

CHAPTER SIX

WITHIN GILDED BORDERS

The Frames of Stanford White

Nina Gray

"WHEN MR. WHITE GETS TIRED OF DESIGNING HOUSES, he relaxes his brain with designs for picture frames. He does a limited number of these, most of them for personal friends, and whoever is the proud possessor of one may regard himself as particularly fortunate. For there is the same chaste elegance about a White frame as there is about a White building."¹

The picture frames designed by Stanford White (1853–1906), the architect and third member of the renowned New York architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White, illustrate one aspect of his tremendous creative energy.² The roles White played in his firm ranged from designing some of the finest architecture in the United States to decorating and ornamenting domestic, ecclesiastic, and public buildings. He was the consummate designer, enthusiastic and willing to work in any medium. His repertoire ranged from tombstones and jewelry to book and magazine covers, and even included the design of a cash register.

White played a significant role as an interior decorator. His work was distinguished by his collaboration with other artists and his ability to incorporate a variety of different media and styles into a harmonious whole. Indeed, his history of working with artists began with the design of bases for sculptures of Augustus Saint-Gaudens and extended to large-scale decorating projects incorporating sculptural decoration as well as murals and mosaics by artists such as John LaFarge and D. Maitland Armstrong. White developed intense and devoted friendships with a number of the most talented American artists of his day. Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Thomas Wilmer Dewing, Abbott Thayer, and George de Forest Brush were all among White's closest friends. And these friends perpetually needed frames for their works.

Stanford White's house at 121 East Twenty-first Street (FIGURES 60, 61, AND 66) was perhaps his greatest feat and labor of love as an interior decorator. White's passion for buying, collecting, and assembling beautiful things in rich, velvet-laden interiors is apparent. His love of art, both old-master and contemporary paintings, is also evident. He owned works by Dewing, Thayer, Metcalf, Brush, and Curran as well as old-master paintings attributed to Tintoretto, Ingres, Courbet, and numerous others.³

The view of Stanford White's drawing room (FIGURE 61) shows his predilection for mixing and matching various styles and ornaments. He was especially skilled in incorporating architectural fragments, including twisted columns, doorways, and entire ceilings. He had little regard for maintaining a single historical style. Rather, he selected each object because it appealed to his aesthetic sensibility. Two of White's most prized paintings are seen in this room: the portrait of his wife Bessie (lower) and his sister-in-law Ella Batavia Emmet (upper). Both portraits were painted by Thomas Wilmer Dewing, and both are in frames designed by White.

In addition to being an architect and an interior decorator, Stanford White was a prominent figure in the New York art world at the turn of the century as an art collector, patron, and dealer. He bought and sold old-master paintings, furniture, antiques, architectural fragments, textiles, and virtually anything else, including picture frames that he might use in embellishing an interior space. White ran a brisk trade in antique frames, which he often enlarged or cut down to fit specific paintings.⁴ These frames were not only sold to White's many decorating clients, but they were also given, lent, or sold to many of his artist friends. White collected antique frames and often used them as inspiration for new designs, both adapting and adding to old frames as well as copying bits and pieces of ornament that struck his fancy.

In the photo of one of two antique frames purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art from the estate sale after White's death (FIGURE 62), it is obvious that the architectural presence of this frame with its pediment and columns would have appealed to White.⁵

In all his work, Stanford White was motivated by his love of beauty, and he gave primary importance to the dynamic effects of light, color, texture, and ornament. He was devoted to lavishly embellished but harmoniously composed decorative schemes. Stanford White came to the design of picture frames from his knowledge of and experience with collecting and displaying pictures, his work with designing and decorating houses, and his experience collaborating with artists. White's acute sensitivity to his surroundings extended to a deep concern for how a work of art related to its environment. Because White was so often involved with the patron as well as with the artist, he was deeply committed to the proper presentation of a work of art. The artist Edward Simmons revealed the extent of White's commitment:

One memorable Easter Sunday (the Ten were to open a show the next day, and we were hanging our art work) Stanny appeared. I had two marines which he liked, but he was greatly taken with a portrait of my grandmother which was not yet framed. I had intended to get some



60. Photograph of the picture gallery, Stanford White Residence, 1901. Courtesy the collection of the New-York Historical Society

