

THE GILDED GARDEN

Historic Ornament in the Landscape at
Montgomery Place



May 25 – October 31, 2019

THE GILDED GARDEN

Historic Ornament in the Landscape at Montgomery Place

Exhibition produced in partnership with and curated by
Barbara Israel and her staff from Barbara Israel Garden Antiques

Funding provided by the A. C. Israel Foundation and
Plymouth Hill Foundation

In 1841, the renowned American architect Alexander Jackson Davis (1803–92) was hired to redesign the Mansion House at Montgomery Place, as well as consult on the surrounding grounds. Between 1841 and 1844, Davis introduced the property owners Louise Livingston, her daughter Cora, and son-in-law Thomas Barton to landscape designer, editor, and writer Andrew Jackson Downing (1815–52), the seminal figure now regarded by historians as the father of American landscape architecture. Downing had learned practical planting know-how at his family's nursery, but he was more than an expert on botanical species. He was also a tastemaker of the highest order who did more to influence the way Americans designed their properties than anyone else before or since. Raised in Newburgh, Downing was intensely devoted to the Hudson Valley region and was dedicated to his family's nursery business there. In the 1830s, Downing began to make a name for himself as a writer, and contributed multiple articles on horticulture to various periodicals.

Downing's enormously influential work, *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America* was published in 1841. It contained descriptions of the proper use of ornament, the importance of coherent design, use of native trees and plants, and his most important principle—that, when it came to designing a landscape, nature should be elevated and interpreted, not slavishly copied. Downing required that any formal ornaments, including urns, finials, and statues, be placed close to the house, so as to relate to the architecture. Further out on the property, where the gardens were less formal in design, the best ornaments were rustic in character.

As the owners' trusted adviser on landscape design and planting, Downing made frequent visits to Montgomery Place. In 1846, when he became the editor in chief of the widely read, trendsetting magazine *The Horticulturist, and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste*, he chose Montgomery Place as the estate that best illustrated the American rural ideal. Downing intended that ideal to inspire and guide his readers in their own gardens, however modest they may have been.

At Montgomery Place, Downing designed the gardens surrounding the jewel box-like Conservatory directly across from the Mansion House (the Conservatory and garden are no longer extant). Although not documented in the letters that survive of Downing's correspondence with Cora and Thomas Barton, he probably advised on the purchase of garden ornament as well as plants.

Ambroise Tellier, an Italian artist living in New York who produced terra-cotta ornaments for the home and garden, was written up in *The Horticulturist* in 1859. One of the statues still in the Montgomery Place collection bears Tellier's stamp, and his firm likely provided the Bartons with other objects. Additionally, the collection includes cast-iron urns by renowned iron manufacturers J. L. Mott Iron Works of New York City and Wood & Perot of Philadelphia, along with wirework and wrought-iron furniture, plant stands, and trellises by a variety of makers.

Much of the surviving ornament at Montgomery Place dates to the 1850s through 1880s, and corresponds with a particularly fruitful period in American garden ornament history. Dozens of American terra-cotta manufacturers and an even greater number of cast-iron foundries were producing furniture, gates, and statuary in every style imaginable. American manufacturers worked hard to keep up with their European competitors, often copying European patterns and designs. From the 1850s through the 1890s, garden ornament catalogues were brimming with varied, inventive offerings, most of them mass-produced and affordable to the average homeowner. At last, almost anyone could own something beautiful for their garden. The explosion of garden ornament also coincided with a time in American history when the idea of making public green spaces had at last gained widespread support (Central Park, one of the most storied of those spaces, first opened in 1858). Additionally, a nascent middle class meant that more people had gardens and leisure time, kicking off a national interest in gardening and garden ornament that continues to this day.

The owners of Montgomery Place—though far more privileged than the average homeowner—nonetheless reflected the general fervor for garden decorating that defined the period. The estate's extant collection of terra-cotta, cast-iron, and wrought-iron ornaments provides a perfect snapshot of period tastes. Even after cast iron had fallen out of favor at the end of the 19th century (corresponding with the emergence of grand, Gilded Age estates and the predilection for classical, Italianate marble ornaments), Montgomery Place was always in step with the latest fashion as illustrated by a classical marble bench likely acquired around 1890.

The Conservatory and gardens at Montgomery Place received almost as much attention as the house itself, and for good reason, since the outdoor spaces permitted the aesthetics of the home to extend into the landscape. Cora Barton was herself an accomplished recreational gardener, but the bulk of the work was carried out by her staff of gardeners, most notably Alexander Gilson (ca. 1824–89), who served as head gardener from the 1840s until the 1885. Gilson, an African American born to an enslaved mother and raised at Montgomery Place, began propagating and tending exotic plants at the age of 12. In his position as head gardener he attained local recognition, despite working within a prejudiced society in which most people knew him only by his first name. A photo, purportedly of Gilson, from August 1861 shows him in front of the Conservatory, adjacent to a statue (one of the same statues that is on exhibit today, in about the same location).

At its peak, the Montgomery Place grounds must have made quite an impression. Imagine elaborate arbors and wirework trellises filled with flowering vines, 15-foot-wide urns planted with the latest horticultural marvels and classical statues, all thoughtfully placed. This exhibition seeks to recapture some of the spirit of that period in American history when garden ornament was abundantly popular, and its possibilities profuse.

