

Ophir Farm
and
Manhattanville
College



Dear Visitor:

Manhattanville and the Purchase Environmental Protective Association (PEPA) worked together to preserve Ophir Farm Estate's historic structures and cultural landscape, much of it co-located on the college campus, and created this book to celebrate the land's rich history.

Dating back to the 17th century, the story of Ophir Farm combines just the right mix of historical truth and local legend, and serves as a worthy heritage for Manhattanville College, now on the same site. The book provides a glimpse into the history, landscaping and architecture of both and is designed to make the buildings and scenery come alive.

The Ophir Farm estate was once one of the nation's most prominent model farms, an art form and hobby pursued by affluent farmers in the 1800's. Today, it includes a rich sampling from artisans who have worked on New York City's Central Park, the White House, the Capitol, the campuses of Harvard and Columbia, St. Patrick's Cathedral, and Lincoln Center.

Our guide has been created, in part, to celebrate and preserve these treasures.

Thanks to Gayl Braisted for allowing me to quote liberally from her work. She compiled many of the sources in this history for her Master's thesis at Manhattanville.

We are enthusiastic about the efforts to preserve Ophir Farm and hope you will read this beautiful book to learn more about it.

Sincerely,

Anne Gold, Executive Director

Purchase Environmental Protective Association (PEPA)



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Early map circa 1695

1695: Harrison's Purchase, Arrival of Haviland Family

The origin of the Manhattanville campus dates back to 1695 when John Harrison of Flushing, Queens, purchased the land from the Siwanoy Indians for 40 English pounds. Harrison petitioned the Governor's Council of New York to make the transaction official, and King William III granted final approval on June 25, 1696. The original sheepskin deed is hermetically sealed and may be viewed by appointment at the Harrison Town Clerk's Office at 1 Heineman Place in downtown Harrison.

When the land became known as "Harrison's Purchase,"¹ the Indians were undoubtedly perplexed. Ownership of land was not a familiar concept to Native American culture, and the Siwanoy may have believed they were selling temporary permission for hunting and farming.

The Indian Sachem (village chief), as related by current folklore, told Mr. Harrison he could have as much land as he could cover in a single day on horseback. Since Harrison didn't want to get his or his horse's feet wet, the borders encompassed a narrow piece of land, nine miles long by three miles wide, bound by streams and lakes on all sides, thus making Harrison the only landlocked town so close to Long Island Sound.²

Similarly, the origins of Ophir Farm may be traced back to 1695 when the Haviland family arrived. They originally leased 20 acres for grist and a sawmill, but later generations produced and sold china after discovering the land contained feldspar, a crucial component in its composition. Eventually, members of the Haviland family returned to their homeland of France where there was a better quality of feldspar than in Purchase. As a result, the famous Haviland China Factory was established there.³

1772: Purchase Street

Purchase Street went through the middle of Harrison's Purchase and was once part of an Indian footpath connecting (present-day) Rye Lake, a fresh water source, to the Long Island Sound, a source of lobster, clams and bluefish. William Forrester, then County Clerk, made the earliest known entry about the path in the 1772 public property record. He referred to it as, "Middle Street – a road formerly laid out as an Indian path along and near the middle line of Harrison's Purchase."⁴

1864: The Holladays

In 1864, millionaire Ben "Doc" Holladay bought up almost 1,000 acres in Purchase, predominantly from members of the Haviland family. He did it to satisfy his wife, Ann Calvert, a well-bred gentlewoman who had married Ben over her parents' objections. They had lived in San Francisco, Oregon and Washington D.C., but Ann wanted to join the New York social scene.

Ben built her a magnificent six-story, 84-room mansion and called the estate Ophir Farm after a Nevada mine he won in a poker game. The mansion (whose footprint is the foundation of present-day Reid Castle) was admired throughout the state. Holladay also built 18 farm buildings including a coach house, stables and a root cellar.

