



THE
VICTORIAN
SOCIETY
NEW YORK

SPRING 2015 PANORAMA

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WWW.VICSOCNY.ORG

THE NEW YORK METROPOLITAN CHAPTER OF THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY IN AMERICA



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES RUSSIELLO

Special Membership Issue

As this issue was going to press, news broke about the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission's imminent plan to remove 96 sites from its calendar of properties under consideration as designated landmarks. Suddenly, what had been planned as a cheerful, upbeat issue of *Panorama*, devoted to the joys and benefits of membership in The Victorian Society New York, seemed out of step with these grave and concerning developments. But as we scrambled to take stock of the issues and rewrite text, one paragraph rang truer than ever: *The Victorian Society New York is its members, who provide the strength, the support and the purpose of our organization. You are the hands that sign petitions and write letters to elected officials and city agencies, you are the feet that march at rallies, you are the voices that speak at community and municipal meetings, and you are the eyes on our media and in our neighborhoods, alert for opportunities to honor and protect the magnificent built heritage of our region.*

Today, these words have real meaning. By the time you read this issue, public outcry—including so many of your voices—has forced the LPC to reconsider its mass and unilateral “de-calendaring” action. Even so, our important work as VSNY members is cut out for us and we must remain vigilant and engaged. In making its announcement to halt immediate action, the LPC offered only to “take a pause to continue to consider feedback on aspects of the proposal” and emphasized its commitment “to clearing a backlog of items that have sat idle.”

For many of us, the LPC's proposed de-calendaring feels like a crossroads for the preservation movement. Just as New Yorkers are gearing up to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the New York City Landmarks Law with a series of related events across the city (see pages 4 and 5), many wonder if we are witnessing its enfeeblement under powerful pressures from City Hall and

influential special interest groups. In this climate of uncertainty, groups like the VSNY—and your membership and active involvement—are as relevant today as they have been at any time since our founding in 1966.

So while you will still find plenty to read about the “joys and benefits” of VSNY membership in these pages, the emphasis on our purpose and responsibilities has come more to the fore. Breaking news demanded a quick pivot, but this issue, and our organization, are the stronger for it. *Our changing city means that membership and preservation advocacy are more important than ever before, and growing and expanding our base is increasingly critical.* In this issue we show you some great ways to give and join in, and when you've finished with your copy, share it with a friend. Meanwhile, the door is always open for your thoughts and insights at info@vicsocny.org. After all, you are one of us. You are a member.

A rare image: VSNY co-founder

Margot Gayle may have been the only person to capture the significance of the moment when she snapped this picture of Mayor Robert F. Wagner signing legislation that created the New York City Landmarks Law and mandated the creation of the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, April 19, 1965.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARGOT GAYLE

Embellishments

Embellishments is a long-running newsletter feature in which we explore places and things related to VSNY programming. This time we focus on the Neustadt Collection of Tiffany Glass, host of a special behind-the-scenes tour for VSNY Patrons.

The Neustadt Collection is an independent nonprofit collection based in Queens, renowned for its collection of Tiffany lamps and windows, and its vast stores of the original flat and pressed glass used by the Tiffany Studios. Collection highlights include iconic designs such as the beloved *Dragonfly* and *Wisteria* lamps and rare examples, like the *Pond Lily Globe*, made as special commissions. Since 1995 the Neustadt has partnered with the Queens Museum to exhibit its collection in a permanent Tiffany gallery and provide educational programming for all ages. This partnership has special significance because Tiffany's glass furnaces, metal foundry and workshops were located in Corona, Queens, less than two miles from the Museum.

The VSNY Patron tour focused on the Neustadt's one-of-a-kind archive of some 275,000 pieces of glass in every imaginable color and texture. Salvaged when Tiffany Studios closed in the late 1930s, this collection provides important insights into the history of the American stained glass movement. VSNY Patrons enjoyed special access to the Neustadt's storage facility and conservation studio, which are not open to the public, where Director/Curator Lindsey Parrott highlighted some of the special types of glass used by the Tiffany Studios. Conservator Susan Tomlin described the labor-intensive process of making a leaded-glass shade and discussed various conservation projects.

