


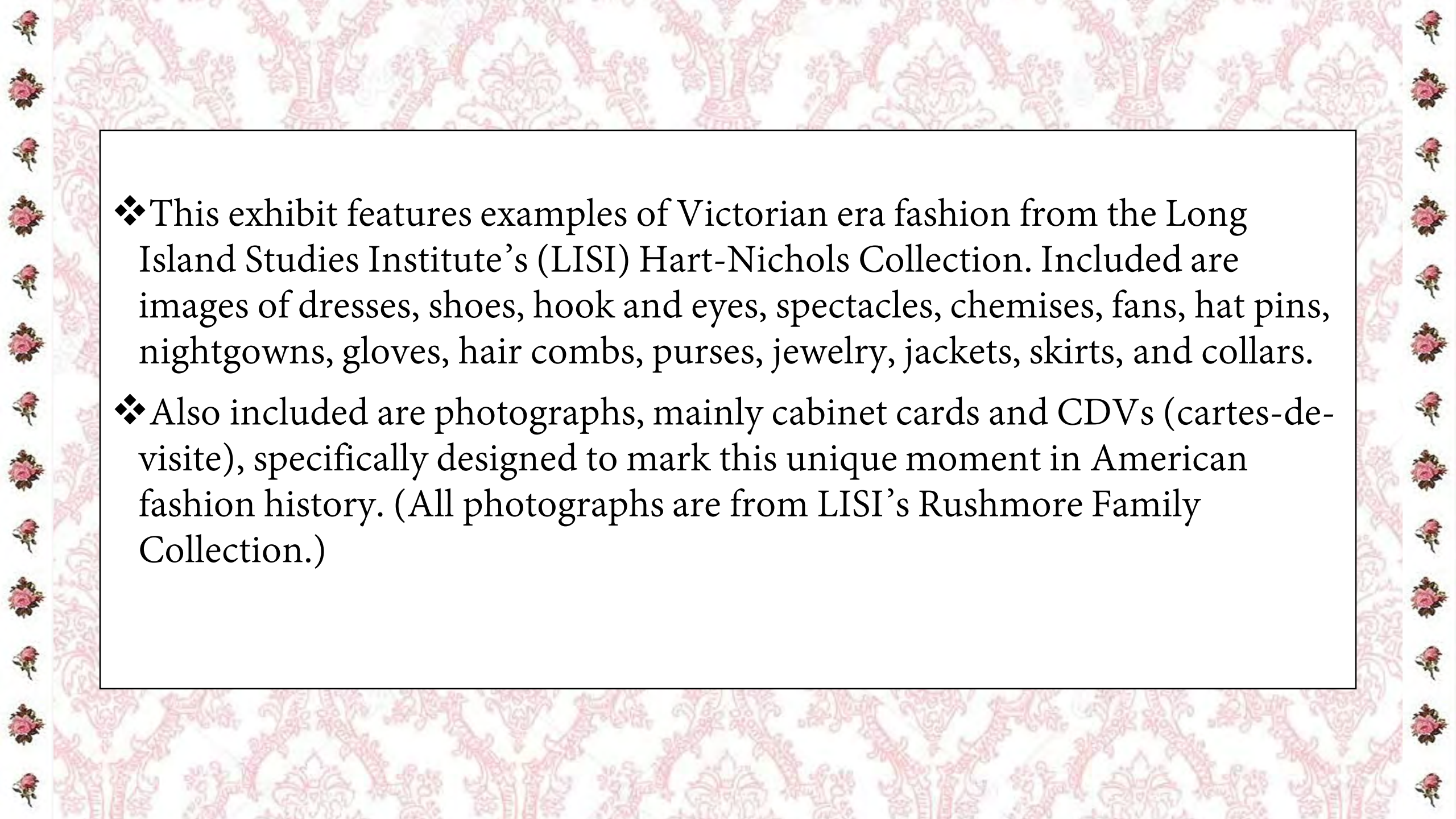
Fashion in the Age of American Victorianism

By Jillian Pallone



American Victorianism

 **American Victorianism** refers to the cultural influence that Great Britain's Victorian era, which ran from approximately 1820-1914 and corresponded roughly to the span of Queen Victoria's reign (1837-1901), had on the United States. This influence, which included a significant impact on fashion sensibilities, was particularly seen in the more heavily populated regions of the country.

