

METROPOLITAN CHAPTER OF THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY IN AMERICA

Spring 2009

WALLPAPER COVERED IN FIRST LECTURE OF CHAPTER'S SERIES

The evolution of Victorian wallpaper will be featured in the first of four illustrated lectures sponsored by the Chapter in coming months. Other topics in the series are the influence of Spain on Victorian artists, Hudson Valley ruins and the artist and photographer F. Holland Day. All of the lectures will be at the New York New Church, 114 E. 35th St., Manhattan and begin at 6 p.m.

The February 10 lecture, *The Horror of the Unadorned: Style and the Technology of Wallpaper Production in the Victorian Era* by Robert C. Kaufmann, will trace technological innovations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that enabled the middle class to afford adorning walls. As wallpaper production became profitable, patterns proliferated. The result was widespread coverage of Victorian era walls.

The recipient of the Chapter's 2008 Lifetime Achievement Award, Kaufmann is librarian of the European Sculpture and Decorative Arts Department and reference librarian and bibliographer of the Thomas J. Watson Library at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. In addition to holding a master's degree in library service from Columbia University, he studied decorative arts at Yale. His interest in wallpapers was heightened by work on the collection of the Cooper-Hewitt

National Design Museum, where he was librarian in the 1980s.

On March 10, Dr. Paul Stirton, senior lecturer in the history of art at the University of



Flamenco Dancer (1881) by John Singer Sargent

Glasgow and visiting professor at the Bard Graduate Center in New York, will present *The Cult of Velazquez: Victorian Artists and Spain*. The lecture draws on Stirton's research as curator for *Discovering Spain*, an exhibition that is to be mounted at the National Gallery of Scotland this year. British and American artists in the nineteenth century, he found, admired the culture and art of Spain. In the 1860s, James McNeill Whistler and John Singer Sargent, inspired by the work of Diego Velazquez, reoriented the approach to Spanish culture and attracted many artists to study "the master from Madrid."

Ruins of Hudson Valley buildings will be featured in the April 14 lecture by Thomas Rinaldi, who is pursuing a master's degree in historic preservation at Columbia University. The book he and Robert J. Yasinsac wrote, *Hudson Valley Ruins* (2006), documents decaying structures along the great river.

F. Holland Day, artist, photographer and historian, is the subject of the May 12 lecture by Patricia Fanning. Chairperson of the Department of Sociology at Bridgewater State College in Bridgewater, Mass., Fanning is the author of *Through an Uncommon Lens: The Life and Photography of F. Holland Day* (2008). 🌿

PILLARS OF PRESERVATION PASS ON

In recent months, death claimed three esteemed preservationists who were members of the Metropolitan Chapter: Margot Gayle, Dorothy Miner and Regina Kellerman.

Margot Gayle, the last of the three founders of the Victorian Society in America, died September 28. She reached the age of 100 on May 14, and the Chapter celebrated her life on that evening at a gala she attended at the Century Association (see Fall 2008 Newsletter). On her 95th birthday in 2003 the Chapter established the Margot Gayle Fund for Preservation of Vic-

torian Heritage to help finance projects in the Metropolitan New York area.

The 1966 founding of the VSA by Gayle, J. Stewart Johnson and Caroline Karpinski and its early activities around Gayle's kitchen table are legendary. Gayle's organizational skills were honed in New York City government and as a leader of the effort begun in 1959 that saved the Jefferson Market Courthouse. She earned a master's degree in bacteriology at Emory University in Atlanta but in New York worked in public relations for the City's Department of Commerce

and Public Events and the Planning Commission.

She founded Friends of Cast Iron Architecture in 1970, drawing attention to SoHo that spurred designation of its historic district. To the end of her life she advocated expansion of this district. In her 90s, she worked to restore
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Margot Gayle



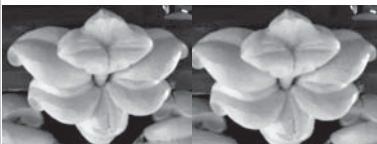
The Armour-Stiner House (commonly called the Octagon House) in Irvington, N.Y., will be visited on a June 6 tour organized by the Chapter. Guiding the tour of this National Historic Landmark will be its current owner, Joseph Pell Lombardi, who is nearing completion of a 30-year restoration. This issue's embellishments are from the house and garden.

Originally built in 1859-60 by Paul Armour, a New York banker, the Octagon House was modified in the 1870s and used as a country retreat by its second owner, tea merchant Joseph Stiner. He added a two-story dome, full colonnaded veranda with ironwork railing and curvilinear front stairs as well as iron cresting atop the dormers and chimney.

