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A Journal of Regional Studies

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From the Editors

Central Park turns 150 this year, and while it is south of our usual territory, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux each has roots and legacies in the Hudson Valley, and their work together in New York City is tied to that. Just as Olmsted and Vaux influenced generations of artists and landscape architects that followed, Washington Irving created a "school" of contemporaries and continues to influence writers today. Our article about America's first internationally successful author explores the Gothic inspiration—in architecture and literature—he gleaned from Sir Walter Scott. From the 1800s, we jump to twentieth-century architecture and parking lots, in an examination of urban life and renewal in the Village of Catskill. We continue up the river, but back in time and again toward the Gothic, ending with a discussion of an early and unattributed work by Herman Melville. (We also publish this short work in its entirety.)

Our regional forums bookend the valley as well—stretching from Boscobel to the historic sites of Troy. But before we end with our usual book reviews and exploration of new and noteworthy books, we feature a new section, titled "Regional Writing," which will be dedicated each issue to the publication of one poem from and/or about our region. Our spring selection is entitled "Winter: New York State."

Reed Sparling
Christopher Pryslopski

Correction:

The image that appeared on page 5 of our Autumn 2007 issue of the *Review* was incorrectly credited. It is from the collections of The New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey, a statewide, private, non-profit historical museum, library, and archives dedicated to collecting, preserving, and interpreting the rich and intricate political, social, cultural, and economic history of New Jersey to the broadest possible audiences. Learn more at *www.jerseyhistory.org.*

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Call for Essays

The Hudson River Valley Review is anxious to consider essays on all aspects of the Hudson Valley—its intellectual, political, economic, social, and cultural history, its prehistory, architecture, literature, art, and music—as well as essays on the ideas and ideologies of regionalism itself. All articles in *The Hudson River Valley Review* undergo peer analysis.

Submission of Essays and Other Materials

HRVR prefers that essays and other written materials be submitted as two double-spaced typescripts, generally no more than thirty pages long with endnotes, along with a computer disk with a clear indication of the operating system, the name and version of the word-processing program, and the names of documents on the disk. Illustrations or photographs that are germane to the writing should accompany the hard copy. Otherwise, the submission of visual materials should be cleared with the editors beforehand. Illustrations and photographs are the responsibility of the authors. No materials will be returned unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is provided. No responsibility is assumed for their loss. An e-mail address should be included whenever possible.

HRVR will accept materials submitted as an e-mail attachment (*hrvi@marist.edu*) once they have been announced and cleared beforehand.

Since HRVR is interdisciplinary in its approach to the region and to regionalism, it will honor the forms of citation appropriate to a particular discipline, provided these are applied consistently and supply full information. Endnotes rather than footnotes are preferred. In matters of style and form, HRVR follows *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

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Regional History Forum

Regional Writing

Book Reviews

On the cover:
A portrait of Melville as a young man by Asa Twitchell.
Courtesy of the Berkshire Athenaeum in Pittsfield, Mass.

COLLECTION OF THE AUTHOR

Fig. 4: Sunnyside from Benson J. Lossing, *Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1852), Vol. II, p. 193

"To Loiter about the Ruined Castle": Washington Irving's Gothic Inspiration

Kerry Dean Carso

Washington Irving (1783-1859) brought acclaim to American literature through his many books and short stories, and distinction to American architecture through the alterations to his house, Sunnyside, on the Hudson River in Tarrytown. Irving's rich imagination drew inspiration from a variety of sources for his architectural creation. The most obvious influence is American colonial architecture, especially the Dutch heritage of the Hudson Valley.[1] Less understood but equally important is Irving's conception of the medieval; in fact, he called Sunnyside "a perversion of the Gothic." [2] Irving enhanced his sense of the Gothic past through his reading of both Gothic novels and historical romances, and applied this sensibility to his architectural tastes. In redesigning Sunnyside, Irving was imitating a man he much admired for both his literary and architectural endeavors, Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832). The author of numerous historical romances, Scott often infused his novels with themes from earlier Gothic writers, such as Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823).[3] At Sunnyside, Irving borrowed architectural elements from Scott's baronial house, Abbotsford, designed by William Atkinson (1812-15; enlarged 1819); these recycled features were both literal (in the case of ivy clippings from Scotland) and conceptual (in the massing and details). The connection to Scott was palpable for visitors to Sunnyside: one writer commented, "A ramble at Sunnyside is equal to a pilgrimage to Abbotsford."[4] In order to understand the complexity of the cultural exchange between past and present that Irving achieved, we must understand the Gothic context of both his literary and architectural endeavors. An interdisciplinary analysis of Irving's literature and architectural design reveals his debt to both Gothic and Dutch traditions.

Scott-related sites were extremely popular tourist destinations in the nineteenth century. American historian Francis Parkman visited the border country—and Abbotsford, Melrose Abbey, and Dryburgh Abbey in particular—in 1844. In Edinburgh, Parkman wrote, "Sir Walter Scott is everywhere. His

name is in everybody's lips, and associates itself with every spot around this place. I ask the name of such a street—such a mountain, or island, or cottage, or piece of woods—the words of the reply have been familiar to me as my own name for the last six years."[5] Visits to literary shrines were important tourist activities. In England, of course, there was an increasing interest in the history of the nation, while, at the same time, religion was on the wane. As literary critic Emily Jane Cohen has written, "The homage paid to the defunct writer would be the equivalent of the late medieval pilgrimage."[6]

Unlike the many Americans who visited Scotland after Scott's death, Irving had the privilege of actually meeting Scott. In 1817, after he had published Diedrich Knickerbocker's *A History of New York* (1809), but before he published his first fictional foray, *The Sketch-Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (1819-1820), Washington Irving stopped by Abbotsford on his way to Melrose Abbey. Scott greeted him warmly and invited Irving to stay for a while. The occasion turned into a visit of several days and resulted in Irving's essay "Abbotsford," published in 1835.[7] At the time, Abbotsford and other points of interest associated with Scott's writings had become popular tourist spots. During Irving's visit, two tourists arrived to visit Scott; after they departed, Scott commented on "the great influx of English travellers, which … had inundated Scotland." Irving reminded him that it was his own writings that drew the curious to the ruins and castles of Scotland.[8]