Ben's hobby was landscaping, and he developed Ophir Farm to capture the flavor and romance of the Great West. Western florals of all types – trees, wild flowers, ferns and bushes – were transplanted into the Purchase soil, many labeled for the edification of visitors.

Holladay was proud of his estate, and he enjoyed conducting tours on board a narrow-gauge railroad running around it, or in a concord coach drawn by four white horses.

Holladay also stocked the streams with speckled trout and brought buffalo from Wyoming, elk from Colorado, and many antelope and deer. In fact, early maps mark the estate as “Buffalo Park,”⁵ and Holladay staged the only Buffalo hunts on the East Coast for his guests. Unfortunately, the animals kept jumping fences and trampling the neighbors' crops, so the park was dismantled.



Ann Holladay's Chapel

A devout Roman Catholic, Ann often spent time in the Norman Gothic-style chapel Ben had built just for her. Private family chapels are rare, and the Holladay chapel represents the oldest of three in Westchester County.⁶

Ann had a boulder with a carved cross and heart in the center placed on the entrance drive so people would know “Catholics lived here.”⁷ The boulder has since been moved and is now located at the southeast corner of the Benziger Building.

Ben Holladay lost his fortune in the New York Stock Market crash of 1873, the very day Ann died, and he declared bankruptcy shortly thereafter. A huge financial burden, his mansion was put up for public sale. Ann and their three children were buried in the vault under the chapel, but in 1919 were moved to a vault Mrs. Whitelaw Reid had built in St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery in Port Chester, NY.

The Impact of Ben Holladay

A colorful pioneer and business tycoon, Ben Holladay was nicknamed the “Stagecoach King,”⁸ because his extensive financial empire included the Pony Express and the Overland Express Stage Coaches. With the only other route to California around South America in a sailing ship, Holladay boasted his passengers could get to Sacramento in an “astonishing fourteen days.”⁹

Holladay wore expensively tailored Paris suits and, in colder climates, a tall beaver hat. At six feet two, he created a powerful and imposing impression, and was respected by the most prominent figures of the time, including Brigham Young and

Ulysses Grant. Even President Lincoln counted Holladay among his business allies, calling him to the White House to emphasize the importance of mail delivery during the Civil War.

It was considered a social kudos to be invited to a Holladay party. Some stretched for a whole month long with no expense spared or amenity omitted, including “beautiful escorts for gentlemen who arrived alone.”¹⁰ The parties would often include congressman, cabinet officers, Wall Street millionaires, foreign diplomats, dignitaries and other social elite.

In addition to reigning as a transportation monarch, Holladay was also known as the Boss of the Plains and a business visionary. He ruled with executive genius and a gambler's instinct and built a virtual monopoly for U.S. mail contracts and stage-coaches; then he “sold the whole shebang to Wells Fargo the day after he saw the first Union Pacific train steam west of Omaha.”¹¹

Foreseeing the decline of stage coaching, Holladay sold out for \$1.5 million in cash, \$300,000 in stock and an honorary seat on the Wells Fargo Board of Directors. Before the sale, Ben controlled 2,670 miles of stage lines, making him the largest private employer in the United States.



Manhattanville Students Restoring the Holladay Stream

The Holladay Stream

Today, Manhattanville Environmental Studies students and ACT (Achieving Conservation Together) student club members are restoring the area in and around one of the oldest streams in Harrison, nicknamed Holladay

stream. This long-term project involves forestry studies, stream ecology and wetlands restoration. Students routinely remove invasive vegetation and monitor stream flow and purity. The College recently

won a Green Campus Recognition award from The National Wildlife Federation for their activities and work to increase awareness of the need for clean water and open space.

1883-1886: John Roach, Arrival of the Reids

The next owner, John Roach, a shipbuilder, never actually lived on the Ophir Farm estate, or in the old house, because he was waiting to complete an important business deal prior to its restoration. Following Ben Holladay's pattern, Roach lost his business empire, and the home became a financial burden. When he died, he bequeathed his estate to his son, Garrett, who immediately put the Farm up for public auction and sold it to Elisabeth and Whitelaw Reid.