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- ❖ This exhibit features examples of Victorian era fashion from the Long Island Studies Institute's (LISI) Hart-Nichols Collection. Included are images of dresses, shoes, hook and eyes, spectacles, chemises, fans, hat pins, nightgowns, gloves, hair combs, purses, jewelry, jackets, skirts, and collars.
 - ❖ Also included are photographs, mainly cabinet cards and CDVs (cartes-de-visite), specifically designed to mark this unique moment in American fashion history. (All photographs are from LISI's Rushmore Family Collection.)



Clothing of Victorian America

Long Sleeve Blouse

White, long sleeve, cotton blouse with ruffle cuffs.

Blouses were loose-fitting garments that reached up to the waist and were covered with a matching belt around the waist in order to highlight the femininity of a woman.

c. 1870-1890



Black Silk Top

Black, fitted, silk top with lace trim collar and short cap sleeves with lace trim. There are hook and eye closures on the back.

c. 1870-1890



Black Silk Shawl

Black, silk shawl with intricate lacing, delicate and extremely thin lining, with cotton fringes along the edges.

Shawls were cut in order to accommodate the wide skirts of a Victorian dress; some could measure nearly 11 feet wide! Up to about 1870, the shawl was chiefly an item of outdoor clothing, and in fact was the only thing which could be worn over the bulky crinoline dresses of the time. After 1870, the shawl went out of fashion as an outdoor garment.

c. 1870 – 1890



Black Silk Ladies Dress Jacket

Black silk ladies dress jacket with
large covered silk buttons.

c. 1870-1880



Chemise

Lace chemise with flower patterns. A small piece of fabric is used in order act as a securing strap to give closure to the center.

A chemise was commonly worn under the corset and cut relatively low in order to prevent exposure.

c.1870-1890



Petticoat

Olive-green petticoat with ruffle, black trim and hook and eye closure.

The petticoat had a dual role as both an underlinen and structural garment. It protected the dress and provided warmth, as well as modesty (by masking the contours of the legs) - all functions of underlinens. It also helped to shape the dress and therefore mirrored the cut of the skirt.

c. 1870-1890



Peplum Skirt

Fuchsia peplum skirt made from taffeta, a synthetic fabric with a crisp texture, with scalloped edges.

Peplum, is a type of elongated hem resembling a short skirt, worn to lie over another garment, either another skirt such as a petticoat or underskirt, or breeches. Overskirts may serve various purposes, ranging from protecting the underlying clothing from mud and dirt, to being purely a decorative feature.



Nightgown

White cotton nightgown

Before pajamas, many people slept in their undergarments rather than wearing an outfit specifically created for rest. Sleepwear during the Victorian age was usually referred to as 'night clothes' and often consisted of ankle-length nightshirts or nightgowns and floor-length robes. Almost everything was white, especially when the style was first adopted (eventually colors and patterns became fashionable).

c. 1841



Gown

Cotton and lace gown with silk peach sash on bodice and flower and tails on back lace trim accented with embroidered yoke and peach florets.

c. 1870-1890



Silk Dress

Blue silk dress with buttons used for closure located on the front. Long sleeves, hook and eye enclosures and a ruffled posterior compliment the dresses structure and appearance.

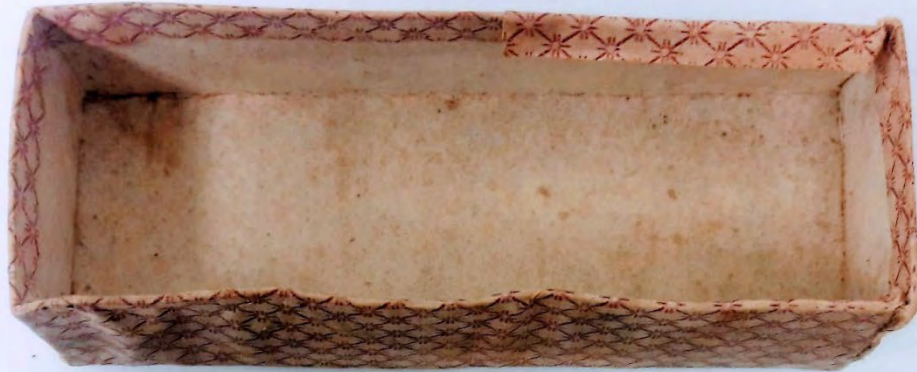
c. 1870-1890





Accessories of Victorian America

Hooks and Eyes Storage Case



Hatpins

During the 1850s, women wore straw hats that they would secure with hatpins. As styles changed, the pins became longer and more ornate, similar to the ones pictured at right.



Hair Comb

Hair comb made from a tortoise shell.

