



PANORAMA

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THE NEW YORK METROPOLITAN CHAPTER OF THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY IN AMERICA

Extraordinary Escapism via Wallpaper

Here's a sneak preview of VSNY's March 11 lecture to benefit the Margot Gayle Fund for the Preservation of Victorian Heritage, written by the lecturer, Nicole M. Mullen, the curator of exhibitions of SFO Museum at the San Francisco International Airport.

The French have long manufactured several types of wallpaper, but they are best known for their spectacular 19th-century handcrafted scenic landscapes. This unique wallpaper created a breathtaking panoramic experience, with all the walls in a room covered with a non-repeating scene. The mural-like papers, popular around Europe and America, provided the opportunity for the viewer to be swept away to an exotic place or immersed in an exciting period in history. The demand for scenic papers remained high until the late 1860s, when they began to fall out of fashion.

Produced in full color as well as sepia and grisaille tones, panoramic papers were intended to be hung at eye level in large rooms, where they were certain to impress visitors. Ample sky was created at the top of the panels to allow for trimming to various ceiling heights. Wallpaper rolls, printed in sets of 20 to 30 or more, varied slightly in size—up to 10 feet long and approximately 20 inches wide. Manufacturers also offered dados to accent papers.

One of the most famous manufacturers of panoramic wallpaper was Jean Zuber (1773–1852). His company Zuber et Cie, established in 1797, quickly gained prominence for its meticulous attention to detail and exquisite colors and designs. Generating a set of papers often required two to three years of planning,

design and sales promotion. Zuber employed some of the finest wallpaper designers and craftsmen. Artists first submitted preliminary small-scale sketches for approval before rendering full-scale enlargements, which served as models for the hand-carved printing blocks. It took anywhere from a few hundred to several thousand blocks to create a scenic paper set. Although machine-made paper had become available, fine French panoramic wallpaper was usually made by hand. Zuber's artisans crafted beautiful skies, which they carefully painted with large brushes before

the rest of the imagery was block-printed onto the paper. Because the wares required major investments of labor and materials, Zuber strove to offer scenes that he knew would be profitable.

From 1804 to 1860, Jean Zuber and his successors offered 25 different scenic papers. *Vues de Suisse*, Zuber's first panoramic paper, was introduced in 1804 and depicts tourist attractions along Switzerland's mountains and lakes. *Vues d'Amérique du Nord*, designed by Jean-Julien Deltail (1791–1863) in 1834, was offered with scenes including Niagara Falls,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



El Dorado, Zuber (1849), in entryway and staircase of a Colonial house, Connecticut (photo: John Neitzel, from the book *Zuber* by Brian Coleman, Gibbs Smith, due out August 2019)

Boston Harbor and New York Bay. Requiring 1,690 printing blocks, 223 different colors and 32 panels totaling over 49 feet in length, *Vues d'Amérique du Nord* is still sold by the Zuber factory today. In the 1960s, Jacqueline Kennedy installed a set in the White House. Scenes like these were not only sought out by Americans but also by Europeans fascinated by North America.

The public favored war scenes as well. *L'Indépendance Américaine*, first offered in 1852, sold well in New England. As a cost-saving measure, this scenic incorporated the same backgrounds that appear in *Vues d'Amérique du Nord*, although Zuber changed the figures in the Revolutionary War foregrounds. During the 1840s and '50s, Zuber emphasized indigenous flora and fauna in several panoramic papers—one of the most captivating, *El Dorado* (1849), features exotic vegetation and showcases the continents of Africa, Asia, Europe and North America. Another fascinating botanically-inspired paper offered by Zuber, *Décor Chinois* (1832), is unusual in that it imitates 18th-century Chinese wallpaper with shallow perspective.