This house was one of hundreds inspired by Orson Squire Fowler's 1848 book, *A Home for All*. In it, he advocated the octagonal plan as a more effective use of space and more healthful alternative than the square plan. The Armour-Stiner House is the only known domical, octagonal plan residential interpretation of an early Roman Temple form. The 1870s interior decoration and furnishings contain some of the best examples in the country of the neo-Roman style popular in the last quarter of nineteenth century America.

Lombardi's restoration of the Octagon House garden was based on archeological studies of the grounds. Among the whimsical elements he added is the 1870s wrought-iron foxglove gate. Foxglove, a common nineteenth-century garden plant with medicinal properties, was original to the Octagon House garden and blooms there in the spring. ☺

-Jacquelann Killian



Pillars of Preservation, continued from first page

the historic Yorkville sidewalk clock on Third Avenue near 85th Street.

Gayle wrote an architectural history column "Changing Scene" for the *New York Daily News Sunday Magazine* from 1975-92. She co-authored three books: *Cast-Iron Architecture in New York: A Photographic Survey* with Edmund V. Gillon, Jr., *Guide to Manhattan's Outdoor Sculpture* with Michelle Cohen and *Cast-Iron Architecture in America: The Significance of James Bogardus* with her daughter Carol Gayle, published on her 90th birthday.

Dorothy Miner, who was counsel to the New York City Landmarks Commission for 19 years, died at 72, October 21. She became counsel in 1965 and



Dorothy Miner

was instrumental in defeating a challenge to the landmark designation of Grand Central Terminal. The 1978 decision by the U.S. Supreme Court not only saved Grand Central but upheld the constitutionality of the New York City Landmarks Law.

Miner helped construct the legal framework that enabled the Commission in 1983 to designate as a landmark the seventeenth-century street plan of Lower Manhattan. The designation preserved the irregularity of blocks and thereby thwarted some developers' plans. She also worked on the successful defense of the designation of St. Bartholomew's Church when the parish sued to overturn it on the basis of freedom of religion and property rights. The designation was upheld by the federal Court of Appeals in 1990.

After Miner left the Commission in 1994, she became an adjunct associate professor in the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation at Columbia University. She also taught preservation law at Pace University and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. She earned her law degree at Columbia in 1961 and a master's in urban planning in 1972.

Regina Kellerman, an architectural historian, died May 13 at age 84. In the early 1960s, she volunteered at the fledgling New York City Landmarks Commission and went on to be its research director when it became a city agency in 1965.

Her dissertation research for her 1970 Ph.D. in architectural history from Pennsylvania State University pinpointed the location of the Stadthuis, New Amsterdam's first city hall dating from 1653. From 1970-72, she was project historian on a dig that uncovered the building's foundation on Pearl Street near Coenties Alley, exactly where she predicted.

In 1971 she supervised a survey of cast-iron buildings in SoHo and then co-authored the report to the Landmarks Commission that led to designation of the SoHo Cast-Iron Historic District in 1973.

Kellerman helped found the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation in 1980 and became its first executive director in 1981. In that capacity, she produced *The Architecture of the Greenwich Village Waterfront*. ☺

MARCH 1 IS DEADLINE FOR SUMMER SCHOOL APPLICATIONS

Study opportunities in the U.S. and England are offered by the Victorian Society in America Summer Schools. Applications must be received by March 1.

The American school, May 29-June 7, is centered in Newport, R.I. Directed by Richard Guy Wilson, Commonwealth Professor of Architectural History at the University of Virginia, this session includes excursions to Providence, R.I. and Bedford and North Easton, Mass. Tuition is \$2,300.

The London Summer School, July 11-26, will be directed by Kit Wedd, a free-lance writer specializing in architectural conservation and historic interior decoration. A five-day tour of the Midlands and North of England is part of the curriculum. Gavin Stamp, former lecturer at the Mackintosh School of Architecture, will conduct the tour of the North. Tuition is \$4,300.

Scholarships are available. For information and application forms, contact Susan E. McCallum, administrator of Victorian Society in America Summer Schools, 100 Prospect St., Summit, NJ 07901; telephone (908) 522-0656; e-mail vsasummerschools@comcast.net. ☺

HAVE YOU MET THESE NEW BOARD MEMBERS?

In recent months three members of the Board of Directors have resigned: Jefferson Mansell to become executive director of the Landmarks Association of St. Louis and Lewis I. Haber and Nadezhda Williams due to busy schedules. To fill these vacancies until elections at the Annual Meeting, the Board has chosen the Chapter members featured here.