Tortoise shell is the name for the outer blades covering the upper shell of the Hawksbill turtle and the Loggerhead turtle. Tortoise shells have been valued for use in jewelry since Roman times. Combs, bracelets, earrings, cameos and decorative inlay have all been made from tortoise shell. The ability to use heat for shaping makes tortoise shell an ideal jewelry material.



Christening Cap

White christening cap with small decorative bow on the front, embellished with dainty needle point designs on the top.

Victorian babies were always dressed in white for a christening, as an emblem of purity and innocence. The embroidered or lace gown would usually have some family or other associations. The infant christening dress was lace trimmed with a short waist, a very long skirt, and short sleeves tied with satin ribbons. The ensemble often included a hat or cap similar to the one pictured at right, and a large white cloak of satin or cashmere.



Gentlemen 's Collar

For most of the Victorian era, men's shirts were white or off white. The shirt collar was attached and folded up around the neck, and sometimes the tips were folded down into a wingtip design. In the 1850s, the detachable collar was invented which saved on washing, but also introduced heavy starching to keep collars crisp and regal.



Gloves

White leather woman's gloves (size 6)

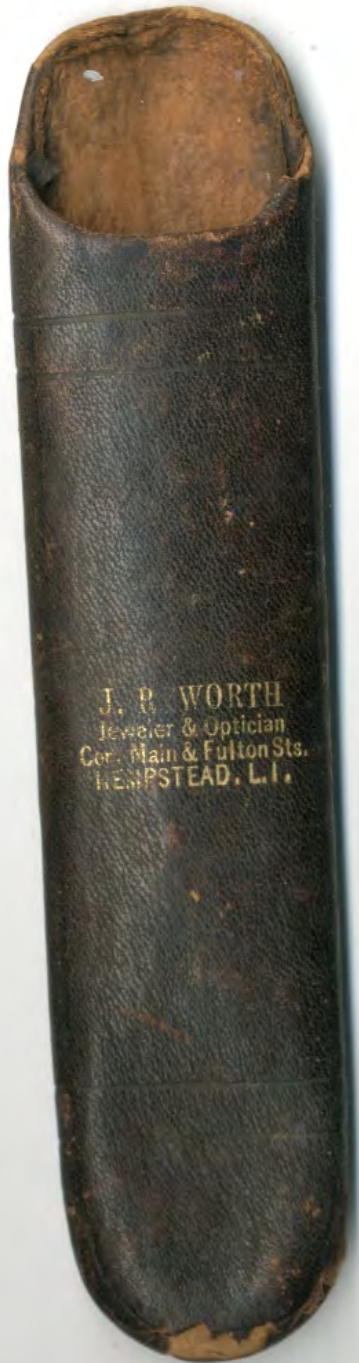
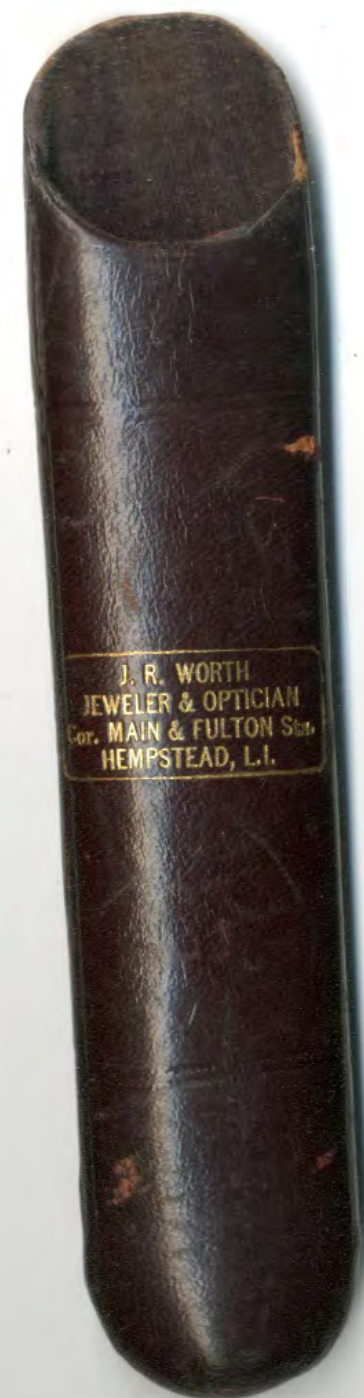
Both men and women wore gloves in the 1800s.