61. Photograph of the drawing room, Stanford White Residence, 1901. Courtesy the collection of the New-York Historical Society



62. Wood, carved and gilded, Italian (Tuscany), c. 1480–1500. Courtesy the Metropolitan Museum of Art

inch-and-a-half molding for it. He could never bear to have a work of art improperly dressed. I can see now how he looked, beautifully groomed with top hat frock coat—evidently on his way to some smart affair. He looked at me for a moment, then grabbed the portrait and rushed from the place. Needless to say I followed . . . we ended at this office, where he had a floor stored with all kinds of valuable antiques, draperies, frames, statues, which he had chosen in Europe—not because they were old or only one of a kind in existence, but because they were beautiful—and brought over here . . . he dove into dozens of frames which were piled at least fifteen feet away from the wall. Ignoring his clothes, he dashed in and was covered with dust in two seconds. In five minutes he had tried all the frames and found two that fitted the portrait.⁶

White designed frames in a number of ways. His earliest frames were probably those designed for the bas-reliefs of his closest friend Augustus Saint-Gaudens. These frames can be seen as an extension of Stanford White's designs for architectural moldings, such as those on overmantels. In fact, the early frames were made by Joseph Cabus, a craftsman who had also worked for McKim, Mead & White executing interior architectural fittings and cabinetwork. Cabus fabricated White's frames from roughly 1882 to 1894.⁷

Second in White's repertoire of frame designs were antique frames that he adapted or altered. White's personal correspondence abounds with requests to his framemakers to enlarge or cut down frames as well as to embellish existing frames or copy various bits of ornament that he felt he might use at a later date.⁸

For example, White owned the Bacchante painting by Richard Sewell, and one sketch suggests that he had taken an old frame and added a broken pediment and columns. The initial sketch was drawn on the back of a scrap of McKim, Mead & White office stationary. (FIGURE 63) From there, a more finished drawing would have been executed by one of the draughtspeople. (FIGURE 64) The notations on the upper left-hand corner of the paper indicated that White sought estimates from two framemakers: Oscar Rudolph, who made White's frames after 1895, and Wirth & Fyfe. The final drawing, (FIGURE 65) which would have been given to the framemaker, shows more complete details of the ornament on the bottom and the profile of the columns.

