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From the Editors

The diverse collection of articles in this issue span nearly 300 years of American history. Geoff Benton takes a closer look at the shifting relationship between Robert R. Livingston and John Jay. Before becoming bitter political rivals, these two Founding Fathers were the dearest of friends. Tracing the evolution of slang at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Jon C. Malinowski demonstrates how its use serves as a means of establishing and maintaining identity and hierarchy in the institution's unique social order. Paul G. Schneider surveys the many ways Hudson River Valley residents have adapted to and made a living from the frozen river. Offering a rare firsthand glimpse into the "downstairs" denizens of the Gilded Age, Susan Ingalls Lewis introduces Emma Waite, an African American domestic worker who kept a diary of her experiences in Saratoga Springs and New York City throughout 1870. Francis R. Kowsky describes how the legacies of Andrew Jackson Downing, the father of American landscape architecture, and his lesser-known brother Charles, a prominent horticulturalist, were celebrated in their Newburgh hometown thanks to the tenacity of Andrew's widow Caroline and the vision of his acolytes Calvert Vaux and Frederick Law Olmsted. Finally, Charlotte Del Vecchio offers a long-overdue appreciation of Jazz Age icon Edna St. Vincent Millay, whose home in rural Columbia County preserves the inspiration for much of her remarkable poetry as well as her irrepressible spirit.

On the cover: This is one of the few images of The Chancellor's Arryl House. It is from a "Hudson River Album," attributed to P. Lodet, c.1806. It appears on page 15: "Clermont Seat of the Chancellor Livingston North River / 1807" [signed "P Lodet" in lower right]. Image courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, National Archives and Records Administration. The portrait of John Jay was painted by Gilbert Stuart in 1794; image courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, United State Public Domain image. The portrait of "The Chancellor" Robert R. Livingston is also attributed to Stuart; image courtesy of WikiMedia, in the United States Public Domain.

THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY REVIEW

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Rise to Steepletop: The Elevation of Edna St. Vincent Millay

Charlotte Del Vecchio

Edna St. Vincent Millay, photographed by Herman Mishkin c.1928. Courtesy of the Edna St. Vincent Millay Society

Edna St. Vincent Millay rose from humble beginnings to become one of the most famous poets in American history, before slowly fading out of the minds of socialites and scholars alike. She is most well-known for her debut poem "Renascence," which unexpectedly led to her attendance at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York. Millay's Pulitzer Prize win early on in her career allowed the poet to expand her reach and develop a foundation for the remainder of her literary career. This Jazz Age author wrote in a wide variety of genres, including sonnets, plays, an opera libretto, and even political propaganda. At the peak of her popularity, Millay sold out the Hollywood Bowl on a national poetry reading tour, outsold numerous mainstream male poets, and managed to generate revenue in an economic depression. Her vivacious social life and steady production of writing throughout her life shaped her as an honest embodiment of the period in which she was writing.

Through her own skill and the unwavering support of her mother, Millay, who preferred to be called Vincent, surpassed the expectations laid out for her by the serene, coastal Maine town in which she was born and the way she was raised. Beginning in Maine, Vincent developed numerous social connections that she maintained through the duration of her life and which assisted in her continual growth and achievement. Vincent's uncanny charm and sensational beauty opened the door for her to bewilder audiences with her talent. She held onto many social and professional relationships because they assisted her career, but these individuals also willingly stayed in her circle so they could continue to experience the remarkable character that was Vincent.

Many were charmed by Vincent for the way she challenged societal norms and her willingness to present honest discussions of love, loss, and female perspectives. Developing her craft as a resident of bohemian Greenwich Village, Vincent came across like minds in the Provincetown Players, which allowed her to live up to her own expectations of life as a writer. Throughout this success, she also managed to have an active social life, which consisted of parties, drinking, and drug use. This anything-goes lifestyle did not endear her to academicians, nor did Vincent's gender. The leaders of academia were hesitant to promote the success of a female poet over that of her male counterparts. Today, the exclusion of this unprecedented poet remains. While continuously appearing in anthologies of American poetry, her writing was largely excluded from the academic realm, with many professors unfamiliar with Millay's work and its continuing relevance.

While Edna St. Vincent Millay's legacy may be largely absent from modern classrooms, it lives on in the Hudson River Valley through Steepletop, her home in Austerlitz, Columbia County. Vincent and her husband, Eugen Boissevain, purchased this estate together in 1925 as an oasis for Vincent to write and host friends from New York City. The couple lived there together for the rest of their lives, appreciating the proximity to the city as well as the natural beauty of the region and the rural way of

Vincent's writing cabin that she and Eugen had built in 1930 after the first one burned down in 1928 is nestled in a grove of pine trees which, like her, were transplanted from Maine. Courtesy of the Edna St. Vincent Millay Society

life that provided a welcome change of pace and inspiration for much of her poetry. Today, Steepletop very much remains the home of the poet; the house still stands as it did when Vincent herself last looked upon it. The Edna St.Vincent Millay Society has worked hard to maintain the property and surrounding landscape and to ensure that Vincent's work and passion for nature live on. Vincent's choice to build her life in the Hudson River Valley reveals the artistic allure of the region, adding the poet to the long list of creative figures who have called this land their true home.

Maine's Shores to Vassar's Doors

Long before she found the Hudson River Valley, Vincent grew up in the small coastal town of Camden, Maine. She was raised by her single mother, Cora, along with two younger sisters, Norma and Kathleen. The family was extremely poor and Cora often left for days at a time to work as a traveling nurse, leaving Vincent to care for her sisters. Cora encouraged an education in the arts and literature for all of her girls. Despite the poor conditions in which they grew up, the girls lived happily, each developing their own artistic passions which they would carry throughout their lives.

The unwavering and unbreakable spirit of the girl who would become one of the greatest writers of her generation was evident long before she was discovered by those who could help her move up in the world. Not only was Vincent bold in

her own right, but Cora's continual support and belief in her daughter's inevitable greatness helped to build her into the writer she came to be. At twelve years old, she was transferred into high school after an altercation with her former principal in which he claimed "she'd run the school long enough." Vincent's outlook on life continually reflects her knowledge that the future holds far more than this small town in Maine could offer her. As the youngest freshman at her school, Vincent quickly began to write for her school newspaper and literary magazine, of which she later became editor in chief.

At fourteen, Vincent reached beyond this school publication, winning a gold medal for her poetry in *St. Nicholas* magazine, a popular children's magazine which Cora encouraged her daughters to read and submit their work to. Her poem "Forest Trees" — her first published piece in this magazine — defined her voice as a poet. While this piece was her first of many, it remains comparable to the work she produced as an adult, demonstrating her true talent. Vincent's pursuit of publication continued with submissions to *The Lyric Year* in 1911, for which she wrote and submitted many of the poems that would be included in her first book of poetry. In order to better the chances of having her work accepted for publication, she submitted her work under the name E. Vincent Millay, deliberately concealing her gender. When her poetry was accepted, she wrote to the publisher, Mitchell Kennerly, to reveal her true identity, and the two began a friendly, lifelong correspondence.

In May 1912, Vincent's poem "Renascence" was included in *The Lyric Year: One Hundred Poems*. At a summer party a few months later, she read the poem to guests at the request of Norma, who encouraged her sister to display her accomplishment and talent. Fortune favored Vincent that night. In the audience sat Caroline B. Dow, an alumna of Vassar College working as dean of the New York Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) training school. She was amazed with Vincent's talent, evident both in her writing and performance. This initial interaction between the two women launched Vincent's interest in Vassar College and a promise from Dow to help her network and secure funding for her higher education. Vincent pursued Vassar because she wanted a life outside the path for most young women in Maine. Conditional to her acceptance at Vassar, Vincent completed a preparatory semester at Barnard College in Manhattan. This change of environment introduced her to life beyond Maine and marked the beginning of Vincent's relationship with New York City. As a result of her delayed process in college admission, Vincent was four years older than the girls in her class at Vassar. However, her maturity made her all the more charming and intriguing to her classmates.

