

Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony

Dazzling and varied stained-glass windows at the Church of the Incarnation, on lower Madison Avenue, provided the backdrop for the 51st Annual Business Meeting and Awards Ceremony of the Victorian Society New York on May 30, 2018. The church's windows were designed by luminary artists including John La Farge, Henry Holiday, Tiffany Studios, William Morris & Company, Clayton & Bell, Guthrie & Davis, Cottin & Company, and Heaton, Butler & Bayne. Rev. J. Douglas Ousley, the rector, welcomed the annual meeting's return to his church after over a decade. VSNY's president and treasurer gave reports and the organization elected directors, handed out awards and grants, and hosted a lively reception.

Outgoing Chapter President Hilda Regier recounted the history of the Society and the Chapter since incorporation in 1966 and 1970, respectively, as well as the year's activities. In fall 2017 through spring 2018, VSNY published informative newsletters, and it organized eight scholarly lectures with receptions, free to the

general public (speaker, venue, and catering costs total \$650 per lecture); walking tours; bus tours to Newark, Trenton, Bethlehem, and Oyster Bay; brunch at the Oscar Wilde Bar; a lecture at the landmark Estonia House (1899, Thomas A. Gray) on terra cotta by Susan Tunick, in support of the Margot Gayle Fund; and a tour of a private Aesthetic Movement collection graciously hosted by Eric Holzenberg and Henry Raine at their Bronx home.

The president praised the Chapter's energetic preservation efforts led by Preservation Committee co-chairs George Calderaro and Russell Needham. The VSNY collaborated with other preservation groups to achieve an individual landmark designation for **827-831 Broadway**, twin Civil War-era "marble palaces" designed by Griffith Thomas and built in 1866-1867 for tobacco heir Pierre Lorillard III. The partly cast-iron buildings are also significant for their associations with the Abstract Expressionist artists Willem de Kooning, Elaine de Kooning, Paul Jenkins,

Larry Poons, Jules Olitski, and Herbert Ferber, and curator William S. Rubin. These influential figures lived and worked there during the pivotal post-World War II era, as New York City became the center of the art world. Following the site's designation, VSNY and other groups testified at hearings and were successful in reducing the scale of an approved rooftop tower development.

Other collaborative efforts included a call for creating a historic district protecting

At VSNY's annual meeting, board leaders, members, honorees, and guests enjoyed spring light through stained-glass windows at the Church of the Incarnation.
(photo by James Russiello)





FROM LEFT: Andrew Dolkart, Amanda Davis, Jay Shockley, and Ken Lustbader, who lectured on New York's LGBT historic sites; Kathleen Morris describing Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema's musical instruments, furniture, and artworks at Church of the Holy Trinity, Yorkville; attendees at a tour of Aesthetic Movement objects and books at the home of Eric Holzenberg and Henry Raine (photos: James Russiello)

Tin Pan Alley on West 28TH Street, Manhattan. In October 2017, VSNY supported a "Save Tin Pan Alley Day," which featured walking tours, musical performances, and a display of sheet music—the event was covered by local media. The VSNY appealed to the Parks Department to properly maintain an individual landmark Staten Island house that landscape architect **Frederick Law Olmsted** purchased in 1847 and lived in for the next 11 years. The house has been allowed to become derelict since the Parks Department purchased it in 2006. VSNY spearheaded a request for evaluation for individual landmark designation for **161 Sixth Avenue**, Manhattan, a four-story block-wide Beaux Arts Classical style school, built in 1905

and designed by C.B.J. Snyder, the legendary superintendent of buildings in NYC from 1891-1922. The LPC denied the request, but the Chapter has vowed to revisit the issue and monitor the building, which is occupied by two public schools. Similar efforts to get the **Kaskel & Kaskel Building** (1903, Charles L. Berg) at 316 Fifth Avenue designated were not successful, and it was demolished to make way for a forty-story condominium tower.

Outgoing Treasurer Frampton Tolbert reported that the Chapter had ended 2017 in the red, but that was due to many donations being received after the first of the year. The largest sources of income were membership dues and tours fees, followed by the amount

raised by the Margot Gayle Fund Program. Major expenses were for the annual meeting, tours, and Victorian Summer School Scholarship Grants. The VSNY provides the second largest amount of funds for these scholarships after the Alumni Association, which is also considered a chapter of the national VSA.

