

Crafting New Citizens: Art and Handicraft in New York and Boston  
Settlement Houses, 1900-1945

By

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## Abstract

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This dissertation explores the creation and exhibition of immigrant-made art in American settlement houses in New York and Boston from 1900 to 1945. The lace, embroidery, and ceramics Southern and Eastern European immigrant artists created provide an important avenue to illustrate how European traditions survived, changed, or disappeared, and how Jewish and Italian communities in New York and Boston adapted to new circumstances while maintaining distinct identities. This dissertation proposes that art can help reveal what is gained and what is lost when communities uproot and settle far from their homelands: an issue as relevant for turn-of-the-century immigrants as it is for emigrant groups arriving in the United States and countries across the world today. The two object sets that are examined closely – ceramics from Boston’s Paul Revere Pottery and textiles from New York’s Scuola d’Industria Italiana – reveal the working and living patterns of first and second-generation Jewish and Italian women as they interacted with middle and upper class settlement house reformers, collectors, and museum professionals to negotiate their place in American social and political life.

Beginning in the late nineteenth-century, college-educated men and women founded settlement houses in rapidly expanding urban immigrant neighborhoods. They initiated programs designed to help newly arriving Southern and Eastern Europeans adapt to American urban life. By 1900, there were over one hundred settlement houses across the United States peopled by progressive reformers eager to address the perceived moral and social problems of poor tenement neighborhoods. The history of settlement house efforts to alter basic living and working conditions is well documented, as are the lives of many of the most influential reformers such as Jane Addams of Chicago’s Hull-House. However, historians have yet to adequately address the pivotal role of art

production in settlement house reform efforts or to underscore the role immigrant practitioners played in the fashioning of their own identities through artistic practice.

The first section of this dissertation focuses on the work of young Italian and Jewish women who decorated ceramics at the Paul Revere Pottery. The workshop's glazed earthenware dishes, mugs, and tiles decorated with images of American historical events and agrarian scenes are emblematic of a larger impulse to adapt workers to American taste through the language of the colonial revival. The young Jewish and Italian painters of the Pottery specialized in designs depicting scenes of flora and fauna native to New England and suggestive of the city's colonial history. Designers hoped such iconography would teach newly arrived immigrants about their new nation's values. The Pottery fostered women who made careers for themselves as artists and librarians while cementing their role as the rightful heirs to the North End's historic structures and its Revolutionary history.

The second section explores textiles created at the Scuola d'Industrie Italiane in New York's Richmond Hill settlement house and reveals how immigrant-made lace and embroidery represent a negotiated identity for the young Italian women who created them. At the Scuola, founders worked to preserve Italian lacemaking traditions while providing Italian women with alternatives to factory labor. Founders Gino Speranza and Florence Colgate worked to preserve Italian lacemaking traditions by creating a school based on Italian revival lace workshops that the pair visited while travelling in Italy. The nineteenth-century Italian revival of lacemaking and its importation to the United States represents a particular understanding of heritage filtered through the lens of settlement house reformers. The Scuola's heyday also coincides with the tremendous vogue among upper class American collectors for Antique European lace. The Scuola's objects are based on highly coveted antique fragments re-conjured in altered forms to appeal to American tastes. As first and second-generation immigrants, the women of the workshop well understood their roles as skilled craftswomen and representatives of an old-world practice. These needlewomen used their positions to cement roles in the social and economic forums of their city.

This dissertation augments previous examinations by turning not only to early twentieth-century reformers and art patrons, but by exploring the social and economic world of immigrant craftswomen and how their practices intersected in unexpected ways with collectors and connoisseurs in Boston and New York. While the voices of individual practitioners in cooperative workshops are often difficult to unearth, this project proposes new ways to read the work of settlement house artisans as vital clues to document their lives. The study addresses settlement houses as negotiated spaces and the objects produced there

as vital means to support and enhance immigrant communities while furthering the interests of various constituencies. The cases in question reframe the Arts and Crafts movement as a trans-Atlantic venture that linked more than just America and Britain. These settlement house craft workshops connected disparate countries and social spheres in networks of cultural exchange and shared influence.

This dissertation is lovingly dedicated to my foremost champion and most wonderful partner, Logan Puck.

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## Introduction

In 1926, the National Federation of Settlements, an umbrella organization for hundreds of American settlement houses across the country, staged an exhibition to showcase the works of various projects at the Palmer House in Chicago. The exhibition featured drawing, sculpture, and handwork by artists young and old, largely first and second-generation immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe. The displays provided interested visitors the opportunity to inspect over 375 individual works from 45 different workshops. Those visitors who attended the exhibition would likely have been familiar with settlement houses – social welfare organizations in immigrant neighborhoods that provided workshops and educational opportunities for newly arriving Eastern and Southern European populations. Across these institutions, art and handcraft projects constituted some of earliest types of educational and potential revenue generating projects founded. In settlements from New York to Boston to Chicago, reform-minded founders taught young immigrants, largely women, how to make old-world inflected handicraft using clay, fiber, and wood. The settlement house studios also provided venues to sell the handiwork. Following tenants of the British Arts and Crafts movement, immigrant-made art and craft workshops valorized hand labor and its potential to satisfy the maker with the gratification such works might provide to savvy consumers.

Some objects on view at the Palmer House conjured the small-scale craft traditions of the early colonial era, but many also focused on celebrating traditional forms and techniques from immigrants' countries of origin. As the *Boston Transcript* explained of a similar 1922 exhibition, "while a few of the exhibits such as some of the rugs indicate a working out of early American motives, these are by far in the minority. The majority of the decorative devices employed in a multitude of ways in a large and varied display spell the nationality of the more or less extemporaneous craftsmen."<sup>1</sup> Workshops such as the Paul Revere Pottery in Boston deliberately associated young Southern and Eastern European women with the virtues of America's past, but, as the *Transcript* noted, many workshops taught women to reproduce versions of work that teachers associated with the traditions of their homelands.

The 1926 Palmer House exhibition showcased the labors of many small-scale workshops for interested consumers invested in supporting the country's new immigrants and interested in how crafts from foreign makers could enrich American homes. Writer Marguerite B. Williams explained the worthiness of handicraft for both immigrant artists and viewers when she described that "the old crafts have much to contribute to life, both to the individual who produces

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<sup>1</sup> H.H.P., "Made in Settlements," *Boston Transcript*, February 8, 1922, sec. Fine Arts Page.

them and in the general gayety and poetry that they have the power of imparting to our drab surroundings. . . . The settlement, which is closer to the foreign born, is the only place that such an art expression has been able to take root.”<sup>2</sup> Williams articulated the stakes of such projects for both the maker and the buyer and identified the key space of the settlement house as where these native talents might be fostered. A reporter at the *Chicago Post* similarly remarked that “in this old world love of the beautiful, this inherited gift for form and color, begotten centuries ago and nurtured from family to family thru the succeeding years, lies a potential contribution to the enrichment of American life which we do ourselves injustice by neglecting. . . . Here is imported gold. The settlements are seeking to mine it from this alien ore; to win for it the appreciation which it deserves.”<sup>3</sup> As these two authors observed, early twentieth-century Americans saw foreign-born makers arriving in the United States and assumed they possessed certain skills and attributes that the settlement house craft workshop and the teachers within them might refine and market. This dissertation centers on two such projects designed for immigrant artists in two different cities. Boston’s Paul Revere Pottery and New York’s Scuola d’Industrie Italiane operated virtually simultaneously in the early decades of the twentieth century. Careful consideration of each as singular projects and as part of larger movements provides new inroads in the study of the American Arts and Crafts movement and identity formation in the era of mass-immigration.

These two explorations reveal who the workers were who populated both workshops; how their studios functioned; and how both projects represented the intersecting agendas of reformers and immigrants. Ceramics from Boston’s Paul Revere Pottery and textiles from New York’s Scuola d’Industrie Italiane expand knowledge of Jewish and Italian communities and female artisans in urban centers at this moment. As Shannon Jackson has observed, the settlement house at large provides a rich ground to examine the complicated relationships between wealthy benefactors, progressive reforms, and immigrant makers.<sup>4</sup> Jackson’s 2000 book, *Lines of Activity*, provides a view of the settlement house as a performative space wherein immigrants and settlers constantly formulated their own identities in relationship to one another. Importantly, Jackson’s study reorients scholarship from traditional settlement house histories centered on the middle and upper-class reformers to propose a model wherein the mutual impact of communities on one another and on the neighborhood comes to the fore. This study builds on Jackson’s formulation and argues that Paul Revere pottery and the Scuola d’Industrie Italiane’s textiles and ceramics are remnants of the lives of working-class women and examples of how their lives intertwined

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<sup>2</sup> Marguerite B. Williams, “Beauty of Folk Revealed in Exhibit,” *The Daily News*, March 2, 1926.

<sup>3</sup> “The Undeveloped Asset in the Alien,” *The Chicago Post*, March 3, 1926.

<sup>4</sup> Shannon Jackson, *Lines of Activity: Performance, Historiography, Hull-House Domesticity* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

with much wider local and international networks of philanthropy, collecting, and exhibition. Employing the methodology of material culture theory, the project reveals the value of seemingly mundane objects to tell expansive and profound stories about individual practitioners and the international scope of the Arts and Crafts movement.

One final glimpse at the exhibitions in Chicago provides a way to connect the two settlement house projects at the heart of this study to the larger trends in the early twentieth century around craft as social work. A visitor coming to the Chicago displays would have encountered not only the fruits of the settlement house workshops proudly on display, but she would have also seen the living tableaux of young makers at work (Fig. 1).<sup>5</sup> The two young women pictured in these newspaper photographs, Flora Clamor and Sophie Harle, both sit in front of somewhat anachronistic machines – a spinning wheel and loom. In each image, the hand-powered mechanism of production appears to overtake the composition. Both young girls appear to one side of the tool they operate and both look out towards the camera. Aware that they are being documented, each girl seems to have paused her work but kept her hands on the machinery before her. Wearing aprons and headscarves, both girls are clothed in the garments of Southern or Eastern European peasants. The two are welded visually to the non-industrial tools of their handicraft and while neither picture showcases their final products, the photographs suggest that the process of creation was equally as important as the objects produced. *The Chicago American* identifies the sitters by name (an unusual addition for the time), but provides no additional details as to the workers' age or place of residence. Rendered visible and identifiable, the figures are nonetheless largely stand-ins to display a type of old-world production. In the context of the exhibition, they also serve as emblems for the type of diligent and skilled immigrant artisan reformers promoted.

The photography from the Chicago exhibition bears much resemblance to staged pictures of female artisans at both of the settlement house projects that are the focus of this study (Figs. 2-3). In one photograph, a young ceramic decorator, Sara Galner, poses with a brush in hand while her other hand stabilizes a large and beautifully decorated vessel (Fig. 2). Seated at an open window in the Paul Revere Pottery's studio, Galner's youthful features are bathed in light as are her tools and the pot she holds. Sara Galner's gaze directs viewers to observe the work she performs with her brush. The picture also highlights the pleasant, light-

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<sup>5</sup> Throughout the 1930s, reformers such as Allen Eaton staged similar types of exhibitions that toured the country to celebrate diverse ethnic groups in America's cities. Alongside craftwork, Eaton also encouraged local constituencies to dress in the costumes of their homelands to interpret their work to visitors. These exhibitions also featured pageants and performances. Allen H. Eaton, *Immigrant Gifts to American Life; Some Experiments in Appreciation of the Contributions of Our Foreign-Born Citizens to American Culture* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1932).

filled surroundings in which she works with potted plants resting on the ample windowsill above a radiator that would have kept her warm in winter. Behind her, a decorated bowl and a vase suggest the artisan's productivity. With Galner in a white smock and a sailor's collar, both figure and scene exude a sense of order and cleanliness – even given the potentially messy location of a ceramics studio. Much like the two girls at work in the midst of the exhibition, Galner seems content with the work she performs and intimately aligned with the products she produces.

A photograph from New York's Scuola d'Industrie Italiane visualizes a similar scene. Here two women ply their needles on opposite sides of a large table in a comfortable well-lit space (Fig. 3). Like Galner, each looks down at the very intricate work she holds in her hands, while around the workers, the photographer captures an array of their and their co-workers' handiwork in the form of pillows, bags, and tablecloths. Like the young girls at the Chicago displays, these women dress themselves in clothing that conjures the old world, or that perhaps represent examples of the Scuola's products. Like Galner, the context in which the young women appear is nearly as important as the work they produce. At a moment when progressive reformers decried the abominable conditions for unskilled-laborers in urban factories, these pictures suggest a vastly different and wholesome alternative to sweatshop work or industrial drudgery that the settlement house craft workshop offered.

While several of the sitters in these photographs are identified, the particulars of their lives outside of the workshop have until now remained largely unknown.<sup>6</sup> This dissertation takes as its premise the fundamental principle that the objects made in settlement house workshops and the lives of their makers matter, however modest each may ostensibly appear. These works and their makers add to existing narratives about women's history in the early twentieth century and help illuminate a little studied international facet of the Arts and Crafts movement. The close study of two workshops and the environments in New York and Boston from which they emerged reveals a group of concerned and motivated reformers as well as a generation of skilled first and second generation women who shaped the spaces in which they worked and who took advantage

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<sup>6</sup> A notable exception to this gap in scholarship is Kate Larson and Nonie Gadsden's work on members of the Paul Revere Pottery. Nonie Gadsden, *Art & Reform: Sara Galner, the Saturday Evening Girls, and the Paul Revere Pottery* (Boston: MFA Publications, 2007). Kate Clifford Larson, "The Saturday Evening Girls: A Progressive Era Library Club and the Intellectual Life of Working Class and Immigrant Girls in Turn-of-the-Century Boston," *The Library Quarterly* 71, no. 2 (April 1, 2001): 195–230. Kate Clifford Larson, "'These Girls Were Quite Ordinary. In Their Ordinarity, They Proved Extraordinary.' The Saturday Evening Girls," November 14, 2001. Work on the artists of the Newcomb Pottery has also recently added valuable insights into the individual makers at the famed New Orleans studio. Sally Main ed., *The Arts & Crafts of Newcomb Pottery* (New York: Skira Rizzoli, 2013).

of the opportunities they received to make money; forge relationships; and in some cases, begin professional careers. Settlement house workshops such as the Paul Revere Pottery in Boston's North End and the Scuola d'Industrie Italiane in Greenwich Village constitute little-studied but vital centers of learning and identity formation across cultures. Immigrant makers, settlement house reformers, museum professionals, and American consumers came together in ways that have yet to be comprehensively explored and the fruits of their struggles and collaborations exist in the objects female immigrant makers produced.

### **Settlement House Art Workshops**

Founded in the late nineteenth century, American settlement houses cropped up in cities across the United States with mandates specifically aimed at helping the neediest populations and providing them with an alternative to factory labor in the vein of Arts and Crafts ideal of finding joy in making. Responding to the economic and social needs of immigrant communities in tenement neighborhoods, settlement houses offered immigrants a variety of ways to help them integrate into social and economic life in the United States. By 1900, there were over one hundred settlement houses across the United States run by progressives, largely women, eager to address the perceived moral and social ills that plagued poor neighborhoods. The settlement house performed a variety of functions, from teaching English to providing vocational training, to educating new arrivals about government agencies.<sup>7</sup> Stanley M. Isaacs, a board member of the United Neighborhood Houses, defined the centers as places designed, "to help people in the crowded neighborhoods of our great cities to organize so as to express their own ideas, so as to secure for themselves those opportunities which they want, opportunities for broader education, for cultural training, for recreation, for dramatics, for art, and for music."<sup>8</sup>

Art and craft workshops in these centers flourished from the very moment that the first houses were founded in the United States in 1886.<sup>9</sup> These workshops predicated their work on values transmuted from British Arts and Crafts

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<sup>7</sup> Allen Freeman Davis, *Spearheads for Reform: the Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967). Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955). Mina Carson, *Settlement Folk: Social Thought and the American Settlement Movement, 1885-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

<sup>8</sup> "Proceedings of the Thirty-Fifth Annual Dinner for the Educational Alliance" (Master Reporting Company, New York, April 20, 1950), 10, Abbo Ostrowsky Papers, 681, Box 2, Folder 29, YIVO Institute for Jewish History.

<sup>9</sup> For more on the settlement house movement in the United States, see Carson, *Settlement Folk*. Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform*. Michael E. McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Free Press, 2003). Reinders, "Toynbee Hall and the American Settlement Movement." Davis, *Spearheads for Reform*.

reformers such as William Morris and John Ruskin: British thinkers who spurred a generation of European and subsequently American reformers to question the nature of production and the quality of design produced in Britain and the United States.<sup>10</sup> As reformer Albert Kennedy noted, “The arts and crafts movement which was beginning to be a factor in American life in the eightennineties found a hearty response from the settlements.”<sup>11</sup> Settlement houses such as Hull-House, Greenwich House, University Settlement, and Denison House advanced the position that producing well-made objects might enhance the lives of immigrants arriving in the United States economically and spiritually. Programs in art and craft instruction constituted fundamental components of the first settlement, Toynbee Hall, founded in London in 1884.<sup>12</sup> Mary Simkhovitch of Greenwich House and Jane Addams and Helen Gates Starr of Hull-House, the earliest proponents of the movement in the United States, wrote and spoke continuously about the need for artistic outlets for immigrant populations.<sup>13</sup>

Even in their earliest incarnations, University Settlement, Hull-House, and similar institutions brought artworks of the Western canon into immigrant neighborhoods to expose poor and working-class populations to what they deemed the best models of design and highest achievements in artistic production. As early as 1892, the University Settlement on New York’s Lower East Side founded the East Side Art League, a space dedicated to hosting exhibitions in tenement neighborhoods drawn from objects lent by museums, schools, and private collectors with an inaugural show that drew over 30,000

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<sup>10</sup> In 1884, Samuel Barnett opened Toynbee Hall in London as the first settlement house and nearly from the start offered art education and gallery space. Barnett’s attention to the legacy of guild-based handwork that William Morris, John Ruskin, and C.R. Ashbee had promoted permeated settlement houses in Britain and the United States. C. R. Ashbee and Essex House Press, *An Endeavor Towards the Teaching of John Ruskin and William Morris. Being a Brief Account of the Work, the Aims, and the Principles of the Guild of Handicraft in East London* (London: Edward Arnold, 1901). William Morris, *News from Nowhere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1890). John Ruskin, *Works of John Ruskin* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1886). Peter Stansky, *Redesigning the World: William Morris, the 1880s, and the Arts and Crafts* (Palo Alto: Society for the Promotion of Science and Scholarship, 1996). Robert C. Reinders, “Toynbee Hall and the American Settlement Movement,” *Social Service Review* 56, no. 1 (March 1, 1982): 39–54. Beverly Kay Brandt, *“Mutually Helpful Relations”: Architects, Craftsmen and The Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston, 1897-1917* (Boston University, 1985), 2.

<sup>11</sup> Albert J. Kennedy, “Excerpts from Chapter XX— Unpublished Manuscript by Albert J. Kennedy on Settlement in New York City Visual Arts Chapter,” 1932, 5 in Albert J. Kennedy Papers, Box 24, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

<sup>12</sup> Reinders, “Toynbee Hall and the American Settlement Movement.” Emily K. Abel, “Toynbee Hall, 1884-1914,” *The Social Service Review* 53, no. 4 (December 1, 1979): 606–632.

<sup>13</sup> Mary Ann Stankiewicz, “Art at Hull House, 1889-1901: Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr,” *Woman’s Art Journal* 10, no. 1 (April 1, 1989): 35–39. Jane Addams, “Labor Museum at Hull House,” *Commons* 47 (June 30, 1900): 1–4. Mary K. Simkhovitch, *Neighborhood: My Story of Greenwich House* (New York: Norton, 1938).

visitors.<sup>14</sup> In 1896, the Educational Alliance debuted a free exhibition of paintings to the residents of the Lower East Side. As the president of the Alliance explained, “we believe that these exhibitions are great incentives to the education and development of taste, that they lead to reading, to study and to the appreciation of the beautiful, thus throwing a ray of much needed sunshine on darkened lives.”<sup>15</sup> From their inception, reformers understood artistic appreciation as integral to larger efforts to Americanize newly arriving Southern and Eastern European communities.

American settlement houses also stridently promoted the creation of art and craft as a way to learn and expand the horizons of new immigrants and as a potential means to maintain traditional craft practices and earn additional income. Hull-House opened its doors in 1889 on Chicago’s West Side with both a gallery and an art studio, suggesting the importance that founders Addams and Ellen Gates Starr placed on artistic education for newly arriving populations. Hull-House also offered immigrants courses in an array of handicrafts and staged exhibitions that celebrated immigrant makers and traditional craft practice at its Labor Museum.<sup>16</sup> New York institutions, such as the University settlement, offered free hand and mechanical drawing instruction as early as 1891.<sup>17</sup> By the early decades of the twentieth century, studios and workshops had proliferated across the United States with an array of small-scale industries and courses in ceramics, lace making, embroidery, woodworking, drawing, painting, sculpture, art and craft education courses for adults and children.<sup>18</sup>

Albert J. Kennedy, a prominent settlement house leader, proposed that art practice reached the immigrant on a level beyond that of mere survival. Ideally, the settlement might serve both the most basic needs and the higher aims of its constituents. Art and craft programs in these contexts were vital, “to give color to drab lives, to enrich impoverished personalities, to open the doors of self-expression to thwarted and repressed people of all classes are the particular

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<sup>14</sup> Kennedy, “Excerpts from Chapter XX,” 2–3.

<sup>15</sup> *Educational Alliance Fourth Annual Report* (New York: The Educational Alliance, 1896), 16.

<sup>16</sup> Scholars such as Jackson, Kristin L. Hoganson, and Rivkah Shpak-Lisak have assessed how the organizers of Hull-House’s Labor Museum juggled the desires and agendas of its founders and the needs of the immigrants who populated the neighborhood. Rivkah Shpak-Lisak, *Pluralism & Progressives: Hull House and the New Immigrants, 1890-1919* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989). Kristin L. Hoganson, *Consumers’ Imperium: The Global Production of American Domesticity, 1865-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007). Jackson, *Lines of Activity*.

<sup>17</sup> Kennedy, “Excerpts from Chapter XX,” 4.

<sup>18</sup> Caitlin Anne Patterson addresses theater and fine art workshops at Henry Street and the impact of the WPA on settlement house art programs in Caitlin Anne Patterson, *Redecorating the Nation: Creating Democratic Arts from the Settlement House to the New Deal* (University of Minnesota, 1997).

values which settlement cherish.”<sup>19</sup> By the 1910s, when Kennedy and his colleague Robert Archey Woods began their nation-wide surveys of the movement’s art projects, they could note hundreds of drawing, painting, woodworking, needlework, and ceramics classes and small commercial studios flourishing across the country.<sup>20</sup> Art and craft workshops provided one means by which these agencies sought to help immigrants earn a living, to foster traditions from students’ countries of origin, and to teach principles of American taste and ideas about citizenship.

Many early advocates in the movement understood that settlement houses could serve as incubators for cross-generational conversations wherein traditions in art and craft from Southern and Eastern Europe might thrive rather than disappear as cultural groups assimilated. Describing the importance of the Educational Alliance Art School, teacher and artist Abbo Ostrowsky, declared that he taught classes “to preserve so they might be assets to American civilization those cultural elements brought out of their past by immigrants to this country and likely to be lost in the severe struggle for existence in the new world.”<sup>21</sup> Organizers employed the workshop model to revive and continue what they determined to be traditional practices threatened with extinction as American-born children entered the workforce without learning the skills and traditions of theirs or parents’ homelands. Indeed, many settlement house projects, such as the Hull-House Labor Museum, explicitly situated immigrant work as a way to teach new generations about traditions that might be fast disappearing. “Among the most important aspects of the work done by the educational-recreation and community organizing agencies,” explained Kennedy, “is to interpret parents to children and young people and the new hopes and ideals of young people and

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<sup>19</sup> Albert J. Kennedy, *Visual Arts in New York Settlements* (New York: Welfare Council of New York City, 1931).

<sup>20</sup> As head worker at the South End House, secretary of the National Federation of Settlements, chairman of the Visual Arts Committee at the United Neighborhood Houses, and the author of several national studies assessing social welfare programs across the country, Kennedy was uniquely qualified to speak about the importance of Progressive efforts to tend to the creative and artistic needs of newly arriving immigrants in the United States. Robert Archey Woods was the founder of the South End House in Boston who spent time at Toynbee Hall. He was instrumental in early publications that surveyed immigrant neighborhoods and also helped to found the National Federation of Settlements and served as the organization’s first Executive Secretary and later its president. J. Hansan, “Woods, Robert Archey,” *Social Welfare History Project*, October 4, 2011, <http://www.socialwelfarehistory.com/people/woods-robert-archey/>. Robert Archey Woods and Albert Joseph Kennedy, *The Settlement Horizon: A National Estimate* (Russell Sage foundation, 1922). Robert Archey Woods, *Handbook of Settlements* (New York: Charities Publication Committee, 1911).

<sup>21</sup> Pach Bros, “Founder of East Side Art School To Be Feted on Its 35th Birthday: Immigrant Ostrowsky Realized Hungering of People for a Creative Outlet,” *New York Times*, April 8, 1950.

children to their parents.”<sup>22</sup> Reformers hoped that settlement house art workshops and exhibition spaces provided the means by which younger generations might learn and proliferate trades with roots in their families’ home countries.

The importance of artistic and craft education for immigrant communities was not universally acknowledged in the settlement house movement or outside progressives circles. Native-born and immigrant communities alike expressed concern that such courses and workshops would not address the most pressing issues facing new arrivals to the United States. As a writer for *The Jewish Day* recalled of art classes at the Educational Alliance, “there were...those who thought the school was unnecessary altogether. They asked ‘Who needs art on the east side? Who is interested in devoting himself to Jewish boys and girls who can draw and model?’ Others said, ‘Let them be taught a trade instead. . .’<sup>23</sup> Many older immigrants worried that young men and women ought not to spend time learning skills that might not immediately prove financially viable. Journalist Louis Rich observed that, “patriarchs shook their heads as they listened to the young dreamer, thinking how incongruous the appeal of art sounded amidst the din and the clatter of the struggle for existence.”<sup>24</sup> To settlement house reformers, however, nothing could be more elemental to the survival and the flourishing of a community and its values than the pursuit of the creative and the beautiful in art and craft. Ostrowsky summarized this sentiment by declaring “I do not share the opinion of some of my colleagues who think that art is something divorced from life. I feel that nothing is closer to social life than the community center of which aesthetic activities should be an integral part of its program.”<sup>25</sup> For Ostrowsky – a Russian immigrant artist himself – education in the arts was intimately bound with the basic survival of newly-arriving populations to maintain a sense of pride in their heritage and to develop a sense of ownership over the physical spaces of their new communities. Many workshops also proposed a model wherein the production of craft might be both fulfilling and remunerative for immigrant craftspeople, particularly girls and women. Kennedy deeply ascribed to such ideas and resigned from his post as Executive Secretary of the National Federation of Settlements over disagreements about funding arts education in settlement houses. As he explained, many of his colleagues accused the Federation under his leadership of “overemphasizing the

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<sup>22</sup> Albert J. Kennedy, “After Subsistence – What?” (Joint Education Program, July 1932), 11–12, Albert J. Kennedy Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

<sup>23</sup> “The Art Holiday at the Educational Alliance,” *Jewish Day*, April 9, 1950, Abbo Ostrowsky Papers, 681, Box 4, Folder 45, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.

<sup>24</sup> Louis Rich, “Labor as an Art Patron: Workers’ Organizations Plan to Endow a European Scholarship for Young East Side Genius,” *New York Times*, June 14, 1925, magazine section.

<sup>25</sup> Abbo Ostrowsky, “To Mr. Graenum Berger,” March 11, 1937, Educational Alliance Papers, 681, Box 2, Folder 16, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.

educational and artistic aspects of settlement work to the neglect of more fundamental and more broadly public issues.”<sup>26</sup> Firm in his belief that such projects benefitted poor communities in profound ways, Kennedy stepped down rather than alter the Federation’s policies himself.

Settlement house craft schools and art courses advanced specific if somewhat contradictory goals. On the one hand, workshops and studios attempted to aid immigrant makers as they assimilated into larger American communities by supplying them with marketable skills and teaching art and design principles that would appeal to mainstream American audiences. On the other, teachers and settlement house administrators viewed their role as helping communities hold on to old world traditions that might evoke pride in small-scale workshop practices and by-gone production techniques. Immigrant makers well understood the dual purposes of the settlement house art workshop to provide lessons in Americanization and to preserve traditions from the old world that might thrive and disseminate into local and broader markets. As immigrant artist Otto Kahn explained,

Having taken the oath of naturalization, it becomes the foremost obligation of all such [immigrants] to be good and thorough Americans, to imbibe the traditions and ideals of their adopted country, to rival their native-born fellow citizens in affection and loyalty for it. . . . In merging themselves in the great mass of their fellow-citizens, it is not their obligation to de-individualize themselves. It is not their obligation to bury, or to let lie fallow, those qualifications and gifts, the products of generations and centuries of ancestry and environment, which came to them as a birthright. . . . On the contrary, they are called upon to cherish and nurture them and preserve them inviolate as a contribution to the common belonging and for the common welfare of their adopted country.<sup>27</sup>

Across settlement house workshops between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, immigrant community members encountered various models of their potential assimilation into American culture that centered on artistic production as a key site where questions about European culture and American adaptation came to the fore.

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<sup>26</sup> Albert J. Kennedy to Charles C. Cooper, March 30, 1928, National Federation of Settlements Papers, Box 36, Folder 3, Social Welfare History Archives, Elmer Anderson Library, University of Minnesota.

<sup>27</sup> Otto H. Kahn in “The Educational Alliance Tenth Annual Exhibition of the Art School” (Anderson Galleries, 1924), 3, Abbo Ostrowsky Papers, 681, Box 4, Folder 41, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.

## Turn-of-the-Century Settlements in New York and Boston

This dissertation focuses on two instances where artistic production reflected and shaped the politics of early twentieth century immigrant life in two major American urban centers: New York and Boston. These two cities had immense turn-of-the-century Jewish and Southern Italian immigrant populations whose rich histories of settler-founded craft workshops have yet to be fully explored. The history of American settlement houses is well-documented, both by the reformers themselves, whose ideas and practices forms the basis of modern American social work, and by subsequent scholars of the progressive movement in social and cultural history.<sup>28</sup> For historians such as Robert Wiebe, Allen Davis, Richard Hofstadter, Paul Boyer, and John Higham, the history of the settlement house unfolded primarily from the point of view of the reformers who founded these early institutions.<sup>29</sup> Scholarship on the settlement house movement has tended to focus on the most well-known and well-documented of these experiments, Jane Addams' Hull-House in Chicago. Addams articulated clear-minded assessments of her own institution and those emerging in its shadow. Her writings and the work at Hull-House naturally have attracted scholars eager to expand the story of Addams, Starr, and the various projects, both art-oriented and otherwise, that emerged from their Chicago institution.<sup>30</sup>

Relatively unstudied are the hundreds of other settlement houses throughout the country whose relationships to the neighborhoods in which they were founded provide a rich way to unearth the histories of first and second generations immigrants there.<sup>31</sup> New York was the largest city in the United States in 1900 and Boston the fifth.<sup>32</sup> As major population centers, both cities underwent significant demographic changes thanks to the major influx of immigrants from

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<sup>28</sup> Addams, "Labor Museum at Hull House." Woods and Kennedy, *The Settlement Horizon*. Albert Joseph Kennedy and Kathryn Farra, *Social Settlements in New York City: Their Activities, Policies, and Administration* (New York: Welfare Council of New York City, 1935). Eaton, *Immigrant Gifts to American Life; Some Experiments in Appreciation of the Contributions of Our Foreign-Born Citizens to American Culture*.

<sup>29</sup> Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform*. Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Macmillan, 1967). Paul S. Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1978). John Higham, *Send These to Me: Immigrants in Urban America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).

<sup>30</sup> Several studies have examined various aspects of art production and display at Hull-House and include Shannon Jackson, *Lines of Activity*. Cheryl Ganz and Margaret Strobel, *Pots of Promise: Mexicans and Pottery at Hull-House, 1920-40* (University of Illinois Press, 2004). Shpak-Lisak, *Pluralism & Progressives*. Stankiewicz, "Art at Hull House, 1889-1901."

<sup>31</sup> Sarah Deutsch's work touches on the progressive settlement house efforts in Boston. Sarah Deutsch, *Women and the City: Gender, Space, and Power in Boston, 1870-1940* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2002).

<sup>32</sup> U.S. Census Bureau.

Southern and Eastern Europe in the early decades of the twentieth century. Between 1907 and 1914, an estimated 650,000 immigrants a year entered the United States. In 1910, immigrants made up 14 percent of the entire population of the United States and constituted 38 percent of the workforce.<sup>33</sup> Immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe entered the United States in record numbers between 1880 and 1921 to establish new lives and settled in cities all over the United States. As they fled oppression and famine in Europe, many resettled in American port cities, such as New York and Boston, and dramatically transformed the character of these eastern seaboard metropolises. Battles over what it meant to be American, Italian, or Jewish raged in every major city in the United States in the early twentieth century, but nowhere more so than New York and Boston where immigrants settled in areas that had formerly housed Anglo-Saxon communities and that contained historically significant structures. These two cities experienced massive changes during the first decades of the twentieth century that have been documented by urban historians, particularly in the case of New York.<sup>34</sup> This study adds to the array of projects that document urban change at this pivotal moment.

In the late nineteenth century, Boston and New York also led the country in their public and private support of and dedication to civic art institutions. The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston were both founded in 1870 thanks to philanthropic patrons that no other American city of the time could boast. The overlapping worlds of fine art institutions and elite collecting intersect with settlement house art workshops and revival industries in ways only possible in New York and Boston during this time period.

While not expressly comparative, the pairing of two projects, one in ceramics and the other in textiles, one in Boston and the other in New York, affords a means to assess the environments in which these two workshops emerged and the very different types of histories on which each relied to promote the works of immigrant makers. In the case of the Paul Revere Pottery in Boston, the art and architecture of colonial New England provided a key means by which ceramicists at the Pottery entered the life of a city deeply invested in its revolutionary past. At the Paul Revere Pottery, founders Edith Brown and Edith Guerrier linked young makers to the colonial history of their North End

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<sup>33</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 159. Ran Abramitzky, Leah Platt Boustan, and Katherine Eriksson, "A Nation of Immigrants: Assimilation and Economic Outcomes in the Age of Mass Migration," *Journal of Political Economy* 122, no. 3 (June 2014): 467–506, 467.

<sup>34</sup> Gunther Paul Barth, *City People: The Rise of Modern City Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980). Robert A. Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). Kathy Lee Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986). Elizabeth Ewen, *Immigrant Women in the Land of Dollars: Life and Culture on the Lower East Side, 1890-1925* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1985).

neighborhood to draw explicit comparisons between old and new world ways of life. In the case of the Scuola in New York, connoisseurs of lace and embroidery bolstered connections to institutional and private collections of antique European textiles that paid homage to the legacy of a pre-modern Italian peninsula. The young Southern Italian makers at the Scuola provided a key link to the practices and the products elite consumers associated with the Italian Renaissance. New York and Boston both had exploding immigrant populations and expansive local networks of historically philanthropic elite connoisseurs, making them the two most important loci at this moment in American history to explore settlement house art projects and immigrant identity formation.

### **Reconsidering the Arts and Crafts Movement in America**

The settlement house studio projects have until now served as a coda in the study of the American Arts and Crafts movement, an instance in which the principles of Ruskin's and Morris' adoration for antique precedents coincided with the guild model of artistic production. With the exception of Art Pottery, the works produced in these studios receive scant mention in the histories of the period. The American Arts and Crafts movement is itself a relatively new field of study for art historians. Robert Judson Clark's 1972 exhibition and catalogue, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in America States*, introduced audiences to the trans-Atlantic influence of Ruskin, Morris, and Ashbee and the array of work in the realm of decorative arts produced in the United States infused with their ideas about the importance of joy in labor and sanctity of hand production. Subsequent exhibitions and attendant publications, such as Wendy Kaplan's 1985 *The Art That Is Life*, expanded Clark's premise and introduced settlement house workshops into the lexicon of Arts and Crafts-inspired projects.<sup>35</sup> Since 1985, exhibitions and scholarly work have examined the fluorescence of the Arts and Crafts movement in particular regions of the United States, from California to Chicago to Boston, with each effort further expanding the definition of the movement's reach in the United States.<sup>36</sup> This study not only adds to the growing literature on the multi-faceted movement and its manifestations in particular regions of the United States, but also addresses the often overlooked international dimension of the Arts and Crafts movement as an artistic exchange

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<sup>35</sup> Wendy Kaplan ed., *"The Art That Is Life": The Arts and Crafts Movement in America, 1875-1920* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1987).

<sup>36</sup> Kenneth R. Trapp, Leslie Greene Bowman, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in California: Living the Good Life*, (Oakland: Oakland Museum, 1993). Marilee Boyd Meyer, ed., *Inspiring Reform: Boston's Arts and Crafts Movement*, (Wellesley: Wellesley College Museum, 1997). Judith Barter, *Apostles of Beauty Arts and Crafts from Britain to Chicago* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). Thomas Andrew Denenberg, "Craft Community: Learning through Doing in 'Old' New England," *Colby Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (March 2003): 55-66.

extending beyond Britain.<sup>37</sup> Observing the extensive work of American and Italian reformers in Florence, Bologna, Rome, and throughout the Italian countryside reveals a largely unmined dimension of the movement's reach.

Since 1985, Eileen Boris' *Art and Labor* has been the principal text that lays out the parameters of the Arts and Crafts movement in the United States. Among the first to comprehensively assess the movement's impact on late nineteenth and early twentieth-century America, Boris rightly contextualizes settlement house reformers and their use of craft within the ideological and stylistic concerns forwarded by Ruskin, Morris, and Ashbee. Focusing on figures such as Hull-House's Starr, Boris posits that settlement house workers largely supported immigrant craft work to promote an Arts and Crafts-inflected stylistic agenda of simplicity and honesty in design. According to Boris, American Arts and Crafts enthusiasts advanced such programs to reinforce and enlarge middle-class structures within the settlement house and to impose ideas about consumption and proper comportment onto immigrant families. In Boris' estimation, Progressives failed to champion any substantive political change that would elevate the status of the worker, a pillar of the movement's British precedents.<sup>38</sup> Wendy Kaplan treads similar ground in her 1987 catalogue "*The Art That is Life*," though Kaplan's exhibition laid the groundwork for a more inclusive and expansive definition of the movement and its multiple iterations.<sup>39</sup> Anthea Callen's study of female practitioners within the Arts and Crafts movement also augmented scholarship in the field by highlighting key contributions of female makers fashioning handwork such as lace and embroidery.<sup>40</sup>

The case studies that are the focus of this dissertation complicate Boris' claims that the American Arts and Crafts movement failed to engage in any means of substantive reform for immigrant groups. More than assessing the movement and its multi-various iterations as examples of failed efforts at social reform, this study provides two instances wherein immigrants and progressive reformers celebrated the particular characteristics of studios and workshops to forward a range of social agendas. The settlement house workshop provided a center for immigrant self-fashioning and the building of community consciousness, not in spite of, but often in collaboration with reform-minded teachers and collectors. The workshops in question reflected the needs and interests of middle and upper

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<sup>37</sup> Karen Livingstone and Linda Parry's catalogue is one of the few projects to draw connections between international folk revivals and the Arts and Crafts movement in Britain and the United States. Karen Livingstone and Linda Parry eds., *International Arts and Crafts* (London: V & A, 2005).

