



# PANORAMA

FALL 2013

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THE NEW YORK METROPOLITAN CHAPTER OF THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY IN AMERICA



## Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony 2013

On May 29, 2013, the Victorian Society New York held its annual meeting and awards ceremony in New York School of Interior Design's commodious auditorium. David Sprouls, NYSID's president, graciously welcomed the group and initiated the meeting, which was chaired by Chapter president Frampton Tolbert. The meeting gave us an opportunity to highlight the VSNY's activities during the past year, which included preservation and advocacy, educational initiatives, tours and lectures, and we honored several worthy groups and organizations with our annual awards and the Margot Gayle Fund Grants. Awards Committee members presented awards for Exhibition and Catalogue, New Media, Preservation and Rehabilitation, and Preservation Advocacy. Frampton Tolbert presented the Lifetime Achievement Award, and Alta Indelman, Margot Gayle Fund chair, announced the grants.

There were two awards for Exhibition and Catalogue, one to the Museum of Biblical Art for *Louis C. Tiffany and the Art of Devotion*, and the other to the Bard Graduate Center for *Circus and the City: New York, 1793-2010*. An award for New Media went to NYC real estate broker John Foreman for his blog, *Big Old Houses*

(bigoldhouses.blogspot.com/), which chronicles large and small details of grand mansions and proud brownstones, many in NYC and environs.

Preservation and Rehabilitation Awards went to the New York, Westchester & Boston Railway Administration Building in the Bronx, constructed 1910-1912; the Park Slope Branch of the Brooklyn Public Library for the restoration of the 1906 Carnegie-funded library building; and Congregation Tifereth Israel of Corona, Queens, for the restoration of its 1911 exterior. The Preservation Advocacy Award went to the Committee to Save St. Brigid's Church, which saved the 1848 house of worship in Manhattan's East Village from imminent destruction.

Barnett Shepherd, author and the executive director of the Staten Island Historical Society for almost 20 years, was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award. Margot Gayle grants were awarded to P.S.11—the William T. Harris School (Manhattan), the Queens Historical Society at Historic Kingsland Homestead, and Preservation Greenpoint (Brooklyn). After the ceremony, guests stayed to enjoy a catered reception.



Barnett Shepherd (left), winner of a Lifetime Achievement Award, with VSNY Chapter president Frampton Tolbert.



# Embellishments

This issue's Embellishments are drawn from our 2013 award winners, all of which can be appreciated for their visual appeal as well as their historic and architectural attributes. Viewing them with a focus on detail brings the viewer's attention to the qualities that led to their being recognized as embodying the best of the New York City area's 19th- and early 20th-century heritage—and the qualities that ensure they will endure for a long time to come.



Restored St. Brigid's Church interior, Manhattan. The Committee to Save St. Brigid's Church received a Preservation Advocacy Award. *Photograph courtesy of Acheson Doyle Partners Architects, P.C.*

Detail of wooden sidewalk in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, now part of Greenpoint Terminal Market. Preservation Greenpoint received a Margot Gayle Fund grant. *Photograph by James Russiello*



Detail, baptismal font, Louis C. Tiffany, 1908, Christ Episcopal Church, Pomfret, Connecticut. The font was displayed as part of the *Louis C. Tiffany and the Art of Devotion* exhibition at the Museum of Biblical Art, Manhattan, which received an Exhibition and Catalogue Award. *Photograph by Gina Fuentes Walker, courtesy of the Museum of Biblical Art*



Detail, stained glass oriel window at Congregation Tifereth Israel, Corona, Queens, which received a Preservation and Rehabilitation Award. *Photograph courtesy of Li/Salzman Architects*





# New Victorian Landmarks and Historic Districts

BY ANTHONY W. ROBINS

Anthony W. Robins, an author, lecturer and tour leader, is a former VSNY board member. His website is [www.anthonrywrobins.com](http://www.anthonrywrobins.com).

BELOW: Nos. 267 to 287 Macon Street, 1872–73, in the Bedford-Stuyvesant / Expanded Stuyvesant Heights Historic District. Photograph by Christopher D. Brazee, courtesy of NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission

Since our last issue, the Landmarks Commission has designated seven Victorian landmarks and two Victorian historic districts (designation reports available at the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission website, [www.nyc.gov/html/lpc/html/home/home.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/lpc/html/home/home.shtml)).

## BROOKLYN

### CATHERINA LIPSUS HOUSE

670 Bushwick Avenue (Bushwick)  
Theobald Engelhardt, 1890

Built for a brewery owner, this American Round Arch-style mansion includes a corner tower with conical peak and high mansard roof.

