

METROPOLITAN CHAPTER OF THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY IN AMERICA



FALL 2007

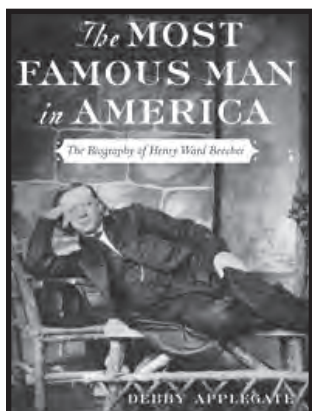


LEGACY OF PREACHER, ACTRESS AND OTHERS CITED AT AWARDS CEREMONY

Before being informed that she had won a Pulitzer Prize for biography, Debby Applegate (pictured below) learned she was to receive an award from the Metropolitan Chapter for her book *The Most Famous Man in America: The Biography of Henry Ward Beecher*. She accepted the award for biography at the Chapter's Annual Meeting on May 22 at the New York School of Interior Design and charmed members and guests at the ceremony and the reception that followed.



The biography culminated the author's 20 years of research on the influential nineteenth-century clergyman who "used his pulpit at Plymouth Church in Brooklyn Heights to confront major cultural and political issues of the day such as abolition of slavery and women's suffrage," reported Jay Shockley in presenting the award. Applegate will be the first lecturer in the Chapter's fall series, speaking on Beecher on Tuesday evening, September 11, at 6 p.m. at the Donnell Library.



The ceremony's 11 awards honored individuals and organizations for significant contributions "to the understanding and preservation of our nineteenth- and early twentieth-century heritage, particularly relating to the greater metropolitan

New York City area," explained Shockley, who chaired the Awards Committee. Others on the committee that selected the awardees were Stephen Gottlieb, Joyce Mendelsohn and Lindsay Parrott. Melissa Baldock assisted with the PowerPoint presentation that accompanied the fast-paced, informative ceremony.

The Devil's Own Work: The Civil War Draft Riots and The Fight to Reconstruct America by Barnett Schecter was recognized with an award for social history. The author, an independent historian who lectured for the Chapter on the book's topic in February 2006, set the July 1863 riots in their historic context and explored how the unresolved issues and conflicts led to the demise of Reconstruction.

An exhibition award went to Vaudeville Nation at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. Curated by Barbara Cohen-Stratynier with support from Jacqueline Z. Davis, the library's executive director, the multi-media exhibition included photos, posters, scripts, film scores, sound recordings and filmed performances from the library's entertainment holdings. Management of vaudeville tours was based largely in New York and impacted such related businesses as music publishing and recording.

Three awards were given for exhibitions and their catalogues. *Frederic Church, Winslow Homer, and Thomas Moran: Tourism and the American Landscape* at the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, focused attention on the juncture of landscape painting, tourism and conservation in late nineteenth-century America. Gail S. Davidson, Floramae McCarron-Cates and Barbara J. Bloemink were the curators of the exhibition and principal authors of the catalogue.

Off the Pedestal: New Women in the Art of Homer, Chase and Sargent at The Newark Museum depicted

Continues on page 2

63 NASSAU IS LANDMARKED

On the day after her 99th birthday Margot Gayle got something she had long wanted: the designation of 63 Nassau Street as an official New York City landmark. On May 15 she watched from her wheel chair as the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission voted unanimously to add the cast-iron-fronted building to those under its protection.

At a November 14 hearing, her testimony in favor of designation had been read for her by Jeff Sholeen, president of the Metropolitan Chapter (see spring 2007 Newsletter). While no foundry plate has been found affixed to the building, she said in the testimony: "After years of research on the life and work of James Bogardus, I have come to the conclusion that 63 Nassau Street appears to have been constructed by James Bogardus, the pioneer inventor and builder of cast-iron-fronted commercial buildings in America." She reached this conclusion based on stylistic elements similar to other known Bogardus buildings.

Jay Shockley, a member of the Landmarks Preservation Commission's research staff, found further evidence to bolster the connection to Bogardus. The cast-iron front, he reported to the Commission, was "almost certainly" produced by Bogardus sometime between 1857 and 1859. One of the oldest surviving cast-iron-fronted buildings in the city, it is among the very few in Lower Manhattan.

The building was owned from 1856 to 1860 by William V. Curtis, a business associate of Augustus Thomas in a silk goods importing firm. Thomas's father, who manufactured tinware in an 1840s structure at 63 Nassau Street, died in 1856.