The advertised election of directors and officers was unanimously approved and included **Vivian Davis, Alice Dickinson, Afsy Kafei, David Mulkins, Caroline O'Connell, Cameron Robertson, and Nicole Smith** as new directors, and the re-election of **Kathleen Bennett, Franklin Headley, John Graham** (corresponding secretary), **Jessica Baldwin** (president), and **Alexis Mucha** (treasurer).

AWARDS

An exhibition award went to **The New-York Historical Society** for *Hotbed*, which featured immersive installations and more than 100 artifacts and images that explored the vibrant political and bohemian artistic scene of early-20TH-century Greenwich Village. Joanna Scutts, one of the N-YHS curators, along with art director Kira Hwang and exhibition designer Melinda Zoephel, accepted the award. Declan Kiely, now director of special collections and exhibitions at the New York Public Library, accepted an exhibition award on behalf of his previous employer, **The Morgan Library & Museum**, for *Henry James and American Painting*, for which he served as co-curator with the novelist Colm Tóibín. The exhibition brought together paintings, sculpture and writings by James and his contemporaries, providing a rich exploration of the connections between the visual arts and literature. Eric Holzenberg, the director of **The Grolier Club**, accepted the Museum Catalogue Award for a show that starred his own stunning collection of Aesthetic Movement

material, *For Art's Sake: The Aesthetic Movement in Print & Beyond*.

The New Media Award went to frequent Chapter award-winner **Bard Graduate Center: Decorative Arts, Design History, Material Culture**, in recognition of the digitalization of its spring 2017 Focus Project, *New York Crystal Palace 1853*. Rev. Thomas Ahern, the former pastor of **Saint Augustine RC Church, Park Slope**, and church board member William A. Cahill accepted the Grassroots Award for roof and associated restoration work at the Parfitt Brothers-designed transitional English-Gothic style 1888 church, which has recently been designated an individual landmark.

Outgoing Awards Committee Chair Alta Indelman presented two Preservation/Restoration Awards. Bruce Nelligan of **Nelligan White Architects** accepted a prize for work at **P.S. 158 Manhattan**, also known as the **Bayard Taylor School**. The Beaux Arts style school building in Yorkville was designed in 1897 with a 1905 addition by C.B.J.

Snyder. VSNY is campaigning to protect Snyder schools throughout the city, and the organization heartily applauds efforts to preserve, restore and adaptively reuse these beautiful buildings, which were built in an era of government commitment to enabling design for educational facilities. Maria Malpica of **United American Land LLC** and architect **Page Ayres Cowley** accepted an award for extensive rehabilitation at **321 and 323 Canal Street**, two 1821 diminutive houses with storefronts added in the mid-19th century. The American painter and inventor Samuel F.B. Morse lived at 321 Canal Street in 1828. In accepting the award, Ms. Cowley especially thanked board member John Graham for his lead efforts with this project before he retired from the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Timothy Bent, senior editor at Oxford University Press, accepted the Book Award on behalf of author **Mike Wallace** for *Greater Gotham, A History of New York City from 1898 to 1919*, which is the sequel to the Pulitzer Prize

Paul Manafort's Brownstone

winning *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898*. Wallace's sequel focuses on the period of growth and dramatic change spanning from the city's municipal consolidation through just after World War I. The volume's range of topics includes muckrakers, ethnically diverse radicals, Jim Crow segregated housing, skyscrapers, garbage, child labor, department stores, prostitution, birth control, feminists, and Tin Pan Alley.

Indelman, who is also outgoing chair of the Margot Gayle Fund Grant, presented three awards. Victoria Munro, executive director of the **Alice Austen House**, accepted a \$500 grant for a digital screen that will display the Staten Island house museum's letter collection. The award represents continuity in VSNY's history; starting in the 1960s, Margot Gayle herself had helped save the Alice Austen House—parts of which date to the 17th century—from demolition.

Helen Day and Santiago Preciado from **The Friends of Maple Grove Cemetery** accepted a \$500 grant for costumes, props, and storage racks. The Friends host public events throughout the year at the cemetery, which was established in 1875 in Kew Gardens, Queens. Most of the programs are free, and many focus on the culture and music of the Victorian period. Scores of Victorian costumes, some of them made by Friends members, enhance the programs and bring history to life.