During her time at Vassar, Vincent became more provocative in her character and writing, developing the persona she would carry with her for the rest of her life. She discovered the power of her sexuality in influencing people around her, and she used these charms on both her classmates and potential donors who might finance

her education. Despite their warm relationship, Caroline Dow warned educators to handle her with caution. Recognizing her talent and future potential, Vassar President Henry Noble McCracken promised not to expel her despite her wildness. "I want you to know that you couldn't break any rule that would make me vote for your expulsion. I don't want to have any dead Shelleys on my doorstep, and I don't care what you do," he told Vincent. The young poet was intent on finding ways to challenge the school's rules in order to grasp a sense of freedom. McCracken's faith in her eased Vincent's desire to escape, and she responded to his promise by stating that "on those terms I think I can continue to live in this hellhole."

Vincent and Dow's relationship existed in respectful conflict throughout their time together; they often disagreed, Vincent being a free spirit and Dow conservative. Dow attempted to keep Vincent's behavior in line, but she could not control the will of the young poet. Dow reminded Vincent that she should stay on the path that was laid out for her and to write poems that would be well-received by those who donated to her education. Vincent responded to this advice by writing "The Suicide," a poem reflecting on depression and the considerations involved in ending one's life. Such topics were rarely discussed, let alone published. Dow discouraged the publication of this poem which first appeared in The Vassar Miscellany Monthly, but maintained a respect for Vincent and her ability to write eloquently about emotional topics. Dow also discouraged Vincent's relationships with students; she believed they would hinder Vincent's social and financial advancement. Ultimately, the pair maintained a bond for the rest of their lives.

Vincent spent many months away from home without corresponding with her family, but she frequently sent them money earned from having her work published. When not in school, she continued to develop a position in New York City society, spending time with Dow and meeting wealthy people willing to support the cost of her Vassar education. Along with her success off campus, she also became more involved in theater at Vassar, which she continued to pursue after college through acting and playwriting.

By the time Vincent was a senior in 1917, she was more self-assured and willing to challenge the guidelines she had begrudgingly followed for the better part of her education. As the time of her graduation approached, Vincent had broken the rules one too many times, leaving President McCracken with no choice but to suspend her indefinitely and deny her a degree. Vincent's charm and spirit throughout her time at Vassar came to her aid, as 108 members of the student body signed a petition demanding that she be allowed to graduate. The petition enabled McCracken to declare that the punishment was too harsh. Vincent graduated with her class, as the Baccalaureate Hymn she wrote was performed.

Vincent's library at Steepletop.
Courtesy of the Edna St. Vincent Millay Society

The Village, *Vanity Fair*, and the Valley

After college, Vincent returned to Maine following a failed attempt to move directly to New York City. Her plan of living independently and creating the life she dreamed of was still beyond her reach. Vincent's continued connection with Edith Wynne Matthison, whom she had befriended while at Vassar, helped make her return to New York possible, enabling her pursuit of an acting career. Matthison was already an established actress with connections to New York's thespian community. In the fall of 1917, Vincent moved back to Manhattan, staying in the apartment of Matthison and her husband while they were away. Vincent published her first book of poetry, *Renascence and Other Poems.* However, the money from the book's advance was not enough to provide solid financial support, so Vincent returned for help to her most reliable proponent in New York, Caroline Dow. Despite the challenges of this period, between 1917 and 1920 Vincent published seventy-seven poems (including thirty-nine sonnets), a play, and her second book, *A Few Figs from Thistles,* as well as eight prose pieces written under the pseudonym Nancy Boyd. She was able to continue writing despite the challenges she faced after leaving Vassar, making her legacy that much greater.

Vincent dreamed of a bohemian life where she could be surrounded by artists like herself who cared little for social convention. Her introduction to this lifestyle

arrived the night she met Charles Ellis at a costume ball in Greenwich Village. He introduced Vincent to the Provincetown Players, whose theater had relocated to Greenwich Village the year before with notable members such as Eugene O'Neil, Max Eastman, and Floyd Dell. Working and acting alongside these people allowed Vincent to develop her own craft, which she would later rely on to sell out her poetry readings in stadiums across America. She continued submitting poetry to magazines for prize money while advancing her social status and pursuing new opportunities for creativity. Vincent found success in the theater through the Provincetown Players, seeking and obtaining leading roles and beginning to write her own plays. Enjoying her time with these artists, Vincent asked her sister, Norma, to come live with her so that she could experience it too. Norma and Cora both relocated to New York City in June 1918, while Kathleen was still a student at Vassar, making Vincent the sole financial supporter of her family. She worked hard for her writing to succeed, knowing that her family depended on her.

Vincent met Edmund Wilson, Jr., managing editor of *Vanity Fair,* at a Greenwich Village party. Wilson was charmed by her and the reputation that preceded her. In an attempt to win her favor, Wilson published several of her works in *Vanity Fair*, including the play *Aria de Capo* and "Twenty Sonnets." Vincent's new relationship with *Vanity Fair* secured her an offer to be a "Foreign Correspondent" in Europe, writing under her own name as well as the Nancy Boyd pseudonym. As Edna St. Vincent Millay, she wrote poetry and correspondence about her travels. As Nancy Boyd, she contributed prose, which she was unwilling to link to her poetry.

On January 4, 1921, Vincent and friends boarded the steamship *Rochambeau* for Paris. She had been very dedicated to learning languages at Vassar and was fluent in five of them, including French. Vincent picked up several travel companions along the way to keep her company while she traveled across Europe, yet she held a longing for her mother throughout her travels. Constantly accompanied by artists and diplomats alike, she explored European cities and wrote about her experiences. Her homesickness for Maine and her mother manifested itself in *The Ballad of the Harp-Weaver.* Vincent wrote home, begging her mother to come to Europe so they could share in the experience of their travels. Cora arrived and stayed with her daughter for the remainder of her time in Europe. Vincent's lifelong ailments caught up with her during this time; she became extremely ill, requiring her mother's care and companionship. When the two returned to America in 1923, Vincent found that she had remained successful in her absence through the publication of her third book of poems, *Second April*, which outsold her first book within four months. Vincent's success would continue through this new stage of her life, in which she embraced the Hudson River Valley and retreated into the oasis of the region to focus more heavily on her writing.

The house at Steepletop.
Courtesy of Andrew Villani

The Ballad of Steepletop: Success and Struggle

In early April 1923, Vincent received news that she had won the newly established Pulitzer Prize for poetry based on her prolific 1922 output, specifically "The Ballad of the Harp-Weaver," *A Few Figs From Thistles*, and eight sonnets that had appeared in the miscellany *American Poetry, 1922*. At the height of her success abroad and with the promise of more award-winning work to come, Vincent kept up with her bohemian circle of friends and fellow artists. She joined this crowd as they slipped away from the city on occasion for house parties in suburban Croton-On-Hudson, in Westchester County, where they mingled, played games, and enjoyed New York society without the city's congestion. It was at one of these parties that Vincent met Eugen Boissevain.

Eugen was a Dutch-born widower; an entrepreneur with family money and a reputation as an honorable character. Eternally destined to fall in love with greatness, he met his first wife, Inez Milholland, a lawyer and prominent leader in the women's suffrage movement (as well as a Vassar alumna) in 1913. The two married later that year after a short engagement, finding agreement on their feminist beliefs and dedication to this cause. Eugen took a leave from his job as a coffee importer to accompany Milholland on her lecture tours and campaigns, allowing his love for his wife to guide him down any path she led. On a nationwide tour the couple discovered the severity of Milholland's health. She collapsed on stage one evening in 1916 and

Vincent and Eugen's wedding with guests (left to right): Floyd Dell, Jan Boissevain (Eugen's brother), Norma Millay (Vincent's sister), Arthur Ficke, Gladys Ficke, Vincent, Eugen, Justice of the Peace (unknown). Courtesy of the Edna St. Vincent Millay Society

succumbed tragically at age thirty to anemia. As she died in her husband's arms, she asked him to live on without her.