CATALOGUE LIST

1

Group of painted terra-cotta hanging planters with flared rims, ornamented with foliate motifs and pierced for drainage, American, ca. 1870

This type of hanging terra-cotta planter was manufactured by such American makers as Parker & Wood of Boston (established in 1845, operating until at least 1892) and Galloway & Graff of Philadelphia (appearing in a Galloway & Graff catalogue [ca. 1876] but not in the early 20th-century catalogues of the later Galloway Terra-Cotta Company). These examples were probably manufactured by New York City maker Ambroise Tellier, since his mark is stamped on another item at Montgomery Place.

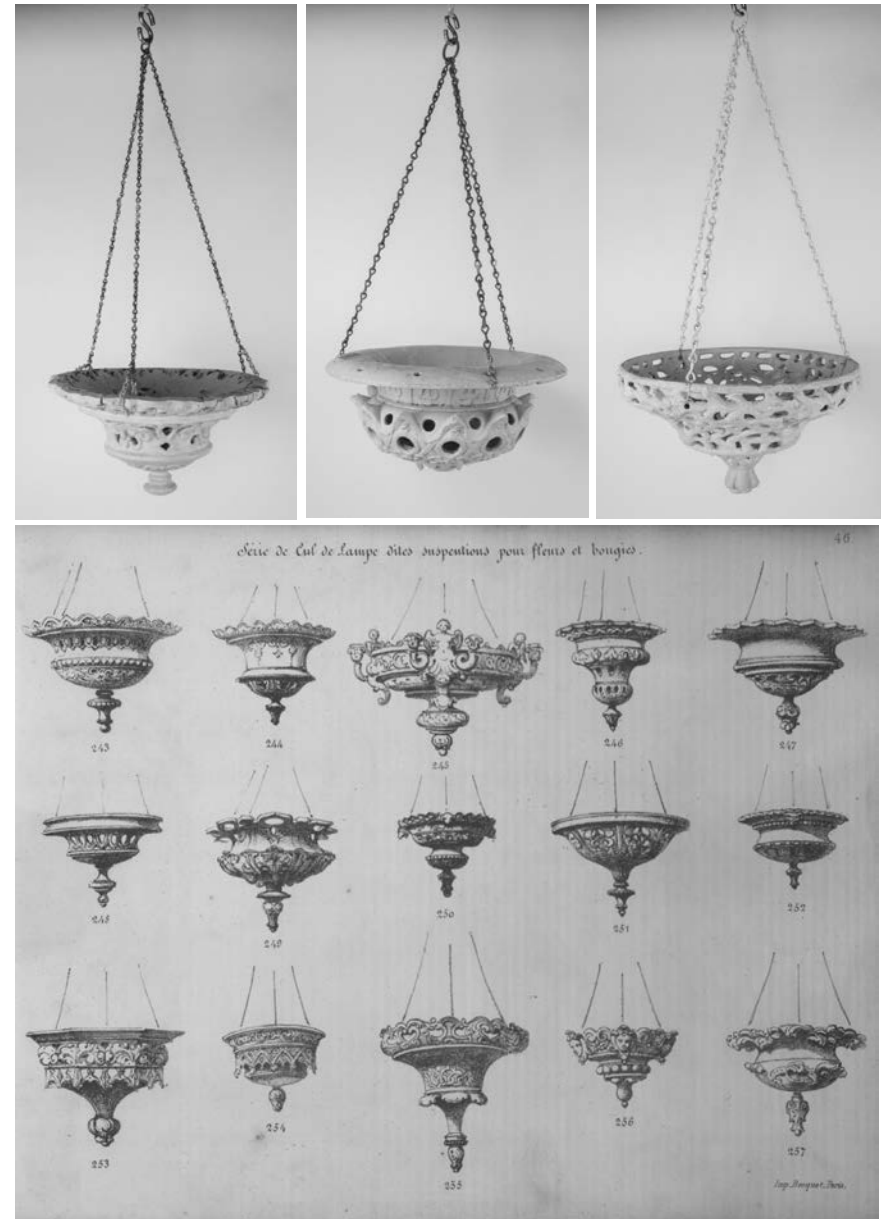
The precedent for this type of hanging vessel is found in the catalogues of French and English makers, notably in the designs of Gossin Frères, one of the French makers most often copied by American terra-cotta manufacturers. The 1856 Gossin Frères catalogue depicts eight designs for this sort of planter, each with pierced form, many with foliate/leafy decoration, and several in the Gothic Revival style. In England, renowned terra-cotta makers like J. M. Blashfield showed “suspending vases,” including one with ivy leaf motif, in Blashfield’s 1857 catalogue.

The popularity of hanging planters speaks to the Victorian-era penchant for botany and horticulture—and the trend toward building conservatories and greenhouses, where these planters were displayed. The pierced bowls provided for proper drainage, and how better to show off varieties of fern and other trailing plant specimens! We know that these hanging planters were used in the interior of the Montgomery Place Conservatory (destroyed in 1880), because they are pictured in a stereoscopic slide image from ca. 1850–63.

A Selection of Vases, Statues, Busts, &c. From Terra-Cottas by J. M. Blashfield, London: Published by John Weale, 59 High Holborn, 1857, p. 208.



Galloway & Graff, *Art and Horticultural Terra-Cotta*, Philadelphia, 1876, unpagéd.



Gossin Frères, statuaires, ornemanistes, fabrique de terre cuite: ... sujets pour la décoration des bâtiments, parcs et jardins, objets religieux pour les églises, 1860, p. 94.

2

Collection of hanging wire baskets with fanciful scrollwork, American, ca. 1850

In the second half of the 19th century, the popularity of gardening and horticultural pursuits prompted more homeowners to build conservatories and greenhouses, creating a market for hanging baskets. The open structure of the wire basket allowed for easy drainage, and the lightweight, yet strong, material made them functional for everyday use.

