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Gilded Ages and Gilded Archaeologies of American Exceptionalism

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Abstract Archaeology's ties to an interest in America's natural and cultural resources, enshrined in the Antiquities Act of 1906, can be tied to the development of the presumed entitlements associated with gilded age-era conceptions of America's cultural and racial exceptionalism. Archaeology, historic preservation, and related interests in the materiality of America's past were in fact among the mechanisms used to legitimize America's global emergence in the modern era. Considering elite ideas about race and a fear of "race suicide" as well as the rise of the environmental conservation and the historic house movement, this paper argues that archaeology and related pursuits of historic materiality have been regularly deployed to enforce Anglo-Saxon racial values. Explicitly formed in the historical context of mass-immigration, this dynamic is explored in a discussion of two archaeological sites in Jamaica, Queens connected to gilded-age discourse on Americanization.

Keywords Race suicide · Historic preservation · King Manor · Jamaica Queens · Theodore Roosevelt

> "There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism" Walter Benjamin, *Theses on the Philosophy of History.*

Introduction

The origins of American archaeology, as the scientific investigation of the remains of the past, are found in the era of the first gilded age, the time when Americans first defined and embraced a homegrown notion of their own civilization as exceptional.

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This paper explains key aspects of this American idea of civilization and how archaeology and historic preservation were cast to support these ideas. As the gilded age was an era of extremes, it is useful to consider how gilded age elites managed the threats to their status that such extremes brought about. In fact, despite urban growth and reform; market booms and busts tied to industrial and finance capitalism; mass immigration, poverty, and class violence; emergent forms of mass transportation and communication; and the rise of American imperialism, conceptions of what was to be found at the core of American civilization remained surprisingly stable. It is important to know how these core values were maintained in the face of such dramatic change. In addition, inasmuch as these core values sustained inequality and elite privilege, it is also important to know the ways that practices like archaeology and historic preservation were used to sustain them. My goal is this paper is to explore processes of elite self-fashioning with a historical analysis of some essential ideas deployed to rationalize American archaeology and historic preservation during the gilded age. I also show how archaeology can itself be used to critique its gilded age foundations and instead develop useful new information without a commitment to gilded age values antithetical to democratic social knowledge and social justice ideals archaeologists typically embrace.

Sex, Race, and the Civilized American Life

A major feature of the gilded age was the enactment of a particular convergence of ideas about civilization, gender, sex, and race. These ideas stemmed from the notion that for the first time modern people could imagine humanity itself as a singular whole. This standpoint was initially supported by Darwin's theory of natural selection, but, as it became popularly understood among the educated elite, evolutionary theory was also used to explain and confirm their own presumed supremacy. Civilization, the topmost rank in most gilded age social evolutionary structures of humanity, was reserved for northern European whites and their descendents around the globe. Only whites had demonstrated and achieved the distinctions of a rank defined by industry, invention, self-control and strength of character. Specifically, as Bederman (1995, p. 25) explains, Gilded Age elites believed that the true mark of the civilized races was a pronounced distinction between the sexes, such that "civilized women were womanly—delicate, spiritual, dedicated to the home. And civilized white men were the most manly ever evolved—firm of character, self-controlled; protectors of women and children." Less "evolved" societies, those labeled "savage" or "barbarian" in the early anthropological literature, were in part defined by their lack of such pronounced sexual differences. It is, of course, curious that in this assessment Gilded Age elites defined manliness and womanliness in terms that reflected their own norms yet presented these findings as objective though exclusive facts of nature.

This sort of reasoning also informed gilded age thinking about race: that humanity was itself a natural historical body that could be divided into several ancient if not original races reflecting the distinct and discrete development of the world's diverse societies. Physical *and* cultural traits were deployed to distinguish the many "races of mankind" from each other, a descriptive way of thinking that naturalized and fixed social and cultural difference. In turn, scientists produced classification schemes

consisting of at times dozens of "races" segregating national societies, language groups, and religious communities into separate stocks (Fig. 1).

The point here is less that racial groups were classified and separated than how they, as a whole, laid out a schematic for explaining the diversity of humanity that was only capable of being understood by the civilized races presumed to reside at the top of the hierarchy. Put another way, and with the anxiety-driven millennial urgency of the times, while the "lower races" were by nature incapable of conceptualizing of the world in such abstract naturalized racial terminology, it was essential that the civilized races do so in order to practice and preserve their civilized superiority for the benefit of all humanity. This urgency was driven on the one hand by a tacit agreement among the civilized races that their way of life approached perfection. With secularism on the rise and evolutionary theory growing in acceptance, the civilized races were more than ever in control of their own *and* the rest of the humanity's destiny. Even gilded age feminist reformer Charlotte Perkins Gilman believed that "the business of [whites] was to carry out the evolution of the human race, according to the laws of nature, adding the conscious direction, the telic force, proper to our kind [i.e. whites]—we are the only creatures that can assist evolution" (in Bederman 1995, p. 128). It was a self-perceived responsibility of the Anglo-Saxon to actively reach towards humanity's highest possible achievements. At the same time, since the barbarians were always at the gate, a strict enforcement of racial distinctions at both the boundaries where the races met (colonies, factories, city streets) as well as internally where whites were supposedly in firm control (the home) was required. Leading a civilized life, that is, was a great deal of work and responsibility, requiring a great deal of scientific knowledge

Fig. 1 Races of mankind, *Webster's Dictionary*, 1911. http://www.flickr.com/photos/numlok/176698531/

and political will. Fortunately, for most gilded age elites, the work of leading a civilized life was well within the range of affordability.

A prime example of gilded age thinking, and an example that shows how even those critical of some aspects of American civilization remained complicit in its reproduction, is found in Gilman's suggestions for living a civilized feminist life. Gilman was critical of the idea that sexual differences marked the highest stage of civilized life. For her, the confinement of women to the home negated the idea of civilization since it promoted sex over race. How could Anglo-Saxon racial superiority be achieved, she questioned, if women were kept in a barbarous "sexuo-economic" subordination? The kept woman, as sexual servant, was only capable of bringing out the primitive ancient traits of her husband, traits she argued were based in a primal "negro" instinct for violence and rape. Gilman argued that "because white Anglo-Saxon men had reached a civilized status that white Anglo-Saxon women could now claim the right to be treated as equal members of the civilized race" (Bederman 1995, p. 145). Gilman believed that a true white civilization could be achieved through the use of paid [non-white] servants to take care of housework, cooking and childcare. Similarly, Gilman also urged that because they were not yet civilized, that "it was best for the negro woman to remain at home and for the man to support her for yet awhile"; since, as Bederman (1995, p. 146) concludes for Gilman, "the Negro man still needed the spur of sex to teach him the virtues of hard work and altruism—to civilize him."

Gilman's criticism of male dominance, though in support of white supremacy, was nevertheless a radical perspective. The majority of Anglo-Saxon racial nationalists were quite comfortable with "traditional" sexual differences as a basis of the civilized life. These people certainly also agreed with Gilman's basic judgment of white superiority and the inferiority of non-white races. Among the most unyielding promoters of the Anglo-Saxon race was Theodore Roosevelt, whose commitments to Anglo-Saxon racial civilization went about as far any one could go (e.g., Bederman 1995; Brinkley 2009; Gerstle 1999; Kaplan 2002; Lovett 2007; Weinbaum 2004).

For Roosevelt, the call of civilization and the racial responsibility for its survival was a paramount concern. Roosevelt surpassed most others by also proposing that white Americans were themselves a new and distinct branch of the Anglo-Saxon racial line. A mix of Anglo-Saxon English heritage combined with those of Saxon, Teutonic, and Celtic origins from the white nations of Germany, Scandinavia, Holland and Ireland, "the American" was an altogether new race. It was in their history, Roosevelt argued, that the potency of the American race could be found, and he told their story in his multi-volume history of the American frontier, *The Winning of the West*. Detailing the conquest of the American frontier, Roosevelt argued that the American race was born from the great "racial saga" (Dyer 1980, p. 55) where two great races—the Native American and the Anglo-Saxon—fought to determine the rightful ruler of the continent. For Roosevelt, racial contests like this were the substance of history, and historical research should aim to reveal the racial qualities that gave advantage to the victors. Roosevelt boasted of the superiority of the civilized American over the savage Indian, confirming evolutionary theory, but also other implications regarding mainstream Anglo-Saxon assumptions about race and gender. For one, the American frontiersman was in battle against a new sort of adversary. The savage was not a respectable warrior, but a primitive, brutal killer

and unmanly rapist. Roosevelt guides the reader through a random and decontextualized assemblage of Indian atrocities against white women and children laying the groundwork for an interpretation of the Anglo-Saxon conquest of America as a gift of civilization to the world. He concluded in fact that "the most righteous of wars is a war with savages" for this sort of war not only advances the superior race but, by eradicating the inferior one, all of humanity is advanced as well. Committed to this agenda, Roosevelt spent the 1890s calling for the American conquest of Hawaii, the Philippines and Latin America to ensure ever expanding influence of the new and superior American race over inferior darker races across the globe.