Six years later, Eugen found his new life in the form of the young and tenacious Edna St. Vincent Millay. The pair fell in love over a game of charades in which the strangers were tasked with portraying a husband and wife. They were never to be separated again. Providing Vincent with the care and attention she craved her entire life, Eugen took on the responsibility of tending to the poet. He noticed something more in Vincent than her fans, friends, or family had before: He saw a bright flame on the brink of suffocation. At this time, Vincent was suffering terribly from a severe blockage in her intestines, which had become more life-threatening each day since she had returned from Europe.

Vincent's love for Eugen was earnest and true, but it was also necessary for her survival. Eugen worked tirelessly to save her life by finding doctors and surgeons in New York City. Vincent lived in Eugen's home while he cared for her and brought her to her many appointments and paid for all of her medical needs. In this way, Eugen reprised his role of doting husband and caretaker. Their fated meeting that night in April saved the fragile life of one of the America's greatest poets, allowing her to continue creating and him to fill the familiar role of supportive and encouraging

partner. That April 30, 1923, during this period of pain and uncertainty, Vincent received the news that she had won the Pulitzer Prize, along with a $1,000 reward.

Vincent and Eugen married three months after their initial meeting, on July 18, 1923, in Croton-On-Hudson. The ceremony itself was brief, as the couple raced to a New York Hospital shortly afterward for Vincent to undergo intestinal surgery. Vincent's sister Norma was her maid of honor and the couple was surrounded by friends who could attend the ceremony on short notice. Vincent reveled in the symbolism of being married on the same day she hoped to be healed from the ailment that had caused her so much pain for so long. Freshly married and still beaming with her Pulitzer Prize win, she happily went into the operating room, telling her friend Arthur Ficke, "Well, if I die now, I shall be immortal." Vincent's surgery was a success and she was able to return home with Eugen for the summer to recover.

In the fall of 1923, Eugen rented a narrow, three-story brick house in Greenwich Village, where the couple resided for the next year. During this time, Vincent returned to her hometown in Maine to repay all of the debts that her family had accrued while living there. In doing so, she enabled the family to collectively move beyond this small town. After returning to New York, Vincent led a poetry-reading tour across the country. Press coverage of the performances described her striking beauty and ability to draw large crowds.

In May 1925, fate handed Vincent her next adventure in the form of an ad in the *New York Times*. Vincent had decided that she needed an escape from city life, a place for her to focus seriously on her writing. She longed for the pine trees and open air of her home in Maine and sought out the natural elements that were missing in her writing. The ad was for a 435-acre former blueberry farm in Austerlitz, priced at only $9,000. During their initial visit to the property, she and Eugen decided this was the perfect place for their escape

Vincent and Eugen on the porch of Steepletop. Courtesy of the Edna St.Vincent Millay Society

from society. Vincent named the hideaway Steepletop, after the common wildflower that grows on the property.

The house was in need of major repairs when they bought it, so the couple decided to begin renovations immediately, doing most of the work themselves. They used this opportunity to modify the home based on their own needs and desires, adding a pool, garden, tennis court, and outdoor theater space, and restoring a portion of the blueberry fields. Located just over 100 miles north of New York City, the expansive property promised easy access to the train in Chatham and, therefore, a never-ending cast of visitors from New York City. While Steepletop slowly became their new home, the couple still frequently traveled to Manhattan and maintained social connections there. Vincent's doctors encouraged her to remain at Steepletop for the fresh air and exercise it could provide. Vincent's mother came to live with them so she could assist Eugen in nursing Vincent and paying close attention to her health. During this period, Vincent continued to write, expanding her œuvre to include a libretto for the opera *The King's Henchman.* Deems Taylor, a renowned New York City composer and music critic, partnered with Vincent on the work. The pair celebrated a successful opening on February 17, 1927, at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. The opera brought even more popularity to Vincent and her other works, further increasing her fame and wealth.

Vincent's bohemian lifestyle in Greenwich Village led to her involvement in social and political justice. In April 1927, she brought fellow writers and bohemians, including Dorothy Parker and Anne Porter, to Boston, Massachusetts, to join in protests against the death sentence given to Italian immigrants and radicals Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, who were accused and convicted of murder. The protests centered on what were believed to be the political aspects of the trial. During this time, bohemians like Vincent took it upon themselves to fight for causes that related to how they were treated by the government and mainstream society. At the protests, the group was arrested for loitering and "sauntering." Though their efforts were unsuccessful in stopping the executions of Sacco and Vanzetti, Vincent managed to have her last word through the poem "Justice Denied in Massachusetts," published in the *New York World*.

Over the next few years, Vincent returned to writing poetry and sonnets about the life she lived abroad and at home at Steepletop. Vincent and Eugen happily hosted various friends and fellow artists, supplying a retreat from society in the form of a spring-fed pool, outdoor bar, and an ever-revolving cast of characters with which to socialize and entertain themselves. Eugen dedicated his life to managing Vincent's career, just as he had done with his first wife. He believed in doing whatever was necessary to help Vincent and her writing because, like many before him, he knew that she was capable of greatness. Eugen professed his devotion and support in a letter to Vincent:

> What ever happens, what ever you want, what ever changes you may go through: don't be afraid — I'll understand everything — and I will always love you. . . I understand you, I get in your mood, as other people only understand themselves. — no matter what you do, I'll be as clever understanding and making excuses and justifying, as if I'd done it myself. — so don't be scared of anything (Quoted in Milford, 353)

In April 1931, Vincent published *Fatal Interview*, a collection of fifty sonnets written over two years. Within them, she spoke of love both in and outside of her marriage. The book was dedicated to both Eugen and the young poet George Dillon, with whom she had an affair. It sold 30,000 copies within the first ten weeks, outselling popular male poets of this time. This period was the height of the poet's career and popularity.

> It is safe to say that by the late summer, with 50,000 copies of *Fatal Interview* in print and *The King's Henchman*'s becoming the most successful American opera yet mounted by the Metropolitan Opera, Edna Millay had become not simply a literary figure but a celebrity. If Scott Fitzgerald was far more than the prose chronicler of the Jazz Age, Edna St. Vincent Millay, who was his contemporary, told their generation what to say about how they felt, and she said it with wit, style, and passion. She gave the Jazz Age its lyric voice." (Milford, 333)

On Christmas Day 1932, Vincent began the first in a series of Sunday night poetry readings over the radio, finding a new way to perform her work and attract an even larger audience across America. She appeared on the NBC station WJZ Blue Radio, which was arranged by Eugen through his friend and radio broadcasting pioneer Margaret Cuthbert. Biographer Nancy Milford explains that Vincent's "apparent nonchalance came from the ability that very few writers have, to seem to reach over and touch the listener with her voice" (quoted in Milford, 368). While Vincent was reaching new audiences, her fragile health worsened and her ability to maintain her usual activities began to decline.

During a writing trip to Europe, Vincent lost a significant amount of weight and began to drink more heavily. When she returned from overseas, she had enough material to publish another book of poetry, *Wine from These Grapes*, in November 1934. It sold 35,000 copies within eight weeks — especially impressive since it occurred during the Great Depression. The book's publication was followed by a successful reading tour.

On a trip to Florida designed to help Vincent and Eugen rest and refresh themselves, the couple lost their luggage — including the manuscript for Vincent's next book of poetry, *Conversation at Midnight* — in a hotel fire. In the summer of 1936, Vincent's luck failed her again as she was thrown from a car when the door

opened on a sharp turn, leaving her with severe nerve damage in her shoulder. That same year, *Conversation at Midnight* was published after Vincent had rewritten it from memory; a play written in verse, this book was unlike anything she had written before. The known pacifist began to change her beliefs on war, which had become more personal to her through her European travels and the fact that Eugen's family remained in Holland as tensions built toward World War II. (Also in 1936, Vincent received an honorary doctorate from New York University, her fifth such degree. The others were bestowed upon her by Tufts University, the University of Wisconsin, Colby College, and Russell Sage College.)