<sup>38</sup> Eileen Boris, *Art and Labor: Ruskin, Morris, and the Craftsman Ideal in America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986).

<sup>39</sup> Kaplan, "*The Art That Is Life*".

<sup>40</sup> Anthea Callen, *Women Artists of the Arts and Crafts Movement, 1870-1914* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979).

class reformers, but also accounted for the desires and exigencies of working-class immigrant communities either purposefully or incidentally thanks to the ingenuity of immigrant artisans. While Boris and others dismiss Arts and Crafts-inflected reforms as strains of misguided upper-middle-class hegemonic practice, this study brings to light the wide range of invested parties whose work is visible in the objects that emerged from these craft workshops.

Building on Boris, Kaplan, and Callen's work, the case studies position settlement house industries as a manifestation of Arts and Crafts ideology present in an extremely local as well as a profoundly global scale.<sup>41</sup> The project augments previous examinations by turning not only to reformers and art patrons at the turn of the century, but looking at the social and economic world of immigrant craftsmen and women and the fruits of interaction between immigrant craftspeople and progressive reformers. While the voices of individual artisans in cooperative workshops can seem impossible to find, this research includes more information about those who participated in craft industries and how they used their work to support and enhance their communities.

### **Material Culture as a Gateway**

The case studies that follow rely on the premise that objects constitute a potent means to unlock the stories of makers and users whose lives might not be represented in written records. As Anne Smart Martin has explained, "material objects matter because they are complex, symbolic bundles of social, cultural and individual meanings fused onto something we can touch, see and own. That very quality is the reason that social values can so quickly penetrate into and evaporate out of common objects."<sup>42</sup> By examining the types of objects that first and second-generation American craftsmen fashioned, the complex politics of Americanization and assimilation in early twentieth-century cities begins to emerge. Throughout these studies, objects serve as sites to map cultural continuity and change.<sup>43</sup> This dissertation relies on a model wherein objects become the primary site of exploration for the negotiated identities of Jewish and Italian artists: a framework that foregrounds the immigrant artist as she confronts the challenges and contradictions of cultural continuity and change in a new country. Methodologically, the study relies on Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's

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<sup>41</sup> A small handful of studies have begun to track the nexus of design with former colonial outposts across the world such as Roberta A. Mayer, "The Aesthetics of Lockwood de Forest: India, Craft, and Preservation," *Winterthur Portfolio* 31, no. 1 (1996): 1-22.

<sup>42</sup> Anne Smart Martin, "Makers, Buyers and Users, Consumerism as a Material Culture Framework," *Winterthur Portfolio*, 28, 2/4, Summer/Autumn 1993): 141-157, 142-43.

<sup>43</sup> Laurel Ulrich, *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001). Kaplan, "The Art That Is Life."

*Age of the Homespun*, a project that employed close material analysis and in-depth study of New England textiles to illuminate the interwoven histories of Native American, British, and European American exchange in New England.<sup>44</sup> For Ulrich, textiles serve as the primary point of access into cross-communal female economies in the region from before the Revolution through the nineteenth century. This dissertation seeks to perform similar work for female immigrant artists in nineteenth and twentieth-century craft workshops, a group who, like the women Ulrich examines, left few written records and have therefore been underrepresented in the historical record. Nonie Gadsden's 2006 *Art & Reform* provides an additional starting point for this project. Through her extensive research, Gadsden's brought to life ceramicist Sara Galner's North End neighborhood and the studio in which she worked.<sup>45</sup>

Growing bodies of literature about the lives of immigrant women have begun to contribute new insights into the varied experiences of young first and second generation women living and working in American cities. With the notable exception of Ulrich, historians have been relatively slow to mine the material archive that these communities created as a way to unearth the rich histories of interchange between countries and social classes.<sup>46</sup> Kathy Peiss, Elizabeth Ewen, and Robert Orsi have provided keenly observed accounts of the lives of women in immigrant communities in American cities using fiction, letters, interviews, newspapers, and an array of written and oral sources.<sup>47</sup> Their work has provided a vital foundation to illuminate the position of women in these communities and to explore their everyday experiences. None of these authors, however, have assessed the material culture that artisans from such communities created as a way to understand the challenges residents of urban tenement neighborhoods faced.

The work of the art historian is thus to tell the stories of these women through what they made. Tiles, pitchers, liturgical textiles, and tablecloths are the living remnants of early twentieth-century first and second-generation immigrant women, whose individual histories are all too often subsumed in narratives about the native-born reformers who founded the workshops in which they labored. The objects that these workshops produced are not, by and large, key works in the canon of American art history. While collectors now seek out Paul

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<sup>44</sup> Ulrich, *The Age of Homespun*.

<sup>45</sup> Nonie Gadsden, *Art & Reform*.

<sup>46</sup> Some historians have begun to tell these stories in more depth through objects such as Lizabeth A. Cohen, "Embellishing a Life of Labor: An Interpretation of the Material Culture of American Working-Class Homes, 1885-1915," *Journal of American Culture* 3:4 (1980), 752-775. Ganz and Strobel, *Pots of Promise*. Jane S. Becker, "For Bread and Pleasure:" Settlement Houses and the Arts and Crafts, 1900-1930 (Boston: Boston University, 1986).

<sup>47</sup> Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street*. Ewen, *Immigrant Women in the Land of Dollars*. Peiss, *Cheap Amusements*.

Revere Pottery works as elegant examples of the Art Pottery movement, the lace and embroidery of the Scuola d'Industrie Italiane is all but lost. Textiles, particularly revival works, are almost entirely absent from the scholarly conversation altogether, which is jarring given the massive amount of these textiles in nearly every major museum in the United States.

The stories that emerge in this study and the objects at its heart may seem modest: They are the individual tales and examples of work from women such as Lili Shapiro, Fanny Goldstein, Cora Gindano, and Angelina Pellegrino. Yet, they bring new meaning to the newly expanding body of work on the varied nature of the immigrant experience by answering basic questions about how immigrants assimilated while maintaining the cultures of their homelands. The details of the lives of working-class immigrant women are not, as is often stated, unknowable. As Ulrich has so ably shown, the stories of women's lives emerge from alternative places such as the materials they produced in the settlement house.<sup>48</sup> Unearthing these objects and stories requires faith that the knowledge gained about the first and second-generation women of the North End and Greenwich Village can contribute in significant ways to how we consider the history of immigration to America in the early twentieth century.

The subsequent studies rely not only on ceramics and textiles, but also on the auxiliary writing and photography associated with these workshops – from newspaper clippings to settlement-house printed brochures, to personal snapshots – as evidence of the full lives these objects lived and the various makers, teachers, and consumers associated with each one. Such ephemera provide some of the most telling clues as to the lives and identities of female immigrant makers. Hastily written names penciled in on the back of a posed studio photograph can open the door to a world of heretofore unknown information about women long-dismissed as lost to history. Assembling scraps of information alongside the handiwork these workshops produced invites a new arena of scholarship that foregrounds makers as active presences in the workshops as artisans and decision makers.

Looking at the objects produced in the settlement houses and the traditions on which they were based requires a critical lens attuned to the political and social pressures that shape objects of so-called “heritage.” As historian Eric Hobsbawm has pointed out, traditions are constructions and they emerge and solidify around the exigencies of the present. Definitions of tradition and ethnic identity grow and crystalize through what Hobsbawm calls, “a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past.”<sup>49</sup> This project proposes

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<sup>48</sup> Ulrich, *The Age of Homespun*.

<sup>49</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, ed., *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 4.

that ceramics and textiles produced in settlement house workshops are important documents charting how traditions solidified and identities emerged for Southern and Eastern Europeans in the United States in the early twentieth century. Historian Davis Whisnant has pointed out that cultural objects are never “pure.” Each represents a series of negotiations between constituencies with varying degrees of agency and control. For Whisnant, defining cultural forms is not a neutral practice. Rather, objects of heritage must be understood by examining what he deems “the politics of culture.” To understand the evolution of cultural objects, one must attend to “the role of formal institutions and forceful individuals in defining and shaping perspectives, values, tastes, and agendas for cultural change.”<sup>50</sup> These works have meaning because of the groups involved in the processes of their production and use, never more so than in the case of settlement house produced immigrant craftwork.

### **The Paul Revere Pottery and the Scuola d’Industrie Italiane**

The first section of this study focuses on the work of the Paul Revere Pottery in Boston’s North End and its role in helping a new generation of immigrant denizens grow and thrive amidst Boston’s most historic structures. The workshop’s investment in the aesthetics of the colonial revival not only provided a ready market for the studio’s goods, but paved the way for first and second generation Jewish and Italian immigrant women to establish themselves as active members of the neighborhood. The works they produced, from historic tiles to colonially-inspired pitchers and salt shakers, showcased makers cognizant of and sympathetic to lessons in patriotism that many Americans suggested might emerge from contact with the forms and structures of the nation’s earliest European settlers. Taking the forms of Paul Revere Pottery as a starting point, this section interrogates the intended and expressed messages of the studio’s production and the ways in which immigrant artists absorbed and manipulated settlers’ lessons and design decisions while forging bonds among their own community members within the space of the workshop. The section also contextualizes how the North Bennet Industrial School marketed Paul Revere Pottery within debates over European and American identity and citizenship. The section further examines how the pottery’s practitioners were included or excluded from the worlds they depicted.

The Pottery’s glazed earthenware dishes, mugs, and tiles, decorated with images of American historical events and agrarian scenes, are emblematic of a larger impulse to adapt workers to American taste through the production of craft objects. The young Jewish and Italian painters of the Pottery specialized in

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<sup>50</sup> David E. Whisnant, *All That Is Native & Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 15.

designs depicting iconic scenes of flora and fauna native to New England and suggestive of colonial farm life, which designers hoped would teach newly arrived immigrants about their new nation's values. Tiles illustrating Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere*, for instance, form a colorful vision of a notable event in American history. With bold outlines and flat areas of color, designer Edith Brown created a visual vocabulary appealing to Native-born audiences and instructive to the pottery's decorators detailing stories from an idyllic American past.

The second section turns to the work of Greenwich Village's Scuola d'Industrie Italiane and the lace and embroidery that emerged from the small studio. As Robert J. Kennedy noted, needlework projects were popular for settlement house crafts schools and served an important purpose in introducing immigrant women to American consumers. Kennedy credits the settlement house with alerting the American public to the skill and artistry immigrant women brought to the United States as a whole. As he wrote, "appreciation of the fact that immigrant women . . . possess in their traditional needlework designs and their skill of hand a precious resource for America, was born in the settlement. The settlement needlework guilds, which sprang up in the decade of 1900 conserved the skill of a number of needle women and enriched the homes of Americans who bought their products."<sup>51</sup> The Scuola d'Industrie Italiane in Greenwich Village exemplifies such a settlement house art project that provided a carefully modulated vision of the immigrant worker as inextricably linked to a pre-modern past and to the virtuous female labor of needlework.

Akin to the Paul Revere Pottery, the Scuola's promoters designed pillowcases, blouses, and altar veils to signal the deeply rooted historical associations of makers with a wellspring of tradition. At the Scuola, founders Gino Speranza and Florence Colgate worked to preserve the Italian lacemaking traditions and providing young Italian immigrant women with alternatives to factory labor. The Scuola d'Industrie Italiane emerged as a small but important connection point for Italian-American makers, American collectors, and reformers on both sides of the Atlantic. Like the Pottery, the needle workers at the Scuola made use of the studio as a space to solidify relationships between one another and among differing social classes as they negotiated difficult positions between larger American economic and cultural spheres and the constraints of family life among first-generation parents, neighbors, and relatives.

While the Paul Revere Pottery achieved success by affiliating its workforce with the North End's colonial history, this chapter explores teachers' turn to an equally complex construction of Italian-American identity through an association

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<sup>51</sup> Kennedy, "Excerpts from Chapter XX," 5.

with the Italian Renaissance and Italian revival industries in Europe. The Scuola's products and the studio's marketing sought to position Italian-Americans as both appropriately modern and deeply traditional. Like the Paul Revere Pottery, the workshop's products circulated among a group of buyers assessing their own histories in light of 'authentic' markers of the past and vestiges of history and, like the Pottery, the Scuola's artists became enmeshed in these efforts to define tradition and integrate it into aspects of modern life. Like the members of the Pottery, artisans at the Scuola used the studio to define themselves as productive Italian-American members of American society.

Unlike the highly valued ceramic work of the Paul Revere Pottery, lace and embroidery from Europe or America is now little valued among collectors or connoisseurs although turn-of-the-century aficionados cherished even fragments of antique lace as among the most precious imports from Europe and the most evident of its history of skilled artistry. Lace from Italy fascinated collectors and progressives on both sides of the Atlantic, as did the revival lace designs produced in workshops in the Italian countryside and in New York. The Scuola d'Industrie Italiane promised to keep such traditions of needlework alive among new generations of Italian-Americans. The Renaissance revival laces that the Scuola's artisans fashioned in their attic workshop at the Richmond Hill settlement house provide key insights into the little known stories of the young women who produced them and allow us to explore the deep-seated connections between Italy, Greenwich Village, and the exhibition halls of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The nineteenth-century revival of lacemaking in Italy and its importation to the United States represents a particular revival of traditional practices re-conjured in an altered form to create salable objects and respectable work for young Italian women. While the Scuola d'Industrie Italiane furnished middle- and upper class consumers with textiles created in an Italian mode, the method of hand production relied on a particular understanding of the role of the young, female immigrant worker.

Taken together, these focused looks at works from the Paul Revere Pottery and the Scuola d'Industrie Italiane use a small set of objects to tell expansive stories of settlement houses, craft workshops, and cultural institutions in the country's two most important early twentieth-century cultural centers. As the following studies will show, works that emerged from immigrant craft workshops helped shape identity in ethnic and political terms for immigrant makers, progressive reformers, and native-born consumers by linking the worlds of elite philanthropists, middle-class purchasers, and cultural institutions to the tenement neighborhoods and the industrious craftswomen who populated early twentieth-century settlement house workshops.

## Acknowledgements

The course of writing this dissertation has been a long one with its share of frustrations and setbacks, but my work has been made possible by a wide array of personal and professional advisors whose investments in me have made the completion of this study a reality. Thinking and writing about settlement house workshops over the past few years has brought me to many new places and introduced me to knowledgeable scholars, librarians, curators, and practitioners whose insights shaped my thinking and widened my scope of inquiry.

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For their limitless knowledge on the history and practice of lacemaking, I cannot thank Gunnel Teitel, Barbara Duggan, and Devon Thein enough. These women took me under their wing and showed not only how lace was made, but also how it has been written about, collected, and moved across the world for centuries. Their enthusiasm for medium spurred my interest and deepened my inquiry into the textile collections at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and beyond. That they are all extremely kind and generous goes without saying. Thank you to Melinda Watt, Jim Moske, and the staff of the Ratti Textile Center – Eva Labson, Eva DeAngelis-Glasser, and Giovanna Fiorino-Iannace – who all facilitated my head-long dive into the Metropolitan Museum's collections. Additional thanks also to Catherine Whalen and David Jaffee for their excellent suggestions on my research during my time at the NEH Summer Institute at the Bard Graduate Center. Additional commendations to the staff at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, particularly Tess Fredette, for welcoming me and gamely answering all my questions about Mrs. Gardner's lace collection.

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## Curriculum Vitae

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- 2011 M.A., History of Art, University of California, Berkeley  
Thesis: "Envisioning the Saints: Charles William Carter and Technologies of Vision in Nineteenth-century Utah"
- 2005 B.A. with distinction, History of Art, Yale University  
Thesis: "Carl Purrington Rollins and Arts and Crafts Printing in New England"

### MUSEUM EXPERIENCE

- 2016 Assistant Curator of American Art, Portland Museum of Art (present)
- 2015 Curatorial Fellow, Portland Museum of Art (9 months)
- 2014 Metropolitan Museum of Art, Douglass Fellow (1 year)
- 2011 de Young Museum, Consultant (2 months)
- 2009 de Young Museum, Founder, Graduate Student Gallery Talks (2 years)  
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- 2007 Ralph Appelbaum Associates, Content Developer/Coordinator (2 years)
- 2006 Smithsonian American Art Museum, Curatorial Intern (1 year)

### EXHIBITIONS

- 2016 *The Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, 1951-1969*, Summer 2018
- Art Pottery, 1900-1930*, Winter 2018
- Hans Hofmann: Works on Paper*, in-house curator, Summer 2017
- Of Whales in Paint: Rockwell Kent's Moby Dick*, Fall, 2017

*Duncan Hewitt: Turning Strange*, January, 2016

2015 *All that Glitters*, permanent installation, The Portland Museum of Art

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#### PUBLICATIONS

2016 "Where Things Can Grow and Will Grow:" Hans Hofmann in California, 1930-31" in *Hans Hofmann: Works on Paper*, in press

2015 *Highlights of the Portland Museum of Art*, co-author

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- 2010 Bancroft Library Study Award, University of California, Berkeley
- 2005 Andrus Prize for best senior thesis in American art, Yale University
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- 2016 “Old Country in the New Country: Exhibitions, Museums, and early Twentieth-century American Immigration,” College Art Association, panel co-chair
- “Collecting and Exhibiting Antique Italian Lace in the United States,” John D. Calandra Italian American Institute Colloquium
- 2015 “Parlor Games: Decorative Arts and the McClellan House, 1801-2015,” Decorative Arts Trust Colloquium, The Portland Museum of Art and the Decorative Arts Trust
- “Unbroken Thread: The Scuola d’Industrie Italiane, 1905-1927,” University of Chicago, Neubauer Collegium Workshop
- “Following the Thread: Italian Renaissance and Revival Needlework at the Scuola d’Industrie Italiane, 1905-1927,” College Art Association 2014
- 2014 Ph.D. Student Roundtable, The Ends of American Art Conference, Stanford University
- “Lace Collecting and Philanthropy at the Metropolitan Museum of Art,” The Ratti Textile Center, Metropolitan Museum of Art
- “Ancient Designs Adapted to Modern Uses: New York’s Scuola d’Industrie Italiane and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1905-1927,” Metropolitan Museum of Art
- “Embroidered Histories: Italian American Textiles and Collecting at the Scuola d’Industrie Italiane, 1905-1927,” Parsons School of Design
- 2013 “In the Shadow of the Old North Church: Americanization at Boston’s Paul Revere Pottery,” The Stickley Museum at Craftsman Farms

- “Capturing the Lamanites: Stereography and the Mormon Vision of Native Americans in the Great Basin, 1864-1906,” Native American Art Studies Association
- “The New Old: Lace Making at New York’s Scuola d’Industrie Italiane,” Boston University
- 2012 “Allen Eaton’s Arts of the Homelands Exhibitions: 1919-1932,” University of Pittsburgh
- “Arts, Crafts, and Citizenship,” invited lecturer, *Western Art: 1900-1950*, University of California, Berkeley
- 2011 “The Most Complete of its Kind in America: The Charles L. Hall Collection of Alaska Native Art,” *Native American Art Studies Association*
- “The Cultural Work of the World’s Fairs: 1876-1893,” *American Art, Architecture and Design*, University of California, Berkeley
- 2010 “Great Basin Collections at the National Museum of Natural History,” *National Museum of Natural History*

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

- 2012 Graduate Student Instructor, *The Shock of the New: Western Art 1900-1950*, University of California, Berkeley
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## Section 1: “The Shadow of the Old North Church”: Americanization and the Colonial at Boston’s Paul Revere Pottery, 1908-1942

*“Now Paul Revere rode forth to war, /to swing the mighty mace of Thor – /to put the British in the jug – /But we – designed the pottery mug!”<sup>52</sup>*

At the end of her eight hour work day at the Paul Revere Pottery, a young female artist would have stepped out of her workshop at 18 Hull Street and into the heart of Boston’s Revolutionary past. Directly across the street on an elevated plot, she would glimpse Copp’s Hill Cemetery and the grave markers of Mathers, Hutchinsons, and Eliots – illustrious names of the city’s colonial days. Navigating her way down cobblestone Hull Street, she would stroll towards the slender spire of the Old North Church, where in 1775 two lanterns had allegedly hung to signal the invasion of the British by sea.<sup>53</sup> From Hull Street, our artist might turn south onto Prince Street and pause to admire the wooden façade of Paul Revere’s House, built originally around 1680, but restored and opened to the public as a house museum in 1908, the very same year that the Pottery began producing the earthenware ceramics that bore his name.

The Paul Revere Pottery operated until 1915 in Boston’s North End and then from 1915 to 1942 in the nearby suburb of Brighton. The workshop was born out of the North Bennet Street Industrial School and the Saturday Evening Girls Club, a reading group for young first and second-generation Jewish and Italian immigrant women, founded by Edith Guerrier and Edith Brown with the financial backing of philanthropist Helen Osborne Storrow. Beginning with its name, the Paul Revere Pottery and the women who created objects in the workshop were deeply intertwined with the history of the North End neighborhood where they lived and worked.

Examining the Pottery’s products and the organization of labor in the workshop, this section traces the interconnections and tensions among antiquarianism, architectural conservation, collecting, and early twentieth-century Americanization efforts in Boston: a city with an Anglo-Saxon past that was intimately interwoven with its multi-ethnic present. The workshop’s organizers

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<sup>52</sup> “Camp Augusta,” Arevedon Kenny in Fanny Goldstein and Charles Knowles Bolton, “The Story of the Saturday Evening Girls: Dedicated to Edith Guerrier and Helen Osborne Storrow: Especially Written for the Reunion Thursday Evening, December 12, 1929 at the West End House, 16 Blossom Street, Boston, Mass, 1929,” 6.

<sup>53</sup> The Pottery’s co-founder Edith Guerrier noted that “we started our little industry in the cellar of a private dwelling, and today our plant occupies the first floor and basement of a house under the shadow of the Old North Church where Paul Revere’s signal lanterns were hung, and opposite the green turf and ancient elms which shade the resting places of some of Boston’s first citizens in Copp’s Hill Burying Ground.” Edith Guerrier, “The Story of the Paul Revere Pottery,” *The Craftsman*, Vol. XXV, Number 2 (November 1913): 205-207.

and the immigrant ceramicists of the Paul Revere Pottery capitalized on the studio's location by assiduously associating the works it produced with Paul Revere and Revolutionary Boston while promoting the structure of its workshop as an idealized and feminized vision of small-scale guild labor. The workshop married the interests of historically-minded consumers, progressive reformers, and first and second-generation Southern and Eastern European immigrant women, many of whom – such as Lili Shapiro and Fanny Goldstein – created lifelong careers for themselves based on their time in the studio.

The Pottery's benefactor Helen Osborne Storrow was decidedly part of the Boston upper class, while Brown was an immigrant from Nova Scotia who, like many progressively minded young art students, gravitated towards teaching and settlement house work. Guerrier came from a wealthy Quaker Abolitionist family. As a child in New Bedford, Massachusetts living with her aunt and uncle, she spent time in the literary circles of Thoreau, Emerson, and Louisa May Alcott and developed a zeal for education and the social justice.<sup>54</sup> Brown and Guerrier met as students at the Museum School of Boston's Fine Arts Museum. The School of the Museum of Fine Arts was founded in 1877 and served as a meeting place for the leading teachers and thinkers of the Arts and Crafts movement in Boston, such as Frederic Crowninshield, Denman Ross, Charles Eliot Norton, Edward Morse, Ernest Fenollosa, and Sarah Wyman Whitman. Both Edith Brown and Edith Guerrier learned about design and pedagogy in an environment saturated with the latest ideas about art and reform. The school was an energetic center for the latest ideas about the Arts and Crafts movement. It was also an institution promoting reform-minded art education and a place full of instructors, such as Charles Eliot Norton and his disciples, invested in early historic preservation in New England.<sup>55</sup>

Through Edith Guerrier and eventually Edith Brown's work with the North Bennet Street Industrial School, the two women eventually came into contact with Storrow, who supported a variety of social institutions aimed at advancing the lives of young women such as the Girl Scouts.<sup>56</sup> An avid feminist and outdoorswoman, Storrow also founded a camp for the young women of these

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<sup>54</sup> Kate Clifford Larson, "The Saturday Evening Girls: A Progressive Era Library Club and the Intellectual Life of Working Class and Immigrant Girls in Turn-of-the-Century Boston," *The Library Quarterly* 71, no. 2 (April 1, 2001): 212.

<sup>55</sup> Edward S. Cooke, "Talking or Working: The Conundrum of Moral Aesthetics in Boston's Arts and Crafts Movement," in Merilee Boyd Meyer, ed., *Inspiring Reform: Boston's Arts and Crafts Movement* (Wellesley: Wellesley College Museum, 1997), 27. Brandt, "Mutually Helpful Relations," 51.

<sup>55</sup> Maureen Meister, *Arts and Crafts Architecture: History and Heritage in New England* (University Press of New England, 2014), 74.

<sup>56</sup> Meg Chalmers and Judy Young, *The Saturday Evening Girls: Paul Revere Pottery* (Schiffer Publications, Ltd, 2005), 8.

clubs at Wingwaersheek Beach in the seaside community of North Gloucester, which offered the North End's young members an escape from city life. As ceramics decorator Sara Galner later recalled of these summer sojourns, "We had a pretty good diet and we enjoyed every minute of it. Especially the living room at night with that huge fireplace sitting down and singing old camp songs and knitting and writing letters. It was a very happy atmosphere."<sup>57</sup> Storrow contributed in significant ways to the workshop as well as additional activities designed to better the lives of young North End immigrant women.

The Pottery project emerged from the Saturday Evening Girls Club.<sup>58</sup> After her time at the Museum School of Art, Guerrier began at North Bennet Street, first in the nursery and then as the administrator for the school's library and its women's clubs.<sup>59</sup> During her tenure, Guerrier organized a series of reading groups for girls of various ages, each of which met on a different night. The oldest group gathered on Saturday evenings and called themselves the Saturday Evening Girls (SEGs). With the backing of Storrow, then a member of the board of directors of North Bennet Street, Guerrier augmented the Saturday Evening Girls Club program with lectures by influential speakers of the day, such as Jane Addams, Robert Woods, and Thomas Mott Osborne.<sup>60</sup>

As Guerrier recalled in her memoir, she and Edith Brown contemplated a variety of potential ideas for a workshop before settling on the pottery. "We spoke of making marmalade, or fruitcake, of hemming napkins and dish towels, and finally, we spoke of pottery, of the charming peasant ware of Italy, of Holland, of Germany, and now of Switzerland."<sup>61</sup> In 1906, Storrow financed a trip for Guerrier and Brown, who was by then a young illustrator and fellow teacher at North Bennet Street, to travel to Europe to study native craft industries.<sup>62</sup> The

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<sup>57</sup> Barbara Kramer Interview with Paul Revere Pottery artists, c. 1970, video cassette, courtesy of Kate Clifford Larson.

<sup>58</sup> Kate Clifford Larson's work on the North Bennet Street Industrial School, the Saturday Evening Girls, and the Paul Revere Pottery provides the most complete overview of the workshop's origins and its founders. Kate Clifford Larson, "'These Girls Were Quite Ordinary. In Their Ordinarity, They Proved Extraordinary.' The Saturday Evening Girls," November 14, 2001. Kate Clifford Larson, *The Saturday Evening Girls and the Paul Revere Pottery: An Experiment in Class Bridge and Cross Cultural Female Domination in Turn of the Century Boston* (Simmons College, 1995). For a history of the North Bennet Street Industrial School, see Laura Stanton, Sarah Henry, and Mary A. Williams, *North Bennet Street School: A Short History, 1885-1985* (Boston, MA, 1985).

<sup>59</sup> In 1899, North Bennet Street's library became the North End Branch of the Boston Public library with Guerrier as its head. Edith Guerrier, *An Independent Woman: The Autobiography of Edith Guerrier*, ed. Molly Matson, illustrated edition (University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 68, 72.

<sup>60</sup> Larson, "'These Girls Were Quite Ordinary. In Their Ordinarity, They Proved Extraordinary.'"

<sup>61</sup> Edith Guerrier, *An Independent Woman*, 85.

<sup>62</sup> Larson devotes a chapter of her work on the Saturday Evening Girls to the varied philanthropic activities of Helen Osborne Storrow, which include funding the camp Wingwaersheek Beach near

pair were particularly enamored of Swiss earthenware they discovered near Geneva at the Thuner See (Fig. 4). The two returned to Boston to set up a small workshop in Guerrier's Chestnut Hill home and solicited the help of local ceramicists as well as experts from further afield. In 1908, Storrow purchased 18 Hull Street as a space for the literary club to meet and for the Pottery to operate. Guerrier and Brown shared an apartment on the building's top floor and instructed a group of Saturday Evening Girls members on how to decorate and eventually also create glazed earthenware ceramics both on the wheel and using molds. As the workshop's wares began to gain popularity, the Pottery opened a showroom in Boston's Back Bay and also sold works in shops in New York, Washington, D.C., Duluth, and Hyannis. In addition, the Pottery exhibited both locally and nationally at the Society of Arts and Crafts in Boston, the New York Society for Ceramic Arts, the National Society for Craftsmen, and the Panama Pacific International Exposition.<sup>63</sup>

By 1915, the workshop had outgrown 18 Hull Street and moved to a space Guerrier designed specifically for the workshop on Nottinghill Road in Brighton. Beginning in 1927, the Pottery also began offering courses for teachers and amateurs interested in learning how to make and decorate earthenware ceramics. By the time of Brown's death in 1932, the heyday of the Pottery was largely over, but SEG ceramicist Lili Shapiro continued to operate the Brighton studio until 1942. While the workshop was well known and appreciated during its time, the cost of maintaining the studio meant that it was never fully self-sustaining and relied on Storrow's support throughout its existence.<sup>64</sup>

The Pottery was among several early twentieth-century projects that used ceramics to help immigrant communities or other struggling groups gain

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Gloucester, supporting folk dancing, and the Girl Scouts. More information on Storrow is available in Leonard Ware, *Helene Osborne Storrow: A Memoir* (Northampton, MA, 1970). Larson, "The Saturday Evening Girls and the Paul Revere Pottery: An Experiment in Class Bridge and Cross Cultural Female Domination in Turn of the Century Boston," Chapter 4.

<sup>63</sup> Edith Brown, "Information for International Jury, Panama-Pacific International Exhibition" (San Francisco, CA, August 15, 1916), University of California, Berkeley, Bancroft Library. "The Fifth Exhibition of the National Society of Craftsmen," *The Craftsman*, February 1912. "American Art Pottery Renaissance," *Brick and Clay Record* XXXIX, no. 1 (July 1, 1911).

<sup>64</sup> Although reporters such as Livingston Wright optimistically claimed that the workshop's members "have had the wonderful patience and the absorbing love of their art to carry along the tiny pottery venture of those years ago clear through to the present and make it financially sustaining," Guerrier admitted in her memoir that the workshop required Storrow's additional funding until its closing and a report in 1921 by Harvard Business School students found the pottery was spending more than it was earning on a regular basis. According to Edith Guerrier, after the move to Brighton, "the pottery sold readily, but it still required to be heavily subsidized." Edith Guerrier, "The Story of Paul Revere Pottery," *The Craftsman*. Lawrence Hurley and Clifford Collins, "Report of Pottery Cost-Finding" (Harvard Business School, August 5, 1921), Baker Library Historical Collections. Gadsden, *Art & Reform*, 89.

economic and social footholds. Settlement houses such as Greenwich House in New York and Hull-House in Chicago also founded pottery programs to provide a place for local first and second-generation immigrants, largely women, to make a sustainable income by decorating and sometimes creating earthenware forms.<sup>65</sup> Several other small studios, in what became known as the Art Pottery movement, also established themselves to help particularly vulnerable populations earn a living. The Arequipa pottery of Fairfax, California was founded in 1911 “to provide work for sick, wage-earning women, while at the same time training them in a new and no doubt useful skill.”<sup>66</sup> Projects such as Marblehead Pottery began with similarly altruistic aims. Marblehead founders hoped to provide patients suffering from tuberculosis with work to occupy their hands and minds.<sup>67</sup> The Newcomb Pottery of New Orleans styled itself as a school to aide female artists in learning a particular craft to earn a living.<sup>68</sup> The Paul Revere Pottery existed within a larger network of philanthropically minded ceramics workshops and studios marketing their works as examples of fine art made by struggling populations.

Edith Guerrier was aware of many of these projects as evidenced by her correspondence with Charles Binns, one of the most well known teachers of studio ceramics who helped foster a generation of Art Pottery workshops across the United States. Guerrier wrote to Binns asking his opinions on everything from glaze to kilns.<sup>69</sup> Unlike the bulk of small Art Pottery enterprises that fashioned unique and highly priced objects for artistic pleasure, the Paul Revere Pottery trafficked largely in earthenware forms designed for everyday use.<sup>70</sup> Such a distinction differentiated the workshop from local and national studios, such as Hugh Robertson’s Chelsea Pottery or workshops further afield, such as

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<sup>65</sup> Robert Archey Woods and Albert Joseph Kennedy, *The Settlement Horizon: A National Estimate* (Russell Sage foundation, 1922).

<sup>66</sup> Callen, *Women Arts of the Arts and Crafts Movement*, 92. Trapp, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in California*, 242.

<sup>67</sup> Paul Evans, *American Art Pottery* (New York: Feingold & Lewis Publishing Corporation, 1987), 157.

<sup>68</sup> Callen, *Women Arts of the Arts and Crafts Movement*, 89. David Rago, *American Art Pottery* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1997).

<sup>69</sup> Binns mentored students such as Adelaide Robineau, who went on to a storied career as a ceramicist fashioning beautifully intricate and unique art objects. Edith Guerrier, “To Charles Binns,” October 15, 1905, Barbara Kramer Archives, Alfred University Library, CF Binns Archives, JMW Galleries. The author consulted the Kramer archives at JMW galleries, however, these archives have subsequently moved to the University of Massachusetts, Boston.

<sup>70</sup> As many authors have noted, much of the work of the Pottery, while modest in size and relatively sparsely decorated, was still priced beyond the capacity of most of the residents of the Lower East Side to ever use it on a regular basis. Marilee Boyd Meyer, “Saturday Evening Girls and the Children’s Movement,” *Antiques Journal*, January 1991, 14–15. Chalmers and Young, *The Saturday Evening Girls*.

the Rookwood Pottery of Cincinnati or complex porcelain objects made by Adelaide Robineau.<sup>71</sup>

## Reconsidering the Colonial Revival

The Pottery can be best understood when situated within the overarching interest in reviving colonial objects and spaces. Architectural historian Richard Guy Wilson has remarked upon the great diversity of projects to suggest that rather than a uniform style or a movement, the colonial revival instead constitutes “an attitude or mental process of remembering and maintaining the past that generations of Americans have consciously created.” The creation, he remarks, “is selective and highly political.”<sup>72</sup> Rethinking the past, according to Wilson, is part memory and part deliberate omission designed to bolster particular viewpoints and agendas. Historian Michael Kammen has similarly observed that “societies...reconstruct their pasts rather than faithfully record them, and that they do so with the needs of contemporary culture clearly in mind – manipulating the past in order to mold the present.”<sup>73</sup> The founders and artists of the Paul Revere Pottery, alongside many other architects, designers, and consumers in Boston, participated in this selective employment and adaptation of New England’s colonial history to advance political agendas and address social needs specific to young Southern and Eastern European women in Boston. The workshop employed the visual vocabulary of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Boston to promote its makers and to cement their position as inheritors of the ideals and physical structures of the country’s founders.

Paul Revere Pottery’s production between 1908 and 1942 coincided with a wide range of projects aimed at the collection and preservation of America’s colonial heritage and its legacy of handcraftsmanship. The early twentieth-century saw William Sumner Appleton’s founding of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities; the creation of colonial villages such as Edith Storrow’s

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<sup>71</sup> For more information on the scope of Arts and Crafts pottery see, Evans, *Art Pottery of the United States*. Rago, *American Art Pottery*. Livingston Wright, “Girls’ Club Establishes Pottery and Ultimately Makes It a Financial Success,” *The Art World* 2, no. 6 (September 1, 1917): 579.

<sup>72</sup> Richard Guy Wilson, “Introduction,” in Richard Guy Wilson, Shaun Eyring, and Kenny Marotta, eds., *Re-Creating the American Past: Essays on the Colonial Revival* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 3. James M. Lindgren, *Preserving Historic New England: Preservation, Progressivism, and the Remaking of Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). Lindgren, “A Constant Incentive to Patriotic Citizenship’: Historic Preservation in Progressive-Era Massachusetts.” *The New England Quarterly* 64, no. 4 (December 1, 1991): 594–608. Lindgren, “A Spirit That Fires the Imagination’: Historical Preservation and Cultural Regeneration in Virginia and New England, 1850-1950,” in Max Page and Randall Mason, eds. *Giving Preservation a History: Histories of Historic Preservation in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

<sup>73</sup> Michael G. Kammen, *The Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 3.

Storrowton and Rockefeller's Colonial Williamsburg; the opening of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's American wing, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston's European and American Decorative Arts displays in Boston.<sup>74</sup>

For the most part, scholars such as Wendy Kaplan and Marshall Davidson have tended to consider colonial revival projects as reactions against the influx of new immigrants into the United States and the shifting balance of social and political power away from Anglo-Saxons to immigrant politicians and constituencies.<sup>75</sup> Kenneth Ames has read the colonial revival as a series of "responses to modernization, expressions of nationalism, strategies to cope with America's social and cultural diversity."<sup>76</sup> Historian James Lindgren has similarly framed the early twentieth-century upper-class turn to the colonial largely as a struggle between native-born Americans and immigrants over the future of American culture.<sup>77</sup> These historians and art historians suggest that Boston Brahmins consolidated their associations with their Anglo-Saxon forebears to underscore distinctions between themselves and incoming immigrant communities.<sup>78</sup>

Though not often linked, the history of historic preservation and the colonial revival are integrally connected to how early twentieth-century Bostonians and Americans at large approached European immigrants. Many early

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<sup>74</sup> The Metropolitan Museum of Art will hereafter be referred to as the Metropolitan and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston as the Museum of Fine Arts. For information on Appleton and the SPNEA, see Lindgren, *Preserving Historic New England*. Anders Greenspan, *Creating Colonial Williamsburg* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002). Period rooms at the Met and the MFA are discussed in Morrison H. Heckscher, "The American Wing Rooms in the Metropolitan Museum of Art," *Winterthur Portfolio* 46, no. 2/3 (June 1, 2012): 161-78. Gerald W. R. Ward, "Period Rooms and the New Art of the Americas Wing of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Reexamination and Reinstallation," *Winterthur Portfolio* 46, no. 2/3 (June 1, 2012): 195-212. *Storrowton, a New England Village* (West Springfield, MA: Eastern States Exposition, 1930).

<sup>75</sup> In the case of Boston, power migrated towards Irish, Eastern European, and Italian communities. John "Honey Fitz" Fitzgerald, an Irish politician served in Congress from 1895 to 1901 and as Boston's mayor from 1906-1908. Many Boston Brahmins viewed his ascension as an alarming sign that they were losing control of their city. Marshall B. Davidson, "Those American Things," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 3 (January 1, 1970): 219-33. Wendy Kaplan, "R.T.H. Halsey: An Ideology of Collecting American Decorative Arts," *Winterthur Portfolio* 17, no. 1 (April 1, 1982): 43-53.

<sup>76</sup> Kenneth Ames, "Introduction," in Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, *The Colonial Revival in America*, 10.

