



# The Gazebo Gazette

Newsletter of the Larchmont Historical Society

## Larchmont Historical Society Spring House Tour “Built to Last: Stories in Stone” Sunday, April 26, 2009

“Built to Last: Stories in Stone” is the apt title for this year’s spring house tour. Given the architectural richness of our community, our annual tours generally include a diverse range of styles. This year is no different. As in the past, there is a stylis-

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as-



introduction to some of the descriptive vocabulary associated with the houses (see the accompanying glossary for an explanation of terms highlighted in bold). From the clues, perhaps some clever readers might even be able to identify a few of the houses!



sortment of exteriors and interiors that will be highlighted on the tour. In certain years, however, a theme or common thread among the houses has been difficult to discern. This year the theme was readily apparent. All five of the houses on the 2009 house tour are distinguished for their varied examples of stonework, from a Colonial Revival house partly clad in uncut stone, to a second Colonial Revival style house that incorporates field stone in its original construction and matching stone recovered from the property for its 2001 addition, to an **Arts & Crafts** home and a **Tudor** that include partial random **ashlar** facing, and a second Arts & Crafts house that features not only a stone foundation but actually appears to have been constructed atop a hill of stone. This group of houses also shares interesting histories, as each is connected to the early development of the neighborhood in which it was built and some of the personalities involved were rather intriguing. Yet in addition to distinctive stonework and great history, there are numerous other features and decorative elements that grace these homes. But why wait until next month when the individual homeowners open their doors to the LHS membership to discover what is in store? While the five addresses will not be revealed here, read on for a taste of what to expect, as well as an

The five houses on this year’s tour are scattered across Larchmont. Just one house is in the Manor and one is in the Village, while three are located in the unincorporated section of town. Additionally, four of the houses have never appeared on the LHS house tour before. And one house was recently awarded an LHS Century Homes Club plaque! As mentioned, the architectural styles range from early Colonial Revival to Colonial Revival Style to Arts & Crafts to Tudor. One of the two Colonial Revival houses incorporates an old stone gatehouse that was originally part of a late 19<sup>th</sup> century Weaver Street estate; the other Colonial Revival house was among the first houses in the development originally known as Larchmont Park. One of the Arts & Crafts houses was an early structure in the Larchmont Gardens development; the other is one of several authentic **Gustav Stickley** houses in Larchmont Woods. The Tudor house was designed by the architect of the Larchmont Shores development and built for the man who developed Larchmont Shores.

Water is a theme at all five of the houses. One house is actually located on the water, connected to its neighborhood by a **cause-**

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*Lynne Crowley, Archivist*

The Larchmont Historical Society was founded in 1980 and chartered in 1981 as a not-for-profit educational corporation by the New York State Board of Regents to discover, preserve and disseminate information concerning the natural, social, and civic history of Larchmont, and to promote the preservation of local historical sites and structures. The Society maintains an archives in the Mamaroneck Town Center, 740 W. Boston Post Rd., Mamaroneck; publishes a newsletter; offers programs; conducts tours for school children and adults; and offers outreach lectures to other community groups. The newsletter is published to provide news of the Society and occasional articles of related interest. Opinions expressed are those of their authors; publication should not be construed as endorsement by the Society.

## President's Message:

The Larchmont Historical Society board members are in the midst of a busy year of successful events. From cemetery restoration to the upcoming house tour, there has not been a dull moment. I have so much admiration for the fine group of volunteers who have devoted themselves to maintaining a strong sense of community history.

Our most recent event was an Antiques Appraisal Day in February, and it was a phenomenal success. Appraisers from the Potomack Company in Alexandria, Virginia provided insightful remarks to begin the day, and they stayed to evaluate a huge number of antiques brought in by residents. People arrived with paintings, tea sets, dishes, and Lionel trains, and they left knowing more about the value of each of their items. Now that we have a template for this event, look for it to be repeated. Many thanks to Margi Gristina, Pier Witek, Susan Emery, Melissa Schoen, Patti Roberts, Margaret Takata, Lynne Crowley, Nancy White and Ned Benton for their wonderful efforts to organize this complex event.