Whitelaw Reid

Whitelaw Reid, an intelligent and meticulous man, pursued noteworthy careers as a farmer, journalist, editor, author and diplomat. He acquired considerable wealth by marrying heiress Elisabeth Mills, daughter of North Salem's (Westchester, NY) native-born banker, gold-rush financier and millionaire, Darius Ogden Mills. Darius helped the couple to purchase Ophir Farm in 1886, and Elisabeth's name appears on the deed, highly unusual for a woman at that time.

Elisabeth, with her modest demeanor, intelligence and charm, became an influential member of New York society and later rose to worldwide fame. Perhaps, her lifelong friendship to Anna (Roosevelt) Cowles, elder sister of President Theodore Roosevelt, helped to establish the deep camaraderie between the President and her husband.

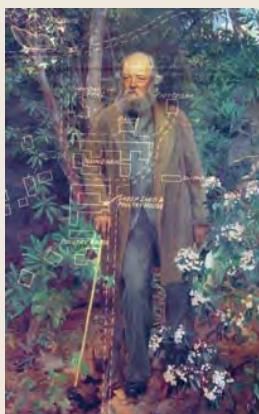
1887: Design by Frederick Olmsted



Elisabeth Reid

In 1887, when the Reids purchased Ophir Farm, it had a mansford-roof mansion and farm buildings sprinkled throughout the property. As owner of *The New York Tribune*, Whitelaw, and his wife, Elisabeth, were moving in the most elite social circles. They were determined to find the finest decorations and the most modern Victorian appliances for their home. It became the first in Westchester with both telephone and electric wiring.

Frederick Law Olmsted, acclaimed as North America's greatest landscape architect,¹² created plans for both the outdoors and the architecture for the buildings in the Farm Group. He had previously designed New York City's Central Park, the nation's first major urban park, and numerous other treasured public spaces including the landscapes for the United States Capitol, the White House and the Jefferson Memorial.



Frederick Olmsted

Olmsted's Contribution to the Environment

Frederick Law Olmsted wrote a report to persuade New York legislators to purchase Niagara Falls and hold it as a public reserve. He also convinced President Lincoln and Congress to preserve Yosemite Valley untouched through the execution of a grant and the transfer of operating expenses to the state of California. Eventually, this technique would become a model for the entire National Park Service.

Olmsted believed the government had a moral responsibility to preserve extraordinary landscapes for the benefit of the people. He wrote, "The enjoyment of scenery employs the mind without fatigue and yet exercises it, tranquilizes it and yet enlivens it; and thus, through the influence of the mind over the body, gives the effect of refreshing rest and reinvigoration of the whole system."¹³

1888: Fire at Ophir Farm



Fire at Ophir Farm in 1888

The work was going smoothly when disaster struck.

On July 14, 1888, only a month before the Reids were scheduled to move in, a fire – caused by either a short circuit or a workman's torch – swept through the house. Within a few hours, the mansion was in ruins. Only the foundation and gutted granite walls testified to its former pioneer glory. Not to be deterred, the Reids immediately decided to rebuild on a greater and grander scale than before.

In planning the reconstruction, the Reids chose an architectural style based on Norman castles, originally popular in the Hudson Valley in the mid-nineteenth century. Romanticized by authors like Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper, the area was likened to the Rhine because of the many stone castles rising above its steep banks.

Several factors may have influenced the Reids' choice. As a practical and often frugal man, Whitelaw knew he could save money by retaining the original footprint of the house and as much of the walls as possible. The



Ophir Castle with Turret

rough granite blocks, cut from quarries on the property, lent themselves far better to castle construction than to a more refined style. The fire in the original mansion also made Reid very safety-conscious, and a crenellated mansion, with load-bearing masonry walls and a massive tower with attached turret, provided a solid, secure feeling.

Whitelaw Reid employed at least four architectural firms to design the estate though the mansion itself is credited to McKim, Mead & White. The firm also designed the 1912 addition and Stanford White worked on the Castle's interior design.