Roosevelt's American racial history was also sharply gendered. Wars of conquest decided whose men were more vital, strong, and superior. On the American frontier, the backwoodsman demonstrated his vitality and strength in the felling of the primeval woodlands that weaker Indians had left standing. He felt the same about their personality, suggestively noting that "there was little that was soft or outwardly attractive in their character; it was stern, rude, and hard, like the lives they led; but it was the character of those who were every inch men, and who were Americans through to the very heart's core" (Bederman 1995, pp. 180–181). For Roosevelt, the American race owed its success to its embrace of "natural" roles in which "the man was the armed protector and provider, the woman was the housewife and child-bearer" (Bederman 1995, p. 180). Nevertheless, Roosevelt also embraced the idea of differentiated duties for men who were beholden to their families *and* their race. Having inherited the gift of racial civilization they were expected to contribute as well to their "collective racial home" by ensuring the values and virility of the dominant race were reproduced (Bederman 1995, p. 188).

Race Suicide, Race Nostalgia, and Race War

In fact, the matter of reproduction was far from idle concern in the gilded age. As a racial millennialist, Roosevelt was fearful that the American race was in danger of falling prey to a feminine and "over-civilized" decadence. Here he found much support from leading voices in the Anglo-Saxon American racial community for his concern with "race suicide." Roosevelt's first official association with the concept of race suicide was in 1903, when his letter to Bessie Van Vorst was printed as a preface in her book *The Woman Who Toils*. Roosevelt praised Van Vorst for illustrating the contradictions between women who worked and the racial demand of women to bear many strong and healthy American babies. He returned to the topic in a 1905 speech "On American Motherhood," presented to the National Congress of Mothers, where he asserted his great concern for the low birth rate among well-to-do Anglo-Saxon Americans:

> If the average family... contained but two children the nation as a whole would decrease in population so rapidly that in two or three generations it would very deservedly be on the point of extinction, so that the people who had acted on this base and selfish doctrine would be giving place to others with braver and more robust ideals. Nor would such a result be in any way regrettable; for a race that practiced such doctrine—that is, a race that practiced race suicide—would thereby conclusively show that it was unfit to exist, and that it had better give

> place to people who had not forgotten the primary laws of their being (Roosevelt 1905).

In the same speech, he also rallied against elite "self-indulgence," which he posited as being in direct opposition to the interests of the American race and nation:

> But the man or woman who deliberately forego these blessings [of parenthood], whether from viciousness, coldness, shallow-heartedness, self-indulgence, or mere failure to appreciate aright the difference between the all-important and the unimportant,—why, such a creature merits contempt as hearty as any visited upon the soldier who runs away in battle, or upon the man who refuses to work for the support of those dependent upon him, and who tho able-bodied is yet content to eat in idleness the bread which others provide.

It was not merely a low birth rate that was a concern but the patterns in modern womanhood that gave rise to it including a desire for education: "the woman should have ample educational advantages; but save in exceptional cases the man must be, and she need not be, and generally ought not to be, trained for a lifelong career as the family breadwinner;" or divorce: "[race suicide] is made evident in equally sinister fashion by the census statistics as to divorce, which are fairly appalling; for easy divorce is now as it ever has been, a bane to any nation, a curse to society, a menace to the home, an incitement to married unhappiness and to immorality, an evil thing for men and a still more hideous evil for women." Roosevelt argued that the "new women" were "race traitors" for failing to heed their first racial duty as mothers (Lovett 2007, p. 92).

In contrast, Roosevelt supported a militant nostalgia for an imagined way of life before rapid industrialization and urbanization eroded the foundations of the traditional, ideal, and naturalized American family that he characterized in 1905 as such: "There are certain old truths which will be true as long as this world endures, and which no amount of progress can alter. One of these is the truth that the primary duty of the husband is to be the home-maker, the breadwinner for his wife and children, and that the primary duty of the woman is to be the helpmate, the housewife, and mother" (Roosevelt 1905).

Roosevelt's public concerns initiated a brief national craze to demonstrate local signs of fecundity. For example, a *New York Times* (Anonymous 1906) announcement of "No Race Suicide Here" notes that some of Roosevelt's Long Island neighbors in Hicksville, NY "gave thanks last Thursday because two days before their eighteenth child was born. [Roosevelt's home town of] Oyster Bay is due north of Hicksville … Presidential precept is believed to have been wafted to Hicksville by a strong north wind. Mr. and Mrs. Mulloy would name their youngest child after the President, but it happens to be a girl." Popular images of fecundity also abounded, including those of Roosevelt's own family, which represented his personal reproductive commitments (Fig. 2).

Roosevelt shared in this nostalgia with sociologist Edward Ross, who is credited with coining the term "race suicide" in 1901 (Bederman 1995; Lovett 2007). Ross also believed the American frontier family demonstrated the highest values of the race. With the historic progression of the frontier, so Ross believed, a "natural" order and control cultivated the Anglo-Saxon American race: "the hardships of the pioneer

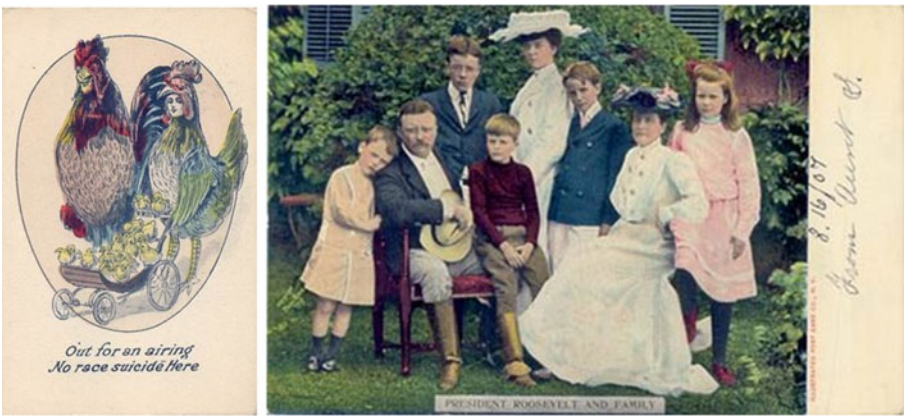

Fig. 2 Race suicide post card images from the first decade of the 1900s. http://postcardy.blogspot.com/2009/05/race-suicide-motherhood-and-theodore.html

life pitilessly screened out the weak and debilitated, leaving only the hardy and vigorous" (in Lovett 2007, p. 89). Losing the frontier, the "weak and debilitated" were now able to survive in the cities and even virile others were apt to succumb to urban decadence. Ross suggested that models based on the "natural" control and order of the frontier would provide "social" control and order for the new American population. Among the social controls Ross proposed was a regulated system for reproduction ensuring only those most fit were given ample opportunity to reproduce.

The greatest threat to the race, according to Ross, was less the low birth rate of Anglo-Saxon American women than the "more-fecund [immigrant] women of supposedly 'inferior' races" (Lovett 2007, p. 78). He pointed to the late nineteenth-century rush of "new" immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, who modern science classified as racially distant from the Anglo-Saxon-Teutonic-Celtic mix that fostered the American race. While immigrant populations in fact grew rapidly because of high levels of immigration and relatively high birth rates, a substantial part of the fear felt by Anglo-Saxon Americans was encapsulated in an 1891 assessment from MIT professor Francis Amasa Walker who also described the new immigrants' "vastly lower standard of living" as a root cause: "our people [i.e., Anglo-Saxons] look upon houses that were mere shells for human habitations, the gate unhung, the shutters flapping or falling, green pools in the yard, babes and young children rolling about half naked or worse, neglected, dirty, unkempt" (Lovett 2007, p. 80). This visage, Walker felt, was enough for his "people" to lower their birth rate in order to protect themselves and their children from even seeing such atrocities. No sense that "their" children might suffer in such conditions seemed to cross his mind, since he firmly believed the new immigrants were racially compelled to live in squalor just as the American race was compelled to live in the comforts of the proper family home.