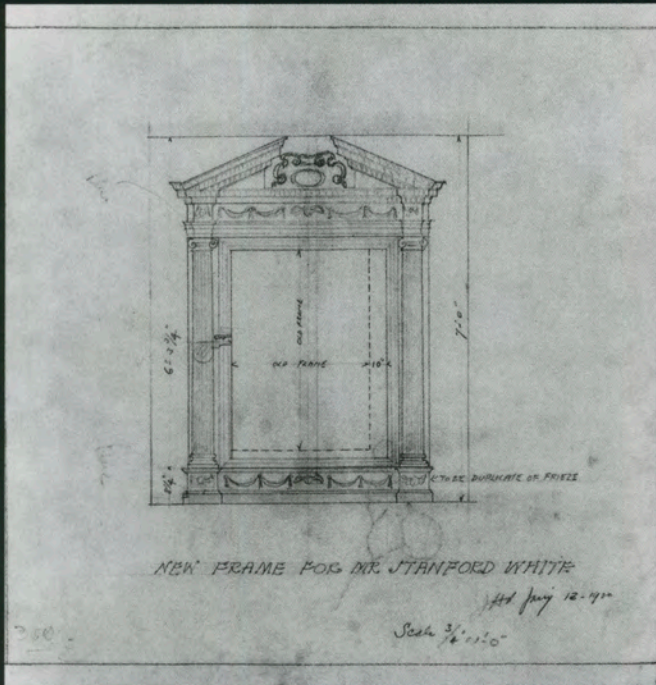
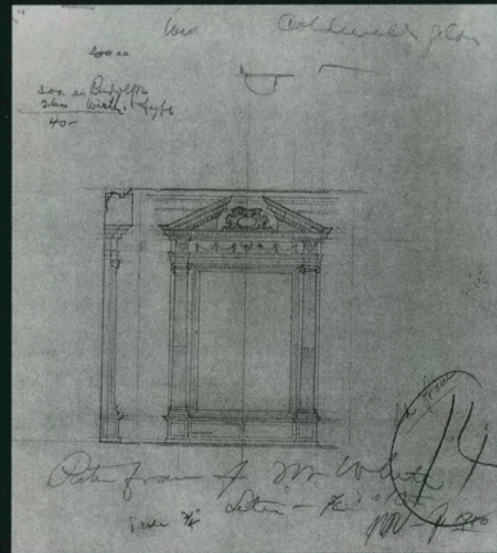
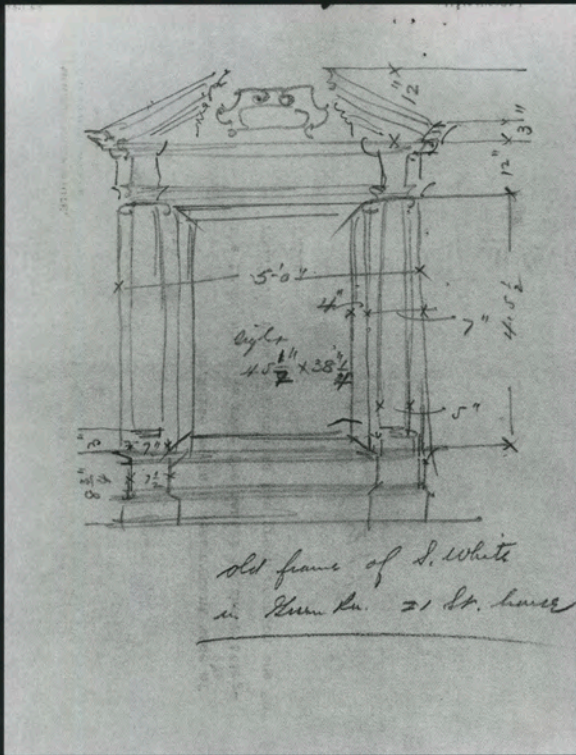
The photograph of the Green Room at the Stanford White Residence (FIGURE 66) illustrates the finished frame as it hung in Stanford White's New York City house. Abbott Thayer's *Dublin Pond* is seen to the left of the Bacchante just under the picture molding, and also has a White-designed frame, as does the large horizontal landscape below it.⁹

The third class of frames that Stanford White designed were those with a common decorative motif that he enhanced with combinations of different moldings to make frames of different widths. These frames were documented at White's framemaker by both actual corners or photographs of corners from which an authorized patron or artist could select. White was very zealous, however, about maintaining strict control of his designs, and permission to use the designs had to be solicited from him. He issued precise instructions to Alexander Cabus, who joined his father's framing business: "In no case, or under no circumstance are you to make a frame from one of my designs or go use the mouldings of my designs in different combinations without the person wishing the frame or yourself first securing from me or my office."¹⁰

The pages of photographs of a number of frame corners showing some of the standard motifs in various combinations were published in Lawrence Grant White's book of his father's designs.¹¹ To acquire a Stanford White frame, clients could select a design from either the actual corners or from a photograph that could be sent to out-of-town patrons. White told a prospective client that Alexander Cabus "has moulds of a lot of my frame designs, and I think also he has a photograph showing a lot of sections of these moulds. So if you write to him, he can probably send you the photograph showing the different moulds, and you can choose from them."¹² (FIGURE 67) One of the photos of frame corners illustrates the many ways in which the bands of ornament could be combined in varying widths and profiles. (FIGURE 68)

One of the most well-known Stanford White designs was the grille frame. This type of frame is most often seen by paintings by Thomas Wilmer Dewing. The grille is reminiscent of the screens that White often used in his interior architectural schemes. There were two different kinds of grille frames: one in which the grille is a separate piece with a wire armature suspended over a gilded cove, and the other in which the entire grille and support is molded out of compo in a single piece.¹³

The grille frame on Dewing's *The Piano* (FIGURE 69), for example, was made in two parts. It creates a buffer of space between the back and front of the frame. This spatial dimension was further enhanced by the use of a water-gilded and burnished ground on the cove that would have shone through the flatter oil gilded finish of the grille.¹⁴



63. Sketch of a frame for the Bacchante by Robert Sewell, frame designed by Stanford White, c. 1890s. Courtesy Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York City