Completed in 1892, the Ophir Farm castle included a five-story central tower with a turret on the southeast corner; a façade accented by arched windows, grouped in twos and threes; and a veranda, supported by granite piers and decorative columns. The small scale of the windows compared to the block-like mass of the building, topped with battlements, gave it the appearance of a fortress. The opulent interior offered a dramatic contrast to the stark exterior even after the 1912 addition. Also, at that time, the turret was removed because Reid wanted the facade to be symmetrical.

The Architectural Contributions of McKim, Mead & White

With nearly one thousand projects between 1879 and 1912, McKim, Mead & White was chosen as the architectural firm for some of the most prestigious projects of the era, including the redesign of the White

House and the Mall in Washington, D.C., and the campuses of Harvard and Columbia Universities. Its residential clients included the most powerful figures of the Gilded Age such as the Vanderbilts, Whitneys

and Pulitzers. The firm built splendid summer cottages in Newport, Long Island and the Hudson Valley, and opulent town houses in Boston, Washington, Baltimore and New York.

1889: Reconstruction

Since Whitelaw Reid was appointed American Minister to France in 1889, the Reids spent most of the reconstruction period abroad. Therefore, the supervision of the project was conducted through a plethora of correspondence, as well as the watchful eye of Elisabeth's generous father, Darius Mills, who resided at Ophir Farm much of the time they were away. Even so, their frequent absences must have contributed to the construction delays.¹⁴

Frederick Olmsted and Model Farms

As an experienced farmer, Frederick Law Olmsted was particularly interested in designing a "Model Farm." As a young man, he had studied engineering and scientific farming and put many of his theories into practice on his own Staten Island

farm. Olmsted viewed farming as an almost sacred activity — worthy of the most careful attention. His views shaped his approach to Ophir Farm, and thus increase its historical significance.

Whitelaw Reid and Model Farms

As a typical "gentleman farmer" of the Gilded Age, Whitelaw Reid didn't milk the cows. He viewed his farm as a hobby and hoped it would serve as an agricultural and scientific model. Therefore, he employed and experimented with the most modern technology available.

Often experimentation with model farms achieved practical advances. However, they also tried to copy the image of the English country estate to give a false picture of success. Described by an early farm equipment company as "more fun than a yacht,"¹⁵ the model farm reflected

the opulent lifestyle of wealthy Gilded-Age families.

The concept of the model farm was also inextricably tied to the American country house movement and the turn-of-the-century industrialist. Decades later, when federal income tax, anti-trust legislation and inflation reduced profit margins, the country house movement waned.

Reid, like his former editor Horace Greeley, championed the American farmer and criticized the emphasis government placed on investment in urban areas. He applauded the

growing export of farm products, foreseeing America's role as a food purveyor to Europe.¹⁶

Reid's appreciation of wholesome country life manifested itself in a program he helped establish to fund trips to the West for poor urban children. When he was editor of *The Tribune*, he sponsored an organization originally founded by Reverend Willard Parsons and later incorporated in 1888 as "The Tribune Fresh Air Fund Aid Society." Today, "Fresh Air" continues to function with the support of *The New York Times*.

1892: Grand Reopening

Sheep at Ophir Farm



Poster for Harrison-Reid Campaign

In 1892, the Reids held a grand reopening for the estate, but the Farm Group was nowhere near completion. Olmsted had created too elaborate a design for the barns, and Reid sent inquiries at frequent intervals. In December 1892, Reid wrote to McKim, Mead & White, "I shall want to see Mr. Mead as soon as he has got his ideas about the barn developed. My fear is that under the inspiration of Mr. Olmsted and with general tendencies of architects, he may be giving me a much finer thing than I want or rather much finer than I want to pay for."¹⁷

Reid had been home only a few months when President Benjamin Harrison asked him to be his running mate for the Presidential election of 1892. The President traveled to Ophir to deliver a speech to the people of Westchester from the mansion's front porch, followed by a reception in the marble hallway. The election was lost by a slim four percent to former President Grover Cleveland, the only President to win non-consecutive terms in the White House.