Beginning in the late 1850s, technological improvements led to the proliferation and popularity of wirework garden ornaments. Wirework furniture, baskets, plant stands, and the like were manufactured by such makers as the New York Wire Railing Company (founded by John B. Wickersham) of New York City, M. D. Jones and Parker & Wood of Boston, and E. T. Barnum of Detroit. Wirework, or “woven iron,” as described in the New York Wire Railing Company’s 1857 catalogue, was celebrated for its lightness and malleability, as well as its durability. Indeed, according to the same catalogue, the strength of wirework was due to the “process of crimping and weaving bars and wire of any size. The plan of crossing wires is so contrived that each binds the other, giving support to every part of the structure.” Wirework ornaments also lent themselves to fanciful, intricate designs, often mimicking the curved and scrolling forms of the Rococo Revival taste popular in the mid-19th century.



3

Pair of cast-iron, campana-form urns, the bodies semi-lobed with foliated handles, the scalloped rims with modified egg-and-dart motif, on ringed, tapered socles and integral square bases, marked “Wood & Perot Philadelphia,” American (Philadelphia), ca. 1860

Even the most standard Victorian-era urns had multiple variations. This pair is a riff on the classical campana (bell-shaped) urn. The scalloped rim, with its modified egg-and-dart motif, invites a comparison to flower petals, an effect emphasized by the handles, which are embellished with a touch of foliage.

The Philadelphia blacksmith and iron founder Robert Wood, who established his business on Ridge Road in 1840, was one of the most productive and influential of all the American makers. For the first decade, Wood produced stoves, pipes, and other utilitarian objects, but by 1850, he was manufacturing decorative items including ornamental railings, veranda components, pier and center tables, settees, chairs, tree boxes, and hat stands. By 1858, Wood had partnered with Elliston Perot, and was operating as Wood & Perot.

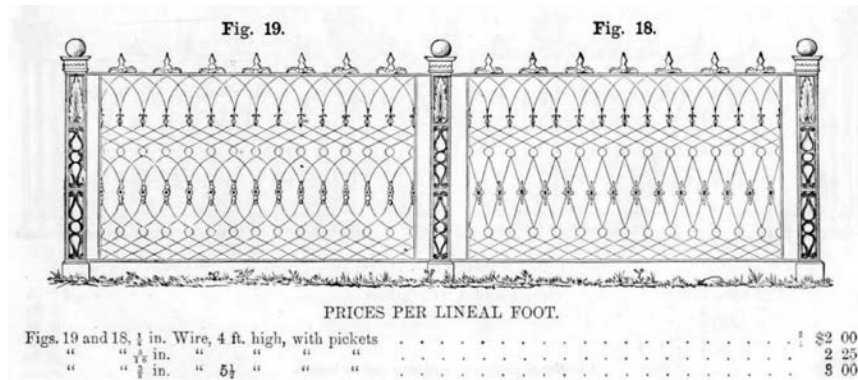


The design of this urn appears in Wood & Perot’s catalogue, *Portfolio of Original Designs of Ornamental Iron Work of Every Description*, ca. 1860. In 1859, an expert on Philadelphia manufacturing, Edwin T. Freedley, noted that “most of the cemeteries and public squares throughout the whole country are adorned by work executed in Philadelphia; and every city, probably every town in the Union, contains some specimen of our manufacturers’ skill and trade.” While there were plenty of important cast-iron makers in New York, Boston, Detroit, and other cities, the heart of the cast-iron industry was in Philadelphia. Wood’s output and reach were unmatched. In 1858, Wood & Perot had installed sales representatives across the country, seeking new avenues of expansion. The fact that early Wood & Perot urns are installed at Montgomery Place is another example of how in step the estate’s owners were with the latest fashion in garden ornament.

Wirework and wrought-iron garden gate, American, ca. 1860

This wirework gate, though unmarked, is similar to gates produced by the New York Wire Railing Company, a short-lived firm founded by John B. Wickersham in 1853. Wickersham came to New York City from Philadelphia, where he had a similar business. He held patents for furniture designs (dated 1847 and 1849) as well as for ornamental railings. For the garden, the company manufactured summerhouses, tree boxes, wire furniture, fencing, and animal statues; the firm also made architectural and domestic items (balconies and hall stands). In 1857, Ira Hutchinson entered into partnership with Wickersham, and in 1866, the company folded.