<sup>77</sup> Lindgren, *Preserving Historic New England*, 10.

<sup>78</sup> These arguments parallel those made most famously by historian T.J. Jackson Lears, who suggests that anxiety around the changing face of the American city and the acceleration of everyday life produced a desire to return to historically inflected styles of the Arts and Crafts movement. T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Anti-Modernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1981. Paul DiMaggio, "Cultural Entrepreneurship in Nineteenth-Century Boston: The Creation of an Organizational Base for High Culture in America," *Media Culture and Society* 4 (1982), 33-50.

preservationists who advocated for the preservation of America's colonial architecture understood that the retention of such spaces was not merely to maintain the inheritance of a few Anglo-Saxon families. Rather, these structures might serve as classrooms for lessons about patriotism.<sup>79</sup> As early as 1883, prominent reformer Edwin Mead initiated a series of programs to teach immigrants American values by touring them through the architectural sites of the North End. Organizations such as the City History Club similarly provided courses for young immigrant children that included visits to historic landmarks.<sup>80</sup> Preservationists from the Bostonian Society to the Paul Revere Memorial Association similarly argued that saving historic spaces from destruction could provide civic lessons to area residents.

Paul Revere Pottery's founders and its artists absorbed the competing claims and contested legacies of early America. The workshop employed selective portions of Boston's Revolutionary history to sell products, carve physical and political space for immigrants, and to foster fulfilling careers for first and second-generation immigrant workers. They employed the arts and architecture of revolutionary America to support, rather than restrict, new ethnic populations in one of the nation's oldest cities. This exploration of the work of the Paul Revere Pottery complicates the commonly held notion that collecting, conserving, and copying of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century objects and homes served primarily as a bulwark against the looming threat of mushrooming immigration. Instead, this section argues that the early twentieth-century colonial revival also contained a strong contingent of reformers, both upper class and not, who saw ways to use America's past as rich material to teach citizenship or to encourage economic independence and a sense of belonging.

As Kate Swisher has argued, the Pottery was not alone as a progressive settlement house project that used colonially inspired objects and surroundings to present new immigrant communities to American audiences or to instill

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<sup>79</sup> As with so many progressive-era initiatives, the language reformers used in advocating for these spaces reflected inherent biases and inaccurate assumptions about immigrant populations.

<sup>80</sup> "The Dyckman House Park and Museum, *Beaver* 4, no. 2 (February 22, 1917) in William B. Rhoads, "The Colonial Revival and the Americanization of Immigrants in Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum," Alan Axelrod, ed. *The Colonial Revival in America* (New York: Norton, 1985), 3. According to historian Barbara Solomon, Mead's project was short-lived because he felt "the old impasses which lay between the upper-class natives and the alien masses." While his efforts in the North End were brief, Mead conducted a series of courses in the Old South Church and edited a successful series of educational pamphlets, the *Old South Leaflets*, which consolidated important American historical documents alongside "useful historic and bibliographic notes...to interest young people in American history and politics, to the end that they may become useful citizens." Barbara Miller Solomon, *Ancestors and Immigrants: A Changing New England Tradition* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1989), 86. Edwin Doak Mead, *Old South Leaflets* (Boston: Old South Meeting House, 1901).

patriotic virtues. Late nineteenth-century settlement house workers often clothed immigrants and posed them in the trappings of early-American domestic life. At Hull-House in Chicago, Starr and Addams hoped that by cloaking the foreign-born and second-generation women in the guise of colonial homemakers, they might inure these craftspeople and their products to native-born populations.<sup>81</sup> Architects in Boston and throughout the United States took lessons from eighteenth-century American buildings to fashion progressive institutions that reflected the ideals they saw reflected in early American buildings. As William Rhoads has observed, architects in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century used revolutionary-era buildings as the stylistic basis for settlement houses, schools, and churches meant to house immigrant communities. Rhoads argues that builders hoped that spaces inspired by the colonial, such as the South End settlement house in Boston might spur patriotism among those who visited.<sup>82</sup> Reformers understood these spaces and objects as radiating the virtues of the country's forefathers: frugality, courage, independence, and respect for liberty and democracy. New arrivals might absorb these virtues as they stood inside Paul Revere's home or gazed at silver tankards forged in his workshop. These reform-minded preservation ideas relied on a model of passive engagement, of betterment through osmosis. The immigrant viewing a piece of Paul Revere silver or sitting beneath the spire of the Old North Church would appreciate elegance and simplicity in form, but would also somehow gain appreciation for the greatness of America's founding fathers.

Edith Brown and the Paul Revere Pottery developed their work in an environment of committed reformers who eagerly espoused such ideas about the potential of colonial culture to transform immigrants into model citizens. More so than other city in the United States, Bostonians had a very specific relationship to historic structures and a markedly strong connection to seeing them as potentially useful in the furtherance of Arts and Crafts principles and ideas. At the end of the nineteenth century, Boston and Cambridge played host to a plethora of individuals and institutions, most notably the Society of Arts and Crafts, that were deeply intertwined with the Arts and Crafts movement in Britain and its veneration of historic architectural forms. As Beverly Brandt and Edward S. Cooke have explored, Bostonians were key players in the popularization and dissemination of Arts and Crafts principles, such as the reverence for the handmade and the morally tinged interest in teaching good taste to as wide a variety of consumers as possible. Charles Eliot Norton, Ernest Fenollosa, Mary Ware Dennett, Ernest Batchelder, Denman Ross, and Arthur Wesley Dow all spent considerable time in Boston and made the city a hotbed for

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<sup>81</sup> Kate Swisher, "Old Country in the New Country: The Visual Culture of American Immigration" (Conference Paper, College Art Association, Washington, D.C., February 6, 2016).

<sup>82</sup> William B. Rhoads, "The Colonial Revival and the Americanization of Immigrants," in Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, *The Colonial Revival in America*, 349.

ideas about the importance of laborer and teacher in the creation of good design.<sup>83</sup>

Edith Brown's designs for the pottery reflect her training at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, where Frederic Crowninshield began a course in decorative design in 1879 that by 1903 had become a major component of the educational program.<sup>84</sup> Brown's simple, colorful compositions also reflect her work as an illustrator, a job she performed simultaneously with her work at the Pottery. Brown illustrated an array of children's books, including *The Cheerful Cricket* (1906) and *Animal Children: The Friends of the Forest and the Plain* (1913).<sup>85</sup> Particularly drawn to plants and animals in her work on both ceramics and on paper, Brown's designs for each reflect signature elements, such as elongated trees and a bold areas of color enclosed by a strong outline. Edith Brown's foreshortened spaces and balanced compositions suggest that she absorbed lessons from Norton's disciples in Boston: Denman Ross and Arthur Wesley Dow.<sup>86</sup> As Nonie Gadsden has shown, Brown's illustrative technique also owes a debt to the work of British illustrator Walter Crane, who was a favorite among acolytes of the Arts and Crafts movement in the United States.<sup>87</sup>

Charles Eliot Norton, Harvard's first Professor of Fine Arts, was one of Boston's most direct links to the Arts and Crafts movement. The first President of the Society of Arts and Crafts, Norton developed friendships with John Ruskin, William Morris, and C.R. Ashbee and spurred the proliferation of Arts and Crafts making and teaching in New England.<sup>88</sup> Norton was a staunch advocate for the study of aesthetics intertwined with that of history to glean lessons from the past. As Edward S. Cooke describes, "Norton believed that close, firsthand study of historical artifacts would reveal the relationships of art and morals in past societies."<sup>89</sup> Through his teachings, he exhorted students to use the past as a way to critique the present. Norton's thinking deeply influenced the early preservationists in Boston, including his student William Sumner Appleton, founder of the Society for the Preservation of Historic New England.<sup>90</sup> Boston's unique confluence of historic architecture and influential teachers provided a rich environment for historically inflected workshops such as the Paul Revere Pottery to flourish.

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<sup>83</sup> Brandt, "Mutually Helpful Relations," 10. Edward S. Cooke, "Talking or Working."

<sup>84</sup> Cooke, "Talking or Working," 25, 27-28.

<sup>85</sup> Meyer, "Saturday Evening Girls and the Children's Movement," 14-15.

<sup>86</sup> Marie Frank, *Denman Ross and American Design Theory* (Lebanon, NH: University of New England Press, 2011).

<sup>87</sup> Gadsden, *Art & Reform*.

<sup>88</sup> Meister, *Arts and Crafts Architecture*, 74.

<sup>89</sup> Cooke, "Talking or Working," 20.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid*, 21.

Like many of his contemporaries, Norton was avowedly paternalistic about who would lead the revolution in craft practices. He firmly believed that a small, educated elite (gathered around himself at Harvard), might guide the betterment of taste by disseminating historically inflected designs to skilled craftsmen. For Norton, the hand who ultimately created works could well be that of the immigrant laborer, who he readily admitted was often better trained than the American craftsman of the early twentieth century.<sup>91</sup> This separation between formulation and execution along class lines could have spread to Arts and Crafts industries such as the Pottery. As we will see, however, Brown and Guerrier, perhaps because of their position as middle-class practitioners and go-betweens connecting Helen Osborne Storrow to the Jewish and Italian immigrant populations of the Pottery, rejected the class and education-based presumptions of Norton's Arts and Crafts movement. Like so many settlement-house workers, Brown and Guerrier lived in the same neighborhood as the women of the Pottery and spent their lives alongside the women of the workshop. Through their work as librarians with the Saturday Evening Girls Club, Guerrier and Brown also fostered the intellectual life of their workers alongside their skill as ceramicists.

Brown and Guerrier did not subscribe to the notion that spaces and objects of historic Boston would benefit communities merely by their presence. More radical than many of their peers, Brown and Guerrier reconceptualized the terms by which reformers employed colonial art and architecture as a tool for citizenship. In a concrete sense, Brown reconfigured antiquarian images from the late nineteenth century to include young Italian and Jewish women's homes and workplaces. In a larger context, the Pottery put its workers into the conversation about the history and future of their neighborhood by treating decorators not as empty vessels to be filled with ideas about patriotism but as skilled and active contributors to the cultural and economic life of the city.

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<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

## **“Rambles in Old (and New) Boston”: Historic Preservation in Twentieth Century Boston and Paul Revere Pottery’s Tiles**

By the early twentieth century, it was first- and second-generation Southern and Eastern European immigrant communities, rather than most Yankee Bostonians and the majority of middle and upper class progressives, who lived in closest proximity to the structures of Boston’s early history. The city’s North End was a small neighborhood bounded on one side by the harbor and stretching roughly out to Washington and Cross streets inland (Fig. 5). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the area served as a hub for shipbuilding and merchant activities and was home to the city’s earliest Puritan residents such as John Winthrop. The neighborhood also hosted the majority of the colony’s largest church congregations.<sup>92</sup> As the city expanded, native-born Bostonians moved away from the industrializing port. With the proliferation of the trolley lines, communities sprang up further and further from central Boston in areas such as the newly constructed Back Bay.<sup>93</sup> These departing populations left the older North End to arriving Irish immigrants and then to Eastern European Jewish and Italian immigrants. Once a bastion of Anglo-American merchants, politicians, and clergymen, by the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century the neighborhood had transformed into a densely packed area of newly constructed tenements filled with immigrant denizens, so much so that the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition bronze medal citation for the Pottery listed its location as “North end of Boston – Foreign Quarter.”<sup>94</sup>

In 1910, the city was home to 31,000 Italians and 42,000 Eastern Europeans. By 1915, seventy percent of Boston’s population was either foreign born or the child of an immigrant.<sup>95</sup> Some of the city’s patrician class, several of whom by 1894 had joined the Immigration Restriction League (founded at Harvard), decried the influx of immigrants into the North End and their seeming disregard for the area’s close relationship to the nation’s founding fathers.<sup>96</sup> Between 1890 and 1910, the North End population more than doubled as tenement houses crowded up against, and sometimes overtook, the very spaces early preservationists had

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<sup>92</sup> Paula J. Todisco, *Boston’s First Neighborhood: The North End* (Boston: Boston Public Library, 1976).

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, 14, 19. Sam Bass Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 46.

<sup>94</sup> *Certification for Bronze Medal to Paul Revere Pottery of the Saturday Evening Girls* (San Francisco, CA, August 15, 1915), University of California, Berkeley, Bancroft Library.

<sup>95</sup> Stephan Thernstrom, *The Other Bostonians: Poverty and Progress in the American Metropolis, 1880-1970* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 135. Lindgren, *Preserving Historic New England*, 28.

<sup>96</sup> Barbara Solomon examines the close network of Harvard graduates whose ideas on immigration restriction and eugenics gained traction in in the early twentieth century. Solomon, 105.

begun to identify as key markers of American heritage.<sup>97</sup> In 1893, Samuel Adams Drake, a popular historian, complained that:

Nowhere in Boston has Father Time wrought such ruthless changes, as in this highly respectable quarter, now swarming with Italians in every dirty nook and corner.... Past and Present confront each other here with a stare of blank amazement, in the humble Revere homestead, on one side, and the pretentious Hotel Italy on the other; nor do those among us, who [know] something of its vanished prestige, feel at all home in a place where our own mother-tongue no longer serves us.<sup>98</sup>

For Drake, the immigrant encroachment on Revere's house was particularly galling: a desecration of a sacred site by the ceaseless rise of newly constructed tenement houses. In 1892, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes told a friend that a New Englander felt much more at home "among his own people" in London than "in one of our seaboard cities."<sup>99</sup>

Indeed, just as Drake and Holmes feared, immigrant families did alter the landscape to reflect their needs and the traditions of their homelands. Historian Paula Todisco has explored the variety of Jewish and Italian institutions that sprang up in the neighborhood with stores such as Harris Gorfinkle and Company, the Freedman Brothers, and Giuseppe Parziale's pizza shop on Prince Street.<sup>100</sup> Fanny Goldstein, an artist at the Paul Revere Pottery and later the first curator of Judaica at the Boston Public Library, eloquently recapped the history of immigration to the North End and residents' efforts to alter its spaces. Unlike Drake or Holmes' comments, Goldstein's poem, composed for a Saturday Evening Girls Club reunion, positively identifies the growth and changes immigrants made to the area:

In the Old North End of Boston/ Of Paul Revere's Fame, – The  
district had changed/ And was not quite the same. /Instead of the  
Old Yankee fathers, / Long buried or gone, /Many new races,

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<sup>97</sup> Charles B. Hosmer and James Lingdren profile Bostonians' first efforts at historic preservation at the Old South Church and the growing interest and professionalization of the movement through William Sumner Appleton and the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. Charles B. Jr. Hosmer, *Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States before Williamsburg* (New York: Putnam, 1965). Lindgren, *Preserving Historic New England*.

<sup>98</sup> Samuel Adams Drake, *Old Landmarks and Historic Personages of Boston* (Boston: J. R. Osgood and company, 1873), 159.

<sup>99</sup> Oliver Wendell Holmes, *Our Hundred Days in Europe* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1892), 205.

<sup>100</sup> Todisco, *Boston's First Neighborhood*, 31, 35.

from shores distant and climes, / Rubbed shoulders together in  
this land of the free/ Where they had come seeking freedom – /  
They found – much – poverty. / But, with spirits undaunted, /  
New children they raised. / The families grew, bigger, / Their  
earnings did too. / It made little difference, / With Italian or Jew.  
/ The old haunts forgotten – / they built for the new.<sup>101</sup>

The North End was not a museum for newly arrived Italian and Eastern European families, but the place where they raised families, went to work, and gathered to celebrate. These residents were not, as some calls from antiquarians alleged, ignorant of the history of their neighborhood. Rather, encouraged by progressive reformers such as Brown and Guerrier, immigrants, such as the ceramicists of the Paul Revere Pottery, visualized and modernized their neighborhood with full acknowledgement of and deference to its storied past.

The fears over the imminent destruction of historically and aesthetically important architecture falling to new development were foremost in the minds of many Boston preservationists. Stung by their inability to save the John Hancock House from destruction in 1863, concerned Bostonians actively invested in the city's colonial cityscape by founding organizations to save structures such as the Old South Church, the Old State House, and Paul Revere's House due to their historic importance.<sup>102</sup> Citizens founded The Bostonian Society, the Paul Revere Memorial Association, and the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (now Historic New England) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to save buildings of regional and national importance. Revere's house served as a particularly important cause for its association with the patriot, but also thanks to its status as one of the oldest wood-frame homes in the United States. The house also sat on land first occupied by the city's most famous Puritan preachers, Cotton and Increase Mather. The house was first built around 1680 with Revere occupying the structure from 1770-1780: pivotal years before and during the American Revolution.

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<sup>101</sup> Fanny Goldstein and Charles Knowles Bolton, *The Story of the Saturday Evening Girls: Dedicated to Edith Guerrier and Helen Osborne Storrow : Especially Written for the Reunion Thursday Evening, December 12, 1929 at the West End House, 16 Blossom Street, Boston, Mass, 1929*, 3.

<sup>102</sup> As Curtis Guild, president of the Bostonian Society and future Governor of Massachusetts, explained of the Hancock house, "this memorial of a great man, and of a great period of a nation's history, is ruthlessly swept away when it ought to have been religiously and sacredly preserved as one of the precious historical mementos of the country." Curtis Guild in *Proceedings of The Bostonian Society at the Annual Meeting, January 11, 1887* (Boston, MA: Old State House, 1887), 6. Charles Hosmer provides a detailed description of the organizing behind preserving the Old South Church. Hosmer, *Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States before Williamsburg*, 111.

For the lovers of colonial history, the North End's eighteenth-century homes and public spaces held vital lessons of the past in their very walls. Antiquarian Edward Griffin Porter felt that such venerable structures might will their own preservation due to their vital histories. Describing the Revere House, he remarked, "this quaint and genuine relic of the seventeenth century seems to be endowed with exceptional longevity, as if the memory of former days had clung to its walls and forbidden their destruction."<sup>103</sup> The very beams of the home remained erect, mused Porter, because of their role as lasting memorials to the country's founding fathers.

When Appleton and the Paul Revere Memorial Association turned their attention to the Revere House in 1906, the home served a bevy of purposes as a shop and a tenement apartment. According to one 1905 visitor, "the lower floor is occupied by a Hebrew green grocery shop while the two upper floors are ordinary North End tenements. Looking into the hall through the open doorway may be seen numerable layers of variegated wallpapers. Thus is the oldest house in Boston gradually sinking into utter ruin."<sup>104</sup> As this 1906 photograph depicts, local residents had separated the building into tenement housing on its upper floors and an Italian grocery and bank on its lower levels (Fig. 6). While accounts differ as to whether the first floor housed Jewish or Italian storefronts, the presence of these businesses in the former home of the patriot clearly unnerved some locals, who voiced their dismay in language expressing prejudice against North End immigrant populations.

Charles Gettemy, an early historian of Revere, explained that, "all about it [Paul Revere's House] swarm olive-skinned natives of sunny Italy and the exiled sons and daughters of Poland and Jewish Russia. Perhaps it is the most historic slum tenement in America."<sup>105</sup> Tryphosa Bates Batcheller marveled on a visit to Boston: "One searches vainly, at first, for any trace of colonial settlement in its Babel of nationalities. Foreign shops and signs make all lines unfamiliar, and the chatter of strange dialects is heard everywhere. Salem Street has become a teeming Jewish quarter; North Square is a breathing-place—a *piazza*—for the Italian district, where amid uncouth surroundings, stands the house of Paul Revere, another brand from the burning, guarded as a goal of pilgrimage."<sup>106</sup> To

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<sup>103</sup> Edward Griffin Porter, *Rambles in Old Boston, New England* (Boston, MA: Cupples and Hurd, 1887), 320–321.

<sup>104</sup> *Milton Record*, September 16, 1905 in Heather A.E. Smith, "The Paul Revere Memorial Association, 1905-1988: An Early Success," *The Paul Revere House Gazette*, no. 11 (Spring 1998): 2. Lindgren identifies the businesses in 1902 that inhabited the old Paul Revere House as a cigar factory and green grocer. Lindgren, *Preserving Historic New England*, 37.

<sup>105</sup> Charles Ferris Gettemy, *The True Story of Paul Revere: His Midnight Ride, His Arrest and Court-Martial, His Useful Public Services* (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1912), 282.

<sup>106</sup> T.R. Sullivan, *Boston, New and Old* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin company, 1912), 36.

Anglo-Saxon visitors, the new immigrant populations speaking foreign languages, cooking different foods, and wearing different clothes insulted the sacred memory of the historic neighborhood and its revered former citizens.

Much of the language surrounding the restoration of the Revere House, while still despairing of the status of the neighborhood, nonetheless pitched the structure's potential revival as a key means to Americanize local foreign populations. At the House's 1908 dedication, former Massachusetts governor John D. Long remarked:

All honor and gratitude to the pious and reverent and patriotic hands and hearts, which have rescued this roof, this pure type of an old colonial house. It now stands in the very inundation and overflow of a population foreign born and coming to us utterly apart from all the traditions, history, religion and tone of the North of Boston in 1775. Yet every day it is assimilating itself by the influence of our schools and civic and political life to the American spirit. For that very reason especially fitting it is that this house should stand here in its original mould and pattern and tell to the generations now here and hereafter to come the story of Paul Revere, the story of the Old South Meeting House, the story of the Tea Party, the story of Lexington and Bunker Hill, not as a story of war and blood and slaughter, but as the story of the stir and upheaval and struggle and sacrifice out of which sprung the fair flower of the independent and free republic which is now to them and to all the world 'the land of the free and home of the brave.'<sup>107</sup>

From the "pure type" of colonial house, argued Long, immigrants could assimilate, just as the house had into its new surroundings. The home's walls could impart stories about freedom and independence. Curtis Guild, Jr., the President of the Paul Revere Memorial Association, similarly anticipated that Revere's restored home would "serve a daily lesson to the youth of that district in Massachusetts' ideal of loyalty, simplicity and civic pride." A restored Revere house would become "a reminder to new citizens of the service due from them and their children to the commonwealth."<sup>108</sup> In 1905, Appleton proposed that after its restoration, the House might even serve local populations as a public library branch, local settlement house, or charity. Alternatively, he proposed that

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<sup>107</sup> "Paul Revere's Old House Restored: Descendants Gather in Building Where Patriot Lived and Died," *Boston Sunday Herald*, April 19, 1908, reprinted in the *Paul Revere House Gazette*, no. 90, Spring 2008.

<sup>108</sup> Curtis Guild, Jr., Circular Letter, 27 November 1907, *Revere House Scrapbook*, in James M. Lindgren "'A Constant Incentive to Patriotic Citizenship,'" 597.

the interior might become a museum dedicated to showing the home life in eighteenth-century Boston; a plan that the Association ultimately implemented.<sup>109</sup> Appleton's suggestions, which were serious enough to merit publication in the *Boston Transcript*, meant that at least some supporters prioritized the use of the space for local community members.<sup>110</sup>

The fervor for historic preservation extended beyond the homes of patriotic citizens such as Revere to the vernacular spaces of virtuous eighteenth-century yeomen. Helen Jackson Storrow, the Pottery's sponsor, invested in New England's historic preservation movement and used the vernacular structures of New England to fashion a pseudo-village dedicated to the domestic arts. Beginning in 1927, Storrow began to literally collect colonial structures from across the region and to rearrange them on a plot of land in West Springfield, Massachusetts as an exhibition space for the Home Department at the Eastern States Exposition (Fig. 7).<sup>111</sup> Between 1927 and 1931, Storrow purchased several residences, a meetinghouse, blacksmith's shop, tavern, stagecoach barn, and a law office and apportioned the buildings around a small central grassy common. As *The New York Times* described: "grouped about a restful village green, with a white-spined church dominating the scene, the eleven authentic Revolutionary and pre-Revolutionary buildings assembled and restored over the years by Mrs. James J. Storrow of Boston, preserve for future generations the dignity and rugged simplicity of early American life."<sup>112</sup> Called Storrowton, the architecture served as classroom space for courses in the domestic arts.

Like many of her contemporaries in Boston and across the country, Storrow viewed her efforts as helping to connect contemporary visitors with the virtues of America's oldest residents and the work of colonial women. Akin to the work of Henry Ford at Greenfield Village, Storrow fashioned her model town by plucking buildings from various times and places and arranging them to form a pleasing composition. Storrow and her architects went so far as to graft portions

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<sup>109</sup> "Paul Revere's Old House Restored."

<sup>110</sup> *Boston Transcript*, June 21, 1905 in Patrick Leehey, "The Business of Preservation: John Phillips Reynolds Jr. and the Restoration of the Paul Revere House," *The Paul Revere House Gazette*, no. 69 (Winter 2002): 1-4, 6, 8. Arguments for the preservation of the Old South Church had also included the notion that the space might serve as a classroom for immigrants. Brander Matthews, "The American of the Future," *The Century*, 74 (July 1907), 60 in Kammen, *The Mystic Chords of Memory*, 244.

<sup>111</sup> Storrow seems to have had an abiding interest in American colonial history much like many of her social peers and this manifested itself both in her support of the Pottery and in her vision for Storrowton. By 1927, Storrow was part of a larger movement of philanthropic projects to reformulate colonial village life with historic and reconstructed architecture. For example, Henry Ford was at work to create Greenfield Village. Storrowton still exists in West Springfield, Massachusetts as part of the Eastern States Exposition grounds.

<sup>112</sup> Richard H. Parks, "Village of Another Day," *The New York Times*, June 29, 1941.

of disparate structures onto one another to create new and more “authentic” wholes.<sup>113</sup> At Storrowton, the schoolhouse represents one such invention. The builders place a tower adapted from an example in Vergennes, Vermont atop a first floor that originated in Whately, Massachusetts.<sup>114</sup> Storrow founded the village not to salvage remnants of the past, but “to serve as a graphic illustration of how household work could be modernized while still retaining the old setting and flavor of bygone days.”<sup>115</sup> Storrow’s experimental town sought to link contemporary American life and its advancements with the presumed virtues of colonial living and particularly, to the industriousness of eighteenth-century female labor (while Henry Food’s Greenfield Village valorized the plucky ingenuity of America’s common man). While Storrow did not begin her building project in Springfield until many years after her first investment in the Paul Revere Pottery, the two projects share the philanthropist’s vested interest in history’s didactic potential, particularly for women.

Storrow’s interest in colonial architecture likely permeated the Pottery’s decision, in 1910, to begin producing a series of tiles dedicated to the North End’s iconic colonial buildings. Brown designed a series of at least 16 tiles showcasing well known and recently preserved public buildings such as the Old North Church, the Old South Church, and Paul Revere’s House (Fig. 8 and 9). Brown favored a  *cuerda seca*  technique in which the artist applied a mixture of wax and manganese to create an outline that set apart areas of colored glaze. During firing, the wax burns off leaving a thick black outline. In some instances, the Paul Revere Pottery’s artists carved into the wet clay before the first firing to create channels in which the wax and manganese might pool. The  *cuerda seca*  process highlighted the palette of bright glazes the Pottery proudly mixed itself.<sup>116</sup>

As Livingston Wright explained in 1917, the Pottery “made tiles showing some of the many ancient Colonial and pre-Colonial houses, wharves, alley-like streets, and other artistic features of the ‘North End.’ These sold remarkably well.”<sup>117</sup> Along with tiles depicting historic public spaces, such as Faneuil Hall, the Old State House, and the Boston Common, Brown also depicted lesser known private homes from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, such as the Galloupe, Hartt, and Tileston houses, all located in the North End. These buildings housed school teachers, merchants, and various personages of colonial

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<sup>113</sup> John D. Rockefeller, Jr.’s Colonial Williamsburg forms part of the same impetus to recreate with the aim of authenticity. Rockefeller proposed that his plans for Williamsburg would help visitors absorb “the lesson that it teaches of patriotism, high purpose, and unselfish devotion of our forefathers to the common good.” John D. Rockefeller, “The Genesis of the Williamsburg Restoration,” *National Geographic Magazine* 71, no. 4 (1937): 401.

<sup>114</sup> *Storrowton, a New England Village*, 11.

<sup>115</sup> Parks, “Village of Another Day.”

<sup>116</sup> Hurley and Collins, “Report of Pottery Cost-Finding,” Gadsden, *Art & Reform*, 60.

<sup>117</sup> Wright, “Girls’ Club Establishes Pottery and Ultimately Makes It a Financial Success,” 578.

Boston. The tiles proved so popular that the Pottery featured them frequently at exhibitions such as 1910's New York Society of Ceramic Arts.<sup>118</sup>

The Pottery included selections from the set in the tiled fireplace of their suburban workshop (Fig. 10.) As Wright described, "there is a perfectly alluring assembly room, a cosy den, with a genuine Olden Tyme fireplace, where the girls have restful recreation."<sup>119</sup> Guerrier designed the workshop's second home to reflect British Tudor domestic architecture. She nestled the structure in a lush garden (Fig. 11). The workshop opened to the public for tours so that visitors could admire the warm surroundings in which the women worked and also to glean insights into how the Pottery's wares might grace their own homes. Guerrier and Brown chose to feature the set of historic tiles within the large hearth, itself a potent symbol of the colonial home and female virtue. The presence of the tiles reminded the women who worked at the Pottery of their neighborhood landmarks. By displaying these tiles in the workshop's public space in Brighton, Guerrier and Brown sought to affiliate the workers and the Pottery's products with the North End.

The historic tiles proved popular as decorative ornaments for Boston and New England homeowners. Their "unpretentious and pleasing" aspect prompted Mira Edson of *Arts and Decoration* to recommend them for installation in small homes. As Edson advised, "the placement or framing of a work of art has much to do with the pleasure it is able to evoke, so these little tilings, to be appreciated for what they are, are best set up locally upon the mantel or elsewhere in the New England cottage."<sup>120</sup> Condensed and graphic, the tiles channeled a particular time and place in Boston's history that resonated for tastemakers, such as Edson and her readers, who were familiar with local history and geography and enamored of Arts and Crafts illustrative styles.<sup>121</sup>

Edith Brown based many of the tiles on a series of sketches published in Edward Griffin Porter's 1887 *Rambles in Old Boston*. An amateur historian, Porter began to document the North End's colonial homes in the spring of 1885 with four lectures on "The Old North End" at the North Bennet Street Industrial School, (then called the Industrial Home on North Bennet Street). Edwin Mead, founder of a lecture series on American history for Boston's immigrant youth, was on

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<sup>118</sup> Mira Burr Edson, "Exhibition of Ceramics," *Arts and Decoration* 1 (October 1910): 261.

<sup>119</sup> Wright, "Girls' Club Establishes Pottery and Ultimately Makes It a Financial Success," 578.

<sup>120</sup> Mira B. Edson, "Paul Revere Pottery of Boston Town," 94.

<sup>121</sup> Gadsden and Meyer have noted the close similarities between Edith Brown's figures and the work of Arts and Crafts illustrator Walter Crane as well as the compositional strategies of Arthur Wesley Dow. As a children's book illustrator, Brown took pains to reduce her imagery to easily legible forms. Gadsden, *Art & Reform*. Meyer, "Saturday Evening Girls and the Children's Movement."

hand for some of Porter's popular presentations and remarked that "the hall was always thronged, not only with North End people, but with oldtime residents, often coming from long distances, pleased to revive their early recollections."<sup>122</sup> Porter was a true Boston blueblood whose ancestors had landed at Plymouth in 1623. He graduated from Harvard in 1858 and spent his career as a minister while representing Massachusetts in the Historical Department at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition. In 1899, Porter served as president of the New England Genealogical Society and was a member of the American Antiquarian Society, the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the American Historical Association.<sup>123</sup> As a dedicated historian with family ties back to Boston's first settlers, Porter held a rather dim view of the changing North End and the spate of newly constructed tenement houses.

Porter expanded his popular North Bennet Street lecture series into a guidebook published in 1887, which featured domestic and public structures of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Boston. To illustrate the work, Porter engaged architect and illustrator George R. Tolman.<sup>124</sup> Porter considered Tolman thanks to the artist's 1882 portfolio, *12 Sketches of Old Boston Buildings*. The two elected to reuse some of Tolman's work from that series, such as a rendering of the Revere house. Tolman's illustrations circulated beyond Porter's guidebook. In 1886, the publisher loaned a watercolor of the Paul Revere house by Tolman to the Bostonian Society and the picture was later purchased for the Society's permanent collection.<sup>125</sup> Curtis Guild, president of the Paul Revere Memorial Society, also bought Tolman's heliograph series for the Society in 1895.<sup>126</sup>

Porter's introduction to *Rambles* emphasized that the illustrator had drawn his images from life. The renderings represented the city's buildings not as they looked when constructed, but rather as they appeared to Porter in 1886. As a pamphlet from the *Bostonian Society* explained, "this book will show, for all time, what architectural antiquities we had among us in the year 1886, and will

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<sup>122</sup> Edwin Doak Mead, *The Old South Historical Work* (Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1887), 13.

<sup>123</sup> Samuel Swett Green, *Memoir of Edward Griffin Porter* (John Wilson and Son, 1901), 9.

<sup>124</sup> Tolman was an architect, draughtsman, and watercolorist. He was born in 1848 and died in 1909 in Boston. Peter H Falk et al., *Who Was Who in American Art, 1564-1975: 400 Years of Artists in America* (Madison, CT: Sound View Press, 1999), vol. 3, 3314.

<sup>125</sup> *Proceedings of The Bostonian Society at the Annual Meeting, January 11, 1887*, 50. *Bostonian Society, Catalogue of the Collections of the Bostonian Society: In the Memorial Halls of the Old State House, Boston, Feb. 1, 1893* (Boston: Bostonian Society, 1893), 36.

<sup>126</sup> *Bostonian Society, Catalogue of the Collections of the Bostonian Society*, 94. The Society displayed its collection to the public beginning in 1881 in the Old State House, the structure founders created the Society to preserve. The Bostonian Society's collection currently includes 24 Tolman illustrations of the North End, including the image of Paul Revere's House on which Brown based the design for her tile. The Tolman images are viewable using the "Search the Object Collection," of the Bostonian Society's website, accessed January 9, 2014, <http://rfi.bostonhistory.org>.

preserve for coming generations, the traditions which connect them with the individual and social life of Boston. It will prove of great value as a history of that quaint and antiquated part of the city, which we call the North End."<sup>127</sup> According to the pamphlet, Tolman's work recorded the buildings but also made visible the tradition (perhaps aesthetic or perhaps patriotic) that connected old and new Boston. *Rambles* constituted a plea for preservation with Tolman's images serving to memorialize a neighborhood of structures, both quaint and stately, before developers overtook them and brought in unfamiliar denizens to populate them. The North End on view in Porter and Tolman's work was at once crumbling thanks to the lack of interest on the part of Bostonians and also in danger of disappearance due to the new construction replacing the homes of virtuous colonial yeomen in favor of high occupancy tenement apartments.<sup>128</sup>

Tolman's pictures aptly capture this sense of imminent destruction. In his image "The Old House," he depicts a small timber home on Charter Street wedged between towering new buildings (Fig. 12). In presenting the small house on Charter Street, Porter remarked that "until recently one could find in Charter Street quite a number of ancient dwellings well worth examining. They are disappearing from year to year, as the demand for larger and more modern tenements increases."<sup>129</sup> Even at its tallest point, the chimney, the house seems overwhelmed by the steep eaves of larger structures. The home appears dilapidated with its shutters dangerously askew. Tolman also includes a young boy on the stoop in front of the residence who leans his torso to the right at the same angle as the most precariously tilting shutter. Perhaps he is a part of the new population of the North End, or, as Porter deemed the region, "the most forbidding parts of what is now the foreign quarter of the city."<sup>130</sup> The tiny structure feels squeezed by the forces of changing demographics consuming it on either side.

Porter described the Tileston house, home of a famous Boston schoolteacher, as "once an attractive dwelling shaded by trees, but now disfigured by the ugly addition which has turned the old school-master's parlor into a corner grocery, and planted a clothes-shed for tenants where his stately front door used to be."<sup>131</sup> (Fig. 13). While the sign over the building's first story is illegible, the large windows and open door indicate the transformation from domestic to commercial space. Tolman's view also encompasses a seemingly endless row of tenement houses tacked onto the building. In the distance, another large structure looms on the horizon, while in the foreground, Tolman depicts a fenced

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<sup>127</sup> *Proceedings of The Bostonian Society at the Annual Meeting, January 11, 1887.*

<sup>128</sup> Porter, *Rambles in Old Boston*, vii-viii.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 238.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

lot and a group of children clustered around a poster advertising a boxing match. One particularly downtrodden figure slumps against the fence and across the street. Like the children immersed in the details of the upcoming match, this man's lethargy seems antithetical to the temperament of the stern and regimented schoolmaster John Tileston, the home's former occupant, who Porter describes as a strict and industrious community leader.

Tolman's drawing of the Paul Revere House similarly recalls a neighborhood altered by the influx of new urban-scaled buildings and Eastern European and Italian immigrants (Fig. 14). In Tolman's image, captured before the building's 1907 restoration, a large sign hangs from the home to remind readers of the ethnic markets and shops open throughout the neighborhood. Flanking Revere's house, Tolman pictures an empty lot surrounded by a fence dotted with peeling advertisements and signage. The vertical composition visualizes the Revere House dwarfed by the jagged profiles of much larger buildings surrounding it. Smoke snakes out into the distance from the building's slender chimney. On the roof of the tenement next door to Revere's house, Tolman pictures a young woman next to a row of drying laundry who gazes down at Revere's house. When combined with Porter's text, the image represented how far the status of the neighborhood and its most important structures had seemingly fallen.

The Paul Revere Pottery was situated at the epicenter of the quickly changing neighborhood that formed the core of Porter and Tolman's study; Brown and the decorators of the Pottery depicted several structures within close proximity of the studio derived from Tolman's illustrations (Fig. 15). The Hartt and Galloupe houses were both located on the same street as the Pottery while the Schoolmaster's House and the Old North Church sat only a few blocks away. The Lincoln House was on the corner opposite the North Bennet Street Industrial School. The series also included famous public spaces outside of the neighborhood, yet the structures that Brown elected to depict were largely those that would have been familiar to the artists of the pottery. Brown's series of tiles for the Paul Revere Pottery utilized and modified Tolman's illustrations by translating them into a new medium and size. In doing so, she and the artists of the Pottery subtly but declaratively altered the overall effect of the scenes and their messages. The Pottery illustrated many of the same structures' nearly identical vantage points but decoupled the images from Porter's commentary so that their views visualize a drastically different North End landscape.<sup>132</sup>

Brown's tiles explicitly draw parallels between the work of the Pottery and Tolman's illustrations. Like Tolman's drawing, Brown's design depicting the Tileston House accentuates the front windows to designate the first floor as

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"The Paul Revere Pottery," n.d. Barbara Kramer Files, JMW Gallery.

commercial space (Fig. 16). Brown alters the composition by severely cropping the original form to eliminate the fenced-in yard, the attached row of tenements, and the group of street urchins, and the loiterer. Brown's tile celebrates the home as a fixture on the corner of two North End thoroughfares. Her tightly composed and colorful rendering allows the viewer to identify the Tileston House's distinctive silhouette while diminishing the aura of decomposition prevalent in Tolman's rendering.

Brown altered her image of Paul Revere's house to adapt it to a square composition, but also to remove the presence of encroaching tenements that threaten to engulf the house in Tolman's scene (Fig. 14). In Brown's tile, the adjacent building rises only one story higher than the Revere house and the viewer can glimpse blue sky above its flattened roofline. Brown has included the fence to the left of the house, but has removed the pasted advertisements evident in Tolman's view. By translating the illustrator's linear pen strokes into large areas of flat color enclosed by decisive black outlines, Brown recasts these colonial landmarks as part of a harmonious whole neighborhood. Eliminating the picturesque aura of ruin and the poignant juxtaposition of the village-scaled structure overcome by urbanism, the black-outlined simplification focuses on stability.