But when wearing gloves, it required people to follow all sorts of etiquette rules. Women were advised, in no uncertain terms, to “never go out without gloves; put them on before you leave the house.” In addition, it was advised that no woman be seen pulling her gloves in the street. Other glove etiquette rules pertained to certain conditions such as indoors and out, in warm or cold weather, and at funerals, balls, or dinner parties.

c.1837



Spectacles



Purses



Crochet coin purse, c. 1755 – 1828

There was a large variety of purses popular during the reign of Queen Victoria. Needle skills were valued, and this was reflected in decorative designs in bead-work and ribbon-work.

Knitted bags and crocheted bags became the rage around 1870. They melded beautifully with the fashionable dresses of the era.



Beaded purse with gold metal clasp, c 1880

Leather Wallets



Jewelry

During the Early Victorian period, the Industrial Revolution surged ahead. Factories opened at an unprecedented rate, and trades and industries flourished. Mass production meant jewelry was no longer made strictly by hand.



Cross- Beads
c. 1870-1890

Beaded necklace with garnet and gold
place clasp with engraved initials MAN
(Mary Ameila Nichols).

c. 1825



Lady's Heels

Lady's cream-colored shoes made with silk and satin
c. 1900



Letter Opener

This scrimshawed (engravings and carvings done in bone or ivory- in this case ivory) piece of ivory, which functions as a letter opener, features mystical images of flowers, roots, and trees dancing upon one another.

Letter openers are products of an age when communication was a good deal more ceremonial than it is today. Correspondence would arrive by post, and one would sit down at one's writing desk to open the day's mail. Letter openers were typically made of silver, bronze, or ivory, with handles resembling everything from the hilts of swords to the heads of mythical beasts.

c. 1812-1897



Fans

By 1865, the fan was an indispensable part of fashion accessory for the emergent middle classes, reaching its peak in the Victorian era. Like many other utilitarian objects for women, fans often became works of art.



Fan Languages

Fan languages, or “fan flirtations rules” were a way to cope with the restricting social etiquette. To the right are some of the commonly known rules women used to express their thoughts through the use of the fan.



Fan Flirtation Rules

Carrying in the left hand, open: “Come and talk to me.”

Twirling in the left hand: “We are watched.”

Drawing across the cheek: “I love you.”

Dropping it: “We will be friends.”

With handle to lips: “Kiss me.”

Drawing through the fan: “I hate you.”

Resting the fan on her lips: “I don’t trust you.”

Open and shut: “You are cruel.”

Passing the fan from hand to hand: “I can see you looking at another woman.”