Women's History Month will be celebrated with cultural historian Lori Rotskoff speaking about "Equal Play: How the Women's Movement Changed the Way We Raised Our Kids" on Thursday, March 26 at 10 a.m. at St. John's Church. Rotskoff will address questions pertaining to feminism, motherhood, and the various new issues that are affecting our children. Join us for an interesting morning.

Our "crown jewel," the annual Spring House Tour, will be held on Sunday, April 26. With five spectacular houses and the promise of a gracious reception at the Mamaroneck Artists Guild's beautiful new galleries at the corner of Larchmont Avenue and the Boston Post Road, it promises to be a wonderful day.

I would also like to tip my hat in appreciation to Nancy White for her work in producing this bimonthly newsletter. She provides a delightful combination of up-to-date information on LHS events with wonderfully interesting articles about our history. Thank you, Nancy.

And thanks, too, to you, our loyal members. We appreciate your support and welcome your participation. Whether you have an hour to give or would like to serve on a committee, please contact us on line at [larchmonthistory.org](http://larchmonthistory.org), 381-2239 or [lhs@larchmonthistory.org](mailto:lhs@larchmonthistory.org).

*-Colette Rodbell*

**SAVE THE DATE: June 9, 2009**

**Larchmont Historical Society  
Annual Meeting and Reception**  
Location to be announced

**Come celebrate a great year and give recognition to all who  
made it possible**

## From the Archives....

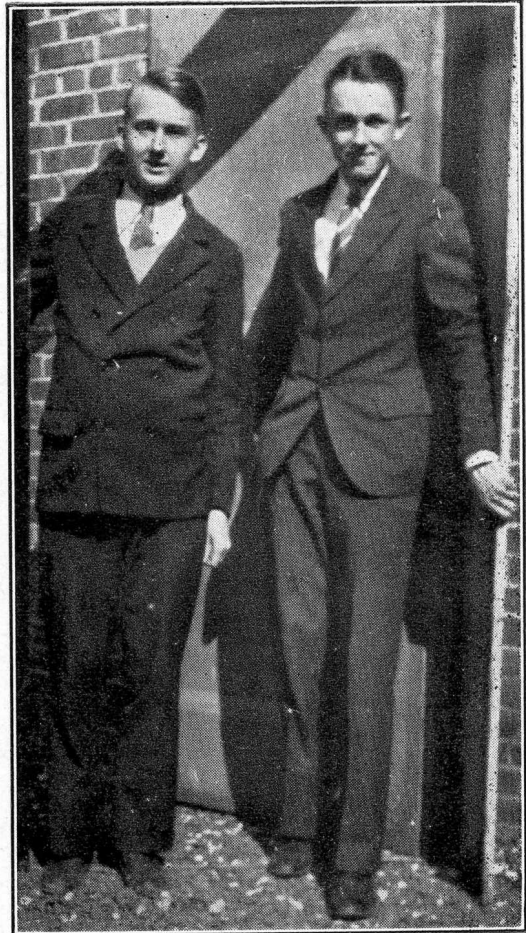
A few months ago I contacted Tina Pantginis, the Librarian at Mamaroneck High School, to consult her on a research inquiry I had received. She was very helpful, as all librarians are – it's in the blood, I believe – and we got to chatting about a project they're undertaking to digitize some records that have accumulated over the years.

This includes school related newspaper clippings, old student newspaper publications and even photo albums. I think they don't yet know all they have in that back room. The most thrilling part to me is that this treasure trove of local history will eventually be accessible to the general public through the Larchmont Historical Society!

The digitizing process has just begun but I can share with you a tidbit. We have a photo album called *MHS Memories 1932-33* created by a student, John S. Gallagher, Jr. He notes that this is the second edition -- the past year's edition evidently featured photos of faculty members "in their off moments". Hmm. Wish we had that one! This edition features students in *their* "off" moments. Perhaps we could regard it as a precursor to Facebook? I hope to be able to bring some of the images to you in a later newsletter; meanwhile, I have looked at the MHS yearbook from 1932 and I found a shot of our young photographer, John Gallagher, helping backstage at one of the many theatrical productions at MHS that year.