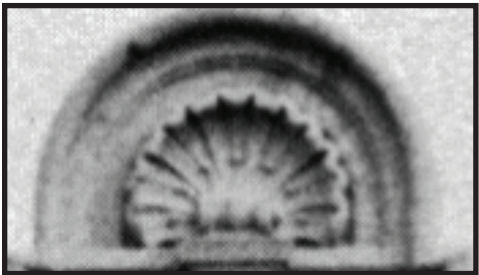
Continues on page 2



EMBELLISHMENTS

The decorative details found throughout this newsletter are taken from Idlehour, the William K. Vanderbilt, Sr. estate in Oakdale, a stop on the Fall 2007 bus tour. Of his many residences, Idlehour remained Vanderbilt's favorite and the only one constructed to satisfy his tastes rather than those of his demanding wife, Alva. Richard Howland Hunt designed the present brick Beaux-Arts mansion to replace the picturesque Stick-style residence (1878) created by his father, Richard Morris Hunt that burned in 1895. Perhaps in homage to the Vanderbilt's Flemish ancestry, Hunt proposed that the brick exterior of the new 110-room Idlehour be laid in the Dutch weave pattern, with facing and trim in limestone. The Flemish influence is particularly evident on the façade where the two slightly-projecting wings flanking the double loggia are capped with elaborate curvilinear gables embellished with obelisks and shells.

Upon completion, Idlehour's interior featured suites of rooms in various 'historical' periods, including a Jacobean dining room, a Francois I smoking room and a French Empire salon. Karl Bitter's sculpture of Diana, the huntress, rests above the dining room mantel while giant urns by French sculptor Sylvain Salieres are found along the garden terrace walls. Throughout the house, arched overdoors are embellished with carved acorns, a symbol adopted by the Vanderbilt family for its family crest.



LEGACY *continued from cover*

women as self-reliant, intelligent, professional or athletic, contrasting with earlier demure portrayals.

The paintings played a pivotal role in presenting the characteristics of the "New Woman." Holly Pyne Connor, curator and editor, and Mary W. Blanchard, a co-author, accepted the award.

Also recognized with an exhibition/catalogue award was *Sarah Bernhardt: The Art of High Drama* at the Jewish Museum. The first major museum retrospective on the legendary and flamboyant actress highlighted her self-orchestrated career, acting style, notorious private life and lucrative entrepreneurship. Carol J. Ockman and Kenneth E. Silver, curators and authors; Karen Levitov, associate curator, and Joan Rosenbaum, director of the museum, were present at the ceremony.

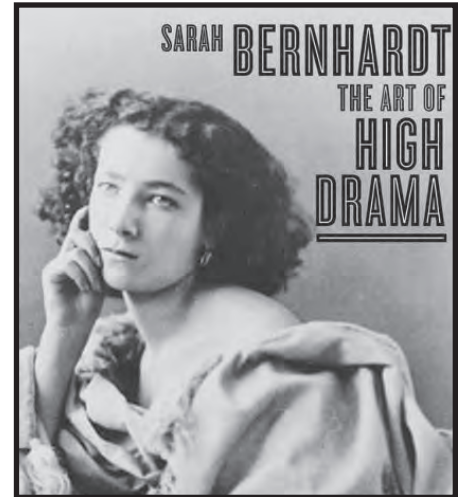
Awards for architecture monographs recognized works on prominent New York firms. *The Architecture of Warren & Wetmore* by Peter Pennoyer and Anne Walker covers the prolific work of the firm established in 1898. Among their surviving projects are the New York Yacht Club and Grand Central Terminal. The monograph is illustrated with historic black-and-white photos as well as recent color views.

The other architecture monograph award honored *Carrère & Hastings, Architects* by Mark Alan Hewitt, Kate Lemos, William Morrison and Charles D. Warren. The two-volume set illustrated with 800 duotone photographs is the first comprehensive examination of the history and work of the firm formed in 1885. Surviving landmarks include several New York Public Libraries, including the main branch, and the Frick Mansion.

Of the two awards for building typology, one was for *Masonic Temples: Freemasonry, Ritual Architecture, and Masculine Archetypes* by William D. Moore. The former director of the Masonic Library on 23rd Street who is now on the faculty of the University of North Carolina Wilmington, Moore used New York State as a case study of structures built from 1870 onward. In them, he identified four distinct types of ritual space: Masonic Lodge rooms, drill rooms of the Knights Templar, Scottish Rite Cathedrals and Shriners Mosques.