Irving delighted in visiting ruins himself. On his first day at Abbotsford, Scott's young son, Charles, accompanied Irving to Melrose Abbey (fig. 1), which was near Abbotsford and which had been featured in Scott's poem *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805). A place with many romantic associations, Melrose Abbey was a must-see destination for Irving. Through his literary persona Geoffrey Crayon, Irving had written of a longing "to tread, as it were, in the footsteps of antiquity—to loiter about the ruined castle—to meditate on the falling tower…"[9] Visiting the abbey was just such an opportunity, and Irving relished it. When they arrived, Charles introduced Irving to the caretaker, Johnny Bower, who cited lines from Scott's poem as he took Irving on a tour of the ruins. Irving noted that *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* had "become interwoven with [the caretaker's] whole existence" so much so that Bower had merged his own identity with those of Scott's characters, an effect resulting from Bower's "constantly living among the ruins of Melrose Abbey."[10]

This merging of fact with fiction, of reality with romance, was part of the tourist experience. Indeed, it was common for nineteenth-century travelers to carry not only their travel guides, but also the fiction relevant to each attraction. When visiting the ruins of Kenilworth, for instance, Prince Puckler-Muskau

COLLECTION OF THE AUTHOR

Fig. 1: Melrose Abbey, from William Beattie, *Scotland Illustrated* (London, G. Virtue, 1838)

brought along Scott's novel *Kenilworth* (1821): "With Sir Walter Scott's captivating book in my hand I wandered amid these ruins, which call up such varied feelings…"[11] When Henry Ward Beecher visited Kenilworth, suddenly the scenes from Scott's novel rushed to mind: "But as I sat in a room, upon a fallen stone, one incident after another from the novel, and from history, came to me, one after another, until I seemed to be visiting an old and familiar place."[12] It is in these circumstances that Gothic literature takes on a didactic quality, teaching its readers how to react to and experience Gothic architecture. For example, Johnny Bower told Irving that because Scott wrote in his poem that the best time to view the Abbey was by moonlight, some visitors insisted on seeing it at night.

While at Abbotsford, Irving's excitement at his proximity to "the mighty minstrel of the North" kept him awake at night: "the idea of being under the roof of Scott, in the very centre of that region which had for some time past, been the favorite scene of romantic fiction … nearly drove sleep from my pillow," Irving wrote. He was an admirer of Scott's literature, and his essay ends with Irving's unbridled admiration for the novelist, whose works he always eagerly anticipated.

But it was not just his literary efforts that Irving admired; it was also his lifestyle and architectural endeavors at Abbotsford. During Irving's visit, Scott was renovating his home, changing it from a "snug gentleman's cottage" into a "huge baronial pile." Irving noted that Scott's process of architectural invention

paralleled the great man's writing method, stating that Scott "pleased himself with picturing out his future residence as he would one of the fanciful creations of his own romances."[13] Scattered about the grounds were the fragments of Melrose Abbey that Scott was incorporating into Abbotsford. In so doing, Scott was blending into his home not only the medieval past, but also the tangible materials out of which his own fiction sprang.

Published along with "Abbotsford" in *The Crayon Miscellany* was Irving's essay "Newstead Abbey," about his visit to poet Lord Byron's ancestral home. It tells us a great deal about Irving's Gothic sensibility. He visited Newstead Abbey for the first time in 1831; in January 1832, he returned to spend three weeks there. Henry II founded the abbey in the twelfth century; under Henry VIII, it was given to Byron's ancestor, Sir John Byron, who converted it into a dwelling. Byron sold it to his schoolmate, Colonel Wildman, who restored it. Irving begins his essay with the history of the dwelling and its eccentric owners, including Byron's great uncle and Byron himself, who, in true Gothic fashion, dug up the bones of the former residents (the Newstead monks) and kept them about the house.

As evidenced by Byron's strange act of disinterment, the past weighed heavily upon the abbey, especially in Irving's mind, but the past is constantly mingled with Irving's fertile imagination. The abbey appeals to Irving because it is "haunted by monkish, and feudal, and poetical associations," a heady mix for a romantic sensibility. As he wanders about, he ruminates on the fact that monks once treaded the quadrangle. He delights in fantasizing about the past, about the people depicted in the abbey's portraits, people who used to inhabit the dwelling. Irving's chamber is an "imaginary realm" to him, where he weaves "a thousand fancies." Here he would "conjure up fictions of the brain." Not at all concerned with his current hosts, as he himself asserts, Irving fixates on both the ancient architecture and Lord Byron's romantic life. He even visits nearby Annesley Hall to see the place where Byron fell in love with Mary Ann Chaworth.

Irving believes that the abbey was a source of inspiration for the poet, as it "addressed itself to his poetical imagination." As Irving explores the place, he quotes Byron's poetry, especially Byron's own poems about the abbey, "Lines on Leaving Newstead Abbey" and "Elegy on Newstead Abbey." Once again, literature and the experience of authentic Gothic architecture go hand-in-hand for Irving. And fiction plays an equally important role in Irving's experience of the countryside surrounding Newstead Abbey. It is located in the heart of Robin Hood country, near Sherwood Forest in Nottinghamshire. Irving tells us that as a child, he loved to read about the outlaw. During his visit, Irving goes to the forest to see the locations most associated with the Robin Hood legend. He communes with

the past in the Sherwood villages, where "every thing has a quaint and antiquated air."[14] Every experience Irving has at the abbey and in the surrounding area is shrouded in fiction and history, and he revels in it all.