Jean Standish from the **Bowery Alliance of Neighbors** accepted a \$1,000 grant to fund translation costs of Chinese texts for the bilingual book version of *Windows on the Bowery*. Since the program's unveiling in 2016, the 64 *Windows on the Bowery* historic signage posters have been widely praised for their dynamic texts, images and design. Most of the posters focus on Victorian-era life on the Bowery and have been displayed in street level windows. The project represents an unprecedented act of rediscovery and rehabilitation for the city's oldest thoroughfare. Development has been obliterating the Bowery's historic streetscape at a ferocious pace, so it is urgent to raise awareness of the area's historical, cultural, and architectural significance. The bilingual English-Chinese book about the *Windows on the Bowery* posters will be available to historians, the media, the general public, libraries, and archives worldwide. The Chinese translation will foster outreach to the large community of Asian immigrants and visitors who live, work, or shop on the Bowery and in the surrounding neighborhood.

James Russiello

On a leafy side street in the Carroll Gardens section of Brooklyn, a handsome yet unpretentious mid-block brownstone keeps drawing crowds. The circa-1860s Italianate row house, at 377 Union Street, between Smith and Hoyt, has belonged to the disgraced political operative Paul Manafort. Over the last 150 years, the building, along with its nearly identical neighbor at 375 Union Street, has attracted curiosity seekers before while engulfed in public scandal.

Manafort bought the property in 2012, for about \$3 million, and started investing heavily in renovations and additions—the intended inhabitants were his daughter Jessica and her husband, Jeffrey Yohai (the couple has since divorced). The interior had retained creamy marble mantles, parquet floors and etched glass pocket doors, and it was also equipped with a Jacuzzi. Financial shenanigans enabled Manafort to hang onto this patch of Brooklyn while falling millions of dollars into debt. (Reporters and researchers for publications and blogs including the *New York Times*, 377union.com and pardonmeforasking.blogspot.com have investigated the murky paperwork trail of his various real estate deals.)

In the last year or so, as Manafort's crimes have been exposed, pranksters and artists have left short-lived marks on the site. A plaque was hung on the fence, declaring the brownstone a city landmark, "The House That Brought Down A President." A handmade poster with a Russian flag was plastered on the fence, reading "Paul Manafort Lives Here!!" in colorful lettering meant to look vaguely Cyrillic. A Halloween pumpkin, carved with an outline of Robert Mueller's face, was displayed on the sidewalk. A box labeled "American Fascism," which contained a pin emblazoned "God Bless America," was buried on the lawn—when the box was discovered, the police ended up cordoning off the area for an afternoon, to make sure the prank was not a bomb.

Past occupants of the house had endured their own shares of troubles. In 1865, one William Murphy living there ran ads forbidding anyone from "harboring or in any manner trusting" his runaway wife Mary. He warned that he would "pay no debts contracted by her," since she "has left my bed and board without cause." In 1924, the brownstone housed a young chiropractor calling herself Dr. Julia Ruccione. After she handed out a prescription for pleurisy medication to an undercover policewoman, Ruccione was

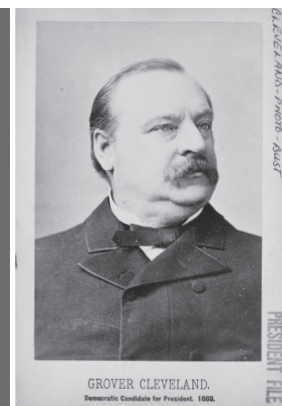
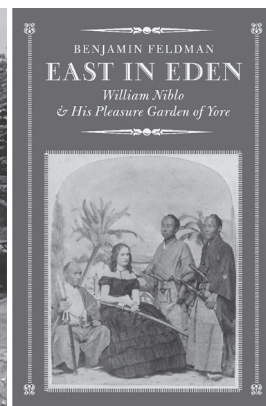
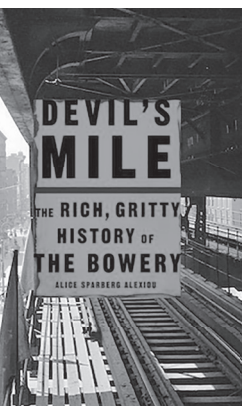


Paul Manafort's padlocked brownstone, 377 Union Street, Brooklyn (photo by Eve M. Kahn)

arrested for falsely claiming to be a physician. "Woman Held as Quack," the newspaper headlines crowed. Ruccione paid a \$500 fine and left town to practice chiropractic elsewhere, and the "newly decorated" house was soon advertised for sale "at a sacrifice."