1895: Construction of the Main Barn

Construction of the barn began in 1895, six years after Reid had asked Olmsted to choose a site and sketch plans for the farm buildings. The work proceeded without further delays, mainly because William Rutherford Mead took over as chief architect when Olmsted fell ill, and Mead was less involved in the design process than his partners. He oversaw the building of the main barn and designed the stables.

1902: Construction of the Farm Group

Photos of Main Barn and Farm Group



By 1902, eleven buildings adjoined a new farmhouse, all constructed of stone from the estate.¹⁸

The main new building, a handsome bank barn topped with a slate roof, eyebrow vents and a line of ventilating cupolas, was constructed of uncoursed rubble on the first floor and clapboard on the second.

The farmhouse, dairy and stable/coach house, all still standing today, were each designed by different architects. The farmhouse, built first, served as a residence for the manager and his family, with a business office and wing for farm workers to eat and relax. Also constructed from uncoursed rubble, with rough stone voussoirs forming the window arches, the farmhouse had a roof accented by an eyebrow dormer on the front portico, and a cupola over the wing. Behind the farmhouse and across the road from the barn, Reid built a dairy based on planning by at least two renowned architectural firms.¹⁹



Typical of the time, gentlemen farmers frequently visited each other, exchanged ideas and livestock, and even swapped personnel in their mutual efforts to create model farms. Hamilton Twombly, who owned a country

estate called “Florham” in Convent Station, NJ, shared ideas and personnel with Whitelaw Reid. Both Ophir Farm and Florham were designed by McKim, Mead and White, and landscaped by Olmsted. Therefore, when Reid decided to build a dairy, he contacted Twombly’s farm manager, Edward Burnett, who has been called the pre-eminent farm designer of the day. A Harvard graduate, Burnett also served in the United States Congress.

When Reid approved Burnett’s ideas, he sent it to the firm of Hoppin & Koen for architectural drawings. The company had designed many prominent country estates including Edith Wharton’s “The Mount” in Lennox, MA. When the construction was completed, Reid was so pleased, he wrote to Hoppin & Koen to compliment them on their work.

The last major farm building, the stable, was set apart from the rest of the group to provide easy access from the drive in front of the house. Mead’s design incorporated many of Reid’s suggestions. The building, with its Georgian face, uncoursed rubble, Bullseye windows and eyebrow louvered dormers, provided elegant housing for Reid’s horses, carriages and stable staff, and echoed many of the details in the farmhouse.²⁰

Parts of the farm group still survive to remind us of this unique era. The farmhouse now serves as faculty housing, and remnants of Olmsted’s grand barn still exist. The little dairy, once a proud component of a model farm, now stands with its doors ajar, revealing antique wall tiling.

1905: Absentee Landlord

In 1905, Theodore Roosevelt appointed Whitelaw as Ambassador to the Court of St. James in London, the highest post in Great Britain. Before leaving for England, he resigned his position at the Tribune and his son, Ogden Mills Reid, became the next editor. Ophir Farm, once again, was supervised from overseas.

1909-1912: Time of Transition

Reid never lost interest in renovating and enlarging his residences. He met with Mead again in 1909 to discuss an elaborate addition to the Ophir castle. The size of the structure suggests he was planning to use the house more frequently upon his return from England. However, Reid died in London in December 1912, exhausted after traveling to New York and Wales for speaking engagements.²¹

1913-1918: Intrusion by the Outside World

The election of Woodrow Wilson, the ensuing period of social reform, the confirmation of Roosevelt’s anti-trust legislation, and the enactment of a federal income tax brought an end to the Gilded Age. In time, the taxes and inflation would prove detrimental to the subsistence of the estate.