Irving had been fascinated with stories, such as Robin Hood's, since his youth. In "The Author's Account of Himself," from *The Sketch-Book*, Irving's alter ego, Geoffrey Crayon, writes that he actively sought out the history and fables of the countryside: "I knew every spot where a murder or a robbery had been committed, or a ghost seen."[15] From Irving's youthful journals, which chronicle his first European visit between 1804 and 1806, we learn that he was a Gothic aficionado, often mentioning Radcliffe's works. While traveling through the French countryside in 1804, Irving is reminded of Radcliffe's landscape descriptions. He passes "an old Castle in a very ruinous state" with one habitable wing and is reminded of the Chateau of M. St. Aubert from *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), writing, "this would have formed a fine picture for her [Radcliffe's] talents to work upon."[16] In October 1804, Irving lent his copy of Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1791) to a friend, who was so interested "that he read it all the road & had nearly broken his head against several walls & trees which he encountered."[17] From his journals, one senses that Irving was often contemplating the Gothic novels he had read, comparing Radcliffe's scenery to that which he saw, and Radcliffe's fictional Gothic edifices to the buildings he examined. When visiting Haddon Hall, an English baronial mansion, Irving writes that "Mrs. Radcliff [sic] is said to have taken the idea of the Castle of Udolpho from this old hall & this singular box may have given the idea of her mysterious picture," referring to the wax figure hidden behind a curtain in Udolpho castle.[18]

Irving's sketch on a visit to Westminster Abbey likewise relies on Gothic novel conventions. Crayon, the narrator, delights in the "mournful magnificence of the old pile." Upon crossing the threshold, it "seemed like stepping back into the regions of antiquity." Irving's description of Crayon's entrance into the abbey reads like a Gothic romance. After passing through a "vaulted passage" that looked "almost subterranean," he caught sight of "an old verger, in his black gown, moving along their shadowy vaults, and seeming like a specter from one of the neighboring tombs." The sketch is a melancholy musing on mortality and the heaviness of the past. The scale of the edifice dwarfs the viewer, who feels a sense of sublime awe, as articulated by Edmund Burke in *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas on the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). The narrator does not fail to think of Scott, who is not explicitly named, but whose chivalric romances are brought to the reader's mind when Crayon describes the sepulchre of a crusader in the abbey.[19]

By his second visit to Europe between 1815 and 1832, Irving's reading habits had evolved, and this time he was everywhere reminded of Scott's works, which had superseded Radcliffe's in popularity by that time. In August 1817, Irving traveled up the coast of Scotland en route to Edinburgh, following a path similar to that of the abbess in Scott's *Marmion* (1808). Such an occurrence does not pass unnoticed in Irving's letter to his brother, in which he quotes Scott's poem and even notes the location of Constance de Beverley's trial and execution.[20] In a letter from 1815, Irving reports that he and a friend have gone to Kenilworth and Warwick castles. Kenilworth is the subject of Scott's novel of the same name, published after Irving's visit, in 1821. The castle dates from 1120, and had stood in ruins since the time of Cromwell. About Kenilworth, Irving writes that anyone who has seen "this magnificent wreck of feudal grandeur can never forget it. It surpassed all my anticipations, and has a proud grandeur even in its ruins…" He is equally impressed with Warwick, and even indulges in some Gothic daydreaming there, declaring "It is sufficient to say that when loitering within its vast court, surrounded by immense towers, long stretching battlements and lofty keeps, all mantled with ivy and stained by time, you may almost realize the dreams of chivalry and romance, and fancy yourself back into the days of tilts and tourneys." When seeing a young woman at a tower window, Irving humorously imagines her to be a damsel in distress trapped in the "dark and dismal tower by some 'Grim baron,'" a scenario strikingly reminiscent of one of Radcliffe's plots. Irving's goal at Warwick was to "forget the present in the past," and he mines the imagery of Gothic novels and historical romances to do so.[21]

The influence of the Gothic seeped into Irving's fictional writings as well. His best-known Gothic story is "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," the tale of Ichabod Crane's moonlit adventure with the Headless Horseman.[22] And Irving takes up a favorite Gothic subject in the final section of his *Tales of a Traveller* (1824). Part III, "The Italian Banditti," is a series of interlocking sketches, bringing the reader inside the world of Italy's morally bereft robbers. The wild, romantic landscape is a major element in the stories. At one point, the painter (the narrator of "The Painter's Adventure," "The Story of the Bandit Chieftain," and "The Story of the Young Robber") is asked by the chieftain to draw his likeness. The painter is excited at the rare prospect. He remembers that seventeenth-century Italian artist Salvator Rosa had lived among the banditti of Calabria (a popular myth about the artist) and "had filled his mind with the savage scenery and savage associates." The painter takes up his pencil "with enthusiasm." When he looks at the scenery, he is reminded of Rosa. Irving has a fine eye for the wild landscape of Italy and describes in picturesque detail the banditti who lurk in the mountains. Here he is

drawing upon one of Radcliffe's favorite subjects and elaborating on it. He takes us behind the scenes of bandit life, chronicling their humanity. Besides the banditti elements and the sexual threat to female virginity (in "The Story of the Young Robber"), the stories are not Gothic, per se, because they lack the intrusion of the supernatural.

This is not the case in Irving's "The Adventure of the German Student," also in *Tales of a Traveller*. In this story, an "unhealthy appetite" for "decayed literature" causes the German student's melancholy. "He was, in a manner, a literary goul, feeding in the charnel house of decayed literature," the narrator tells us. The setting is Revolutionary Paris, the accoutrements of which (including the guillotine) serve to frighten the student on his rambles through the city. The student meets a woman he finds in the pouring rain by the guillotine. He leaves her alone in his apartment; upon his return, he finds her "lying with her head hanging over the bed, and one arm thrown over it," a posture eerily reminiscent of the female figure in Henry Fuseli's Gothic painting *The Nightmare* (1781).[23] In a Gothic twist, it turns out the woman was guillotined just the night before. Upon undoing her neck band, the student watches as her head rolls onto the floor. The student ends up in a madhouse. In "The Adventure of the German Student," Irving once again turns to the wealth of his Gothic knowledge.

One interpretation of Irving's work that is decidedly Gothic is that of John Quidor (1801-1881).[24] A relatively unknown painter in his time, Quidor specialized in literary subjects, and Irving's works in particular. His painting *The Money Diggers* (1832) (fig. 2) is based on Irving's "Wolfert Webber, Or Golden Dreams" and "The Adventure of the Black Fisherman" from *Tales of a Traveller*. Wolfert Webber, an impecunious Dutch burgher in old Manhattan eager to rise above his financial misfortune, becomes obsessed with the legends of buried treasure in the area. Wolfert, Doctor Knipperhausen (Wolfert's black magic-practicing physician), and Sam (the black fisherman of the story's title) attempt to dig up some of the booty buried in the earth by pirates years before. A witness to the scene might have "mistaken the little doctor for some foul magician,

Fig. 2: John Quidor's *The Money Diggers*, 1832. Brooklyn Museum 48.171 Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Alastair Bradley Martin

