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In Her Wake:

The Story of Alva Smith Vanderbilt Belmont

by Raymond E. Spinzia

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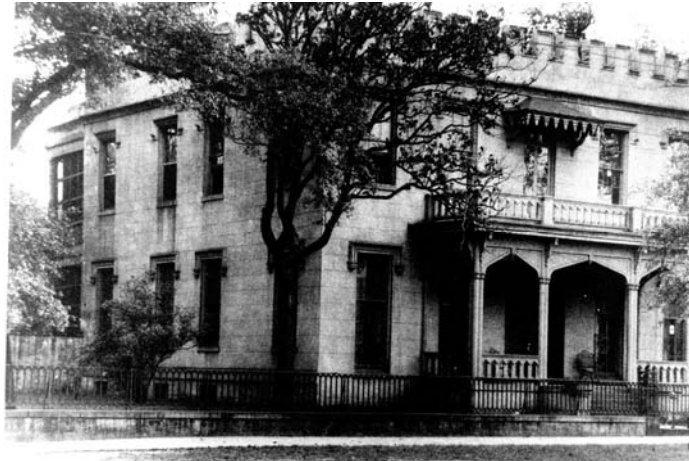
Factors which, in the mid 1840s, encouraged the establishment of estates on the South Shore of New York's Long Island included: the comradery afforded by the Southside Sportsmen's Club, whose members were among the wealthiest individuals in the nation; the flat terrain, which made it ideally suited to horsemanship; and the sea breezes, which even today make it a sailor's paradise. The South Shore Gold Coast eventually extended from Babylon to Bayport. By and large, these estates were originally perceived as rustic hideaways for the rapidly increasing number of Manhattan and Brooklyn millionaires. Indeed, by the 1880s Long Island's South Shore was considered a chic place in which to vacation.¹ William Kissam Vanderbilt Sr. was the most prominent of the South Shore millionaires and his wife, Alva, without doubt, was the most ambitious. Indeed it was Alva who propelled the Vanderbilt family into the rarefied air of society's famous "Four Hundred."



Alva Vanderbilt

She was born on January 17, 1853, in Mobile, Alabama, to Murray Forbes Smith, a successful cotton broker, and Phoebe Desha Smith, the daughter of General and Tennessee Congressman Robert Desha. Her uncle was Kentucky's Governor Joseph Desha, from whom President Lyndon Baines Johnson could also trace his ancestry.²

A year or so prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, Alva's father moved his family to New York City. As conditions in New York became increasingly untenable for southerners after the assassination



Murray Forbes Smith's Mobile, Alabama, residence

of President Lincoln, Alva's father again decided to move, but this time circumstances forced the separation of the family since he went to England where he continued as a cotton broker. The rest of the family took up residence in Paris, where they remained for four years before returning to the United States. Unable to regain the family's wealth and social position in the South, Smith chose once again to settle with his family in New York City where he continued trading cotton while his wife established and ran a boarding house.³

Undaunted by the loss of social and economic status, Alva plotted to advance herself in New York's society. The instrument of her success was to be Consuelo Yznaga, a Cuban heiress and her childhood friend, whose brother would one day marry Alva's sister, Mary.⁴ Consuelo, who socialized with the Vanderbilts, managed to introduce Alva to the young William Kissam Vanderbilt, Sr. In 1875, a year after the date of their first meeting, Consuelo was a bridesmaid at the wedding of Willie K. and Alva. In one masterful maneuver, Alva managed to revive her family's social position and financial status.

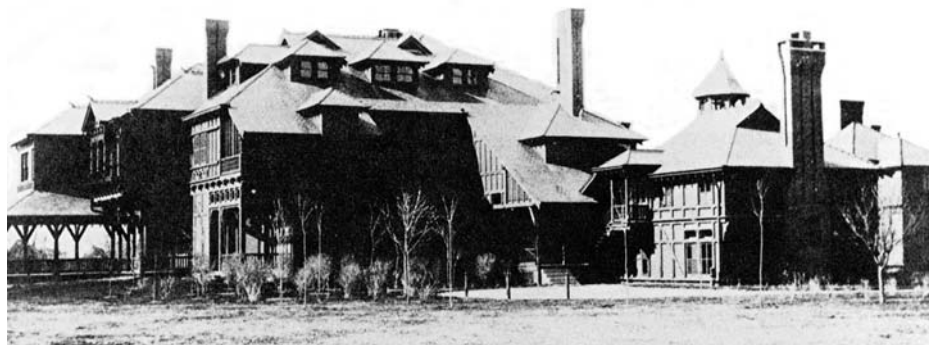
Her father, who had by this time ruined his health worrying about the future of his family, was unable to attend the wedding due to his failing health and died ten days after the wedding, but not before thanking Alva for bringing him peace of mind and encouraging her to care for the family. There can be little doubt that financial and social status considerations were major reasons for her marriage to Willie K., whose grandfather Cornelius' \$94-million fortune was reputed to be the largest in America.⁵



William Kissam Vanderbilt, Sr.