Women's Land Army (Farmerettes) on Ophir Farm

As far back as October 5, 1872, she wrote him, "I am sorry you are not here – I wanted to convert you to women's suffrage."²² Some historians believe Henry James, a friend of Reid and frequent visitor of Ophir Farm, based two characters in his novel, *The Bostonians*, on the real-life struggle between Anthony and Reid.²³

Women's Suffrage and Whitelaw Reid

During World War I, because the men were engaged on the battlefield, women with little or no agricultural experience were recruited to work on farms. Their nationwide contribution to the war effort became known

as the Women's Land Army or Farmerettes. Their contributions encouraged President Wilson to endorse women's suffrage, a cause of much debate between Susan B. Anthony and Whitelaw Reid.

A letter written in 1875 indicates Ms. Anthony's displeasure. She tells Reid, "You are altogether too high in the air for the likes of me to even hope to reach you. Hence, I must content myself with this letter to say I hope you will help us shout our discontent with the tyranny of taxation without representation."²⁴

The Reid Women

The Reid women were involved in the suffrage movement as well, and Helen Rogers Reid, Elisabeth's daughter-in-law, attended the opening of the second New York State suffrage campaign on September 8, 1917 at Sagamore Hill, Teddy Roosevelt's Long Island estate. By working with the chair of the delegation, Mrs. Norman Whitehouse, State Chair of the New York State Women's Suffrage Party, they were able to win passage of the suffrage amendment to the New York State Constitution on November 6, 1917, despite its initial rejection by the voters in 1915.

The Reid women also helped with their husband's careers. Both



From left to right: Mrs. Ogden Mills Reid, Mrs. Norman Whitehouse, President Theodore Roosevelt and Mrs. James Lees Laidlaw at Sagamore Hill

Elisabeth and Helen contributed to the operation of the New York Tribune (later the New York Herald-Tribune). Elisabeth closely followed her husband's career when he was managing editor and owner of the paper, and after their son Ogden took control, she wrote him and his wife Helen extensive letters concerning the paper's editorial policy and daily operations. Helen Reid had started as the paper's advertising editor and eventually

became President and Chairman of the Board. Both Helen and Elisabeth were active philanthropists, with Elisabeth engaging in work with the American Red Cross (she was listed as one of its founders in an Act of Congress), Bellevue Hospital and Trudeau Sanitarium, in Saranac Lake, New York. Helen supported various colleges and universities, the Fresh Air Fund and especially women's suffrage.

1931: Growing Recognition

In June 1931, the Reid estate at Ophir Farm was praised by Arts and Decorations magazine, "Mrs. Reid's home is a repository for more precious and varied works of art than any other place of its period in the country. Built in the manner of an old world castle, it is surrounded by a vast estate planted with a rich dignity and including in its many interests a nine-hole golf course."²⁵

Because of this splendor, the estate was visited by many prominent individuals including Admiral Richard Byrd, President Calvin Coolidge, Marie and Eve Curie, Amelia Earhart, President Benjamin Harrison, President Herbert Hoover, Henry James (renowned author), Teddy Roosevelt and Gene Tunney (heavyweight boxing champion).

In 1931, Ophir Farm received its first visit by royalty, King Prajadhipok and Queen Rambhai of Siam (now Thailand). Fortunately, one of the reasons for the King's visit to the United States, delicate eye surgery, proceeded without incident. Mrs. Reid arranged for the royal entourage to stay at Ophir Hall and converted a bedroom of the mansion into an operating room. In appreciation, the King and Queen gave Mrs. Reid a large marble mantel carved with water buffalo, rice fields and other symbols of Siam. It was placed in the East Library where it remains today.

Later the same year, Elisabeth Reid passed away while visiting her daughter in the South of France, and her son, Ogden Mills Reid, inherited the estate. He didn't move into Ophir Farm but continued to live with his wife, Helen, in Ophir Cottage, on the other side of Purchase Street.