Marie De Palma is a mental health counselor in District 75, a special needs unit of the New York City Department of Education, working with children from kindergarten through high school who are physically, emotionally or psychologically challenged. Before becoming a counselor, she taught social studies in a junior high school. She was an insurance company account executive, holding an insurance broker's license. She also held a real estate license and continued in that field while employed as an educator. Her interest in New York history developed while in the insurance business and blossomed while teaching social studies. She is a public member of Community Board 6 in Brooklyn, working on matters related to landmarks preservation, and is a member of many preservation-related organizations. She lives in an 1873 Federal style three-family house in Carroll Gardens and has worked to preserve its interior since she and her husband purchased the building in the late 1970s. Marie received her master's degree in counseling from Brooklyn College.

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LECTURE SERIES

All lectures are at *The New York New Church, 114 E. 35th St., New York City, admission is FREE; no reservations required*

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 6 PM
The Horror of the Unadorned: Style and the Technology of Wallpaper Production in the Victorian Era

Robert C. Kaufmann, librarian, European Sculpture and Decorative Arts Department and reference librarian and bibliographer, Thomas J. Watson Library, The Metropolitan Museum

Technological innovations, particularly in printing and paper production, enabled even the middle class to adorn walls economically in the nineteenth century. A proliferation of Revival styles also figured in the wide-spread use of wallpaper in the Victorian era.

TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 6 PM
The Cult of Velazquez: Victorian Artists and Spain

Paul Stirton, Ph.D., senior lecturer, University of Glasgow; visiting professor, Bard Graduate Center, New York, and curator of Discovering

Spain, a 2009 exhibition at the National Gallery of Scotland

In the nineteenth century, British and American artists admired the culture, art and landscape of Spain. In the 1860s, Whistler and Sargent, inspired by the work of Velazquez, reoriented the approach to Spanish culture and attracted many artists to study "the master from Madrid."

TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 6 PM



Hudson Valley Ruins: Forgotten Landmarks of an American Landscape

Thomas Rinaldi, co-author of *Hudson Valley Ruins: Forgotten Landmarks of an American Landscape* (2006)

Often dismissed as eyesores, neglected buildings lining the Hudson River spell out the region's history. They range from country seats such as The

Point in Dutchess County, designed by Calvert Vaux in the 1850s, to industrial buildings such as the Powell and Minnock brickyard near Albany, which closed in 2002.

TUESDAY, MAY 12, 6 PM
"A Nest for Dreaming, a Shelter for Imagining:"The Art, History and Architecture of F. Holland Day

Patricia Fanning, Ph.D., author of *Through an Uncommon Lens: The Life and Photography of F. Holland Day* (2008) and chairperson, Department of Sociology, Bridgewater State College, Bridgewater, Mass.

Influenced by Aestheticism, the Arts and Crafts and Colonial Revival Movements, F. Holland Day was a remarkable artist and dedicated historian. His sense of beauty and interest in history are reflected in his book designs and photographs, his varied collections and, most of all, in his home and family chapel in Norwood, Mass.

TOURS & SPECIAL EVENTS

Members receive detailed flyers or invitations before events. Nonmembers may contact (212)886-3742 for tour flyers. Advance prepaid reservations are required for tours.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24, 2 PM

Picturing Pride of Place

Gallery tour of the exhibition *House Proud: Nineteenth-Century Watercolor Interiors from the Thaw Collection* at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum will be led by Co-curator Floramae McCarron-Cates. Commissioned by proud owners, the watercolors illustrate decorative choices made in the Victorian era.

\$25/Chapter members; \$35/nonmembers
Tour limited to 25 participants

SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 1 PM



The Cathedral of St. John the Divine: An Unfinished Story Told in Stone

Guided tour will highlight the history of the world's largest Gothic-style cathedral from 1892 to the present. The Cathedral remains unfinished and includes a recent restoration following a cat-

astrophic fire. Hand-crafted stonework, tapestries and stained glass will be pointed out. The group will move from the interior to the expansive grounds and the Textiles Conservation Lab, housed in the oldest structure within the Cathedral complex built in 1838.

Fees/reservation deadline to be set
Tour limited to 25 participants

TUESDAY, MAY 19, 6:30 PM

Metropolitan Chapter Annual Meeting **Bohemian National Hall**

The Annual Meeting features an awards ceremony as well as elections. FREE to Chapter members.

SATURDAY, MAY 30, 2 PM

Contemplating The Evergreens

Walking tour led by Joe Svehlak, urban historian, visits The Evergreens, a cemetery established in 1849. A 255-acre repository of sculpture, architecture and landscaping from the Victorian era, it

spans the Brooklyn/Queens border along the terminal moraine and offers romantic vistas designed by Andrew Jackson Downing, Alexander Davis and Calvert Vaux. Of note are the Actors' Fund Monument, Triangle Shirtwaist Fire Memorial, Seaman's Monument and mausoleums of old Bushwick families.