Several of Brown's compositions feature more contemporary constructions abutting a featured historic landmark, such as her tile depicting the base of the Old North Church (Fig. 16). On the ceramic tile, we see the well-known church surrounded by buildings. Using white outline against the large mass of reddish brown, Brown pictures blocks of structures flanking either side of Hull Street with the viewer positioned as a pedestrian on this street. The church anchors the center of the composition, but it is compressed on either side between the two rows of densely packed tenement houses. Rendered in the same reddish brown, Brown links the Church's base and the surrounding buildings. The tile illustrates the world as the women of the Pottery would have experienced it, but without the unpleasant associations of immigrant indigence from Tolman's illustrations.

Rather, compositions such as this one celebrate the Pottery and the homes of its workers as proximate to and in conversation with the city's most sacred historic sites. Tolman's images render texture, shadow, and depth with minute pen strokes. The illustrations are dense with few passages of unmarked space. Tolman populates his skies with passing clouds, clusters of birds, or plumes of smoke, resulting in packed compositions that accentuate the claustrophobia of the North End. Brown's tiles, though small, feel expansive by comparison. She uses no more than three or four colors in each and removes the anecdotal details of Tolman's work to fashion serene scenes. Outlined silhouettes pictured buildings lining the streets and alleys that second-generation immigrant artists of

the Paul Revere Pottery traversed every day. The tiles helped the women of the pottery showcase proficiency in Colonial history and develop an alternative harmonious vision of the contemporary North End to the one forwarded by Tolman; one that forecasted the neighborhood's positive evolution rather than its imminent demise.

### **“Swift Pride:” Longfellow, American Education, and the Legacy of Paul Revere<sup>133</sup>**

In 1911, *House Beautiful* dedicated an article to the work of the Paul Revere Pottery. As with much of the writing about the workshop, the author began by explaining the workshop's name: “In the annals of historic interest, Paul Revere stands a conspicuous figure. Immortalized by poets and bards, his name has become a National pride. It is not strange that an industry which had its beginning in Hull Street, in the North End of Boston, where the ‘Old North Church’ stands, should take for its name ‘Paul Revere.’”<sup>134</sup> As with many descriptions of the Pottery's christening, the writer for *House Beautiful* attributed the studio's branding to the proximity of the Old North Church to the workshop. In this re-telling of the workshop's origin story – a tale largely consistent with Guerrier's autobiography and various artists' accounts – notes that ‘poets and bards’ made Revere and the Old North Church famous. The bard in question was Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and his work, “The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere.” Published first in 1860 in *The Boston Transcript*, “The Midnight Ride,” was instrumental in fashioning Revere as a patriot and the North End as the seat of Revolutionary Boston. Indeed, the Pottery dedicated a full series of tiles to the poem and they were among its best-known products (Fig. 17). The series showcases another means by which Brown and the Pottery's artists shaped an idea about the history of the neighborhood to benefit their community and secure their place in the city.

Beginning the early 1910s, the Paul Revere Pottery began to display the sets of thirteen tiles depicting significant vignettes from Longfellow's poem. The tiles graced the walls of public buildings such as the Forsyth Dental Infirmary for Children where builders installed a full set for the building's 1914 opening (Fig. 18).<sup>135</sup> In addition to appealing to Americans eager to connect to a concrete if idealized vision of their past, the set also celebrated the successful integration of the workshop's first and second generation artists in American life. Their production memorialized the women's participation in the Massachusetts public

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<sup>133</sup> Brander Matthews, “The American of the Future,” *The Century*, 74 (July 1907).

<sup>134</sup> “Paul Revere’ Pottery a Rare Product,” *House Beautiful*, December, 1911.

<sup>135</sup> The tiles are still visible in the building, now called the Forsyth Institute, although they are not available to the public. Sarah A. Hull, “Decorative Tile Work of the Forsyth Dental Center” (Simmons College, May 1998).

school system and through extra-curricular projects such as Americanization courses at the North Bennet Street Industrial School.<sup>136</sup>

Before 1860, Revere's ride did not figure prominently in the story of American independence. While myriad scholars have pointed out the historical inaccuracies of Longfellow's account, the work nonetheless became the chief means by which young Americans learned of Boston's role in the Revolutionary war.<sup>137</sup> After the publication of Longfellow's poem, Americans, and particularly Bostonians, took special pains to bolster the patriot as a symbol of independence and strength. The city of Boston commissioned sculptor Cyrus Dallin to fashion a statue of Revere on horseback, though the full monument was never erected. In 1891, Elbridge Henry Goss published the first full-length biography of Revere and in 1905, composer E.T. Paull fashioned a piece of music, *Revere's Ride; a March-Two Step*, featuring the faint sound of horse hooves.<sup>138</sup>

Subsumed into public school curricula across the country, the poem etched itself into the minds of school children, many of whom were immigrants, who learned and recited its singsong rhythms by heart. Early-twentieth century Revere historian Charles Ferris Gettemy remarked:

Upon how many thousands of schoolboys who have declaimed the stirring lines of Longfellow's description of Paul Revere's ride, and upon how many thousands, too, of their elders has the picture drawn by the poet left its indelible impression? Certainly it is the sum and substance of all their knowledge of the subject to hundreds of visitors who, every summer, wander through those old, narrow streets of the north end of Boston and gaze with reverence upon the graceful spire of Christ Church.... It is to Longfellow's simple and tuneful ballad that most persons undoubtedly owe their knowledge of the fact that a man of the name of Revere really did something on the eve of the historic skirmish at Lexington which is worth remembering.<sup>139</sup>

Longfellow's verse – the quickly moving narrative and its vivid visual description, which Gettemy describes as a "picture drawn" – made the work a popular didactic tool in schoolrooms throughout America, including urban classrooms with mandates to help young first and second-generation immigrant pupils Americanize. Historian David Hackett Fischer has also remarked on the "insistent beat" of Longfellow's meter that helped make the poem appealing as a

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<sup>136</sup> Mead, *Old South Leaflets*.

<sup>137</sup> David Hackett Fischer, *Paul Revere's Ride* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 331–332.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 334, 336.

<sup>139</sup> Gettemy, *The True Story of Paul Revere*, xxii.

teaching tool.<sup>140</sup> As Fischer explains, despite Longfellow's many historical inaccuracies, his poem "gave new life and symbolic meaning to its subject."<sup>141</sup> Virginia Jackson has contended that Longfellow's poetry contains a visual quality that naturally lent itself to wide dissemination and frequent illustration.<sup>142</sup>

By 1900, the poem was part of the social studies curricula in nearly all American schools.<sup>143</sup> The teaching of American history, particularly through lessons that employed image-rich poetry, proved an ideal vehicle to bring American history to first generation students. Angela Sorby has proposed that "The Midnight Ride" helped soothe tensions in classrooms between various ethnic groups by creating a united narrative about the nation's early history that children of all nationalities might embrace.<sup>144</sup> As she describes, the poem "locates readers in a national community by giving them a common history."<sup>145</sup> The poem's emphasis on particular places, such as the Old North Church and Copp's Hill Cemetery, also created a virtual lesson in Boston's geography for students. A Massachusetts teacher's guide from 1911 suggested teaching the poem alongside a map of Revere's route to familiarize pupils with the particular features that the patriot would have seen and known.<sup>146</sup> For immigrants in the North End, such as the young women of the Pottery, to have their neighborhood streets celebrated as the site of famous deeds could well have engendered a sense of pride.

The Paul Revere Pottery's set of 13 tiles depicting scenes from the "Midnight Ride" constitute one such illustration that visualized historic spaces of colonial New England and showcased the Pottery's knowledgeable artists. While the objects could be purchased individually, together they formed a retelling of the poem in its entirety. The series begins with the stealthy approach of the British warship *Somerset* into the Boston harbor and ends with the redcoats' flight after the Revolutionary War's first skirmish.<sup>147</sup> Each tile includes text from the poem describing the action of the particular moment. The tile depicting Revere holding his hat as he sprints through the night reads, "Struck out by a steed flying

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<sup>140</sup> Fischer, *Paul Revere's Ride*, 331.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 332.

<sup>142</sup> Virginia Jackson, "Longfellow's Tradition; or Picture-Writing a Nation," *Modern Language Quarterly* 4, no. 59, 1998: 471-96.

<sup>143</sup> Angela Sorby, *Schoolroom Poets: Childhood, Performance, and the Place of American Poetry, 1865-1917* (Lebanon, NH: University of New England Press, 2005), 29.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>146</sup> Margaret W. Haliburton. *Teaching Poetry in the Grades* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1911), 54, in Sorby, *Schoolroom Poets*.

<sup>147</sup> A full set of the tiles was installed in 1914 at Forsyth Institute, which at the time had opened as a dental clinic for children. Sarah A. Hull, "Decorative Tile Work of the Forsyth Dental Center," (Simmons College, May 1998).

fearless and fleet. “The tiles, and particularly the silhouette of the mounted Revere, proved popular with consumers. Mary Northend of *House Beautiful* suggested that “perhaps the most interesting of all, on account of its association with place are those depicting Paul Revere. Paul Revere, galloping on horseback with his cape blowing out behind, is a very popular motif.”<sup>148</sup>

Images of Revere in profile expanded far beyond the series of tiles. The Pottery employed Revere’s form atop his horse on all variety of offerings such as bowls and paperweights (Fig. 19). Beginning in 1923, fully eight years after the Pottery moved out of the North End, the workshop still stamped its wares with the image of the mounted Revere to connect its work to the patriot and craftsman. The Pottery’s espousal of Revere’s image and of Longfellow’s poem indicated more than Brown, Guerrier, and Storrow’s interest in the colonial revival and its associated heroes. Rather, the tiles and the linkage of the Pottery to the figure of Revere, himself a second-generation immigrant and craftsman, celebrated the education and acculturation of the Pottery’s first and second-generation immigrant workforce. Given that cultivating sophisticated literary taste was at the heart of Edith Guerrier’s Saturday Evening Girls Club project, it is not surprising that some of the group’s best-known work celebrates these women’s literacy and their historical knowledge.<sup>149</sup>

Guerrier founded SEGs as a means of providing the women of the neighborhood with the tools they would need to advance in American economic life. As she recalls in her memoir, Guerrier told the Pottery workers that “some day you girls are going to enter the business world.... you will need to have a sense of the values of good literature, good music, and good recreation.”<sup>150</sup> At a moment when some politicians, social critics, and even settlement house reformers debated whether Eastern European and Italian immigrants were capable of learning American values or whether they were inherently unteachable, the use of “The Midnight Ride” in public schools and as a key component of the Pottery’s visual vocabulary provided a clear statement that the young women of the Pottery had not only read this American history, but that they had absorbed it.<sup>151</sup> Much like the recitation of the poem in public school classrooms, the tiles presented a type of performance for the artists of the Pottery. Installed collectively and read as a complete narrative, they celebrated a comprehensive

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<sup>148</sup> Mary Harrod Northend, “Paul Revere Pottery,” *House Beautiful* XXXVI, no. 3 (August 1914): 82-83.

<sup>149</sup> For more on the Saturday Evening Girls and Guerrier’s vision for the literary clubs of the North Bennet Street Industrial school, see Kate Clifford Larsen, “The Saturday Evening Girls: A Progressive Era Library Club and the Intellectual Life of Working Class and Immigrant Girls in Turn-of-the-Century Boston,” 195-230

<sup>150</sup> Guerrier, *An Independent Woman*, 79.

<sup>151</sup> John Higham and American Council of Learned Societies, *Strangers in the Land Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002).

re-telling of a version of Boston's history and the narrative of the nation's founding. At the same time, the works reminded purchasers and viewers that female artists of the Pottery understood the story they depicted.

### **"The Halo of Association:" Collecting and Exhibiting Colonial Objects and Paul Revere Pottery's Domestic Wares**

Yankees, progressives, and new immigrants alike turned not only to historic structures of the colonial past and history lessons in poetic form, but also to antique objects from Revolutionary Boston as a way to formulate lessons about the American past. For Brown and Guerrier, the growing interest in American antiques provided a stylistic basis for many of the shapes and patterns they designed. Brown likely encountered eighteenth-century American decorative arts at institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston as well as through her interactions with Helen Osborne Storrow and her social circle. Rather than create faithful reproductions of seventeenth and eighteenth-century objects for sale to colonial revival enthusiasts (though there was a robust market for these), Brown and Guerrier created works suitable for the present moment imbued with references to New England's past.<sup>152</sup> The studio took advantage of the associations of eighteenth-century forms with virtues such as industriousness and modesty.

As with the burgeoning historic preservation movement in Boston, private collectors and museum officials differed widely in how they understood the traditions these objects represented and the Pottery's use of early American styles was necessarily informed both by collectors eager to establish their lineage from a British and Western European tradition and by reformers who embraced antique objects as tools for teaching patriotism. While the aims of these constituencies differed, nearly all collectors and preservationists of the early twentieth century agreed that the worth of American antiques lay not merely in their aesthetic beauty, but in their associations with heroes of the Revolution.

Stirrings of interest in early American objects emerged throughout New England with the sanitary fairs of the 1860s and the 1876 Philadelphia International Exposition. At Philadelphia, in the New England Farmers Home display, women dressed in homespun garments and served meals to audiences around an

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<sup>152</sup> Several marketers such as Wallace Nutting, produced works more faithfully wedded to colonial precedents designed for consumers eager to own these objects but unable to pay for originals. As Thomas Denenberg argues, Nutting also partook of a creative re-imagining of the American past to produce his furniture. Thomas Andrew Denenberg, *Wallace Nutting and the Invention of Old America* (New Haven: Yale University Press in association with the Wadsworth Athenaeum Museum of Art, 2003).

enormous hearth bedecked with the trappings of a farmstead kitchen.<sup>153</sup> With the 1909 Hudson-Fulton exhibition, the Metropolitan helped inaugurate an era of permanent public displays of early American materials in fine arts contexts, culminating in the opening of the Museum's American Wing in 1924 (Figs. 20-21).<sup>154</sup> In 1906, the Museum of Fine Arts hosted its first exhibition of early American silver, followed in 1911 by another major joint display of church silver arranged in conjunction with the Metropolitan Museum.<sup>155</sup> By 1925, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston had also completed a major renovation to exhibit European and American decorative arts from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>156</sup> A brief examination of the rhetoric around these displays, particularly Boston's fascination with the work of the famed silversmith Revere, unravels what made colonial designs so compelling to American collectors and why Guerrier and Brown might have elected to draw from colonial source materials.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Many scholars date the renewed interest in colonial forms to the colonial kitchen exhibit at the Philadelphia Exposition in 1876. Rodris Roth, "The New England, or 'Olde Tyme,' Kitchen Exhibit at Nineteenth-Century Fairs," in Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, *The Colonial Revival in America*, 159-183.

<sup>154</sup> Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.), *The Hudson-Fulton Celebration: Catalogue of an Exhibition Held in the Metropolitan Museum of Art Commemorative of the Tercentenary of the Discovery of the Hudson River by Henry Hudson in the Year 1609, and the Centenary of the First Use of Steam in the Navigation of Said River by Robert Fulton in the Year 1807: New York, September to November, MCMIX* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1909).

<sup>155</sup> Boston's 1906 silver exhibition was the first time an American museum had dedicated an entire display to American decorative arts with a catalogue. Along with Halsey, Francis Hill Bigelow, a Boston dealer, helped bring together a formidable collection of American silver for these displays. Elizabeth Stillinger, *The Antiquers: The Lives and Careers, the Deals, the Finds, the Collections of the Men and Women Who Were Responsible for the Changing Taste in American Antiques, 1850-1930* (New York: Knopf: Random House, 1980), 126. Unlike the excellent literature on the Metropolitan's early American collectors and curators, there is relatively little written on early American collections at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Whitehill's history of the museum is currently the best source. He notes that in 1919, the MFA began to invest more seriously in the collecting of American decorative arts with works donated by collectors Dudley L. Pickman, Charles Hitchcock Tyler, Henry Davis Sleeper, Francis Hill Bigelow, and William Crowninshield Endicott. Elizabeth Stillinger also provides a short overview of one of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston's major American decorative arts donors, Charles Hitchcock Tyler. Walter Muir Whitehill, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: A Centennial History* (Belknap Press, 1970). Stillinger, *The Antiquers*.

<sup>156</sup> The Philadelphia Museum of the Art, Salem's Essex Institute (now the Peabody Essex), and Detroit Institute of Arts also collected and displayed American decorative arts and utilized the period room to feature pre-colonial and colonial interiors. The major donor to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Charles Hitchcock Tyler, was a cousin of The Metropolitan Museum's major American decorative arts donor, Horace Eugene Bolles. Tyler's collection, though somewhat more eclectic than his uncle's, nonetheless provided the museum with a core group of furnishings, glass, silver, and ceramics from the seventeenth, eighteenth and even the nineteenth centuries. Stillinger, *The Antiquers*, 104.

<sup>157</sup> Meyer, "Saturday Evening Girls and the Children's Movement," January 1991, 15.

Much like the push to preserve colonial structures, collectors and museum professionals venerated seventeenth and eighteenth-century American objects, particularly furniture, pewter, and silver, for what the Metropolitan Museum of Art's first de-facto curator of the American Wing, R.T.H Halsey, deemed "the halo of association with manifold phases of the life of our fathers."<sup>158</sup> Remarking on a temporary exhibition of seventeenth-century decorative arts from New England, Boston's decorative arts curator Edwin Hipkiss similarly observed the importance of both fine workmanship and historic merit in these works. "Although the collection is small in number, there are examples of furniture, silver, and pewter, some of which have the interest both of fine craftsmanship and of association with the founders of New England."<sup>159</sup> If standing in the space of Paul Revere's restored home might engender a feeling of connection to the past, so too, reasoned the Metropolitan and the Museum of Fine Art's early curators, might encountering the objects once owned or forged by America's revolutionary heroes in museum halls or period rooms.

Progressive museum professionals, such as Halsey and Robert W. de Forest, at the Metropolitan argued that American decorative arts displays might impart American values to new immigrants. At the Metropolitan Museum, Halsey proposed that his exhibits would "have intense interest to all Americans as well as to many of our people of foreign ancestry who are attempting to become good Americans."<sup>160</sup> Jeffery Trask has examined museum collecting by a group he deems "Progressive connoisseurs:" men at institutions such as the Metropolitan and Boston who envisioned the use of colonial objects to advance immigrants' understanding of their adopted country's history and its values (as interpreted by the largely Anglo-Saxon cultural elite).<sup>161</sup> Visiting the museum and observing the antiques would spur patriotism in young immigrants and provide excellent examples of good taste for the decoration of their own homes.<sup>162</sup>

Perhaps due to the inherent value of the material itself, much of the earliest and most active collecting and exhibition of antiques in the United States centered on American silver and pewter.<sup>163</sup> American metalwork found an eager audience

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<sup>158</sup> R.T.H. Halsey, *American Silver* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1906), 9.

<sup>159</sup> Edwin J. Hipkiss, "Minor Arts in New England, 1620," *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin* 18, no. 109 (October 1, 1920): 47.

<sup>160</sup> Emphasis author's own. R.T.H. Halsey and Charles O. Cornelius, *A Handbook of the American Wing*, (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1925), 74.

<sup>161</sup> William B. Rhoads, *The Colonial Revival and the Americanization of Immigrants* (Norton, 1985). Jeffrey Trask, *Things American: Art Museums and Civic Culture in the Progressive Era* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

<sup>162</sup> For more on how immigrant working class city dwellers purchased furnishings, see Cohen, "Embellishing a Life of Labor."

<sup>163</sup> Beth Carver Wees, *Early American Silver in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

among patrons who saw its relative simplicity in contrast to much more ornately decorated wares from continental Europe. "This early American silver..." explained Halsey, "is thoroughly characteristic of the taste and life of our people. Simple in design and substantial in weight, it is symbolic of the classic mental attitudes of its owners."<sup>164</sup> Critics praised the austerity of colonial American designs, which Halsey claimed were "always without extravagance."<sup>165</sup> In truth, many of the attributes collectors and museum professionals most admired drew heavily on British and Dutch precedents, but Americans nonetheless identified American silver's relatively spare aesthetic with the imagined restraint they admired in their forefathers. Collector and art critic Robert H. Van Court declared that "early silversmiths were what might be called the aristocracy of craftsmen and as a rule occupied social stations far above that of other craftsmen who labored at the making of fabrics or furniture."<sup>166</sup> Art Critic Royal Cortissoz similarly proclaimed the supremacy of American silverwork over other early colonial crafts by claiming that "our craftsmen were never more judicious or more suave than when they worked in silver."<sup>167</sup> Collectors also favored works in metal because of the unique signature makers placed on the objects. Called maker's marks, these impressions allowed collectors to identify the artisan who created each object and to appreciate the hand that forged each item. As we will see, the women of the Pottery took the rather unusual step at the time of signing the works they created with their initials. The practice added the personalized connection so sought after by Arts and Crafts enthusiasts, but also built on the tradition of colonial craftsmen such as Revere who "signed" each of his pieces.

Connoisseurs of silver, particularly those invested in the Arts and Crafts ideals of small-scale workshops and the value of contented craftsmen, valued American silver because of the small-scale method of production. John Singleton Copley's 1768 portrait of the silversmith Revere highlights this fascination with fine workmanship, modest decoration, but also supreme veneration the Revolutionary hero Revere (Fig. 22). In Copley's well-known depiction of the patriot, Revere dresses not in fine clothes, but rather in the costume of a craftsman: wigless and in shirtsleeves. Copley pictures Revere clasping a recently complete but as yet un-engraved silver teapot. Spread before him on a fine table, the painter depicts the tools that Revere will shortly employ to apply designs to the surface of the gleaming, hand-wrought object in his hands. Colonial craftsmanship aligned in important ways for Arts and Crafts enthusiasts with Morris and Ruskin's exhortations to look to the past for ideal models of guild

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<sup>164</sup> Halsey, *The Homes of Our Ancestors*, 26.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, vii.

<sup>166</sup> Robert H. Van Court, "Some Early American Silver," *Art and Progress* 6, no. 3 (January 1, 1915): 73.

<sup>167</sup> Royal Cortissoz, "The American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York: An Appreciation," in Halsey, ix.

practice and the inspired artistry that emerged when the craftsman was free to practice his trade in comfortable conditions. Revere personified the master craftsman ideal for American collectors and Copley's portrait envisioned this patriot and craftsman at the height of his prowess.

Collectors admired Revere's skill as a craftsman, but it was also his association with the events of the Revolution that spurred such outsized demand for the silversmith's teapots, bowls, and cups. In 1931, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston opened two rooms dedicated exclusively to Revere silver and objects found in his home. This shrine of sorts included Copley's portrait of Revere, paintings by Gilbert Stuart, and objects that the craftsman had allegedly owned, such as his watch-chain pendant and a mahogany desk.<sup>168</sup> As Van Court described:

One thinks of Paul Revere chiefly, if not wholly, in connection with an historic midnight ride in which a lantern and a church spire also played important parts, and this achievement which earned for him an immortal fame and a place upon the pages of history has almost completely overshadowed his renown as one of the most skilful and eminent of early American engravers and silversmiths. His work, of which much still remains to bear eloquent testimony to his carefully trained taste and to his skill as a workman, is distinguished by an extreme delicacy of design and a minute and careful balance of proportion in which he easily excels among the many skilled silversmiths of colonial Boston.<sup>169</sup>

Revere became not only an icon of the Revolution, but also an exemplar of the consummate craftsman who ran his own workshop and produced refined objects for his clientele. In describing the addition of a fluted sugar bowl and creamer in 1918, the *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* proclaimed that "there clings, ...to the articles of silver made by him [Revere] an element of romantic and patriotic association which endears them to those who possess them."<sup>170</sup> In these accounts, Revere's artistry and his Revolutionary activities are inextricable.

Edith Brown and the ceramicists of the Pottery almost certainly saw colonial silver and pewter objects on display in historic homes and in the residences of wealthy patrons such as Helen Osborne Storrow and at the museum. The Pottery's shapes exemplify an interest in their physical forms and an effort to connect the workmanship of the young second generation immigrant artists to

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<sup>168</sup> Edwin J. Hipkiss, "The Paul Revere Room," *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* 29, no. 175 (October 1, 1931): 84.

<sup>169</sup> Van Court, "Some Early American Silver," 76.

<sup>170</sup> "Paul Revere Silver," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 13, no. 7 (July 1, 1918): 161.

the mythology of Revere (also a second-generation non-Anglo-Saxon immigrant) as a craftsman.<sup>171</sup>

Enterprising business owners, such as Wallace Nutting, faithfully reproduced examples of colonial-era furniture for eager audiences. The Pottery, on the other hand, selectively espoused aspects of the colonial objects they encountered to create hybrid forms that were unmistakably influenced by the past but refashioned for the present.<sup>172</sup> Unlike Nutting, Brown and the decorators of the Paul Revere Pottery made no attempt to replicate highly prized early- American works, instead employing decorative schemes reminiscent of shapes and patterns they admired but filtered through the lens of Arts and Crafts-era ideas about composition, color, and subject matter. Particularly in the early years of the Pottery, the mottled composition of the Pottery's clay, visible through semi-transparent glazes, evoked the textured surfaces and tonal range of antique British and American ceramics.<sup>173</sup> The Pottery favored thick-walled, sturdy vessels similar to the quotidian wares that colonial and early Republic makers fashioned for farm work or storage. The Pottery repurposed functional forms in a series of saltshakers created in the shape of early stoneware and earthenware jugs (Fig. 23). Meant as table decoration, these miniaturized versions of well-known vessel types playfully copied a familiar shape but manipulated its size and re-envisioned its purpose by puncturing the body of the container designed in its original form as watertight vessels to hold liquids.<sup>174</sup>

Edith Brown and the members of the workshop also looked to works in media beyond ceramics for inspiration. The slender silhouette of this lidded pitcher, which tapers as it rises, bears resemblance to the contours of eighteenth-century lidded flagons such as this example from 1760 by New York pewterer Philip Will (Fig. 24). Like the flagon, designers at the Pottery conjured the classical orders of architecture in dividing the flagon into two registers, the bottom white with a small image of a goose and the initials B.H.W, and the top half painted with cobalt blue glaze.<sup>175</sup> While banding distinguishes sections of the silver flagon, the Pottery's characteristic black outline separates the two portions of the Paul Revere vessel.

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<sup>171</sup> More research needs to be done to ascertain what types of objects populated the Storrow's Lincoln home, where Storrow entertained the women of the Pottery.

<sup>172</sup> Denenberg, *Wallace Nutting and the Invention of Old America*.

<sup>173</sup> According to interviews conducted by two Harvard Business school students in 1921, the pottery used the following mixture: rough clay (120 lbs.), fine clay (60 lbs.), red clay (11.5 lbs.). Hurley and Collins, "Report of Pottery Cost-Finding," 3. Janine E. Skerry, *Salt-Glazed Stoneware in Early America* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2009), 212.

<sup>174</sup> Skerry, *Salt-Glazed Stoneware in Early America*.

<sup>175</sup> Charles F. Montgomery, *A History of American Pewter* (New York: Dutton, 1978), 80.

The Pottery also produced bowls with two flat extensions on either side of the lip that evoke the form of the porringer, a shape that American silversmiths and pewterers made frequently (Fig. 25). While the Paul Revere Pottery's version has truncated extensions, the basic shape and the pair of handles appear to be influenced by colonial originals.<sup>176</sup> The Pottery even produced its own version of a chamber stick, an object that allowed its owner to walk with a candle throughout a home without gas or electric light (Fig. 26). Fixtures of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century dwellings, the chamber stick's primary use was obsolete by the time the Pottery created their version in earthenware. Much like the stoneware jug repurposed as a saltshaker, the object became a decorative notion for the twentieth-century mantel evoking an earlier time.

The studio's decorative program also exemplified the simplicity of colonial serving ware in wood and pewter. In some instances, sets included intricate decorative schemes, such as this dinner service Helen Osborne Storrow commissioned, which the Pottery decorated with the initials of her husband, James Jackson Storrow (Fig. 27).<sup>177</sup> This set employs a tin-glaze white and cobalt blue base (hearkening back to the inspiration of the Swiss Thuner earthenware) with a painted scene confined to a small circular medallion. Many early American silver objects for homes or ecclesiastical use featured names or initials of their owners to mark objects as the property of a given family or congregation. The Pottery did its most brisk business in these very types of personalized sets. To create them, Brown employed the very same means to identify users and specific families or individuals for whom the objects had been specially prepared (Fig. 28).

The use of colonially-inspired forms, patterns, and decorations colored how consumers understood the artists of the Pottery. The natural correlation between simple objects and virtuous living favorably positioned the Pottery's artists in the eyes of buyers interested in the simple aesthetics of early American work. While Brown appears not to have directly copied examples of early American silver, wood, or pewter, she nonetheless appropriated many stylistic attributes and applied them to the objects in earthenware. The Pottery's success in marketing domestic objects reminiscent of the early American home or craft workshop helped bolster the claims of the immigrant artists as American craftsmen.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Porringers typically had only one handle and not two, but there are examples of two handled porringers, such as the one in figure 21.

<sup>177</sup> One could specify how little or much decoration one wanted on the pieces they ordered, as early catalogues indicate. Prices indicate how much various items cost with varying degrees of decoration. Paul Revere Pottery Pamphlet, n.d., Boston Public Library.

<sup>178</sup> Hurley and Collins, "Report of Pottery Cost-Finding," 5.

**“Our Makers Wrought us with Zeal, with Integrity, with Faith to do nobly an Honest Thing.”: Labor and Craftsmanship at the Paul Revere Pottery<sup>179</sup>**

The Paul Revere Pottery relied on more than stylistic and formal connections between its work and the objects of colonial America to position its artisans as true inheritors of the spirit of colonial craftsmanship. The structure of the workshop and the skills that immigrant women gained at the Pottery linked artists to valorized conceptions of small-scale craftwork related to Colonial production. By creating an environment where many immigrant women could participate in all aspects of an object’s creation, the Pottery fostered the careers of ambitious Saturday Evening Girls Club members such as Lili Shapiro, Sara Galner, and Fanny Goldstein, who excelled as artists and intellectuals.

The workshop’s founders were less invested than many of their peers in the authenticity of objects. For museum professionals such as R.T.H. Halsey, as one might expect, form, style, and authenticity of eighteenth-century originals trumped serious investment in the methods craftsmen employed to produce works. Kaplan has noted, “Halsey seemed more concerned with the recreation of what was used in colonial times than the duplication of the methods of eighteenth-century craftsmen.”<sup>180</sup> Unlike connoisseurs preoccupied with surface form and provenance, the Pottery’s founders emphasized the process of their goods’ creation. They advertised hand production and the potential value of ceramics skills to provide young women of the North End a way to make an independent livelihood.

Guerrier, Brown, and Storrow all understood the lessons of the colonial revival less as a way of preserving a culture threatened with extinction than as a practical means to organize their workshop and promote the work of their artists. Their workshop ideals echoed the credo of the Arts and Crafts Society in Boston, which proclaimed in 1912 that “we have begun to realize that what we want to revive is the old art spirit of the Colonial times, not the furniture and furnishings suited to other days....American craft work has combined to be a presentation of new ideas suited to modern conditions and done with some of

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<sup>179</sup> “The motto chosen for the ware on the first little circular is still and always will be the message the potters hope each piece will be worth to carry.” “Paul Revere Pottery,” undated brochure, Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston Archives.

<sup>180</sup> Kaplan, “R.T.H. Halsey,” 34. Eileen Boris’s *Art and Labor* provides a similar critique of the American Arts and Crafts movement in general, namely that it ultimately concentrated on stylistic and aesthetic reform and ignored the political manifestations of small-scale craft work and the ideas of socialism at the core of the movement’s British origins. Mary Ware Dennett, a member of the council of the Society of Arts and Crafts in Boston resigned in 1905 over her belief that the Society valued objects over their methods of production and the fulfillment of the craftsman. Eileen Boris, *Art and Labor*. For more on the Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston and Dennett, see Brandt, *Mutually Helpful Relations*. Stansky, *Redesigning the World*.

the ardor of the old spirit of craftsmanship.”<sup>181</sup> Morris, Ruskin, Ashbee, and Pugin, the British figureheads of the Arts and Crafts movement had endorsed recreating the spirit of the medieval workshop as an alternative to the isolating and mechanical labor of industrial mass production.<sup>182</sup> Paul Revere Pottery similarly rejected large-scale production, which Edith Guerrier called “uninteresting and unbeautiful drudgery.”<sup>183</sup> As she described, “The real objective [of the pottery] became that of the old time guild developed to meet modern conditions, but with the old world incentive of the creation of beautiful objects and the strengthening of a feeling for beauty in the creator of such objects.”<sup>184</sup>

The Pottery’s founders took ample opportunity to link the workshop with studios of a by-gone era. This image of artist Sara Galner, for instance, which was reproduced in *House Beautiful* in August, 1914, pictures the artisan hard at work to complete the detailed paint application on a large vase (Fig. 29). Seated next to a window, which provides ample light for her delicate task, Galner stabilizes the form in one hand as she carefully applies glaze with the other. Light from the window illuminates her face, which appears both concentrated and content. She appears unrushed, conducting her work at a leisurely pace. While comfortable, Galner appears industrious. Behind her we glimpse several examples of the Pottery’s work, perhaps recently completed by her as the sole artist in the photograph’s frame.<sup>185</sup> Images such as this one celebrated the clean, light-filled workspaces and foregrounded skilled artists whose careful work was conducted in the verdant, and pleasant surroundings. The photographs connects Galner also to Copley’s iconic representation of Revere. Her pose, with the large vessel in her hands and wearing clean but nonetheless work-ready clothing, evokes the painting of Revere that was by 1914, a well-known representation of Boston’s most famous silversmith and his honest labor. Even in photographing its workers, Brown and Guerrier referenced Boston’s most celebrated forefather and positioned their ceramicists as his natural successor.

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<sup>181</sup> “The Fifth Exhibition of the National Society of Craftsmen,” 562.

<sup>182</sup> Stansky, *Redesigning the World*. See also Kaplan, “*The Art That Is Life*.” Boris, *Art and Labor*. Robert Judson Clark, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in America, 1876-1916* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972).

<sup>183</sup> Guerrier, “The Story of Paul Revere Pottery,” 205.

<sup>184</sup> Guerrier’s use of the term ‘old world’ here is interesting, as she seems to be referencing models of European craft work as well as their importation to the United States. *Ibid.*, 205.

<sup>185</sup> Descriptions of the pottery’s workroom often note the presence of flowers as well as the garden plots that workers each tended once the workshop moved to Brighton in 1915. Lili Shapiro recalled in an interview with Barbara Kramer that, “Ms. Brown and Ms. Guerrier too they let us find a spot to grow our own garden, any flower we wanted. I think I chose the morning glory. We were given our garden to take care of and it wasn’t too big but it was something because it belonged to us. I mean that was the feeling all through while we were there doing these little things that gave us pleasure.” Barbara Kramer interview with Paul Revere Pottery artists, video cassette, courtesy of Kate Clifford Larson, c. 1975.

The Pottery did more than merely imagine its workers as skilled craftsmen or pose them mid-production for promotional purposes. The studio actively cultivated its workers' minds and hands. In addition to Guerrier's program of daily readings and concerts performed while the women worked, Brown also introduced several interested artists to the entire process of creating the studio's wares from the mixing of the clay to the decoration of forms.<sup>186</sup> As one brochure proclaimed, "it is intended that those who make the trade a life's work shall, if they choose, learn the whole of the pottery's art, not only the parts requiring skill of hand and ripe judgment in the management of the materials, but those involving the chemistry of the subject, and finally the art of original design both as to form and decoration."<sup>187</sup> Another leaflet promised that "the attentive and fairly apt worker may hope at the end of her first year to undertake skilled parts of the work."<sup>188</sup>

Galner recalled that her fellow practitioner, the Boston-born Lili Shapiro learned from Brown. According to Galner, she "knew how to mix the glazes. She knew how to mix the clay. She drew the designs. She could paint them as well as anybody."<sup>189</sup> Shapiro spoke with pride about the artistic freedom she enjoyed at the Pottery and the control she maintained over the look and shape of the objects. As she recalled, "I loved the feeling of the clay when you brought it up and shaped it the way you wanted to."<sup>190</sup> Shapiro made a career for herself as a ceramicist. She worked and taught at the workshop and maintained the studio after Edith Brown's death in 1932 until its closing in 1942. Based on her work at the Pottery, Shapiro was elected a 'craftsman' in 1931 and 'master' in 1935 by the Society of Arts and Crafts in Boston.<sup>191</sup> In addition, Shapiro exhibited her ceramics at museums such as the Syracuse Museum and the Worcester Museum. In 1937, the American Federation of Arts asked to exhibit one of Shapiro's bowls in a Paris Exposition devoted to American Arts and crafts.<sup>192</sup> Shapiro's diligent effort towards learning the entirety of the craft earned her a reputation as an artist in her own right. This independence is due at least in part to the guidance she received in the Paul Revere Pottery studio.

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<sup>186</sup> As Lili Shapiro recalled, "we had Mrs. Storrow and some of her friends come in and read the classics to us and that's where I learned to love Dickens and Shakespeare." Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> "S.E.G. Bowl Shop," *The Boston Herald*, n.d.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Barbara Kramer Interview with Paul Revere Pottery artists.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> "Miss Lily Shapiro" (Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston, n.d.), Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston, Lily Shapiro, Comments of Juried Craftsmen, 1936-39. Lili Shapiro's name appears in this document spelled with a "y" rather than an "i". The "i" appears throughout this text as this is what Shapiro used when she filled out paperwork for the Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston.

<sup>192</sup> Lili Shapiro, "Craftsman Data Sheet" (Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston, April 3, 1947).

As Nonie Gadsden has chronicled, Galner, who came to the Pottery as a teenager, also learned skills as well as independence as a decorator and a saleswoman for the Pottery.<sup>193</sup> She was a skilled ceramics painter. According to her recollections, was also responsible for opening the workshop's Boylston Street shop in Boston as well as a shop in Washington, D.C. This fluidity between roles allowed her to feel a sense of ownership over the products she created and sold.<sup>194</sup> While Edith Brown initiated the majority of the Pottery's designs, practitioners also developed expertise in particular types of imagery, which helped them to establish their identities as creative practitioners. Galner specialized in flora and landscape and throughout her career and continued to evolve the types of designs she applied. This vase depicting Queen Anne's lace represents a high point in her production (Fig. 30). Now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Galner decorated the large vessel with asymmetrical budding flowers rising on narrow stems from a grassy base of a mottled yellow green. Three shades of blue create a varied backdrop for the tufted blossoms. The work displays a subtle understanding of color and a keen eye for composition.