Readers, remember, if you have any wonderful or even *ordinaire* documents that chronicle some aspect of life here in Larchmont, please consider contacting us. We may be able to take them off your hands! Or, you may want to share them temporarily so we can scan them for posterity. I can be reached at 381-2239 or by email at [lhs@larchmonthistory.org](mailto:lhs@larchmonthistory.org).

- Lynne Crowley



*Fisher and Gallagher preparing to draw the curtain*

Correction: "From the Archives" in the February issue of the newsletter misstated the address of writer Merriam Modell. The Sept. 8, 1949 Larchmont Times article that I quoted was in error -- as was I for not fact-checking. The correct address is 18 Pryer Lane (not 17). Thanks go to Tamara Baum for straightening that out!

## Can You Identify This House?

### Win Two Tickets to the Spring House Tour Lecture

Submit Your Answer:

[lhs@larchmonthistory.org](mailto:lhs@larchmonthistory.org)

(If more than one correct answer, there will be a drawing)

Answer to last month's Mystery House: It used to be located at 90 Park Ave (corner of Procter and Park) and was built by F. F. Proctor, the theatre owner. The house was demolished some time after his death in 1929.



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# Century Homes Club: 1 Fountain Square

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We are delighted to welcome the latest member to the Century Homes Club: the residence of Jacqueline and Terrence Pare – One Fountain Square, which will henceforth also be known as, “Smith Cottage, 1895.”

Pursuing the research on this house has been particularly rewarding due to the homeowners’ passionate interest in the history of their home. When renovating their home, the Pares discovered some theatre tickets, which had fallen behind a staircase, which read “Manhattan Opera House, December 8, 1892.” Finding such a wonderful artifact in one’s house is the type of event which spurs the imagination and helps further interest in the previous lives of our wonderful old homes. With the tickets safely framed and hanging on their wall, the Pares had long believed their house to have been built in 1892.

As we began our research on the house, all the indicators pointed to 1895. Our earliest map of Larchmont, published in July 1893 had no indication of a house on the property, but depicted the land as owned by M.F. Smith. The insurance map of 1893 likewise made no representation of a house, however the 1898 insurance map depicts a house.

We are also fortunate to have the original handwritten tax rolls for the early 1890s. In each of the years 1891, 1892 and 1894, no house was listed, but the land was owned by Mary Smith. In 1895, ‘house’ was penciled in, as was an increase tax assessment value of \$2000, replacing the previous \$1250. Lastly, we have the village treasurer’s books from that same year, in which there is a citation on June 14, 1895 “Mary F Smith, For Sewer Opening, \$50.”

Ordinarily, we would have stopped our research at this point, as three data points are generally enough for a fair degree of confidence. However in this case our homeowners wanted to know how those theatre tickets from 1892 came to be in the wall of a house built in 1895? We kept digging and were soon rewarded with the story.

We first came across references printed in the New Rochelle Paragraph in November and August of 1895, respectively, as follows:

“George Grant, the gardener, has planted several choice trees on Miss Smith’s place, occupied by Thomas Q. Seabrooke, located on the east side of the circle.”

“The grounds about the residence of Thomas Q. Seabrooke were supposed to have been sowed to lawn seed, but a heavy crop of wild mustard sprang up, to the surprise of both the owner and the tenant of the pretty cottage. George Grant, the Weaver street gardener, was called to the rescue, and the wild mustard quickly disappeared. Mr. Grant promises a fine lawn in the near future.”

From this we learned that by November of 1895 Miss Smith had a house on her plot which was rented to a Thomas Q. Seabrooke. We then surmised from the second reference that the house had been built in the summer of 1895, given the seeding of the yard fiasco.