The block's most notorious pre-Manafort resident, however, was Marvin T. Rodman, who moved into 375 Union around 1870. He was an executive at the Brooklyn Trust Company bank as well as a government official. In 1873, Rodman was arrested for helping crooked Brooklyn politicians pocket thousands of dollars each time they transferred funds from the government's revenue coffers into the city's Brooklyn Trust bank account. When the scandal broke, reporters and investigators thronged Rodman's home and interviewed him and his family and neighbors. *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* reported on August 29, 1873, that no one could quite pinpoint "what became of the money" that Rodman had stolen. He had no obvious vices or expensive habits; the brownstone's contents were deemed "elegant but not extravagant." Rodman claimed that his Brooklyn Trust actions were "simply clerical," that he was just following orders. He testified against his superiors in exchange for immunity, and he soon put his "newly and nicely furnished" house on the market. He eventually fled with his family to Milan, Ohio, where he seems to have attracted little attention.

A recent visit to Union Street revealed Manafort's brownstone empty behind its



LECTURES

The Victorian Society New York sponsors a series of free lectures at the Bard Graduate Center: Decorative Arts, Design History, Material Culture, at 38 West 86th Street, between Central Park West and Columbus Avenue in Manhattan. No reservations are required for the events, which begin at 6:45 p.m. Pre-lecture receptions start at 6 p.m.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

EAST IN EDEN: WILLIAM NIBLO

AND HIS PLEASURE GARDEN OF YORE

William Niblo, an Irish immigrant to New York City at the end of the 18th century, rose from his initial position in the hostelry and tavern business in Lower Manhattan to found an immensely popular “coffee house.” He then opened an enormous pleasure garden, in the London tradition, at the northern limits of the populated city in 1828. It initially served mostly as an outdoor place of leisurely entertainment and recreation for middle class New Yorkers, who eschewed the city’s few crowded and noisy public parks. Niblo’s Garden expanded and improved many times over its 66-year existence, always under the name of its founder. Niblo’s name and good will were known all over the United States, and his stages were sought after by performers of every ilk for opera, circus acrobatics, equestrian displays, and grand private celebrations. The story of this devout Episcopalian’s rise in New York through the 19th century, with his wife Martha King Niblo at his side, forms a remarkable chapter in the story of public, genteel, urban entertainment in Victorian times. The lecturer, Benjamin Feldman, is the author of *East in Eden: William Niblo and His Pleasure Garden of Yore* (published by the Green-Wood Historic Fund in association with New York Wanderer Press, 2014).

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4

THE SECRET SURGERY ON GROVER CLEVELAND: CANCER AND POLITICS IN THE GILDED AGE

On July 1, 1893, President Grover Cleveland vanished. He boarded a friend’s yacht, sailed into the calm blue waters of Long Island Sound, and disappeared. He would not be heard from again for five days. What happened during those five days, and in the days and weeks that followed, was so incredible that, even when the truth was finally revealed, many Americans simply would not believe

it. The lecturer, Matthew Algeo, is the author of *The President Is a Sick Man: Wherein the Supposedly Virtuous Grover Cleveland Survives a Secret Surgery at Sea and Vilifies the Courageous Newspaperman Who Dared Expose the Truth* (Chicago Review Press, 2011). Algeo will discuss an extraordinary but almost unknown chapter in American history: Grover Cleveland’s secret cancer surgery and the brazen political cover-up that followed.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6

TREADING THE BORDERS: IMMIGRATION AND THE VICTORIAN STAGE

‘Treading the boards’ is a colloquial theatrical expression that refers to the wooden planks of the stage upon which performers ply their trade. Dr. Matthew Wittmann, the curator of the Harvard Theatre Collection at Houghton Library, will use the turn of that phrase to highlight a simple but significant point—much of the richness and vitality of the performing arts in America derives from creative talent originating elsewhere. This was particularly true in the 19th century, as successively larger waves of immigrants evoked contradictory sentiments even as they continually reshaped American society. This unsettled dynamic was reflected on the stage as the British performers and conventions that dominated the early history of the American theater gave way to a broader cast of characters and influences. From Irish comedians to Italian dancers and even Chinese giants, the Victorian stage featured a fascinating mix of performers who invariably served to enrich American culture. Dr. Wittmann’s presentation draws upon materials in the Harvard Theatre Collection to tell the stories of some of the more noteworthy immigrant actors, artists, and entertainers who came to the United States from around the globe. Dr. Wittmann was previously a curator at the American Numismatic Society and a curatorial fellow at the Bard Graduate Center, where he curated the exhibition *Circus and the City* and co-edited the volume *The American Circus*.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6