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65. Sketch of a frame for the Bacchante by Robert Sewell, frame designed by Stanford White, c. 1890s. Courtesy Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York City



66. Photograph of the Green Room, Stanford White Residence, 1901. Courtesy the collection of the New-York Historical Society

The Dewing painting *Summer* (FIGURE 70) was once in Stanford White's collection, although it was framed before White owned it. This style of frame, known as "u-decoration," consists of many rows of tightly spaced arabesques.¹⁵ The arabesques are overlaid with a garland suspended from a bow. One sees a similar kind of layering of decorative motifs in both White's interior decoration and in his exterior architectural ornamentation.

Another pattern that Stanford White used is the basket weave; it appears both as a texture for architectural elements such as walls and in frames. In the frame for Abbott Thayer's *A Virgin*, White has combined the basket weave with gadrooning on the inner border and crosseted corners.¹⁶ This motif appears in many different combinations on paintings by Tryon, Dewing, H. Siddons Mowbray, Robert Blum, and Frederic Church. It is interesting to note that the original owners of these works were among Stanford White's most prominent collector friends: Charles Lang Freer, John Gellatly, Edward D. Adams, and Isabella Stewart Gardner.¹⁷

Sometimes White would take a basic frame pattern and adapt it to surround a particular painting or series. No detail of design was too small for him. The painting *Summer* (FIGURE 71) was part of a series of the seasons by Tryon. The frames used on these paintings were all similar, differing only in the outer band of ornament. The paintings were meant to be seen together. In the frame for *Summer*, the open flowers are symbolic of things in bloom. For the *Autumn* frame (FIGURE 72), White used a band of leaves. White accommodated the design of the frames to both the size and the subject of the works.