Fanny Goldstein similarly began her career as both an SEG and a member of the Paul Revere Pottery. Thanks to her early interactions with Guerrier, Goldstein gravitated towards library work and served at the North End Branch that Guerrier had headed.<sup>195</sup> Goldstein was editor-in-chief of the *SEG News*, the group's official clubhouse paper, which anticipated and initiated her subsequent career as a librarian and an author. In 1922, she became the head of West End branch of the Boston Public Library. Through her position at the library, Goldstein founded programs to promote Jewish literature and inaugurated Jewish Book Week in 1925 and Jewish Book Month in 1943.<sup>196</sup> As the first Jewish woman to head a branch of the library system in Boston, Goldstein was a pioneer for first generation immigrants like herself and a strong ally for newly-arriving populations to succeed in America. Goldstein understood her role as a champion for immigrant populations and their integration into the larger social fabric of the city. She was dedicated both to immigrant populations as well as to those who had lived in the area for generations. Her programs to unite Jews and non-Jews through joint celebrations showcased these efforts. As Dr. B.M. Selekman recalled, "She is an educator and interpreter who has made her library a medium of understanding between the culture of the old world and the new."<sup>197</sup> *The Boston Globe* commented "a Russian immigrant herself, she took it upon herself to explain America to the Jews and to give the non-Jewish community an

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<sup>193</sup>Gadsden, *Art & Reform*.

<sup>194</sup> Barbara Kramer Interview with Paul Revere Pottery artists.

<sup>195</sup> Dorothy Wayman, "One Book Written in West End Branch of Public Library," *The Boston Globe*, December 11, 1954.

<sup>196</sup> Fanny Goldstein, "On the Bookshelf," *The Jewish Advocate*, December 8, 1950.

<sup>197</sup> "Comments" (typed manuscript, n.d.), Fanny Goldstein Papers, American Jewish Archives.

opportunity to learn about Jews and Judaism."<sup>198</sup> Goldstein not only loved books but also understood the power of objects to carry cultural identity, a lesson likely imbued in her from her time at the Pottery. As a librarian, she collected Judaica for the Boston Public Library and served as the curator of the Judaica collection.<sup>199</sup> A published author and lecturer on topics ranging from literature to Russian, Italian, and Jewish life in America, Goldstein was a highly respected presence in Progressive Boston circles.

Thanks to her time at the Pottery, Goldstein also became a committed historic preservationist dedicated to saving the structures of the Boston neighborhood where she worked. She was particularly interested in the history of her own West End Library, an institution housed in the former home of the Old West Church. Barbara Tibbetts described Goldstein as a landmark herself, painting an image of the librarian as "digging in archives to restore the old West Church;" a woman who was "ready at the slightest hint of injustice to defend a minority group or a slighted historical building."<sup>200</sup> Thanks to her experience as an SEG, Goldstein was equally comfortable in an array of social circles, from the high society set to the Eastern European immigrant community. Nura Globus noted that Goldstein did not hesitate to visit "aristocratic Beacon Hill, many of whose residents were among her warmest friends and admirers."<sup>201</sup> Goldstein gained confidence and social fluidity during her time as an SEG when she visited Isabella Stewart Gardner's Green Hill and penned an elegant thank you note as thanks.<sup>202</sup>

For artists such as Galner, Shapiro, and Goldstein, the Pottery's association with colonial and old-world modes of production provided a space to explore creative possibility, advance their craft, and take well-deserved credit for their talents. Brown, Guerrier, and Storrow created a workshop to promote the women's connection to the skilled craftsmen of New England's past. In doing so, they endowed them with a sense of the value of their labor. That potters such as Shapiro went on to careers as artists cemented their status as craftsmen in the mold of the nation's forefathers. The long shadow of the Old North Church shaped not only the Pottery's products, but the lives of its practitioners as well.

## Conclusion

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<sup>198</sup> "Fanny Goldstein," *The Boston Globe*, December 27, 1961.

<sup>199</sup> "West End Librarian Feted Upon Retirement," *The Jewish Advocate*, January 23, 1958.

<sup>200</sup> Barbara Tibbetts, "Woman of the Week," *The Boston Traveler*, August 7, 1952.

<sup>201</sup> Nura Globus, "In Memoriam: Fanny Goldstein, 1888-1961," *The Question Mark XVII*, no. 1 (1961).

<sup>202</sup> Fanny Goldstein, "To Isabella Stewart Gardner," June 19, 1908, Isabella Stewart Garden Museum.

Brown, Guerrier and Storrow's colonially-inspired workshop was, of course, a highly idealized vision of guild work predicated on Ruskin's rhetoric and Morris's social practice. Yet, like many of their peers, Guerrier, Brown, and Storrow adapted a vision of the past suitable to forward their aims: the successful integration of first and second-generation immigrant artisans into the economic, social and political life of Boston. The workshop's founders appropriated the architecture, objects, and images of the region and its history alongside methods of small-scale craftwork to help immigrants celebrate their place in their new surroundings and to become active participants in the American commercial economy. The Pottery embraced the landscape of Boston's North End, the odes penned to its heroes, the artifacts of its past, and the framework of its labor patterns to celebrate immigrants' role in creating the city.

The preservation of colonial architecture; the creation of an American hero in verse; the rediscovery of early American antiques; and the market for early American objects produced in small-scale workshops point to a society invested in rediscovering and reinterpreting its roots. Historian T.J. Jackson Lears has read the era's anti-modernist streak as a symptom of a collective loss of faith in American institutions and a profound collective sense of social unmooring.<sup>203</sup> As this chapter has shown, however, the reclamation of the colonial and the creative adaptation of the period's architecture and domestic objects served not only threatened upper-class Americans attempting to cling to crumbling vestiges of power. Progressive reformers and immigrants used the country's history and the remnants of that past as resources to claim the country's traditions of democracy, independence, artisanship, and frugality for themselves. Newly arriving populations and their children productively imagined their own version of an American past and profited from widely held conceptions, both real and invented, about life in colonial New England. What differentiated the Paul Revere Pottery from other progressive projects of the time was its underlying faith in the abilities of its workers to succeed as fully integrated participants in all aspects of life in contemporary Boston.

As the lives of Galner, Shapiro, and Goldstein attest, members of the Pottery took the lessons proffered by Guerrier and Brown through Storrow's beneficence and pursued fruitful careers and successful lives as American citizens. In the 1970s, Barbara Kramer, herself the daughter of a Saturday Evening Girl Ethel Epstein Maysles, conducted a series of interviews with members of the Saturday Evening Girls Club in which she asked participants what America meant to them. Responses from women who were themselves SEGs or their sons and daughters resoundingly expressed an abiding love for the United States and its opportunities. Louise O'Neill wrote of her mother, SEG potter Albina Mangini,

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<sup>203</sup> Lears, *No Place of Grace*.

that she learned to decorate, glaze, hand-paint, and throw pottery at the studio and that “Her [Albina’s] pride in it was tremendous, and we, as her family, treasured everything about it.” She continued that “It [the Pottery] gave her an education in the broadest sense – an unusual knowledge and appreciation of art and literature.<sup>204</sup> Mrs. Rosa B. Arnold, an SEG herself, recalled that “We were given opportunities to meet people we would not have met. I was inspired through them to improve my way of thinking, living, and doing.”<sup>205</sup> Albert Maysles recounted that the Pottery “made a Boston Brahmin,” of his mother, Ethel Epstein. “She went on to attend and graduate college...The SEG experience nourished her optimism and helped enormously to elevate her aspirations and consciousness.”<sup>206</sup> Over and over, women who participated in the Pottery and their children recounted the profound effect the workshop had on their lives in the United States.

The artists of the Pottery absorbed and applied lessons gleaned from the small-scale production of colonially inspired craft objects, but they did not lose sight of the traditions of Europe with which they arrived. As first and second-generation immigrants, these women constituted a vital link between the customs of the old world and realities and potentials of life in the new. While some Bostonians viewed the loss of old structures in the North End of Boston, the women of the pottery and their families altered the North End’s spaces to accommodate newly arriving immigrants and to celebrate the immigrants’ places in the evolving city. Through their work at the Pottery, reformers and immigrant women created identities for themselves aware of the opportunities and advantages as well as the limitations America afforded, perhaps more so than most progressive reformers realized.

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<sup>204</sup> Louise O’Neill, “Questionnaire About the Saturday Evening Girls” (Barbara Kramer, April 1, 1978), Barbara Kramer Files, JMW Gallery.

<sup>205</sup> Rose B. Arnold, “Questionnaire About the Saturday Evening Girls” (Barbara Kramer, December 1977), Barbara Kramer Files, JMW Gallery.

<sup>206</sup> Albert Maysles, “Questionnaire About the Saturday Evening Girls” (Barbara Kramer, December 1977), Barbara Kramer Files, JMW Gallery.

## **'Ancient Designs Adapted to Modern Uses:' The Scuola d'Industrie Italiane, 1905-1927**

In 1893, Italian Queen Margherita's prized collection of Italian lace arrived in Chicago for the Columbian Exposition. The display in the women's pavilion featured the Queen's collection of antique and contemporary laces ferried from Italy by the Royal Marines under the watchful eye of American expatriate and lace expert, Cora Slocomb di Brazzà.<sup>207</sup> The array of finely wrought textiles celebrated the history of lace from blocky sixteenth-century *reticella* to figurative Baroque needle and bobbin laces. On view against an armature of hand-carved wood and wrought iron constructions evoking Renaissance architecture, the displays offered examples "from prehistoric times to the most perfect specimens of the modern school of Burano" as the epitome of Italian craftsmanship of both the past and the present (Figs. 31 and 32).<sup>208</sup> As Hubert Howe Bancroft observed, "these are heirlooms descended through many generations, some of them articles the secret of whose manufacture is known only to the royal household, and others samples of varieties which the queen is introducing among the women of Italy, reviving an industrial art that was well nigh lost."<sup>209</sup> The Italian lace display in Chicago stressed continuity between ancient arts and modern practices with new and old works on view side by side. Perusing the examples of both antique and modern lace, writer Eva Marriotti observed the important role, beyond pure aesthetic pleasure, that such works might play for the careful observer. "To the thoughtful," explained Marriotti, "each piece of lace is the history of a portion of a woman's life."<sup>210</sup>

While lace has largely fallen out of favor among contemporary designers, collectors, and academics, it is beginning to reemerge as a subject of study among art historians precisely because it can tell stories about women one might otherwise never know.<sup>211</sup> Taking Marriotti's observation to heart, this study examines examples of lace and embroidery made at a single studio, the Scuola d'Industrie Italiane in Greenwich Village, as an entrée into the lives of Italian and American-born women in early twentieth-century New York. The Scuola's lace

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<sup>207</sup> Benjamin Cummings Truman, *History of the World's Fair: Being a Complete and Authentic Description of the Columbian Exposition from Its Inception* (New York: E.B. Treat, 1893), 222.

<sup>208</sup> Eva Marriotti, "Italy," in Maud Howe Elliott, *Art and Handicraft in the Woman's Building of the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893* (Boussod, Valadon & Company, 1893), 268.

<sup>209</sup> Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The Book of the Fair* (Chicago: The Bancroft Company, 1893), 268.

<sup>210</sup> Eva Marriotti, "Italy," in *Art and Handicraft in the Woman's Building of the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893*. (Chicago and New York: Rand, McNally & Company, 1894), 264-70.

<sup>211</sup> Edvige Giunta and Joseph Sciorra, *Embroidered Stories: Interpreting Women's Domestic Needlework from the Italian Diaspora* (Univ. Press of Mississippi, 2014). Emily Zilber, "'A Delicate Link with Their Far Away Country': The Scuola d'Industrie Italiane (1905-1927) and the Translation of the Nineteenth Century Italian Reproduction Textile Workshop in an American Context" (The Bard Graduate Center, 2007).

and embroidery project was a cultural, social, and artistic effort that was tied to international Arts and Crafts institutions abroad and the building of public collections and philanthropic social programs at home. The works constitute important keys to understanding the women who participated in this astoundingly complex trans-Atlantic network of industries. The laces and embroideries prompt questions about national identity, gender politics, and class relationships. In short, the studio's work constitutes much more than "ancient designs adapted to modern uses," as the workshop's advertising proclaimed.<sup>212</sup> Rather, the items made by the young women of the Scuola illustrate the formation of Italian-American cultural life in early twentieth-century America.

Most of the textiles the workshop produced between 1905 and 1927 were as modest in scale as the attic studio in which they were made (Fig. 33). Yet these items—from chalice veils to opera hoods to hatpins—form what Jules Prown has called "special indexes of culture, concretions of the realities and belief of other people in other times and places."<sup>213</sup> By attending to such works, one begins to reconstitute the values that they absorbed as they were conceptualized, created, worn, and collected. Tracing their roots and their movement in different social spheres unearths the complementary and competing interests of American collectors, burgeoning museum professionals, social reformers, and Italian-American craftswomen of early twentieth-century New York and Italy.

The Scuola d'Industrie Italiane was founded at a charged moment in the history of New York and the nation during which ideas about the ethnic basis for American citizenship confronted the realities of a quickly changing multi-ethnic landscape. Between 1880 and 1920, four million immigrants from the Italian peninsula came to the United States with the majority settling in cities such as New York and neighborhoods such as Greenwich Village. Even as late as 1920, nearly eighty percent of residents in Greenwich Village were first- or second-generation immigrants, half of whom were Italian-born.<sup>214</sup> Italians' efforts to integrate more fully into mainstream American culture were often stymied by Americans unsure as to whether or not Southern and Eastern European immigrants were worthy or capable of American citizenship.<sup>215</sup> Defining American nationality as inherently Anglo-Saxon, members of groups, such as the Immigration Restriction League, questioned the potential allegiances of Italian

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<sup>212</sup> "Scuola d'Industrie Italiane Pamphlet" (Scuola d'Industrie Italiane, 1911), Gino Speranza Papers, Scuola d'Industrie Italiane, Box 14, Folder 1909, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

<sup>213</sup> Jules David Prown, "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method," *Winterthur Portfolio* 17, no. 1 (April 1, 1982): 1-19, 16.

<sup>214</sup> Caroline F. Ware, *Greenwich Village, 1920-1930* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1935).

<sup>215</sup> Werner Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

immigrants, who, they worried, might answer first to the Pope before obeying the laws of their adopted country.<sup>216</sup> Writer William Foulke summarized the views of many Americans when he cautioned that new Southern Italian immigrants were a far cry from the storied Renaissance craftsmen, artists, and thinkers of the sixteenth century. He called these newly arriving immigrants, most of whom hailed from the southern part of the peninsula, “the dregs of the Italian population, who are ignorant, pest ridden, lazy, unclean, dishonest and revengeful.”<sup>217</sup> Projects such as the Scuola’s lace workshop helped to counter such Nativist rhetoric by providing immigrant women with means to support themselves and their families through the production of articles that connected them to a storied Italian past.<sup>218</sup>

Founded by second-generation Italian immigrant and lawyer Gino Speranza, philanthropist Florence Colgate, and Italian lace expert Carolina Amari, the studio employed young immigrant women to produce copies and adaptations of antique Italian textiles for American and Italian audiences.<sup>219</sup> Colgate, the daughter of Bowles Colgate and heiress to the Colgate company toothpaste and soap fortune, was a Barnard graduate and avid antique lace collector. Speranza was a second-generation Italian lawyer and co-founder of the Society for the Protection of Italian Immigrants. He was the son of Carlo Speranza, a noted Dante Scholar and Yale and Columbia professor who had emigrated from Northern Italy in 1876.<sup>220</sup> Both Colgate and Speranza travelled in Italy and were inspired by efforts of reformers such as Cora Slocumb di Brazzà and the Contessa Ranieri di Sorbello, American women who worked to revitalize Italian needlework by creating schools, workshops, and cooperatives that taught techniques and helped to sell needlework.<sup>221</sup> Speranza and Colgate opened the

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<sup>216</sup> Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998), 62.

<sup>217</sup> William D. Foulke, “A Word on Italian Immigration,” *Outlook* LXXVI (1904): 459.

<sup>218</sup> Geoff Spenceley, “The Lace Associations: Philanthropic Movements to Preserve the Production of Hand-Made Lace in Late Victorian and Edwardian England,” *Victorian Studies* 16, no. 4 (June 1, 1973): 433–52.

<sup>219</sup> Amari’s long career in cottage industry textile revivals spanning the Atlantic is relatively understudied. Ivana Palomba provides the most comprehensive treatment of Amari’s work in Italy. Ivana Palomba, *L’arte Ricamata: Uno Strumento Di Emancipazione Femile nell’Opera Di Carolina Amari* (Premio la Filanda ’09, 2011), <http://www.learitessili.it/portfolio-items/premio-la-filanda-09/> provides the most comprehensive treatment of Amari’s work in Italy.

<sup>220</sup> Speranza and Colgate married in 1909. For the purposes of this chapter, however, I will continue to refer to Florence Colgate by her maiden name. David R. Colburn and George E. Pozzetta, *Reform and Reformers in the Progressive Era* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1983).

<sup>221</sup> Gianfranco Tortorelli *Ricami della bell’epoca: la Scuola di Romeyne Robert Ranieri di Sorbello, 1904–1934* (Foligno: Editoriale Umbra, 1996). Charles Elihu Slocum, *History of the Slocums, Slocumbs and Slocombs of America: Genealogical and Biographical, Embracing Twelve Generations of the First-Named Family from A.D. 1637 to 1908, with Their Marriages and Descendants in the Female Lines as Far as Ascertained* (The author, 1908). During the life of the workshop, the Scuola sold its good as

Scuola d'Industrie Italiane in Greenwich Village as an extension of the Industrie Femminili Italiane in Italy with the help of Italian textile expert Carolina Amari, who had been instrumental in founding several American-funded lace industries across Italy and who was an avid antique textiles collector in her own right.<sup>222</sup> To populate the workshop, Colgate and Speranza turned to local enterprises that catered to the Italian community. As Speranza wrote to Colgate in 1905, "I have endeavored to make the list as broadly representative of the philanthropic, educational, religious, commercial and labor interests of Italians as possible."<sup>223</sup> In his role as one of the founders of the Society for the Protection of Italian Immigrants, Speranza was well connected with networks of Italian and Italian-American institutions in the City. His preliminary overtures included inquiries with the University and Hartley Settlements, the Italian Consulate General, Eliot Norton, president of the Society for Italian Immigrants, the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, The Children's Aid Society, The Italo-American Educational League, and the National Civic Federation.<sup>224</sup> The Scuola represented a New York extension of the Italian cooperative that drew young women from the surrounding neighborhood and beyond. The workshop sought to elevate handcrafted goods while providing employment outside of sweatshops and factories for Italian-American immigrant workers, many of whom had learned embroidery and needlework techniques in Italy or in New York from their mothers, aunts, and grandmothers.<sup>225</sup>

The Scuola was not alone in its aims to foster European craft industries among American immigrant communities. Settlement houses and philanthropic efforts in New York and throughout the country identified weaving and needlework as a promising means to promote Southern and Eastern European cultural heritage among middle and upper-class consumers and to help first and second-generation immigrant women earn income for themselves and their families. Assuming that many women had arrived in the United States with at least a working knowledge of basic needlework, Hull-House, Denison House, and South End House all founded weaving and needlework schools in the early

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locations on King Street (1919), Anderson Galleries (1923), East 54<sup>th</sup> St. (1925) 59 W 39<sup>th</sup> street. In addition to sending envoys to the Milan, Turin, and San Francisco International Expositions, the Scuola also presented its wares at small sales organized by wealthy members of its executive committee in enclaves such as Bar Harbor, Oyster Bay, Martha's Vineyard, Stamford, and Stockbridge.

<sup>222</sup> Palomba, *L'arte Ricamata: Uno Strumento Di Emancipazione Femminile nell'Opera Di Carolina Amari*.

<sup>223</sup> Gino Speranza, "To Florence Colgate," October 16, 1905, Gino Speranza Papers, Scuola d'Industrie Italiane, Box 14, 1905 Folder, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> For more on the role of embroidery in late nineteenth-century Sicily and the use of linens and knowledge of needlework as assets for Italian women, see Jane Schneider, "Trousseau as Treasure: Some Contradictions of Late Nineteenth-Century Change in Sicily," in *Beyond the Myths of Culture: Essays in Cultural Materialism*, ed. Eric B. Ross (New York: Academic Press, 1980), 324.

twentieth century.<sup>226</sup> In New York, Hamilton House, Harlem House, Lenox Hill Studio, Greenwich House, and the Brooklyn Neighborhood House sponsored needlework projects for Italian, Ukrainian, Greek, and Syrian communities to sell textiles made according to the traditions of their homelands.<sup>227</sup> The work of progressive reformers, such as Jane Addams of Hull-House in Chicago and Mary K. Simkhovitch and Katherine Lord at Greenwich House in New York, helped immigrant populations in tenement neighborhoods by promoting needlework industries based on the historic textiles of their homelands.<sup>228</sup> Progressives outside of major urban centers also took up the mantle. Sybil Carter's lace industry in Minnesota, for instance, taught Sioux, Oneida, Winnebago, Ojibwe, and Onondaga women lacemaking and women created textiles featuring iconography associated with Native Americans, such as canoes and hunters with bows and arrows.<sup>229</sup> While the Scuola d'Industria Italiana was not officially affiliated with the Richmond Hill settlement house, the group used the top two floors of their Greenwich Village building and also relied on the advice of leaders in the settlement house movement such as Jane Addams of Hull-House and Elizabeth S. Williams, Head Worker at the College Settlement house.<sup>230</sup>

Speranza and Colgate no doubt knew of and likely visited the Hull-House's Labor Museum, a series of exhibits dedicated to promoting European handicraft industries by showcasing examples of handiwork and craftspeople fashioning traditional forms. Hull-House presented immigrant-made products as part of an historic evolution from the handmade to advanced industrial production. The museum coupled products from Europe with live demonstrations in which artists prepared raw materials and made objects.<sup>231</sup> As Addams explained, the Labor Museum sought to educate native-born Americans about the craft traditions of Europe, but also to connect second-generation citizens to their European-born parents and grandparents.<sup>232</sup> In 1909, Gino Speranza wrote to

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<sup>226</sup> Jackson, *Lines of Activity*.

<sup>227</sup> Albert J. Kennedy and Kathryn Farra, *Social Settlements in New York City: Their Activities, Policies, and Administration*, First Edition (Published for the Welfare Council of New York City, 1935), 200. "Rescue the Artist from the Scrubbing Brush!," *The New York Tribune*, July 20, 1919. Jennifer Guglielmo, *Living the Revolution: Italian Women's Resistance and Radicalism in New York City, 1880-1945* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 103.

<sup>228</sup> Katherine Lord, "The Greenwich Handicraft School," *Craftsman* 13 (March 1908): 717-21. Jane Addams, "Labor Museum at Hull House," *Commons* 47 (June 30, 1900): 1-4. Denison House Lace Sample Book, c. 1915, Paper and cardboard; cotton lace samples, 12 in. x W: 9 in, Gift of Ms. Florence Chase, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 42.689.

<sup>229</sup> Elizabeth West Hutchinson, "Progressive Primitivism: Race, Gender and Turn-of-the-Century American Art" (Ph.D., Stanford University, 1999), 496.

<sup>230</sup> Robert Archey Woods and Albert Joseph Kennedy, *The Settlement Horizon: A National Estimate* (Russell Sage foundation, 1922), 15.

<sup>231</sup> Hoganson, *Consumers' Imperium*.

<sup>232</sup> Jane Addams, "The Hull-House Labor Museum," in *The Child in the City: A Series of Papers Presented at the Conferences Held During The Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit* (Chicago: Chicago School

Jane Addams expressing his admiration for her Hull-House initiatives and invited her to view the Scuola's work on exhibition in Chicago. He even offered Addams a place on the Scuola's advisory committee.<sup>233</sup> From its early days, the Scuola was intertwined and actively seeking engagement with other settlement house-based industries across the country.

Few historians have focused careful attention on the work of the Scuola d'Industrie Italiane and those who do have tended to dismiss the agency of the women who populated the workshop. Writing about the members of the Scuola, historian George Pozzetta refers to the makers as "pawns [to be] moved about in an interesting experiment" by the founders of the workshop.<sup>234</sup> Pozzetta further condemns Speranza and Colgate by claiming that, "there was little effort to consider the role of these 'arts' in the lives of the peasants."<sup>235</sup> Dismissing the Scuola's structure as heavy-handed paternalism on the part of Speranza and Colgate, Pozzetta characterizes the workshop as a place that left little space for individual growth or expression among the young women who created lace and embroidery within it. This study provides an important corrective to this assessment by reconstructing the lives of particular needle women in the workshop. Far from disempowering its young needle workers, this chapter argues that the Scuola served as a space for the young women of Greenwich Village to define their roles as intermediaries between old and new world cultures often in collaboration with the studio's founders as well as with each other.

Recent authors writing about Scuola have also incorrectly assumed that the identities of the needle workers could never be known. Edvige Giunta and Joseph Sciorra reinforce the prevalent assumption that "the names of the small number of young women employed or their thoughts on the Scuola are lost to history."<sup>236</sup> Attending to the record, however, reveals not only the names and photographic evidence of several needle women at the school, but also makes known the relationships needle workers created amongst one another and with women of various social strata through the workshop. By identifying individual

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of Civics and Philanthropy, The Department of Social Investigation, 1912): 410-11. "Urban Experience In Chicago: The Labor Museum and Hull-House Shops," accessed April 21, 2013, [http://tiger.uic.edu/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/urbanexp/main.cgi?file=new/show\\_doc.ptt&doc=589&chap=61](http://tiger.uic.edu/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/urbanexp/main.cgi?file=new/show_doc.ptt&doc=589&chap=61).

<sup>233</sup> Jane Addams, "To Mr. Speranza," April 10, 1909, Box 14, Gino Speranza Papers, Scuola d'Industrie Italiane, Folder 2, 1909, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

<sup>234</sup> George E. Pozzetta, "Immigrants and Craft Arts: Scuola d'Industrie Italiane," *Multicultural History Society of Ontario* (Proceedings of the tenth annual conference of the Italian Historical Association, 1977,) 150.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Giunta and Sciorra, *Embroidered Stories*, 12.

practitioners and situating them within the communities and organizations they created and maintained, this chapter proposes that young women such as Millie Mariano, Nettie Muccio, Angelina Pellegrino, and Cora Gindano were visible and active presences in the workshop. Far from anonymous or invisible, these skilled workers negotiated roles as both keepers of traditional practice and representatives of their communities in social and cultural spaces beyond Greenwich Village.

### **Lacemaking in Italy**

Even as they decried the number and quality of Italian immigrants coming to the United States, many Americans simultaneously embraced Italy's storied artistic heritage as the shared patrimony of Western civilization.<sup>237</sup> The idea of the Renaissance as the consummate moment of artistic flowering was a fairly new one in the early twentieth century that emerged from the struggles of Italian Unification. In the 1870s, Italians faced the daunting prospect of bridging vastly different groups of citizens who spoke diverse languages and lived according to traditions that varied drastically between regions of their newly formed country. The agricultural depression of the 1880s opened chasms between landless laborers and farm owners and also exacerbated tensions between the increasingly industrial north and the agricultural south. In Massimo d'Azeglio's famous words, "we have made Italy: now we must make Italians."<sup>238</sup> To create a shared national culture and quell economic and regional tensions, the Italian government imagined an Italy before Napoleonic rule whose legacy reached back to the Romans and encompassed Michelangelo and Dante.<sup>239</sup> As historian Eric Hobsbawm has argued, newly cemented traditions coalesced across Europe at this pivotal moment of nation building to bolster collective identity. While typically associated with European nationalism of the late-nineteenth century, the progressive agenda in the United States that spurred institutions such as the Scuola embraced a very similar brand of cultural construction to bring Americans together with ideas about a shared Western cultural heritage. The romance of the Italian Renaissance – a time loosely defined as the fifteenth and sixteenth century, especially in Florence and Rome where painting, architecture, and literature influenced by antiquity flourished – became the shared cultural patrimony of the new country.

The ideas and fashions attributed to this moment of Italy's past enraptured Americans traveling and living abroad at the same moment that many Southern Italians were coming to settle on American soil. Many progressives rushed to

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<sup>237</sup> Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition*.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, 267.

<sup>239</sup> Raymond Grew, "Culture and Society, 1796-1896," in John Anthony Davis, *Italy in the Nineteenth Century 1796-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 206-231.

associate immigrant populations with virtues attributed to a storied Italian civilization. Rosina Pavoni has noted that in the late nineteenth century, members of the American upper classes travelling in Europe or visiting exhibitions such as Di Brazzà's displays were drawn to the artistic manifestations of Renaissance culture as the ultimate vestige of old world refinement. "As regards luxury manufactures for domestic use," Pavoni notes, "Italy was regarded as the repository of a tradition which sprang directly from the master craftsman of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries."<sup>240</sup> Italian Renaissance craftsmanship and its associations with small-scale skilled artisans and guild workshops suited American consumers enamored of the Arts and Crafts movement and its emphasis on the handmade.<sup>241</sup>

Nowhere were the values of handcraftsmanship so amply in evidence as in the intricate laces and embroideries of sixteenth and seventeenth-century Italian lace makers and embroiders. The consummate skilled labor, traditional lace could only be produced on a small scale and with ample time by skilled artisans using either a needle or a series of wooden dowels called bobbins. Associated with court culture, the work of lacemaking had, by the late nineteenth century, largely migrated to rural homes and small-scale workshops. These peasant industries nonetheless appealed to Arts and Crafts enthusiasts eager to associate products with rural life lived in concert with the natural world.<sup>242</sup> The appeal of antique laces extended to collectors such as the Scuola's Florence Colgate, who followed many of her peers in collecting lace and embroidery, and who also fostered programs designed to keep traditional practices from disappearing.

Collectors such as Colgate took a vested interest in examples of antique lace. Many American women, inspired by revival needlework experiments in England such as John Ruskin's rural lace workshop, sought to bring back dormant traditions among Italians in the countryside.<sup>243</sup> As Geoff Spenceley has documented in the case of Britain, lace associations formed in the late nineteenth century to provide livelihoods for rural workers and deter mass migration to urban centers.<sup>244</sup> As in Britain, Italy also became a major locus for such revival projects, with several American women founding schools to teach young women

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<sup>240</sup> Rosanna Pavoni, *Reviving the Renaissance: The Use and Abuse of the Past in Nineteenth-Century Italian Art and Decoration* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 10-11.

<sup>241</sup> While the term "Renaissance" applies generally to fifteenth and sixteenth-century Italy, Americans often employed the term to apply in a broader sense to Italian products such as laces made between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries. Some of the confusion rests in the extreme difficulty of dating authentic laces and later copies of original patterns. Some laces with characteristically fifteenth-century patterns, therefore, are dated to the eighteenth century.

<sup>242</sup> Giunta and Sciorra, *Embroidered Stories*, Introduction.

<sup>243</sup> For more information on Ruskin's needlework industries, see Elizabeth Prickett, *Ruskin Lace & Linen Work* (New York: Dover Publications, 1985).

<sup>244</sup> Spenceley, "The Lace Associations."

fast disappearing or already extinct stitches and methods of lacemaking and embroidery.

In Italy, aristocratic families and committed reformers alike bolstered an interest in lace and embroidery of the past. The Italian lace revival gained traction in 1872, when Countess Adriana Marcello and Princess Giovanelli Chigi, with the backing of the Queen, resurrected the famed Burano lace workshops on one of the Venetian islands.<sup>245</sup> Queen Margherita of Italy committed herself wholeheartedly to supporting these projects as well as to wearing antique lace and embroidery.<sup>246</sup> Other small revival schools sprang up across the country to teach lace and embroidery techniques to women, who created the textiles in their homes or at small schools. Women such as Amari also organized collectives that sold the goods to discerning connoisseurs in Europe and the United States. Amari was involved in each one of these projects and lent her talents to other industries such as Bologna's Aemilia Ars – a workshop that produced a variety of Arts and Crafts inflected decorative arts and fostered the production of both revival and Art Nouveau inspired textiles.<sup>247</sup>

The Scuola in New York benefited from the expansion of revival industries in Italy.<sup>248</sup> This particular example of the Scuola's handiwork showcases what the workshop in Greenwich Village called its "acorn" pattern applied, in this case, to a cloth purse (Fig. 34). The acorn pattern was one of a group of designs that the workshop offered for a variety of objects in the Scuola's repertoire. This purse features abstracted vegetal forms applied in repeating blocks using an array of techniques from raised embroidery pattern to *reticella* to delicate withdrawn work. Largely abstract, the twisting embroidered lines evoke curling vines and budding branches reaching across the purse. The delicate *reticella* squares shaped like tiny baskets, leaves, and flowers create a sense of lightness and transparency. Applied with cream-colored thread onto linen, the repeating abstracted floral pattern provides a subtle embellishment; it features an array of stitches and techniques and a great diversity of textures.

In promoting this particular design to customers, the Scuola celebrated the acorn pattern's venerable pedigree by referring to it as "characteristic of a XVI century work (Fig. 35)."<sup>249</sup> The origins of the acorn design can be traced to a particular

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<sup>245</sup> Margaret Plant, *Venice: Fragile City, 1797-1997* (Yale University Press, 2002), 179.

<sup>246</sup> Grazietta Butazzi, "The Abuse of the Renaissance: Elegance and Revival in Post-Unification Italy," Pavoni, *Reviving the Renaissance*, 162.

<sup>247</sup> Il Punto Antico, *Aemilia Ars Disegni E Merletti* (Bologna: Edizioni Punto Antico, 20007).

<sup>248</sup> Emily Zilber's work on the Scuola specifically addresses the strong ties between Italian workshops and the Scuola. Zilber, "A Delicate Link with Their Far Away Country."

<sup>249</sup> "Scuola d'Industrie Italiane Advertising Brochure," Gino Speranza Papers, Box 15, Advertisements Folder, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

textile in the collection of co-founder Carolina Amari (Fig. 36). Amari purchased and photographed textiles across Italy for use in her workshops in Europe and abroad. She likely purchased this example from an enterprising dealer who stitched two distinct fragments together to create a larger sample. In Figure 6, the acorn pattern constitutes the bottom portion of the fragment and is nearly identical to the Scuola's copy hundreds of years later.

In 1906, the original fragment of lace from Amari's collection travelled to Boston for display as part of an exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts featuring over 1,000 fragments from Amari's storerooms. As the *Museum Bulletin* proclaimed, "This collection contains many hundreds of pieces of lace and embroidery, for the most part Italian, while specimens from other countries have been introduced for purposes of comparison. Only a few pieces date from the 15th century, but the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, the most flourishing periods in the history of lace making in Italy, are well represented."<sup>250</sup> Amari not only lent the Museum nearly 1,000 examples of her own lace, but also presented three lectures about the collection and served as an advisor for the budding textiles department at the museum, helping to "reclassify the Museum's collection of lace and Italian embroideries."<sup>251</sup> Amari also observed and commented, sometimes extensively, on dozens of laces in the collections both in person and via letter once she returned to Italy.<sup>252</sup> Upon her departure, she left the museum with a comprehensive hand-written bibliography of books to help with the future classification of European lace and embroidery. Amari's expertise advanced programs on both sides of the Atlantic through her knowledge of antique laces as well as her ability to translate these forms into patterns that young women might learn to apply to needlework items.

Amari's eighteenth-century fragment also served as the basis for objects produced at the Aemelia Ars workshop in Bologna (Fig. 37), thus cementing the links connecting revival workshops in Italy, the efforts of the Italian-Americans working in Greenwich Village, and the shared influence of Amari's original example. Aemelia Ars was founded in 1898 to provide women with the skills to produce embroidery and lace based on antique originals. The Bologna workshop was affiliated with woodworkers and ceramists and Amari partnered with the studio to create textiles based on antique precedents. The Aemelia Ars version of the acorn pattern is virtually identical to both the original and the Scuola's copy. The workshop in New York was bound to the old world not only by the support

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<sup>250</sup> *Exhibition of Italian and Other Lace Lent by Signorina Carolina Amari* (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1906).

<sup>251</sup> "Boston Museum of Fine Arts Annual Report" (Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 1906), 84-85, Museum Archives Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

<sup>252</sup> Carolina Amari, "To Miss Flint," March 12, 1906, Amari Folder, Textiles Department, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

of a small group of women, but also by the very particular forms and patterns that it repeated and the shared antique examples that formed the basis for products on both sides of the Atlantic.

Many of the women who supported and helped to found Amari's Italian revival projects were American heiresses who had married into the Italian landed elite. A fellow expatriate Tryphosa Bates Batcheller recalled, "Here are three of the most energetic workers in this Society (the Countess Brazzà, the Marchesa di Viti de Marco, the Marchesa di Sorbello), all bearing long and noble Italian names: but we are proud to claim them as American women, who have gone into the Old World, and are not only a credit to the titles that they bear, but an honor to the name of womanhood, for the energy and ability they have shown in advancing the condition of women in the country they have adopted as their own."<sup>253</sup> These Americans arrived in Italy infused with the spirit of design reform and ideas about the potential of cottage industries to help poor women survive. American-born women such as Romeyne Robert Ranieri di Sorbello (originally Romeyne Robert of Morristown, New Jersey), Cora Slocomb di Brazzà, and Edith Bronson Rucellai were collectors who also founded schools, workshops, and cooperatives to support revival industries across Italy.

Amari helped Romeyne Ranieri di Sorbello found a needlework school on her estate in Perugia, the Scuola di Sorbello. The workshop began with eight pupils in 1904 but eventually mushroomed to 150 employees. Under the guidance of Amari, Sorbello also opened a cooperative shop in Perugia, the *Arti Decorativi Italiane*, to sell the school's work alongside that of similar industries from the region. Specializing in a new embroidery stitch called the *punto umbro*, the work of the Scuola Ricami Ranieri di Sorbello was nonetheless rooted in antique Italian designs from Edith Bronson Rucellai's extensive needlework collection. Rucellai, owned a large group of laces and helped to fund Venice's Burano lace revival. Amari is credited with translating the stitch from the Rucellai's embroideries to new work at the Scuola di Sorbello. For its work, the Sorbello School employed heavy linen hand-woven in the workshop of another American, Baroness Alice Franchetti at Citta di Castello.<sup>254</sup>

Cora Slocomb di Brazzà also worked with Amari to found a workshop and cooperative association on her estate in Friuli. By 1905, she had expanded her operation to half a dozen lace schools across the region. The workshops employed young women between fourteen and eighteen years old with the aim of providing useful income to put towards their dowries. Di Brazzà suggested

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<sup>253</sup> Tryphosa Bates Batcheller, *Glimpses of Italian Court Life: Happy Days in Italia Adorata* (Doubleday, Page, 1907), 319–20.

<sup>254</sup> "Tela Umbra History," *Tela Umbra Città Di Castello*, accessed April 8, 2016, <http://www.telaumbra.it/storia-dal-1908/history-english-version.html>.

the labor could serve as a healthful alternative to farming or factory labor and might teach morality and cleanliness to rural Italian populations.<sup>255</sup> In 1903, Di Brazzà and Amari founded the Industrie Femminili Italiane (IFI), a cooperative based in Rome that served as a venue to sell the lacework of her makers. The association purchased handmade textiles directly from female producers across Italy and in doing so removed potentially exploitative middlemen thus allowing women to keep more profits. The IFI also maintained a board of patronesses to study “the many beautiful designs of lace and embroidery in the museums, to which their rank and position give them easy access, and to keep in touch with the changes of fashion, in order that their schools may produce the articles most desired at the most opportune time in various countries.”<sup>256</sup> Amari and di Brazzà headquartered the IFI in Rome, but also opened outposts of the cooperative in cities such as Bologna and Florence. In doing so, they brought together connoisseurial knowledge and income of wealthy collectors with women in rural Italy versed in the needlework traditions of their regions and eager to generate additional income for their families.