Zuber's greatest competitor, Joseph Dufour (1752–1827), began his career in the wallpaper business in the 1790s in Mâcon, France. He later relocated the firm to Paris. Dufour released many remarkable papers during his three decades as a manufacturer. Unlike Zuber's tinted skies, Dufour's skies featured majestically placed, expressionistic clouds. The first panoramic paper he produced, and one of the most famous, was *Les Voyages du Capitaine Cook* (1804), designed by Jean-Gabriel Charvet (1750–1829). Loosely inspired by James Cook's travels in the Pacific, it depicts Western explorers maneuvering ships in tropical waters and arriving at islands filled with native peoples. Dufour went so far as to advertise his scenic paper as an educational experience: "The mother of a family will give history and geography lessons to a lively little girl. The several kinds of vegetation can themselves serve as an introduction to the history of plants." Other notable Dufour papers include *Monuments de Paris* (1812–14),

a romantic scenic of the city's historic sites; *Psyché* (1815), a rich classical grisaille composition; and *Paysage De Télémaque Dans L'île De Calypso* (1818), which details in vibrant colors the adventures of Odysseus on the mythical island of Ogygia where he was seduced by the nymph Calypso.

French panoramic wallpaper is a fascinating decorative art to explore, partly through surviving examples. It is intriguing to imagine just how many more French scenic wallpapers may still lie hidden under layers of more recent wallpaper and paint in historic buildings in the U.S. and overseas. Scrupulous detail and effort are required to create these papers, and they continue to captivate present-day patrons. Zuber, the only surviving scenic wallpaper manufacturer, continues to use the original antique printing blocks, which the French Ministry of Culture has declared as historical monuments.

Join VSNY March 11 at the Grolier Club (47 East 60th Street, between Park and Madison Avenues) to learn more! See p. 4 of *Panorama* for lecture details.

VSNY Helps Fight To Keep Clockworks Ticking on Display

Legal briefs have been filed at the Court of Appeals, New York State's highest court, in defense of the landmarked clock tower rooms and historic clock mechanism at 346 Broadway, the former New York Life Insurance Company headquarters. Designed by McKim, Mead & White and completed in 1899, the building is an individual landmark, and it was long owned by the city. Its interior landmarks include formerly public spaces housing the original E. Howard mechanical tower clock, which represents the pinnacle of American clock-making technology. Marvin Schneider, the city's official clock master, has restored and long maintained the equipment. (A web search for the phrase "Manhattan clock tower will keep" brings up a 2014

New York Times video of the magnificent clockworks keeping time.)

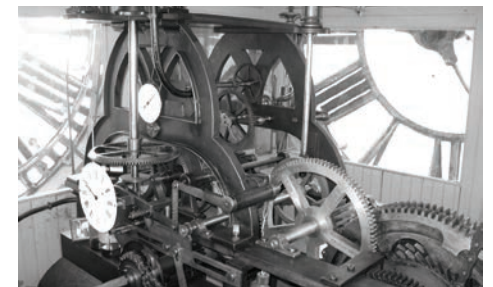
In 2014, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) approved the conversion of the clock tower rooms into an apartment and the partial dismantling of the clock and its conversion to electric operation. This work was proposed as part of a much-needed restoration of the building, which a developer is converting into luxury condominiums.

Preservation organizations, individuals and the nonprofit group Save America's Clocks filed a lawsuit to reverse LPC's decision, and both the trial court and Appellate Division ruled in their favor. The courts found LPC had erred in believing the Landmarks Law would not allow it to prevent alterations that would close the clock tower to the public or to maintain the original clock mechanism. Further, the courts deemed LPC's decision arbitrary and capricious—it subverts the Landmarks Law's purpose and would destroy the very features of the clock that had merited designation. Perversely, LPC and city officials continue to appeal the court decisions in a manner that would weaken the city's own Landmarks Law.

VSNY has signed on to an *amicus* brief filed with the Court of Appeals, prepared by attorney Michael Gruen. (He wrote the text for the 1973 amendment to the Landmarks Law authorizing interior landmark designations.) The brief, besides supporting the petitioners' main arguments, argues that LPC's strategy of approving the project "on balance" rather than finding each component of the proposed work appropriate has no basis in the law and invites sub rosa wheeling and dealing and the avoidance of preservation standards.

Oral arguments at the Court of Appeals in Albany are scheduled for February 13, 2019.