The other building typology award went

to *New York's Historic Armories: An Illustrated History* by Nancy L. Todd, a staff member in the Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation. The author documented the history and architecture of the state's large inventory of historic armories, many of which are now vacant or underutilized. "This work," predicted Shockley, "will prove a highly useful tool in bringing increased and deserved attention to these valuable historic resources, leading to their preservation and re-use."



A special citation honored the Lower East Side Tenement Museum and *Biography of a Tenement House in New York City* by Andrew S. Dolkart. Under the leadership of Ruth J. Abram, the museum's founder and president, a number of apartments in its 1863 tenement have been recreated and opened to the public. The building's social history and architecture are covered in the book by Dolkart, a Columbia University professor of historic preservation.

63 NASSAU *continued from cover*

The new façade, Shockley concluded "was evidently commissioned as a speculative venture to capitalize on the commercial changes in the area around Maiden Lane, including Nassau Street, which was being transformed into a major jewelry district." Thomas and Curtis were well aware of Bogardus and his work because their firm at 183 Broadway was in the building that in 1848 had been the inventor's first commission for a cast-iron front. Distinctive stylistic elements such as bas-relief medallions of George Washington (since removed) and of Benjamin Franklin and sperm candle columns strongly suggest the cast-iron front was the work of Bogardus. "This attribution is make more conclusive by the connection between Thomas, Curtis, and Bogardus' first commission," Shockley concluded.

"It was a lot of little coincidences that I pieced together," said Shockley in describing his research to the Newsletter. As to why no foundry plate has been found, he surmised that it might have been removed when the ground floor was remodeled in 1919.

FORMER CHAPTER PRESIDENT DIES AT 95

Giorgio Cavaglieri, who was president of the Metropolitan Chapter in 1973, died May 15 at the age of 95.

An architect, he gained recognition in the 1960s for sensitive preservation and adaptive reuse of older structures when he converted the Jefferson Market Courthouse in Greenwich Village into a library and the Astor Library on Lafayette Street into the Public Theater. In both buildings, he preserved façades and important interior details but added modern functional elements.

Born in Venice in 1911, Cavaglieri graduated magna cum laude from the Milan Politecnico in 1932. He went on to design airfields for the Italian

military. After the Fascist government imposed severe restrictions on Jews, Cavaglieri moved to New York in 1939. He served in the U.S. Army in World War II, testing bridges for safety and adapting German barracks for reuse by the Allies. After the war, he established his own architectural firm and continued his design work until he was 93.

As president of the Municipal Art Society in 1963, he was deeply involved in the campaign to preserve Grand Central Station. At various times he was president of the New York chapter of the American Institute of Architects and chairman of the National Institute of Architectural Education.

LECTURE SERIES

All lectures are at the *Donnell Library Auditorium, 20 W. 53rd St., New York City*
Admission is **FREE**; no reservations required

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 6 PM

HENRY WARD BEECHER, THE MOST FAMOUS MAN IN AMERICA

DEBBY APPLIGATE, winner of the Pulitzer Prize and a Metropolitan Chapter Book Award for *The Most Famous Man in America: The Biography of Henry Ward Beecher*

The Reverend Henry Ward Beecher, a Brooklyn clergyman, won international notoriety for transforming American religion with his "Gospel of Love." He was also a flamboyant abolitionist and a cultural gadfly who shaped public opinion on matters great and small. At the peak of his career in the 1870s, he became embroiled in a spectacular sex scandal when he was accused of seducing one of his own parishioners.



TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 6 PM

TRUE TO NATURE: THOMAS COLE AND ASHER B. DURAND IN THE 1840S
DR. TERESA A. CARBONE, Andrew W. Mellon Curator of American Art, Brooklyn Museum and author of the catalog *American Paintings in the Brooklyn Museum: Artists Born by 1876*

The confluence of Cole and Durand as landscape painters occurred from 1840 to 1848. Critical responses to their works in the 1840s identified overriding preoccupations and expectations that shaped the reception of their work. Inspired by their Christian beliefs, each artist subordinated other concerns to the evocation of a perfect American landscape imbued by a sense of age and pastoral ease suggestive of an ideal place.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 6 PM

ASSERTING YOURSELF IN MEN'S CLOTHES: CROSS-DRESSING IN THE COMEDIES OF ALICE GUY BLACHÉ, THE FIRST WOMAN FILMMAKER
DR. ALISON McMAHAN, president of Homunculus Productions and author of *Alice Guy Blaché, Lost Cinematic Visionary* and *The Films of Tim Burton: Animating Live Action in Hollywood*