Patron Membership

"It's really a great value," says Sara Durkacs, chair of the VSNY membership committee. "It allows VSNY members to give generously to support work they believe in, and receive some very special benefits in return. In 2014, our Patrons not only enjoyed a free private tour of the Neustadt Collection, they received passes and a guided visit to the International Fine Art and Antiques Fair at the Park Avenue Armory—in addition to the tour discounts, free lectures and receptions, VMails and newsletters they receive as members." Right now, Sara's committee is planning a special visit to the Virginia Graham Fair Vanderbilt house on East 93rd Street, the home of antiques dealer, Carlton Hobbs. As new opportunities arise, VSNY Patrons and members at higher levels will have advance access through priority reservations as part of their membership. For more information, see page 7 and visit vicsozny.org.



(CLOCKWISE FROM TOP) Educational model showing the step-by-step process of making a leaded-glass shade, created by Susan Tomlin, conservator for the Neustadt Collection; Original pressed-glass "jewels" used by the Tiffany Studios (Courtesy of the Neustadt Collection); Joe Russiello admires a shard of opalescent glass; *Pond Lily* library lamp by Tiffany Studios, c. 1905 (Courtesy of the Neustadt Collection); Neustadt Collection director/curator Lindsey Parrott shows the group a striking piece of Tiffany glass.

UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, ALL PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES RUSSIELLO

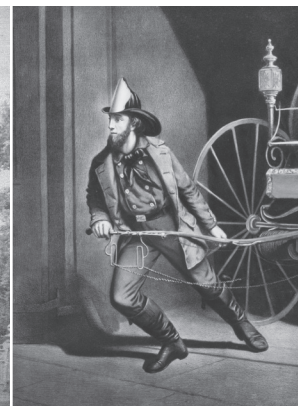
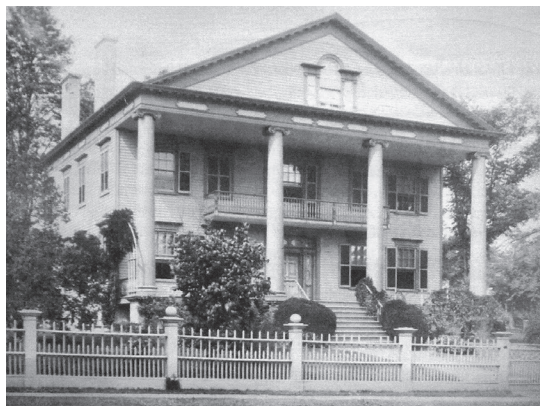


(CLOCKWISE FROM TOP) Detail of a Tiffany Studios *Angel* window on the conservation bench; The treasure trove of opalescent flat glass used by the Tiffany Studios, including rare uncut sheets of glass (Courtesy of the Neustadt Collection); Taking a closer look at the interior of a Tiffany Studios *Dragonfly* shade; *Dragonfly* shade awaiting conservation; *Shade Garden: Floral Lamps* from Tiffany Studios in the Neustadt Gallery at the Queens Museum (Courtesy of the Neustadt Collection).

Corrections

We apologize for the following errors and oversights in our Fall 2014 issue. On the front page, a description of the N-YHS exhibition *The Armory Show at 100* omitted the name of its co-curator, Kimberly Orcutt. On page 4, the name of the Green-Wood Cemetery's not-for-profit funding association was misstated. It is The Green-Wood Historic Fund, not the Green-Wood Historical Association.

THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY NEW YORK



Lectures

Lectures are held at Dominican Academy, located at 44 East 68th Street between Madison and Park Avenues.

TIME: 6:30 P.M. Admission is free; no reservations are required. Attendees are invited to meet the speakers at our post-lecture receptions.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10 YOUNG SCHOLARS PRESENT THEIR RESEARCH

Two graduate students present their current research on Consuelo Yznaga (an American of Cuban descent who became the Duchess of Manchester) and Tiffany competitor, the Church Glass and Decorating Company of New York. Also, from Chelsea's P.S. 11, a fifth-grade student will speak about the VSNY-sponsored *Hands On History* program for grade-school participants.