### BEDFORD-STUYVESANT / EXPANDED STUYVESANT HEIGHTS HISTORIC DISTRICT

Bounded by Tompkins Avenue, Macon and Halsey streets, Malcolm X Boulevard and Fulton Street

These 825 buildings—tripling the size of the existing district—include late 19th-century row houses, two-family residences, small apartment houses and institutions. Styles include neo-Grec, Queen Anne, Romanesque Revival and Renaissance Revival.



## MANHATTAN

### WEST END-COLLEGIATE HISTORIC DISTRICT EXTENSION

bounded by Broadway and Riverside Drive,  
West 70th and West 79th Streets

These 220 buildings double the size of the existing district. Row houses and apartment buildings, from the mid-1880s to late 1920s, include work by C.P.H. Gilbert, Henry J. Hardenbergh, Clarence True and George F. Pelham, in styles including neo-Grec, Romanesque Revival, Renaissance Revival, Queen Anne and Beaux-Arts.

### CHURCH OF ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE

8 Columbus Avenue (Upper West Side)  
Built 1875–85, attributed to Jeremiah O'Rourke;  
upper walls of towers c. 1900

Once the country's second largest church (after St. Patrick's Cathedral), the Paulist Fathers' home has a facade of stone salvaged from the Croton Aqueduct and the former Booth's Theater.

### NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, SEWARD PARK BRANCH

192 East Broadway (Lower East Side)  
Babb, Cook & Welch, 1908–09

This Italian Renaissance Revival brick and limestone "Carnegie library" is crowned by a copper railing that supported a canvas awning for an open-air rooftop reading room.

### ST. LOUIS HOTEL (NOW HOTEL GRAND UNION)

34 East 32nd Street (Murray Hill)  
Frederick C. Browne, 1903–05

The Beaux-Arts-style hotel has a red brick facade with limestone and terra-cotta trim, including carved ornament of lions' heads and shields, and a high mansard roof.

### BEAUMONT APARTMENTS

730 Riverside Drive (Hamilton Heights);  
George and Edward Blum, 1912–13

A typically idiosyncratic design by the Blums, this Arts and Crafts-style apartment house has a facade of geometric brick patterns with terra-cotta tiles and foliate ornament, including plaques with eagles, parakeets and owls.

## QUEENS

### FOREST PARK CAROUSEL, FOREST PARK (WOODHAVEN)

Carved wood figures mostly by D.C. Muller & Brother, c. 1903 or 1910; pavilion by Victor F. Christ-Janer, 1973; renovated 1989

Designed for Lakeview Park, Massachusetts; moved to Forest Park in 1971. One of only two Muller carousels still operating in the United States, it includes 46 hand-carved wooden horses in addition to a lion, a tiger, a deer and two chariots, as well as an ornate band organ manufactured in Waldkirch, Germany.

### JAMAICA HIGH SCHOOL (NOW JAMAICA LEARNING CENTER)

162–02 Hillside Avenue (Jamaica)  
William B. Tubby, 1895–96

This school, built just before Consolidation joined Queens to New York City, has a Dutch Revival-style facade including a stepped gable, stepped and arched windows, and a tall hipped roof with "witch's hat" dormers and high chimneys.

## In Case You Missed It ...



### THE VSNY GOES BACK TO SCHOOL

ABOVE: Reception at the Colonial Club.

RIGHT: The Italianate Prospect Hall.

A fascinating trip combined with fine summer weather on Father's Day greeted VSNY tour participants at Princeton University. Jon Hlafter, University Architect Emeritus, led the group through one of America's most distinguished and architecturally rich campuses, which was founded in 1746. With buildings ranging from the Georgian-style Nassau Hall (1754-56) to the Collegiate Gothic Whitman College (2003-07), the campus is a journey through the academic architecture of the 19th and early 20th centuries. It includes buildings by architects such as John Notman, William Appleton Potter, Robert Henderson Robertson, Walter Cope, John Stewardson and Ralph Adams Cram. These notables from the past have been joined by modern luminaries such as Frank Gehry, I.M. Pei, Robert Venturi and Rafael Vinoly, all of whom are represented at Princeton.

The tour started in the High Victorian Gothic splendor of the Ruskinian Gothic Chancellor Green building (W.A. Potter, 1878), with special highlights including the Richardsonian Romanesque Witherspoon Hall (W.A. Potter and R.H. Robertson, 1877), and Alexander Hall (W.A. Potter, 1892-94), as well as the Italianate Prospect Hall (John Notman, 1851).