From the beginning it was obvious that they were mismatched. Even as a child, Alva was strong-willed, arrogant, ill-tempered, opinionated, liberated, and tyrannical, traits that tended to intensify rather than moderate in later life. Willie K., on the other hand, was friendly, cultured, even-tempered, gentle, a loving father, and non-combative.⁶ Alva considered him to be a “weak nonentity” and marriage to be legalized prostitution.⁷

Willie K.'s first and only attempt to be free of Alva's domination may well have been on their honeymoon. Arriving in Saratoga aboard his grandfather's private railroad car, he signed the hotel register, “William Kissam Vanderbilt, wife, two maids, two dogs and fifteen horses.”⁸ As the years progressed, he tended more and more to allow Alva to have her way rather than be subjected to her tirades.

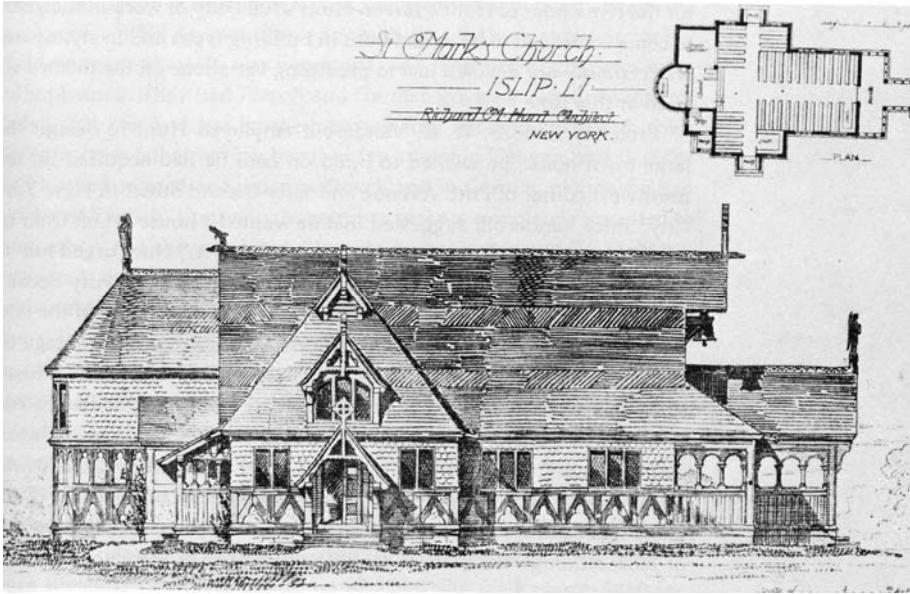


the first Idlehour, built in 1878

Alva's greatest pleasure in life was building and decorating mansions, a skill for which she was recognized when she was elected as the first woman member of the American Institute of Architects.⁹ Her first architectural adventure was the Vanderbilts' first vacation home, *Idlehour*, a large shingled Queen Anne-style mansion built in Oakdale, Long Island. Designed by Richard Morris Hunt, its construction was begun in 1878 and completed the following summer at a cost of \$150,000. The gardener's cottage, greenhouse, stable, entrance gate, and two gate houses were also designed by Hunt and erected sometime after the completion of the mansion. In addition to the auxiliary buildings designed by Hunt, others were designed by the noted South Shore Beaux-Arts architect, Isaac Henry Green II. Several alterations were made to the mansion, including the addition of a massive bachelor quarters, before its destruction by fire in 1899.¹⁰ In later life Alva would remember fondly the bucolic days spend by the family at *Idlehour* and sailing to Fire Island for picnics aboard a small paddlewheel boat named the *Mosquito*. Her reminiscences also conjure up pleasant afternoons at the children's playhouse on the estate where her daughter Consuelo would serve afternoon tea to Alva's friends.¹¹

Located not far from the Vanderbilt's *Idlehour* estate was Islip's rather dilapidated 1847 St. Mark's Episcopal Church, which Alva was determined to rebuild. Recounting in her memoirs about the

events of these years, she states, “It was not long after we became summer residents of Oakdale that,



for the first and last time in my life, I built a church.” Alva also records that she paid for the construction of the 1880 church, that she and Hunt designed the church and the rectory together, and that she asked her friend Louis Comfort Tiffany to furnish the church with stained-glass windows.¹²

St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Islip, architectural drawing

In 1879 Alva turned her attention to the creation of a new Manhattan residence. The architect was, again, Richard Morris Hunt but this home was to be more lavish than their Oakdale residence. Located at 660 Fifth Avenue on the corner of Fifty-Second Street, the French Chateau-style mansion took one thousand workmen three years and cost \$3 million to build.¹³ Alva finally had a Manhattan residence that was larger and more ornate than that of Mrs. Caroline Schermerhorn Astor, the acknowledged leader of New York's society.