TUESDAY, MARCH 10 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Tenzing Chadotsang, a VSNY board member and Deputy Director of Chhaya CDC in Jackson Heights, leads a discussion on the 19th- and 20th-century history of affordable housing with a panel that will include residents of today's affordable housing in New York City.

TUESDAY, APRIL 14 VICTORIAN PARLOR DOMES

Collector John Whitenight, author of *Under Glass: A Victorian Obsession*, illustrates the history of the glass parlor dome, a ubiquitous feature of Victorian-era interiors that preserved and displayed a variety of skillful objects and natural history wonders.

TUESDAY, MAY 12 WITNESSING LIGHT: FREDERIC AND ISABEL CHURCH AT OLANA

The painter Frederic E. Church and his wife Isabel were known as conventional Protestants, but they manifested their spirituality by unconventional means at Olana, their home overlooking the Hudson River. Writer and museum consultant, Karen Zukowski, a former curator of Olana State Historic Site and a board member of The Olana Partnership, will relate how light—from sky-viewing vantage points on the property to reflective surfaces in the house—embodied their religious beliefs.

Our free lectures are made possible with generous support from Lewis I. Haber, who invites his fellow members to "adopt a lecture" starting at \$250. For details, contact membership@vicsocny.org.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5 SPECIAL EVENT: VSA SUMMER SCHOOLS LECTURE

The Victorian Society in America invites you to "Newport-Chicago, Architectural Connections," a lecture by Richard Guy Wilson, director of the VSA Newport Summer School, at 6:00 p.m., Jefferson Market Library, 425 Sixth Avenue. Learn about the VSA Summer Schools in Newport, London and Chicago before the March 1st application deadline.

RSVP BY FEBRUARY 2 TO
VSASUMMERSCHOOLS@GMAIL.COM

Tours

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7 • 11 A.M.
FIRE!

Fighting the many fires in 19th-century New York was left largely to volunteers. At the New York City Fire Museum we will learn how these early brigades evolved into a professional force. Featuring equipment ranging from horse-drawn fire engines to helmets, the museum's collection is housed on two floors of a triple-wide 1904 fire house.

FEES: \$12 FOR VICTORIAN SOCIETY NEW YORK MEMBERS, \$20 FOR NONMEMBERS

TUESDAY, MARCH 3 PATRON TOUR

A rare opportunity to tour the former residence of Virginia Graham Fair Vanderbilt, meticulously restored to its 19th-century opulence by Carlton Hobbs and now home to his eponymous gallery of antiques and fine art.

BY INVITATION ONLY

Landmarks50



The NYC Landmarks50 Alliance was formed to promote projects in celebration of this year's 50th anniversary of the NYC Landmarks Law—and to encourage New Yorkers to "reflect upon and embrace the significance of the role of historic preservation in shaping the City." Upcoming events include the VSNY's March 10 panel on preservation issues in affordable housing and our April 17 tour of Grand Central Terminal, in addition to dozens of others taking place around the city. For more information and listings, visit the NYC Landmarks50 website at nyclandmarks50.org.





FRIDAY, APRIL 17 • 10 A.M.

GRAND CENTRAL: THE SITE THAT SPURRED NEW YORK CITY'S LANDMARKS LAW

Celebrate the 50th anniversary of landmark protection in New York City with a tour of Grand Central Terminal, the icon around which preservationists rallied to gain enactment of legislation signed into law on April 19, 1965. On a three-hour tour we will go behind the scenes, onto catwalks and into the depths of the structure, which opened in 1913. Designed by the firms Reed and Stem and Warren and Wetmore, the terminal remains the nation's busiest railroad station. Landmark designation spared it from being surmounted by a 55-story tower.

FEES: \$25 FOR VICTORIAN SOCIETY NEW YORK MEMBERS, \$50 FOR NONMEMBERS

SATURDAY, APRIL 25 • 8 A.M.