Jeremy Woodoff
preservationist, board member of Save America's Clocks



FROM LEFT: *Les Voyages du Capitaine Cook*, Dufour wallpaper, 1804 (photo: De Young Museum, San Francisco); *L'Indépendance Américaine*, Zuber wallpaper, 1852, in Colonial Revival house's dining room, upstate New York (photo: John Neitzel, from the book Zuber by Brian Coleman, Gibbs Smith, due out August 2019); historic clock on 346 Broadway (photos: courtesy Jeremy Woodoff, c.-1900 image, New-York Historical Society)



New Victorian Landmarks



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The Peter P. and Rosa M. Huberty House (photo: Landmarks Preservation Commission); Central Harlem-West 130-132ND Streets Historic District (photo: Landmarks Preservation Commission); The Dime Savings Bank of Williamsburg (photo: Brownstoner); The Empire State Dairy Company Building and Complex (photo: Michael Padwee and Susan Tunick)



Here are some of the Landmarks Preservation Commission's recently designated landmark buildings that were erected or significantly altered in the VSNY's period of interest, 1836-1917.

QUEENS

An old parish hall at 86-02 Broadway in Elmhurst was built in 1735-1736 as the **Old St. James Episcopal Church**. It is New York City's oldest remaining Church of England mission structure and its second oldest religious building, predated only by the 1694 Friends Meeting House in Flushing. It ceased being used as a church in 1848. Restored to its 1884 appearance in 2004, the building combines the Colonial Meetinghouse form with 19TH-century Gothic Revival and Stick style details.

Engine Companies 264 & 328/Hook and Ladder 134, 16-15 Central Avenue, Far Rockaway, was built in 1912 and designed by Hoppin & Koen. It combines elements of Romanesque Revival and Renaissance Revival styles. It is one of 30 firehouses designated as individual landmarks.

BROOKLYN

The 2018 **Extension to Boerum Hill Historic District** contains some 288 buildings. Expanding the 1973 designated district in every direction, it encompasses brownstone and brick row houses and part of the Atlantic Avenue commercial corridor.

The Peter P. and Rosa M. Huberty House, 1019 Bushwick Avenue, was built in 1900 for German-born lawyer and Democratic politician Peter P. Huberty in a Colonial Revival design by his 23-year-old-son, Ulrich. The son, Ulrich J. Huberty, who became a notable Brooklyn architect, designed another recently designated building with Frank J. Helmle, **The Dime Savings Bank**

of Williamsburg, 209 Havemeyer Street. The neoclassical structure was built in 1906-1908.

The Renaissance Revival style **Dr. Maurice Thomas Lewis House**, 404 55TH Street, is a rare early-20TH-century freestanding single-family home in Sunset Park, built in 1907 when most homes in the neighborhood were multifamily. R. Thomas Short was the architect.

The Empire State Dairy Company Building and Complex, 2840 Atlantic Avenue, in East New York, is an industrial complex constructed in two stages. The first two Renaissance and Romanesque Revival style buildings of 1906-1907, designed by Theobald Engelhardt, feature unique terra-cotta details. A four-building annex was added in 1914-1915. Its Viennese Secessionist design by architect Otto Strack features two large panels of intricate polychrome ceramic tile mosaics depicting pastoral folk scenes with cows. The ceramics are among the largest surviving intact decorative tile installations from the American Encaustic Tile Company.

MANHATTAN

The recently restored **Rose Main Reading Room** and adjoining **Bill Blass Public Catalog Room** of the **New York Public Library** at 476 Fifth Avenue were designated together as an interior landmark. The rooms join other designated areas of the 1911 Carrère & Hastings structure now known as the Stephen A. Schwarzman Building.

The Hotel Seville, now the **James NoMad Hotel**, 22 East 29TH Street, has a distinctive Beaux-Arts style. Harry Allan Jacobs was the architect for the 1901-1904 portion while its Annex of 1906-1907 was designed by Charles T. Mott. **The Emmet Building**, 95 Madison Avenue, a Neo-Renaissance skyscraper built in 1911-1912, was designed by John Stewart Barney and Stockton Beekman Colt. These

two individual landmarks represent the evolution of Madison Square North from affluent residential blocks to a commercial district.

Twin "marble palaces" at **827-831 Broadway** designed by Griffith Thomas were built in 1866-1867 as commercial buildings. Prominent 20TH-century artists had studios there.

The Interborough Rapid Transit Company (IRT) Powerhouse, now Consolidated Edison Powerhouse, 855-869 Eleventh Avenue, was designed by McKim, Mead & White to supply power for the city's first subway line in 1904. It is the first known working power plant to be landmarked.