The 25-year career of Alice Guy Blaché as a film producer and director began in 1896 and resulted in hundreds of films, many of which were groundbreaking in technology and subject matter. Her comedies focused on active female heroes, marital equality and cross-dressing. Although cross-dressing was a common trope in films of the period, hers were unique in their

message about what it means to be a woman in a male-dominated world.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 6 PM
SCHOOLS OF DESIGN FOR WOMEN IN LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY NEW YORK

MARGARET K. HOFER, curator of decorative arts at The New-York Historical Society and co-curator of the recent exhibit "A New Light on Tiffany: Clara Driscoll and the Tiffany Girls"



Rapid expansion of textile manufacturing and stained glass in the 1880s and 1890s in New York opened new opportunities for women as cultural barriers toppled and "industrial art" became an acceptable career for them. Educational opportunities followed. The New York School of Applied Design for Women, Institute for Artist-Artisans and Art Students League trained numerous women to establish successful careers in industrial design.

TOURS

Members receive detailed flyers before an event's scheduled time. Events must be reserved in advance. To reserve for tours, return flyer's reservation form with check. If you are not a Metropolitan Chapter member, contact us to receive a flyer.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 5, 3 PM
REGIMENTAL REVIEW

Private tour explores the Seventh Regiment Armory (1877-79) designed by Charles W. Clinton. Responsible for the décor of individual rooms were Louis Comfort Tiffany, Stanford White, Herter Brothers, Pottier & Stymus, Louis Marcotte and Alexander Roux.

Tour limited to 25 participants
\$25/members; \$35/nonmembers.
Reserve by September 28

Idlehour courtyard



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20, 8 AM
CAPITALISTS ON THE CONNETQUOT

All-day bus tour on the South Shore of Long Island features the homes of William Bayard Cutting and William Kissam Vanderbilt on opposite sides of the Connetquot river. The Bayard Cutting Arboretum and artists' colony in the former farm buildings of the Vanderbilt

estate, Idlehour, will be explored on foot. Also to be seen are the Southside Sportsmen's Club, where both men were members, and Vanderbilt's St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Islip (1879) designed by Richard Morris Hunt. The buffet luncheon will be in the Cutting mansion and the end-of-day catered reception at Idlehour.

\$95/members; \$110/nonmembers
Reserve by October 10.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1 PM

TRAVERSING TRANQUIL TRINITY TRACT
Walking tour led by historian Jay Shockley will explore Trinity Church's uptown cemetery established in 1843 on land that had been part of John J. Audubon's farm. Landscaping by Vaux & Co. in 1870s-80s retained much of the original hilly topography. Among the graves to be seen are those of Audubon, Clement Clarke Moore, Madam Eliza Jumel and John Jacob Astor. In the Church of the Intercession (1910-14) a memorial to its architect, Bertram Goodhue, will be seen.

Tour limited to 30 participants
\$25/members; \$35/nonmembers
Proceeds go to the Margot Gayle Fund for Preservation of Victorian Heritage
Reserve by October 19

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1:30 PM
FORAY ONTO 44TH STREET

Walking tour of storied block west of Fifth Avenue includes an early adaptive reuse: the

library of the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen. Designed in 1891 by Lamb & Rich, the three-story space was originally a drill hall for a prep school. A collection of paintings by John Singer Sargent will be seen at the Harvard Club, designed in 1894 by Charles McKim. At Warren & Wetmore's 1900 New York Yacht Club, John Rousmaniere, club historian, and the curator, Lindsay Shuckhart, will guide the group through principal rooms, including the extravagant double-height model room.

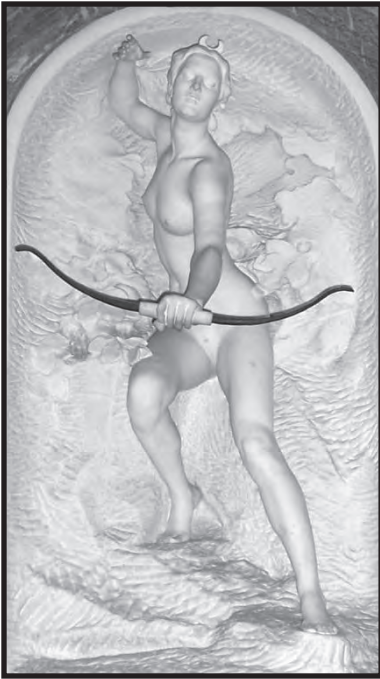
Tour limited to 25 participants
\$25/members; \$35/nonmembers
Reserve by October 25

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8, 8:30 AM
SEASONAL SIGHTS OF STATEN ISLAND

All-day holiday bus tour will visit the Alice Austen House with its parlor looking as it did in the 1890s and the Garibaldi-Meucci Memorial Museum where in 1851 an inventor gave the Italian patriot refuge. The afternoon will be spent at Snug Harbor Cultural Center seeing the Great Hall, Music Hall and Chapel as well as seasonal exhibits. Luncheon and reception included.