The Scuola d’Industrie Italiane in Greenwich Village was, as Emily Zilber has documented, opened under the larger umbrella of the IFI.<sup>257</sup> In addition to relying on Carolina Amari for patterns and artistic direction, the Scuola also sent examples of its work to be sold in Italy as part of the IFI’s inventory. Colgate and Speranza’s effort to embrace Italian sponsorship for the enterprise in New York also encouraged patrons in the United States to consider the workshop as an extension of the old world lacemaking revival. Batcheller wrote that “the women of Italy, particularly the women of Abruzzi and Calabria, from which districts come the larger part of the Italian immigration, have been noted for centuries for their skill and handicraft, and it is with delight that I can write you that through the untiring and endless efforts of Signorina Carolina Amari, a lace school, to be a branch of the Industrie Femminili in Rome, has been established at Richmond House in MacDougal Street [sic], where these Old World hand-works of women are now to be preserved, renewed, and we surely hope ably supported.”<sup>258</sup> While working conditions in New York necessitated alterations to the structure of an IFI project, the Scuola nonetheless understood itself as part of the conglomeration’s disparate revival industries. With Amari, the Scuola embraced the IFI’s mandate to salvage the traditions of Italian women while helping them provide for themselves and their families.

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<sup>255</sup> Cora Ann Slocomb Di Brazzà Savorgnan, “The Italian Woman in the Country,” in *The Congress of Women: Held in the Women’s Building, World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago, U.S.A., 1893*, ed. Mary Kavanaugh Oldham (Chicago: Monarch Book Company, 1894), 697–703.

<sup>256</sup> Batcheller, *Glimpses of Italian Court Life*, 301.

<sup>257</sup> Zilber, “A Delicate Link with Their Far Away Country.”

<sup>258</sup> Batcheller, *Glimpses of Italian Court Life*, 423.

## Collecting Old Lace

Lace had been produced in Europe since the fifteenth century, yet it was not until the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that American collectors became interested in gathering and cataloging examples from countries such as Italy, France, Belgium, and Britain. Financial, political, and social upheavals, combined with debilitating droughts across Europe, had forced many land-holding families off of long-held estates and increased the circulation of objects onto the open market in countries such as Italy. Shifting political boundaries across Europe also loosened Church holdings so that ecclesiastical textiles began to appear for sale in the shops of dealers such as Jesurum, *Lefébure*, and *Marion Powys in France, England, and New York*.<sup>259</sup> During the height of the Scuola d'Industrie Italiane's popularity, its executive board and its customers – women such as Florence Colgate, Marian Hague, Mary Stillman Harkness, Jane Morgan, Jr. and Anna B. Bliss – were all amassing large personal collections of antique lace and embroidery, much of which they eventually donated to institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art and some of which became the basis for lace and embroidery produced at the Scuola.<sup>260</sup>

In the early twentieth century, American women travelling abroad began to collect lace in large quantities or to purchase fragments from dealers who proffered examples at prices that rivaled those of Old Masters paintings. By the late nineteenth-century, wealthy Americans such as Isabella Stewart Gardner, Arabella Huntington, Mrs. J.P Morgan, Mrs. Astor, and Mrs. Harkness all maintained extensive lace collections. As early as 1895, Maud Howard Elliott had declared that, "old lace is now almost priceless; there has been a tremendous run on it. . . . Most of the good old lace has gone to America."<sup>261</sup> *The Ladies Home Journal* reported in 1901 that the value of Mrs. Astor's lace collections on loan to the Metropolitan Museum exceeded \$62,000. *The New York Times* compared Italian lace to oil painting and remarked that, "the market price for a flounce of old Venetian point is \$1,000 a yard. . . . It is so rare that it is registered like a fine old Rembrandt and like the picture the location of a Venetian point flounce is known to collectors and dealers all over the world."<sup>262</sup> The founders and the needlewomen of the Scuola d'industrie Italiane readily embraced this American

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<sup>259</sup> Powys opened her Devonshire Lace Shop at 60 Washington Square, New York City in 1916. She later moved the business to 57<sup>th</sup> street. "Marian Powys," accessed July 30, 2014, <http://www.powys-lannion.net/Powys/America/MarianP.htm>.

<sup>260</sup> Mrs. J.P. Morgan Jr., "To Miss Taylor," March 22, 1923, Gino Speranza Papers, Scuola d'Industrie Italiane, box 14, Folder 1923, Manuscripts and Archives Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>261</sup> Maude Howard Elliott, "To Julia Ward Howe," May 10, 1895 in Maud Howe Elliott, *Three Generations* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1923), 269–70.

<sup>262</sup> "Fine Lace Lovers Have Their Club," *New York Times*, December 1, 1918, sec. Editorial.

interest in antique Italian lace and employed the work of Italian needlewomen to celebrate particular aspects of new immigrants' identities.

Lace was a precious commodity for clothing, household decoration, and systematic collecting for presentation and study. *Le Moniteur de la Mode* proclaimed in 1892 that laces were "a passion, a rage, everyone wants them, the old laces are on the rise; we quarrel over them, we snatch them."<sup>263</sup> Isabella Stewart Gardner was indicative of the type of educated collector who amassed examples for use and display in the manner deemed fashionable by guides such as the 1874 *Queen Lace Book*, which noted that "the fashion, which is now so general, of collecting specimens of lace is only a revival. . . . whereas in old days ladies amassed long lengths and large quantities, now they are content with scraps of small dimensions. Formerly Lace collections were hidden in presses and cabinets, now they are for public inspection; and the general idea is to arrange them in albums, as drawing-room table ornaments."<sup>264</sup> Women such as Rita d'Acosta Lydig also purchased antique lace as a means of adornment for contemporary dresses and shoes (Fig. 38). As Ms. Jackson Nevill remarked in 1899, "the revival in the fashion of wearing old lace is the leading note in the world of dress this season.... Real lace gives an air of refined distinction which even jewels, lovely though they may be, are impotent to achieve."<sup>265</sup>

Gardner elected not only to frame and showcase prime fragments, but also to combine several examples of the needlework she purchased from European dealers, such as Jesurum, and also through connections to fellow American expatriates in Venice, such as her confidantes Katherine de Kay Bronson and her daughter Edith, the Contess Rucellai.<sup>266</sup> Between 1888 and 1894, Gardner purchased twelve items from the Parisian lace dealer Jesurum and likely collected many more small samples during her extended stays in Italy.<sup>267</sup> Gardner recorded paying 2,860 dollars in 1894 for an "old Rosalino point flounce," and 413 dollars for an "old handkerchief and coverlet."<sup>268</sup> Like those of many of her New York contemporaries, Gardner's lace collection and wardrobe reflected a discerning eye for everything from large liturgical textiles to small fragments of needle and bobbin lace.

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<sup>263</sup> Anne Kraatz, *Lace: History and Fashion* (New York: Rizzoli, 1989), 152.

<sup>264</sup> *The Queen Lace Book* (London: The Queen's Office, 1874), 38.

<sup>265</sup> Mrs. F. Nevill Jackson, "On the Wearing of Old Lace," *The Lady's Realm*, August 1899, 510–16.

<sup>266</sup> Edith Bronson became the Countess Rucellai and founded her own lace school in Venice. Rosella Mamoli Zorzi, Anne McCauly, and Erica Hirshler, *Gondola Days: Isabella Stewart Gardner and the Palazzo Barbaro* (Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardiner, 2006).

<sup>267</sup> "Dealer Receipt Inventory 1888-1894," The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum Archives.

<sup>268</sup> Isabella Stewart Gardner, "Isabella Stewart Gardner Receipts," October 16, 1894, The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. (*Underlining occurs in the original text*).

In 1909, Dodge MacKnight sent Gardner a portion of Spanish lace with the note, "I also send you by this mail a large piece of Spanish drawn work – probably for an altar and evidently done in a monastery some time or other – I've been keeping it in a drawer – thought I would unload it on a museum some time or other; but would rather give it to you than sell it to any one else."<sup>269</sup> Gardner had seamstresses combine such fragments into larger patchwork compilations that served as curtains between a grand second floor chamber and the airy central court of her 1903 museum building (Fig. 39). The Cathedral of St. John the Divine in Manhattan received a similar patchwork textile pieced together from donated antique lace fragments given by New York society women and assembled by Mrs. Eloise Zallic in 1926 (Fig. 40). This American interest in collecting lace extended beyond personal caches to the creation of textiles that combined a whole community's shared interest in antique work. Women, such as Eloise Zallic, gamely appropriated Roman Catholic religious textiles and affixed them to pieces drawn from domestic textiles. She pieced together disparate collected fragments much like a patchwork quilt for her community's most sacred space.

Collecting antique lace fragments in a systematic way gained traction with the publication of manuals identifying various techniques and regional characteristics. With manuals such as Mrs. Bury Palliser's 1865 *History of Lace*, upper-class women received advice on the value and rarity of various forms. Reprintings of antique lace pattern books such as Vecellio's 1617 *Corona delli Nobili et Virtuose Donne* also popularized Renaissance designs among makers and collectors. In 1908, Elisa Ricci produced a richly illustrated three-volume guide to Italian laces, *Antiche Trine Italiane*, a work that presented a chronology of forms illustrated with examples from private collections such as those of the Scuola cofounders Carolina Amari and Florence Colgate.<sup>270</sup> In 1920, Metropolitan Museum textile curator Frances Morris and Gertrude Whiting published *Antique Laces of American Collectors* detailing the history of European textile collections in the United States in both public institutions and private hands.<sup>271</sup> In the United States, associations, such as the Needle and Bobbin Club, also sprung up to bring together women with shared interests in fostering antique lace appreciation and supporting the production of contemporary textiles.

Objects such as the needle lace dragon fragment made by the workers of the Scuola reflect the international collecting efforts of the Scuola's founders and the workshop's creative reworking of museum quality fragments with Italian

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<sup>269</sup> Dodge MacKnight, "To Isabella Stewart Gardner," April 9, 1909, The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum Archives.

<sup>270</sup> Elisa Ricci, *Old Italian Lace*, (London: William Heinemann, 1913). Elisa Ricci, *Antiche Trine Italiane: Trine a Fuselli* (Bergamo: Istituto Italiano d'Arti Grafiche, 1908).

<sup>271</sup> Frances Morris and Marian Hague, *Antique Laces of American Collectors* (New York: Published for the Needle and Bobbin Club by W. Helburn Inc., 1920).

provenance. This small dragon medallion was made using a technique called *Punto in Aria*, or stitching in air (Fig. 41). The process required the lace maker to fill in thousands of tiny buttonhole stitches between guide threads affixed to a paper pattern. To create this needle lace, the Scuola designer worked from an original antique textile, a half chalice veil owned by co-founder Florence Colgate (Fig. 42). Colgate's original veil depicts a lamb encircled by the Latin words "Ecce Agnus Dei," or "Behold the Lamb of God." Around the border, the maker added an elaborately rendered eagle and a dragon with outstretched wings.

Colgate exhibited her original fragment at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's 1919 display of New York lace collections. At the time, curator Frances Morris declared the work not only a feat of artistry, but also a precious historical link to Italy's past. Morris identified the dragon and the eagle motif as linking the fragment to Cardinal Scipio Borghese, nephew of Pius X, because the Borghese crest featured an eagle and dragon. Writing of Colgate's half chalice veil, Morris lamented that "it is difficult to imagine a vandalism that could ruthlessly damage so valuable a document."<sup>272</sup>

Images of Colgate's veil proliferated in print as part of Ricci's *Antiche Trine Italiane*. Ricci's text, published in Italian and English, featured objects in Amari's and Colgate's coffers. Ricci's illustration of Colgate's example featured two images of the work. The first illustrates the lace stretched flat (Fig. 43).<sup>273</sup> In the second illustration, two sides of the lace have been pulled together to unite the halves of the dragon just as the Scuola would render the complete figure of the mythical beast (Fig. 44). We cannot know if the workshop produced the dragon upon seeing Ricci's illustration, or if the publication perhaps knew of the Scuola's efforts and elected to photograph the textile accordingly. In either case, the Scuola's efforts reunited a form divided years before and recreated it.

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<sup>272</sup> Frances Morris, "Summer Lace Exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art," *The Bulletin of the Needle and Bobbin Club* 3, no. 2 (1919): 3-15. The fragment remained in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum until 1935, when Speranza requested its return. Mrs. Gino Speranza, "To Mr. Henry F. Davidson, Registrar of the Met," July 11, 1935, Speranza, Mrs. Gino, 1919-21, 1923, 1935-36, 1941, Sp. 3597, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives.

<sup>273</sup> Ricci's dating of this textile is not consistent with that of the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, the institution that currently owns the work. While Ricci dates the lace to the sixteenth century, the Cooper-Hewitt lists the fragment as early seventeenth century. Such confusion is typical with lace fragments that employ patterns and iconography popular in several time periods.

## Museums and Lace

The Scuola d'Industrie Italiane relied not only on efforts of individual collectors, but also on the shared knowledge and expertise of a rising group of female museum professionals who organized and fostered textile collections of immense size and importance. Examples from these collections became the basis for some of the Scuola's most ambitious projects. Thanks to the collecting efforts of wealthy Americans and the growing acceptance of the status of lace as both a craft and a fine art, institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston received major donations in the late nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries and actively collected to create encyclopedic collections of lace and embroidery from across Europe. A generation of museum professionals also emerged at this moment capable of distinguishing between different types of lace from various locations and time periods.

The first female professionals at institutions, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, emerged in the field of textiles with many working specifically with these institutions' highly prized lace collections. Women such as Sarah Flint Townsend of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and Frances Morris at the Metropolitan, fostered careers as experts in the field of textiles and solicited aide in the systematic identification and classification of their museums' vast lace collections using experts such as Amari, who worked both for the Metropolitan and the Museum of Fine Arts. Museums such as the Metropolitan organized exhibitions and permanent installations using religious and domestic examples to present the history of lace from its origins in Italy to its flourishing in countries across Europe. The National Museum in Washington D.C., the Corcoran Gallery, the Brooklyn Museum, the de Young Museum, the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris all exhibited permanent collections of lace in the early half of the twentieth century. Colgate, Amari, and several members of the Scuola's executive board were closely aligned with the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. It is these ties that allowed the studio to work directly from museum examples and also attract clients and professional support.

Even before the Columbian Exposition, the Metropolitan Museum was acquiring lace in large quantities. The institution received its first major collection of lace in 1879 and augmented it at intervals until 1938, by which time the holdings had mushroomed to well over 4,000 objects. The Metropolitan's list of lace donors reads as a virtual who's who of New York Society with names such as Astor, Skyler, Harkness, Bliss, Morgan, and De Forest among the museum's major contributors. Many of these families would provide dedicated patronage to the Scuola. In 1921, the Metropolitan featured two full galleries dedicated exclusively

to lace, suggesting the tremendous popularity of the medium for viewers and among museum personnel. Visitors could also look more closely at examples from the collection in the Museum's Textile Study Center. As the *Museum Bulletin* declared, "Here one may study the history of lace from its primitive conception in the Coptic network of the early centuries of the Christian era, to the highest perfection of the art in the Venice points; and from this stage one can follow its development in the different countries under varied conditions, each with its marked characteristics, but few attaining the perfection of the early Venetian workers."<sup>274</sup>

Museums also embraced opportunities to allow craftsmen into their collections to work from original sources. *The Bulletin of the Needle and Bobbin Club* described in 1924 that "The Metropolitan and the Brooklyn museums are always ready to loan or place before our designers, rare old pieces that can be adapted to modern needs, and now after their careful training, the needle women can embroider according to the best traditions of the past."<sup>275</sup> In the early twentieth century, the Metropolitan Museum had not lost sight of one of its original mandates to foster good design among the nation's makers. The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston also acquired a large collection of laces from local collectors and with the help of Sarah Flint, arranged them in the gallery "as to form a perfect and illuminating historical sequence."<sup>276</sup> Like the Metropolitan, the Museum of Fine Arts also welcomed the public to their study room to explore particular textiles. In 1911, the museums hosted nearly 1,500 visitors in this capacity.<sup>277</sup>

During the height of the Scuola d'Industrie Italiane's popularity, the workshop's executive board and its customers — Colgate, Marian Hague, Mary Stillman Harkness, Jane Morgan, Jr. and Anna B. Bliss — were donating antique lace to the Metropolitan and also purchasing the Scuola's new products based on older models.<sup>278</sup> On more than one occasion, Mrs. Morgan ordered napkins and other wedding presents.<sup>279</sup> Members of Colgate's family such as Mr. Lathrop Harper and Mrs. Colgate Harper served as members of the executive committee of the Scuola and were also active donors to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Scuola was also popular at the Needle and Bobbin Club and the Guild of Needle and Bobbin Crafts, two groups of textile enthusiasts and practitioners formed at

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<sup>274</sup> Although most scholars since the early twentieth century locate lace's origins in fifteenth-century Italy, one can see the characteristic buttonhole stitch in textiles dated much earlier. "The Lace Room," *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 1906, 98–99.

<sup>275</sup> "Guild Notes," *Needle and Bobbin Club Bulletin* 8, no. 2 (1924.): 48.

<sup>276</sup> "Rare Laces on View," *Boston Evening Transcript*, December 21, 1903.

<sup>277</sup> Sarah Gore Flint, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Thirty-Sixth Annual Report for the Year 1911* (Boston: The Metcalf Press, 1912), 121.

<sup>278</sup> Mrs. Morgan Jr., "To Miss Taylor,"

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*

the Metropolitan Museum.<sup>280</sup> The Scuola advertised in the first issue of *The Bulletin of the Needle and Bobbin Club* and continued to do so for several years. When the Scuola closed its independent shop in 1923, the studio continued to sell through the Guild of Needle and Bobbin Crafts, an affiliated philanthropic enterprise born of the Needle and Bobbin Club. The Guild maintained showrooms at 125 E 54<sup>th</sup> street in New York and sold works from the Ukrainian Needlework Guild, Lenox Hill House, Russian Refugee Work Shop, and Hamilton House.<sup>281</sup> Throughout its tenure and thanks to women such as Amari and Colgate, the Scuola was deeply interconnected with objects and patrons in New York's premier cultural institutions as well as with philanthropic organizations dedicated to integrating immigrant women into the American economy.<sup>282</sup>

In 1906, the Museum of Fine Arts featured an exhibition of Amari's collections and also published a small catalogue to accompany the show. As the Museum *Bulletin* proclaimed, "This collection contains many hundred pieces of lace and embroidery, for the most part Italian, while specimens from other countries have been introduced for purposes of comparison."<sup>283</sup> Amari not only lent the Museum nearly 1,000 examples of lace, but also presented three lectures. To sustain these efforts she served as an advisor for the budding textiles department at the Museum.

Her notes on the MFA's textiles defined techniques, dates, and potential locations of origin for Italian needle and bobbin laces in the collection. In her marginalia, Amari commented on workmanship, drew connections between pieces in the collection and served as intermediary between the American museum and connoisseurs and workshops in Italy.<sup>284</sup> The museum noted that "She [Amari] brought over the Italian patterns and material for the work which could not be procured here."<sup>285</sup> Margaret Taylor Johnston, a lace enthusiast affiliated with the Metropolitan's lace collections, also sought Amari's expertise

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<sup>280</sup> In 1916, Gertrude Whiting founded the Needle and Bobbin Club to encourage the study of textiles in the United States. The group went on field trips and published a newsletter exploring collections and introducing new industries. Gertrude Whiting, "Needle and Bobbin Club By-Laws," *Needle and Bobbin Club Bulletin* 1, no. 1 (1916): 20.

<sup>281</sup> Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, March 16, 1922, Gino Speranza Papers, Scuola d'Industrie Italiane, Box 14, 1922 Folder, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library.

<sup>282</sup> Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, March 16, 1922.

<sup>283</sup> *Exhibition of Italian and Other Lace Lent by Signorina Carolina Amari*.

<sup>284</sup> Carolina Amari, "06.24 Italian Lace Fragment," 1906, Textiles Department, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

<sup>285</sup> "Embroidery School for Italian Girls," 1906, Gino Speranza Papers, Scuola d'Industrie Italiane, Box 15, Folder Newspaper Clippings, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

in identifying and classifying old laces for the Metropolitan.<sup>286</sup> Women at the heart of the Scuola's enterprise were instrumental in the building up and identification of European textile collections in the United States and these close ties allowed the Scuola to reproduce particular antique objects with singular accuracy.

In 1908, the Scuola, through its close relationship with the Metropolitan Museum, began its most ambitious project to date by reproducing to a liturgical object that was part of the Museum's collections. The studio set out to recreate a complete altar set based on a sixteenth-century chalice veil (Figs. 45 and 46). The Scuola's version of the Metropolitan Museum's original represents a remarkably faithful copy of the work that entered the collections in 1879 as an anonymous gift attributed either to Italian or Spanish makers (Fig. 47). Fashioned from plain weave linen with cutwork, drawn work, and deflected work, both the original and the Scuola's reproduction are made up of alternating rows of Maltese crosses interspersed with tiny baskets enclosed in diamond shaped shields. Although the Scuola's reproduction is nearly three inches larger than the original, the copy follows the same design and showcases the very same attention to detail and fine craftsmanship. The Scuola's designers augmented the textile with attendant items based on sketches that Amari sent from Italy as part of a *servizio di capella* she had seen in Italy (Fig. 48). The studio embellished Amari's cursory outline to produce a version outlined in the drawing. The workshop, thus, not only skillfully reproduced a valuable artwork but also 'completed' it with appropriate linens to form a complete set.

The studio included the work in several of its promotional brochures, often noting the pattern's origin in the Metropolitan's collections. One pamphlet boasted that the work comprised "an *exact* reproduction of an example in the Metropolitan Museum of Art."<sup>287</sup> In celebrating their artists' ability to forge exact copies, the workshop coopted the language of industry and mechanized production, but used it to champion the ineffable spirit of Italian artistry that its workers translated into worthy versions of antique originals. As an invitation to the Scuola's Christmas Sale boasted, "visitors will have an excellent opportunity to see many beautiful pieces varying widely in price from the tiny embroidered glove-purse at 50 cents to the exquisite chalice veil, an exact reproduction of an

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<sup>286</sup> Johnston was an American living abroad with a life-long project to classify the Metropolitan's lace collections, albeit from across the Atlantic. She was affiliated with the museum through her brother, the Metropolitan Museum's founding president, John Taylor Johnston, and her niece, Emily Johnston de Forest, wife of Metropolitan Museum president, Robert W. de Forest.

<sup>287</sup> Scuola d'Industrie Italiane, "Catalogue of an Exhibition of Laces and Embroideries Held at the Residence of Mrs. Gino C. Speranza Fifty East Fifty-Seventh Street December First MCMX," Gino Speranza Papers, Scuola d'Industrie Italiane, Box 14, 1910 Folder, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library.

example in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.”<sup>288</sup> Even before this particular textile was completed, the workshop offered to show it off to its most prominent patrons. In 1911, executive committee member Lathrop Harper wrote to Mrs. J.P. Morgan suggesting a visit to see the work in progress. “It is really very wonderful,” Harper informed Mrs. Morgan’s secretary, “and I believe the finest thing in the way of needle work ever produced here. I am sure that it would give her pleasure to know that such beautiful and artistic work is possible under modern conditions here. This is quite aside from her coming to purchase it.” Although, Harper could not help but add: “It is of course for sale.”<sup>289</sup>

This veil, or copies of the textile, also appeared as part of the workshop’s displays across the country. The work featured in the Scuola’s booth at the Boston Arts and Crafts Society and the New York and Brooklyn Architecture League.<sup>290</sup> In this image of an unnamed exhibition, the veil served as one portion of the busy backdrop for three young workers, whose meticulous labor appears as much on display as the Scuola’s textiles (Fig. 49). Just as Harper had invited Mrs. Morgan to the workshop to view the veil as artisans worked to complete it, so too did such displays of women at work stress the close association between their careful labor and the genteel, domestic, and ecclesiastical objects they created.

The last recorded exhibition of the Scuola altar occurred in 1944, when lace expert Marion Powys included the work in her *A Century of New York Needlework and Decorative Arts* exhibition at the Museum of the City of New York (Fig. 50). The installation featured the liturgical set as part of a tableau also celebrating other New York workshops such as the Fisk Weavers. In the display, Powys draped the chalice veil over a cup as it might have appeared on an altar and exactly as Amari had sketched it several years before. This exhibition, displayed over a decade after the Scuola had closed, re-contextualized the workshop’s products to celebrate New York industries and American makers rather than the foreign associations of its producers. The chalice veil’s context shifted to stress evolving conceptions of Italian-Americans as full participants in the shared culture of the United States.

Tracing the origins and the uses of the Scuola’s objects in works such as the *servizio di capella* locates the Scuola at the heart of the collection, reproduction,

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<sup>288</sup> “Scuola d’Industrie Italiane Christmas Sale Invitation,” Gino Speranza Papers, Scuola d’Industrie Italiane, Box 15, Miscellany, Catalogues, notices of exhibitions, invitations, samples of stationary, etc., Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

<sup>290</sup> Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, March 12, 1914, Gino Speranza Papers, Scuola d’Industrie Italiane Box 14, 1913-15 Folder, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library.

and exhibition of the work of Italy's past and its present as embodied in the aims of the Scuola and handwork of America's new immigrants. This secularized version of the *servizio* embodies the pride that the workshop's directors exhibited in their needle workers. These works exhibit the mutually beneficial interconnections between urban museums, the philanthropic class, and the Scuola's mission to integrate immigrant working-class women into a skilled professional trade.

### **"Strands in the Cable": The Women of the Scuola**

The Scuola helped define upper-class women's status as collectors and arbiters of taste who employed the reproduction of valuable needlework to better classify the capacities of new immigrants in the United States. They deliberately linked the prestige of the Renaissance to modern Italian-American women. The workers of the Scuola had their own goals; they worked within the structures of the settlement house workshop to shape their own experience of New York and to solidify conceptions about their heritage and their lives in the United States. Millie Mariano, Nettie Muccio, Angelina Pellegrino, and Cora Gindano were some of the young women who grew from young pupils into skilled practitioners at the workshop (although all pay slips that went to Muccio, Pellegrino, and Mariano were co-signed by men). Each used the studio to maintain aspects of their Italian patrimony.<sup>291</sup> Some efforts towards these dual purposes were collaborations between the Scuola's largely Anglo-Saxon management, while other advancements came not through conscious programmatic efforts by teachers and executive committee members, but rather through the use of available resources on the part of the Italian-American workers.

Millie Mariano, Nettie Muccio, Angelina Pellegrino, and Cora Gindano were among the first and second-generation Italian immigrants recruited for the Scuola in its early days. Their families, like so many others arriving in New York in the early twentieth century, had fled Italy for the United States hoping to escape dwindling agricultural opportunities and economic and political instability.<sup>292</sup> As Oscar Handlin has vividly described, leaving the Old Country was a traumatic process that required severing ties with members of one's family, community, and culture.<sup>293</sup> Upon arrival, immigrants faced an unfamiliar

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<sup>291</sup> "Pay slips Nettie Muccio, Angelina Pellegrino, Millie Mariano" (Central Union Trust Company, New York, 1923), Gino Speranza Papers, Scuola d'Industrie Italiane, Box 14, 1923 Folder, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

<sup>292</sup> Davis, *Italy in the Nineteenth Century 1796-1900*, 17.

<sup>293</sup> Subsequent historians, such as Ewen and Orsi have reassessed Handlin's account of immigration to account for the rich cultural life that immigrants forged for themselves after

and disorienting world where “the customary modes of behavior were no longer adequate, for the problems of life were new and different. With old ties snapped, men faced the enormous compulsion of working out new relationships, new meanings to their lives, often under harsh and hostile circumstances.”<sup>294</sup> For Handlin, the history of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century immigration to the United States from Europe constituted nothing short of “a history of alienation and its consequences.”<sup>295</sup>

Large numbers of Italians settled in American cities, such as New York, and gathered in close-knit communities of fellow Italians from similar regions. Robert Orsi and Catherine Ware have demonstrated that while religious and social institutions became gathering nodes for New York’s Italian communities, the unit of the family remained the primary organizational unit (as well as the sometimes ideologically loaded symbol) of daily life.<sup>296</sup> Italians brought with them a strict patriarchal structure but in the new world relied increasingly on the work of women to maintain domestic and financial stability. As Ware and Orsi have documented, it was the younger generations, and girls in particular, who served as the primary links between the traditions of their parents and new American ways of living.<sup>297</sup> In her study of Greenwich Village, Ware identified this confrontation between old and new world as the primary pressure threatening to destroy the soul of the neighborhood and a stress felt particularly by the community’s young women. “Whatever operated to individualize the women and the children upset their subordination to the group as a whole and to the man who was its dominant head,” Ware observed.

As this occurred, the most fundamental of all traditional Italian relationships was destroyed. The breakdown of Italian culture can, thus, be traced in a changing position of Italian women and girls. . . . It was around the position and activity of the girls who were growing up that the clash between the tradition of rural Italy and the dynamics of modern America really centered.<sup>298</sup>

Orsi similarly notes the fraught position for young women among early twentieth-century Italian immigrants in Harlem who embraced independent

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settling in the United States. Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street*. Ewen, *Immigrant Women in the Land of Dollars*.

<sup>294</sup> Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), 5.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>296</sup> Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street*; Ware, *Greenwich Village*.

<sup>297</sup> Mary Antin, a young Jewish immigrant, well understood this particular tension when she described herself and her compatriots as “the strands of the cable that binds the Old World to the New.” Mary Antin, *The Promised Land* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1912), Introduction.

<sup>298</sup> Ware, *Greenwich Village, 1920-1930*, 175.

identities outside of the home yet also felt pulled to maintain their place in strict family hierarchies. For the Italian families in particular, this dual identity meant that submitting to paternal authority, even as women, took on increasing responsibility outside of the home.<sup>299</sup>

The Scuola's workers – Maria Di Benedetto, Nettie Muccio, Millie Mariano, Angelina Pellegrino, Frannie Terrolota, Cora Gindano, Rosina Gruora, Augusta, Ceasarina, Eletta, Mrs. Gigante, Marrie, Rosie, Assunta, Jennie, Anita, Elivira, Letizia, Manise, and many others whose names were not recorded – stood at the heart of this pivotal generational conflict. They or their parents felt the strains of leaving Europe and arriving in the United States. These young women shouldered many of the burdens of adjusting to unfamiliar surroundings and adapting to American life. Each made a choice when they turned away from work in the home or factory to learn needlework skills at the Scuola. In working at the studio, needle workers sought ways to preserve aspects of their cultural heritage and forge new Italian-American identities while embracing economic and social opportunity in the United States.

Sometime between 1916 and 1921, six young female workers from the Scuola sat for a portrait at the studios of Simon and DeMaria, located near the workshop (Fig. 51).<sup>300</sup> Millie Mariano, Eugenia Terracotta, Angelina Pellegrino, Cora Gindano, Rosina Gruora, and Nettie Muccio stand in a cluster beside a leaded glass window in a tight group united by similar clothing and hairstyles. Two women seated in the first row, Muccio and Terracotta, hold small sprigs of flowers. Pellegrino and Gindano wear simple strands of beads around their necks but apart from these scant embellishments, the young women appear cleanly and plainly attired in white shirtwaists and long skirts: the everyday costume of middle-class urban women in early twentieth-century New York. Each has her dark hair swept up and none covers her head. In short, the women pictured bear the markings of respectability as they exhibit their integration with the fashions of their adopted homeland.

A second photograph likely taken around the same time records Mariano and Pellegrino in a similar studio setting (Fig. 52). The image provides a very different picture of Italian-American immigrant identity. Rather than the slender high-waisted skirts of the first photograph, Mariano and Pellegrino pose wearing full, layered skirts over loosely tied bodices, billowing blouses, and cascading

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<sup>299</sup> Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street*, 143.

<sup>300</sup> The image can be dated based on executive committee meeting minutes which note that as the institution struggled against economic forces that resulted in its closure two years later, all workers save Angelina Pellegrino and Millie Marciano were let go in 1921. The writing on the back of the photograph dates from 1919 or after, although it is not clear if the notations were recorded at the same time the photograph was taken.

necklaces. Such wide-sleeve blouses and head coverings, or Roman Blouses and Dante Hoods, constituted particularly potent symbols of Italian peasant life for the Scuola and its workers (Figs 53 and 54). The workshop marketed versions of each using language that emphasized the authentic nature of the form, decoration, and the maker of the item of clothing. In a 1907 article in *The Sun*, Amari referred to the Roman Blouse as “an inevitable part of every peasant’s wardrobe.”<sup>301</sup> The garments, produced and marketed by the Scuola, held particular valences for the women as well as for those consumers who would have associated the costume with Rome, Dante, and the Italian countryside.

According to the notation on the back of the image, the two are dressed for a “Washington Square fête.” Pellegrino wears an apron adorned with a heraldic crest, a common embellishment across Italy for festival clothing. The horizontal bands of embroidery on Mariano’s apron similarly reference patterns of peasant needlework.<sup>302</sup> While the precise celebration remains unclear, ethnic heritage celebrations were common occurrences in Washington Square Park’s large public gathering space, where parades often marched under the triumphal arch at Fifth Avenue.<sup>303</sup> Italian-American festivals occurred with particular frequency in this location given the square’s proximity to the predominantly Italian Greenwich Village (Fig. 55). Unlike the first image, these two women cover their heads with two variations on the *tovaglia*, a starched linen decorative headdress common throughout Italy that marked the two as linked to traditional folkways.<sup>304</sup> Unlike the simple adornments of the women in the first photograph, the decorative costumes conjure modes of dress linking the women both to their homeland and to the products they produced at the small workshop in the Richmond Hill Settlement House on 27 McDougal Street. Taken together, the two images situate two of the workshop’s most respected artisans, Mariano and Pellegrino, as posing both as Italian peasants and modern American women.

The Richmond Hill Settlement house provided the workspace and exhibition area with funding from Speranza, Colgate, and various board members. Amari likely influenced the look and feel of the studio space and the informal atmosphere echoed many of the workshops she had helped to form in Italy. Yet the women of the workshop also played an important role in creating and

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<sup>301</sup> “School of the Lace Makers: A Work Carried on Here as in Italy,” *The Sun*, January 27, 1907.

<sup>302</sup> According to Jill Condra, aprons with heraldic crests were popular articles for festival attire throughout Italy, but notably in Southern Italy, the region that most the Scuola’s workers likely came from. Jill Condra, ed., *Encyclopedia of National Dress [2 Volumes]: Traditional Clothing around the World* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2013).

<sup>303</sup> Artist William Glackens recorded crowds at an Italian-American celebration in Washington Square Park around 1912 in a painting now at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. William Glackens, *Italo-American Celebration, Washington Square*, c. 1912, 23 ¾ x 32 inches, oil on canvas, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 59.658.

<sup>304</sup> Condra, *Encyclopedia of National Dress*, 379.

making use of the well-appointed and domestically scaled environment that was nonetheless distinct from their actual homes. Orsi, Kathy Peiss and Elizabeth Ewen have observed the dearth of public spaces available to immigrant women in cities to escape pressures from their families and communities.<sup>305</sup> Living in cramped tenements or on noisy factory floors, immigrant women wishing to maintain good reputations had few locations to escape cramped homes or busy workspaces. While their male counterparts might easily convene in bars or in the purpose-built or rented halls of mutual benefit societies, women had few commensurate social spaces. Peiss and Ewen have proposed that public entertainment venues came to fulfill this function for a new class of wage earning women, who socialized both with one another and with the opposite sex in movie theaters, dance halls, and amusement parks. Such spaces, they argue, evolved to suit the particular needs of this newly empowered population.<sup>306</sup>

The settlement house and the Scuola's workshop, in particular, provided immigrant women in New York with some of the same advantages as these entertainment spaces. Richmond Hill, like many area social welfare organizations, offered neighborhood residents an array of language and manual training classes designed to help immigrants Americanize and integrate more fully into American life. While the Scuola remained an entity apart from the settlement, its mission complimented the aims of the institution from which it rented space by offering an alternative space where women might gather to share experiences and frustrations. The Scuola was never an official part of the Richmond Hill Settlement House, but there were overlaps in leadership between the two institutions. Gino Speranza was chairman of the settlement in 1909 and Elizabeth Romer served as Head Resident at the Richmond Hill House on the executive committee of the Scuola for several years. The workspace fostered an environment wherein workers connected with one another in Italian, a language that appears to have been inscrutable to most of the Scuola's executive committee members.

Accounts of women's daily work from visitors and committee members alike reveal that these observers roundly designated conversations between workers during the day as nothing more than idle chatter conducted in a foreign tongue. While Colgate lived in Italy with her husband, her assessment of conversations taking place between workers indicates that she was unfamiliar with the language that floated through the workshop, nor did she imagine that such conversations constituted anything more than lighthearted gossip. As she described, "so long as they [the workers] are not too noisy or lazy, the childish chattering is unchecked. Rosina and Maria talk over their affairs, and laugh and

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<sup>305</sup> Peiss, *Cheap Amusements*.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.* Ewen, *Immigrant Women in the Land of Dollars*.

tease each other as freely as at home, and in more comfort.”<sup>307</sup> Recounting the sounds of Rosina and Maria’s laughter and their conversations as ‘childish chatter,’ Colgate dismissed the importance of the exchanges her workshop enabled. Illustrated articles about the workshop’s efforts similarly featured the Scuola’s women at work while leaning in close to one another, “chattering in Italian as fast as their fingers can fly” (Fig. 56). In fact, conversation at the Scuola between workers reached far beyond pleasantries and into discussions of the role of piecework and wage labor and the potential for better pay and better working conditions for the women of the workshop. As the studio’s executive committee meeting’s minutes record, the Scuola’s workers collectively petitioned for wage increases and vocalized their concerns about the studio’s working techniques.<sup>308</sup> At a moment when their relatives and neighbors were founding and joining unions in increasing numbers, the Scuola’s needlewomen too came together in the workshops to discuss how to better their community of workers and the neighborhood at large.

Individual practitioners worked within the system to achieve success and independence. Angelina Pellegrino worked at the Scuola for over ten years, first appearing in the Scuola’s records in 1915 when she received a wage increase from seven to eight dollars. Throughout her career, the executive committee recognized her on several occasions for her artistic and leadership skills. By 1921, the committee recommended that she be “employed. . . to work as pattern-maker and pace setter.”<sup>309</sup> Pellegrino entered the Scuola as a teenager and rose from practitioner to designer to supervisor. She became so indispensable to the studio that even in its waning days, she continued to receive the unprecedented wage of eighteen dollars a week. By contrast, reports from the Immigrant Commission in 1915 reported that over half of female immigrant workers in unskilled professions earned less than 7 dollars and fifty cents a week.<sup>310</sup>

Millie Mariano similarly forged a successful career at the Scuola. Born in 1891 in New York to Italian parents, Mariano began working at the Scuola sometime before 1912 and remained there until its virtual dissolution in 1923. During that time, her wages increased from six dollars to nearly seventeen dollars a week. In 1920, the unmarried, 29 year-old Mariano lived in a Greenwich Village boarding house near the Scuola and supported herself with her own income. She proudly

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<sup>307</sup> Eva Lovett, “Italian Lace School in New York,” *International Studio* 29 (1906): xiv.

<sup>308</sup> Executive Committee Meeting Minutes,” February 9, 1911, 1911 Folder, Gino Speranza Papers, Scuola d’Industrie Italiane, Box 14, 1922 Folder, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

<sup>309</sup> “Executive Committee Meeting Minutes,” May 12, 1921, Box 14, Gino Speranza Papers, Scuola d’Industrie Italiane, 1916-1921 Folder, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

<sup>310</sup> C.E. Persons, “Women’s Work and Wages in the United States,” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 29, no. 2 (1915): 207–208.

informed census takers that she was employed as an “embroiderer” in a “lace house.”<sup>311</sup> In addition to specifying her skilled trade, Mariano also made sure to differentiate her workplace from that of a factory or sweatshop. Her self-identification as a skilled maker in a boutique establishment clearly indicates the pride she felt in the workshop she helped to maintain.