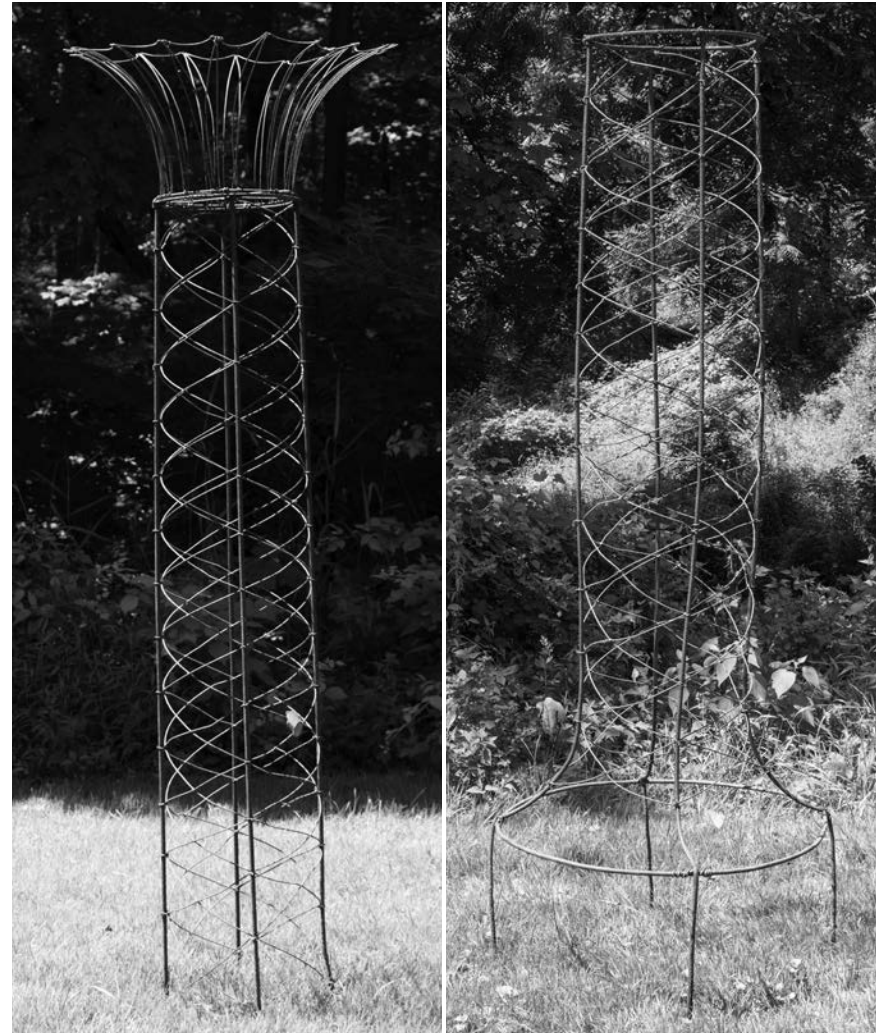
The New York Wire Railing Company, along with E. T. Barnum of Detroit, M. D. Jones of Boston, and other outfits, tapped into the fashion for wirework ornaments in the mid-to-late 19th century. While wirework no doubt appealed for aesthetic reasons (the material was easily adapted to just about any shape and style, in keeping with eclectic Victorian-era tastes), it was also representative of the technological strides that had been made in iron manufacturing. As noted in Wickersham's 1857 catalogue, "recent improvements in machinery for [iron] manufacture have much enlarged its sphere of usefulness. The manufacture of wrought-iron has reached a degree of perfection. . . . Its hardness and intractability have been rendered soft and flexible by the powerful embrace of the steam engine. . . and, by the aid of machinery, articles are made which are not only cheaper, but they are also stronger and more beautiful than anything previously constructed."



New York Wire Railing Company, *A New Phase in the Iron Manufacture*, New York, 1857, p. 11.

Two wirework trellises, one with flared upper portion, the other with flat top and flared bottom, both with spiral wirework on the shaft, American, ca. 1870

These two trellises—so simple in design as to appear almost modernist—reflect the trend for wirework garden ornaments in the latter half of the 19th century. Their lightness made them easy to move around and store. It also made them unobtrusive, and they became “invisible” supports for prized horticultural specimens.



6

Group of terra-cotta flower bed or path edging tiles, each with leafy scroll motif, American, ca. 1860

Similar terra-cotta edging tiles are pictured in the 1876 catalogue of Galloway & Graff of Philadelphia. Possibly made by New York City terra-cotta maker Ambroise Tellier (a terra-cotta statue with Tellier's mark is in Montgomery Place's collection), it's likely that his firm provided several ornaments for the estate.



7

Group of three cast-iron campana, or bell-shaped, urns with foliated loop handles, the bodies semi-lobed, the rims with egg-and-dart motif, on ringed, tapered socles and square integral bases, marked "J. L. Mott New York," American (New York), ca. 1870

This style of urn was one of the most commonly produced by 19th-century foundries. The basic shape recalls the ancient Greek *calyx krater*, a vessel used to dilute wine with water. More specifically, these urns resemble the form of two bell-shaped kraters from antiquity: the Borghese Vase and Medici Vase, dating to the 1st century BCE and the 1st century CE, respectively.

Campana urns, particularly of the simple, not overly ornamented variety, were praised by landscape architect and tastemaker Andrew Jackson Downing (1815–52). Downing was a personal friend of the owners of Montgomery Place, and a trusted adviser on garden matters. In an 1848 issue of *The Horticulturist*, of which Downing was the editor, he cited a statement by J. C. Loudon (1783–1843), a noted, early 19th-century English garden expert. Loudon wrote, "The history of every country may be traced by its vases." Downing, whose influence lasted well into the 20th century, extolled the virtues and uses of ornamental vases, noting, "There are few objects that may, with so much good effect, be introduced into the scenery of pleasure grounds, surrounding a tasteful villa, as the *vase* in its many varied forms."



Multiple variations of the standard campana urn were produced by a large number of American and European foundries, including J. L. Mott of New York City. The J. L. Mott Iron Works, one of the most successful and prolific of all American foundries, was established by Jordan L. Mott (b. 1799) in 1828. The foundry was located in the Mott Haven section of the Bronx, with additional showrooms in Manhattan.

8

Pair of terra-cotta lidded urns, the octagonal body of each urn ornamented with foliate motifs, the handles in the form of dragons, their open mouths grasping the lid of each urn, the lid with foliate terminal, French or American, ca. 1860

The design for this urn appears in an 1856 catalogue by the French maker Gossin Frères, and the Montgomery Place pair could have been imported from France. However, since New York City maker Ambroise Tellier reproduced several designs from Gossin Frères's (and other French makers') catalogues, and because we know that a statue marked "A. Tellier" is in the Montgomery Place collection, it is reasonable to think that he produced these urns.