While the Vanderbilts may have been, collectively, the wealthiest family in the nation, they had not been recognized by Mrs. Astor and, hence, were socially unacceptable. It was Mrs. Astor's contention that one's fortune had to be at least two generations old and one had to be unencumbered by work in trade.¹⁴ Therefore, the Vanderbilts were scorned as *nouveau riche* and unacceptable for admission into New York's elite “Four Hundred.”



Vanderbilt Manhattan residence

Alva's childhood friend Consuelo Yznaga, then Viscountess Mandeville (later, Duchess of Manchester) was again to play a major role in Alva's life. Lady Mandeville was the guest of honor at a 1,200-guest housewarming party for Alva's new Manhattan mansion and, thereby, the instrument that would catapult the Vanderbilts into social acceptability. Receiving an invitation to the party which was

to be held on March 26, 1883, had become a major preoccupation among New York's socialites.¹⁵ Alva had planned her strategy well. Consuelo Vanderbilt, Alva's daughter and Consuelo Yznaga's namesake, was a friend of Mrs. Astor's daughter Carrie. Alva knew that Carrie had her heart set on attending the party and had been practicing the quadrille for weeks. But society rules decreed that since the Astors had not recognized the Vanderbilts, an invitation to the party could not be extended.¹⁶ Carrie was crushed and pleaded with her mother to do something. To restore peace in her home, Mrs. Astor had but one option, to recognize the Vanderbilts and thereby accept them into the ranks of elite society. What followed was the bizarre, and in many respects comical, scene in which Mrs. Astor was driven up Fifth Avenue to the Vanderbilt mansion where Mrs. Astor's footman, clad in the style of the servants of Windsor Castle, delivered her card to the maroon-clad footman of the Vanderbilts. The next day the process was reversed with Alva making the trip down Fifth Avenue to have her card presented by her footman.¹⁷ Alva had won! Correct social etiquette had been maintained. The Astors would receive an invitation to the party. But more importantly, the Vanderbilts had "arrived"; they were now "socially acceptable." Shortly thereafter Willie K. had been proposed for or had been accepted into virtually every significant social club and invitations to elite parties abounded.¹⁸



Consuelo Vanderbilt

Alva still was not content. Her next hurdle was to marry her daughter, Consuelo, to a member of European nobility. It was of no consequence to Alva that Consuelo was in love with Winthrop Rutherford, the twenty-nine-year-old son of a prominent and wealthy Knickerbocker family, or that the couple wished to marry.¹⁹ Alva had decided that Consuelo was to marry Charles Richard John Spencer-Churchill, the Ninth Duke of Marlborough, who, although land poor, was a member of one of Britain's most prominent families. No amount of pleading by Consuelo could dissuade Alva, who kept Consuelo under virtual house arrest and threatened to shoot Rutherford. During bursts of anger Alva claimed she had had a heart attack and that, if Consuelo didn't marry the Duke, she would be responsible for her mother's death.²⁰

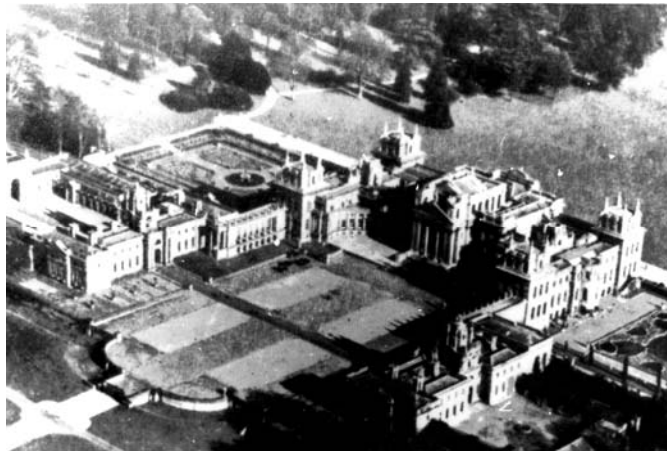
Willie K. was of no help to his daughter since he and Alva separated in 1894 and were divorced in March 1895, just eight months before Consuelo's November 6th wedding to the duke at Manhattan's St. Thomas' Episcopal Church. It is doubtful that, in the best of circumstances, Willie K. would have interfered. Thus, Consuelo, young, impressionable, and without any protection from Alva's ambitions,

was forced to yield to her mother's will. The marriage agreement reportedly cost Willie K. \$10 million. Had he wished to prevent his daughter's marriage to the duke, Willie K. could have simply refused



to pay the dowry. Unfortunately for Consuelo, Willie K. opted not to be on the receiving end of Alva's rage, thus, condemning Consuelo to eleven years of marriage to an arrogant man who hated everything that was not British.²¹