The Central Harlem-West 130-132ND Streets Historic District consists of 164 properties constructed in the late 19TH century as speculative row houses. Their architectural styles remain notably cohesive and intact. The buildings were host to significant Civil Rights activity during the 1960s.

The former **Richard Webber Harlem Packing House**, 207-215 East 119TH Street, was built in 1895 as part of a larger commercial slaughterhouse, meat-packing and retail complex. Bartholomew & John P. Walther were the architects.

The former **Public School 109**, now **El Barrio's Art Space PS109**, 215 East 99TH Street, was constructed in 1899. The design by Superintendent of School Buildings Charles B. J. Snyder employed eclectic Collegiate Gothic historicism in an "H" plan. After a period of disuse, the building was adaptively reused and restored for affordable housing. VSNY gave that project a preservation award in 2015.

James Russiello



LEFT TO RIGHT: The influential Hewitt sisters Amy, Sarah and Eleanor, founders of the Cooper Hewitt museum (photo: Ringwood Manor); 19th-century valentines (photos: Nancy Rosin, Metropolitan Museum of Art)

VSNY sponsors free lectures at various venues, thanks in part to Lewis Haber. No reservations required. Events begin at 6:30 p.m. (reception with refreshments starts at 6 p.m.), unless otherwise noted.

LECTURES

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7

BARD GRADUATE CENTER, 38 WEST 86TH STREET, BETWEEN CENTRAL PARK WEST AND COLUMBUS AVENUE

HOW VICTORIAN VALENTINES MADE HEARTS SOAR

Nancy Rosin, president of the National Valentine Collectors Association, has made a “passionate obsession” for more than 40 years out of historical love and friendship cards, keepsakes and related ephemera. Her lecture will reveal the visual and structural wonders of Victorian Valentines. Surfaces were richly textured with gilded lace and high-relief embossing, and cards were engineered to turn into three-dimensional forms including battlefield tents and steam engines. Rosin will discuss the cards’ hidden codes of floral motifs, which represented various virtues and emotions, and the evolution of flattering and comic depictions of lovers, whether athletes, crooked politicians or caged mice. Rosin has made major discoveries about the makers; women and immigrants played groundbreaking roles in designing and marketing Valentines. She describes the cards and mementoes, whether handmade or mass-produced, as demonstrating “the creativity and passion of human emotion.” Rosin is also the president-emerita of the Ephemera Society of America. In 2018, her family’s collection of about 12,300 Valentines and related items was donated to The Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens in San Marino, California, to be accessible for research and display.

THURSDAY, MARCH 7

BARD GRADUATE CENTER, 38 WEST 86TH STREET, BETWEEN CENTRAL PARK WEST AND COLUMBUS AVENUE

THE MAKING OF A MODERN MUSEUM: THE HEWITT SISTERS

When New Yorkers utter the phrase “Cooper Hewitt,” it typically brings to mind the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, housed in Andrew Carnegie’s mansion on 91ST Street and Fifth Avenue. Far less renowned are the institution’s 19TH-century women patrons, who made their family names synonymous with achievements in art and design. Sue Shutte, the historian at Ringwood Manor in Ringwood, New Jersey (the Hewitt family’s longtime country home), will bring deserved attention back to three sisters, Amy, Sarah and Eleanor Hewitt. They were world travelers with deep interests in collecting, music and equestrianism. Their story is particularly relevant now, as ever more scholarship is devoted to the history of influential women. Come meet the Hewitt sisters and their famous family and discover how these three young progressive women used their passion to establish America’s premier museum devoted to design.

CO-SPONSORED WITH THE GENERAL SOCIETY OF MECHANICS & TRADESMEN

TUESDAY, APRIL 2

GENERAL SOCIETY OF MECHANICS & TRADESMEN, 20 WEST 44TH STREET, BETWEEN 5TH AND 6TH AVENUES

LECTURE AT 6:30, RECEPTION

AFTERWARDS (7:30)

