By the Book

Jane Williamson

Burlington is a charming city, and one of the chief contributors to that charm is its housing stock, dating mostly from the nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. Little lessons in architectural history and style—from the Federal to Modern—are everywhere. Spotting particular housing types can be a fun challenge: kit houses from Sears and Montgomery Ward or Burlington’s own John Roberts’s houses, for example.

Some savvy home owners took their cues from nineteenth-century trendsetters who published pattern books of architectural style. Andrew Jackson Downing was one of the most influential. He started as a horticulturalist and an expert on fruit growing, but segued into landscape planning and garden design. (He’s considered a founder of landscape architecture in the US.) From there, it was a short hop to housing design. His books, Cottage Residences (co-authored with A. J. Davis) and Architecture of Country Houses, promoted rural life and the Gothic Revival and Italianate styles.

Downing believed that well-designed homes exerted moral influence on their occupants and that “a good house will lead to a good civilization.” Much more was at stake than just choosing layout, style, and color. But he also insisted that houses should fit into the surrounding landscape by blending into the natural habitat. He also thought they should be functional for the activities of whatever family might inhabit them. And his plans were stratified by class into cottages, villas, and farmhouses.

Elmwood Cemetery: Beyond the Gate

Karyn Norwood

Elmwood Cemetery is that cemetery that we always walk by, but never go into. I have walked by it for eight years straight, in fact. It usually goes like this: I glance at the headstones along the fence, sometimes stopping to squint at the faded epitaphs to make them out, and then peering out beyond, wondering what else is there? I stop at the gate, see it is locked, and then never call the number to schedule a visit. I continue along the fence and think: someday I will get in.

Well, this year that changed, I am glad to say. Preservation Burlington offered two tours of the cemetery grounds this year—one at the Ramble in July and then again in October for a living history walking tour. Over seventy people came to the two tours and, continued on page 6

Carolyn Bates

This high-style Italianate house on Mansfield Avenue is an interesting example. A “villa” in what Downing sometimes called the “bracketed” style, it seems to borrow from plans in both books. Downing noted (somewhat sniffily) in Cottage Residences that “persons who have cultivated an architectural taste, and appreciate the
higher beauties of the art growing out of variety will give a great preference to a design capable of awakening more strongly emotions of the beautiful.” That’s compared to those “who only judge of a dwelling house by a common-sense standard.” The house is certainly beautiful and more stylish than most in Burlington.

Both of Downing’s books are available in paper from Dover Publications and would make great companions for walking Burlington’s historic neighborhoods.

By the Book

continued from page 1

Fighting for the Right to Vote:
Burlington Suffragists

Liisa Reimann — These biographical sketches were written for the Online Biographical Dictionary of the Woman Suffrage Movement in the United States

In advance of the 100th anniversary of women receiving the right to vote in the United States. Preservation Burlington is honoring the following women who advocated for this important right:

Jeanette Sickler (Sichler) Pease Phelps
(Jeanette Pease), 1868–1951
Frances Walker Brown, 1863–1942

Jeanette Sichler, was born on December 4, 1868, in Detroit, Michigan. She was one of seven children born to German immigrants Benjamin and Louisa (Hahn) Sichler. The middle child, Jeannette had two older sisters (Annie and Olga), an older brother (Benjamin Jr.), and three younger brothers (Alfred, Louis, and Eddie). Benjamin supported the family by working as a druggist and, later, Louis joined his father’s business as a clerk. Jeannette followed her sister Olga into teaching, and taught for a time at Jefferson School.

Circa 1907, at the age of 39, Jeannette married George Lucius Pease—a wealthy widower 10 years her senior. How and where the two met is unclear. George was a native of Charlotte, Vermont—an entrepreneur who moved from his parents’ country farm to pursue dreams of business ownership in Burlington. Working his way up the entrepreneurial ladder, he held a variety of jobs before founding and managing the Burlington Shirt Company. Pease Mountain, which is named for his family, was part of his estate at the time of their marriage. George was a member of the First Church of Burlington and it is assumed that Jeanette became a member of the same congregation. They maintained a house on South Prospect Street in Burlington. It does not appear the couple had any children.