LEFT: It's back to school .... wandering through the arch of the Tudor Gothic Revival-style Blair Hall (Walter Cope and John Stewardson, 1897).



ABOVE: The group visiting the Trustees' Meeting Room in Chancellor Green, built 1873 to Victorian Gothic designs by William Appleton Potter, remodeled and largely concealed by the academic Gothicist Ralph Adams Cram before renovations supervised by Jon Hlafter exposed Potter's work.



LEFT: Princeton University Architect Emeritus Jon Hlafter with tour organizer and former VSNY president Jeff Sholeen.

Longtime VSNY friend Gloria Hamilton welcomed the participants as they dined at the members-only Nassau Club (1814, remodeled in the 20th century) before she guided them to the private Woodrow Wilson House, built in 1905 to designs by Edward S. Child, and then on a bus tour of the area that passed Drumthwacket, the official residence of the governor of New Jersey. The trip ended with a final tour and relaxing reception at the Colonial Club, an eating club on Prospect Avenue built in 1907 to designs by Robert Gibson and Francis G. Stewart.



TOP TO BOTTOM:  
The Woodrow Wilson House

Prospect Hall

Constitution Hall, the Junius S. Morgan House, built 1897 to designs by Walter Cope and John Stewardson. It was remodeled in the late 20th century by architect Perry Morgan (a grandson of the original occupant), who was there to greet the group and show off the main hall.

## New Board Members



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF KATHLEEN BENNETT

### KATHLEEN BENNETT

A native of New Jersey, Kathleen has been immersed in the arts since graduating with a BA in Fine Arts Education from Montclair State University. Her interest in the 19th century began with a move to the historic commuter suburb of Montclair, New Jersey, and the acquisition of a Victorian house. She became involved with the Northern New Jersey Chapter of the VSA as program chair and president, and also served as chair of the VSA's Summer Schools committee. Kathleen also holds degrees from the Historic Preservation program at Drew University and the Parsons / Cooper-Hewitt Master's program in the History of Decorative Arts and Design. Hours spent in state and private archives resulted in her thesis, *The Rococo in Sicily: Assimilation of a Style*. Kathleen continues to research and write about Sicilian subjects; when not trolling through libraries and archives, she explores Sicily's cuisine and cultural peculiarities.



PHOTOGRAPH BY BILL HOBBS

### MORGAN MUNSEY

Morgan Munsey trained as an architect at Hampton University, where he specialized in urban planning and historic preservation. He has worked in leading firms in Washington, D.C., and Manhattan. He now lives and works in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, as a preservation design architect. In 2009, he began to document the architecture and architects of Bedford-Stuyvesant to support the landmark designation of this historic neighborhood. The knowledge he gained from this project is expressed in the walking tours he leads as well as his blog, [savebedfordstuyvesant.blogspot.com](http://savebedfordstuyvesant.blogspot.com). With central Brooklyn as his focus, Morgan is an active participant in preserving New York City's history. He is also a real estate salesperson for Evans & Nye.



Founded in New York City in 1966, the Victorian Society in America is dedicated to fostering the appreciation and preservation of our nation's 19th-century heritage as well as that of the early 20th century (1837-1917). The Victorian Society New York (VSNY), the oldest of numerous chapters now flourishing throughout the U.S., is an independent nonprofit organization affiliated with the national Society.

Membership contributions at any level help to provide the foundation for all that we do—from our lecture series, walking tours and excursions to our grant and awards programs honoring worthy preservation projects in New York. Members also help provide scholarships to the Victorian Society in America Summer Schools for advanced study. Donations to the Margot Gayle Fund make possible monetary grants for preservation and conservation of Victorian material culture in our region.

## The Margot Gayle Fund



**The Margot Gayle Fund encourages Victorian Society New York members and their colleagues to submit applications for grants ahead of the February 14, 2014, deadline. Proposals must relate to the preservation, conservation or interpretation of Victorian material culture in the New York City metropolitan area. Previous grants have supported a range of projects, from restoring damaged plaster in a historic house museum to creating an interactive website. Forms and guidelines are available at [www.vicsocny.org](http://www.vicsocny.org).**

**Creative ideas are welcome!**

## Save the Dates

### MARGOT GAYLE FUND LECTURE

January 27, 2014

A special fundraising lecture for the Margot Gayle Fund, *Inventing the Modern World: Decorative Arts at the World's Fairs, 1851-1939*, by Jason Busch, Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs and Museum Programs at the St. Louis Art Museum and former chief curator and Alan G. and Jane A. Lehman Curator of Decorative Arts and Design at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh.