It was in this way that the new immigrant presented a real threat to the preservation of the American race. So, for those already anxious and fearful, a race war was essentially at hand. In support of this undeclared war, Roosevelt reiterated his commitments to the American race in speech after speech and in a formal 1903 appeal to white Anglo-Saxon women to increase their birth rates. He backed this up

with political action ushering through the Immigration Restriction Act of 1907 the same year he reached a Gentlemen's Agreement to restrict Japanese immigration. Notably, immigration control and support for white mothers were two sides of the same coin of Ross's theory of "social control," a process that led later to his embrace of eugenics during the interwar years.

While immigration restriction was popularly embraced, the Americanization of immigrants already in America was a necessary additional effort. In the following I discuss two material expressions of Americanization relating the early development of American archaeology to Roosevelt's racial agenda. The first section considers the role of Roosevelt's "strenuous life" in the construction of the American race and the scientific construction of human history, prehistory, and nature. The subsequent section relates to the home, or the womanly sphere, where lessons on the American race expressed in illustrations of decoration, history, and family were presented. Special attention is paid to the female-led historic house movement that aimed to make the symbols of American history more accessible. A common theme in both discussions is the way men and women appealed to a presumed capacity for higher levels of consciousness among the civilized races expressed in part through the use of costumes, adopted personae, and new media that were part and parcel of their Americanization programs.

The Archaeological Marriage of Conquest and Conservation

Among Roosevelt's most famous racial actions was a post-presidential African safari in 1909, where he proudly demonstrated his prowess by personally killing more than 250 animals. In his book about this adventure, *African Game Trails*, he repeatedly confirmed his racial civility, starting with his self-praising claim that "we did not kill a tenth, nor a hundredth part of what we might have killed had we been willing" (in Bederman 1995, p. 211). Demonstrating a conservationist impulse in the face of a savage African world illustrated the superiority of civilization and the civilized races: they could kill but also restrain themselves in the name of conservation. This racial understanding is mirrored in his descriptions of Africa and Africans. Adopting a very archaeological sensibility, Roosevelt saw Africa as primeval: "Think of the 20th century suddenly going back into the world as it was when the men of the unpolished stone period hunted the mammoth and the wholly rhinoceros!" (Bederman 1995, p. 207). Africa was a fantastic abstraction, a place that presented an opportunity for modern Anglo-Saxons to engage their prehistory, to live as their ancestors did, to travel, in Roosevelt's words "a railroad through the Pleistocene" (Bederman 1995, p. 209). A key to this assessment is a pairing of African materiality: its ancientness, wildness, fierceness, beastliness; with the implication that these qualities were themselves a resource for the conservation of the Anglo-Saxon racial civilization, symbolized by the hunters *and* the railroad. The Anglo-Saxon, though now the embodiment of civilization, once lived as modern Africans do: "African man, absolutely naked, and armed as our early paleolithic ancestors were armed, lives among, and on, and in constant dread of, these beasts, just as was true of the [ancestral European] men to whom the cave lion was a nightmare of terror, and the mammoth and wooly rhinoceros possible but most formidable prey" (in Bederman 1995, p. 209).

In contrast to the detailed and highly-valued qualities of the animals, Roosevelt considered African people in less laudatory terms. For one, Africans' supposed arrested development provided him with the opportunity to re-live the experience of his Anglo-Saxon ancestors. If Africans were as racially gifted as whites, he presumed, Africa too would be civilized. Being racially handicapped, Africans had not progressed beyond what Roosevelt considered humanity's savage "childlike" stage (Bederman 1995, p. 210). As his troop's porters, guides, beaters, and skinners, "savage" Africans were depicted in dozens of illustrations in *African Game Trails*, but like the animals and presumably "most children," they are not named. This stands in stark contrast to the repeated identification of Mr. Roosevelt and his compatriots Mr. Selous, Dr. Kearns, Mr. Cunningham and his adult son Kermit throughout the book. It is thus not surprising that among the opening epigraphs in the book there is a statement from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*: "he loved the great game as if he were their father." Roosevelt clearly saw himself as a father figure among not only his family and his race but also among the Africans, if not the whole of humanity.

While Roosevelt's Africa presented a set of severe distinctions between civilization and savagery, the underlying premise of *African Game Trails* was that civilization and the civilized races were in peril. Without a commitment to their traditional values, exemplified by Roosevelt's cultivated rugged manliness, civilization would succumb to its own vices. Conservation was embraced as a key to saving civilization. *African Game Trails* reminded the civilized races of their wild origins and the fact that without the opportunity to experience these origins that they would have only, as the National Conservation Association concluded in 1909, "the artificiality and social instability of urban life" (Lovett 2007, p. 123). Moreover, while most Americans could not afford an African safari, they could read Roosevelt's book and put its ideas into practice in their own neighborhoods. For some, this led to the preservation of "country life," the imagined origin site of the Anglo-Saxon American race. Indeed, Roosevelt created the Country Life Commission to survey the impact of urban cultural change on America's rural lands. Roosevelt explained in his 1907 speech *The Man Who Works with his Hands* that "it would be a calamity to have our farms occupied by a lower type of people than the hard-working, self-respecting, independent, and essentially manly and womanly men and women who have hitherto constituted the most typically American, and on the whole the most valuable, element in our entire nation" (Lovett 2007, pp. 113–114). The American farm, similar in ways to the ancient Pleistocene landscape, was the rough material world from which the American race was born, and its protection was considered a matter of national, writ racial, importance.

This impulse fostered the modern conservation movement, which placed the America's soil, forests, waterways, animal species, and the traditional rural family life and its "crop of [white] children" (Lovett 2007, p. 120) on the nation's list of vital and threatened natural resources. The conservation theme was also picked up by groups not typically associated with it, such as the Daughter of the American Revolution whose President Mrs. Matthew T. Scott declared in a 1911 speech "We the mothers of this generation—ancestresses of future generations—have a right to insist upon conserving not only of soil, forest, bird, minerals, fishes, waterways, in the interest of our future home-makers, but also upon the conservation of the supremacy of the Caucasian race in our land. This conservation, second to none in

pressing importance, may and should be insured in the best interests of all races concerned: and the sooner attention is turned upon it the better" (in Lovett 2007, p. 124). A clearer statement connecting race, nation, and conservation would be hard to find. Again, while Scott appealed to American mothers her concern was less the activities of Caucasians than the threat to their purity presented by new urban immigrants, who she "likened to pollutants" in her general conclusion: "We must conserve the sources of our race in the Anglo-Saxon line" (in Lovett 2007, p. 124).

American Antiquities as Civilized Practice

The National Parks Service's official history of the American Antiquities Act of 1906 by Ronald F. Lee (2001) establishes that the conservation of ancient sites first captured the attention of American east coast elites during the height of the gilded age. 1879 was a watershed year seeing a convergence of diverse individuals who formed federal agencies (e.g., Bureau of American Ethnology), professional organizations (e.g. the Archaeological Institute of America [AIA], the Anthropological Association of Washington) and published books that brought the value and preservation of ancient Native American remains to widespread academic and elite attention. The AIA, the leading national organization for the promotion of archaeology and an organization primarily interested in the classical Mediterranean, argued in 1885 that "the study of the aboriginal life in America is essential to complete the history of the human race, as well as to gratify a legitimate curiosity concerning the condition of man on this continent previous to its discovery" (Lee 2001). At root here was a keen interest in the total documentation of humanity, a feat they implied was entirely possible. A more explicit statement on the value of American "aboriginal" research was suggested by the leading evolutionary anthropologist and President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Lewis Henry Morgan. Regarding Indian antiquities of the Northeast, the Southwestern Pueblos, Mexico, and the Yucatan, Morgan argued "Springing from a common mind, these exhibit only different stages of development, and form one system of works, from the Long House of the Iroquois to the Joint-Tenement structures of the Aztecs and Mayas" (Lee 2001). Similarly in 1882 Marshall P. Wilder, President of the New England Genealogical Society, stated that "the remnants of very ancient races in North America", especially that evident in the territories of New Mexico and Arizona, would "furnish invaluable data for the ethnological studies now engaging the attention of our most learned scientific, antiquarian, and historical students." Given the interest of leading New England genealogists in the far off territories of Arizona and New Mexico, I suggest we see, in addition to a hopeful effort to preserve cultural relics, an attempt to establish the cultural and scientific authority of the traditional American elite over America's untamed lands.