Scuola artists supported not only themselves and their families, but lifted up other members of the community through their connection to the workshop.<sup>312</sup> In 1916, studio supervisor Eleanor Daggett wrote to Colgate of a potential new hire; “a young Italian who has only been in this country nine months. She has a very good hand and knows how to do many kinds of stitches.” In addition to her talents, Daggett relayed that the needle worker was also Scuola artist Frannie Terrolota’s sister-in-law.<sup>313</sup> Terrolota used her position in the workshop to assist another newly arriving relative by securing for her a position.

The women of the workshop understood the relatively rare opportunity the workshop provided for them to interact with women outside of their neighborhood and their social sphere. Needle workers met with customers when the workshop opened its doors to visitors once a week. Young artisans also spent time in the homes of their benefactors, who frequently held sales in their townhouses and summer retreats. During the summer of 1921, for instance, the Scuola held exhibits in Bedford, Ardsley, Norfolk, Martha’s Vineyard, and Oyster Bay.<sup>314</sup> In at least one instance, artists travelled to the country with Mrs. Colgate, one of Florence’s relatives, for a visit to her Bedford Hills estate.<sup>315</sup>

The young women of the Scuola also served as representatives for the workshop at fairs and exhibitions, as attested by the photograph of a group of young workers at an unnamed exhibition (Fig. 49). The Scuola exhibited products and workmanship at fairs and exhibitions, both in the United States and overseas, such as the Milan Exposition (1906), The Society of Arts and Crafts in Boston (1907), the Turin International Exposition (1911), The Women’s Industrial Exhibition (1912), The Architectural League (1914), The American Federation of

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<sup>311</sup> “1920 United States Federal Census, Manhattan Assembly District 5, New York, New York,” 1920, Records of the Bureau of Census, Record Group 29, Roll T625\_1193, Page 13A District 409 Image 464, The National Archives.

<sup>312</sup> Organizations such as the International Ladies’ Garment Workers Union, founded in 1900, organized factory walkouts and strikes among immigrant workers in 1909, 1910, and 1911 when women protested low pay, long hours, and poor working conditions. While major strikes took place in 1909 and 1910, the movement catalyzed around the Triangle Shirtwaist fire of 1911 that killed 146 female garment workers.

<sup>313</sup> Eleanor Daggett, “To Mrs. Speranza,” June 15, 1916, Gino Speranza Papers, Scuola d’Industrie Italiane, Box 14, Fold 1916-1921, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library.

<sup>314</sup> “Executive Committee Meeting Minutes,” May 12, 1921.

<sup>315</sup> Daggett, “To Mrs. Speranza.”

Arts (1915), and the Panama Pacific Exposition (1915). During these public events, the young needle workers represented their work and that of their fellow needle workers to all variety of interested passers-by. Members of the Scuola also participated in New York's 1921 *America's Making* exposition as part of the Guild of Needle and Bobbin Crafts displays. As Mrs. Robert Coleman Taylor of the Guild reported, "The Ukrainian Needlework Guild, the Italian 'Scuola,' and the Lenox Hill House sent workers in their national costumes."<sup>316</sup> By placing the producer amidst the fruits of her labor as, di Brazzà and the Labor Museum at Hull-House had done, the Scuola provided a visual connection between handwork, history, and industry.

Exchanges between upper-class patrons and working-class artists resulted in friendships that benefitted both women. Needle worker Cora Gindano recognized in Florence Colgate an empathetic personality and a source of financial support. The two cultivated a relationship that remained strong even after Colgate moved to Italy with her husband. Gindano was one of the workshop's most promising artists and was among the first at the workshop to successfully petition for a raise in wages (from ten to eleven dollars a week in 1914). She rose quickly to become one of the workshop's top earners.<sup>317</sup> At some point in the early part of the 1910s, Gindano became ill and took time away from the workshop to recuperate. In letters to Colgate, she described her convalescence in the country, making sure to emphasize her sincere gratitude to Colgate for her support, which appears to have been both emotional and material. Gindano wrote to Colgate that, "many times when I sat alone suffering did I think of you and say, Oh! If Mrs. Speranza was here, not for anything but I felt that a word of comfort from you was the best tonic for a suffering person."<sup>318</sup>

Members of the Scuola maneuvered within the structure of the business to maximize their earnings and create the most favorable work environment for themselves. While other women in the neighborhood working in factories might receive higher wages initially, Scuola needlewomen advanced slowly into more lucrative positions as they graduated from apprenticeship to the evolving wage and piecework system of skilled embroidery. According to a 1909 article on the Scuola, women understood their labor as distinct from their unskilled counterparts in box making or artificial flower factories. Scuola literature stated

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<sup>316</sup> Mrs. Robert Coleman Taylor, "The Guild of the Needle and Bobbin Crafts at 'America's Making,'" *The Bulletin of the Needle and Bobbin Club* 5, no. 2 (1921): 31.

<sup>317</sup> "Executive Committee Meeting Minutes," December 10, 1914, Gino Speranza Papers, Scuola d'Industrie Italiane, Box 14, 1913-1915 Folder, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library.

<sup>318</sup> Cora Gindano, "To Florence Colgate Speranza," February 29, 1916, Gino Speranza Papers, Scuola d'Industrie Italiane, Box 14, 1912-1921 Folder, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library.

that women, “are paid according to their work and their ability to reach the high mark aimed at by the school, whose demands require artistic workmanship of a high order.”<sup>319</sup> The artisans at the Scuola invested in their education to advance within the context of the workshop. Through dedicated learning, they used the system to garner significant income for themselves and their families.

Unlike their counterparts in sweatshops and factories, the Scuola’s workers labored in relatively clean and bright surroundings and kept to eight-hour days with an hour-long lunch break. Each received two weeks paid vacation and in the summer they also received a small budget for ice and amended working hours so they might leave earlier in the day. Between July 3 and July 13, even apprentices took off from work and for four dollars could arrange vacations out of town.<sup>320</sup> In 1909, the Scuola’s workers also augmented their own situations by successfully lobbying the executive committee for a wage increase of fifty-cents to a dollar for every worker.<sup>321</sup> The records of individual practitioners reveal a group of women knowledgeable about the worth of their skills and willing to ask for higher pay. In 1910, for instance, Rosina, Millie Mariano, Cora Gindano, Angelina Pellegrino, and Jennie all asked for and received additional wage increases.<sup>322</sup>

The Scuola’s workers also added their voices to the long-standing discussions between executive committee members as to whether or not the workshop should pay its employees by the hour or by the number of items they could complete. As early as 1906, the executive committee debated moving from wage to piecework to help motivate workers and streamline production. In 1911, the Scuola experimented with a piecework system using an arrangement of variable pricing that accounted for the size and complexity of the pattern produced.<sup>323</sup> Scuola workers by and large reacted negatively to the change in their pay and did not shy away from expressing their opinions to the Executive Committee. Meeting minutes from the Committee record that

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<sup>319</sup> “Girls Make Lace,” n.d.

<sup>320</sup> “Scuola d’Industrie Italiane Executive Committee Meeting Minutes,” June 24, 1908, Gino Speranza Papers, Box 14, 1907-8 Folder, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

<sup>321</sup> Gino Speranza, “Minutes of the Executive Meeting,” June 27, 1912, 1, Box 14, Gino Speranza Scuola d’Industrie Italiane 1907-09 Folder, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

<sup>322</sup> “Pay slips Nettie Muccio, Angelina Pelligrino, Millie Mariano.”

<sup>323</sup> “Scuola d’Industrie Italiane Executive Committee Meeting Minutes,” December 25, 1905, Gino Speranza Papers, Scuola d’Industrie Italiane, Scrapbook, vol. 17, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library. Kennedy and Farra, *Social Settlements in New York City*, 221.

As far as the girls are concerned, the experiment [in piece work] has not been altogether popular. Some of the girls prefer what they call the 'happy family life,' sitting by their 'chums,' in a single room. One professes that it makes her nervous to work against time, despite the fact that the time standard was that set by the girls' own work in the wage room. On the other hand, some of the girls perceive the justice that they should be the gainers or losers by their own efficiency or deficiency, not the Scuola.<sup>324</sup>

Workers contributed their opinions as to how the workshop should run and how it should assess the value of its employees. While some members of the executive committee dismissed the preference for wage labor as an attempt to shirk responsibility, the women who opposed piecework reported missing the feelings of friendship and the sense of family that pervaded the workroom when every woman received a set wage. For some members of the workshop then, working alongside their compatriots created strong relationships that the introduction of piecework threatened to overturn.

## Conclusion

When Arts and Crafts movement pioneer John Ruskin described lace and embroidery produced in his own revival needlework project in Cumbria, England, he noted that "the real good of a piece of lace, then, you will find, is that it should show first, that the designer of it had a pretty fancy, next, that the maker of it had fine fingers; lastly that the wearer of it has worthiness or dignity enough to obtain what is difficult to obtain, and common sense enough not to wear it on all occasions."<sup>325</sup> According to Ruskin, an array of invested constituencies affect the ultimate quality of lace. This chapter has sought to shed light on the various groups Ruskin identified in the case of the Scuola d'Industrie Italiane. As Ruskin described, a network of female financial underwriters, designers, makers, and consumers all contributed tastes and talents to fashioning the lace and embroidery created at the Scuola. The workshop's objects provide a means to explore the collecting and fashion impulses among upper-class American women, the florescence of Renaissance-revival textile industries in Europe and the United States, and the efforts of first and second-generation Italian-American women to support themselves and their families through the creation of these objects. Taken as a whole, the Scuola's works exemplify contested visions of influence, heritage, and tradition in early-twentieth century

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<sup>324</sup> "Scuola d'Industrie Italiane Executive Committee Meeting Minutes."

<sup>325</sup> Ruskin, *Works of John Ruskin*, 140. For more on the workshop, see Prickett, *Ruskin Lace & Linen Work*.

Italy and America. The textiles solidified national narratives in post-unification Italy, became markers of revival and invented traditions traversing the Atlantic between Europe and the United States, fortified narratives about the skill of immigrant workers, and celebrated homegrown New York industry.

Like the Paul Revere Pottery, the Scuola d'Industrie Italiane and related industries lace and embroidery products in American settlement houses exemplify a robust and almost exclusively female-based economy. The Scuola and similar workshops in New York and Boston were run almost expressly by women and relied on antique examples collected by women or under the care of female museum professionals. The workers that the Scuola sought to provide for were also exclusively female and fostered traditions of needlework that had always been part of women's work in Italy. The workshop was even politically active in support of women's suffrage. In two instances, the Scuola produced large textiles for display, one at the Suffrage exhibition of 1914 and a large work with the phrase "Votes for Women" sewn into its center.<sup>326</sup> More than a collective space for the economic support of immigrant women, the studio also served the explicit political aims of those invested in widening the political reach of immigrant and Anglo-Saxon women alike.

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<sup>326</sup> George Pozzetta, "Immigrants and Craft Arts: Scuola d'Industrie Italiane," 148.

## Conclusion

Throughout the first half of the twentieth-century, settlement house art workshops functioned as the locus for debates about the nature of identity and citizenship among first and second-generation Italian and Jewish Americans. The immigrant communities of New York and Boston used art making within these workshops to associate themselves with Boston's colonial past and to foster connections between contemporary Italians and Renaissance handwork. These studios provided a shared arena wherein groups of immigrants came together to fashion objects that appealed to American consumers at large and that also presented ways to adapt practices and ideas from the old country in the context of the new. The Scuola and the Pottery opened important alternative venues for immigrant women to earn livings outside of the sweatshop and the factory. The workshops also helped them transform the physical spaces of their neighborhoods and to visualize their new homes in ways that included their contributions to the changing landscape of modern American life.

The settlement house workshops of the early twentieth century connected people and objects across walks of life and between continents. The studios united members of various social strata and seemingly disparate communities of native-born Americans and immigrant groups working to their places in the United States. More so than connecting individual philanthropic progressive reformers with tenement artists (although these relationships certainly flourished), the workshops performed the ancillary function of weaving together expansive networks between New York and Boston's most vaunted public institutions – the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston – with small-scale workshops in tenement neighborhoods.

This study looked at two workshops, one in Boston that borrowed from the colonial past, and one in New York dedicated to European traditions of handmade textiles. Though these two projects in two cities differed in the type of ethnic heritage each took as a reference point, we cannot generalize about the nature of reform efforts in either New York or Boston as categorically biased towards either American or the European precedents. Isabella Stewart Gardner of Boston, for instance, took an active interest in all variety of painting and decorative arts from Italy, while New York collector and Scuola supporter Emily de Forest collected and donated early American antiques to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.<sup>327</sup> The Denison House in Boston produced fine laces and embroideries in Italian revival styles.<sup>328</sup> Given Amari's close links to the Museum

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<sup>327</sup> Zorzi, McCauly, and Hirshler. *Gondola Days*. Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, "Emily Johnston de Forest," *The Magazine Antiques* 157:1 (January 2000): 192-199.

<sup>328</sup> Denison House Lace Sample Book, c. 1915, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of Miss Florence Chase, 42.689.

of Fine Arts and the philanthropic interest of personalities like Gardner, The project of the Scuola might well have flourished in Boston as easily as it did in New York. The Paul Revere Pottery, however, one suspects, may have only been possible in the particular climate of Boston, a place that continues to promote deep connections to the nation's founding. Throughout the nineteenth century, Boston's position as the country's oldest major city engendered pride for the families (and there were many) who traced their roots back to the Mayflower, but also amongst newer Bostonians who absorbed ideas about the city and its history.<sup>329</sup> By the early twentieth century, Boston's moment as the Revolutionary capital of the country was long past, as was its time as a major center for national politics. What Boston had and continues to cultivate is delight in its early patriots and artisans, men such as Revere, and to the structures they lived and worked in. As the 2016 brochure for the Freedom Trail boasts, walking the loop around Boston's famous historic sites allows one to "Step INSIDE the places where the American Revolution was launched, from pews and pulpits, private homes and public offices, with fiery speeches and midnight rides all in a vibrant, sophisticated, and modern city."<sup>330</sup> One glimpse at the Freedom Trail's advertising makes clear that the marketability of Boston as the epicenter for the Revolution resonates as much for twenty-first-century champions of the city as it did for the Pottery a century ago.

What both cities shared and continue to share is an early and ardent support for the arts and culture through two of the most impressive public art institutions in the country and the world, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. As we have seen, supporters of these museums intersected in multiple ways with the Pottery and the Scuola. It seems fitting then that both the Metropolitan and the Museum of Fine Arts are key the repositories for exquisite works by Paul Revere Pottery ceramicists. The Museum of Fine Arts, in particular, prominently features several works that Sara Galner decorated in their Arts of the Americas exhibition. Lace and embroidery by immigrant makers, or any makers for that matter, are harder to come by in the displays in either institution, although both museums hold thousands of examples of these textiles in storage. While the Metropolitan once dedicated two full galleries exclusively to showcasing the history of European lace, at the time of this writing no examples from their vast storehouses were on view in the European or American galleries. Part of the issue is one of taste. Unlike Art Pottery, the aesthetics of lace are decidedly not *au courant*. Tied up in notions of Victorian excess, these textiles do not appeal to modern notions of tasteful decoration and so the works have subsequently languished in storage. Many institutions with large lace collections, such as the Brooklyn Museum, have deaccessioned their

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<sup>329</sup> James M. Lindgren, "'A Constant Incentive to Patriotic Citizenship.'"

<sup>330</sup> The Freedom Trail (Boston: The Freedom Trail Foundation, 2016).

collection en masse rather than keep such works indefinitely off-view. As this dissertation has hoped to prove, needlework by women, far from being discarded, should constitute the basis for further research and exhibition. When carefully examined, antique and revival laces and embroideries can illuminate domestic and workshop practices and provide a lens into the individual histories of artisans. Thoughtfully presented, such textiles could become touchstones for understanding the lives of women in Europe and the United States from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries.

## Epilogue

Given the importance of settlement house workshops to the lives of immigrants, why did so many of these industries, such as Paul Revere Pottery and the Scuola, shut down by the 1930s? Internal factors, external demographic shifts, and the professionalization of social work all contributed to the demise of the types of settlement house-sponsored ventures such as the Pottery and the Scuola. Many small-scale craft industries failed because of an essentially incompatible economic model wherein the market would not support the high prices required to support paying workers living wages. As Lawrence Hurley and Clifford Collins observed of the Paul Revere Pottery as early as 1921, expenses for the workshop far outpaced the potential for profits by an incompatible margin.<sup>331</sup> In the case of both the Scuola and the Pottery, constant influxes of additional funding from founders Edith Storrow and Florence Colgate kept workshops afloat but not indefinitely. The Paul Revere Pottery managed to stay in business longer than the Scuola thanks to courses in pottery making that provided additional income to the workshop. However, by 1942, the Pottery, like so many settlement house founded industries, closed its doors.

Another reason for the ebb in settlement house art workshops towards the mid-century was demographic. The population of immigrant neighborhoods changed, partly in response to the upward mobility of first and second generation denizens and partly due to congressional measures that sharply curbed the number of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe who could enter the United States. Immigration laws in 1921 and the Johnson-Reed act in 1924 sharply limited the number of Southern and Eastern European entrants to the United States – first to three percent and then to two percent of the number who were in the country as of the 1890 Census. These drastic reductions in the number of newly-arriving populations from Southern and Eastern Europe changed the types of projects that settlement houses prioritized as well as the communities that they sought to serve.

First and second-generation immigrants living in neighborhoods such the Lower East Side, Greenwich Village, and the North End also dispersed from tightly packed tenement blocks as they gained footholds in the United States. Like many urban dwellers, upwardly mobile families moved to more spacious surroundings as finances allowed. Following prevailing trends, many left dense urban areas for the suburbs or different neighborhoods thanks to the expansion of public transportation networks. The Italians of New York, for instance, migrated to enclaves further uptown or to towns in New Jersey, while the Jews and Italians in Boston took advantage of new train lines to begin buying property in the

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<sup>331</sup> Ware, *Greenwich Village*.

suburban communities beyond the North End.<sup>332</sup> As Caroline Ware chronicled, the Italian community of Greenwich Village fractured not necessarily by choice. As other communities encroached on the real estate that had previously been almost exclusively Italian, older residents and their children could no longer afford to live where their parents had and so many felt pushed out.<sup>333</sup> The role of the community center in the heart of a close-knit immigrant neighborhood lost some of its core functions as immigrants dissipated from these tight-knit demographic units and moved into increasingly mixed neighborhoods.

Settlement house workshops also faltered because of a larger move away from private philanthropy as the engine of social welfare. With the dawn of the New Deal in the 1930s, the United States government took more and more responsibility over social welfare programs for poor populations. New Deal sponsored-initiatives, such as the Works Progress Administration (WPA), shifted the burden of responsibility from individual agencies to the federal government.<sup>334</sup> Since the Second World War, however, government funding for the arts has grown increasingly scarce. As Caitlin Patterson has observed, “linking aesthetic and physical hunger, connecting arts to citizenship, has never regained the pinnacle that was reached in the New Deal.”<sup>335</sup> The lack of Federal investment in art programming since the 1930s has contributed in substantial ways to the loss of many small-scale art studios and craft projects, even those that had managed to weather the Great Depression.

The professionalization of social work also lessened the ability of settlement houses to continue with highly specialized art projects aimed at very select communities. Social work as a profession in the United States concretized with the 1917 founding of the National Conference of Social Work and the American Association of Social Workers.<sup>336</sup> Professional social workers, unlike many settlement house progressives, tended not to live within the communities with whom they worked and therefore responded less to the particular needs of their constituencies and more to nationalized plans and mandates.<sup>337</sup> Settlement houses lost some of their individually tailored programming as they too professionalized under larger governing structures. The United Neighborhood Houses and the National Federation of Settlements were founded in 1901 and 1911 to bring together smaller institutions and develop more systematic protocols for how these organizations might run. As these umbrella organizations centralized decision making, they streamlined and restricted to

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<sup>332</sup> Sam Bass Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs*, 67.

<sup>333</sup> Ware, *Greenwich Village*.

<sup>334</sup> Caitlin Anne Patterson, *Redecorating the Nation*.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid*, 155.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid*.

some degree the types of projects supported at individual institutions. As Albert Kennedy, a staunch advocate for art and craft projects in settlement houses well knew, settlement houses watched government and private philanthropic resources drain away from projects deemed less essential to the immediate survival of immigrant populations. As mentioned in the introduction, Kennedy left his position at the National Federation of Settlements due to disagreements over his support for the arts in the face of tightening budgets.<sup>338</sup>

Some settlement house organizations did manage to keep funding available for art and craft projects, in many cases by partnering with the WPA.<sup>339</sup> They also kept their work relevant by embracing the new constituents who filled vacancies in the neighborhoods vacated by Southern and Eastern Europeans. Chicago's Hull-House, for instance, successfully adapted to reflect the changing demographics of the West Side by altering Hull-House Kilns to serve new Latin-American immigrants. As Cheryl Ganz has documented, from 1927-1937, artists such as Jesús Torres and Miguel Juárez and instructors such as Myrtle Meritt French employed techniques based on Mexican ceramic patterns to teach Latino community members how to fashion salable works that represented a hybrid of Mexican ceramics traditions and American production techniques. French espoused the teachings of Mexican artist and educator Adolfo Best Maugard, who developed a lexicon of seven essential forms in indigenous Mexican art production.<sup>340</sup> As Ganz relates, "Ceramics classes at Hull-house provided Mexican immigrants with an opportunity to connect the traditions of their homeland with their new experiences in Chicago."<sup>341</sup> The Hull-House Kilns, like the Scuola and the Paul Revere Pottery, fostered a "symbiotic relationship between immigrant and Hull-House reformers."<sup>342</sup> However, even these types of projects could not save an institution as well-respected or venerable as Hull-House. In news that shocked the philanthropic world in 2012, the 122 year-old institution closed its doors due to lack of funds. This shuttering of one of the nation's most iconic settlement houses and community centers provides a sad coda to the long history social work in the United States and also serves as a telling sign of the drastic nationwide reduction in funding available for such organizations.<sup>343</sup>

To fill the void of these dwindling projects and resources, other cultural agencies are taking up the mantle to provide artistic outlets for immigrant communities in

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<sup>338</sup> Albert J. Kennedy to Charles C. Cooper.

<sup>339</sup> Patterson, *Redecorating the Nation*.

<sup>340</sup> Ganz and Strobel, *Pots of Promise*, 57, 78-79.

<sup>341</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>342</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>343</sup> Maureen West, "Collapse of Famous Hull House Charity Could Be an Omen," *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, February 2, 2012.

poor neighborhoods in the United States. America is still very much a nation of immigrants, though many more recent arrivals now hail not from Europe but from Asia, Latin America, and Africa. We are living in a moment when politicians are busy stoking fears about the influx of populations coming to the United States bringing customs, languages, foodways, and religions that appear foreign and, therefore, suspect. Vitriolic rhetoric from Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump, for instance, rehashes many of the same arguments Nativists made a century before about Southern and Eastern European immigrants as unsuitable for citizenship. Trump has claimed that the United States has been “overrun by dangerous migrants,” referring supposedly to Muslims coming to the United States.<sup>344</sup> In 2015, Trump told supporters that “when Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best. They’re not sending you. They’re not sending you. They’re sending people that have lots of problems, and they’re bringing those problems with us. They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists.”<sup>345</sup> Such fabrications and overstatements paraphrase many of the same arguments made about Catholics and Jews from Southern and Eastern Europe that some Americans put forward a century ago. These message carry the very same suggestion that those coming to the United States are fundamentally different from native-born Americans and potential threatening to an existing way of life. Such assaults on immigrants entering the United States in 2016 makes the necessity of fostering programs that follow in the footsteps of settlement house craft projects all the more vital. While the paternalistic approach some reformers took may have stymied attempts on the part of communities to feel entirely at ease in the context of the settlement house, the basic premise of providing arenas for various populations to exchange ideas and to celebrate difference seems desperately needed as this moment of national division.

Museums with diverse constituencies have, in many ways, taken on the task of providing artistic and social venues for immigrant groups and native-born populations to meet and exchange ideas around art and craft. Projects in New York, including many spearheaded by the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs Tom Finkelpearl, take seriously the mandate on the part of civic organizations to fill voids left by shrinking private social service organizations. Finkelpearl’s approach has been to create new spaces in the City that counteract the potential for inwardness and isolation at a moment when the country desperately needs to embrace and celebrate the myriad traditions that

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<sup>344</sup> Jonathan Martin and Alexander Burns, “Blaming Muslims After Attack, Donald Trump Tosses Pluralism Aside,” *The New York Times*, June 13, 2016.

<sup>345</sup> Michelle Ye Hee Lee, Donald Trump’s False Comments Connecting Mexican Immigrants and Crime, *The Washington Post*, July 8, 2015, available <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2015/07/08/donald-trumps-false-comments-connecting-mexican-immigrants-and-crime/>

make up its culture.<sup>346</sup> During his tenure as director of the Queen's Museum from 2002 to 2014, Finkelppearl used the museum to fill the void left by the waning of settlement house projects and other shuttered civic organizations. Among many changes to the museum, Finkelppearl spearheaded a massive renovation that opened a large first-floor public gathering space and added a branch of the Queens Library to the institution.<sup>347</sup> He also hired a community organizer to ascertain what the surrounding neighborhoods around the museum needed most. Espousing much of the rhetoric of the immigrant gifts model, the Queens Museum celebrates immigrants as key parts of a larger, multi-ethnic whole and continues to develop programs and spaces dedicated to cross-cultural exchange.<sup>348</sup> For instance, the museum provides exhibition opportunities for local voices such through the Community Partnership Exhibition Program. With discussion and research into the needs of local constituents, the institution has made itself vital to the community around it.<sup>349</sup>

In 2010, the Queens Museum and the public arts organization Creative Time sponsored artist Tanya Bruguera's Immigrant Movement International (IMI), a performance art piece that pushed the boundaries between creative expression and social work by turning the act of social service into collaborative performance. The Cuban-born Brugeura lived with immigrant residents of Queens for the entirety of 2010 and rented a storefront in Astoria, Queens where immigrants, largely local residents originally from Ecuador and El Salvador, could come to gather.<sup>350</sup> The space was akin in many ways to the settlement house of a century before in that it opened its doors to local populations and attempted to address the most pressing issues immigrant communities faced. As Bruguera described, the project was aimed at "engaging both local and international communities, as well as working with social service organizations, elected officials, and artists focused on immigration reform."<sup>351</sup> According to the

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<sup>346</sup> Rich Beattie, "Insights of Passage," *New York Times*, May 19, 2006, sec. F.

<sup>347</sup> Holland Cotter, "A Local Place for a Global Neighborhood," *The New York Times*, November 7, 2013.

<sup>348</sup> Allen H. Eaton, "Immigrant Arts in America," *The School Arts Magazine* 32, no. 6 (February 1933): 323-26. Diana Greenwold, "The Great Palace of American Civilization": Allen Eaton's Arts and Crafts of the Homelands, 1919-1932," *Contemporaneity* 3 (2014), <http://contemporaneity.pitt.edu/ojs/index.php/contemporaneity/issue/view/7>.

<sup>349</sup> As Holland Cotter describes, "services include legal advice and computer instruction, but there are also reading lessons that double as introductions to art history, with an emphasis on the difficult lives of artists in the past; health classes that incorporate meditation and tai chi, linking an isolated Latin American population to the borough's Asian cultures; and theater workshops that function as safe places to work out stress, reimagine reality and rehearse political interventions." Holland Cotter, "Immigrant Movement International, in Queens," *The New York Times*, June 21, 2012.

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>351</sup> Tanya Bruguera, *Immigrant Movement International*, <http://www.taniabruquera.com/cms/486-0-Immigrant+Movement+International.htm>, accessed June 10, 2016.

*New York Times*, Bruguera's project sought "to blend politics and art to empower immigrants through English classes, legal help and impromptu performances."<sup>352</sup> Bruguera hoped to provide an arts-related component for the community at large but, as she related, immigrant visitors came in not hoping for lessons in creative expression, but "for English classes, jobs and legal help. They don't want any art at all. They want very concrete and mundane things. This is what their life is."<sup>353</sup> Even in 2010, when Bruguera conducted the project, she confronted similar quandaries over the roles of aesthetics for those lacking basic services and amenities as settlement house leaders had a century before. As Bruguera hoped, some Astoria residents did recognize the project's potential to engage local audiences creatively. Bosnian immigrant Aida Sehovic remarked that "immigrants in this city usually only relate to art when they're custodians at museums. This project flips that, where the immigrants become active participants."<sup>354</sup> Bruguera's project coexisted as artwork and social practice.

The Immigrant Movement International has had an afterlife after Bruguera. The center continues to operate as a "volunteer-led community space for alternative education, a think tank for debate and action by people's philosophers to re-imagine the role of (im)migrants in society and to change unjust situations, and a laboratory for the merging of arts and activism."<sup>355</sup> In the summer of 2016, the IMI presented artworks by community members that confronted questions of racism and social justice in Corona, Queens and promoted solidarity between immigrant groups. Like the settlement house workshops, the IMI provided space for immigrants to gather and voice collective concerns through artistic production. The Queens Museum and the IMI function in some ways as the settlement house did a century ago by offering financial support and space for community gathering and identity formation. The IMI is emblematic of the ongoing legacy of the work that reformers and artists began in the settlement house workshops of New York and Boston in the early twentieth century. Unlike social work of a century ago, however, the contemporary outreach model that Bruguera and the Queens Museum espouse involves no supposition on the part of the organizer or funder that the immigrant requires her culture or experience to be interpreted on her behalf. Collaboration rather than the top-down didactic education strategies anchor these twenty-first century artistic and social experiments. In the twenty-first century context, the settlement house workshop as an incubator for traditional craft practice may well be dead. However, the

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<sup>352</sup> Sam Dolnick, "As Art, Tania Bruguera Lives Like a Poor Immigrant," *The New York Times*, May 18, 2011.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid.

<sup>355</sup> "Joining Struggles IMI Corona Exhibition 2015-2016," *The Queens Museum*, available <http://www.queensmuseum.org/2016/07/community-partnership-exhibition-program-joining-struggles-imi-corona-exhibition-2015-2016>, accessed July 2, 2016.

legacy of employing art and craft to enhance the lives of immigrants and to celebrate diverse practices from around the world is still very much alive.

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## Figures

Figure 1:



Flora and Harry Clamor and Sophie Harle in "New Art Works by Old Methods," *Chicago American*, March 3, 1926.

Figure 2



Sarah Galner, c. 1914, in Nonie Gadsden, *Art & Reform: Sara Galner, the Saturday Evening Girls, and the Paul Revere Pottery* (Boston: MFA Publications, 2006), 82.

Figure 3



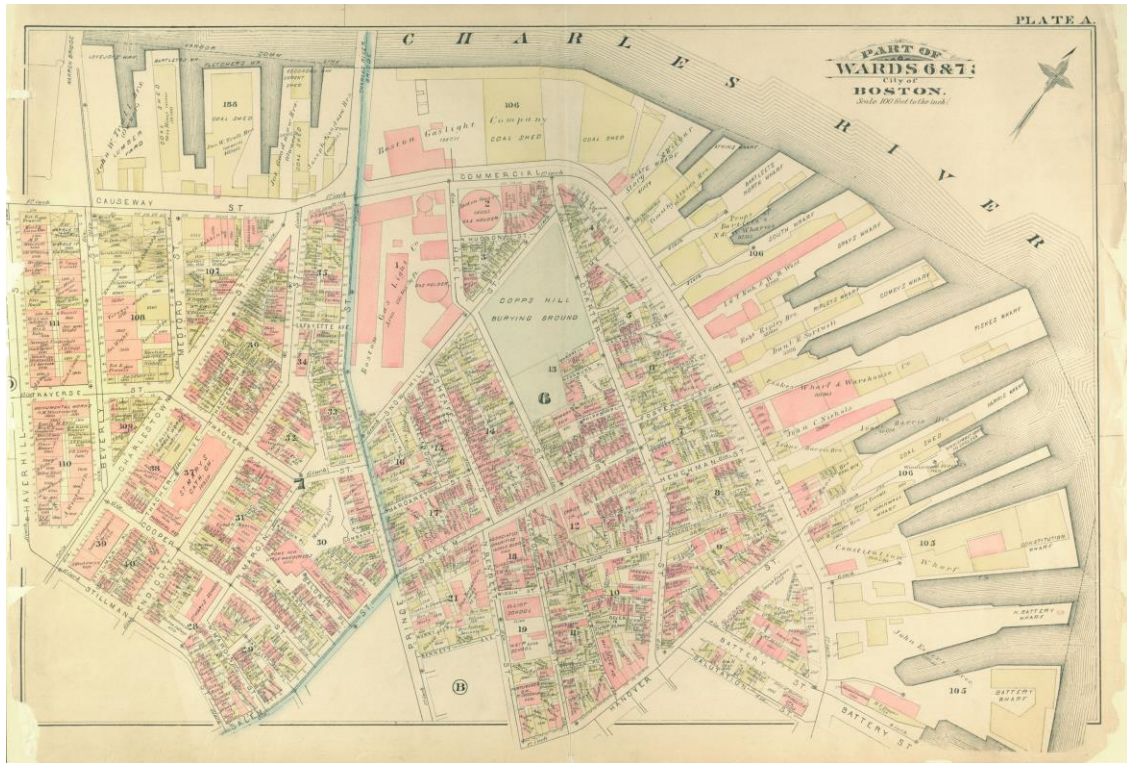
Two women at work at the Scuola d'Industrie Italiane, c. 1910, Gino Speranza Papers, Scuola d'Industrie Italiane, Box 15, Advertisements Folder, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York public Library.

Figure 4:



“Thuner Majolika Vase with Chrutmuster, circa 1900, *Village Antiques*, Online, Available <http://www.villageantiques.ch/handpainted-ceramic-dinner-set-from-gwatt-thun-switzerland>, accessed March 9, 2015.

Figure 5:



G.W. Bromley & Co., "Atlas of the City of Boston, Boston Proper and Back Bay, from Actual Surveys and Official Plans 1902," *MIT Libraries, Dome*, Accessed January 12, 2015, <http://hdl.handle.net/1721.3/82433>.

Figure 6:



Henry Peabody, photographer "Paul Revere House, Boston, Before Restoration," c. 1906, Historic New England Collections.

Figure 7:



Storrowton Village, West Springfield, MA, c. 1926, The Eastern States Exposition Archives.

Figure 8:

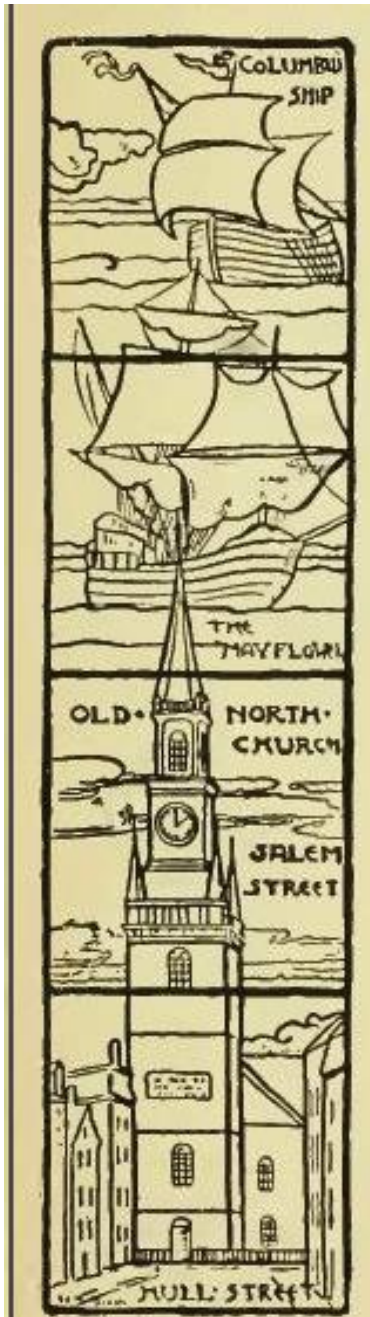


Illustration "Columbus Ship," "The Mayflower," "Old North Church," and "Hull Street" tiles, in Alice Louise McDuffee, *Nutshell Guide to Boston* (Cambridge, MA: 1912), 15.

Figure 9:



Paul Revere Pottery, Assorted Tiles, glazed earthenware, private collections and Rago Auctions, Meg Chalmers and Judy Young, *Saturday Evening Girls Paul Revere Pottery* ((Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publications, 2005), 148-150.

Figure 10:



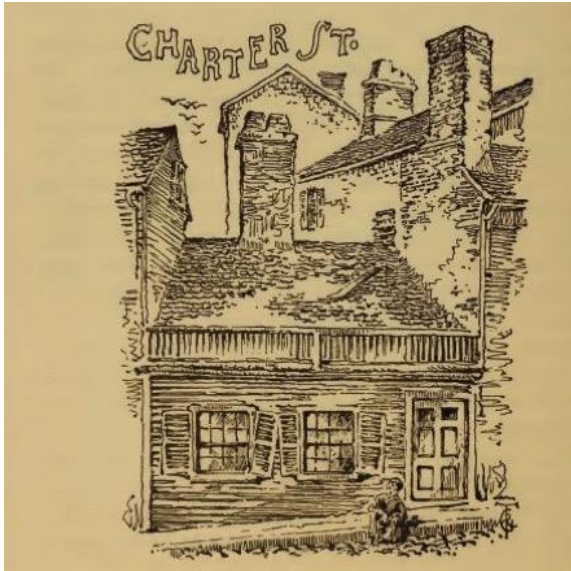
"The Unique Special Design Fireplace," in Livingston Wright, "Girls' Club Establishes Pottery and Ultimately Makes It a Financial Success," *The Art World* 2:6, 578.

Figure 11:



"Paul Revere Pottery Inc." c. 1920, Paul Revere Pottery Collection, Boston Public Library.

Figure 12:



George R. Tolman, illustrator, "The Old House," in Edward Edwin Porter, *Rambles in Old Boston* (Boston: Cupples and Hurd, 1887), 244.

Figure 13:



Tolman, "The Tileston House," in Porter, *Rambles in Old Boston*, 138.  
Paul Revere Pottery, "Corner North Bennet and Salem Street," tile,  
glazed earthenware, Norman Karlson collection in Chalmers and  
Young, *Saturday Evening Girls Paul Revere Pottery*, 150.

Figure 14:



Tolman, "Paul Revere House," in Porter, *Rambles in Old Boston*, 318.  
Paul Revere Pottery, "Paul Revere House," tile, glazed earthenware,  
private collection in Chalmers and Young, *Saturday Evening Girls Paul  
Revere Pottery*, 148.

Figure 15:



Tolman, "Galloupe House," in Porter, *Rambles in Old Boston*, 214. Paul Revere Pottery, "Hull Street Galloupe House," tile, glazed earthenware, private collection in Chalmers and Young, *Saturday Evening Girls Paul Revere Pottery*, 148.

Figure 16:



Paul Revere Pottery, "Hull Street," tile, glazed earthenware, Norman Karlson collection in Chalmers and Young, *Saturday Evening Girls Paul Revere Pottery*, 149.