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Fig. 3: John Quidor's *Ichabod Crane Pursued by the Headless Horseman*, 1858. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase made possible in part by the Catherine Walden Myer Endowment, the Julia D. Strong Endowment, and the Director's Discretionary Fund

busied in his incantations, and the grizzly headed negro for some swart goblin, obedient to his commands."[25] Their midnight adventure climaxes when a supposedly deceased buccaneer appears, leering at them from the cliff above and causing chaos to break out. This is the scene that Quidor chooses to illustrate. The story certainly contains Gothic elements—intrigue, spectral appearances, ruined buildings, necromancy—but the tale is told in a humorous tone that pokes fun at Wolfert's incredulity. However, Quidor's interpretation is more seriously Gothic than his source. As Bryan Wolf has argued, Quidor takes Irving's work and transforms it into "a more gothic exploration, however burlesque, of subterranean and unknown forces."[26] According to Wolf, the gaping hole in the center of the composition is the Gothic underworld, representing the character's irrational fears. The space of the painting is claustrophobic; all around the figures are grotesquely twisted, leafless trees, a mysterious moonlit landscape, and inky darkness.

Equally Gothic is Quidor's interpretation of Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (fig. 3), entitled *Ichabod Crane Pursued by the Headless Horseman* (1858). Once again, Quidor chooses to illustrate the story's most dramatic point, when Ichabod flies through the forest on his emaciated steed, Gunpowder, pursued by the "Galloping Hessian." In Quidor's painting, Ichabod and Gunpowder are diminutive compared to the overwhelmingly dark and mysterious landscape encircling them. The composition draws attention to the frightened figure on horseback chased through the primeval forest.[27] The small scale of the figures compared to the vast web of trees in the background highlight the exaggerated sense of horror that Quidor infuses into his source. Indeed, as David Sokol has shown, Quidor reconstructs Irving's works, creating imaginative paintings that in their intensity go beyond his sources.[28] Quidor gothicizes Irving's story, creating an image pulsating with horror.

When Irving returned to the United States after seventeen years in Europe, he decided to settle on the banks of the Hudson. In 1835, he purchased an old

Dutch farmhouse in Tarrytown that had belonged to the Van Tassel family (whom Irving had immortalized in "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"). The original house on the site, dating to 1656 (according to Irving), was the residence of Wolfert Acker, a privy councilor to Peter Stuyvesant. This Dutch house was burned during the Revolution; the house that replaced it, known as the Van Tassel Cottage, was built in the 1780s. Irving engaged his friend George Harvey, a painter of Hudson River landscapes, as the architect, and the two collaborated on the renovation between 1835 and 1837 (fig. 4, page 22). The original structure was retained, but Harvey and Irving heightened the walls, enlarged the west window, added dormers, rebuilt the chimney, and added a new wing and veranda on the river side. The renovations included the addition of crow-stepped parapets to the gables and an arcaded entrance pavilion forming a porch. The whole creates an extremely Romantic effect; the building is asymmetrical through the addition of wings, and features an irregular roofline, created by the crow-stepped gables; weathervanes; clustered chimneystacks; and a cupola with spire and dormers. It is low to the ground and harmonizes with nature with its vine-covered walls and surrounding trees. Irving and Harvey added a tower with an Oriental flair (nicknamed the "Pagoda") to Sunnyside's northeast corner in 1847, after Irving's four-year sojourn in Spain. Although the tower's function was mundane (it contained a laundry, store rooms, pantries, and servants' rooms), the "Pagoda" further Romanticized what was already an eclectic concoction.[29]

Irving's description of Sunnyside as "a perversion of the Gothic" is an accurate description, given its diverse sources (fig. 5). Indeed, Sunnyside is an amalgamation of styles, including the Hudson Valley's colonial Dutch architecture, evident in the house's crow-stepped gables.[30] In Dutch colonial America, the crow-stepped gable was a feature prevalent in urban architecture. Curiously, Irving chose an urban architectural element for his Hudson Valley home. As Wayne Franklin has shown, illustrations of urban Dutch-influenced houses in New York City appeared in *The New-York Mirror* in a series of articles illustrated by Alexander Jackson Davis in the early 1830s.[31] Irving repeatedly emphasized the Dutch nature of his house; it is clear from his descriptions of Sunnyside that its Dutch aspect was of great importance to him. Contemporaries noted the varied inspiration of Irving's creation. A critic in *The Corsair* praised Sunnyside as "a combination of the old fashioned Dutch North-river mansion, with the modern English cottage."[32]

The overall feeling of the house is Picturesque, and its interior architectural spaces are quite Gothic, in the novelistic sense, a fact that was not lost on contemporary observers. Nathaniel Parker Willis reported that Sunnyside was "not wholly comprehensible," much like the architectural space of the castle of Udolpho, in

Fig. 5: Washington Irving and George Harvey, Sunnyside, 1835-37, Tarrytown

which passages lead to nowhere and secret doors abound.[33] Irving had described a similar Gothic house earlier, in *The Sketch-Book*, when he writes about the typical Englishman in the essay "John Bull." Bull's house, of course, is a fictional composite of what Irving perceives as the representative English manor house:

> His family mansion is an old castellated manor house, gray with age, and of a most venerable though weather-beaten appearance. It has been built upon no regular plan, but is a vast accumulation of parts, erected in various tastes and ages . . . Like all relics of that style [Saxon architecture], it is full of obscure passages, intricate mazes, and dusky chambers . . . Additions have been made to the original edifice from time to time, and great alterations have taken place; towers and battlements have been erected during wars and tumults, wings built in time of peace . . . until it has became one of the most spacious, rambling tenements imaginable. [34]

Sunnyside is like John Bull's house in many ways. It has the appearance of "accumulation" in its synthesis of various styles. As an addition to the main house, the "Pagoda" accordingly looks like an appendage. Access to the tower from the original house is awkward; as Willis pointed out, the plan of Sunnyside, especially the tower addition, is not straightforward. Narrow hallways and staircases, nooks