Ninth Duke of Marlborough



Marlborough ancestral estate

On January 11, 1896, Alva married Oliver Hazard Perry Belmont, who had deserted his first wife



on their honeymoon to travel in Spain with a French dancer. It was of no consequence to Alva that Belmont was five years younger than she, that he was more interested in having a good time than attending to the family business, or that he had an inordinate love for his horses. Alva finally had married for love!²²

Oliver Hazard Perry Belmont

The couple summered at *Belcourt*, O. H. P. Belmont's Newport mansion, which was designed by Richard Morris Hunt and which was across Bellevue Avenue from Alva's own mansion, *Marble House*. *Belcourt*, with its stable located on the main floor of the mansion must have truly seemed odd to Alva. Perhaps even more curious was the lavish treatment which Belmont heaped upon his horses. Stalls were paneled in teak and upholstered; blankets were made of pure Irish linen and embroidered with the Belmont coat-of-arms; and bedding was changed three times a day by English grooms. Belmont did not relegate his horses solely to the stable. Two of his favorites were stuffed and mounted by mannequins dressed as knights in full armor and adorned the Belmonts' five-hundred-guest ballroom. O. H. P.'s eccentricities were not limited to horses. Outside their bedrooms slept Azar, a six-foot-six-inch-tall Egyptian dressed in an ornate military uniform topped by a red fez, with a knife between his teeth.²³



Belcourt

As the new Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont, Alva resumed entertaining on a lavish scale even surpassing the parties she had given when married to Willie K.²⁴ But her happiness was short-lived. In 1908 her beloved O. H. P., just fifty-years-old, died prematurely at *Brookholt*, their East Meadow, Long Island, estate, following an appendix operation.²⁵ Alva was now an extremely wealthy woman, for in addition



Brookholt

to *Marble House*, which she had owned since its completion in 1892, and the annual alimony payment of \$100,000, which she had received as a divorce settlement from Willie K., she inherited O. H. P.'s entire fortune, which consisted of several mansions and \$10 million.²⁶

Alva quickly consoled herself by going on a building spree that dwarfed all her previous projects. The stable was removed from the first floor of *Belcourt*, a new master bedroom complex was built at *Brookholt*, a Chinese tea house was constructed at *Marble House*, a Georgian-style mansion was built in Manhattan, and *Beacon Towers*, a medieval-style castle was erected on the shore of Long Island Sound in Sands Point.²⁷

Ever restless, Alva unleashed her inexhaustible energy into philanthropic and political activities. Belmont Memorial Hospital (later, named Hempstead Hospital), of which Alva was the primary benefactor and board president, was completed in April 1910. In addition to providing the bulk of the funds for the construction of the hospital and for its redesign less than a year after its opening, she also donated her \$16,000 limousine and paid the \$1,600 necessary to convert the vehicle into an ambulance. Situated on the corner of Henry Street and Jerusalem Avenue in Hempstead, the two-story hospital, with its stucco annex and wide piazza, accommodated twenty-four of its fifty patients in private rooms.



*original Hempstead Hospital.
Henry Street and Jerusalem Avenue, Hempstead, Long Island*

Alva insisted on a policy that opened the hospital to all patients and doctors. After Mrs. M. A. Morgan was appointed superintendent in September of 1910, although still open to all doctors and their patients, all house doctors and professional staff were women.²⁸

In 1911 Alva established the Brookholt School of Agriculture for Women at her East Meadow estate and was determined that within a year the farm would become an “Adamless Eden.” She intended to endow the 200-acre farm so that it could exist forever. However, within a year, it was evident that the school's twenty-five “farmerettes” were not suited to farm life. Marilyn E. Weigold hypothesized that such factors as the payment of four dollars per week, three meals a day, uniforms designed by Alva’s personal dressmaker, and clean and spacious dormitories — all of which being decided improvements over their previous living conditions — may well have induced the

“farmerettes” to remain at *Brookholt* rather than establishing their own farms, thus influencing Alva to terminate her farm experiment at the end of its first year.²⁹

Alva then diverted her full attention to the woman's suffrage movement, becoming a major supporter, campaigner, speaker, and writer for the movement. With Elsa Maxwell, she wrote a suffragist operetta entitled *Melinda and Her Sisters*. A mansion was purchased by her in Washington, DC. Known as the Alva Belmont House (later renamed the Sewall–Belmont House and Museum), it was used as the National Woman's Party Headquarters. In 1920 she was elected the party's first president and remained in that office until her death. She opened her Newport and New York City mansions to suffragist rallies.³⁰