1942-1945: World War II

During World War II, Ophir Farm was used for tactical maneuvers by army infantry and Harrison's Policy Auxiliary. They were training to fight potential saboteurs.²⁶

1947: Up for Sale

When Ogden Reid died in 1947, other plans were discussed for the estate because it had become a financial burden. One proposal, defeated by the local town board, involved the construction of a shopping center and housing development. The grounds were also considered as a location for the United Nations.

1949: Purchase by Manhattanville College

Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart, located since 1841 in New York City, purchased 250 acres of the estate in 1949. Having outgrown its campus in Manhattan, the college bought the mansion and a dozen auxiliary buildings for \$500,000. The decision to relocate was reached after lengthy debate among Manhattanville's Board of Trustees, the Sacred Heart School and New York City officials. Manhattanville's President, Mother Eleanor O'Byrne, was a driving force in support of the decision.

1950's: Growth of Manhattanville

During the Korean War, the U.S. Government restricted the use of steel for new buildings. As a result, Manhattanville's Benziger Hall, originally designed to use 72 tons of steel, pioneered the first long-span, pre-stressed concrete girders. Previously, this construction method had been employed primarily for tanks, pressure pipes and bridges. Afterwards, it became commonplace in nearly all building types. And Manhattanville contributed to the war effort because Benziger Hall used only eight tons of steel in the process.



MANHATTANVILLE COLLEGE
PURCHASE, N.Y.
ARCHITECTS - EGGERS & HIGGINS
CONTRACTORS - GEORGE A. FULLER CO.
PROJECT NO. 43-472
BUILDING NO. LOCATION
NEGATIVE NO. 6 DATE 5-3-51

Groundbreaking Day

On May 3, 1951, groundbreaking ceremonies were held on the quiet rolling hills of the estate. In an incredibly short time, less than a year-and-a-half later, the college opened the campus after moving its furniture, equipment, and thousands of books and documents.

In September 1952, five new college buildings were completed including Benziger and the Pius X Music Building. The New York-based architectural firm, Eggers and Higgins, created a modern and functional design while maintaining a harmony with the granite mansion.

The Pius X School of Liturgical Music

When Manhattanville moved, so did its renowned Pius X School of Liturgical Music (1918- 1969). One of the best-known institutions for teaching Gregorian chants, a musical repertory used by the Roman Catholic Church, the school had

been founded in 1918 by Justine Ward and Mother Georgia Stevens.

Often referred to as the “sung Bible,” Gregorian chants had been instituted in 1903 by Pope St. Pius X. His goal was to achieve fuller participation by the laity in the Church’s worship.

Over thirteen thousand teachers have studied the school’s method of teaching chant, and even legendary composer Richard Rodgers of Rodgers and Hammerstein knew about the school’s reputation.²⁷

1959: The Sound of Music

While composing “The Sound of Music,” Richard Rodgers had to create a realistic version of the opening piece with nuns singing the Catholic prayer “Dixit Dominus.” Rodgers noted, “I had to make sure that what I wrote would sound liturgically authentic. Through friends, I got in touch with Mother Morgan, head of the music department at Manhattanville College in Purchase, New York. She invited me to a specially arranged concert at

which the nuns and seminarians sang and performed many different kinds of religious music. An unexpected moment came when Mother Morgan, waving her arms like a cheerleader at a football game, was vigorously conducting a particularly dramatic passage. As the music built to its peak, Mother Morgan's booming command could be clearly heard, shouting, 'Pray it. Pray it.'"²⁸

According to campus legend, Mr. Rodgers was struck by the nuns and students he saw traversing the Quad's gentle slopes and this, in part, inspired him to write the verse, "The hills are alive with the sound of music." The Broadway play went on to become one of Rodgers and Hammerstein's most famous collaborations, and the film adaptation won the Academy Award for Best Picture.

1963: O'Byrne Chapel

The dedication of the O'Byrne Chapel on April 28, 1963 was attended by Ogden and Whitelaw Reid, grandsons of Elisabeth and Whitelaw. The ceremony honored the architects, builders, artists, craftsmen, technicians and construction workers who shared in its creation. The chapel reflects their genius and has been described as Manhattanville's tribute to the Source of beauty.