Interest in the preservation of America's ancient ruins found additional support following the highly popular ethnological and archaeological displays at the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition and the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. These huge conventions put the whole of humanity, most especially its civilized achievements, on display. The world's great civilized nations presented their modernity in

inventions, machines, products, and display technologies. Added to that were live illustrations as well as material culture collections representing the lifeways of American and other of the world's savage and barbarian peoples. Not only representing a counterpoint to civilized modernity, these ancient people illustrated the stages of the human evolutionary scheme that ordered, ranked and presented humanity through the singular gaze of the civilized races. It was not simply the "invaluable data" that ancient peoples and sites provided, it was that this "new" data could be so easily fit into a pre-existing structure that validated the supremacy of the civilized races.

This pre-existing structure came to include not only the world's people but also the natural resources that sustained the wealth and perceived supremacy of civilized life. During the gilded age, the conservation of productive stands of forest, soil, and water first emerged as national concerns. These natural resources also took on new characteristics that redefined the meaning of "nature" less as the edge of civilization than those areas preserved for restrained civilized use. This thinking came together an 1899 bill that put the natural and the historical as well as the "scientific" and the "scenic" together:

> The President of the United States may from time to time set apart and reserve for use as public parks or reservations, in the same manner as now provided by law for forestry reservations, any public lands upon which are monuments, cliff-dwellings, cemeteries, graves, mounds, forts, or any other work of prehistoric, primitive, or aboriginal man, and also any natural formation of scientific or scenic value of interest, or natural wonder or curiosity together with such additional area of land surrounding or adjoining or adjoining the same, as he may deem necessary for the proper preservation and subsequent investigation of said prehistoric work or remains (Lee 2001).

The final text of the 1906 Antiquities Act emerged from this bill and carried its priorities forward while also placing civilized restrictions on who could collect antiquities ("recognized scientific or educational institutions") and provided punishments (fines/imprisonment) for those who looted ancient sites. The Antiquities Act also provided the President with the authority to create "National Monuments" based on historical/archaeological or scientific/natural interest. While originally intended to provide legislative protection for archaeological sites, the majority of the first 18 national monuments (those designated by Roosevelt) were natural sites including Devil's Tower (1906), Arizona's Petrified Forest (1906), California's Cinder Cone/Lassen Peak (1907), Muir Woods (1908), and the Grand Canyon (1908). It is arguable that despite the unique qualities of these sites that they were also designated based on a hopeful sense that they represented pristine untouched environments to be savored for their wonder and curiosity. This would help to explain J. Horace McFarland's statement about the designation of the Grand Canyon : "The reason the Grand Canyon of the Colorado is [a National Monument] was because the American Civic Association was bombarded by some man who insisted that there was a trolley line about to be constructed around it, which would not add to its natural attractiveness. At that time, Mr. Pinchot was the Forester, and I was one of several who made a loud noise in his ear, in consequence of which he went to Mr. Roosevelt" (Lee 2001).

At stake for scientists, naturalists, and other bearers of the highest achievements and privileges of the civilized races was the conservation of sites that would allow for the practice of a rugged civility. Whether climbing peaks, mapping rivers, or collecting and studying ancient natural formations and cultural artifacts, the truly civilized and manly American required untamed and unspoiled sites where they could practice the techniques of a natural civilized life. Notably, this was not a life that would actually be lived in the national monument sites, but one in which such places were there to be appreciated for their curiosity, wonder, and symbolic conquest (Fig. 3a and b). To engage with a

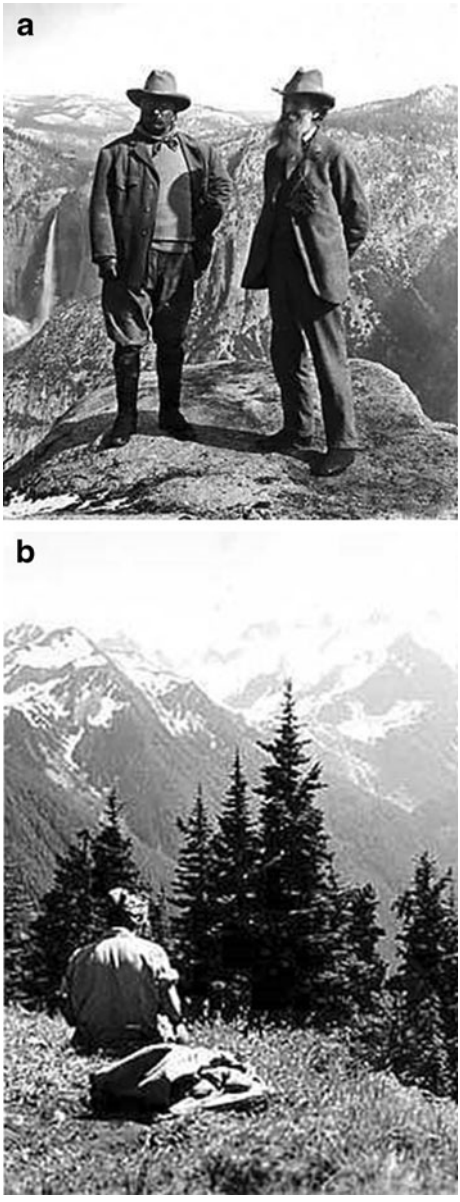

Fig. 3 **a** Sierra club founder John Muir photographed with President Theodore Roosevelt in Yosemite, Sierra Nevada Mountains, of California in 1903. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Template:POTD/2008-05-28 **b** Promotional image for Mt. Olympus National Monument showing the solitary civilized process of engaging with the natural world, http://www.nps.gov/history/archeology/sites/antiquities/profileOlympic.htm

national monument required more than simply visitation, for civilized men it was a process of appreciation based on their capacity to understand and categorize the sites appropriately. For example, to know Devil's Tower, as Roosevelt's official proclamation of designation noted, was to know that the "lofty and isolated rock [was] such an extraordinary example of the effect of wind erosion in the higher mountains as to be a natural wonder and an object of historic and scientific interest" (Roosevelt 1907a). Similarly, in order to understand Lassen Peak it was vital to know that it was "the southern terminus of the long line of extinct volcanoes in the Cascade Range from which one of the greatest volcanic fields in the world extends, and is of special importance in tracing the history of the volcanic phenomena of that vicinity" (Roosevelt 1907b). Likewise, Muir Woods was to be known as "an extensive growth of redwood trees (*Sequoia sempervirens*) … of extraordinary scientific interest and importance because of the primeval character of the forest in which it is located, and of the character, age and size of the trees" (Roosevelt 1908). The appropriate visitor brought with them a regional and global geographic and scientific knowledge that put national monuments in their civilized context. National monuments may have been untamed lands, but they were well domesticated as symbols of the civilized gaze.

The same can be said of the first National Monuments designated for their historical and archaeological associations. However, the proper use of these sites was not as clearly spelled out. El Morro in New Mexico, the first cultural site designated, was simply noted for being "of the greatest historical value" (Roosevelt 1906a). Montezuma Castle in Arizona, the second site designated, was described as having "the greatest ethnological value and scientific interest" (Roosevelt 1906b). These generic statements do not match the rich descriptions applied to the natural sites. It may be that Roosevelt was not as interested nor as convinced of the value of archaeological study; or, it may relate to the subject of some of his other proclamations regarding Native Americans made during the months before and after these early monument designations. For example, the same day Roosevelt created Devil's Tower National Monument he also opened 480,000 ac (194,250 ha) of land on the Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache Indian Reservations to white settlement by public auction. During 1906 five similar proclamations were made opening to settlement reservation lands of the Unita, Crow, Shoshone Wild River, and Walker River tribes (Roosevelt 1906c). Given Roosevelt's documented acceptance of cultural evolution and white superiority, his contradictory acts of preserving the sites of ancient Indian remains at the same time as displacing Indian people from their ancestral lands is smoothed over. Only the civilized races were capable of managing the ancient ancestral sites of the Indian savages still living in America. It is certainly clear, no matter his actual interest in archaeology, that Roosevelt included archaeologists as symbols of the appropriate use of America's precious natural resources. Racial inferiors, like Native Americans, were simply incapable.

It is therefore arguable that the emergence of archaeology and its rise to notoriety during the early twentieth century, should be tied to the racial conservation program embodied by Roosevelt. Archaeological sites presented spaces for the practice of the rugged civility that transformed forgotten savage histories into stories of humanity's progress and, similarly, transformed over-civilized men into rugged Americans. Moreover, American archaeologists, as a body of mostly white Anglo-Saxon American male

explorers represented the confluence of America's "high brow" east coast civilization with its rugged frontier history of exploring, taming, and conserving the nation's wild and unknown, though recently appropriated, lands. Archaeology, that is, played a substantial symbolic role in the making of the American empire, a role that sustained both American self-confidence and the archaeological profession for decades. The battle for American racial superiority, however, was not fought solely along constructed frontiers in Arizona and New Mexico. Other battles in the race war raged in the cities where rugged manliness was not nearly as effective a weapon. Rather, this fight required the distinctive efforts of civilized women and their capacity for preserving and illustrating the values of the American home.