BORN TOO SOON, BORN TOO LATE: MABEL LOOMIS TODD, MILLICENT TODD BINGHAM AND THEIR UPSIDE-DOWN VICTORIAN SENSIBILITIES

Julie Dobrow, a Tufts University professor, will speak about the mixed-up Victorian sensibilities and fascinating lives of Mabel Loomis Todd, Emily Dickinson’s first editor, and her daughter Millicent Todd Bingham. Todd lived the majority of her life

in the 19TH century but confided to her diary her belief that she had been born one or two centuries too soon. Her love affair with Dickinson’s brother Austin scandalized their prim community in Amherst, Massachusetts. Bingham’s professional life began in geography but shifted to Dickinson scholarship, and her life encompassed more of the 20TH century than the 19TH, yet she considered herself more Victorian than her mother. Todd, who spent most of her adult life in Amherst, and Bingham, who lived for years in Manhattan, both pushed the envelope of expectations for women of their eras. The two women were artistically gifted, and they traveled the world, wrote prolifically and advocated for land preservation. Their complicated mother-daughter relationship is well-documented in their enormous, intertwined paper trails. Dobrow’s book, *After Emily: Two Remarkable Women and the Legacy of America’s Greatest Poet*, was published by W.W. Norton in October 2018.

THURSDAY, MAY 2

SOTHEBY’S INSTITUTE, 570 LEXINGTON AVENUE (51ST STREET)

EMERGING SCHOLARS

VSNY will present three 15-minute talks by current university students or recent graduates about 19TH-century and early-20TH-century culture. Potential topics include literature, architecture, theater, fine and decorative art, politics, manufacturing, education, gender roles, reform movements, fashion, and food. **Deadline for proposals is March 10** (preference given to American/New York topics). Email 200-word summary and CV to info@vicsocny.org. Speakers’ remunerations include lively and delicious restaurant dinner with historians and enthusiasts after the talk and a VSNY one-year membership (\$30 value).

MAY ANNUAL MEETING

Date and place to be announced for a festive evening event, celebrating annual award winners and Margot Gayle Fund grantees, and toasting the 200TH birthdays of Walt Whitman and Queen Victoria!



LEFT TO RIGHT: A paper filigree valentine (photo: Nancy Rosin); a row of portraits of Emily Dickinson's literary defenders, Millicent Todd Bingham, seated at left, and her mother Mabel Loomis Todd (photos: Yale University)

TOURS

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1:30-3 PM

A VICTORIAN DOG'S LIFE

The American Kennel Club has a new museum devoted to dogs. On our museum tour, we will learn how 19th-century artists immortalized humans' best friends with portraiture and sculpture as well as what a dog's life was like in Victorian times—how animals were bred, trained, housed and shown. We will also see how owners' expectations have evolved.

FEES: \$25 FOR VSNY MEMBERS,
\$35 FOR NONMEMBERS

SATURDAY AFTERNOON, MARCH 23

HIGH TEA

We will sit down to high tea at the Oscar Wilde Bar in the Flatiron District. The setting has been described as the most beautiful and opulent

Victorian pub in the city. A lecture on the origins of high tea will accompany the repast.

FEES AND EXACT TIME OF THE EVENT WILL BE FORTHCOMING.

SATURDAY, MAY 11, 9 AM

PRESERVATION IN THE HUDSON HIGHLANDS

The first stop on this bus tour will be Cold Spring, the site of an iron foundry that operated from 1811-1911 supplying artillery to the West Point Military Academy across the Hudson River. We will start our exploration of the town with a walking tour of its historic district. Then we will have lunch at the Hudson House, built in 1832. After lunch the bus will take us to Boscobel in nearby Garrison, an 1804 house that was demolished and reassembled on this site in the 1950s. The possibility of visiting nearby private homes is being explored.

FEES ARE TO BE DETERMINED.

SATURDAY, JUNE 1, 9 AM - 4 PM

HUDSON VALLEY HOUSE DELIGHTS

Departing by train from Grand Central Station, we will visit two prominent Victorian homes on the Hudson, Washington Irving's Sunnyside and the Gould family's Lyndhurst. This tour is walking intensive; we will walk from the Irvington station to Sunnyside and then Lyndhurst via the Old Croton Aqueduct Trail. Walking shoes/sneakers required. Lunch can be brought from home, or purchased at Zarrilli's Deli in Irvington.