VICTORIAN GARDENS, ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN PHILADELPHIA

Welcome spring's arrival with a trip to Philadelphia, preceded by a tour of Chanticleer, established in 1912 as a country retreat along the Pennsylvania Railroad Main Line by industrialist Adolph Rosengarten. The estate's house and gardens, on the National Register of Historic Places, embody the eclectic spirit of the Victorian era. Next, stop for a taste of historic preservation and revitalization with lunch on your own at the 1892 Reading Terminal Market. The afternoon will feature a guided tour of America's oldest art museum and school, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and its special exhibition, *The Artist's Garden: American Impressionism and the Garden Movement, 1887-1920*.

FEES: \$125 FOR VICTORIAN SOCIETY NEW YORK MEMBERS, \$165 FOR NONMEMBERS

SATURDAY, MAY 16 • 8:45 A.M.

VISITING NEWBURGH'S VICTORIAN NEIGHBORHOODS

With the second largest historic district in New York State, Newburgh retains an enormous number of buildings from the Victorian era. On a walking tour led by the city historian, Mary McTamane, we will see buildings designed by such noted architects as Andrew Jackson Davis and Calvert Vaux. Among the sites to be visited is the 1830 Captain David Crawford House, maintained by the Historical Society of Newburgh Bay and the Highlands, with its wealth of original interior and exterior detail.

FEES: \$135 FOR VICTORIAN SOCIETY NEW YORK MEMBERS, \$175 FOR NONMEMBERS

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF TOUR PARTICIPATION

Meeting places will be provided in the confirmation of registration. Participants in our tours must be in excellent health and be able to participate safely in all activities. The sites we visit may have challenging stairs; if you have any doubt about your ability to participate fully because of health conditions or disabilities, please contact events@vicsozny.org or call 212-886-3742. The Victorian Society New York reserves the right to decline to accept or to refuse to retain any person as a member of its tours at any time.

Chanticleer, the former Rosengarten estate, built in 1913, Wayne, Pennsylvania. Photograph by Chunying Ling

An English glass parlor dome protects an elaborate floral bouquet made from seashells, c. 1835. Photograph by the Vangelli Gallery, London

Early 20th-century view of the 1830 Captain David Crawford House, Newburgh, New York.

Louis Maurer, *The American Fireman*, Currier and Ives, 1858.

The house at Olana State Historic Site, designed from 1870 by Frederic Church and Calvert Vaux. Photograph by Rolf Müller via Wikimedia Commons

Consuelo, Duchess of Manchester, c. 1890. Bain Collection, US Library of Congress

Grand Central Terminal, c. 1918. Courtesy of the Frances Loeb Library, Harvard University Graduate School of Design

Grants Available



Don't forget the February 14 deadline for applications to the Margot Gayle Fund for the Preservation of Victorian Heritage. Find more details online at vicsozny.org.



Spring 2015

In Case You Missed It

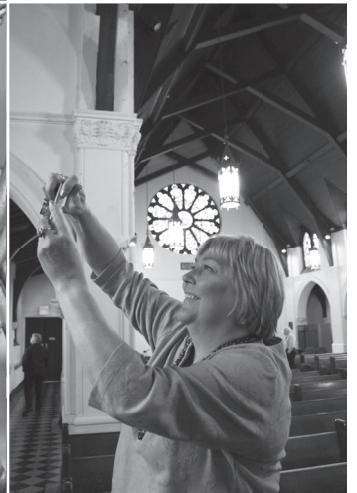
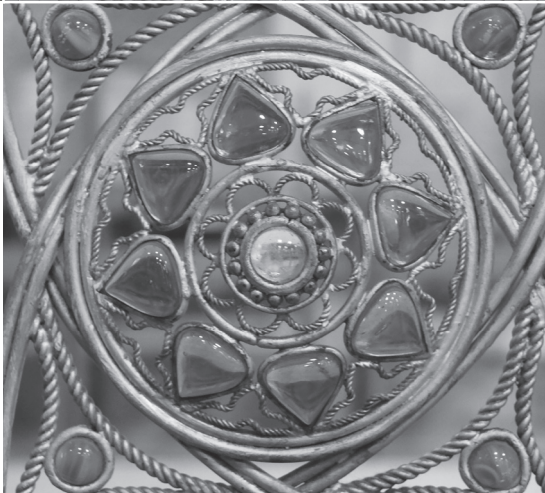
Never been on a VSNY tour? The Victorian Society New York offers an ever-changing array of affordable local and regional excursions. Here we show you what you've been missing with some scenes from terrific events of the past year: visits to Sag Harbor, the Hudson Valley, New Jersey's Plainfield, TriBeCa, Troy in upstate New York and Sunset Park, Brooklyn, among others. See pages 4 and 5 for upcoming offerings and visit vicsocny.org for more details.