From this point the research took an entertaining twist, literally, as the name ‘Thomas Q. Seabrooke’ is rather distinct, and thus easy to search. As is likely no great surprise, he was a comic opera, and later vaudeville, actor, who lived from 1860 – 1913. His first, and most enduring claim to fame was in the comic opera, “The Isle of Champagne,” which was written in 1892. Seabrooke first performed this show in the summer of that year, touring Buffalo, Chicago and Boston before debuting it in New York at the Manhattan Opera House on December 5, 1892.

So our tickets weren’t from opening night, but opening week is still pretty impressive! The question remains, “How did those tickets get into the wall?” As we learned more

about Mr. Seabrooke, we moved away from any vision of him being the sentimental type who might have been holding onto tickets from the first week of the show that make him famous. We learned that he was only the occupant of One Fountain Square for one summer, as the following summer he was on the run from the law for failure to pay alimony of \$40 per week to his wife, Elvia Crox Seabrooke, “who had brought an action for separation from him on charges of cruel and inhuman treatment.” (NY Times, July 21, 1896). Upon hearing that an order had been issued for his arrest, on July 21, 1896, he “said good-



**MID 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY WOMEN'S VOICES  
REFLECTIONS OF LIFE IN LARCHMONT  
CELEBRATING JEAN KERR, MARIE KILLILEA  
& PHYLLIS MCGINLEY**

bye to several friends . . . and declared that he would seek seclusion outside the limits of the State until he was in a position to comply with the order of the court. . .and proceeded to Jersey City. . . Seabrooke's friends say that . . .as soon as the theatrical season opens, when he will secure a lucrative engagement, he will return."

We will likely never know for sure, but suspect that our homeowner had seen the performance, and perhaps even made the acquaintance of the esteemed Mr. Seabrooke, helping him find his way to Larchmont.

As much as we loved tying the pieces of history together, we still felt an enormous EUREKA moment when staring at a micro film machine one afternoon and spotted, in the New Rochelle



Paragraph, April 6, 1895

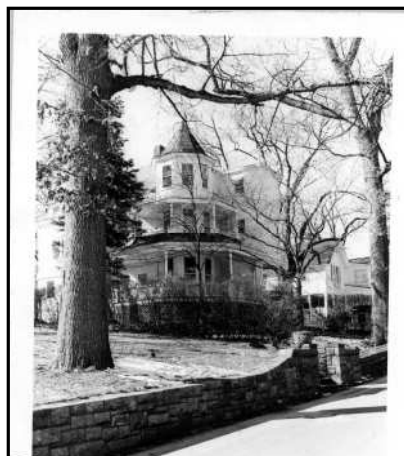
"Chas. T. Robinson of New Rochelle has the contract for building a cottage for Miss M.F. Smith on the east side of the circle, adjoining Jos. X. Arosemena's residence. A.G. C. Fletcher of Pelham Heights is the architect. The cottage will be a handsome one."

Followed by, in the same publication on July 20, 1895,

"real estate agent Homer A. Jones has rented Miss M.F. Smith's new cottage on the east side of the circle to Thomas Q Seabrooke. The lease \_\_\_\_ three years. The cottage is a pretty one and reflects great credit upon Messrs A. G. C. Fletcher, the architect, and Charles T. Robinson, the builder."

We can certainly hope that continued research on future century homes houses will yield as complete a picture as we have been able to reconstruct on One Fountain Square. But thanks in no small part to the devotion of an committed homeowner, we were able in this case to unearth a wonderful subchapter in Larchmont's history.

- Stacy Caffrey



Jean Kerr, Marie Killilea, and Phyllis McGinley were three Larchmonters writing about their experiences as wives, mothers, and professionals in mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century suburbia, as a comedic essayist and playwright, an inspirational activist and memoirist, and a lauded poet and author respectively. While these three women's writings won them prestigious awards and earned them

recognition on bestseller lists and book reviews within The New York Times, these women's written voices endeared them nationwide to other women who appreciated their down-to-earth and instructive reflections.