FEES: \$75 FOR VSNY MEMBERS,
\$90 FOR NONMEMBERS

NOTE FOR TOUR PARTICIPANTS:

Meeting places will be provided with registration confirmation. Participants must be in good health, able to participate safely in all activities and keep pace with groups. Sites may have challenging stairs or hills. If you have any concerns about your ability to participate fully, please contact us (info@vicsocny.org or 212-886-3742). VSNY reserves the right to decline registration or end the participation of any tour group member at any time.

MARGOT GAYLE FUND EVENT

On Monday, March 11, to benefit the Margot Gayle Fund for the Preservation of Victorian Heritage, the Victorian art of wrapping rooms in spectacular panoramas will be the topic of scholar Nicole M. Mullen's talk, "French Scenic Wallpaper." Mullen, the curator of SFO Museum at the San Francisco International Airport, is working on a double-feature SFO exhibition of Zuber's French panoramic wallpaper and late 19th-century Victorian wallpaper featuring the contemporary maker Bradbury & Bradbury, which opens July 2019. Her talk will explore how 19th-century armchair voyagers found captivating substitutes for foreign travel in the form of 360-degree panoramic wallpapers. French manufacturers painted and printed vivid views of ancient Roman ruins, Mount Vesuvius's eruptions and Brazilian jungles teeming with colorful birds and toothy crocodiles. The scenes were teaching tools as well, with lessons on geography, history, mythology, literature and life in foreign lands. The Margot Gayle Fund provides grants for preservation or conservation of Victorian era material culture. Each year 5% of the fund's principal is available for grants. Tickets: \$50 each (donations beyond that level are welcome). Grolier Club, 47 East 60th Street (between Madison and Park Avenues). Lecture at 6:30 pm, reception to follow.

MARGOT GAYLE FUND DEADLINE

Margot Gayle Fund grant applications for preservation or conservation of Victorian era material culture are due on Valentine's Day, Thursday, February 14, 2019. Application forms are posted at vicsocny.org.

Where a Landscape Visionary First Shaped Landscapes



ABOVE: Olmsted described his Staten Island porch (now lost) as a piazza (photo: Friends of Olmsted-Beil House)

Around 1850, long before Frederick Law Olmsted became America's first famous landscape architect, he spent a few years farming along Staten Island's southeast coast. Around his farmhouse, part of which was built in the 1680s, he laid out wheat fields and groves of oaks, pears, cedars of Lebanon, ginkgos, horse chestnuts, black walnuts and Osage oranges. He called the property Tosomock Farm, a version of a family name of Dutch settlers at the site. He described his wrap-around porch as a piazza, and he hosted salons there for his growing circle of cultured friends. The views from the piazza, he told one friend, were "wondrous beautiful" as well as "always renewedly interesting," affording glimpses of "forever distant sails coming up or sinking" at the ocean horizon.

The building, at 4515 Hylan Boulevard in the Eltingville neighborhood, currently looks forlorn. Boards cover some of the windows. The piazza has crumbled away. Yet vestiges from Olmsted's time survive on the grounds. A tour in December 2018 revealed the lawns layered with dried ginkgo leaves and Osage orange seed pods the size of grapefruits. Ghosts of 19th-century curving driveways were visible in the frozen terrain. Leafless trunks of Olmsted's trees and their progeny cast sculptural shadows across the farmhouse walls and were reflected in the rippled antique windowpanes.

The site, according to Barnett Shepherd, Staten Island's eminent historian, preserves a sense of Olmsted's early basking in "natural beauty and intellectual stimulation, to nourish his life interests."

LEFT TO RIGHT: Its 2018 state, still shaded by Olmsted's trees (photo: Eve M. Kahn); The hilltop site afforded ocean views (photo: Staten Island Historical Society)



In the last year, preservation efforts have greatly brightened prospects for the building, now known as the Olmsted-Beil House. In the latter half of the 20th century, it belonged to Carlton Beil, a preservationist, naturalist and museum curator. It has been a city landmark since 1967, and in 2006, the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation bought the 1.5-acre property from the Beils. Preservation grants have come from private, institutional and government sources. The New York Landmarks Conservancy has raised money partly through [kickstarter.com](https://www.kickstarter.com) for stabilization efforts and analysis. A new preservation group, Friends of Olmsted-Beil House (olmstedbeilhouse.org), has formed. An adjoining property, with over an acre of land plus a gazebo and a house built around 1910 in emulation of a Swiss chalet, is being added to the Parks Department's holdings—it had long belonged to the Kaasmann family, passionate advocates for Staten Island preservation.