This type of urn can be used year-round. In warm weather, the lids are removed, and the urns planted. During less temperate months, lids keep ice and snow from collecting in the interiors of the urns.



9

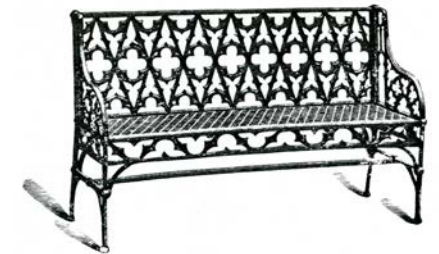
Collection of slatted wooden seating furniture, painted white, custom-made for Montgomery Place by Munder-Skiles in the 1990s, reproductions of pieces used at Montgomery Place in the 1930s

10

Cast-iron Gothic Revival settee, the back and arms pierced with tracery and quatrefoils and with hexagon pierced seat, the legs joined by stretchers, together with a pair of matching armchairs, attributed to the Val d'Osne foundry, French, ca. 1860

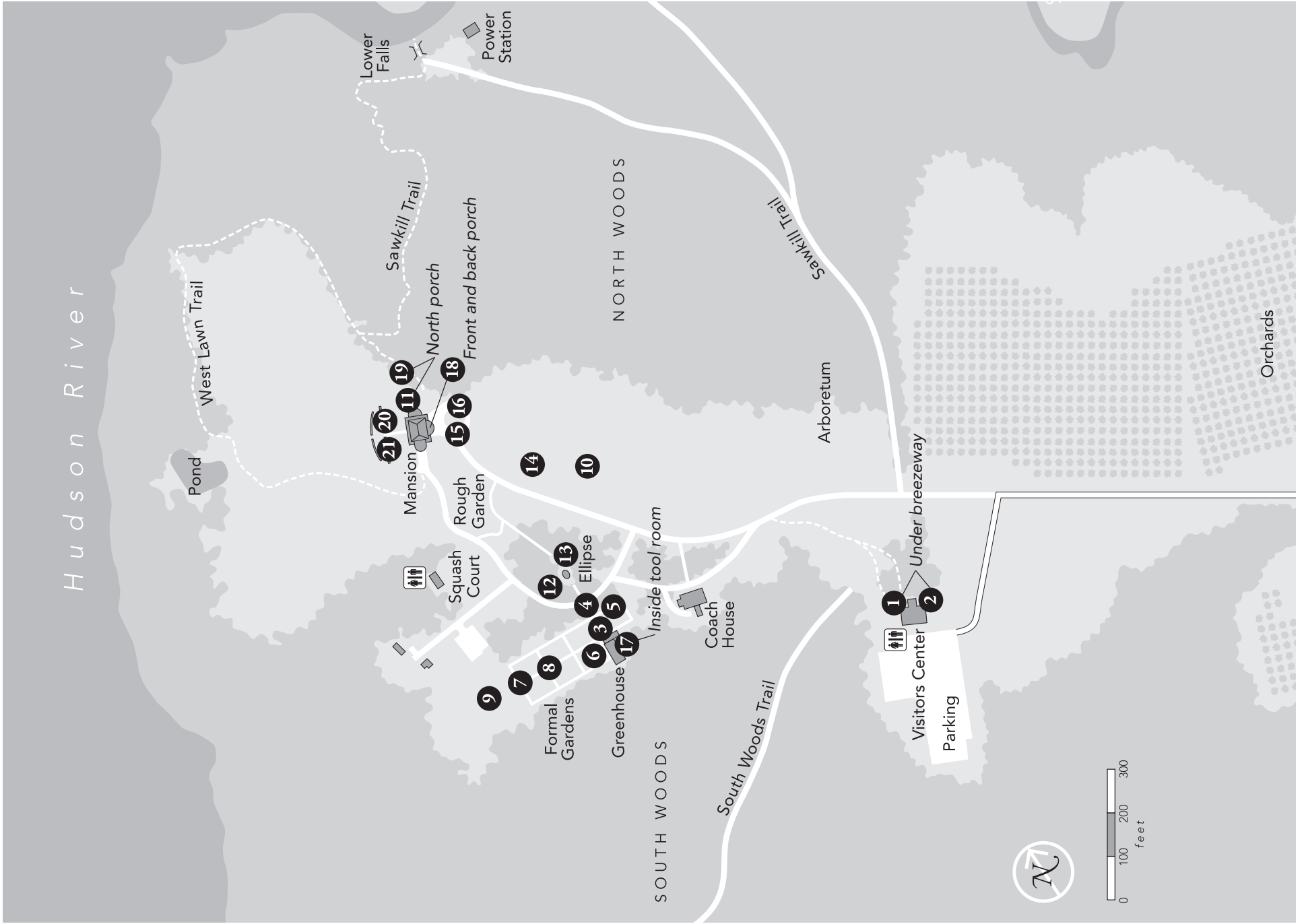
This pattern is thought to have been first cast around 1842 in Rotherham, England, by James Yates, and later copied by the Val d'Osne foundry, which was in business near Paris after 1833. A design for this seat is illustrated in the 1858 Barbezat & Cie Founderies du Val D'Osne catalogue, under *Bancs de Jardin* (garden benches), plate 135. The only American company known to have offered it was Janes, Kirtland & Co. of New York City in its 1870 catalogue.