\$25/Chapter members; \$35/nonmembers
Tour limited to 30 participants
Reserve by May 27

SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 8:45 AM



Hideaways on the Hudson

Bus tour will visit the home of artist Jasper Cropsey, the Octagon House and at least one other site in the Lower Hudson Valley. Fees and further details will be given in the flyer.

Tour limited to 50 participants

JOIN THE METROPOLITAN CHAPTER OF THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY IN AMERICA

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL:

- Individual \$40
- Household (two adults) \$60
- Sponsor \$75
Acknowledgement in newsletter, annual meeting presentation and website
- Patron \$150
Same benefits as Sponsor, plus admission for one to a special annual event
- Senior (over age 65) \$30
- Student (with copy of student ID) \$30

Name(s) Please print clearly

Address, including apartment designation and zip code

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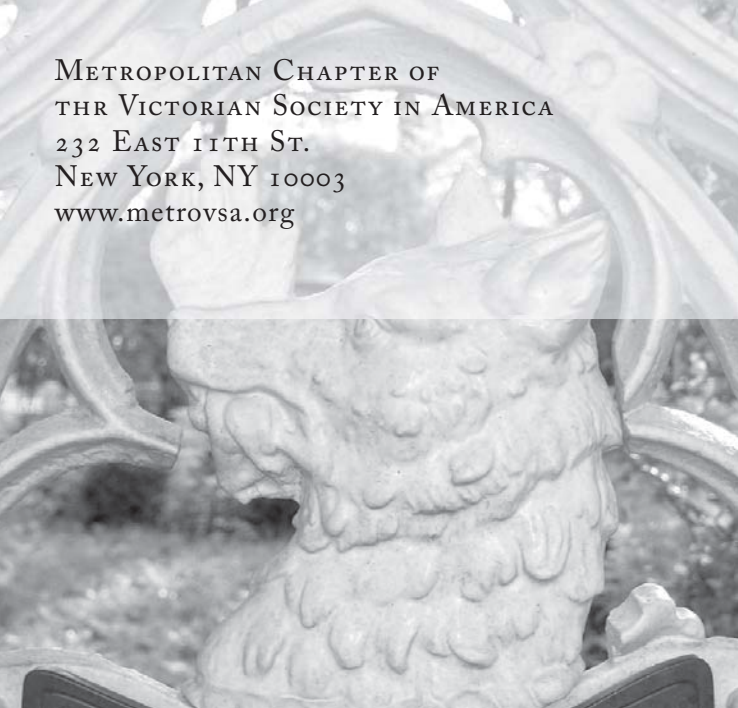
- VSA Summer School Scholarships \$ _____
- Margot Gayle Fund for Preservation of Victorian Heritage \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

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METROPOLITAN CHAPTER OF
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Have You Met These New Board Members?

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Frampton Tolbert is deputy director of the Historic Districts Council, a citywide advocacy group for historical buildings and neighborhoods. In this capacity, he manages all solicitations for gifts and coordinates special events and educational initiatives with community-based organizations. After earning a B.A. in historic preservation from Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg, Va., he served in a variety of marketing and development positions for The Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C. In 2003 he moved to New York and became associate campaign manager for the Brooklyn Museum, managing a variety of projects for a \$130-million fund drive for two years before accepting his current position. On a volunteer basis, Frampton is involved in event planning and non-profit fundraising for local preservation organizations in Brooklyn and Pittsburgh and serves as a board member for the Recent Past Preservation Network. He lives in Prospect Heights, Brooklyn.

Suzanne Wray is a technical designer for women's sweaters in the garment center in New York City and has studied the history of the textile industry in New England. She has longstanding interests in New York City history and in architectural history, which were sparked by Friends of Cast Iron Architecture walking tours given by the late Margot Gayle. She has a particular interest in nineteenth-century panoramas and dioramas and presented a paper, "In the Style of Daguerre: Two Nineteenth-Century American Showmen and Traveling Exhibitions of Chemical Dioramas," at a conference of the International Panorama Council in Plymouth, UK and published an article on Robert Winter, one of the chemical diorama showmen, in the Winter 2008 issue of the *Magic Lantern Gazette*. Among her current projects is research connecting a short story by Brander Matthews with the New York installation of The Panorama of the Battle of Gettysburg. Suzanne holds a BFA in fashion design from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She lives on Manhattan's Upper West Side. ☺

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Levels of Membership: Lifetime \$1,000 (no longer offered); Patron \$150 annually; Sponsor \$75 annually