FREAK SHOWS, DIME MUSEUMS, AND ANTHONY COMSTOCK: THE VICTORIAN AGE ALONG THE BOWERY

Victorian times were all about the suppression of anything salacious, as Alice Sparberg Alexiou, author of the new book, *Devil’s Mile: The Rich,*

Gritty History of the Bowery (St. Martin’s Press), will explain. The era’s prudery just increased the urge to experience sex and weirdness—all commodities then were readily available on the Bowery. This is where the action was, in the form of freak shows, minstrel shows, gay bars (“fairy resorts”), concert saloons with back rooms devoted to fight contests and the waitresses doubling as prostitutes, anatomical museums that featured human fetuses and examples of diseased human body parts pickled in formaldehyde, scams offering cures for syphilis (which was then untreatable). The Bowery was at its most spirited on Saturday nights, when uptown swells headed there for a night of slumming. But watch out, because you might get your drink drugged (a “mickey finn”), your pocket picked. Or even murdered.

CO-SPONSORED LECTURE WITH ROYAL OAK FOUNDATION:

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11, 6:15 PM

THE GENERAL SOCIETY LIBRARY, 20 WEST 44TH STREET, MANHATTAN

FROM DICKENS TO DOWNTON: VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN FOOD

The lecture will offer a journey through British food and dining traditions from the mid-19th century through the early 20th century. Beginning with a look at food references in the work of Charles Dickens, which helped establish some of Britain’s most cherished culinary traditions, the talk will continue to explore the world of great town and country houses known to lovers of *Downton Abbey* and *Upstairs Downstairs*. This talk will take a look at dining tables both upstairs and downstairs, as well as inside and outside the house, including properties run by Britain’s National Trust such as Petworth House and Standen House. Carl Raymond, food historian, writer, and lecturer, will give an illustrated tour of some of the classic dishes of the Victorian and Edwardian periods. He will also discuss their background and how they were prepared and served. He will explain cultural and social trends and influences that affected eating and entertaining, from the Industrial Revolution to the beginning of World War I. For tickets: royal-oak.org (\$30 Royal Oak and Victorian Society members; \$40 non-members)



LEFT TO RIGHT: Alice Sparberg Alexiou's new book on the Bowery's bountiful 19th-century opportunities to sin; the newly restored 1884 home in East Hampton of the artists Thomas Moran and Mary Nimmo Moran (photo: Courtesy of the East Hampton Historical Society); Benjamin Feldman's study of the pioneering showman William Niblo (image: Courtesy of The Collection of Tom Burnett); President Grover Cleveland, who managed to conceal major illness (photo: Library of Congress); the Italian-born ballet dancer Maria Bonfanti (1845-1921), performing around 1866 in a musical romantic comedy, *The Black Crook*

TOURS

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 8 AM

GLIMPSES OF THE HISTORIC HAMPTONS

A chartered bus will take us to a private home in Southampton. It boasts one of the best collections of 19th-century Aesthetic Movement paintings, ceramics and furnishings in the area and is rarely open to the public. From there we go to East Hampton for lunch. In the afternoon, we will have a guided tour of the Thomas and Mary Nimmo Moran Studio, which opened to the public on July 3 after a five-year, \$4.5-million restoration. The first artists' studio in East Hampton, it was built in 1884 for Thomas Moran (1837-1926) and Mary Nimmo Moran (1842-1899). He is renowned for his paintings of the American West including those of the Grand Canyon, Yosemite, and Yellowstone. She was a landscape artist and etcher. Works by both are displayed in the studio along with some original furnishings. In the afternoon we will also visit the Home Sweet Home Museum. This Colonial era house has been maintained as a shrine to John Howard Payne (1791-1852) since 1927. An actor, playwright and dramatist, Payne wrote the lyrics for the song that was a 19th-century favorite for an 1823 opera, *Clari*.