The Federal-style Mansion House at Montgomery Place was completed in 1805 under the direction of Janet Livingston Montgomery. It was redesigned in the Classical Revival style in 1840, and again in 1860 by renowned New York City architect Alexander Jackson Davis (1803–92). While Montgomery Place was not designed in the Gothic Revival style, it makes sense that a suite of Gothic Revival furniture was used in the garden, since Davis was one of the foremost practitioners of the style (an excellent example is Lyndhurst, Davis's 1838 masterpiece built for Jay Gould, located in Tarrytown, New York).



No. 138.

Janes, Kirtland & Co., *Illustrated Catalogue of Ornamental Iron Work*, New York, 1870, unpagged.



11

Pair of small, cast-iron occasional chairs, listed in 19th-century trade catalogues as “hall chairs,” the backs of balloon form, with three-legged base and triangular stretcher, American, ca. 1860

This style of chair was produced by many American makers, including J. W. Fiske Iron Works, J. L. Mott of New York, and Robert Wood of Philadelphia.



J. W. Fiske, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List of Ornamental Iron Goods, Japanned and Bronzed Hardware, Iron and Wire Railing, Iron Stable Furniture, Copper Weather Vanes, Emblematic Signs*, New York: Bradstreet Press, 1868, p. 27.

12

Suite of wrought-iron wirework seating furniture, consisting of two settees and two armchairs, the back, arms, and aprons with scroll motif, with mesh seats, American or French, ca. 1860, or 1930

The date of this suite is debatable. Companies produced similar wrought iron and wire pieces in the 1850s and 1860s in both France and the United States: a comparable side chair appears in the ca. 1858 catalogue of Parisian maker Barbezat & Cie; several related chairs show up in the ca. 1870 catalogue of French maker Société Anonyme des Hauts-Fourneaux & Fonderies du Val d’Osne (known as Val d’Osne); and in an 1857 catalogue, the New York Wire Railing Company offered wirework chairs that were akin to the French models (though not as elaborate). The curved leg (not quite cabriole, but in the spirit of the Rococo Revival), also point to a ca. 1860 date, plus the fact that the bulk of the ornament at Montgomery Place dates to the mid-19th century. However, a later date cannot be ruled out, as wrought-iron furniture was enormously popular in the 1930s, and both French and American makers were producing high-quality, whimsical pieces at that time. These could also have been custom made by a craftsman, as they have an individuality unmatched by many suites of either the 1860s or 1930s.



13

Terra-cotta figure of a winged Psyche, partially draped with Cupid's bow in her proper right hand, American, ca. 1876

This figure of Psyche appears in the ca. 1876 catalogue of Galloway & Graff, a Philadelphia-based firm specializing in high-quality, terra-cotta ornaments for the home and garden. Although Galloway often borrowed design ideas from European manufacturers, this particular model of Psyche does not appear in the most oft-copied English and French source catalogues. However, it is clear that the Galloway & Graff designers were familiar with European sculpture, as this figure is modeled after the 1847 marble *Psyche Lamenting the Loss of Cupid* by English sculptor William Theed Jr. (1804–91), which was in turn inspired by Danish master Bertel Thorvaldsen's 1806 *Psyche with the Jar of Beauty*. Theed lived and worked in Rome from 1826 to 1844 and is believed to have studied under the tutelage of Thorvaldsen for some of that time. Theed's statue of Psyche, along with the companion figure of Narcissus, was purchased by Queen Victoria in 1847, and is on display at Buckingham Palace in London.



Galloway & Graff, *Art and Horticultural Terra Cotta*, Philadelphia, 1876, unpagged

14

Cast-iron armchair with rose swags, foliate scrolls, and lyre motif marked "ROBERT WOOD," American (Philadelphia), 1850–58

The Philadelphia blacksmith and iron founder Robert Wood established his business on Ridge Road in 1840. He first produced stoves, pipes, and other utilitarian objects, but by 1850, he was manufacturing decorative items including ornamental railings, veranda components, pier and center tables, settees, chairs, tree boxes, and hat stands. By 1858, Wood had partnered with Elliston Perot, and was operating as Wood & Perot. The design of this chair appears in Wood & Perot's 1858 catalogue titled *Portfolio of Original Designs of Iron Railings, Verandahs, Settees, Chairs, Tables, and Other Ornamental Iron Work*. (Wood probably did not produce a catalogue prior to 1858, when he partnered with Perot, since Edwin T. Freedley noted in an 1859 book on Philadelphia manufactures that Wood had just issued his first illustrated catalogue. However, Wood was clearly producing this chair prior to the catalogue's publication, since it is marked "Robert Wood" and not "Wood & Perot," or "Robert Wood & Co.," as were later versions.) Many designs in the 1858 Wood & Perot catalogue are copies of English and French patterns, but a few, including this armchair, seem not to have had European precedents, and have a distinctly American design.



15

Terra-cotta figural group titled *L'Amour et L'Innocence* (“Love and Innocence”), consisting of two curly-haired cherubs, one holding and kissing a bird, each with one arm around the other, the figures with a small dog at their feet, manufactured by Ambroise Tellier, marked “A. Tellier” on base, American (New York), ca. 1860

In the mid-19th century, New York City-based firm Ambroise Tellier produced terra-cotta statuary, urns, fountains, and decorative architectural ornament, in addition to a full line of terra-cotta bricks, tiles, and slabs. The firm was lauded in an 1859 issue of *The Horticulturist*, the widely read gardening and taste-making journal edited by one of the nation’s first landscape architects, Andrew Jackson Downing (1815–52). According to *The Horticulturist*, Ambroise Tellier was an Italian artist who emigrated to the United States, establishing an atelier at 1194 Broadway in New York City. *The Horticulturist* indicated that Tellier’s terra-cotta material was “perfectly adapted to a northern climate, being as durable as brick.”