As Vincent needed more care for her ailments, she and Eugen spent the majority of their time at Steepletop. Eugen took even greater care of the property than before, hiring more people to maintain the homestead as he nursed Vincent back to health. While Vincent's health complications took a toll on her body, her intense interest in America's war efforts took a toll on her career. She began writing anti-fascist poetry and eventually published a book of poems urging America to enter World War II in 1940. *Make Bright the Arrows* was poorly received by critics, who deemed it political propaganda. Friends and fellow artists alike urged her to return to her original voice and leave arguments about war out of her artistry.

By the summer of that year, Vincent was rarely seen beyond the grounds of Steepletop. She had been prescribed morphine to deal with chronic pain from her shoulder injury and became addicted. She used both morphine and alcohol to cope with her condition. In an attempt to break Vincent out of her routine at Steepletop, the couple rented an apartment in New York City while Vincent received hospital treatments. In order to continue writing, she hired a typist to transcribe her words. The treatments for nerve damage did little for Vincent's pain and she became more dependent on morphine. In a final effort to help his wife, Eugen began using it as well so the couple could overcome their addictions together.

In 1949, the couple received the startling news that Eugen had an advanced form of lung cancer. He died shortly after the diagnosis, during surgery in Boston, devastating Vincent. Not only did she lose her husband, but also her manager and most loyal supporter throughout her adult life. She returned to Steepletop alone to recover from this great loss and to find her literary voice once again. Vincent unplugged the phone and relied on the postmistress to handle the outpouring of condolences she received. She poured herself into her writing, spending many late nights alone in her personal library at the top of the house's main staircase. On the evening of October 18, 1950, Vincent's groundskeeper came inside to light the fires and discovered the poet's body at the base of the stairs. She appeared to have fallen down them at some point in the early morning, after having spent the whole night writing. Vincent was buried next to Eugen in the family plot on the grounds of Steepletop.

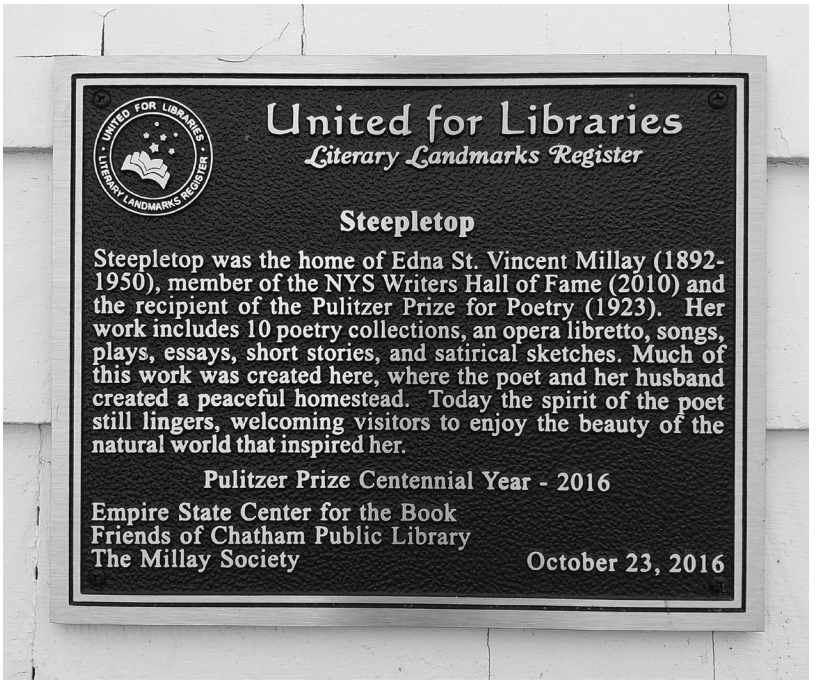
Vincent and Eugen in the fields at Steepletop, 1925.
Courtesy of the Edna St. Vincent Millay Society

Echoes of Millay and the Guardians of the Flame

Following Vincent's death, Norma Millay and her husband, Charles Ellis, moved into the house where Charles continued to paint, using the carriage house as his personal art studio. Maintaining her sister's legacy was paramount to Norma and it is due to her preservation efforts that visitors can still see how Vincent and Eugen lived in the house. While Norma and Charles lived in Steepletop for the remainder of their lives, they did not make the space their own. Norma resided in Vincent's rooms, yet never moved her sister's things from where Vincent herself had last placed them.

Thanks to Norma's efforts, Steepletop became a National Historic Landmark in 1972. In addition to preserving Steepletop and its contents, Norma also established the Millay Colony for the Arts and the Edna St. Vincent Millay Society in 1973. Both remain in existence. The Millay Colony for the Arts offers time and space in the form of residencies in which artists can explore their creative processes and engage in artistic community.

The trustees of The Millay Society continue Norma's work in preserving Vincent's literary legacy as well as Steepletop itself. A large portion of Vincent's papers have been donated to the Library of Congress to ensure their preservation while expanding access. The Society is also cataloguing Vincent's entire library,



In recognition of its national importance, Steepletop was designated a Literary Landmark by the American Library Association in 2016. Courtesy of Andrew Villani

including her hand-written notes on the texts, as another means of inspiring and supporting new scholarship on the writer. They regularly host two open weekends a year at Steepletop which include tours of the house and grounds. As part of the centennial celebration of Steepletop's purchase by Vincent and Eugen, the Society is also offering special programs throughout 2025 which will be advertised on their website www.millay.org. The website also offers images and descriptions of the house and grounds, samples of Millay's work, and recordings of Vincent reading her poetry.

Charlotte Del Vecchio, Marist '25

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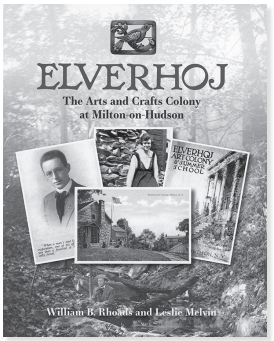
Book Reviews



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(Catskill, NY: Black Dome Press, 2022),
218 pp. $35.00 (paperback)

In "The Soul of Man under Socialism" (1891), Oscar Wilde captured the sentiment that drove so many speculative enterprises at the end of the nineteenth century when he declared, "a map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing." This utopian spirit was foundational to the Arts and Crafts Movement, inspiring countless pioneers to set out in search of a better world more equitable and satisfying than what was available in the rapidly industrializing one they occupied. Spurred on by the impassioned rhetoric of the movement's patron saints, John Ruskin and William Morris foremost among them, small communities of artists, artisans, and social theorists banded together across Europe and, later, America in disparate efforts to put Utopia back on the map. They established workshops, guilds, and colonies where communal efforts at creating objects both useful and beautiful were intended to restore pleasure to the creator and purchaser alike and to raise the aesthetic and moral standards of modern society in the process.

While several of these Arts and Crafts enterprises remain household names today, owing to the desirability of their products among collectors and the afterlives of their aesthetics in contemporary art and design, just as many vanished during the movement's decline in the interwar period, leaving only enigmatic traces behind. In the latter category is Elverhoj, the subject of this very welcome work of historical reconstruction by William B. Rhoads and Leslie Melvin. Founded in 1912 by a collective of artists and handicraft workers led by Anders H. Andersen, a Danish American blacksmith-turned-artist, Elverhoj was part of a loose network of Arts and Crafts colonies that set up shop in the Hudson Valley around the turn of the century. Their founders were drawn there by the region's quintessentially American natural beauty and its proximity of urban centers, including Poughkeepsie and New York City. A relative latecomer to the scene as compared to Elbert Hubbard's Roycroft (founded in 1897) and Jane Byrd McCall and Ralph Radcliffe Whitehead's Byrdcliffe (1902), Elverhoj functioned as a cooperatively organized and incorporated entity for only a few years, until its formal dissolution in 1917. However, as Rhoads and Melvin amply demonstrate, Elverhoj achieved quite a lot in its relatively short lifespan as

a functioning Arts and Crafts colony. It distinguished itself both nationally and internationally, and its legacy can only be properly appreciated by following the careers of the many craftsmen and women who spent time in the community and then carried forth its practices and ideals into other spheres of action.