Jeannette was an independent, active citizen and was involved in the Vermont Equal Suffrage Association (VESA) and the Burlington Equal Franchise League (BEFL), elected as the League’s Secretary in 1912 and serving as VESA’s Press Superintendent in 1913. The newspaper coverage of the BEFL election noted, “Women intending to visit New York and Boston this season and who wish to become in close touch with the national movement should also communicate with Mrs. Pease,” indicating that she was well-connected with other suffragists.

The Burlington Free Press routinely noted her engagements, trips away, and visitors over the years. A member of the Automobile Club of Vermont she was the registered owner of a 21-horsepower Chevrolet as early as 1920. She also appears to have been an active member of the Bull Moose Party (the informal name of the Progressive Party), which was an offshoot of the Republican Party that gained notoriety for splitting the party by supporting Theodore Roosevelt as their candidate in the 1912 election and essentially helping elect Democrat Woodrow Wilson. When she couldn’t attend party meetings herself, George did so as her representative. George died in 1926 at the age of 67. The following year, on October 14, 1927, Jeannette
married widowed New York City ear, nose, and throat physician Haskell S. Phelps (aged 61). The couple wed in New York, but returned to Jeannette’s home in Burlington where Phelps, who had family ties to the city, may have continued to practice for a short time. The following year however, it seems that Haskell sold off his medical instruments and office supplies. At the same time, Jeannette offered Pease Mountain—164 acres with an orchard, tea house and individual log cabins—up for sale at the price of $3000.

Haskell’s death, in Hollywood, CA in 1932, left Jeannette a widow for the second time. His body was cremated and returned to Vermont, and his remains were interred in East Cemetery in Williston—interestingly the same cemetery where George Pease and his first wife, Julia, were also interred.

Jeannette appears to have relocated to Hollywood permanently sometime after Haskell’s death, and died there herself on August 13, 1951. In her will, she left $500 to the University of Vermont for the purpose of creating a memorial to her first husband, George, in the form of a bronze tablet, to be hung over a fireplace in a log cabin, or a stone marker on Pease Mountain or its approaches.

Francis Walker was born in Burlington on August 15, 1863 to Mary A. (White) and Obediah Johnson Walker. Obediah was a merchant landowner with a 500-acre farm he called Riverview Farm in the Intervale, a fertile valley along the Winooski River. The oldest of ten children, he was the main proprietor of O.J. Walker & Brothers Wholesale Grocers in Burlington. He too would have a large family—Fannie was one of six children Obediah had with Mary, but the only one who survived to adulthood. Frances would not have remembered Mary, as she died when Fannie was just two. Fannie never knew her brothers either: John (9), Freddy (7) and Charles (6) all died of diphtheria in the fall of 1862, a year before Fannie was born. An infant sister died within a week of birth in April 1860—too soon to even be named. Fannie did have a younger sister Elizabeth “Lily,” but she also perished from diphtheria—in 1878, at the age of 13. Mary and the children, with the exception of Lily, were initially interred at Elmwood Cemetery in the heart of Burlington, and then moved to a large family plot in the picturesque and park-like Lakeview Cemetery in 1876.

Obediah remarried in 1875—to a widow also named Mary (31). Mary had two sons, Ezra and Hiram, from her first marriage, and had a third, Robert, with Obediah. Fannie would have had family around her constantly—the Walkers were close-knit, several of the older brothers were neighbors on South Union Street and at least two of their spinster sisters lived with them.

Frances completed high school, but didn’t attend college. A woman of means, thanks to her father’s business, she was routinely listed in the Burlington Grand List as one of the top tax payers. She shared her wealth in various philanthropic endeavors, and gave passionately of her time and energy to organizations whose missions she supported. A member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, she also immersed herself in church activity. She was an officer of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, a founding member of the Foreign Missionary Society, and active in the local Chautauqua. In the late 1890s, she was also instrumental in the founding of the VWSA and served on its executive board.