(ABOVE FROM TOP) Guide Tony Robins introduced new VSNY members to the cast-iron architecture of TriBeCa; VSNY members enjoy leafy shade and spectacular harbor views from Sunset Park, Brooklyn, during their tour of the neighborhood in June 2014.



(COUNTERCLOCKWISE FROM TOP)
In April, Long Island tour participants visited Sag Harbor's oldest extant church, St. David AME Zion, in Eastville, built in 1839; Cupola details from the 1859-60 Armour-Stiner "Octagon" House in Irvington, New York, a stop on the Hudson Valley tour in March 2014. Photograph by Franklin Headley; St. Paul's Episcopal Church, in Troy, New York, features an 1890s interior decorated entirely by Louis Comfort Tiffany. Photograph by Franklin Headley; Elizabeth Broman takes in magnificent stained glass by Keaton, Butler & Baine and Tiffany Studios at the 1892 Grace Episcopal Cathedral, in Plainfield, New Jersey, May 2014.



UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, ALL PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES RUSSIELLO



THE
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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 USA, 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.

Acknowledgments

The Victorian Society New York gratefully acknowledges the generous support of members, individuals, firms and sponsors that helps further the Chapter's mission to preserve, protect and promote our Victorian heritage.

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SPECIAL THANKS

The VSNY gratefully acknowledges the staff at McVicker & Higginbotham, specialists in not-for-profit and cultural sector printings and mailings, for their superb work and generosity in supporting this issue of *Panorama*.

Lewis I. Haber
Carol Gayle
Gretchen Gayle Ellsworth
Christopher Forbes
Deborah Sher

NEW WAYS TO HELP

New Membership Levels and the Daniel D. Badger Circle

Thanks to the hardworking membership committee, a lot of energy has gone into cultivating the VSNY member experience in recent years. Online renewals and tour registration are just two of the many improvements. If you renewed this fall, you may have also noticed changes to our membership levels—and that your membership at any level brings more opportunities than ever: new events, partnerships with other groups for discounts to exhibitions and lectures, *VMail* alerts to late-breaking opportunities and more. In 2014, for instance, in addition to our regular calendar of tours and lectures, the VSNY held its second annual Margot Gayle Fund Lecture and it offered a free TriBeCa walking tour for new members, to name just two special extras.

Now, several fresh membership categories let you support your Chapter your way. Two new levels, Sustainer and President's Circle, offer all the benefits of Patron membership, plus the gift of a book by one of our lecturers for Sustainers, and a special event with the VSNY president for members of the President's Circle.

Also new is the Badger Circle. Named for Daniel D. Badger (1806-1884), whose Architectural Iron Works in New York City was a leading fabricator of cast-iron architecture in the U.S., the Badger Circle is a group of organizations and firms that make a generous commitment to support the activities of the VSNY. Available at the Patron, Sustainer and President's Circle levels, Badger Circle memberships bring special recognition in *Panorama*, on the Chapter's website and at VSNY events, and offer named sponsorships in *VMail*, the VSNY's e-newsletter, in addition to other benefits. For more information, contact membership@vicsocny.org.

Join the VICTORIAN SOCIETY NEW YORK today!

☐ \$40 INDIVIDUAL*

*Seniors and full-time students receive a \$10 discount at this level. Please provide a copy of your valid ID.

☐ \$60 DUAL*

*Seniors receive a \$10 discount at this level.