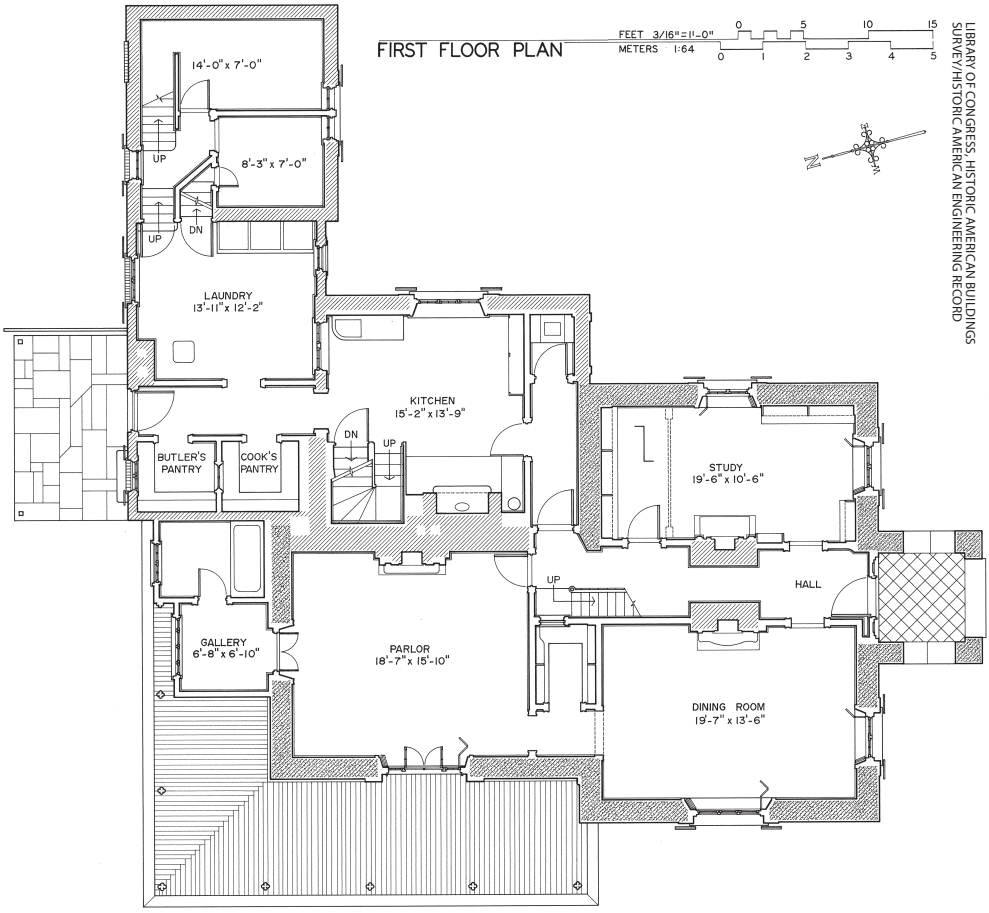

Fig. 6: First floor plan of Sunnyside

and crannies, and cramped spaces abound. The generally small rooms on the first floor often have more than one point of access. The intricate, maze-like plan features numerous small hallways and closet spaces (fig. 6).

Irving evidently delighted in these complicated schemes, as evidenced from his description of John Bull's house. The key difference between Bull's house and Sunnyside, however, is that the former was created over a span of centuries, while Sunnyside is the creation of one owner over a much shorter amount of time. John Bull's house is an authentic accumulation involving many owners and builders, who employed the styles appropriate to their respective ages. As Irving writes, John Bull's house is of "irregular construction, [resulting] from its being the growth of centuries, and being improved by the wisdom of every generation."[35] Sunnyside displays a similar outward aspect, but without the accretion of time. Hence, Sunnyside represents a nineteenth-century gentleman's quick fix

PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR

Fig. 7: Sunnyside's dated gable

for Gothic intricacies. In order to pseudo-authenticate the building's age, Irving affixed the date "1656" to the west gable of the house, indicating the year the original dwelling was built (fig. 7).

The decorative arts at Sunnyside today, many of which belonged to Irving, further illuminate his diverse interests. Most interesting from a Gothic standpoint are two whimsical cast-iron benches that adorned the entrance to Sunnyside. They were a gift to Irving from Gouverneur Kemble, owner of the West Point Foundry in Cold Spring. The design of the benches was based on Irving's sketches that he included in a letter to Harvey in 1836.[36] While the interior of Sunnyside is not entirely devoid of Gothic Revival touches in its furnishings, the overall eclectic sensibility is that of comfort, taste, and refinement suitable to Irving's stature as a man of letters. The opposite of Gothic Revival whimsy, Irving's desk in his study (a gift from his publisher, G.P. Putnam) is downright functional, allowing two people to work simultaneously on its oak surface. Nuances of the Gothic Revival are found, however, in the pointed arches of the dining room chairs and the decoration of Irving's wine cabinets. In general, though, the architectural ornamentation inside Sunnyside (including the keystone arches of the west bedroom) as well as the furnishings are far from Gothic; indeed, it is the spirit of Picturesque irregularity in the plan and in the exterior of Sunnyside that most strongly relates the house to the Gothic Revival. Outside of his cottage, on the Picturesque landscape surrounding Sunnyside, Irving built two Gothic Revival buildings—the icehouse and gardener's cottage—which were simultaneously ornamental and functional.

What was Irving's inspiration for Sunnyside? Certainly, Scott's Abbotsford was the most significant model (fig. 8). Irving was imitating Scott, as evidenced by a letter he wrote in 1852, in which he asserts that he is not overspending on the renovations "as poor Scott did at Abbotsford."[37] Both houses share architectural similarities such as steeply pitched roofs, cross-gabling, stepped gables, clustered chimney stacks, and irregular window sizing.[38] In addition, Sunnyside was stuccoed to have the illusion of cut stone, of which Abbotsford is constructed. Like Scott, Irving mingled the past into his home. Irving imported ivy clippings from the walls of Melrose Abbey to plant on his cottage, thereby organically linking the medieval past of Scotland with his own architectural creation (fig. 9). Scott had incorporated the stones of Melrose into Abbotsford, while Irving settled for a lighter souvenir to make the transatlantic passage. In so doing, Irving was

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Fig. 8: Abbotsford, from William Beattie, *Scotland Illustrated* (London, G. Virtue, 1838)

adjusting for America's historical inadequacies; the horticulturist Andrew Jackson Downing praised ivy for its Old World associations, even suggesting that ivy failed to grow in the United States because of the nation's youth:

> Certainly the finest of all this class of climbers is the European ivy. Such rich masses of glossy, deep green foliage, such fine contrasts of light and shade, and such a wealth of associations, is possessed by no other plant; the Ivy, to which the ghost of all the storied past alone tells its tale of departed greatness; the confidant of old ruined castles and abbeys… True to these instincts, the Ivy does not seem to be naturalized so easily in America as most other foreign vines. We are yet too young—this country of a great future, and a little past.[39]

Historian Adam Sweeting notes the significance of Irving's ivy, writing that "with one clip of the pruning shears, a remarkable associational web involving Scottish history, Dutch legend, Robert the Bruce, and Katrina Van Tassel were forever linked by a vine… Using an old farmhouse on the banks of the Hudson the way his mentor appropriated the history of Melrose Abbey, Irving created a useable literary and historical past that existed outside the commercial present…"[40] The "associational web" that Sweeting describes is rich with implications; Irving's house is architecturally and intellectually eclectic. Irving included another tangible thread in his associational web with the addition of weathervanes from Dutch sources. According to Irving, one weathercock once

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Fig. 9: Sunnsyide from *Harper's New Monthly Magazine,* XIV: LXXIX (Dec. 1856), 1

adorned the Stadt-House in New Amsterdam (New York City) and another the Vander Heyden Palace of Albany. Irving asserted that a third weathervane, a gift from Gill Davis, came from Rotterdam.[41] Historically, however, the provenance is less important than Irving's *assertions* about their provenance. His descriptions of Sunnyside—his words—are as vital to the mythology of Sunnyside as the physicality of the house itself.

With the construction of his fanciful cottage, Irving attempted to blend fiction and reality in true Gothic fashion. He wrote a quasi-fictional history of the building, "Wolfert's Roost," originally published in 1839 and rewritten in 1855. In the sketch, Irving describes Sunnyside as "a little, old-fashioned stone mansion, all made up of gable ends, and as full of angles and corners as an old cocked hat." He then wraps the little house in superstition. During the pre-Revolutionary War period, it was "reputed to be harassed by Yankee witchcraft. When the weather was quiet every where else, the wind, it was said, would howl and whistle about the gables; witches and warlocks would whirl about upon the weather-cocks, and scream down the chimneys…" After the British burned the house down, it became a "melancholy ruin," avoided by the superstitious.[42] The "Tappan Sea" near the house was also said to be haunted. Even if Sunnyside lacked Gothic architectural elements in its original Dutch colonial aspect, Irving recreated it as a haunted Gothic ruin. In so doing, he also recreates the atmosphere of Newstead

Abbey, where, as he tells us in his essay, supernatural sightings were common among the domestic staff. Sunnyside represents the breakdown between fiction and reality due to Irving's imaginative creation of legends surrounding his house. Such was Irving's style, as indicated by his alter ego, Geoffrey Crayon, who claims that "when I attempt to draw forth a fact, I cannot determine whether I have read, heard, or dreamt it; and I am always at a loss to know how much to believe of my own stories."[43]

Scott's Abbotsford was not the only British source for Sunnyside, as Irving's house is in many respects an American version of Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill (1749-77). The fanciful Gothic Revival castle outside of London became the setting for what is considered the first Gothic novel, Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764). At Strawberry Hill and Sunnyside, the Gothic impulse is the same, and both owners wrote stories about the Gothic architectural creations they designed themselves, with the help of others. When one examines Walpole's and Irving's own descriptions of their houses, it becomes clear that Irving was conscious of his imitation of Walpole's castle. Walpole often referred to Strawberry Hill in Lilliputian terms, exemplified by the following quotation: "[Strawberry Hill] is a little plaything-house … and is the prettiest bauble you ever saw."[44] Irving describes Sunnyside in similarly diminutive terms, repeatedly using the word "little" to describe the house. His intention, he says, was "to make a little nookery somewhat in the Dutch style, quaint but unpretending."[45] This miniaturization displays both Walpole's and Irving's sense of humor, which acts as an antidote to the gloom and doom of the Gothic literary genre in which both indulged in their writings.

Irving's little cottage had an important impact on American architectural history: it influenced Alexander Jackson Davis, the premiere domestic Gothic Revival architect in the decades before the Civil War. Davis and Irving met in 1837 through Davis's friend, James A. Hillhouse, of New Haven, Connecticut. According to Davis's daybook, in May 1839, he was reading Irving's works. Davis visited Sunnyside on occasion and drew the house on wood block for publication in A.J. Downing's *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening Adapted to North America* (1841). Friendship with Irving led to Davis's commission to design Knoll (later renamed Lyndhurst) in Tarrytown for William and Philip R. Paulding (1838; enlarged 1865-67). The villa echoes Sunnyside in its veranda; Dutch crow-stepped gables; and projecting, two-story entrance gable. Architectural historian Patrick Snadon argues that Davis's progress in architectural design between Glen Ellen (designed by Davis and his partner Ithiel Town for client Robert Gilmor III near Baltimore, Maryland, in 1832) and Knoll can

be attributed to his exposure to Sunnyside. In particular, Snadon notes that the two-storied, gabled entryway at Knoll, a more sophisticated design than that of Glen Ellen, owes its inspiration to Sunnyside's similar entrance. It is significant that Sunnyside, the amateur effort of Harvey and Irving, influenced Davis, a professional architect.[46]

Perhaps Irving and Sunnyside are most like their Scottish counterparts Scott and Abbotsford in the steady stream of visitors they received, brought there by the fame of the author. Irving had arrived unannounced at Scott's doorstep in 1817, and Scott welcomed him heartily. In 1854, when the people of Dearman (a ten-minute walk from Sunnyside) voted to rename their railroad stop "Irvington," Irving was a very well-known figure and Sunnyside, through numerous prints, was equally famous. One guidebook called Sunnyside and its grounds "the great attraction of tourists from all parts of the world."[47] After Irving's death, the artist Christian Schussele celebrated Irving's similarities to Scott in his painting *Washington Irving and His Literary Friends at Sunnyside* (1863), which closely resembles in subject, composition, and title Thomas Faed's *Sir Walter Scott and His Literary Friends at Abbotsford* (1854). Scott had given Irving a copy of this engraving.[48] For Irving, like Scott, the romanticized medieval past was a rich source for both literary and architectural inspiration.