Obediah died in 1897 and his estate, including the 500-acre farm, passed to Frances. She held onto the property until 1918, even after a devastating fire in 1910, but it’s unclear in what capacity it operated. In 1899, at the age of 35, Frances married George Bascomb Brown (40) who was 5’10”, had a straight nose, oval face, medium forehead, mouth, chin and complexion, brown hair, and bluish grey eyes. It was the first marriage for them both. For a time the couple lived on South Union Street, in the house of Frances’ uncle Henry. George, who had given up life as a manuscript editor in New York City, joined the family grocery business. They had no children, preferring instead to travel and spend time with Fannie’s extensive family. The Browns eventually moved into a home on North Prospect Street, where they hosted family parties and weddings for various cousins.

George died in December 1924 of pulmonary edema, and was interred in the Walker family plot at Lakeview Cemetery. Fannie lived another 18 years, passing away at the age of 79. Her death in 1942 is attributed to a seven-day bout of bronchitis and malnutrition. She too is now at rest in Lakeview Cemetery.
What Style Is It?

**Burlington’s Many Architectural Styles**

*Karyn Norwood*

As a Burlington resident, one of my favorite things to do is go for walks, looking at architecture and trying to figure out when it was built and what style it is. Identifying a house’s architectural style is fun. It requires some basic understanding of architectural features and once you have it down, you can figure out when whole neighborhoods were developed. I think of architectural styles as I do fashion—for instance, the Second Empire style rose to popularity in the 1870s, just as bell-bottoms did the 1970s—and both are identifying features of their respective time periods.

Burlington’s architecture has changed quite a bit over time. Burlington experienced its greatest growth in the late 1800s and early 1900s, hence the most common architectural styles you’ll see in Burlington are Colonial Revival and Queen Anne, which were two of the most popular styles in the country. Interspersed, you will find Italianates and Craftsman bungalows, and Second Empire residences. Most streets in Burlington are lined with these different styles of architecture. The styles reflect national and local cultural trends of each period, and the different demographics of people who settled in Burlington. In the King Street area and along Pearl Street, there are few Federal style buildings remaining (the earliest areas of Burlington settled). In the North End, you will find more often more vernacular, smaller, simpler forms of these architectural styles. In the South End, there are more high-style versions of these styles, reflecting the wealth of people in that area of Burlington. Downtown, you will find a mixture of business block buildings from the late 1800s to the mid-1900s. All buildings will have continued on page 7

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**Colonial Revival Style: 1880–1955**

- Colonial Revival style buildings can be seen all over Burlington on most streets, with all different shapes and sizes.
- Look for colonial and classical details on these newer buildings, such as: an elaborate front door with a front porch, pilasters, and columns, windows with double-hung sashes. Houses may have a gambrel, hipped, or gable roof, that may be steeply pitched.
- This style can vary quite a bit from house to house. Features and building sizes are generally larger than their colonial counterparts. (Hint: Remember, an older colonial or Federal building is not likely to have a matching garage in the back!)

**Queen Anne Style: 1880–1910**

- This colorful, “eclectic,” ornate style of architecture came over from England, but quickly became the most popular style in America in late 1800s.
- Queen Anne style buildings can be seen all over Burlington.
- Look for asymmetrical, 2–3 story, colorful, and detailed buildings with textured wall surfaces, such as patterned shingles, towers, porches with turned wood spindles, steeply-pitched roofs, generally with a front-facing gable. Queen Annes usually have a lot going on!