The Historic Home in New York City

While the forward thrust of American racial civilization pushed the frontier to new territories around the globe and to invented domestic territories defined by new conceptions of nature and American antiquity, the conservation of the race was also a battle fought at and about the home. The issue centered on Americanization, or the programs aimed to assimilate "new immigrants" to mainstream Anglo-American middle-class ways of life. The "racial" make-up of American cities, especially, underwent a dramatic change during the gilded age. In New York City, for example, the number of foreign born persons were at or very close to 40 % of the total population for each federal census between 1870 and 1920. These persistent high percentages also reflect a shift in countries of origin from western to eastern and southern Europe. Lesser but still large percentages of foreign born persons (greater than 25 %) were also recorded for most other large American cities including Philadelphia, Boston, Providence, Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Newark, and San Francisco (United States Census 2012). Programs to not only assist immigrants in the transition to a new country but to learn and adopt American mores and norms began in earnest after 1895.

Women were some of the most vigorous advocates of Americanization. Among the most famous was the lawyer and social worker Frances Kellor who asserted that it was a social responsibility to provide ample opportunities for immigrants to become full Americans. With the support of Teddy Roosevelt, Kellor led New York State's Bureau of Industries and Immigration, which recorded labor and household data and made recommendations for improving immigrant lives. She was also a prominent member of the New York branch of the North American Civic League, which stimulated educational opportunities for immigrants and called out for protective legislation on their behalf. Kellor was obviously a gifted and powerful woman for her times, nevertheless, by the time she came on the scene other women in New York and elsewhere were already steeped in less official yet still very powerful Americanization programs. I highlight here some of the women who contributed their energies to the preservation of America's famous historic homes. Exploring this movement in New York City, including a case study that entwines the preservation of King Manor in Jamaica, Queens with the archaeological study of that site and the surrounding community, constitutes the remainder of this paper.

The most well-known preservation-oriented group to form during the gilded age was the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), founded in 1890. With

membership based on documented proof of bloodline descent from those who fought during the Revolutionary War, the DAR was an intentionally exclusive and originally entirely white Anglo-Saxon American organization created to preserve and educate newer Americans about the qualities and legacies of the patriot generations. The DAR created and still follows three objectives:

> Historical—to perpetuate the memory and spirit of the men and women who achieved American Independence; Educational—to carry out the injunction of Washington in his farewell address to the American people, 'to promote, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge, thus developing an enlightened public opinion…'; and Patriotic—to cherish, maintain, and extend the institutions of American freedom, to foster true patriotism and love of country, and to aid in securing for mankind all the blessings of liberty (Daughters of the American Revolution 2012).

Also ensconced in their original objectives was a mandate for "the acquisition and protection of historical spots, and the erection of monuments" (Howe 2002, p. 28). Getting right to work, the DAR honed in on saving the home of Betsy Ross in Philadelphia in 1892 and then Independence Hall in 1896. Soon after DAR connections helped Melusina Fay Pierce create a Women's Auxiliary to New York's Trustees of Scenic and Historic Places and Objects in 1900 to save Fraunces Tavern and the Jumel Mansion, sites associated with Washington's Revolutionary War activities in the city. These achievements were followed by dozens of instances of preservation activism by or through the DAR organization in communities throughout the country.

Historian Randall Mason (2004, p. 137) argues that the underlying premise of New York's early preservation and reform efforts was a theory of "positive environmentalism" in which the construction of a proper environment, including Americanization, was essential to achieving the desired effects of urban reform. Environmentalism of this sort parallels the conservationist agenda that established the National Parks and Monuments, and similar to the conservation of the qualities of America's rugged and ancient frontier, urban environmental reformers sought to "directly [shape] individual and social behavior" but through "beauty, cleanliness [and] historical associations" (Mason 2004, p. 140). Mason situates early preservation efforts in New York as part of the larger progressive effort to modernize and reform the city at the turn of the twentieth century, which also included concerns with transit, housing, sanitation and public health. The preservationist helped to create an urban landscape with a "spatialized memory" (Mason 2004, p. 140), or sites, monuments, and memorials that connected modern citizens to their historical predecessors and events. As preservationist Henry Kirke Bush-Brown wrote in 1899: "No matter how well a story may be told in words, there yet remains something unexpressed, which form and color alone can portray" (in Mason 2004, p. 140). Essential for successful urban reform, cities needed not only to build facilities of modernization but also tell their histories through the very material fabric of their buildings, parks, shorelines, and streets. Yet, as Mason (2004, p. 141) also describes "architecturally, urbanistically, and culturally, the test of effective preservation was finding and making a past that was sensible (given lasting material and visible form; unambiguously interpreted) and usable (in terms of cultural reform, politics and the representation of urban

development as "improvement"), but *not necessarily authentic* …. a powerful image was [most] important" (emphasis added).

One powerful image put to use in the early historic preservation movement was the materiality and the concept of the "colonial home," which brought together the values of patriotism and domesticity and placed them in open view on the increasingly complex, mutilvalent, and polyphonic cityscape. An example of the use of the "colonial home" image that is specifically connected to women's role in Americanization were settlement houses, which offered temporary housing and support for struggling immigrants. The University Settlement and the Henry Street Settlement houses both served New York's Lower East Side where thousands of immigrants first found homes. Notably, both settlement houses, as well as Greenwich Village's Greenwich House, deployed variations on "colonial" style architecture to emphasize the American roots of the settlements' mission and value. According to one visitor, Lillian Wald's Henry Street house offered a "reposeful colonial setting" amidst the noise and squalor of the immigrant neighborhood (Rhoads 1985, p. 346).

The most obvious way that preservation supported the city's need for powerful images was through the creation of historic house museums that could be saved and then deployed to illustrate the story of American history to newcomers. Saving and interpreting historic houses was typically taken up by women's groups, a feature that presents a perfectly gendered complement to the male-dominated urban reform efforts associated with infrastructure and planning and the more strenuous patriotic pursuits embraced by Roosevelt and his peers. Turning to a case study of the saving and interpretation of King Manor in Jamaica, Queens, I consider both the women who saved the site as well as how the site itself marked a clear statement of Anglo-Saxon origins in the face of radical social changes to the landscape surrounding it at the turn of the twentieth century.

"A Monument to the Days Before City Life": Making King Manor Museum

King Manor Museum, founded in 1900, was the first historic house museum in Queens and the second in all of New York City. The rush to preserve the house was prompted by the confluence of two forces affecting the Jamaica, Queens community. The first was the 1898 consolidation of Queens with greater New York City. Prior to consolidation, Queens was a mostly rural county with a few small villages. While western Queens close to Manhattan favored consolidation, the people of eastern Queens, including the villages of Jamaica and Flushing, were more ambivalent about joining with the great metropolis and its vision of an "imperial destiny" (Williams 2002, p. 16). In part, therefore, King Manor Museum was envisioned as a way to preserve a symbol of the county's genteel rural history in the face of the encroaching city and its modern problems. The second force connected to the making of King Manor Museum is its basis in an emerging "domestic feminism" embodied by elite clubwomen in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Feeling a growing antipathy toward male supremacy in civic affairs, elite urban women formed clubs for their mutual intellectual, social, and community development. Putting these forces together, the preservation and interpretation of a historic house museum suited the interests of the leading Long Island women who sought opportunities to develop

both their own citizenship skills and to ensure that *their* historic values would be preserved and referenced as the city expanded to Long Island. As one Jamaica, Queens newspaper concluded in 1897 regarding consolidation: "The duties and responsibilities of citizenship will become more important than ever, if such a thing is possible, when we in this slow and conservative village become part of the great city of New York. An effort is being made to induce those who have held aloof from political and public affairs, to take more interest in these things in the future" (Williams 2002, p. 20). The clubwomen who founded King Manor museum took this advice to heart.