Beacon Towers, c. 1924

Alva's Sands Point estate *Beacon Towers* also played an important role in the battle to win the vote. It virtually resonated with activity. Party delegations were continually coming to the estate for meetings and lectures. For those delegates who couldn't afford the expense of travel, Alva paid their fare. It was from her *Beacon Towers* office that Alva directed the party and it was to *Beacon Towers* that Alice Paul and other party leaders would come to rest and recuperate.³¹

To raise money for the cause of woman's suffrage, Alva even endorsed Ponds Cold Cream, Simmon's mattresses, and silverware in advertisements.

As always, many of Alva's positions were extreme. She advocated a national hunger strike and the boycott of all jobs by women. When women were finally given the franchise, Alva urged them not to vote until men relinquished their monopolistic control of political parties.³²

Alva enjoyed setting goals that appeared unobtainable and then surmounting all obstacles to obtain these goals.³³ She was, without question, a major trend-setter of her era being the first of her

social stratum to marry a Vanderbilt and the first society woman to demand and receive a divorce and still retain her social position.³⁴ She single-handedly propelled the Vanderbilts into high society and later married O. H. P. Belmont in a civil ceremony presided over by the mayor of New York City when clergy refused to marry them. She decreed that her daughter, Consuelo, would marry into nobility and did not hesitate to place a guard at her child's bedroom door on the wedding eve to prevent her from running away to her true love. Years later, she would testify to this action in order that Consuelo might obtain an annulment.³⁵ She became a major organizer and participant in the movement for woman's suffrage.³⁶ Alva once said of herself, "I blaze the trail for the rest to walk in."³⁷ What may be equally true of Alva is the sentiment expressed by a banner carried by suffragists in 1933 at her funeral service in St. Thomas' Episcopal Church in New York City:

"FAILURE IS IMPOSSIBLE."³⁸

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ENDNOTES

1. John Forman and Robbe Pierce Stimson, *The Vanderbilts and the Gilded Age: Architectural Aspirations 1879-1901* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), p. 174, and Harry W. Havemeyer, "The Story of Saxton Avenue." *The Long Island Forum* 53 (Winter 1990):11-12.
2. Alva Vanderbilt Belmont, ["Alva Vanderbilt Belmont Memoir"] in Matilda Young Papers (hereafter cited as "Belmont Memoir"), Special Collections, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, NC, pp. 5-6. While the manuscript is incomplete and unpublished it does reveal how Alva perceived her role as a prominent socialite. *See also* Louis Auchincloss, *The Vanderbilt Era: Profiles of a Gilded Age* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1989), p. 46.
The Vanderbilts are also related to the Roosevelt family through their Kissam relationship. In 1786 Cornelia Roosevelt married Benjamin Kissam. Cornelia was the daughter of Isaac, President Theodore Roosevelt's great-great-grandfather. *See also* Consuelo Vanderbilt Balsan, *The Glitter and the Gold* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1952), p. 4.
3. "Belmont Memoir," pp. 19, 48. *See also* Arthur T. Vanderbilt II, *Fortune's Children: The Fall of the House of Vanderbilt* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1989), p. 86.

4. Alva's sister, Mary Virginia Smith, was married to Consuelo Yznaga's brother Fernando Yznaga at *Idlehour*, the Vanderbilt Oakdale estate, on September 22, 1880. Alva and her husband, William Kissam Vanderbilt, Sr., were the witnesses. Dr. Haight and St. Mark's rector, The Rev. Reuben Riley, were the officiating clergy. "Parish Records of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Islip, New York, 1847-1914," p. 256, and *The Old Oakdale History*, vol. 1 (Oakdale, NY: William K. Vanderbilt Historical Society of Dowling College, 1983), vol.1, pp. 57-58.
5. Vanderbilt, *Fortune's Children*, pp. 87, 88, 429, and W. A. Swanberg, *Whitney Father, Whitney Heiress* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1980), p. 58.
6. Balsan, pp. 5-6.
7. Vanderbilt, pp. 429, 446.
8. Vanderbilt, p. 84.
9. Balsan, p. 238, and *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v., "Belmont, Alva Ertskin [sic] Vanderbilt."
10. Forman and Stimson, p. 175. *See also* Susan R. Stein, *The Architecture of Richard Morris Hunt* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 6; Paul Baker, *Richard Morris Hunt* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1980), p. 271; and Robert B. King, *The Vanderbilt Homes* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1989), pp. 69-70.
11. "Belmont Memoir," pp. 94-95.
12. "Belmont Memoir," pp. 98-100.
None of Alva's claims pertaining to St. Mark's can be confirmed as all communications found in the church records concerning the building of the church and its rectory refer only to Mr. Vanderbilt.
13. Vanderbilt, p. 89, and Swanberg, p. 57.
14. Terrence Gavan, *The Newport Baron*. (Newport: Pineapple Publications, 1988), p. 13.
15. Balsan, p. 6.
16. Lucy Kavalier, *The Astors: A Family Chronicle of Pomp and Power* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1966), p. 126.
17. Vanderbilt, p. 106.
18. Forman and Stimson, p. 177.
19. Jerry E. Patterson, *The Vanderbilts* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1989), p. 150, and Balsan, p. 47.
20. Balsan, pp. 46-48.