While its history is inseparable from the thirty-acre estate in the Ulster County hamlet of Milton that served as the colony's home and bore its name, Elverhoj (pronounced el-ver-hoy) existed as an idea in the mind of Anders Andersen long before its founding. An immigrant to Iowa, Andersen found in his new home a new calling, quickly enrolling in the Art Institute of Chicago and afterward setting up experimental precursors to Elverhoj, such as the Viking Art Colony in Michigan and the Racine School of Fine Arts in Wisconsin. Through these early ventures, Andersen drew into his orbit a number of other aspiring artists and craftsmen, such as fellow Dane Johannes Morton, the painter James Scott, and etcher Ralph Pearson. This core group, which also included Scott's sisters Henrietta and Bessie, would be among the first members of Elverhoj. Andersen named it after the mystical "land of fairies" in Danish folklore, a nod to his Scandinavian roots and his aspiration to create an Arts and Crafts utopia, "a shelter for kindred souls who wish to share joy and work with us" (14).

Working from a trove of correspondence, design and promotional materials, and press notices (much of it amassed by Andersen and now in the possession of private collectors, including Rhoades), the authors present the history of Elverhoj in a loosely chronological fashion.[1] They follow numerous byways and side paths involving the colony's individual members and the media in which they worked, its connections among the businesses and educational institutions in the Hudson Valley, and its participation in the larger Arts and Crafts Movement. The promotional materials — including advertisements for its summer school courses — are particularly revealing. They highlight Andersen's canny deployment of Arts and Crafts rhetoric toward more strictly entrepreneurial ends, as he sought to develop Elverhoj into an enterprise as successful and profitable as Roycroft.

That said, as compared to the other members of the Elverhoj community, whose talents in painting, illustration and etching, metalwork and jewelry, leatherwork, and weaving are painstakingly documented by Rhoades and Melvin, Andersen's main talent seems to have been in self-fashioning. The only member of the original enterprise to remain tied to Elverhoj throughout its existence, worked tirelessly to keep it afloat after the decline of the Arts and Crafts Movement. In later years, he established a summer performance venue, the Elverhoj Theatre, and renovated its central building, a Colonial house much touted in the colony's early advertising,

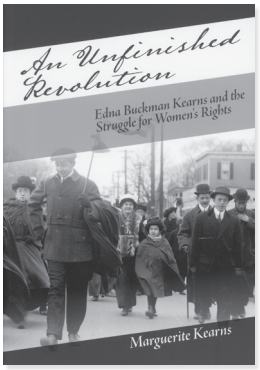
1 After completing the book, the materials owned by William Rhoads and his wife were donated to the Vassar College Archives and Special Collections Library as the Elverhoj (William and Sally Rhoads Collection), 1887–1985. https://vclibrary.vassarspaces.net/elverhoj/index

into a Moorish-style confection complete with a dining hall for visitors. In spite of these increasingly desperate efforts, including a final letter campaign to enlist the support of Eleanor Roosevelt, the dire state of Andersen's finances by the mid-1930s led to the foreclosure of the mortgage on the Elverhoj property and the public auction of contents of the colony's studio, museum, and gift shop. Andersen, though, continued to live near the property until the very end of his life, as it passed through the hands of multiple owners, most famously the controversial spiritual leader Father Divine.

While Andersen's fortunes declined alongside Elverhoj's, many of its other members had fruitful and successful careers after leaving the colony, particularly Pearson and James Scott as artists, and Bessie and Henrietta Scott as arts educators. Indeed, as documented in the single, extensive chapter "The Women of Elverhoj," the Scott sisters parlayed their early study and teaching of weaving at Elverhoj into impactful professional lives as practitioner-instructors in the fields of higher education and occupational therapy. They continued to promote a key tenet of Arts and Crafts ideology: its fundamental belief in the rehabilitative powers and economic benefits of handicraft, both for the individual and society as a whole.

That the name and reputation of Elverhoj did not long outlast the colony's existence is not tremendously surprising, for reasons that Rhoades and Melvin acknowledge. Though utopian ideals were vital to the broader appeal of the movement, Arts and Crafts enterprises were intensely vulnerable to changes in public taste and the state of the economy, especially if they lacked a charismatic leader, a stable of wealthy patrons, and a distinctive and cohesive aesthetic to help them stand out in an already crowded market. Added to that in Elverhoj's case, many of its wares, especially the metalwork and jewelry for which it received the highest praise, were unsigned or otherwise unmarked and thus difficult to attribute. Yet, one might argue that the relative scarcity of documented Elverhoj artifacts actually benefitted Rhoades and Melvin's study, in that it clearly inspired them to focus all the more intensely on the colony as a speculative endeavor. Elverhoj's value should not be limited to what it produced, but also must consider what it represented, who it inspired, and how it impacted the regional community to which it belonged.

Meghan Freeman is the fellowship and internship librarian at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University.



***An Unfinished Revolution: Edna Buckman Kearns and the Struggle for Women's Rights*, Marguerite Kearns (Albany, NY: Excelsior Editions/SUNY Press, 2021), 331 pp. $29.63 (softcover)**

Audiences today generally know the broad strokes of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century struggles to secure women's suffrage. Many are familiar with prominent nineteenth-century figures who fought for equality and voting rights: Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Sojourner Truth, and Frederick Douglass, to name a few. But early twentieth-century suffragists whose actions resulted in passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920 remain a faceless crowd. In *An Unfinished Revolution: Edna Buckman Kearns and the Struggle for Women's Rights*, Marguerite Kearns strives to personalize the movement. She tells the story of her maternal grandparents, Wilmer and Edna Buckman Kearns, who protested and marched for women to secure these rights in New York and Pennsylvania. As the author writes, activists must trace and tell such stories or run the risk of an "incomplete, marginalized, or invisible" historical account (xvii). Kearns met the herculean task of composing a work that blends family oral history, youthful memories, and primary documents with uneven success.

The book is a loving homage from a granddaughter to her grandparents, centering their love story against a backdrop of the fight for women's suffrage, as opposed to the biographical study of Edna I anticipated. It opens with ten-year-old Kearns eagerly listening to her grandfather's stories, filling in the blanks herself with dialogue that is true in essence if not verifiable. Some of Wilmer's stories describe the couple's participation in protest marches, stoically walking amid threatening agitators. Others recount the couple's literary discussions of Mary Wollstonecraft, Margaret Fuller, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman. And some reveal how Edna's Quaker beliefs (broadly speaking, nonviolence and equality) explain her devotion to the cause, her hesitation to marry, and Wilmer's eventual Quaker convincement (akin to Christian conversion). Kearns' regular visits with her grandfather incite her lifelong passion for women's rights activism and, at her grandfather's suggestion, the decision to write their family story.

This youthful foundation results in a romanticizing tone that holds the book back from being a more serious treatment of Edna Buckman Kearns' activism. Historical events and anecdotes are, perhaps, simplified a bit too much, and the notion of "patriotic protest" could be treated with a more critical eye. Structurally, Kearns attempts to create a narrative that gyres through time and family memory. Peppered throughout are brief historical summations and apocryphal family claims,

such as that Edna's protest wagon (the "Spirit of 1776") once belonged to George Washington and family furniture that was formerly owned by Edgar Allan Poe. She provides historical background on first-wave suffragettes in the United States, and the patriotism inspiring the "Spirit of 1776" wagon and rallying cries around taxation and representation. (Unfortunately, Black suffragettes receive only brief mention.) At a few points, Kearns acknowledges family stories are not "entirely reliable" (81) and can dilute the veracity of historical events. Her tendency to mythologize family and nation holds back the work from being a completely visible, three-dimensional history. The inordinate focus on her grandparents' courtship and marriage — certainly natural for a young grandchild — seems out of place in a book whose title centers on her grandmother's advocacy.