Endnotes

1. See W. Barksdale Maynard, "'Best, Lowliest Style!': The Early Nineteenth-Century Rediscovery of American Colonial Architecture," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 59:3 (Sept. 2000), 338-357.
2. Quoted in Hugh Grant Rowell, "The Interior Architecture," *American Collector*, XVI (Oct. 1947): 16.
3. The Gothic literary genre transported its readers to an imaginary realm, a pseudo-medieval place filled with dungeons, caverns, and all manner of subterranean labyrinths. Haunted castles, lascivious monks, and disembodied voices—the trappings of the Gothic novel gripped late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century readers with spine-tingling tales of treacherous villains and virtuous heroines. Without risking a hair on one's head (but perhaps raising more than one), the Gothic reader vicariously experienced supernatural happenings and gained access to the awful and sublime secrets of the human soul.
4. Theodore Tilton, *Sanctum Sanctorum, or Proof-sheets from an Editor's Table* (New York: Sheldon & Company, 1870), 7.
5. Francis Parkman. *The Journals of Francis Parkman*, ed. Mason Wade (New York & London: Harper & Brothers, 1947; Kraus Reprint Co., New York, 1969), 227.
6. Emily Jane Cohen, "Museums of the Mind: The Gothic and the Art of Memory," *ELH*, 62:4 (1995), 887.
7. Irving's essays on Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey are based on his actual visits, about which he writes in his journals and letters. William Owen has argued that Abbotsford is an "imaginative reconstruction" of Irving's visit, rather than a factual account. He posits that the actual narrator is Irving's literary persona, Geoffrey Crayon. However, for the purposes of this article,

I will refer to Irving as the writer of the two essays since it is impossible to separate what Irving actually experienced and what he fictionalized for the purposes of his essays. William Owen, "Reevaluating Scott: Washington Irving's 'Abbotsford,'" in *The Old and New World Romanticism of Washington Irving*, ed. Stanley Brodwin (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 69-78.

8. Washington Irving, "Abbotsford," *The Crayon Miscellany*, ed. Dahlia Kirby Terrel, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979), 153.
9. Washington Irving, "The Author's Account of Himself," in *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (1819-20; New York: Penguin Books, 1981), 14.
10. Irving, "Abbotsford," 129.
11. Quoted in Megan Aldrich, *Gothic Revival* (London: Phaidon Press, 1994), 141.
12. Henry Ward Beecher, *Star Papers; or Experiences of Art and Nature* (New York: J. C. Derby, 1855), 14-15.
13. Irving, "Abbotsford," 129-130, 125, 143.
14. Washington Irving, "Newstead Abbey," *The Crayon Miscellany*, ed. Dahlia Kirby Terrel (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979), 188, 181, 196-197, 175, 187.
15. Irving, "The Author's Account of Himself," in *The Sketch Book*, 13.
16. Washington Irving, *Journals and Notebooks (1803-1876)*, ed. Nathalia Wright, vol. 1 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), August 8, 1804, 55-56.
17. Irving, *Journals*, vol. I, October 9, 1804, 489.
18. Washington Irving, *Journals and Notebooks (1807-1822)*, vol. II, ed. Walter A. Rechart and Lillian Sclissel (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981), August 3, 1816, 76.
19. Irving, "Westminster Abbey," in *The Sketch Book*, 169-173.
20. Washington Irving, *Letters (1802-1823)*, ed. Ralph M. Aderman, Herbert L. Kleinfield, and Jenifer S. Banks, vol. I (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978), August 26, 1817, 490.
21. Irving, *Letters (1802-1823)*, vol. I, July 27, 1815, 406-408.
22. The most complete discussion of Irving as a Gothic writer appears in Ringe's book *American Gothic*. While Ringe acknowledges that Irving read Radcliffe, he minimizes her impact on his work, citing Common Sense Philosophy (which sought rational explanations for supernatural phenomena) and German romances as stronger influences. Irving often employs the supernatural in his sketches to demonstrate the fallibility and gullibility of certain characters whose engagement with the supernatural is the result of mental deceptions. Irving's comic elements clearly separate him from earlier Gothic writers. Donald Ringe, *American Gothic: Imagination and Reason in Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1982), 80-101. There is a significant amount of scholarship on Irving and the Gothic, including: Oral Sumner Coad, "The Gothic Element in American Literature before 1835," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 24 (1925), 72-93; John Clendenning, "Irving and the Gothic Tradition," *Bucknell Review*, 12:2 (May 1964), 90-98; *Washington Irving: An American Study, 1802-1832* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965), 195-212; Donald A. Ringe, "Irving's Use of the Gothic Mode," *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 7:1 (1974), 51-65; and G. R. Thompson, "Washington Irving and the American Ghost Story," in *The Haunted Dusk: American Supernatural Fiction, 1820-1920*, ed. John W. Crowley, Charles Crow, and Howard Kerr (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983), 11-36. For a discussion of Irving, haunting, and the Hudson Valley, see chapter two of Judith Richardson, *Possessions: The History and Uses of Haunting in the Hudson Valley* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2003).
23. Washington Irving, *Tales of a Traveller by Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.*, ed. Judith Giblin Haig (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987), 189, 193, 32, 35.
24. The most comprehensive work to date on Quidor is David M. Sokol, "John Quidor: His Life and Work," Ph. D. Diss., New York University, 1971. See also Bryan Jay Wolf, *Romantic Re-Vision: Culture and Consciousness in Nineteenth-Century American Painting and Literature* (Chicago

& London: University of Chicago Press, 1982), chapter 4; David M. Sokol, "John Quidor, Literary Painter," *The American Art Journal*, 2:1 (Spring 1970): 60-73; Christopher Kent Wilson, "Engraved Sources for Quidor's Early Work," *The American Art Journal* 8 (Nov. 1976), 17-25; and exhibition catalogues David M. Sokol, *John Quidor: Painter of American Legend*, (Wichita: Wichita Art Museum, 1973); John I. H. Baur, *John Quidor* (Utica: New York State Council on the Arts, 1965); and John I. H. Baur, *Three Nineteenth Century American Painters, John Quidor, Eastman Johnson, Theodore Robinson* (New York: Arno Press, 1969). These last two catalogs are reprinted from Baur's 1942 exhibition catalog from the Brooklyn Museum. In *Painting the Dark Side*, Sarah Burns addresses the question of race in Quidor's paintings, which she describes as "powerful visual metaphors for what we might call *fear of the dark* in white antebellum culture." Sarah Burns, *Painting the Dark Side: Art and the Gothic Imagination in Nineteenth-century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 101.