FEES: \$150 FOR VICTORIAN SOCIETY NEW YORK MEMBERS, \$180 FOR NONMEMBERS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27, 10:45 AM.

COMFORTABLY EXPLORE
WOODLAWN CEMETERY

Join us for a trolley tour of The Woodlawn Cemetery, a 400-acre destination in the northern part of the Bronx. Designed by James C. Sidney in the rural style on rolling hills, the nonsectarian cemetery opened in 1863. The ceremonial burial there of Admiral David Farragut in 1870 spurred interest in the cemetery, and it became the final resting place of many well-known figures. Herman Melville, Thomas Nast, Nelly Bly and F. W. Woolworth are among those interred there. It has one of the most impressive collections of mausoleums in New York, perhaps in the nation. Designers of its monuments include James Renwick, Stanford White, John Russell Pope, Carrère and Hastings, Cass Gilbert, Louis Comfort Tiffany and John La Farge. On our tour we will see the graves of entrepreneurs and wealthy socialites of the Victorian era. A highlight of the tour will be a chance to enter the Belmont Mausoleum where Alva Vanderbilt Belmont and her husband Oliver, a one-term congressman, are entombed. Designed by Richard Morris Hunt, its exterior is a replica of the Chapel of Saint-Hubert at Chateau d'Amboise in France. The cemetery was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2011.

FEES: \$30 FOR VICTORIAN SOCIETY NEW YORK MEMBERS, \$40 FOR NONMEMBERS

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1

SAVE THE DATE FOR HOLIDAY TOUR,
DETAILS TO BE ANNOUNCED SOON



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.

MARGOT GAYLE FUND DEADLINE

Margot Gayle Fund grant applications are due on Valentine's Day, February 14, 2019.

A grant application form can be found on The Victorian Society New York website (vicsocny.org). The Margot Gayle Fund provides monetary grants for preservation or conservation of Victorian era material culture.

New Board Members Elected



Vivian Davis

VIVIAN DAVIS has been in the museum field for over ten years, working as an interpreter for the National Park Service at Federal Hall National Memorial in Manhattan and Van Cortlandt House Museum in The Bronx. She joined The Bronx County Historical Society as education coordinator in 2016, focusing on creating programs for students of all ages. She has also been heavily involved with the World War I and Women's Suffrage centennials' programming in New York and New Jersey. She has given multiple lectures on the Preparedness Movement of 1915-1917, Camp Hewitt's Emergency Service Corps of 1916, and Van Cortlandt Park during World War I. She has a bachelor's degree in American studies from Ramapo College in Mahwah, N.J., and a teacher's certification in social studies from William Paterson University in Wayne, N.J. She is currently pursuing her master's degree in American history at Adams State University, focusing on the National Guard mobilization camp at Van Cortlandt Park during World War I. Vivian joined the Victorian Society New York's board due to her strong interest in immigration and architecture of the period and is looking forward to bringing more attention to The Bronx's rich Victorian history. She is an avid historical reenactor whose passion is to bring history to life through interpretation and material culture. Other hobbies include collecting vintage clothing and backpacking, she reports, "but not backpacking while wearing vintage clothing!"



Alice Dickinson

ALICE DICKINSON is curator of collections at the New York Yacht Club (NYYC), where she oversees the fine and decorative arts housed within the organization's midtown Manhattan clubhouse (designed by Warren & Wetmore, 1901) and Newport, R.I., house (Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson, 1906). Before coming to New York, Alice was the decorative arts fellow at The Preservation Society of Newport County, where she researched and wrote about the collection of Hunter House (ca. 1748). She previously worked at the New Orleans Museum of Art, where her experience included the role of curator for *MASS PRODUCED: Technology in Nineteenth-Century English Design*. Her current project focuses on a group of magnificent silver trophies given by Ogden Goelet for NYYC races between 1882 and 1897. The exhibition, *Spectacular Silver: Yachting's Goelet Cups*, opens in Newport at the Redwood Library & Athenaeum in June 2019. Alice holds master's degrees from the Winterthur Program in American Material Culture and Tulane University.



Afsy Kafel

AFSY KAFEL is a program associate at World Monuments Fund, working to empower communities through the conservation of cultural heritage. She holds a master of science degree in historic preservation from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, N.Y., and a degree in art history from the University of Central Florida in Orlando. Following college graduation, she spent a year in Paris where she made up her mind that, as she had long suspected, historic preservation was her calling. Once settled in New York, she worked for preservation groups such as Landmark West!, Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, and Art Deco Society as an educator, teaching young minds about the architecture, history, and importance of preservation in New York City.