This month, during Women's History Month, the Larchmont Historical Society highlights these feted local women writers, and invites you

to find out more about Larchmont's fortune in having such esteemed women living within our rich literary history. Come see our display up in the Town Center, visit our Archives, or go to the Reference Room at the Larchmont Library, to learn more.  
- Roberta Warren



Photo's from top: Killilea house; Kerr house (both on Beach Ave); Clock-wise from top: Marie Killilea; Phyllis McGinley, Jean Kerr



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## House Tour Glossary

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**TUDOR REVIVAL STYLE**, based on the medieval architectural style of the Tudor period in England. Includes six distinctive features: decorative half-timbering, steeply pitched roofs, prominent cross gables, tall, narrow windows, small window panes, and large chimneys, often topped with decorative chimney pots. **ASHLAR** – a squared block of building stone, or a thin, dressed rectangle of stone used for facing walls. **GAMBREL ROOF** - a type of roof similar to a hip roof (with all sides sloping downwards), but with gables forming the top part of the end slopes. **GABLE** – the portion of a wall, generally triangular, between the edges of a sloping roof. **TIMBER FRAMING** - or half-timbering, a method of creating framed structures of heavy timber jointed together with pegged mortise and tenon joints. **ORIEL WINDOW** - a form of bay window that juts out from the main wall of the building but does not reach the ground. They are commonly found in Gothic revival architecture, but also are seen in combination with the Tudor Victorian architecture of the Queen Anne style. **ROUNDEL** - a small, ornate, circular window. **CHIMNEY POT** - a round or octagonal decorative clay top or pot placed on the top of each flue of a chimney. **ARTS AND CRAFTS STYLE** (American Craftsman or Craftsman Style). Popular in the last years of the nineteenth century into the early part of the twentieth century, this American decorative style was based on the British Arts and Crafts Movement. Common architectural features include low-pitched rooflines, gabled or hipped roofs, deeply overhanging eaves, exposed rafters or decorative brackets under eaves, a front porch beneath the extension of the main roof, tapered columns supporting the roof, hand-crafted stone or woodwork, mixed materials throughout. **GUSTAV STICKLEY** (1858-1942) - Leading spokesman of American Arts and Crafts Style and American furniture maker and architect. In architecture, he believed a house ought to be constructed in harmony with its landscape, with special attention to local materials, an open floor plan to encourage family interaction, built-in bookcases and benches and large groupings of windows to let in natural light. **TRANSOM** - a horizontal lintel or beam across a window dividing it into stages or sections; a fixed window over a door or another window. **COFFER** - a sunken panel in the shape of a square, rectangle or octagon in a ceiling or vault. **FRIEZE** - the wide, central section of an entablature, it lies on top of columns and is often decorated in relief and capped by the moldings of a cornice. In interiors, the frieze is the section of wall of above the picture rail and under the crown moldings or cornice. The term is also used for a straight band of decoration between two supports. **CAUSEWAY** - a road or railway elevated on a sandbank, usually across a broad body of water or wetland. **POTAGER** - a traditional kitchen garden, with herbs, vegetables, fruits and flowers, often structured with a design based on repetitive geometric patterns. **REPOUSSÉ** - a method of making a design in relief in metalwork by hammering from behind so that the decoration projects. **REVERSE GLASS PAINTING** - the method of applying paint to a piece of glass and then viewing the image by turning the glass over. **CHINOISERIE** - free and fanciful rendering, in Western terms, of features adapted from the decorative repertoire of Chinese ornament.

- Margi Gristina

Continued from page one

**way**, while another has a natural waterfall on its property, a third is built near a waterfall, a fourth has a miniature pond with waterfall added by the current owners, and the fifth house once had a small pond used for swimming and skating! In addition to water, several of the properties are large and feature lovely gardens. One property in particular had the good fortune to have been re-designed by the famous landscaping pair Joe Eck and Wayne Winterrowd of North Hill Garden in Readsboro, Vermont. North Hill is considered one of the most famous private gardens in America, and Mr. Eck and Mr. Winterrowd came to Larchmont and worked their magic on delightful grounds that



our tour-goers will be able visit next month. These gardens boast a boxwood parterre and a **potager**. Interested in learning more? Then attend the slide lecture that Mr. Eck and Mr. Winterrowd will be giving at St. John's Church on April 25<sup>th</sup>, the afternoon before the house tour. They will be selling and signing copies of their most recent book, "Our Life in Gardens," as well.