21. George E. DeMille, *Saint Thomas Church in the City and County of New York 1823-1954* (Austin: Church Historical Society, 1958), p. 120. *See also* Kit and Frederica Konolige, *The Power of Their Glory. America's Ruling Class: The Episcopalians* (New York: Wyden Books, 1978), pp. 189, 190, and Balsan, p. 187.

22. Patterson, pp. 146, 153, and Balsan, p. 54.

23. Lucius Beebee, *The Big Spenders* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966), p. 171; Vanderbilt, pp. 249, 252, 289; and Gavan, p. 16.
Azar would remain with Alva until her death in 1933.

24. Vanderbilt, pp. 251-52.

25. "Belmont Memoir," p. 167.

Alva again commissioned Hunt, but this time it was not to build a mansion but rather an imposing medieval chapel-styled mausoleum resplendent with gargoyles, stained-glass windows, and a magnificent stone carving of St. Hubert's vision of the stag with a crucifix between its antlers. Patterned after St. Hubert's Chapel at the Chateau of Ambrose in France, Alva and O.H.P.'s final resting place is located in Woodlawn Cemetery in The Bronx. *See also* Vanderbilt, p. 294.



St. Hubert frieze over entrance to Belmont Mausoleum, Woodlawn Cemetery, The Bronx, New York

Located in the south transept of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Islip, New York, the modified *stavkirke* built by William Kissam Vanderbilt Sr. in 1880, is the (c. 1924) Henry Rieman Duval Memorial stained-glass window by John Hardman Company, England, which depicts the story of the patron saint of the hunter, St. Hubert. When the wainscoting in the church had to be removed after the devastating arson fire of December 5, 1989, the notation identifying "Mrs. Vanderbilt's stall" was found written in pencil on the back of the wainscoting next to the representation of St. Hubert. A further irony places this window precisely opposite a window created by Heaton, Butler, Bayne, & Co. of London, dedicated to William Kissam Vanderbilt, Sr. by his children, after his death in 1920. The latter window, in the north transept of the church, is next to the pew which had been traditionally referred to as Mr. Vanderbilt's pew by the church. (Judith A. Spinzia, former parish historian of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Islip, New York, March 12, 1990.)



*Belmont Mausoleum
Woodlawn Cemetery, The Bronx, New York*



gargoyle detail

26. *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v., “Belmont, Alva Ertskin [sic] Vanderbilt.” See also Vanderbilt, p. 252.

27. Vanderbilt, p. 252.

Because of her terror of ghosts, Alva had never been able to sleep in a room in which someone had died. After O.H.P.'s death at *Brookholt*, she had a new master bedroom added to the mansion. Unfortunately, on the very date of its completion a mason fell off a ladder and died in the new bedroom causing Alva to lament, “It really does seem as though Fate had decided I am never to sleep peacefully at night.” See also Elizabeth Drexel Lehr, “*King Lehr*” and the *Gilded Age* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1935), pp. 175-76.

28. “Alva Belmont Scrapbook: Hempstead Hospital 1910-1911/ Brookholt School of Agriculture 1911-1912” in National Woman's Party Headquarters, Sewall-Belmont House, Washington, D.C.

Alva's hospital no longer exists. The present Hempstead Hospital, at 800 Front Street, started by a group of doctors in the 1950s, has no connection with the hospital financed by Mrs. Belmont.

29. Marilyn E. Weigold, “1911 Crop of Female Farmers,” *The Long Island Forum* (June 1980): 116-24, and Elsa Maxwell, *R.S.V.P.: Elsa Maxwell's Own Story* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1954), p. 107.

William Kissam Vanderbilt, Sr. and Alva Smith Vanderbilt Belmont made substantial contributions to Long Island philanthropic causes. William Kissam Vanderbilt, Sr.'s contributions to St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Islip included: \$15,892 which represented the entire cost of building the 1880 *stavkirke* designed by Richard Morris Hunt; \$1,000 toward the \$11,800 construction cost of the Parish House designed by Issac Henry Green II; the total cost of enlarging the church in 1890; and a bequest at his death in 1920 of \$50,000 to the church's endowment fund. See also The Reverend William H. Garth, *Historical Sketch of St. Mark's Islip, Long Island* (New York: privately published, 1928), pp. 26, 32, 37, Appendix II - Endowments, unnumbered page.