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Courtesy of Vermont Division for Historic Preservation
2019 Preservation Burlington Homes Tour

Matt Viens

Preservation Burlington’s 2019 Homes Tour was held on Saturday, June 8, a beautiful spring day in Vermont. As in past years, we were thrilled to showcase six amazing homes on the tour. While every tour boasts a unique collection of homes, I think this year’s lineup was one of the most eclectic yet. Take for instance Ken Axelson and Margot White’s apartment over Nunyuns Bakery & Cafe. The place is an artistic wonderland, and a fine example of the creative reuse of an historic building. The exterior of the structure—a tastefully painted Italianate commercial building—posed a delightful contrast to the funky interior of the couple’s expansive living quarters. Similarly, Linda Provost’s home, with its classic nineteenth century architecture, juxtaposed beautifully with the modern addition used as her Little Place Guest House.

Two of the things I love most about our tour is you never know what to expect, and how each home offers something different. This year I was in awe of the panoramic views of Lake Champlain offered from the back yard of Lewis and Mary Willmuth’s house, and the equally enchanting vision of Guido Masé and Anne Dougherty’s terraced back yard gardens. I fell in love with the rustic floorboards and tranquil vibe of Susan Wehry and Brooke Barss’ converted carriage barn, and was inspired by the collection of antique sepia tone photographs on display in Emily Lee and Eric Morrow’s home. I hope others came away from the tour with similar feelings.

None of this would be possible without the homeowners, who this year opened their homes to over 450 visitors. To them, we are incredibly thankful. We are also thankful for those who volunteered to help make the tour a success: our tour guides, cookie bakers, advertisers, and photographer (thank you, Carolyn Bates!). Lastly, thank you to those of you who bought tickets and joined us on the tour—it was a wonderful day! We’ve already set the date for next year’s tour, so please make plans to join us on Saturday, June 6, 2020!
beyond a few single hands, most of us had never ventured beyond the gate.

Burlington’s second oldest cemetery’s origins are surrounded in mystery, at least at this point. Local legend has it that the cemetery was established in 1801, for the burial of Ethan and Ira Allen’s Tory brother, Levi, who died a pauper in a debtors’ prison. However, there are burials in this cemetery that date to earlier (1790s). Also, we have no burial marker for Levi existing today in the cemetery. Regardless of origins, this cemetery has burials primarily from the early 1800s to 1860s. There’s an unknown number of interments (best estimate is 1,800) and there was also a period where people were buried very haphazardly in the cemetery, so there are many graves with no markers. Known as the “burying ground” first, then “Locust,” the name of Elmwood Cemetery came into use in 1878, since, as an article in the Burlington Free Press stated then matter-of-factly, “Elm trees long since took the place of the locusts which in the long gave the street its name.”

Buried here are many significant people who played varied roles in the history of our community. Ethan Allen’s second wife, Frances, and her third husband, Jabez, are buried here, along with the naturalist and historian Zaddock Thompson. John Johnson, famous surveyor and builder, lies in the back of the cemetery. William and Elizabeth Lund, the founders of the Lund Center are at rest here too. Men and women who served in the War of 1812 and the Civil War are also interred here.

I particularly love the story, though, of Pilot Joseph Barron, who navigated the Saratoga in the War of 1812’s Battle of Plattsburgh—his marker is toward the front of the cemetery. Commodore Thomas Macdonough put Barron in charge of his flagship, due to his knowledge of this area of Lake Champlain. Barron steered them to a successful victory, but he was killed soon after—when an errant musket ball struck the back of his head. Both Plattsburgh and Burlington had grave markers for Barron, however, and in 1906, the dispute over where Barron was actually interred of Plattsburgh—his marker is toward the front of the cemetery. Commodore Thomas Macdonough put Barron in charge of his flagship, due to his knowledge of this area of Lake Champlain. Barron steered them to a successful victory, but he was killed soon after—when an errant musket ball struck the back of his head. Both Plattsburgh and Burlington had grave markers for Barron, however, and in 1906, the dispute over where Barron was actually interred
reached a dramatic height. How to determine who actually had his body? Well, you can guess. That year they dug him up in Elmwood in front of a substantial crowd of people. They had a doctor on hand to survey the body and upon seeing the hole in the back of head, as well as the military clothing, it was determined to be Bar- ron. Huzzah! Apparently those who attended took snippets of the blanket Barron was wrapped in as souvenirs of the day.