Fees and other details to be announced





METROPOLITAN CHAPTER OF THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY IN AMERICA

c/o The Neighborhood Preservation Center
232 East 11th Street, New York, NY 10003
Telephone 212-886-3742 www.metrovsa.org

HAVE YOU MET THESE CHAPTER MEMBERS?

JEFFERSON MANSELL'S interest in history and architectural preservation was sparked by trips through the Mississippi countryside with his grandparents to visit Columbus and Natchez and the old houses of cousins. Now executive director of the Roslyn Landmarks Society on Long Island, he grew up on a cotton farm near Pickens, which is between Jackson and Yazoo City.

At Mississippi State University in Starkville, Mansell received two degrees, one in history and a second in communications and public relations. Aiming to become a teacher, he went on to earn a master of education degree. Meanwhile he worked at Mississippi State in student affairs. After a time, he decided to go to Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, where he earned an M.A. with an emphasis on historic preservation.

Before coming to the Roslyn society, he worked for the Tuscaloosa County Preservation Society in Alabama and Historic Beauford Foundation in South Carolina. At Roslyn, he has started a program in which high school students earn monetary awards for essays on local history. Currently he is overseeing two restoration projects: a carpenter gothic house and a trellis at the Nassau County Museum that was formerly the home of the Childs Frick family.

While at a Winterthur winter institute, he learned of the Victorian Society summer schools and in 1997 attended the one in Newport, RI. After coming to New York, he met Shawn Brennan, then president of the Metropolitan Chapter, at a dinner party hosted by a mutual friend. At Brennan's suggestion, he joined the Chapter. The first activity in which he participated was a Brooklyn tour, Fort Greene on Foot, in

October 2004. In 2005, he became a member of the Board of Directors. He now chairs the Tour Committee, overseeing arrangements for eight or nine tours each year. He has been the prime mover for tours of Long Island and last spring's Gardens of the Garden State expedition. This fall he is in charge of arrangements for the Long Island tour, Capitalists on the Connetquot, and of the visit to the Seventh Regiment Armory in Manhattan.

TERESA DZIEDZIC is an enthusiastic participant in the Chapter's tours. Whether the tour is by bus or on foot, she is among the first to sign up. She goes on the tours because of what she



learns. "I have this thing about knowledge," she said, adding that she is interested in biography, architecture, history and nature. After some of the walking tours, she will revisit the area to quietly absorb the scene and review details. She

finds the printed handouts given on most tours useful for the background information on the sites visited.

Before Dziejdzic joined the Metropolitan Chapter, she was already taking tours of the city, among them expeditions led by Joseph Svehlak, a Chapter member who is a professional tour guide. He told her about the Victorian Society offerings and she added them to the cornucopia of activities she enjoys in retirement. She has subscriptions to the Metropolitan Opera, the Philharmonic Orchestra and some 10 theater companies. She also belongs to two hiking clubs.

Among Dziejdzic's hobbies is the creation of distinctive stationery. She gathers flowers and leaves, presses them and then makes color photocopies, perhaps with a notation of the specimen's place of origin.

She grew up in New Haven and went to work

for the New York Life Insurance Company right after high school. She stayed with the company for 41 years until she took early retirement at age 58. Over the years, the company moved her to different locales, and she took on varying duties. She started in the New Haven office and went from there to Boston, Stamford, Brooklyn and finally the company headquarters in Manhattan. Along the way she rose through the ranks to administrative positions. At different times she was manager of claims and manager of new business.

Vacations from work provided opportunities to travel. She has been to Europe, the Mideast, the Far East, East and South Africa and the South Pacific as well as Hawaii and Alaska.

Recently Dziejdzic has been trying to divest herself of brochures and booklets accumulated over the years. Loath to simply discard them, she tries to find appropriate recipients and has passed on some to a young friend interested in biodiversity and quite a few on historic sites to the Metropolitan Chapter's Tour Committee.