Running King Manor Museum (KMM) was the primary focus of the King Manor Association of Long Island, Inc. (KMA), a women's organization consisting of over 100 Long Islanders headed up by 15 directors. KMM was dedicated to the celebration of the patriotic and political achievements of Rufus King, his son John Alsop King, and their families as well as the memory of the patriotic events and ways of life from Jamaica's early history. Rufus King (1755–1827) was a federalist political figure instrumental in drafting the U.S. Constitution. Originally from Massachusetts, he was elected senator from New York four times and served twice as U.S. Minister to England. He moved to what became known as King Manor in 1805, and the house remained his principal home until he died in 1827. The house passed to his son, John Alsop King, who was later elected to the United States Congress and then Governor of New York. The house and surrounding property eventually passed to Cornelia King in 1872, who lived the remainder of her life in the house quietly selling off lots and transforming the property from a farm to a rural estate. After Cornelia King died in 1896, the house and 11 ac (4.45 ha) of the King estate were purchased by the Village of Jamaica to be used as a public park. After consolidation, the park came under the authority of the City Parks Department, and two years later, in 1900, KMA submitted a successful petition to the Park Commissioner to take control of the manor house. The KMA still operates the house as a museum under the auspices of the New York City Historic House Trust, and the surrounding 11 ac (4.45 ha) remain a New York City park.

The purpose of such early historic house museums is typically seen as a nostalgic effort by elites to ensure that their history and its significance survived modernization (Mason 2004; Wallace 1996; West 1999; Williams 2002). However, as Mason (2004) concludes for New York City's early preservation in general, there was another side to this nostalgia which, as interested in the future as the past, tied preservation to urban reform and "improvement." The KMA and its designs for King Manor Museum were modeled along these improving lines. KMA directors were long active in varied improving pursuits prior to their involvement with the preservation of King Manor. All of the directors who lived in Jamaica were instrumental figures in the Jamaica Women's Club (JWC), a literary and intellectual organization founded in 1888. JWC members were required to present an original paper once a year to the membership. Topics for these papers explored historical and social topics including "Equal Rights for Men and Women in the Economic World", the first paper delivered at King Manor in 1900. The JWC was the main organization behind the creation of King Manor Museum, yet the club also petitioned to bring a branch library to Jamaica and lobbied on behalf of other improvements for their community indicating far reaching civic interests and commitments. Brooklyn members were active in the Brooklyn Woman's Association, the Brooklyn Public Library, Henry Beecher Stowe's

Plymouth Church, and a Shakespeare Society. To no surprise almost all KMA directors were also members of elite women's lineage associations such as the DAR (including its national president from 1900–05, Anna Brooks Snow), the New York Society of Colonial Dames, the Colonial Daughters of the Seventeenth Century, and the Order of the Colonial Lords and Manors of America. The directors were all white, wealthy Protestants; New York natives of "fine stock"; and most typically non-working married women with adult children and a number of household servants. This composite biography describes the very sort of women one would expect to take on the effort to preserve a historic house, however, some particulars help to establish the details of these women's particular interest in King Manor.

The inclusion of "Long Island" in the formal title of the organization establishes an anti-consolidation position to the organization: King Manor was a house museum for Long Islanders first, before other New Yorkers. Its purpose was to preserve Long Island's colonial heritage as one that was as significant to the nation and the locality as any that could be found elsewhere. Moreover, Long Island's recent rural history was distinct from the city, yet with arrival of the new immigrants attracted to Jamaica because of the transit options provided by the Long Island Rail Road, this past was rapidly succumbing to urban encroachment. Yet, it was not only the history of the site that mattered. King Manor also offered club women a cultivated and historically important meeting space where they could assert their patrimony over the history and future of the Jamaica and Long Island communities. In fact, the KMA encouraged many different groups to use King Manor as a meeting place. The JWC held their meetings at the house starting in 1900. Subsequently, the local DAR chapter, the Colonial Daughters of the Seventeenth Century, the Queensborough Musical Society, the Fort Green (Brooklyn) DAR chapter, and the Lawn Tennis Association also found a home at the site. In exchange for the use of the house for their meetings, organizations refurnished a specific room that would serve as their own primary meeting space and to assist the KMA in fundraising for house maintenance needs. The house, therefore, was not simply a museum but a center for cultivating elite women's agency.

Guidelines for re-furnishing the house were very broad and driven by the theory of positive environmentalism. Members were assured that the presentation of the proper historical and cultural associations would inherently impart lessons on patriotism and the authority of the American past in the face of an immigration-driven diversity. Simply put in a 1900 statement published by the KMA in the *Long Island Democrat* established that, "anything historical would be accepted … it has been decided not to make any period specific (in Williams 2002, p. 62). Members were asked to donate "something historical to aid in furnishing and embellishing the home" (in Williams 2002, p. 58). The result was that each room contained a particular collection of decorative objects assembled by the different groups, and the individual rooms were not coordinated with others let alone with their historic functions during the King family's residence.

The guiding light for decorating the museum was its most well-known director, Alice Morse Earle, a Brooklyn Heights resident, descendent of ancient New England lineages, and author of several books and articles about the customs and costumes of colonial times. With her involvement, King Manor obtained a precious cultural authority to speak confidently on issues related to *Home Life in Colonial Days*, the

title of her 1898 book. The details contained in the text of *Home Life* were amply illustrated by photographs of surviving colonial-era material culture and in some instances of the proper way to perform the domestic tasks in case one was interested in re-creating these activities. In fact, her Brooklyn *Daily Eagle* obituary noted that she deserved recognition for "helping Americans rid themselves of 'mid-Victorian jumbles and horrors' in favor of 'the good lines and the sense of proportion and relation of the colonial period' … 'There is no question that our domestic architecture and household furnishing of today are of far greater beauty, and in most cases of greater simplicity and unity of style, than they were twenty-five years ago, when Mrs. Earle began to write her books'" (in Williams 2002, p. 52). Under this influence, King Manor represented the domestic realm where the famous King men found retreat from their busy political lives and the watchful and caring support of their wives and families. The history presented at the site, therefore, aimed to instill a sense of the proper home defined by strong supportive women who not only sustained these homes in the past but who could preserve them and impart their memories in the present.

While there was a very particular message available at King Manor Museum, few argued who the message was for. As the first KMA President Mary Cragie stated: "The great problem before us today is the education of our foreign-born citizens in the history and traditions of our country by methods tending to arouse their interests and stimulate their patriotism, for the basis of a democracy is a citizenship cemented by loyalty and appreciation of the ideals of their adopted country" (in Williams 2002, p. 34). Indeed, there was great deal available to visitors to King Manor as long as they accepted the authority of those who were providing the information.

Archaeologies of Americanization in Jamaica, Queens

Early KMA tours of King Manor Museum showed visitors the house itself, informed them about the King family, and illustrated how such historic places could be put to use in the hands of civilized white club women. Historic photographs of the house museum's rooms as they were designed by the different clubs and the KMA illustrate these messages. The images in Fig. 4 show the front hall included a mix of "historic" furnishings complemented by several potted plants and framed "historic" images. It is also notable that outside the rear door, a set up for traditional cooking demonstration awaits the visitor. The other image is of the library, a room documented to have housed Rufus King's extensive collection of over 5,000 volumes. Instead of books, however, the KMA used the extensive built-in shelving to display their vast collection of historic ceramics and other decorative pieces. This shift from books to domestic wares encapsulates an emphasis placed on cultivating the proper home-like atmosphere (Williams 2002, p. 70). Notably, this room was completed with paired portraits of George and Martha Washington, providing both an important (though unconnected) historical association as well as images of the first American married couple whose domestic life illustrated the key message of the museum.

The creation of King Manor Museum was an active effort to construct the proper atmosphere for building historical associations through the old house, its park landscape, mainstream American values and ideals of domesticity, and the legacy

Fig. 4 Photographs showing decorated rooms at King Manor Museum in the 1910s (Courtesy of King Manor Museum)

of Anglo-Saxon American norms embodied by the patriotic King family, other historic figures like the Washingtons, the modern museum directors, and their peer organizations. These associations combined to set King Manor apart from its surrounding urbanizing community, which since 1890 was rapidly growing to be home to a much more diverse population. As a whole, the Queens County population grew from 90,000 to 153,000 between 1880 and 1900, much of which is accounted for by foreign born immigrants who doubled in number from 21,000 to 44,000 in

population. Obviously, King Manor's separation from these urban changes helped to create a proper setting for the new museum, but looking more closely at some archaeological findings related to the museum era at King Manor as well as a contemporary site across the street provides some necessary context from the ground.