There are many more stories to be unearthed in this cemetery. There are so many of our community members buried here. Going beyond the gate to see this beautiful cemetery and learn about those in Elmwood has been so powerful—and it has been equally alarming. Here’s the thing: Elmwood Cemetery is in bad shape. The tombstones are wearing year after year, many of them are broken, and those important bits of information about who is buried there and when they lived are disappearing.

We must prioritize preservation of this important historical site—and soon—before before parts (people) of Burlington’s history are lost forever.

Architectural Styles
continued from page 4
undergone some change over time and some buildings might have different features from different periods or have additions. Some buildings might fit one style, some might not fit any. Historic buildings, like their inhabitants, are different from each other and change over time.

I highly recommend Virginia McAl- ester’s A Field Guide to American Houses as a primer for identifying architectural styles. You can also follow me on Instagram (@what_style_is_that) for quick identification tips.

Meet the Board Member – Gwen Langdon

With a background in architecture and history from Ithaca College, and a Master’s Degree from UVM, Gwen was a natural choice for Executive Director of Preservation Burlington. She led PB from 2007 to 2009. Gwen left Preservation Burlington to pursue a career in sustainability with the Rainforest Alliance. She has remained a resident in the Burlington area, although spending much of her time on the road in her new position. In her 10 years working for Rainforest Alliance, Gwen had the opportunity to travel the country, dedicating much of her leisure time to experiencing American art, architecture and culture. In 2013, Gwen took a global position allowing her to travel the world, visiting architectural gems such as the Eiffel Tower, Cologne Cathedral, and the Taj Mahal.

Switching career paths from preservation to sustainability was a natural progression in that preservation is sustainability in the larger sense. In Gwen’s free time she remains dedicated to her local community, preservation, and Preservation Burlington. A regular at the PB Homes Tour as house captain, and volunteer, Gwen recently returned to the Preservation Burlington board acting as Secretary and Advocacy Committee chairperson. When she isn’t traveling for work or volunteering at cemetery and walking tours, you will find Gwen at the lake or strolling the streets of Burlington with her black lab Stella Louise.
The statement of significance for Bayview Street from Vermont’s Historic Sites and Structures Survey (from 1977) tells the story of how the street was developed by Hamilton Peck, a successful lawyer, and Joel Gates, a banker and industrialist who built the Kilburn and Gates factory which still stands at St. Paul and Kilburn Streets. Their street plan was registered with the city in 1887. Peck built houses at the lower end of the street. The men also sold lots to others, who either built for themselves or developed the properties for sale.

One of these developers was Eugene Chausse, an enterprising resident of the Old North End. He was the developer of Kingsland Terrace and other areas in the Hill section of Burlington. His wife Gertrude’s name was usually included on his deeds. On September 1st of 1915 the Chausse bought a lot of land on Bayview Street from George E. Story; on the 15th they bought a lot east of it from W.O. Shattuck. On the 20th of December they sold #38 Bayview Street, a house and lot. The lot included parts of both the previous purchases, the greater part being from Story’s. The house, like others on the street, is in the Colonia Revival style, with clapboard and shingle siding, a slate roof, and a spacious front porch.

The new owner was Walter G Holtham. He was a clerk at the Hotel Vermont, then located in the building still standing at the southeast corner of Main and St. Paul Streets. A native of Canada, he had been living at the hotel, and he was listed there in the 1916 city directory; #38’s first mention is in that directory, and it is listed as “empty.” This would reflect the first part of 1916. On May 19th, 1916, Walter Holtham, age 38, was married to Nellie Agnes Hickey, age 30, the daughter of Irish immigrants, and a telephone operator at the hotel. Nellie’s baptismal name was Helen, but for most of her life she used Nellie as her given name. Walter and Nellie settled into their new home. In 1923, Nellie became a co-owner of the house.