Afsy is fascinated by the history of immigration of the Victorian era, and how those shifts have shaped our cities' social and cultural senses. She reports that she is "so ecstatic" to join the long-standing Victorian Society New York, and to leave her small mark on a big group. She's looking forward to working again with young minds, teaching about the importance of Victorian-era history and architecture, and never forgetting her most important learning tip, "Always look up!"

Afsy was born in Quito, Ecuador, moved to Florida in the late 1990s, and has resided in New York since 2013. She lives in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, and loves walks around her neighborhood, traveling (whether nearby or far away), reading historic fiction and memoirs, and listening to mystery podcasts.



David Mulkins

DAVID MULKINS is co-founder and president of the Bowery Alliance of Neighbors (boweryalliance.org), which works to preserve, protect, and celebrate the city's oldest street. He taught history (he has a master's degree in the subject from Hunter College) and cinema studies (master's degree, NYU) at the High School of Art and Design for 25 years, and has lived just off the Bowery for 35 years. He has presented films and illustrated lectures at the Tenement Museum, New York Public Library, Cooper Union, Film Forum, Anthology Film Archives, and Bowery Poetry Club. He is project director, editor, and contributing writer for Windows on the Bowery, an historic signage project.

David was born in Norfolk, Virginia. He has been happily married for 17 years to Louise Millmann, an artist and teacher. He loves swimming, bicycling, travel, films, literature, 1920s jazz, and

broccoli rabe with extra garlic. Though he loves Victorian architecture and design, his greatest interest is in race, class, and ethnicity during the era, and how culturally diverse groups interacted and expressed themselves on the street, in politics, and in music and the performing arts.



Caroline O'Connell

CAROLINE O'CONNELL works at Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum as a curatorial assistant. Her work is focused on the 19th century, and she is interested in the history of collecting, trans-Atlantic provenance and patronage, and intersections between English, French and American architecture. At the moment, she is leaping into the 21st century in preparing for an exhibition on contemporary design and its relationship to the natural world opening in 2019. She is originally from Toledo, Ohio, and credits her interest in the Victorian era to the Gilded Age buildings that anchor many a Midwestern city. Caroline holds a master's in "Decorative Arts, Design History and Material Culture" from Bard Graduate Center and a bachelor's degree in art history from Williams College. She is particularly interested in the development of American taste, and her focal points include secular stained glass, silver, the decoration of civic buildings, and collections of drawings and prints. Caroline recently returned from the Attingham Summer School and is slowly readjusting to urban living at home in Brooklyn where she resides with her husband and dog. She is honored to join VSNY's board.



Cameron Robertson

CAMERON ROBERTSON, a planner and historic preservation specialist at AKRE, Inc., received her B.S. in civil engineering from George Washington University and a dual M.S. in urban planning and historic preservation from Columbia University. Originally from Dallas, Texas, Cameron has been living on the East Coast for the past ten years. Before attending Columbia, Cameron worked as a project engineer for the City of Erie, Pennsylvania, and helped to design and implement the city's first dog park. While living in Erie, Cameron discovered her love of history and volunteered at Preservation Erie. The group is dedicated to preserving the natural landscape and built environment that gives north-west Pennsylvania a unique sense of identity and place—including smokestacks, rail lines, and last, but not least, Erie's gorgeous Victorian mansions on West Sixth Street. Cameron was first introduced to the Victorian Society New York while in graduate

school at Columbia, and she loved that the chapter found ways to reach out to the community through free lecture series and by hosting a number of tours throughout the year. Cameron hopes to expand the society's education sector and to help spread knowledge and awareness about New York City and the region's unique architectural history. When Cameron is not at work, you can find her on spontaneous day adventures around the city, cooking TexMex cuisine, reading, or going on long walks in her Brooklyn neighborhood.

NICOLE SMITH was raised by two freelance musicians in the small town of West Milford, N.J. She spent her childhood poring over any books she could get her hands on and assisting her mother with planning travel itineraries to visit her father, who was often abroad touring with The Rolling Stones. Her interest in art and history was largely birthed out of those exotic international rock 'n' roll adventures, and she quickly became a self-described "humanities junkie" with "an insatiable hunger to always keep traveling and learning."