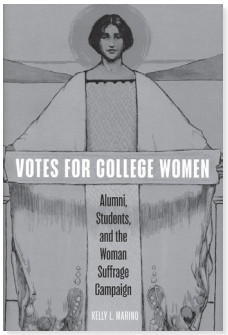
Ultimately, Kearns embarked on a tremendous task, trying to weave so many threads into one cohesive tapestry. I was somewhat disappointed that the story's warp-thread is Wilmer's pursuit of Edna, even though I understand it. Kearns's grandmother passed away in 1934, when the author's mother was only a child, so she had to rely on Wilmer to provide the nearest first-person recollections. However, since Kearns had access to Edna's published and unpublished writing, I opened the book eager for protest accounts from her. A sprinkling of Edna's original writing does appear within the narrative, but the bulk of it is contained in an eleven-page chapter near the book's conclusion (and even this short chapter ends with Wilmer's words and not Edna's). That said, Kearns does provide numerous photographs from both public holdings and private collections to humanize the events and people she depicts.

Despite the promise in the book's blurb to "[tell] the story of the suffrage movement and the *ongoing struggle* [emphasis added] for women's rights in the United States," Kearns does not move much beyond the twentieth century. Other than revealing that she held a picture of her protesting grandparents when she marched for women in 2019, the author neglects to fully engage with the pressing issues and challenges to women's rights in the twenty-first century. She explains that "early women's rights activists were often dismissed as 'boring' or irrelevant," and that "[l]iterary agents tended not to be interested" because such books didn't sell (196). I don't believe that is as true now as it may have been in the latter part of the last century. The sea of white outfits honoring suffragettes at the 2024 Democratic National Convention attests to their relevance and presence on the national stage today.

I wholeheartedly agree with Kearns that it is important to tell the narratives of rights and reforms, including personal history. Readers interested in an introduction to women's rights in the United States, Pennsylvania Quaker history, and family stories will not be disappointed in this book. I would encourage readers to use it as a stepping stone to further education on the movement itself and the many

unfamiliar names that ensured its progress. By doing so, readers can — just as Kearns does — commit to their own activism.

Cheryl Weaver, State University of New York College at Buffalo



***Votes for College Women; Alumni, Students, and the Woman Suffrage Campaign,* Kelly L. Marino (New York University Press, 2024), 278 pp. $39.00 (hardcover)**

In *Votes for College Women*, Kelly L. Marino has identified a key but largely understudied piece in the suffrage movement: the creation of the College Equal Suffrage League (CESL). She reveals how the CESL worked to change student and alumni attitudes toward women's suffrage. While northern schools have often been considered in the wider discussion of suffrage, Marino provides excellent case studies of the critical roles of institutions in the West and South as well. She also demonstrates the breadth of the CESL's activism, exploring how it challenged preconceived notions about suffragists' professionalism and femininity, expanded civic education, and amplified women's voices in politics. Similarly, Marino examines the complexities of exclusion and inclusion within the organization and the broader suffrage movement, showing that while the CESL was open to expanding its membership to working-class women, African American women often found themselves forced out of the public light. However, she shows that African American women found their own ways to contribute to the movement even when they were faced with sexism and racism. Marino's valuable contribution to the history of women's suffrage sheds light on an organization whose impact changed the movement's legitimacy.

Marino starts off her study of the CESL by exploring its founders and foundational principles. Maud Wood Park and Inez Haynes Irwin started the league after being inspired by suffragists of the nineteenth century. Frustrated that grassroots movements were no longer gaining any traction or winning any advances on state or local levels, the new CESL targeted college graduates who were professionals in their fields. These suffragists tried to rebrand themselves as "well-dressed, articulate, and intellectually advanced" (28). They worked tirelessly on research and new arguments for women to gain the vote, and used multiple forms of media — such as theater and literature — to reach audiences. Marino has uncovered fascinating episodes of this creative activism, such as *The Judgment of Minerva,* a play showing suffragists approaching Zeus and asking him to support their cause (34–35). As the movement

grew, suffragists opened the ranks to new members, believing that working-class women were necessary for its expansion, especially in New York. Marino points to Jessie Ashely, an especially influential activist and CESL president, who stated, "Nothing revolutionary can be accomplished without the working people" (42). On the other hand, at first the women's campaign did have rather close-minded ideas on African American involvement in the movement, and larger organizations like the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) "remained exclusionary" (45). However, this did not stop African American women from forming their own grassroots movements by joining organizations like the National Association of Colored Women (46).

An important benefit of Marino's national approach is that she provides a systematic explanation for how, even though CESL was started in Massachusetts, the group contributed to early victories in places further west. In California, its mobilization was quick and effective. One group the league tried to involve was teachers, though initially they were hesitant to join the movement for fear of retaliation from school systems or misconceptions of what it promoted. One CESL member wrote that teachers were often "interested in the cause but whose affairs made it impossible" (62). The 1911 California suffrage referendum vote appeared bleak in urban areas, but in a surprising twist, rural support was robust enough to secure its passage. Suffragists around the country celebrated this enormous victory. However, the movement met different troubles in other key regions of the country. Southern women were weary of Northerners dictating terms. They created their own suffrage groups, like the Era Club in New Orleans. Even though White suffragists were often exclusionary, especially before the late 1910s, African American women continued fighting to make their voices heard. For example, the African American Equal Suffrage League of Brooklyn sent a petition to the House of Representatives to pass the Bennet Bill (88). Prominent allies like W.E.B. DuBois urged Black men to support suffrage in the hopes that African American women voters would help pass civil rights legislation and lift the race in the eyes of the law (89).

One of Marino's most important contributions is her nuanced study of how the CESL helped to facilitate a greater understanding of the suffrage movement on college campuses, which in turn shifted students' overall attitudes toward suffrage. Chapter three offers a meticulous exploration of this delicate process. College women's positions were already contentious on campus, so the CESL made suffrage work compatible with college coursework. It promoted essay contests, public debates, and guest lectures to hone students' ability to defend their positions as suffragists. It even held events with British suffragists to dispel some of the rumors about the radical nature of the British movement. At African American institutions, women felt they needed to hold themselves to a higher standard because of the racial prejudice and discrimination they already faced. They worried that becoming suffragists would open

them up to even more incidents of racist and sexist brutality. Meanwhile, activists faced censorship at both Black and White institutions where administrators were wary that if they were seen to support suffrage, then parents might be less inclined to send children to their university. Marino shows that an important element of suffrage activism was normalizing the movement. Through the CESL's work, being a suffragist was decreasingly seen as being on the fringes of society.

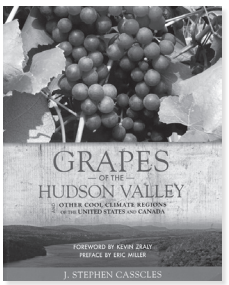
As the CESL continued to make progress, it faced potent adversaries, such as New Yorker Annie Nathan Meyer. In chapter four, Marino discusses how Meyer led a strong anti-suffrage movement that believed women could make a positive difference in politics without the vote. Meyer and other anti-suffragists undercut CESL activities on campus, where they claimed college women were not ready to take on such a complex issue. Anti-suffragists appealed to many of the preconceived notions young women already had about the movement. They warned that it would become harder to find a husband, and the women would become increasingly more masculine by "unsexing" themselves (140). Black anti-suffragists asserted that racial unity was more important in this period than receiving the vote. All the while, anti-suffrage White men preferred more extravagant tactics. They opted for public displays meant to bring negative media attention to the movement, such as when anti-suffrage students at Tulane University created posters with "an image of a suffragette head with a hatchet raised to strike it" (151). As it became clearer that passage of the Nineteenth Amendment was "inevitable," anti-suffragists worked on "curbing the impending legislation" (155).

The book's final chapter explores how women won the vote in 1920. The National College Equal Suffrage League (NCESL), formed in 1908 from the remaining state chapters, and other organizations continued to widen their coalitions to upper-class, working-class, and African American women. They focused on refining one clear, strong message. They shifted their energy to areas of lower support, like the South, and focused on lobbying in Washington, D.C. While it is well known that World War I helped change the narrative of the Nineteenth Amendment, Marino sheds new light on how these events affected the campus movement. In 1917, the NCESL decided to disband because of financial issues and tensions within the group's leadership. However, not all sections of the CESL disbanded; many groups continued fighting and innovating their message. For example, Marino shows that while Southern officeholders warned that enfranchising women would help increase African Americans' say in politics, Black and White college students started joining together in hopes of creating a stronger coalition. NAWSA declared it would support a "broad type of American democracy that knows no bias on the ground of race, color, creed, or sex" (195). After the amendment was ratified on August 18, 1920, Black and White suffragists joined together to celebrate the momentous victory (199). While the breakdown of the suffrage coalition in the 1920s is well-documented,

Marino reminds readers that many organizations that helped women win the vote did not disband after passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. Instead, they became training grounds for civic education for women and future students.