By far the most productive deposit from excavations at King Manor was the site's historic privy shaft (Matthews 2012). Constructed in the eighteenth century, before the Kings obtained the site, the privy shaft was a large stone-lined pit, 2.4 m (8 ft) in diameter. The west half of the pit was excavated in 2005 as part of Hofstra University's study of the archaeology at King Manor. While the privy was originally dug out in the eighteenth century, the 2 m of archaeologically excavated fill contained only twentieth-century materials. Based on the presence of burned materials and a large collection of household artifacts such as bottles and jars, household ceramics, flower pot fragments, tin cans, buttons, nails, bricks, animal bones, plaster, and foil the materials are taken to be the result of an extensive clean out of the house after a 1962 fire that damaged the upper floors of the manor house. Despite the 1962 date of the fire, the majority of the excavated material dates to earlier periods and is thus believed to be properly associated with the early twentieth-century caretakers who helped the KMA manage and maintain the house. The artifacts recovered from the privy shaft stand for the way they reflect the backstage aspect of the museum's history, revealing that behind the scenes of the proper domesticity presented in the re-furnished rooms of the museum another sort of domestic life was actually lived.

Looking at the assemblage collected from core fill layers in Unit 20 illustrates. Unit 20 was located in the center of the privy shaft and materials discussed below derived from a dense layer of material at the heart of the post-1962 dump. While normally a predominant artifact type, there were only 48 ceramic sherds recovered. Of these 27 (56 %) were coarse red earthenwares, most with obvious flower pot vessel characteristics. Given the interest in potted plants in the early museum, these sherds may represent leftover or broken pots from museum-era potted plants that were discovered and discarded in a post-fire house clean out. The remaining sherds with one exception were refined white earthenwares and porcelain types. Three sherds were tea cup handle fragments and others were rims from small plates/saucers. Two of the sherds also had floral decorations. These finds suggest that many of the refined ceramics were from tea wares. The ceramic assemblage thus lacks the typical domestic vessels such as dinner plates and other common tablewares. Rather, the ceramics seem to be discards from museum displays (potted plants) or even museum activities themselves (re-enacted teas). Still, records from the museum indicate that caretakers were in residence, so the lack of household ceramics also suggests that the caretakers' lives did not conform to standards of domesticity propagated by the museum.

The bulk of the materials from the Unit 20 assemblage consist of metal and glass artifacts. The metal is dominated by 1,348 pieces of thin sheet metal, of which at least 132 pieces are definitely the remains of canned goods containers, which were most likely food containers. While the small number of ceramics reflects a lack of a traditional domesticity, the large presence of can metal suggests a domestic life based in purchased prepared foods that were perhaps eaten directly from the cans rather than foods prepared at home. Faunal remains also suggest purchased prepared foods as the 194 animal bones include many pieces that were cut for consumer purchase. Combined with the paucity of

ceramics, can and faunal data show that early caretakers did little cooking at the museum. In fact, caretakers may not have been allowed to cook at the site since the historic kitchen was used to demonstrate colonial household cooking methods rather than to provide a facility for those employed to care for the site.

The other material type in great numbers in the privy fill was bottle glass artifacts. A collection of 659 whole bottles and fragments was recovered from the Unit 20 assemblage. Those that can be identified by marks, writing, or preserved labels indicate a preponderance of liquor bottles. The most readily identified marks were "Golden Wedding" rye (at least 3 bottles) and "Lincoln Inn" whisky (at least 2 bottles). Both of these brands were on the market in the early twentieth century, which also helps to associate the larger assemblage with the early museum period. Also recovered was a whole L. Epic Brewing Co. Brooklyn bottle as well as 21 crown bottle caps that may have sealed other beer bottles whose fragments were also discarded in the privy fill. Most bottles and fragments suggest larger bottles that contained a pint or more, though at least two small medicine bottles and a 10 oz. (29.5 cl) vessel are also in the collection. The glass collection, including deposits excavated in other sections of the privy fill than in Unit 20, also includes water bottles and glass storage vessels (mason jars), though liquor bottles are the most dominant type throughout. Going along with the other observations of the Unit 20 assemblage, the presence of a great number of whiskey bottles also describes an alternative sort of domesticity. Rather than one defined by genteel temperance and refined sober living, at least some of those involved with the museum enjoyed a spirited life. If indeed these materials were discovered during a clean out of the house after the 1962 fire, it would mean that these bottles would have accumulated over the years, perhaps even as tokens of the very alternative of the caretaker's life to the sobriety of those who directed the museum.

To provide a comparison to this data from King Manor Museum, I also consider findings from an archaeological study of the Michael Pette home site that stood across the street from King Manor (Fitts 2002; Fitts et al 2000). The Pette site includes materials associated with an immigrant Italian household who lived at the site in the first decade of the twentieth century. Michael Pette immigrated to New York City from the rural Molise section of Italy in 1885. After living first in Harlem and Woodside, Queens, he settled in Jamaica across the street from King Manor in 1903 with his children, parents, and other members of his family. Pette worked in a number of fields popular among Italian immigrants, including shoemaking and artificial flowers, before finding success in real estate sales and investments. This career allowed him to obtain several properties in Queens County that he purchased for himself and his extended family. Pette's life was most marked by a commitment to assisting in the Americanization of his family and his fellow Italian immigrants.

Starting from a solid financial base accrued through real estate investment, Pette gained substantial recognition in both Italian and mainstream American circles. In Italian circles he was considered a *prominenti*, or a leader of the Italian immigrant community. Pette was active in immigrant support and relief efforts including the Italo-American Property Owners Protective League and the Italo-American Citizen's Independent Club. He was also founder and publisher of a the bi-lingual newspaper, *Lavoro e Commercio* (Labor and Commerce) (Fitts 2002, p. 4). Being a leader in the Queens Italian immigrant community he found acceptance in mainstream American

society including work as a part-time clerk in the Queens District Attorney's office in addition to local positions in Jamaica such as on the Street Opening Commission, the school board, the Jamaica Citizens Association and as a vice president on the Long Island Press Association (Fitts 2002, p. 4). Being a *prominenti* he also developed relationships with Teddy Roosevelt and other state and national level power brokers who helped him to gain roles on the New York's Deep Waters and Fisheries Commission, as a special investigator on labor for Long Island, and consideration for the position of State Commissioner of Charity (Fitts 2002, p. 5).

With this resumé, Michael Pette was no doubt known to the King Manor Association directors, especially those from Jamaica and Long Island who may very well have served on community boards with him or knew others that did. Moreover, as King Manor Museum was also created during the very years that he resided across the street, Pette was likely quite aware of the museum's activities and intentions. The issue at hand, therefore, is what sort of relationship existed between these leaders from different backgrounds and likely divergent interests while they were neighbors in the first decade of the twentieth century. To address this question, I have broken the data recovered from the archaeological study of the Pette household into aspects that illustrate his family's assimilation versus those parts of the record that demonstrate the retention of ethnically Italian practices. I further situate these findings into the public or the private sphere of the Pette household to show how these data were part of a dialogue that reached across Jamaica Avenue to King Manor and of course further afield about the meaning of immigrant lives during the gilded age.

Despite Pette's highly public efforts and positive stance regarding his Italian heritage, he encouraged his fellow immigrants to Americanize so that they would be able find routes into the offerings available to those who publicly adopted their new home. He promoted the adoption of American dress and the use of the English language (Fitts 2002, pp. 5–6). This effort was replicated in certain key aspects of the material record of his household. Documentary and material evidence show that the Pettes' home included a formal parlor for meeting and entertaining guests. Fragments of porcelain figurines, delft tiles, a mantle clock, flowerpots, and vases are complemented by Pette's recollection of the family piano. As the parlor was the most public space inside the home, mainstream domestic reformers cited the importance of having the room reflect the respectability of the household residents. Immigrant homes were often denigrated for lacking a parlor or, if they had one, for using gaudy and/or "religious" decoration. It is not known exactly how Pette's parlor was decorated, but, given his local standing and interest in a fashioning a public assimilation, it is likely that it was more refined than those caricatured in the reformist literature (Fitts 2002, pp. 7–8).

Household ceramics also show the adoption of American norms. The ceramic collection includes remains from two sets of matched table settings, one white granite for everyday use and one porcelain likely reserved for more formal meals. The varied specialized vessels recovered from these sets indicate the adoption of distinct courses during meals and separate dishes to segregate foods. Given that traditional Italian cooking focused on stews, soups, and pasta dishes, Pette's ceramics show a shift away from Italian food presentations (Fitts 2002, pp. 8–9). Data on household sanitation also confirm a trend towards American norms. Ammonia, disinfectant, and poison bottles deposited into tidy trash pits amidst a relatively clean yard suggest the Pettes were aware of and adopted sanitation standards expected of proper

American households. The pattern holds for evidence of personal hygiene, which included wash basins and ewers for bathing and chamber pots, combs, and razor blades for other toilet routines. Similarly, the collection of medicine bottles for shows a basic acceptance of modern treatments, despite the fact that many Italian immigrants remained skeptical of "modern" medicine (Fitts 2002, p. 12). In many ways, the record from the Pette site shows a very publicly visible acceptance of American mainstream norms and expectations of assimilated public behavior.