As was the case with many American garden ornament manufacturers, Tellier borrowed heavily from the pattern books of European makers. This terra-cotta group is pictured in the 1856 catalogue of French maker Gossin Frères.



Gossin Frères, statuaires, ornemanistes, fabrique de terre cuite: ... sujets pour la décoration des bâtiments, parcs et jardins, objets religieux pour les églises, 1860, p. 6.



16

Terra-cotta figural group titled *L'Enfants au Coeur* (“Children of the Heart”), comprising two curly-haired winged cherubs representing Cupid and Psyche, with Cupid trying to prevent Psyche from stomping on the flaming heart that lies at their feet (alongside a rose and Cupid’s quiver full of arrows), the act of stomping symbolic of Psyche’s betrayal of Cupid’s trust, attributed to New York City maker Ambroise Tellier, American, ca. 1860

In the mid-19th century, the New York City-based firm Ambroise Tellier, produced terra-cotta statuary, urns, fountains, and decorative architectural ornament, in addition to a full line of terra-cotta bricks, tiles, and slabs. The firm was lauded in an 1859 issue of *The Horticulturist*, the widely read gardening and taste-making journal edited by one of the nation’s first landscape architects, Andrew Jackson Downing (1815–52). According to *The Horticulturist*, Ambroise Tellier was an Italian artist who emigrated to the United States, establishing an atelier at 1194 Broadway in New York City. *The Horticulturist* indicated that Tellier’s terra-cotta material was “perfectly adapted to a northern climate, being as durable as brick.”

As was the case with many American garden ornament manufacturers, Ambroise Tellier borrowed heavily from the pattern books of European makers. This terra-cotta group is pictured in the 1856 catalog of French maker, Gossin Frères. It also appears as *Cupid Struggling for a Heart* in *A Selection of Vases, Statues, Busts, &c. from Terra-Cotta*, an 1857 trade catalogue by English maker J. M. Blashfield.

This figural group on its original oval pedestal is pictured in an image taken of the Montgomery Place Conservatory in August 1861.



Gossin Frères, statuaires, ornemanistes, fabrique de terre cuite: ... sujets pour la décoration des bâtiments, parcs et jardins, objets religieux pour les églises, 1860, p. 6.

Pair of wooden architectural fragments in the Rococo Revival style, with central Green Man mask ornamented with foliate embellishments, American, ca. 1840

Representation of the Green Man originated in ancient Rome, but the symbol has been found in the art, architecture, music, and literature of cultures around the world. The Green Man signifies Nature's bounty and the cyclical rebirth associated with the growing season, making it well suited to decorate a conservatory or greenhouse.



These panels are believed to have been installed on the doors of the wood and glass Conservatory at Montgomery Place (built in 1840, demolished in 1880). The Gothic Revival-style Conservatory, commissioned by Louise Livingston and Cora Barton and designed by Alexander Jackson Davis, stood on the lawn to the east of the Mansion House and housed hundreds of exotic horticultural specimens.

Group of terra-cotta planters with rams' head handles, the bowl of each planter ornamented with laurel swags and stiff leaf motif, American, ca. 1845

The planters on the porch balustrades were most likely manufactured by an American firm, and perhaps by Ambroise Tellier, the New York City terra-cotta maker that provided some of the statuary on the grounds at Montgomery Place. Installing planters at intervals along a balustrade or wall was a favorite design feature utilized by both Alexander Jackson Davis, the architect who redesigned the Mansion House in the 1840s, and by Andrew Jackson Downing, the landscape architect who advised on plantings. In his seminal publication, *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening . . .* (1841), Downing proposed that in order to decorate a terrace effectively, one should place "neat flower-pots on the parapet, or border and angles of the terrace." Downing particularly loved plants with an austere, architectonic look. Indeed, he found that the most suitable specimen to occupy terrace pots was the "American or Century *Aloe*, a formal architectural-looking plant." The aloe plants in the Montgomery Place planters were introduced by Thomas Barton (one of the owners of the property)—no doubt with Downing's input—and have been continuously propagated since 1846.



ing in them. For
Aloe, a formal a
 well
 same
Yucca
 which
 while
 flowe
 [Fig. 67.]
 fine hardy specie
 in such a situatio
 flower pot is sl

19

Pair of stoneware roundels representing Day and Night, after the 1815 marble originals by Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen (ca. 1770–1844), English, ca. 1850

This pair of roundels, after Bertel Thorvaldsen's oft-reproduced pair, depicts personified representations of Day and Night. Day is shown as a winged woman, flying across the sky with bunches of flowers in her hand. Holding on to her shoulder is a cherub clutching a flaming torch, a symbol of light and sun. Night is also depicted as a winged woman, serenely suspended in the sky. Her head is nodded and in her hair are poppy pods, known for inducing sleep. She is holding two dozing cherubs in her arms, with a flying owl at her feet.

The roundels are installed on the north porch of the Mansion House at Montgomery Place, with Day placed at the eastern end of the mansion façade, and Night at the western end, to indicate the rising and setting of the sun.