Kelly L. Marino has made an important contribution to studies about the involvement of alumni and college students in the early twentieth-century suffrage movement. *Votes for College Women* is well-written, carefully researched, and comprehensive. And by presenting colorful stories to illustrate complex arguments, it is approachable for both students and general audiences interested in this important history.

Brooke Timmins, University of Maryland



Grapes of the Hudson Valley and Other Cool Climate Regions of the United States and Canada
J. Stephen Casscles, 2nd Edition; Forward by Kevin Zraly, prefaces by Eric Miller and Carlo DeVito
(Coxsackie, NY: Flint Mine Press, 2023)
317 pp. $34.95 (softcover)

With the publication in 2015 of *Grapes of the Hudson Valley and Other Cool Climate Regions of the United States and Canada*, J. Stephen Casscles joined a small group of writers who have concentrated on winegrowing in the Eastern United States, including such august figures as Lucie Morton and Hudson Cattell as well as, most recently, Richard Fiegel. This book is a significant contribution to that literature and in important ways is unique. Its second edition, published in 2023, has been revised and updated to include New England grapes and their breeders.

The book is organized in an unusual but sensible way. It begins with the interesting, thoughtful, and excellent "A Short History of Viticulture in the Hudson Valley," starting with the early settlers, nurseries and viticulturists; first commercial vineyards; and advances in grape growing and breeding. Casscles makes a case study of famed naturalist John Burroughs and his vineyard at Riverby, then tells about the grape industry and its revitalization after World War I. He touches on the effects of Prohibition and covers the growth of local wineries, starting with High Tor and Benmarl, followed by the many others that came after the Farm Winery Act of 1976.

A section of the Introduction, How to Use This Book (pp. xviii–xix), explains the way all grape varieties are described. Each has a capsule statement identifying the parentage and typical harvest date (a range), and shows five symbols indicating winter hardiness, disease resistance, vine vigor, productivity, and wine quality. Every variety is graded A to D. For example, Concord has parentage of *labrusca* and

should be harvested "mid-season to early late season." Its hardiness is A+, resistance A, vigor B, productivity A+, and quality B-. Casscles does this for most of the 171 varieties listed in the index, though some clones are given more cursory treatment. Interestingly, Pinot Noir, that elusive Holy Grail of all varieties, receives the following ratings: hardiness C-, resistance D, vigor C, productivity C+, and wine quality A+. But then, Concord is a Northeast native and Pinot Noir is from Burgundy, France.

The book proceeds to discuss the benefits of wine-grape hybridization and then explores the basics of cool-climate viniculture.

In Chapter Six, "Selected American Grape Species Used for Breeding," the book's organization differs from all other such books of which I am aware. It describes the leading native vines used for wine production: *Vitis aestivalis* and some of its vinous varieties; *V. berlandieri* (Texas and northern Mexico); *V. cinerea*, which favors rich soil along streams; *V. labrusca*, whose varieties are among the best known and include Concord, Catawba, Niagara, and Delaware; and *V. riparia*, sometimes called River, Riverside, or Riverbank. Also included, because it is now so widely planted in America, is the European species *V. vinifera*. Casscles compares and explains the differences between the *Vitis* species, including their dominant habitats, geographical range, winter hardiness, and wine quality.

Discussion of the various grapes can be as long as two whole pages (for Concord), though most get a far briefer treatment of a few hundred words. *Vinifera* grapes like Pinot Noir are extensively discussed. The variety notes focus largely on the viability of the vines in a region like that of the Hudson River Valley and similar ones in Canada and the northeastern United States (including New England) and other cool-climate states like Wisconsin and Minnesota. For Casscles, winter hardiness and disease resistance are primary concerns, along with wine quality.

The next chapter is about *Labrusca* hybrids, followed by chapters on the Hudson Valley hybridizers, then the Early French hybridizers, the Late French ones, then Geneva hybrids, Minnesota hybrids, and Central European *vinifera*. Each chapter begins with a brief historical background followed by short biographies of the important hybridizers and then a detailed description of the developers' significant hybrids. The book closes with a chapter devoted to selected classic *vinifera* varieties suitable for growing in the Hudson Valley.

Importantly, the book also provides biographies of the major hybridizers, beginning with those working in the Hudson Valley in the nineteenth century. A.J. Downing and his brother Charles feature, along with Andrew Jackson Caywood (1819–89), who developed Dutchess, Nectar, Poughkeepsie, Ulster, and Walter. Dr. William A.M. Culbert (1822–90) is also given respectful space, as is Dr. Charles William Grant (1810–81), who bequeathed Eumelan and the important Iona. James H. Ricketts (1818 or 1830–1915) gave growers Clinton, Bacchus, Downing, Empire

State, and Jefferson. Each biography is followed by descriptions of the varieties bred by the hybridizers.

In a following chapter, Casscles explores the Early French Hybridizers (1875–1925), including Bertille Seyve, Jr. (1895–1959), who created Seyval Blanc. Another chapter is devoted to the Later French Hybridizers (1925–1955), of whom Ravat gave us the now widely-planted Vignoles and Jean-Louis Vidal the Vidal Blanc, a mainstay of the East Coast wine industry. Next are the Geneva (New York) hybrids from Cornell's Agricultural Experiment Station, which bred Chardonel, Melody, and Traminette. After that come the Minnesota hybrids, featuring Elmer Swenson (1913–2004), along with his interspecific crossings such as the excellent La Crescent, La Crosse, and St. Pepin. Casscles remarks on the attitude of Swenson, who had "a very generous policy of sharing breeding material and grape variety selections…to anyone who requested them." This generosity is seen as a great benefit to growers; in Casscles' view, it "should be a lesson to many of our current university-based grape-breeding programs, which seem to want to control the products developed, but in doing so… limit the scope of the field research that can be done by not widely disseminating their plant material for comment." An important point and one well-taken.

In Chapter Fourteen, Casscles discusses the leading *vinifera* varieties that can, despite disease pressure and severe winters, more or less thrive in the climates of the Hudson Valley and similar regions. These include Chardonnay, Gewürztraminer, Riesling, Cabernet Franc, Gamay Noir, and Pinot Noir.

Chapters Fifteen and Sixteen cover the grape breeders of New England. Probably the single most important of these is Edward Staniford Rogers (1826–1899) of Massachusetts. He was one of the first Americans to successfully breed *labrusca* and *vinifera* hybrids and was an inspiration to many who followed in his footsteps. Especially interesting was the important role played by two *vinifera* varieties in his breeding program: Black Hamburg and White Chasselas. The former was crossed with the Carter, a *labrusca* grape, leading to several hybrids, including Herbert, which has been used at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva. The latter was crossed with the Carter hybrid to produce Lindley, one of Rogers' most successful red varieties.

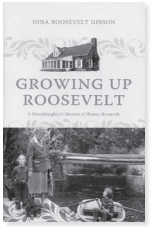
Casscles' book is well-illustrated with many black-and-white photos, drawings, and diagrams, as well as a set of color plates of twenty-seven varieties. It has three maps: one of the fruit-growing areas of the Hudson Valley, another of the hardiness zones of New York State, and the third showing the wine-growing areas of New England highlighting the location of its breeders. The map outlining hardiness indicates zones from 3a to 6b, but it fails to explain what the zones mean. (The map is based on the USDA Agriculture Research Service NY Plant Hardiness Zone Map.)