As Mrs. Vanderbilt, Alva built and helped to maintain the Sea Side Hospital for Sick Children (Trinity Sea Side Home). The 200-bed hospital was located on Timber Point Road in Great River opposite *Idlehour*. See also Vanderbilt, p. 288, and “Belmont Memoir,” p. 94. She also donated \$100,000 to Nassau Hospital [now Winthrop University Hospital] which at the time of its inception was the first voluntary non-profit hospital east of New York City. See also Robert MacKay, *Between Ocean and Empire: An Illustrated History of Long Island* (Northridge, CA: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1985), pp. 125-26, and *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v., “Belmont, Alva Ertskin [sic] Vanderbilt.”



30. *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v., “Belmont, Alva Ertskin [sic] Vanderbilt.”

Prosper d’ Epinay’s 1902 statue of Joan of Arc became a centerpiece of *Beacon Towers*, the walls of which were decorated with murals depicting the life of the saint. After Alva’s death, the sculpture was donated to the National Woman’s Party by her daughter Consuelo and remains on display at the Sewall–Belmont House and Museum.

*Joan of Arc by Prosper d’ Epinay
as displayed at Beacon Towers*



31. Clarice Stasz, *The Vanderbilt Women: Dynasty of Wealth, Glamour, and Tragedy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), pp. 216, 234.

In order to maintain privacy for herself and her guests Alva purchased the lighthouse and its surrounding grounds on the property adjoining that of *Beacon Towers*.

32. Vanderbilt, p. 257-58, and Auchincloss, p. 51.

33. Auchincloss, p. 49.

34. Patterson, p. 153.

35. Vanderbilt, p. 250, and Balsan, pp. 53, 242.

36. Doris Stevens, *Jailed For Freedom* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1920), pp. 30-31.

Katherine Duer Mackay, whose *Harbor Hill* estate was located in Roslyn, tried unsuccessfully to interest Alva in the suffrage movement. Ironically, years later Mrs. Mackay was to fail in her attempt to challenge Alva for leadership of the suffrage movement. *See also* "Belmont Memoir," pp. 149-50, and Aileen S. Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement 1890-1920* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 153.

Other prominent Long Island socialites who were involved in the Woman Suffrage Movement:

Janet House Auchincloss (Mrs. Gordon Auchincloss, Sr.) of Glen Cove and *Ronda*, Matinecock;

Consuelo Vanderbilt Balsan (Mrs. Louis Jacques Balsan) of *Old Fields*, East Norwich, and *Gardenside*, Southampton;

Clare Boothe Brokaw (Mrs. George Tuttle Brokaw; later, Mrs. Henry Robinson Luce) of Sands Point and *Sunnybrook*, Brookville;

Gertrude Foster Brown (Mrs. Raymond Brown) of Bellport;

Edith Cooper Bryce (Mrs. Lloyd Stephens Bryce) of *Bryce House*, Roslyn Harbor;

Virginia Keep Clark (Mrs. Marshall Clark) of *Windy Meadow*, Centre Island;

Anne Louise Ide Cockran (Mrs. William Bourke Cockran) of *The Cedars*, Sands Point;

Edith La Bau Dyer (Mrs. Edward Tiffany Dyer) of *Westlawn*, Southampton;

Mary Hopeton Drake Dyer (Mrs. Leyman Tiffany Dyer) of St. James, Southampton, and Stony Brook;

Caroline M. Pelgram Fleming (Mrs. Henry Stuart Fleming) of *Stepping Stones*, Southampton;

Augusta C. Mayer Gaynor (Mrs. William Jay Gaynor) of *Deepwells*, St. James;

Louisine Waldron Elder Havemeyer (Mrs. Henry Osborne Havemeyer) of *Bayberry Point*, Bay Shore;

Dorothy Nicoll Hubert (Mrs. William H. Hubert) of Babylon;

Marjorie Merriweather Post Hutton (Mrs. Edward Francis Hutton) of Bay Shore and *Hillwood*, Brookville;

Florence Shloss Guggenheim (Mrs. Daniel Guggenheim) of *Hempstead House* and *Mille Fleurs*, Sands Point;

Miss Rosalie Gardiner Jones of *Jones Manor*, Cold Spring Harbor;

Alice Cary Bussing Kingsbury (Mrs. Howard Thayer Kingsbury, Sr.) of Sands Point;