20

Pair of terra-cotta urns in the Renaissance revival style, the handles in the form of cherubic grotesque figures with arms crossed over chest, the body of the urns ornamented with floral swags and fleur-de-lis cartouches, attributed to New York City maker Ambroise Tellier, American, ca. 1860

In the mid-19th century, the New York City-based firm Ambroise Tellier produced terra-cotta statuary, urns, fountains, and decorative architectural ornament, in addition to a full line of terra-cotta bricks, tiles, and slabs. The firm was lauded, and the design of this particular urn was shown in an 1859 issue of *The Horticulturist*, the widely read gardening and taste-making journal edited by one of the nation's first landscape architects, Andrew Jackson Downing (1815–52). According to *The Horticulturist*, Tellier was an Italian artist who emigrated to the United States, establishing an atelier at 1194 Broadway in New York City. *The Horticulturist* wrote that Tellier's terra-cotta material was "perfectly adapted to a northern climate, being as durable as brick." Although published after Downing's death, the editors undoubtedly would have followed his tips on proper placement by suggesting that urns as formal as these be displayed close to the house or other architectural structure (whereas more rustic ornaments would require a more naturalistic setting).

As was the case with many American garden ornament manufacturers, Tellier borrowed heavily from the pattern books of European makers. This urn is pictured in the 1856 catalog of French maker Gossin Frères.



Rare cast-iron garden seat, the back constructed of hoops, the seat pierced, the front and back legs of cabriole form, the pattern usually referred to as either “Rococo” or “Gothic,” American, ca. 1870

The design of this settee, known both as “Rococo” and “Gothic,” was patented in Great Britain in 1846 by the Carron Company of Scotland. By the 1850s, several American foundries were making this pattern, including Janes, Beebe & Co.; J. L. Mott Iron Works; and J. W. Fiske Iron Works, all of New York City; and the Stewart Iron Works of Cincinnati. Although mainly Rococo Revival in aesthetic, the arched hoops on the back are more closely related to the Gothic Revival style. Consequently, the settee is described as “Rococo” or “Gothic” in period trade catalogues. While the original Scottish version had a straight back leg, the American version differed in its use of a curved, or cabriole, back leg. See a closely related American example in the White House Rose Garden, Washington, D.C.



Janes, Kirtland & Co., *Illustrated Catalogue of Ornamental Iron Work*, New York, 1870, unpagged.

No. 140. 2 sizes.

JANES, KIRTLAND & CO., NEW YORK.



ADDITIONAL ITEMS ON DISPLAY AT

Alexander Gilson: From Property to Property Owner

Historic Red Hook Annex, Cherry Street, Red Hook, New York

Wirework plant stand with single “basket” to hold a pot or pots on four simple legs, with x-form stretchers and scrolled feet, American, ca. 1860

One of the cherished objects of the materialistic Victorian age was the plant stand, which provided a link between house and garden as well as practical storage space for horticultural specimens (horticulture being a preeminent fascination of the era). In 1841, Humphrey Repton (1752–1818), the influential English garden designer, and Jane Loudon, wife of the landscape expert J. C. Loudon (1783–1843), were each credited with introducing wire flower baskets into English gardens, though they had been advertised as early as 1839, by English maker John Porter.



In the United States, in the second half of the 19th century, plant stands were practically ubiquitous. The most popular were constructed of wirework, manufactured by such makers as the New York Wire Railing Company (founded by John B. Wickersham) of New York City, M. D. Jones and Parker & Wood of Boston, and E. T. Barnum of Detroit. Wirework, or “woven iron,” as described in the New York Wire Railing Company’s 1857 catalogue, was celebrated for its lightness and malleability, combined with durability. According to the same catalogue, the strength of wirework was due to the “process of crimping and weaving bars and wire of any size. The plan of crossing wires is so contrived that each binds the other, giving support to every part of the structure.” Wirework ornaments also lent themselves to fanciful, intricate designs, often mimicking the curved and scrolling forms of the Rococo Revival taste that was popular in the mid-19th century.



No. 33 Flower Bed Stand.
30 in. high, 8 1/4 in. wide, and 30 in. long \$9.00
31 in. high, 9 1/4 in. wide, and 30 in. long 10.00
The box is made of walnut, lined with zinc. The stand is gilded with gold, making a very handsome bay window ornament. The stand can be bronzed, (not gilded) costing \$2 less.

Gilson, Wirework plant stand
Special Catalogue of E. T. Barnum's Wire Goods, Wire and Iron Work, Detroit: No. 29, Special Supplement, 1881.

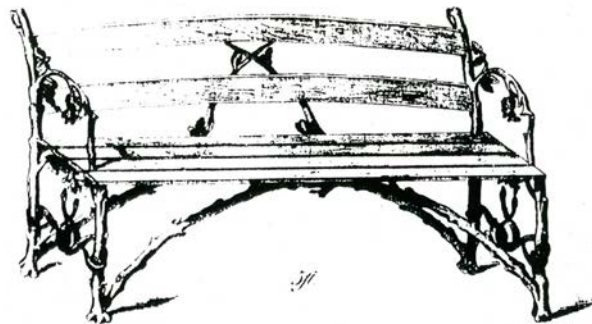
Manufacturers like Wickersham made the most of wirework's popularity by producing settees, tables, chairs, and, of course, a plethora of plant stands to satisfy customer demand.

Pair of cast-iron, campana-form urns, the bodies shallow and semi-lobed, with fluted, ringed, and tapered socles and unusual wavy rims, American or European, ca. 1880



Cast-iron and wooden settee, the cast-iron supports in the twig, or rustic, pattern, the seat and back composed of wooden slats, American, ca. 1860

This bench was manufactured by a variety of American and European makers. It appears in the 1858 catalogue of Wood & Perot, a prominent Philadelphia-based manufacturer.



No. 200.
WOOD & PEROT, Philadelphia.



Bard