### VSA SUMMER SCHOOLS EVENT

January 30, 2014

Newport Summer School director Richard Guy Wilson, Commonwealth Professor and chair of the Department of Architectural History at the University of Virginia, will be the keynote speaker at a recruitment event for the Victorian Society in America's summer schools in Newport, Rhode Island, and London. Professor Wilson will give a brief talk on the art and architecture of Newport. The event will be held at 6:00 p.m. at Dominican Academy, 44 East 68th Street, NYC.

THE  
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NEEDS YOU!

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## Passings

The VSNY notes with sadness the deaths of two distinguished Chapter members who were dedicated to preserving the city's Victorian heritage.

### BILLIE SHERRILL BRITZ

Billie Sherrill Britz, former president of the national Victorian Society and of the New York Metropolitan Chapter (as the VSNY was formerly known), died on May 15, 2013, at the age of 88. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan and a master's in art history from Columbia. An expert on historic greenhouses, she published many articles on them and also led the Chapter's campaign to restore Augustus Saint-Gaudens's statue of General William Tecumseh Sherman at Manhattan's Grand Army Plaza.

Bill Ayres, a former Chapter president and one of her closest friends, said that she was "always unerringly stylish, with a hearty laugh, trademark cigarettes and often a martini—which somehow blended seamlessly with all of her accomplishments as a scholar and unrelenting supporter of historic preservation. They broke the mold." A woman of formidable style as well as accomplishment, Billie will be greatly missed.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY  
OF MEREDITH BRITZ SHELLEY

### NINA GRAY

BY MARGARET K. HOFER

Margaret K. Hofer is Curator of Decorative Arts at the New-York Historical Society.

Nina Gray, an independent curator of American decorative arts and former board member of the VSNY, died on May 20, 2013, at the age of 57. After receiving an MA at the Institute of Fine Arts, NYU, Nina began her career at the New-York Historical Society, first as



PHOTOGRAPH BY DON POLLARD

assistant curator of architectural drawings, photographs, and prints (1985–1987), and then as associate curator of decorative arts (1987–1990). She curated several notable exhibitions, including *Artistic Houses: Lavish New York Interiors of the 19th Century* and *The Rise and Fall of New York: Building and Unbuilding Manhattan*. Aside from a stint as the curator of the collection of the Seventh Regiment Armory, from 1991 until shortly before her death Nina was an independent curator and architectural historian.

The many exhibitions she curated or contributed to included: *A Brass Menagerie: Metalwork of the Aesthetic Movement*, at the Munson Williams Proctor Arts Institute; *The Park Avenue Armory: A Century of Culture, Competition, and Ceremony*; and in 2007, *A New Light on Tiffany: Clara Driscoll and the Tiffany Girls*, organized by the New-York Historical Society.

Nina authored numerous publications, many focused on her deep interest in the work of Louis C. Tiffany. Among them are the award-winning exhibition catalog, *A New Light on Tiffany: Clara Driscoll and the Tiffany Girls* (coauthored with Margaret K. Hofer and Martin Eidelberg) and *Tiffany By Design: An In-Depth Look at Tiffany Lamps*. Other topics she wrote about included historic frames, the metalwork of Greene and Greene, and Gilded Age interiors and decorators.

She was also an active participant in the civic life of the Manhattan neighborhood where she lived for 30 years. Her particular interest was historic preservation and the work of Landmark West!, the advocacy group devoted to balancing the important architectural legacy of the Upper West Side with new development.

Donations in her name may be made to the New-York Historical Society.

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## VSA Summer Schools in London and Newport

TOP: The Newport Summer School's class of 2013 at Philmoney, the G. Pierce Metcalf House, in Exeter, Rhode Island, built 1931 to designs by George Locke Howe.



BOTTOM: London Summer School students visiting Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, an outstanding example of Arts and Crafts-influenced architecture. Industrialist Samuel Theodore Mander commissioned the house, designed by Edward Ould of the Liverpool firm Grayson and Ould, which was completed in 1887. The Great Parlour wing, also designed by Ould, was added in 1893. Albert Parson designed the gardens, and a terrace and balustrade were added in 1910 by Thomas Mawson, the most celebrated landscape architect of the Edwardian era. Britain's National Trust took control of the house in 1937, an early date for the appreciation of Victorian design.

Richard Guy Wilson, director of the Newport Summer School, will be speaking in New York on January 30, 2014. See Page 6 for details.

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES RUSSIELLO