Research into the history of Olmsted's home is ongoing. Its 17th-century core may have originally served as a barn. The ground floor's fieldstone walls have brick relieving arches just visible through whitewash layers. Early occupants included French Huguenot immigrant families and Revolutionary War soldiers. Among Olmsted's prominent visitors and neighbors were the publisher George Putnam, who helped adapt Olmsted's writings about traveling in England into his first book, and the Vanderbilt family, who became Olmsted's clients for landscape commissions as vast as the Biltmore estate in North Carolina and a family cemetery on a Staten Island hilltop. Another neighbor on Staten Island, Mary Perkins, eventually married Olmsted (her first husband, Olmsted's brother John, died of consumption a few months after she bore their third child). By the late 19th century, the property had been turned into a coastal resort. An 1886 advertisement invited "the best class of pleasure-seekers only" to come fish, swim and picnic there.

Plans are now afoot to adapt Olmsted's home into an environmental and educational center during the next few years.

Eve M. Kahn



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.



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Spectacular Silver: Yachting's Goelet Cups



LEFT AND CENTER: Andromeda in chains comes under serpent attack on the 1886 Goelet Cup for sloops by Whiting Manufacturing Co.; FAR RIGHT: Tiffany & Co.'s 1886 Goelet Cup for schooners depicts a mermaid (photos: New York Yacht Club)
BOTTOM RIGHT: Competitors race for the 1887 Goelet Cup (photo: Detroit Publishing Company/Library of Congress)

VSNY Board Member Alice Dickinson, the curator of collections at the New York Yacht Club, reports on a summer 2019 exhibition that she has co-curated, affording insights into the lives of Gilded Age New Yorkers.

This summer, the New York Yacht Club (NYYC), in partnership with the Redwood Library and Athenaeum in Newport, Rhode Island, will present the first exhibition devoted to the magnificent silver trophies given by the yachtsman and real estate magnate Ogden Goelet (1851-1897) for sailing races held off Newport. *Spectacular Silver: Yachting's Goelet Cups* will explore an important moment when sailing competition inspired innovative silversmithing.

Starting in 1882 and continuing for 16 years, Ogden Goelet awarded cups for races each year when the NYYC was at Newport. The competitions, a high point of the summer colony's season, attracted national media attention and were followed by huge spectator fleets. The costly trophies (\$1,000 each for schooner winners, \$500 for sloops) were commissioned from the finest makers including Tiffany & Co. and Whiting Manufacturing Co. in New York. *Spectacular Silver* will feature yacht models,

paintings and archival documents in addition to approximately one third of the 31 Goelet Cups awarded.

Ogden Goelet was a Manhattan native, and his family owned substantial property in the city. He and his wife Mary Wilson (a Tennessean whose siblings married into the Vanderbilt and Astor clans) divided their time among a Fifth Avenue townhouse, a villa in southern France and a Newport mansion, Ochre Court, designed by Richard Morris Hunt. (The châteauxque structure is now home to Salve Regina University—and likely familiar to alumni of the Victorian Society's Newport Summer School!)

Two of the most dramatic Goelet Cups were awarded in 1886. That year's schooner cup, by Tiffany & Co., features a mermaid in swirling waves with winds blowing and churning up the water. The winner's name, *Grayling*, is acid etched around the vessel's neck. In 1893, Tiffany & Co. exhibited the piece and five other Goelet Cups at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, demonstrating the maker's enduring pride in the trophies' craftsmanship. Whiting made the 1886 cup for sloops, awarded to *Mayflower*. The pitcher depicts the myth of Andromeda and the sea serpent. Her

family had sacrificed her to appease Poseidon, and Perseus saved her, slaying the creature preparing to attack. The trophy portrays Andromeda in chains, with swirling waves and a snaking monster wrapping around the jug's body and forming the handle.

Spectacular Silver, drawing from the NYYC's holdings and from significant public and private collections, brings together rarely seen objects and documentation of colorful personalities from a singular chapter in the history of sailing and decorative arts. The show will be on view at the Redwood Library and Athenaeum from June 14 to September 29.