She earned her undergraduate degree in history at the University of Scranton, with minors in



Nicole Smith

art history and philosophy. Her first job in the arts was at Ringwood Manor, the summer home of the Cooper-Hewitt family, in Ringwood State Park, N.J. This job introduced her to the history of 19th-century America, as well as the art of studying lives and stories through researching objects. She later worked at the Owens-Thomas House in Savannah, Georgia, and the Grover Cleveland Birthplace in Caldwell, N.J.

She earned a master's degree at Christie's Education, in their "Art and the Art Market: Modern and Contemporary Art" program. Her thesis focused on the portrayal of women by the famed American illustrator Charles Dana Gibson. Her post-graduate work has included working as a cataloger in the 20th-Century and Contemporary Art department at Phillips auction house and as a researcher at the Noguchi Museum for the Isamu Noguchi Catalogue Raisonné. She is currently a generalist appraiser focusing on fine art at Gurr Johns, Inc., where she completes appraisals for estate tax, financial planning, insurance, damage/loss, and donation purposes.

She joined the Victorian Society New York's board out of her fascination with the Victorian era of American history. She explains, "I am excited to be a part of an organization with such a fantastic legacy, and I hope that my involvement will help bring greater attention to our collective heritage."

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newly restored façade. (The block is well preserved, although it lies just outside the borders of the Carroll Gardens historic district.) A padlock and chain were clamped onto the handles of 377 Union's entry doors, which are framed by carved wooden Corinthian pilasters. The spear-topped metal fence's gate was padlocked, too. Waterlogged, unopened mail was strewn on the paved entry path. Weeds sprouted from the front lawn.

No window shades had been pulled down, allowing glimpses of the parlor floor. A ladder was posted near some boxes and a Victorian-style ceiling light fixture, with brass fittings and a simple hemispherical glass globe. The fixture seemed akin to the "elegant but not extravagant" possessions that the tarnished banker Marvin Rodman had left behind, when he abandoned Union Street and headed West.

Eve M. Kahn



A pumpkin carved with Robert Mueller's face was posed in front of the brownstone's faux landmark plaque. (photo by Amy Finkel)

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Remembering a Scholar and Early Board Member

STEWART ROEBLING MANVILLE, an early member of the Victorian Society in America and a prominent music historian and curator, died March 16 at the age of 91.

Manville joined the Victorian Society in 1967, within the first year after it was established. A lifelong resident of White Plains, N.Y., he traveled to the group's early meetings in the Greenwich Village home of Margot Gayle and to the Chelsea apartment of Sylvia Newman. He soon became a board member. After the Victorian Society in America went national in 1969 and moved its headquarters to Philadelphia, he remained part of the group that continued as the board of the New York chapter.

He organized numerous group tours to sites in the region with connections to the Victorian era, including Lyndhurst in Tarrytown and the Percy Grainger House in White Plains. The most

ambitious tour he arranged, he recalled in 2017, "was an overnight weekend to the Lake Mohonk Mountain House, which included tea with the Newburgh (N.Y.) Historical Society and placement of a wreath on the grave of A.J. Downing."

Manville's parents, the lawyer Leo Stewart Manville and the musician and historian Margaret Roebling Manville, raised him in a 1910s pre-fab bungalow that became his lifelong home. Early in his career, Stewart Manville worked as an opera house stage director, edited encyclopedias and published studies of Manville family history. He served for decades as the archivist and curator of the Grainger house, about a mile from the Manville home; Percy Grainger (1882-1961), the Australian-born composer, conductor and pianist, had there lived for the second half of his life.

In 1962, Percy's widow, the Swedish-born poet and artist Ella Grainger (1889-1979), hired Manville to help her sort through her husband's estate and promote his musical legacy. Manville married her in 1972, without telling anyone at first. "Our idea was that she should go on being known as Mrs. Grainger," he told the *New York Times* in 2004.

The Manvilles maintained the Grainger house and its collections, which include Percy's pianos, concert programs, and composition drafts, and the couple gave tours to the public. The property, which belongs to the International Percy Grainger Society, remains publicly accessible.

Hilda Regier



TOP: Stewart Roebling Manville; LEFT: Percy Grainger Home and Studio; RIGHT: Manville and his future bride Ella Grainger, photo from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Nov. 8, 1970

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