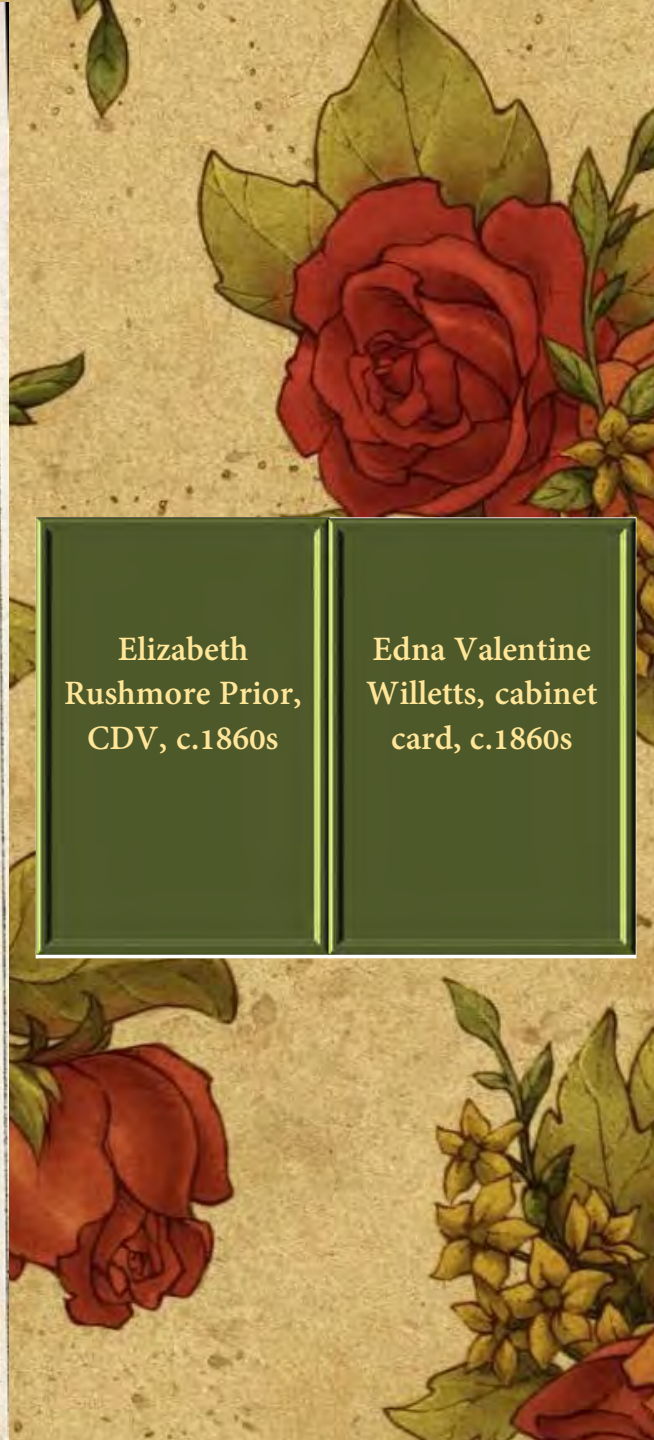




*Photographs of Long Islanders
During the Age of
American Victorianism*



Elizabeth
Rushmore Prior,
CDV, c.1860s



Edna Valentine
Willetts, cabinet
card, c.1860s



Anna

Cor. 14th St. & 6th Ave., N. Y.



Matilda Willets
Seaman, cabinet
card, 1896

Julia Prior,
cabinet card, 1895



Fredricks.

NOUVELLE

BROADWAY
AND
9TH ST., N.Y.

Carbonette

CARBONETTE
* 1895 *

NEW YORK,
BROOKLYN,
PITTSBURG.

Mrs. Crosby, hand
colored postcard, c.1890s



Miss James, c.1890s



Sara Albertson Skillen,
cabinet card, c.1880s





R.A. LEWIS 160 CHATHAM ST. N.Y.

Jacob
Valentine,
c.1860s

Frederick E.
Willitts,
cabinet card,
c.1880s



DAVIS GARBER.

747 BROADWAY, N. Y.



Samuel J.
Seaman, Jr.
cabinet card,
c.1898

James Willits,
CDV, c.1865



Donna

CARBONETTE
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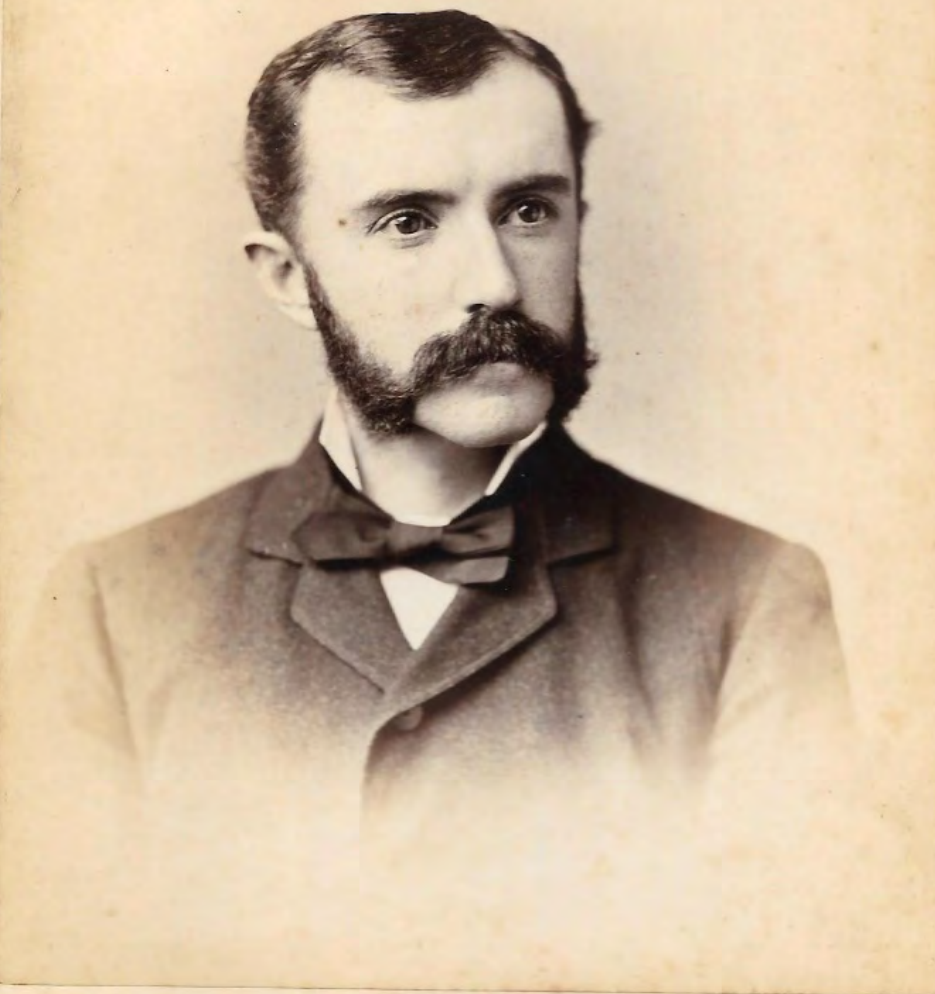
NEW YORK.
BROOKLYN.