Figure 17:



Sara Galner, decorator, Paul Revere Pottery, Three from a set of thirteen tiles featuring "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere," February, 1917, glazed earthenware, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Forsyth Institute and private collection, in Chalmers and Young, *Saturday Evening Girls Paul Revere Pottery*, 11-13.

Figure 18:



Designed by Sara Galner and executed by the Paul Revere Pottery Company of Boston  
A Paul Revere Mural in one of the woods of the Forsyth Institute furnishes entertainment to many a little patient.

"The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere" Tiles Installed in the Forsyth Institute in "Decorative Tiles," *House Beautiful* XL: 2, 77.

Figure 19:



Paul Revere Pottery, Revere mark on mug and vase, glazed earthenware, Chalmers and Young, *Saturday Evening Girls Paul Revere Pottery*, 256, 257. Lili Shapiro, decorator, Paul Revere Pottery, Bowl, Paul Revere on his Horse, glazed earthenware, Marilee Meyer Collection, Chalmers and Young, *Saturday Evening Girls Paul Revere Pottery*, 191.

Figure 20:



SILVER BY PAUL REVERE  
EXHIBITION OF AMERICAN CHURCH SILVER, BOSTON MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, 1911

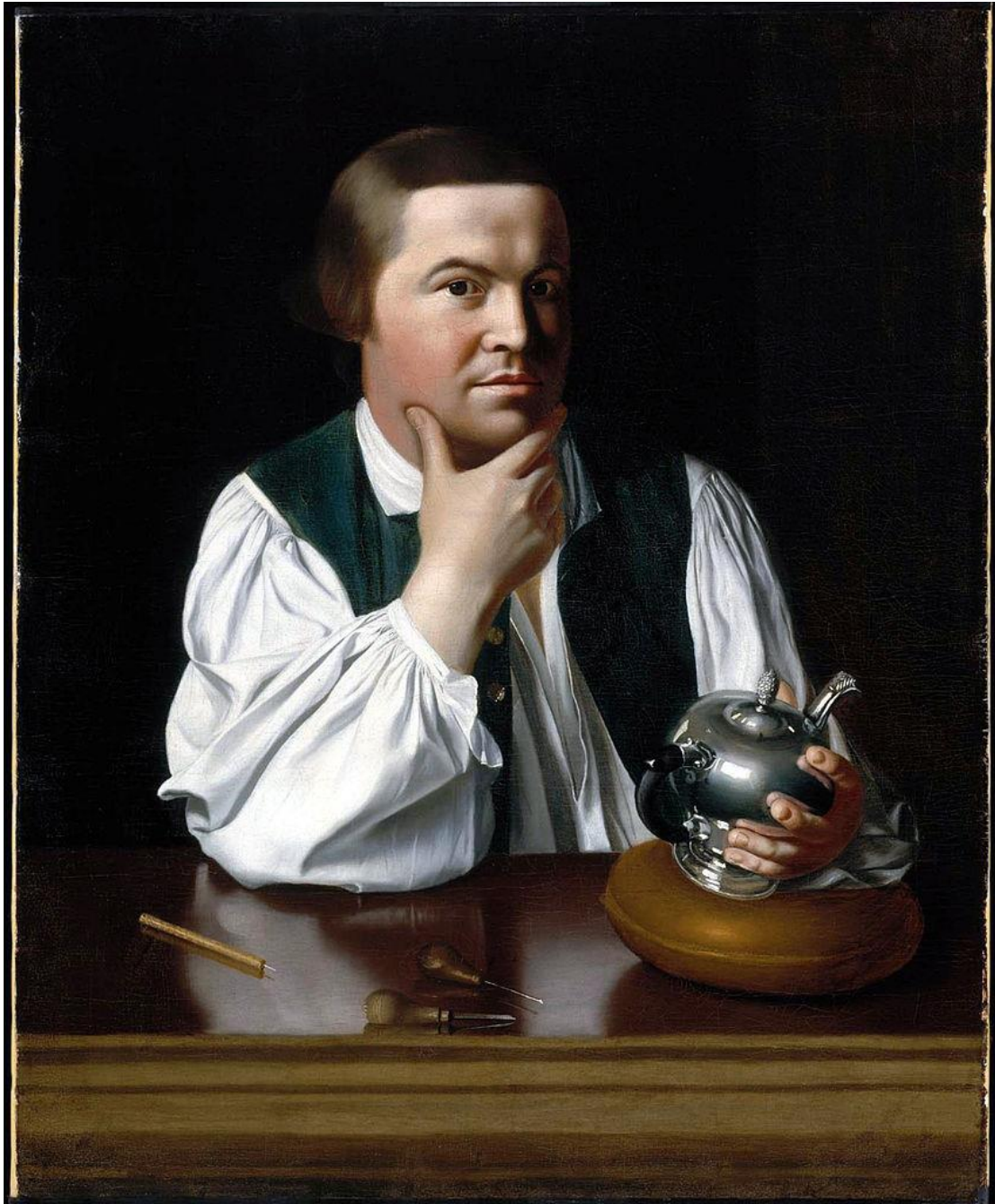
“Silver by Revere,” *Art and Progress* V: I3 (January, 1915), 75.

Figure 21:



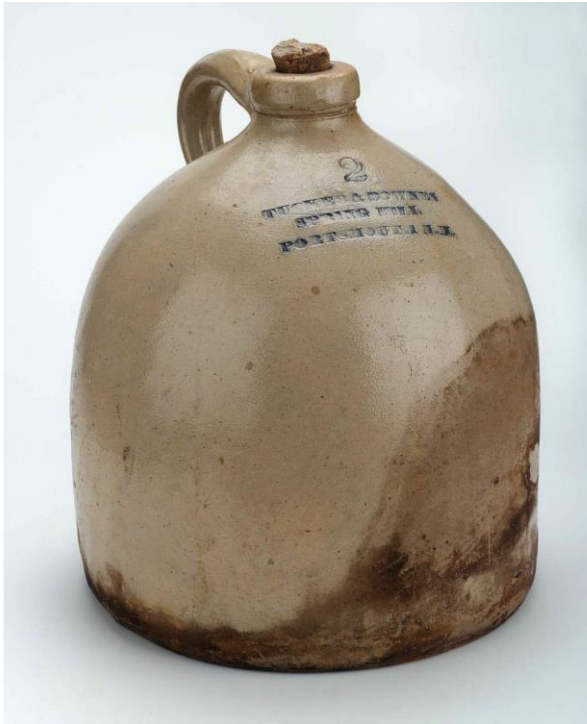
The Hudson-Fulton Exhibition, 1909, Museum Archives, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Figure 22:



John Singleton Copley, *Paul Revere*, 1768, oil on canvas, 35 1/8" x 28 1/2", 30.781, Gift of Joseph W. Revere, William B. Revere and Edward H. R. Revere, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Figure 23:



Tucker and Downes, Jug, stoneware, 19th century, 27.94 x 25.4 x 25.4 cm (11 x 10 x 10 in.), Gift of Mr. and Mrs. George Michael, 1972.27a-b, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Paul Revere Pottery, Seven Salts in the form of Jugs, earthenware with matte glazes, Sandi Lubin collection, in Chalmers and Young, *Saturday Evening Girls Paul Revere Pottery*, 107.

Figure 24:



Paul Revere Pottery, Covered Pitcher with Duck Medallion, 1918, Collection of Barbara Gerr and Arnie Small. Philip Will, Flagon, cast pewter, 13.4" (H), 7.5" (W), 5.5", 1766-1787, , Museum Purchase, 1982.0005, Winterthur Museum and Gardens.

Figure 25:



"Judith, Her Bowl," Chalmers and Young Collection, Chalmers and Young, *Saturday Evening Girls Paul Revere Pottery*, 129. Covered Porringer, 1700–20, silver, 4 5/8" x 11 1/4", Bequest of Alphonso T. Clearwater, 1933, 33.120.350a, b, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Figure 26:



Chamberstick, Paul Revere Pottery in Chalmers and Young, *Saturday Evening Girls Paul Revere Pottery*, 106.

Figure 27:





Paul Revere Pottery, Set designed for James Jackson Storrow, glazed earthenware, c. 1924, The Gift of the Storrow Family, 1999.552-581a-b, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Figure 28:



John Coney, Beaker, c. 1695, silver, Overall 4 1/16" x 2 15/16," The Philip Leffingwell Spalding Collection, Given in his memory by Katharine Ames Spalding and Philip Spalding, Oakes Ames Spalding, and Hobart Ames Spalding, 42.236, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.  
Churchill and Treadwell, Pitcher, 1814, silver, Gift of the Storrow family, 1999.134, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Figure 29:



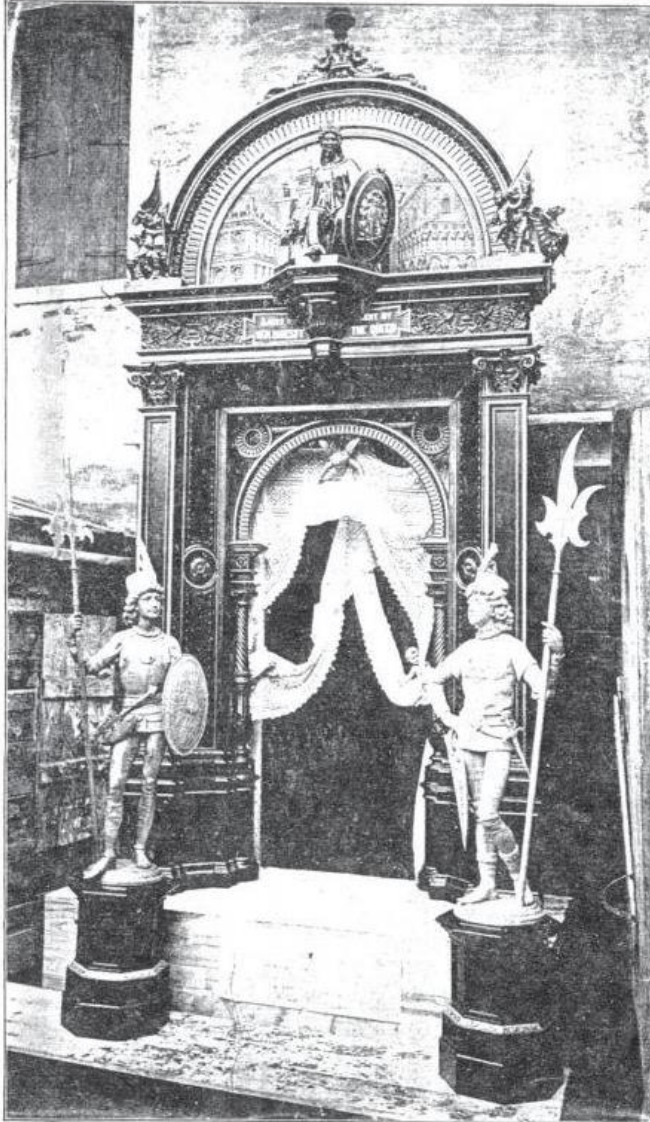
Sara Galner, photograph c. 1914, in Gadsden, *Art & Reform*, 82.

Figure 30:



Sara Galner, decorator, Paul Revere Pottery, Vase, 1915, glazed earthenware, 16''x 9'', William Cullen Bryant Fellows Gifts, 2000, 2000.31, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Figure 31:



“Italian Displays at the 1893 Columbian Exposition” in Cora Ann Slocomb Di Brazzà Savorgnan, *A Guide to Old and New Lace in Italy, Exhibited at Chicago in 1893* (Chicago: W. B. Conkey Co., 1893), frontispiece.

Figure 32:



“Italian Lace Displays at the 1893 Columbian Exposition” in Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The Book of the Fair* (Chicago: The Bancroft Company, 1893), 271.

Figure 33:

Nov. 1908

## Little Gifts by Italian Needleworkers

EXQUISITE work done in the Museum design. A needle's fine eye will enhance beauty of the embroidery.

AMONG the many designs of the Museum are those which are especially adapted for the use of the needle.

THESE are the designs of the Museum which are especially adapted for the use of the needle.

ANOTHER example of the Museum's fine work is this one, which is especially adapted for the use of the needle.

Tilden Foundations.

The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations.

Gino Speranza papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division.


**Embroideries Copied From Ancient Designs and Adapted to Modern Uses, as Worked by the Students of The Scuola d'Industria Italiana of New York, at Richmond Hill Settlement House**




**EMBROIDERIES** copied from ancient designs and adapted to modern uses, as worked by the students of the Scuola d'Industria Italiana of New York, at Richmond Hill Settlement House.




**D**AMASKS are the latest fashion of which there are a number in the collection. They are made in modern forms to make for the lady.




**T**HIS convenient linen pocket is a useful addition to the wardrobe of the modern woman.



**C**HRISTMAS cards made in white embroidery are especially attractive when made in these designs.




**T**HIS hat is of washed gold, and with the carefully embroidered white lines for a decorative addition to a finger hat, or to one of high materials for evening wear.




**T**HIS is a very useful and decorative bag, and with the carefully embroidered white lines for a decorative addition to a finger hat, or to one of high materials for evening wear.



**T**HIS is a very useful and decorative bag, and with the carefully embroidered white lines for a decorative addition to a finger hat, or to one of high materials for evening wear.



**A**MONG the many designs of the Museum are those which are especially adapted for the use of the needle.

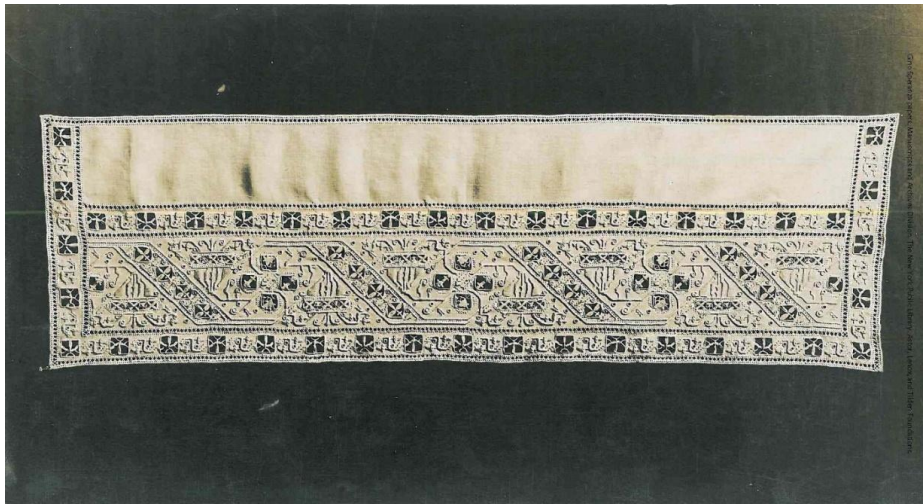


**A**N EXQUISITE set of linen work, made by the Scuola, and especially adapted for the use of the needle.

**PRESENTING** this page in THE FORUM a few words may not be unwise as to the object and scope of The Scuola d'Industria Italiana. The Scuola was organized in response to a movement, which has not only been felt in many other countries since for a revival of the beautiful and artistic hand work of bygone centuries. Its object is twofold: the revival of the fine art of needlework, and also to give employment to the young women of the Italian colony of New York City. From the first the girls have shown a remarkable aptitude, and all of the pieces exhibit a high workmanship of the highest order. The Scuola has had exceptional facilities for copying many of the finest and rarest pieces of ancient work, but adaptable to modern purposes, as well as the preservation of the beautiful, has been the keynote of its policy, and its products are objects for use as well as for admiration. While it is thought the larger and more elaborate pieces that the aim of the work of the Scuola is more faithfully interpreted, it also makes a number of inexpensive small articles of exquisite beauty, both in design and execution. These latter are appropriate for party favors, prizes or gifts, and are, as shown on this page, quite out of the usual. Among them is the very useful and ornamental bag with the tassel ornaments. The pin itself is of washed gold, and with the carefully embroidered white lines for a decorative addition to a finger hat, or to one of high materials for evening wear. It is called the "Madonna" hat. Some of the other many attractive and dainty small productions of these skillful workers are the dainty white box, the small striped embroidery in the same design by which to fasten the box, and the tiny glove-printed handkerchief. The heart-shaped presentation seems to be a decorative present for the ladies of Chelsea—and all is done of white, pink, blue, or the color of choice, while the decorative, both chain and cover, and all of these articles possess a particular value as articles for the personal gift, for they are made and embroidered by hand. Sometimes a deep, cream-colored linen is used instead of the usual white, or a touch of color is given by the use of pink blue or pink thread in the embroidery, but generally the work is all white. The choice yellow is one of the most simple, yet carries with it a delightful assurance of respect. The large pillow of elaborate design impresses one with its formal beauty and shows in a better way the care and art of the Italian worker. A rose design and a delicate finish is given by the heavy white tassels. These are hand made on the loom by the girls and make beautiful cushions and ornaments, used in the finishing of the various productions. The design presented on this page are but a few of the truly beautiful and artistic work of the Scuola. The fine work, including gowns, parasols, scarfs, and waist ties of its handiwork. The pupils are at the same time learning our language, and the enterprise, under the direction of its most capable staff of directors, promises to be of mutual interest and profit to our country.

Advertisement, November, 1908, Gino Speranza Papers, Box 15, Advertisements Folder, New York Public Library.

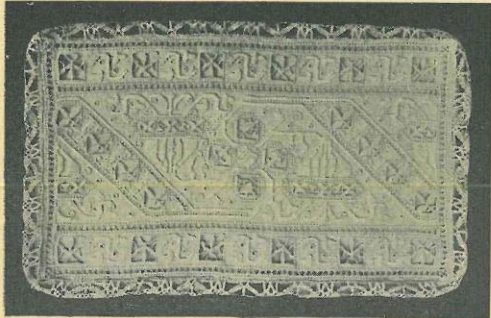
Figure 34:



Scuola d'Industrie Italiane, Embroidery, Gino Speranza Papers, Box 15, Designs Used Folder, New York Public Library.

Figure 35:

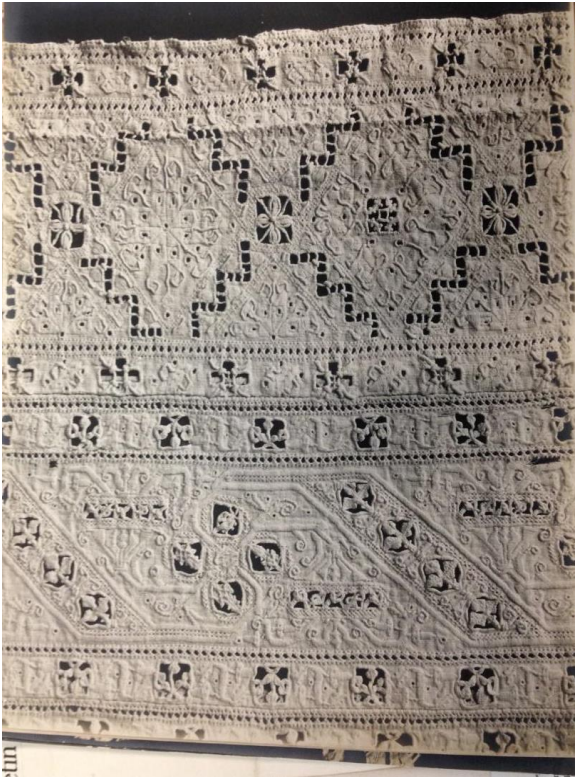
ACORN DESIGN, characteristic of XVI century work.



7560	Pillow Slip.....	\$29.00
7733	Oblong Centerpiece or Tray Cloth 23 x 16 in.....	8.00
7724	Oblong Plate Doily 15½ x 11 in.....	5.50
7602	Square Centerpiece 20 x 20 in.....	13.25
7603	Square Plate Doily 10½ x 10½ in.....	5.50
7608	Square Tumbler Doily 6½ x 6½ in.....	3.00
7542	Sideboard Cover, Wide Border at Ends, 56 x 22 in.....	65.00

Scuola d'Industrie Italiane brochure, Gino Speranza Papers, Box 15, Advertisements Folder New York Public library.

Figure 36:

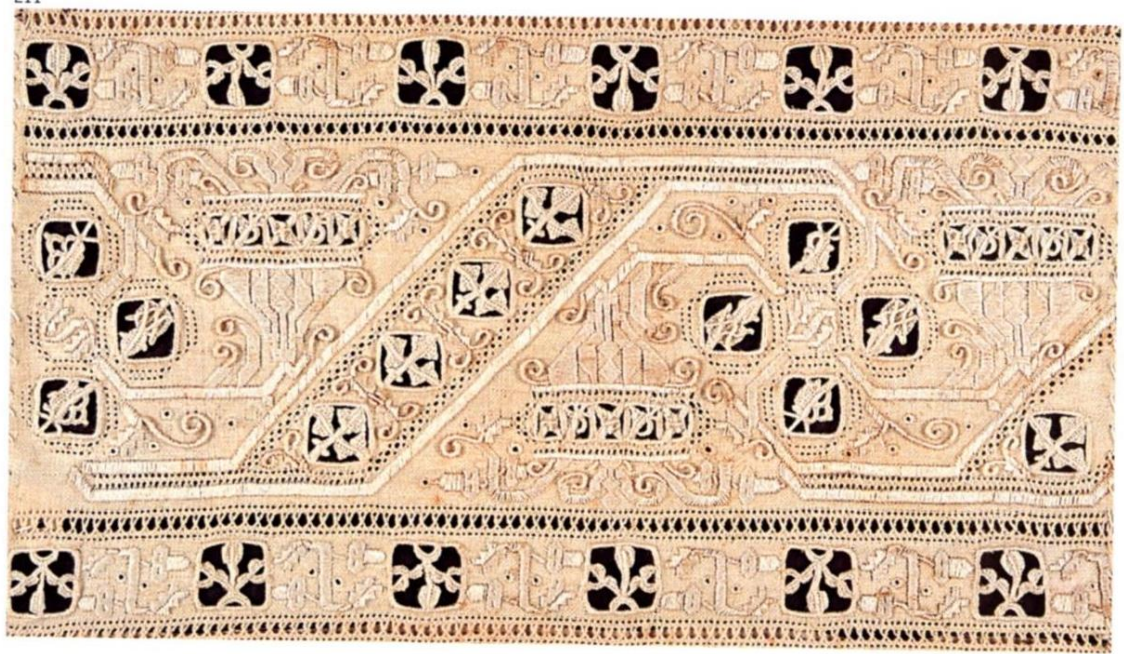


Lace and Embroidery, 18th century, Carolina Amari Collection, photograph and detail, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Figure 36 (detail):



Figure 37:



Aemilia Ars, Lace and Embroidery Insert, 20th Century, Collezioni  
Comunale d'Arte.

Figure 38:



Dress, ca. 1920, linen, cotton, 42," Brooklyn Museum Costume Collection at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of the Brooklyn Museum, 2009; Gift of Mercedes de Acosta, 1955, 2009.300.1241, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Pierre Yantorny, Shoes, 1914-19, silk, metal, jet, with shoetrees: 6 ½" x 10", Brooklyn Museum Costume Collection at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of the Brooklyn Museum, 2009; Gift of Mercedes de Acosta, 1953, 2009.300.1178a, b, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Figure 39:



Courtyard, 1902, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum Archives.

Figure 40:



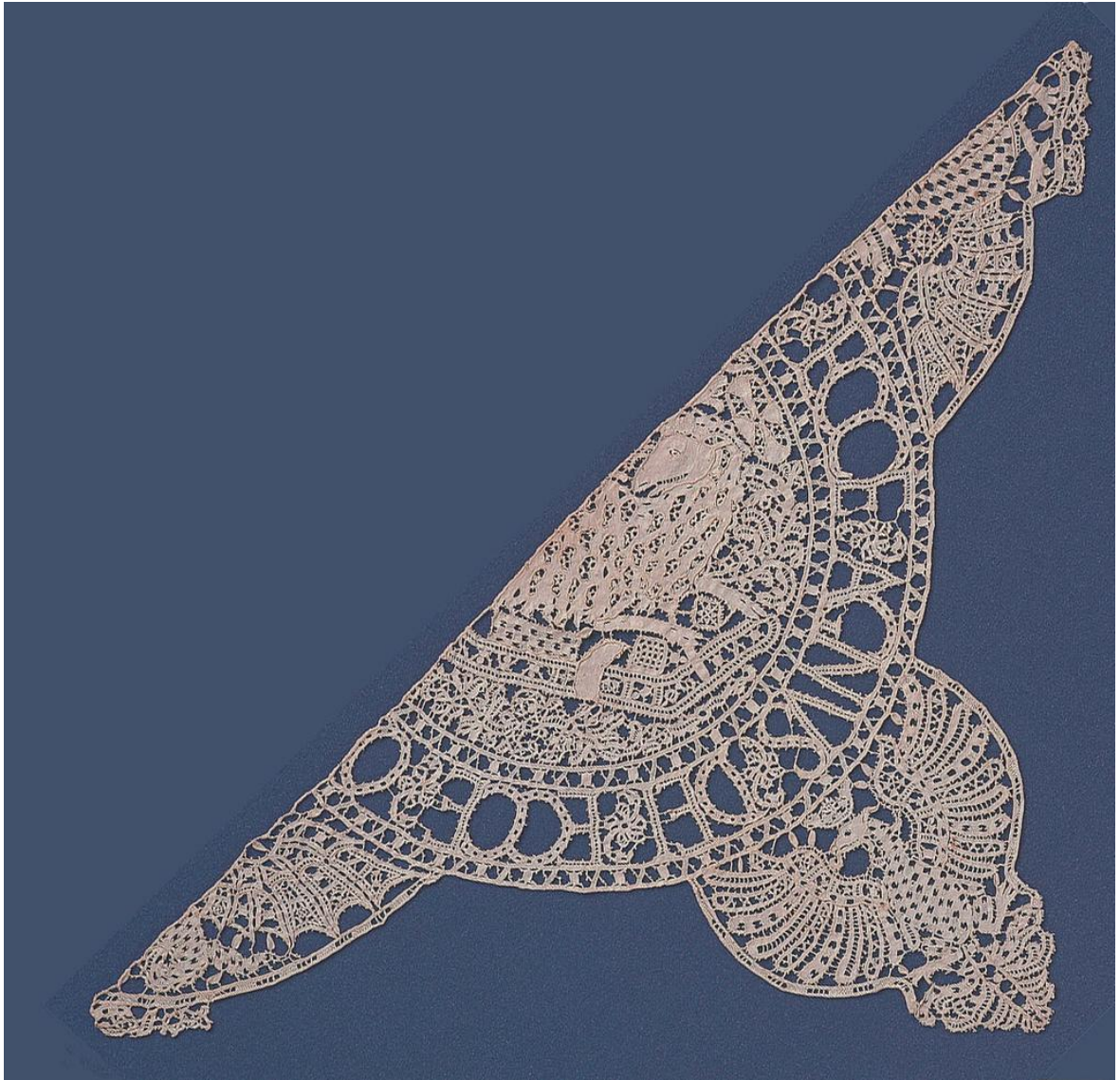
Eloise Zalic, 1926, Archives of St. John the Divine.

Fig. 41:



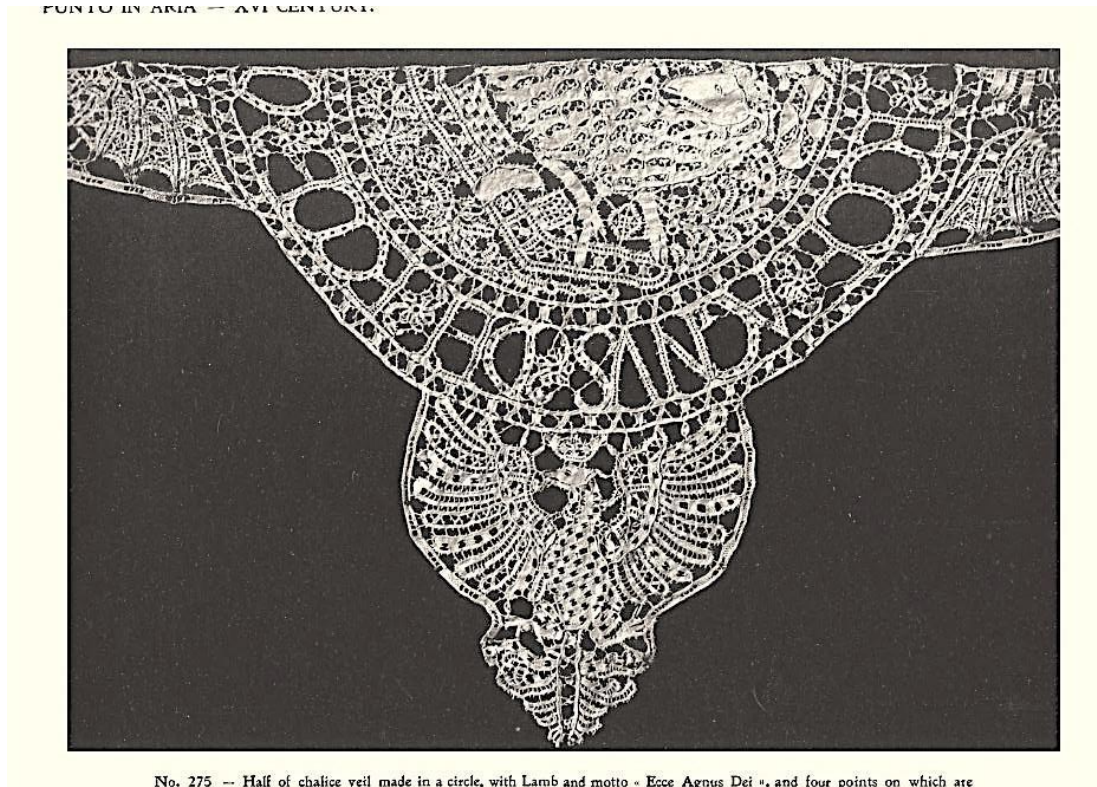
Scuola d'Industrie Italiane, dragon fragment, needle lace, twentieth century, 1947-7-21, Gift of Mrs. Gino Speranza, Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum.

Figure 42:



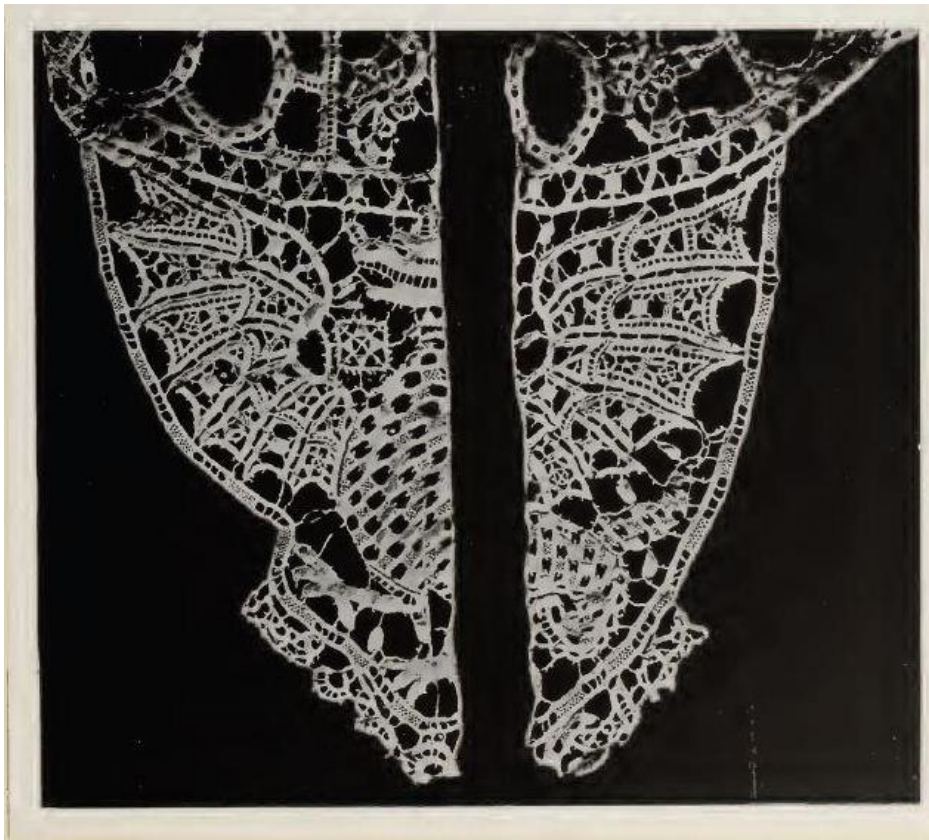
Half of Chalice Veil, Italian, lace, seventeenth century, Estate of Mrs. Florence Colgate Speranza, Museum purchase from Au Panier Fleuri Fund, 1951-130-1, Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum. (*Regarding date inconsistencies between figures, see section 2.*)

Figure 43:



Half of a Chalice Veil, lace, sixteenth century, in Elisa Ricci, *Antiche Trine Italiane* (Bergamo: Istituto Italiano d'Arti Grafiche-Editore, 1908).  
(Regarding date inconsistencies between figures see section 2.)

Figure 44:



Half of a Chalice Veil, Lace, sixteenth century, in Elisa Ricci, *Antiche Trine Italiane*, 1908. (Regarding date inconsistencies between figures see section 2.)

Figure 45:



Figure 46:



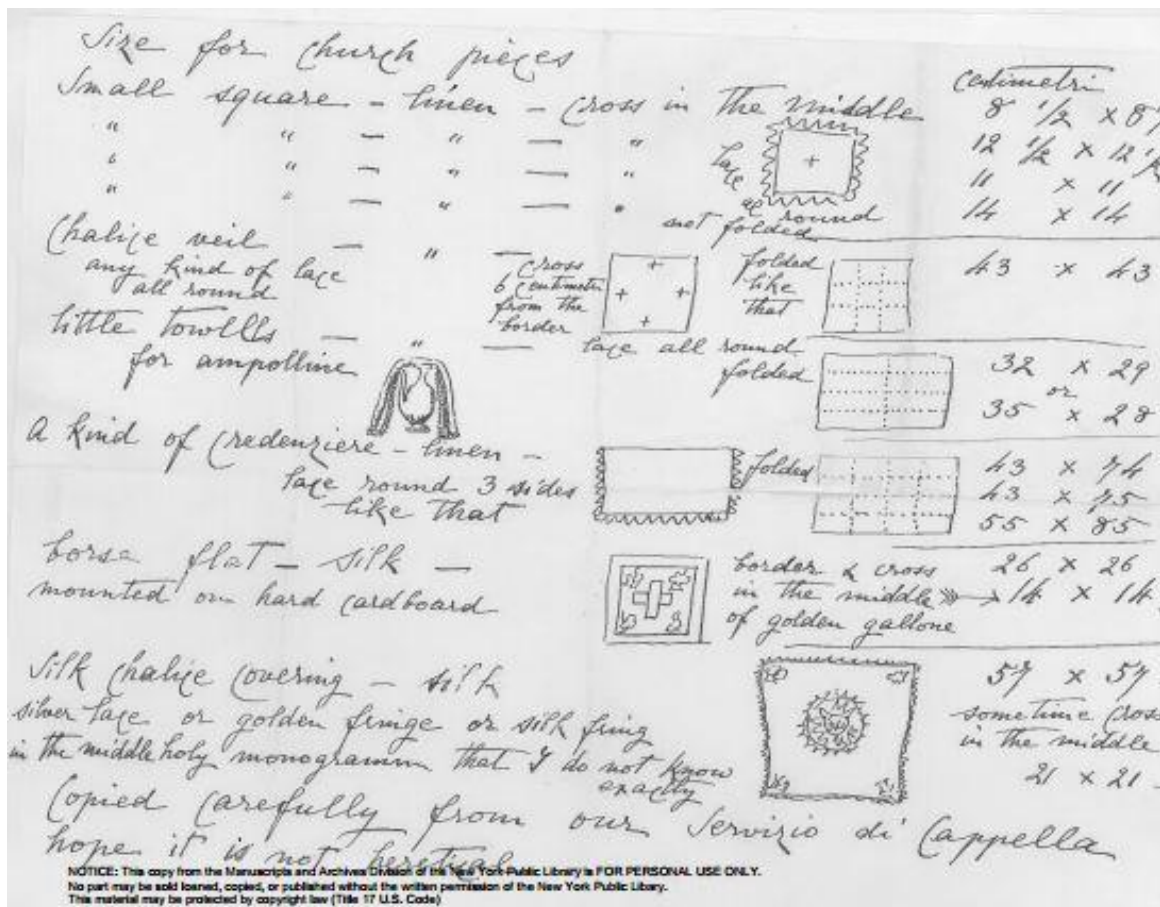
Scuola d'Industrie Italiane, alter set, linen, plain weave with cut work and embroidery, Gift of Scuola d' Industrie Italiane in New York through Florence Colgate Speranza, 1943-41-1-a/d, Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum.

Figure 47:



Chalice Veil, seventeenth century, cutwork, Spanish or Italian, Rogers Fund, 1920, 20.186.367, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Figure 48:



Carolina Amari, Sketch, in Helen Pupke to Florence Colgate, June 5, 1909, Gino Speranza Papers, Box 14, 1909 Folder, New York Public Library.

Figure 49:



Women Working at a Scuola D'Industrie Italiane Booth, 1905-1927, photograph, Scuola d'Industrie Italiane Folder, Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum.

Figure 50:



"A Century of New York Needlework and Decorative Fabrics, 1820-1920," *The Bulletin of the Needle and Bobbin Club*, 1944, Ratti Textile Center Library Archives, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Figure 51:



Group of Scuola Workers, photograph, Gino Speranza papers, Box 15, Advertisements Folder, New York Public Library.

Figure 52:



Gino Speranza papers. Manuscripts and Archives Division. The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations.

Millie Mariano and Angelina Pellegrino, photograph, 1915-1927, Advertisements Folder, Gino Speranza Papers, Box 15, New York Public Library.

Figure 53:



“School of the Lace Makers: A Work Carried on Here as in Italy,” *The Sun*, January 27, 1907.

Figure 54:



“School of the Lace Makers: A Work Carried on Here as in Italy,” *The Sun*, January 27, 1907

Figure 55:



Map Indicating the Location of the Richmond Hill Settlement House and Washington Square, Sanborn Map Co. Insurance maps of N.Y., *Atlas 112. Vol. 3* [Chelsea, Greenwich Village, East Village], 1904, "Key Continued," Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library, New York Public Library Digital Collections. Accessed April 20, 2016.  
<http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/9686f7af-cb12-4302-e040-e00a18066f2a>.

Figure 56:



Elisabeth A. Irwin, "The Story of a Transplanted Industry: Lace Workers of the Italian Quarter of New York," *The Craftsman*, July 1907, 405.

## **Glossary of Terms:**

*Bobbin Lace:* Lace created with wooden dowels or bobbins wound between one another in sequence.

*Deflected work:* Patterns created by the gathering of individual threads in an existing fabric.

*Needle Lace:* Technically embroidery, needle lace is created using buttonhole stitches. Needle lace makers typically employ a needle to insert stitches between guide threads affixed to a paper pattern.

*Reticella:* An early form of needle lace using buttonhole stitches to fill in portions of space created by withdrawing or bundling warp or weft threads from an existing fabric.

*Withdrawn work:* Form of needlework in which individual threads of a base material are removed as part of the overall design.

*Venetian point:* A seventeenth-century type of textile that features scrolling floral designs often in relief. Venetian point's delicacy and curvilinear designs are a sharp contrast with the more angular *reticella* patterns.