1965: The Japan Pavilion

In 1965, the Japan Pavilion, originally built for the New York World's Fair in Queens, was offered as a gift to the college. Created from specially designed lava stones, it proved impossible to reconstruct because the contractors were unable to disassemble the stones without destroying them. They salvaged as many stones as they could and made a sculpture garden in front of the President's Cottage and the Kennedy Gym.

Japan Giving Fair Pavilion to Manhattanville College



The New York Times
Section of the sculptured wall surrounding the Japan Pavilion at the fair that has been donated to Manhattanville College. Stone abstraction was designed by Masayuki Nagare.

The Japan Pavilion at the World's Fair is to be donated to Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart in Purchase, N. Y.

The building is considered to be an outstanding example of Japanese architecture. It will be presented formally to the college by officials of the Japan Trade Center, organizer of the pavilion, on behalf of the Japanese Government at a ceremony next Tuesday.

Mother E. M. O'Byrne, president of the college, said Japan's gift to Manhattanville could not have been announced at a more significant moment. She explained that through a grant from the United States Government, the college expanded its program of Asian studies this fall by offering instruction in the Japanese language.

The pavilion will serve as a language and Asian studies center at Manhattanville. Young people from the United States and many other nations will study there, Mother O'Byrne observed and added: "This, in itself, will establish a basis of understanding and friendship which will enrich the lives of all of these."

The stone wall of the Japan Pavilion is said to be the first stone-sculpture wall ever erected in this country. To introduce this traditional architectural art to Japan and to create interest in the use of stones for modern architecture in this country, Masayuki Nagare, Japanese sculptor, designed the entire wall of lava rock, brought specially from Japan.

Seven skilled Japanese artisans underwent special training in Mr. Nagare's studio for the job of constructing the wall, which weighs 600 tons and is composed of 6,000 sculptured stones. The artisans were brought to the fair specifically for the construction work.

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1974: Recognition of Reid Castle

Reid Castle and its grounds were listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.

As approved, the National Register of Historic Places Inventory, filed with the United States Department of the Interior, lists Manhattanville College's "Areas of Significance" as "Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Political." It notes, "A lavishly decorated residence in the style of a Renaissance Revival Castle, Reid Hall was designed in 1892 by Stanford White. Reid also hired Frederick Law Olmstead to landscape the 714-acre estate."

1980: Harrison Historic Landmark

In 1980, Reid Castle and Manhattanville College were listed in the New York State Register of Historical Places and designated as a Harrison Historic Landmark, one of only four nationally registered sites in Harrison.

Today: A Global Community



Today, Manhattanville College is a thriving community of over 1,500 undergraduate and 1,100 graduate students from more than 45 countries and 40 states. But it has, and always will, be a place of destiny. From the wild tulip trees the Siwanoy found here and crafted into canoes, to the mansion built two centuries later as a stagecoach tycoon's home, to a burgeoning student body with their aspirations to shape the future, these 100 acres are continuing to grow and reflect the yearning needs undreamed of by Ben Holladay and Whitelaw Reid. This tradition-steeped community, and the values that it represents, continues to uphold the spirit of these two extraordinary men. Leaders in the global community, Holladay and Reid were creative and forward-thinking individuals who appreciated the arts and nature while balancing social responsibility in their daily lives. Today, Manhattanville's mission is to "educate students to become ethically and socially responsible leaders for the global community." Students are encouraged to be independent and creative thinkers in both their careers and personal lives. These values are brought to life everyday in the classrooms, dorms, athletic fields and the community beyond the campus. Just 30 minutes away from the college's namesake borough and original home, Manhattanville today enjoys its bucolic campus setting enriched by the opportunities of New York City, only a skyline away.



Footnotes

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28. "Dear Theo UUSBHC Programs," March 21, 2004, Mark Allstrom, Rev., www.uusbhc.org/sermons/032104deartheo.



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