In the 1927 city directory Helen A. Holtham had a beauty shop at 82 South Winooski Avenue. In November 1929 Walter traveled to Montreal, checking in at the Windsor Hotel. We don’t know if Nellie was with him. He became ill with pneumonia and died on November 16, 1928. His body was sent home to Burlington for burial.

Helen continued living on Bayview Street and managing her beauty shop until she remarried on July 26, 1932. The groom was Graham Wilson, a Selma, Alabama native who had been managing the Wilson, a rooming house which still stands at 189 Church Street. He had come to Burlington after his honorable discharge as a cavalry sergeant at Fort Ethan Allen in 1900. Helen/Nellie moved to the Wilson with her new husband, renting out her house on Bayview to Mrs. Lulu A. Bartlett, a widow.

In 1933 and 1934 city directories listed the house as vacant. The family of Frederick W. Thayer, a clerk at the Burlington Savings Bank and a treasurer/trustee of the Episcopal Diocese, were the next renters. They were at #38 until the early 1940s, when they moved to Overlake Park. Nellie Wilson returned to the house with Graham briefly. He died after a long illness in December of 1945. Nellie rented to the family of Albert S. Coffin, Superintendent of the Employers’ Liability Corp. in 1943–1944.

She continued to manage the Wilson until 1951 with her third husband, J. T. Rourke. She had sold the house in December of 1946 to Bial Boynton, who owned Boynton’s Shoes on Church Street. In 1949 Caroline H. and Henry T. Rondeau were living in the house. They soon sold it to Robert L. and Martha M. Wilbur. Robert was plant accountant for GE, and the treasurer of the Burlington Chamber of Commerce. The Wilburs moved on in 1952.

The new owners were Margaret F. and Thomas H. Candon, Jr. Thomas was an employee of the Veterans’ Administration, specializing in mortgage loans. In November of 1958 they continued on page 9.
Behind the Green Marker continued from page 8

were planning to leave Burlington, so they sold to Marjorie and Cedric A. Lavalla. Cedric worked for New England Telephone and Telegraph. In September of 1962 Ruth and William C. Mitchell took over #38; he worked for the Lane Press as a customer service representative. In about a year the Mitchells sold the house to Francis T. and Sylvia M. Sheridan. Francis was a trust officer with Chittenden Trust. The Sheridans remained for almost thirteen years.

Then, in June of 1976, Thomas J. and Johannah Leddy Donovan settled in to raise their family. So they did; Thomas was a lawyer, and Johannah’s family was well known in Vermont political circles. Their son, T.J. Donovan, is Vermont’s present attorney general. They were the family at #38 Bayview for nearly forty years. Johannah Leddy, now widowed, sold the house to its present owners in January of 2016.

References
Burlington Land Records
Burlington City Directories, 1914–1990
State of Vermont: Historic Sites and Structures Survey, 1977
Hopkins Map of Burlington VT, 1890, detail

Events

2020 Preservation Burlington Homes Tour

Preservation Burlington’s 2020 Homes Tour will be held on Saturday, June 6 from 12–4 P.M. The Homes Tour Committee is hard at work compiling a list of beautiful and historic homes for you to tour. If you are interested in having your home on a future tour (or know someone who would), or would like to volunteer on the day of the tour, please contact Matt Viens at 802-864-7391 or mlviens@comcast.net. The Homes Tour is Preservation Burlington’s biggest fundraising event. Proceeds from the tour go towards the organization’s many educational programs.

Preservation Burlington Walking Tours

Burlington’s fascinating history and alluring architecture come alive through guided walking tours. Our knowledgeable guides will entertain you with stories of the past and introduce you to Burlington’s diverse architectural styles. We offer a number of different types of tours and cover a variety of Burlington’s neighborhoods.

For more information please email info@preservationburlington.org or call 802-522-8259. See you on the streets!
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Only $15. Available in Forest Green unisex adult sizes S-XXL
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Cost: $100 includes:
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