25. Irving, *Tales of a Traveller*, 259.

26. Wolf, 122.

27. Quidor also painted an earlier version of the same subject in 1828. In the earlier version, someone other than Quidor added the horseman; since removed from the original painting, the horseman can be seen in a reproduction in John I. Bauer, *John Quidor*, 23. See Rebecca Bedell, "John Quidor and the Demonic Imagination: *Ichabod Crane Flying from the Headless Horseman* (c. 1828)," *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 11:1 (1998), 6.

28. Sokol, 63.

29. On Sunnyside, see David R. Anderson, "A Quaint, Picturesque Little Pile: Architecture and the Past in Washington Irving," *The Old and New World Romanticism of Washington Irving*, ed. Stanley Brodwin (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 139-149; Joseph T. Butler, "Washington Irving and His Home, Sunnyside," *Washington Irving, A Tribute*, ed. Andrew B. Myers (Tarrytown, NY: Sleepy Hollow Restorations, 1972); Joseph T. Butler, *Washington Irving's Sunnyside* (Tarrytown, NY: Sleepy Hollow Restorations, 1974); Harold Dean Cater, "Washington Irving and Sunnyside," *New York History*, XXXVIII: 2 (April 1957): 123-166; Kathleen Eagen Johnson, *Washington Irving's Sunnyside* (Tarrytown, NY: Historic Hudson Valley Press, 1995); Andrew B. Myers, "Sunnyside: From Saltbox to Snuggery to Shrine," *The Knickerbocker Tradition: Washington Irving's New York*, ed. Andrew B. Myers (Tarrytown, NY: Sleepy Hollow Restorations, 1974); Clay Lancaster, "The Architecture of Sunnyside," *American Collector*, XVI (Oct. 1947), 13-15; Hugh Grant Rowell, "The Interior Architecture," *American Collector*, XVI (Oct. 1947), 16-18; and Robert M. Toole, "An American Cottage Ornée: Washington Irving's Sunnyside, 1835-1859," *Journal of Garden History*, 12:1 (1992), 52-72. See also W. Barksdale Maynard, *Architecture in the United States, 1800-1850* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2002), 88-92; Thomas G. Connors, "The Romantic Landscape: Washington Irving, Sleepy Hollow, and the Rural Cemetery Movement," in *Mortal Remains: Death in Early America*, ed. Nancy Isenberg and Andrew Burstein (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 187-245; Patrick Snadon, "A. J. Davis and the Gothic Revival Castle in America, 1832-1865," Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1988, 293-301; Janice Schimmelman, "The Spirit of the Gothic: The Gothic Revival House in Nineteenth-Century America," Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1980, 134-38; and Adam Sweeting, *Reading Houses and Building Books: Andrew Jackson Downing and the Architecture of Popular Antebellum Literature, 1835-1855* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1996), 134-139.

30. This architectural feature, also called corbie steps, can be found not only in Flanders and Holland, but also in north Germany and East Anglia, as well as sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Scottish architecture

31. Numerous commentators have mentioned this idiosyncrasy of Sunnyside, including Wayne Franklin, "Cooper and New York's Dutch Heritage," *James Fenimore Cooper Society Miscellaneous Papers*, 5 (1994), 18-24.

32. Quoted in Schimmelman, 137. For an analysis of the later influence of Dutch art and architecture on American culture (1880-1920), see Annette Stott, *Holland Mania: The Unknown Dutch*

Period in American Art and Culture (Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 1998). See also Joyce D. Goodfriend, ed., *Revisiting New Netherland: Perspectives on Early Dutch America* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005) and Joyce D. Goodfriend, Benjamin Schmidt, and Annette Stott, *Going Dutch: The Dutch Presence in America, 1609-2009* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008).

33. Quoted in Sweeting, 137.
34. David Anderson mentions the similarities between Sunnyside and John Bull's house in Anderson, 141, as does Sweeting, 138. Irving, "John Bull," in *The Sketch Book*, 304.
35. Irving, "John Bull," in *The Sketch Book*, 305.
36. Butler, *Washington Irving's Sunnyside*, 42-3.
37. Quoted in Anderson, 145.
38. Johnson, 11.
39. Andrew Jackson Downing, "On the Drapery of Cottages and Gardens," in *Rural Essays* (New York: George P. Putnam and Company, 1853), 94.
40. Sweeting, 135.
41. Johnson, 8.
42. Washington Irving, *Wolfert's Roost*, ed. Roberta Rosenberg (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979), 3, 6, 11.
43. Irving, *Tales of a Traveller*, 4.
44. Quoted in W. S. Lewis, "The Genesis of Strawberry Hill," *Metropolitan Museum Studies*, V:1 (June 1934), 60.
45. Irving, *Letters*, II, July 8, 1835, 835; Irving uses the word "little" to describe Sunnyside in the following letters: *Letters*, III, January 13, 1843, 473; *Letters*, III, June 21, 1843, 544; and *Letters*, IV, November 8, 1846, 104. Twentieth-century scholars have followed suit; Cater calls Sunnyside a "polished miniature."
46. Snadon, 296, 301. For more information on Davis's designs of Glen Ellen and Knoll, see Susanne Brendel-Pandich, "From Cottages to Castles: The Country House Designs of Alexander Jackson Davis," in *Alexander Jackson Davis: American Architect 1803-1892*, ed. Amelia Peck (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992), 58-79 and Kerry Dean Carso, "Diagnosing the 'Sir Walter Disease': American Architecture in the Age of Romantic Literature," *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*, 35:4 (December 2002), 121-142. Irving and Gilmor knew each other from their travels in England, and Walpole's Strawberry Hill and Scott's Abbotsford influenced both men in the designs of their respective houses. Snadon, 298.
47. *Miller's New York As It Is, or Stranger's Guide to the Cities of New York, Brooklyn and Adjacent Places…* (New York: J. Miller, 1866), 125.
48. Butler, *Washington Irving's Sunnyside*, 53.

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