In more typically private household activities the record from the site presents less evidence for assimilation. For one, the artifact collection contained a colorful majolica ceramic dessert set, including a *tazza*, or a pedestaled serving dish used for presenting sweets. Majolica wares are not specifically Italian, but according to Fitts (2002, p. 10), the style from the Pette site is consistent with Italian-made wares. Another sort of private activity would have been drinking. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, temperance was a key feature of Protestant domesticity and at-home liquor consumption declined. The Pettes did not subscribe to this feature of American domestic life, preferring instead to preserve their traditional use of alcohol at social gatherings and during meals. The thirty-nine alcohol bottles recovered in the excavation made up a substantial 12 % of the glass assemblage and clearly marked the site as place of spirituous consumption. A final example of private retentions of Italian traditions is the large number of tea sets. At least six sets are represented in the ceramic assemblage, which is surprising since most Italian immigrants did not have a tradition of tea use but were more often coffee drinkers. So, it is believed the tea sets were used for coffee service instead.

These findings, while demonstrating evidence of the retention of some old world Italian habits, also suggest strategic actions undertaken to constitute and preserve the Italian immigrant community in the face of mainstream expectations of assimilation. The materials in the Pette collection that most reflect an Italian heritage were called upon not just during private household activities. Rather, coffee, alcohol, and dessert are also commonly offered at the sort of semi-public gatherings where certain non-household members are present. I refer here not just to any outsiders or guests but to those specifically connected by ethnicity and other shared interests to the household head and host such as business partners, employees, or even rivals. The very items that reflect the retention of Italian heritage, that is, were those used in direct support of the activities connected to Pette's *prominenti* status.

This observation may be paired with those objects and practices that reflect a public display of Italian ethnicity. I mentioned above that Pette was very active and prominent in many organizations associated with the betterment of the Italian immigrant community including mutual aid societies and a newspaper. These publicly visible roles counterbalanced other public activities that the archaeological record illustrate such as the tidy yard, outfitted parlor, piano, and conformed table settings. In some ways, that is, the public presentation of Michael Pette was distinctively Italian and for the benefit of Italians. In other ways, it was aimed to demonstrating his Americanization. It is useful to integrate this observation in order to better understand the Americanization process from Pette's perspective. Most discussions of Americanization seek to explain how and why mainstream societies sought to assimilate immigrant communities while other studies point to evidence that explains how immigrants underwent the change. Fewer studies seek to understand the purposes

and benefits immigrant communities may have defined for themselves regarding Americanization. In other words, Americanization was more than a simple discussion across ethnic community lines, but also one that occurred within immigrant communities regarding how to publicly present the group for the benefit of its members. In the case of Michael Pette, that is, we do not want to simply record his Americanization but also contextualize it to better understand his intentions as a *prominenti* and perhaps identify a critique of the very process that mainstream communities expected he and his community go through to become truly American.

As a *prominenti* and a publisher, Pette was an instrumental figure in defining the public perception of the Italian immigrant community in Jamaica, Queens. Reading the messages of his public ethnicity we can see his particular interests. The two "Italo-American" organizations he belonged to were each based in key foundations of American society: property ownership and citizenship. These organizations were aimed therefore not simply at assisting Italian immigrants but advancing their particular interests *as a group* in gaining access to the fruits of American nationhood. His success in this role was also pronounced enough that mainstream politicians, including Roosevelt, were interested in him for the state-level charity commission position. This interest shows the value that at least some mainstream elites saw in his ability to organize and support his community. It is possible, however, that he was passed over for this prestigious position because of other interests that came with being a *prominenti*. Here I refer to the actual intention of his charity, as captured in the name of his newspaper: "Labor and Commerce." While certainly interested in promoting Italian community businesses, the publication title captures that fact that most in the Italian immigrant community were members of the laboring class in the American capitalist system.

Without doubt, a *prominenti* had to appeal to both the successful and assimilated members of his community as well as its newly arrived, less successful, and perhaps more militant laboring branches. I suggest that this describes the greatest threat to the mainstream American communities represented by the native-born protestant directors of the King Manor Association and their peers and was a key force in driving the creation of their museum. It was one thing to teach American history, instill patriotism, and imbue the norms for language, dress, and domestic practice. It was quite another to see the formation of immigrant ethnic and perhaps radical community organizations led by those who clearly illustrated the very capacity for immigrants to become Americans less through the adoption of mainstream norms and values than through a direct participation in the American political economy of property ownership, class consciousness, and active citizenship. Ultimately, Michael Pette and his fellow immigrant leaders and organizers crafted two critiques of the mainstream community embodied by the KMA. First, he showed that the messages at King Manor Museum and other temples of Anglo-American racial supremacy were not actually necessary for succeeding in America. Instead, success could come from an investment in America's real foundation as a capitalist social system founded on the power of private property as the root of citizenship. Second, he essentially unmasked the foundation of the King Manor Association's civilizing mission. At home, in subtle but recognizable ways, he showed that the content of the assimilated household was less important than the capacity to use the artifacts of a civilized life appropriately in public. Just as the King Manor Association sought to create a living historic and

nostalgic patina that would fashion an experience of American norms and values for museum visitors, Michael Pette also knew that it was simply the presentation of the self and the community in the appropriate disguise or costume that mattered. Simply to be able to "act" civilized, by the time Pette and others arrived, was what mattered, since, as the trouble history of race and class conflict in America shows, a true civilization based on respectful intergroup relations and the cultivation of an actual participatory democracy, has played only a bit part in this America's development (Matthews 2002).

Conclusion

When Walter Benjamin (1968) penned the words in the opening epigraph during the first years of World War II he captured an idea essential to understanding the gilded age philosophies that in part gave rise to European fascism and which his "theses on the philosophy of history" hoped to undermine. This was the thinking that situated civilization as a credential. Civilization, that is, was used by those in power to demonstrate the legitimacy of their position, and as the epigraph suggests, the barbaric actions they undertook to achieve it. To define civilization, gilded age elites pointed to evidence in their actions and the world they ruled over of as the achievements and benefits of a civilized life.

In this paper I have explored diverse expressions of the American civilized life during the gilded age and related it to particular normative ideas about gender, race, and belonging and key practices related to conservation and reproduction in light of the American elite's quest to affirm the validity of their presumed American racial supremacy. I also made the case that many of the original foundations of the archaeological discipline, in both its spirit and its administrative branches in the academy, government agencies and private business, derive from activities crafted to sustain this particular racial ideology. In a nutshell, archaeology, as a conservationist, environmentalist, strenuous practice emerged from, embodies, and reproduces mainstream American Anglo-Saxon racial claims to distinction and authority. I complemented this study with an examination of a similar application of this racial thinking in America's urban context and through the work of women rather than men. Building temples to not only American history but also the feminine domestic sphere, the founders of historic house museums emphasized key ideas about the reproduction of the American race that the museums as well as their founders embodied.

Rather than succumb to the ideology of American race as a final assessment for archaeology, I also showed that archaeology itself can be untangled from its roots to critique the ideas that created it. My study of the archaeological remains from King Manor during the period when the site was a historic house museum highlighted the alternative domesticity of the site's caretakers buried in the site's privy. This hidden reality of life at King Manor illustrated the superficiality of the domestic display in the museum itself. If those who worked there were not party to the message, how effective was it other than as a dressing used to publicly confirm the directors' presumed racial superiority? I then turned to the archaeological record recovered from the immigrant Italian Pette site to show how archaeology can pry apart the public-private distinctions that those involved in the American racial debate had to

negotiate. Illustrating how Michael Pette tactically employed evidence of his own Americanization, I argued that he was likely more aware than we might think of the very strategies that his supposed racial superiors deployed to illustrate their natural American belonging. The key for Pette and others was to publicly perform an awareness of what Americans say Americans are while privately practicing the very acts that successful Americans undertake to reproduce their power: private property, active citizenship and a clear conception of labor-capital relations. Put in Benjamin's terms: Pette's home site set in light of his *prominenti* standing indicates that he was familiar with both the barbarism that describes the "victorious" (Weber 2003) gilded age capitalist system as well as the appearance of civilization that those in power used to paper over their intimate involvement in the immoral market and their limited concern for those the market failed to care for.

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