This is a mere quibble when one considers the overall quality and detailed information provided in Casscles' book. It is a real accomplishment and deserves

respectful and serious attention, particularly from growers and winemakers, not to mention serious wine lovers. Apart from the excellent and extensive endnotes to each chapter, there is a substantial bibliography and an index to the individual varieties covered in the text, as well as a general index. It is a work of scholarship, but, after all, Casscles was formerly an attorney who worked with several New York State senators to help draft key bills and laws pertaining to wine and beer. He has worked in vineyards since he was fourteen; is also a winegrower, assessing eighty-five varieties at his own vineyard in Athens, New York; and was the winemaker for Hudson-Chatham Winery (across the Hudson River in Ghent) from 2007 to 2020.

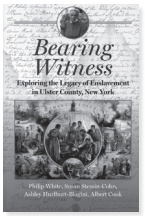
José Moreno-Lacalle is author of The Wines of Long Island
and the blog "Wine, Seriously."

New & Noteworthy Books



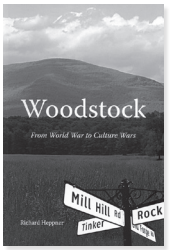
Growing Up Roosevelt: A Granddaughter's Memoir of Eleanor Roosevelt
by Nina Roosevelt Gibson
(State University of New York Press, 2023) 190 pp. $29.95 (hardcover)
www.sunypress.edu

This book offers an intimate glimpse into the private life of one of the most influential women of the twentieth century. Nina Roosevelt Gibson lived with her "Grandmère" for twelve years, and her experiences, particularly at Val-Kill, helped solidify her understanding of Eleanor Roosevelt as a person whose public principles and values seamlessly extended into her personal life. Much has been written about the "First Lady of the World," but learning who this extraordinary woman was from Gibson's unique perspective will appeal to many more than the hardcore Roosevelt enthusiast.



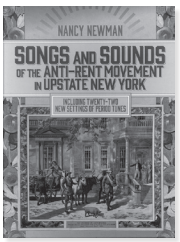
Bearing Witness: Exploring the Legacy of Enslavement in Ulster County, New York
by Philip White, Susan Stessin-Cohn, Ashley Hurlburt-Biagini, and Albert Cook
(Black Dome Press Corp., 2024) 122 pp. $16.95 (paperback)
www.blackdomepress.com

Relying on historical data from Ulster County that reveals a comprehensive system of enslavers, this text examines the Hudson River Valley's complicity in the institution of slavery. The authors challenge the common assumption that the enslavement of people of African descent only occurred in the American South. Focusing on more than sixty Black residents of Ulster County, the book illustrates life as an enslaved person in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century New York and in thriving Black communities after the state abolished slavery. Previously overlooked, these genealogical and societal profiles provide a thorough understanding of the Black experience in the region prior to the Civil War. This information is crucial for anyone studying this period.



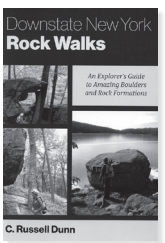
Woodstock: From World War to Culture Wars
by Richard Heppner
(State University of New York Press, 2024) 282 pp. $29.95 (paperback)
www.sunypress.edu

Historically, Woodstock has often struggled with its identity. Richard Heppner details its history, highlighting such events as the Anti-Rent War of the mid-1800s, the effects of construction of the New York State Thruway, and the repercussions of suburban migration after the global pandemic. Each instance reflects the long-held individualism and independence of the community's people and underscores the significance of this unique town in the nation's cultural character.



Songs and Sounds of The Anti-Rent Movement in Upstate New York
by Nancy Newman
(State University of New York Press, 2025) 244 pp. $130.00 (hardcover)
www.sunypress.edu

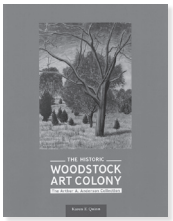
This is the first book-length publication to document and reconstruct the artistic expression of Hudson Valley tenant farmers who organized in the 1840s to protest this unjust instance of feudalism in the United States. To fully capture this social reform movement, author Nancy Newman divides the text into two parts — critical analysis and songbook. She contextualizes how music and poetry became a representation of the anti-renters, whose compositions — such as "Old Dan Tucker" and "Bruce's Address" — have reached a larger audience. Newman further explores how popular culture continues to be reshaped by the Anti-Rent era.



Downstate New York Rock Walks: An Explorer's Guide to Amazing Boulders and Rock Formations
by C. Russell Dunn
(State University of New York Press, 2023) 544 pp. $29.95 (paperback)
www.sunypress.edu

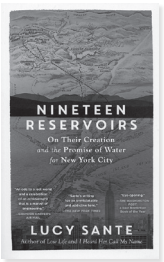
C. Russell Dunn has written a plethora of hiking and paddling guides to New York's natural and scenic wonders. His latest delves into the geological and cultural history of the lower Hudson Valley, New York City, northern New Jersey, and Long Island by highlighting some of the most significant rock formations throughout the region. Many of these large glacial erratics were points of navigation, boundary markers for European settlers, or used by Indigenous people for meeting points or shelters. Primarily organized by county, the book provides

instructions on how to find the sites and the level of difficulty in reaching them. It also offers details about the type of formation, their history and "WOW" factor, and available online resources. While more images might entice the novice trekker, this guide will interest historians, geologists, and hikers alike.



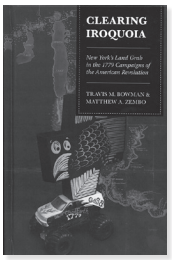
The Historic Woodstock Art Colony: The Arthur A. Anderson Collection
by Karen E. Quinn
(State University of New York Press, 2024) 112 pp. $35.00 (paperback)
www.sunypress.edu

Ralph Radcliffe Whitehead established the Byrdcliffe Arts Colony in Woodstock in 1902, leading to a community of artists who have had an international impact. Arthur Anderson purchased a painting by one of these artists in 1990, then went on to collect more than 15,000 works from throughout the twentieth century by artists associated with Woodstock. This slim but luminous volume serves as introduction, overview, and invitation to Anderson's collection, which he donated to the New York State Museum in 2017. Eight authors, including Anderson, have contributed essays offering insight into various aspects and individuals of Woodstock's art colonies. They serve to illustrate the collection's richness and potential for further research. With more than 150 gorgeous color images, this book also includes collection highlights, a bibliography, and a complete list of artists associated with Woodstock.



Nineteen Reservoirs: On Their Creation and the Promise of Water for New York City
by Lucy Sante
(The Experiment, LLC, 2024) 198 pp. $19.95 (paperback)
www.theexperimentpublishing.com

Lucy Sante is no stranger to the many-faceted history of New York City and its environs. Her latest investigation encompasses the nineteen reservoirs, seven counties, three states, and two watersheds that collectively produce 1.1 billion gallons of water per day for the city's five boroughs. While acknowledging this engineering marvel and its undeniable necessity, Sante focuses instead on the "unintended consequences" — the removals, transplants, lawsuits, and losses that resulted from the creation of one of the world's largest municipal water supply systems. The book is a catalog of "progress" and resistance as the city's thirst grew throughout the twentieth century. Sante's writing, informed and engaging as ever, combined with a sumptuous feast of sepia-toned archival images and Tim Davis's color photos of the watershed taken in 2020, make this book irresistible.



Clearing Iroquoia: New York's Land Grab in the 1779 Campaigns of the American Revolution
by Travis M. Boman & Matthew A. Zembo
(Lexington Books, 2025) 326 pp. $130 (hardcover)
www.rowman.com

Travis M. Boman and Matthew A. Zembo reexamine the 1779 campaigns from the Indigenous perspective, arguing that several leaders of the American Revolution intentionally used them to displace the Haudenosaunee and other Native people from their lands. Drawing on primary sources, including letters, journals, speeches, and reports, the authors reveal multiple motives behind the campaigns that had devastating repercussions on Indigenous life in New York after the Revolution. The work introduces and addresses the multiple perspectives of, and divisions sown between, the Six Nations as they were impacted by the warring armies who fought for control for their ancestral lands. While some readers may find the endnotes included with each chapter distracting, Bowman and Zembo effectively highlight powerful details that position these campaigns as early examples of the young nation's "Manifest Destiny" ideology and its results.

— *Tisha Dunstan*