☐ \$75 CONTRIBUTOR

☐ \$150 PATRON

☐ \$250 SUSTAINER

☐ \$500 PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE

Please visit www.vicsocny.org for a complete list of benefits and to learn about Daniel D. Badger Circle memberships.

Additional Special Contribution(s):

VSA SUMMER SCHOOL Scholarships \$ _____ MARGOT GAYLE FUND \$ _____

Please make checks payable to: Metropolitan Chapter, VSA
Mail this form with check to: VSNY, 232 East 11th Street, New York, NY 10003

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MEMBER PROFILE

John Antonides

In keeping with the theme of this issue, we knew that we wanted to profile a VSNY member—but who? Then we received a copy of John Antonides's letter to Mayor de Blasio protesting the mass "de-calendaring" vote at the Landmarks Preservation Commission and we knew he was a perfect choice. John's interesting work and life, and his powerful, informed message about the importance of the landmarks process, moved us all.

John Antonides is a longtime editor at the Brooklyn Museum, contributing to dozens of publications over thirty years. One of them, the 1990 book *Dutch by Design*, involved finding imagery of early Dutch buildings still standing in New York City. During the course of his research, John learned of the Hubbard House, a dilapidated wooden home in Gravesend, Brooklyn, and was inspired to begin the long process of seeking landmark designation for this rare example of a Dutch-American building on its original site. In 1999, he bought the house, which he has been repairing and restoring since. Built on farm-

land for Nelly Johnson Hubbard, a descendant of a Dutch family that had been in Gravesend since the 17th century, the original wing of the house has "Dutch Colonial" features but probably dates to the 1830s, based on evidence of machine-cut nails and sawn timber. Original elements include much of the exterior clapboarding and molded spring eaves, a fireplace and wide-board pine floors.

In 2009, Hubbard House received landmark designation from the LPC, almost 20 years after John began exploring that possibility. His experience is powerful testimony for the value of letting the landmarks process take its course:

*Dear Mayor de Blasio,
Please use your offices to stop the Landmarks Commission's proposed issuing of "no action" letters for buildings and sites that are "inactive" and have been calendared for five years or longer. My own landmark property, the circa 1830 Hubbard House in Gravesend, Brooklyn, is a textbook example of why this is a bad idea. The Commission first had a hearing on this house in October 1997. Despite strong public support for landmarking, the then-owner was opposed to designation, and so the Commission took no action on the matter: the house remained "calendared." Eventually, I bought the house, and, with the help of a low-interest construction loan from the New York Landmarks Conservancy, completely renovated it. In January 2009, with the Conservancy and myself both joining the many voices urging designation, the Commission voted to landmark the property. Had the house been "de-calendared"—had the Commission not let it settle into a sort of landmark limbo until an owner came along who supported its*

designation—it wouldn't be standing today. It can take time for forces to coalesce around the saving of historic buildings in New York, and up to now the Landmarks Commission has followed a policy of deliberation that, although it can sometimes seem too cautious to historic preservationists, has often served the cause of preservation well.

Read John's account of his journey with the Hubbard House in "My Old House" on the Brooklyn Museum's blog *BKM Tech*. For more information on the Hubbard House and Gravesend, see the LPC's report at nyc.gov/html/lpc/downloads/pdf/reports/HubbardHsedesigrep.pdf.

Milestones

In other Landmarks Preservation Commission news, our good friend, longtime VSNY supporter and former board member, Jay Shockley, retired in December from his position as senior researcher at the LPC after more than 35 years with the agency. During this time, Jay authored well over 110 of the excellent designation reports the LPC research staff is known for, establishing definitive accounts of many of New York City's most significant places. When we spoke to him recently about his retirement plans, he reassured us that, along with some well-deserved relaxation, he has several years' worth of architecture and preservation research projects planned. A highlight: cataloging an unpublished collection of original slides shot by VSNY co-founder Margot Gayle. Congratulations, Jay, on a full career of meaningful work and the start of a bright new chapter!



The Hubbard House, c. 1945. Curved "spring eaves" reflect an earlier style, but construction details date it to the 1830s. From Maud Dilliard, *Old Dutch Houses of Brooklyn*

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