Aside from their common themes of stonework and water, the five houses boast numerous other individual architectural features that enliven their facades. Look for a **gambrel roof** on one of the Colonial Revival houses, a pergola on the other Colonial Revival example, a standard **gable** on one of the Arts & Crafts homes, and a cross gable on the second Arts & Crafts house, while the Tudor features **timber framing**. There is a great variety of windows, including several types of sashes and casements, a Palladian window, and an **oriel window**. Two of the houses possess an assortment of stained glass windows, including a large stairwell skylight in one home and five unusual **roundels** in the other.

Interior architectural details to be found include **transoms**, a **coffered** ceiling, an original hammered copper fireplace hood, original light fixtures and hardware, decorative plasterwork, French doors, carved woodwork, and more. Decorative motifs abound. In one house, you will see fleur de lys tiles on a powder room floor. In another house, the fleur de lys motif is incorporated into the border of a stained glass window. Decorative styles abound as well. One house has delightful dose of chinoiserie, another features contemporary artwork, while yet another is more traditional, and the others are perhaps eclectic. If your curiosity has been piqued, or if you think that you have guessed some of the houses described, then please join us on Sunday April 26<sup>th</sup> for the house tour. A reception and art show will be held afterwards at Mamaroneck Artists' Guild.

- Susan Emery

## *LHS Members Scour Attics in Search of Treasure!*

When a few antique-loving board members came up with the idea of an appraisal day, it seemed like a perfect fit for LHS. "What could be better than to offer residents the chance to learn the history and value of their own objects?" questioned Pier Witek, one of the LHS board members who suggested organizing the event. "After The Potomack Company volunteered their time, it all fell into place," explained Margi Gristina, fellow board member and chair of the event.



And fall into place it did. On Saturday, February 7, 2009, more than 80 enthusiastic participants arrived at St. John's Church with their works of art, prized jewelry and furniture in tow, eager to learn the value of their treasures. Guests began arriving at 10:30 AM with hopes of having their items appraised early in the day. An open forum panel discussion preceded the appraisals and was moderated by the Potomack Company's seasoned experts. The panel offered tips on the proper care and keeping of antiques and on spotting quality objects - old, new and fake. Elizabeth Wainstein, President and Founder of The Potomack Company and Director of George Washington University's

Appraisal Studies Program led the group which included former curators and experts from Christie's, The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Phillips Collection.

Participants shared stories with one another to pass the time while they waited to learn even more about the treasures they possessed. While there were a few disappointed faces in the room, there were many more smiles to be found. Yelps of excitement could be heard throughout the day, as guests were told that their object was worth significantly more than expected. Taking the prize for the oldest object was a pre-Columbian double-bodied pottery vessel from the North Coast Moche or Chimu Culture, dating from 1000 to 1470 AD. The most valuable object was a Terrestrial American Improved Globe Manufactured by Gilman Joslin, originally issued by Charles Copley of Boston in 1868.

In all, the event was a wonderful success. One that will likely be repeated for years to come.

- Melissa Schoen

Above left, Elizabeth Wainstein of Potomack Company confers with Antiques Appraisal Day Chair, Margi Gristina; Top right: Sign at St. John's; Pier Witek and Margi Gristina register antiques for appraisal; VP Lauren Gottfried, Antiques Appraisal Day Chair Margi Gristina, Historical Society President Colette Rodbell and VP, Programs Patti Roberts discuss details as the day unfolds. Appraisals were made on the spot by extremely knowledgeable and qualified experts from the Potomack Company.



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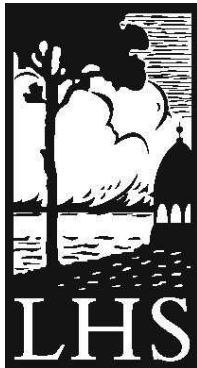
I would like to volunteer to help on the following committee(s):

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