Harriet Burton Laidlaw (Mrs. James Lees Laidlaw) of *Hazeldean*, Sands Point;
 James Lees Laidlaw of *Hazeldean*, Sands Point;
 Rebecca Lamb Bolling Littlejohn (Mrs. Robert Malcolm Littlejohn; later, Mrs. Francis Hartman Markoe, Jr.) of *Little Cote*, Southampton;
 Maude Kahn Marriot (Mrs. J. C. Oakes Marriot) of *Oheka*, Cold Spring Harbor;
 Violet Westcott Morawetz (Mrs. Victor Morawetz) of *Three Ponds*, Woodbury;
 Sarah Gibbs Thompson Pell (Mrs. Stephen Hyatt Pelham Pell) of Southampton;
 Cornelia Bryce Pinchot (Mrs. Gifford Pinchot) of *Bryce House*, Roslyn Harbor;
 Florence Balsdon Gibb Pratt (Mrs. Herbert Lee Pratt, Sr.) of *The Braes*, Glen Cove;
 George du Pont Pratt, Sr. of *Killenworth*, Glen Cove;
 Helen Deming Sherman Pratt (Mrs. George du Pont Pratt, Sr.) of *Killenworth*, Glen Cove;
 Vera Amherst Hale Pratt (Mrs. George du Pont Pratt, Sr.) of *Killenworth*, Glen Cove;
 Eleanor Alexander Roosevelt (Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr.) of *Old Orchard*, Cove Neck;
 Margaret Olivia Slocum Sage (Mrs. Russell Sage) of *Harbor Home*, Sag Harbor, and *Cedar Croft*, Lawrence;
 Dorothy Payne Whitney Straight (Mrs. Willard Dickerman Straight; later, Mrs. Leonard Knight Elmhirst) of *Elmhurst*, Old Westbury;
 Katrina Ely Tiffany (Mrs. Charles Lewis Tiffany II) of *Elmwood*, Oyster Bay Cove;
 Vera Boarman Whitehouse (Mrs. James Norman Whitehouse) of *Broadwood*, Upper Brookville;
 Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney (Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney) of Old Westbury;
 Emmeline D. Heckscher Winthrop (Mrs. Egerton Leigh Winthrop, Jr.) of *Muttontown Meadows*, Muttontown.

See also Frances Weitzenhoffer, *The Havemeyers: Impressionism Comes to America* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1986), pp. 234-38; Nettie Leitch Major, *C. W. Post, the Hour and the Man: A Biography with Genealogical Supplement* (Washington, DC: Press of Judd & Detweiler, Inc., 1963), p.171; Stasz, pp. 232, 236, 258; “National Woman’s Party Papers” in Frank Melville, Jr. Memorial Library, SUNY at Stony Brook; John W. Furlow, Jr., “TR and the Pinchots: Conservation and Feminism in Modern America” in Natalie A. Naylor, et. al, eds., *Theodore Roosevelt: Many-Sided American* (Interlaken, NY: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1992), pp. 460-61; Stephanie Biglow, *Bellport and Brookhaven* (Bellport, NY: Bellport Historical Society, 1968), p. 48; Mallory Leoniak and Jane S. Gombieski, *To Get the Vote: Woman Suffrage Leaders in Suffolk County* (Brookhaven, NY: Town of Brookhaven, 1992), p. 25; Ida Husted Harper, *The History of Woman Suffrage* (New York: Source Book Press, 1970), pp. 5, 183, 442, 560, 732; Judith Ader Spinzia, “Women of Long Island: Clare Boothe Luce (1903-1987), The Long Island Connection.” *The Freeholder* 14 (Summer 2009):3-5; 17-20; Judith Ader Spinzia, “Women of Long Island: Mary Elizabeth Jones; Rosalie Gardiner Jones.” *The Freeholder* 11 (Spring 2007):2-7; Judith Ader Spinzia, “Women of Long Island: Cornelia Bryce Pinchot, Feminist, Social Activist – The Long Islander Who Became First Lady of Pennsylvania.” www.spinzialongislandstates.com; Natalie A. Naylor, “General Rosalie Jones (1883-1978): Oyster Bay’s Maverick Suffragist.” *The Freeholder* 12 (Summer 2007):3-7, 19; and Natalie A. Naylor, “In Deeds of Daring Rectitude’: Winning Votes for Women in Nassau County and the Nation.” *The Nassau County Historical Society Journal* 50 (1995):30-44.

37. Cornelius Vanderbilt Jr., *Queen of the Golden Age: The Fabulous Story of Grace Wilson Vanderbilt* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1956), p. 40.

38. Auchincloss, p. 51.

Alva had instructed in her will that a woman preacher deliver the funeral oration at St. Thomas but her final request was denied.

See also Lehr, p. 290.

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