Stephen
Rushmore,
CDV, c.1865



Samuel J.
Underhill,
cabinet card,
c.1880s



Atma

Cor. 14th St. & Sixth Ave., N. Y.



DAVIS GARBER,

747 BROADWAY, N. Y.



Herbert Bowne,
cabinet card,
c.1880

Frederick
Willets Seaman,
cabinet card,
c.1894



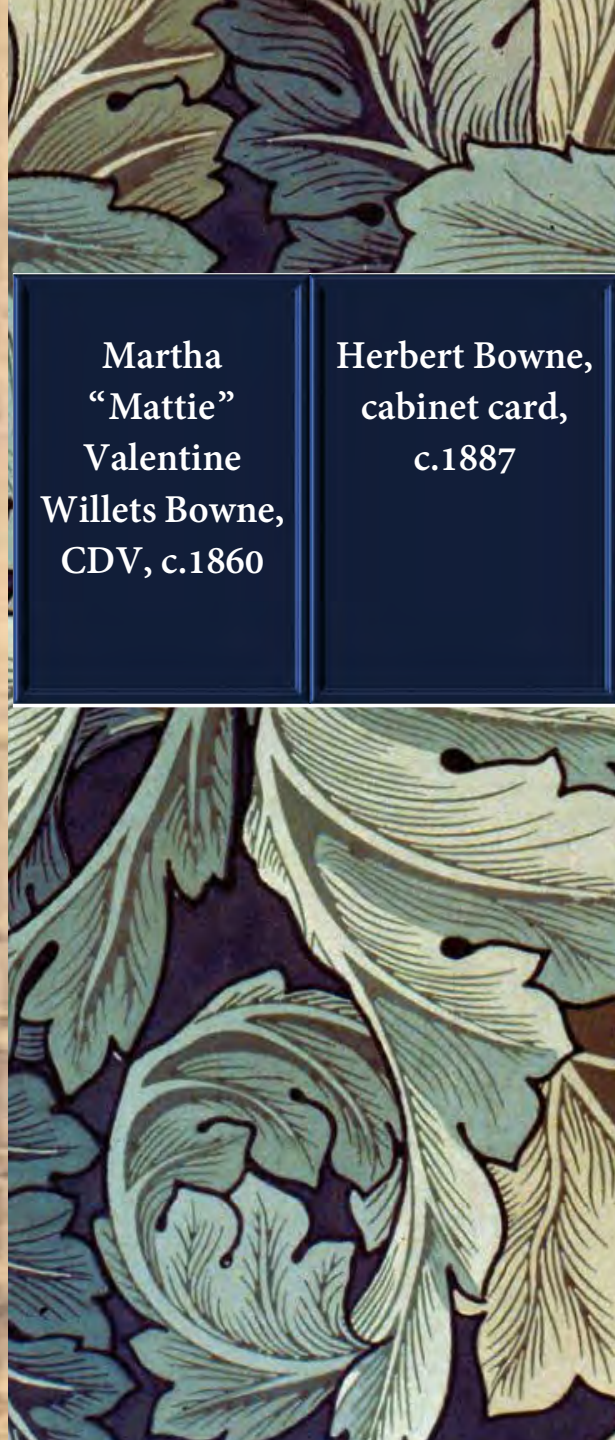
Rockwood

11 Union Square (West)
N. Y.



Martha
"Mattie"
Valentine
Willets Bowne,
CDV, c.1860

Herbert Bowne,
cabinet card,
c.1887



Rockwood

11 Union Square, (West)
N.Y.



Thomas and
Halstead
Rushmore,
cabinet card,
c.1883

Samuel J.
Underhill,
CDV, c.1864