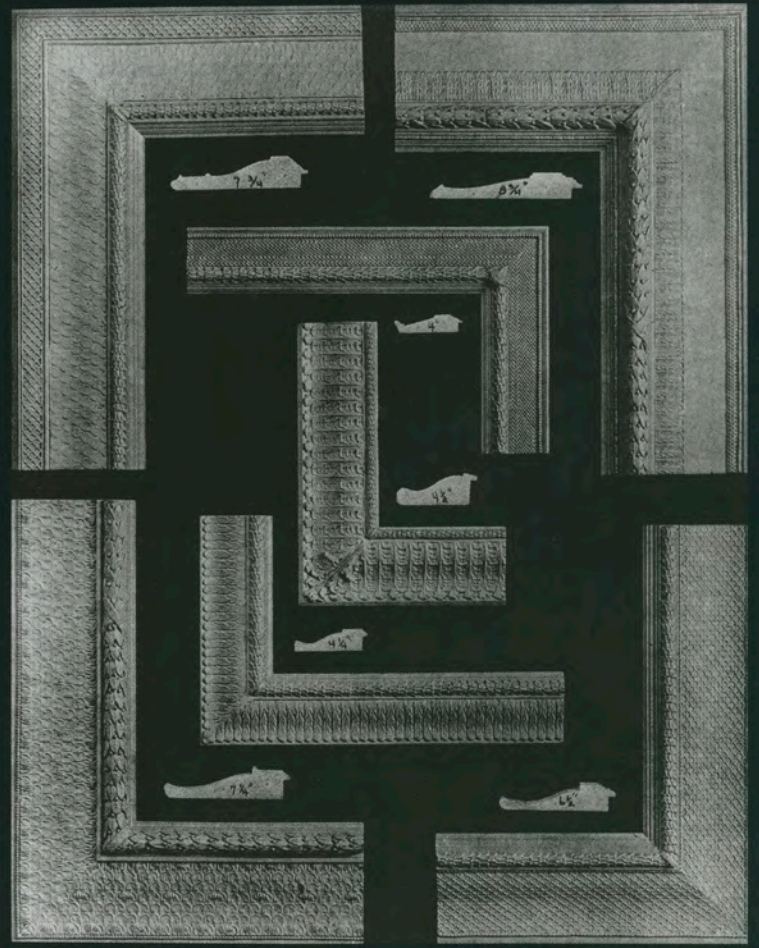
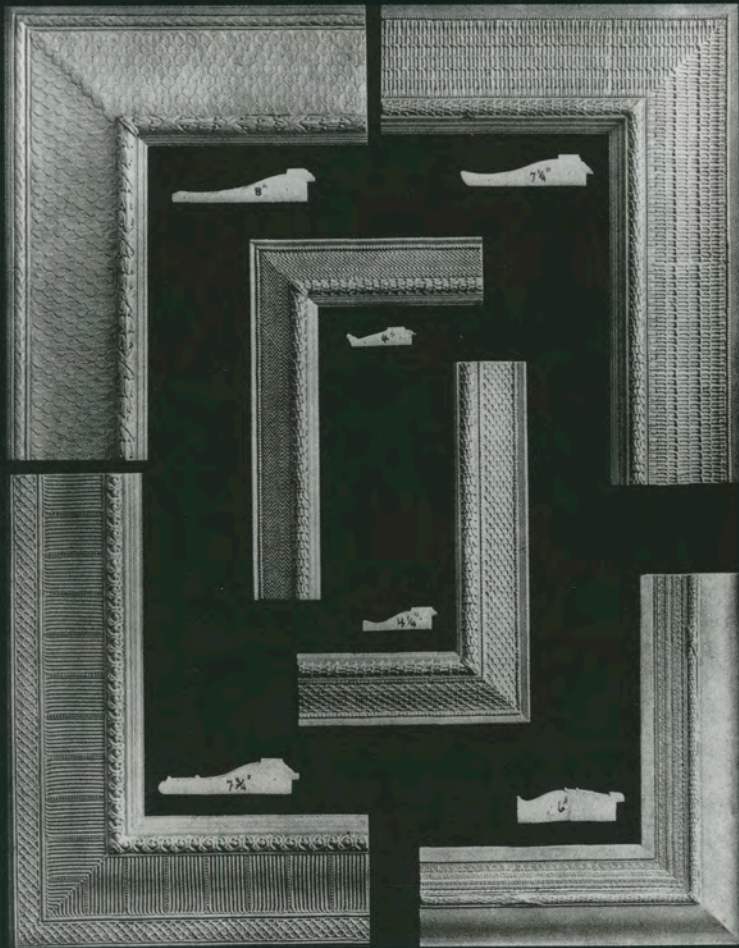
Among the most interesting frames are those that White custom-designed for specific works of art. Often White developed a dialogue concerning the relationship of the painting and frame to its environment both with the patron and with the artist concerning the frame as a complementary setting for a painting. Such concerns were motivated by a devotion to aesthetics rather than by financial considerations. Indeed, it seems that White was not paid for his frame designs. White wrote to one patron, Miss Caroline Hecker of New York: "I have never yet designed a frame as a matter of business and I certainly should not like to begin with you. I should be very happy to design and have the frame made."¹⁸

Joseph Cabus made the frame for Dewing's 1888 *Portrait of a Young Girl*. (FIGURE 73) White became very taken with this frame as it was being made; twice he told Miss Hecker that if she was not happy with the frame or if it cost more money than she wished to spend—the frame cost \$120 to make—he would happily keep the frame for himself.¹⁹ Since Miss Hecker seems to have been pleased with the frame, White had another one made for a Thayer painting that White owned.²⁰

Several frames that were in White's own collection were unique or made only in very limited numbers for special clients. And some of these unique frame designs were even more restricted. In them, one sees a special harmony in the relationship of the painting to the frame. Some of the designs were executed in carved wood rather than in compo.²¹ This was a far more labor intensive and hence more costly way of making a frame.

Surrounding Dewing's portrait of Mrs. Stanford White (FIGURE 28) is probably the most delicate and elaborate frame ever designed by White. He wrote that he had designed the frame specifically for this portrait and did not want it replicated. The frame is carved with an elaborate floral decoration on a carved net ground with an inner border of delicately carved flowers. The portrait of Bessie's sister Ella hung as a companion piece in White's Grammercy Park parlor. The frame, although much less elaborate, is complementary in its use of a narrow carved net border. Another Dewing picture that appeared in White's picture gallery (FIGURE 60) included a small nude in an extraordinary carved frame. (FIGURE 74) White collected nudes from his artist friends. Before his untimely death, he had planned on making them a gift to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, of which he was an active supporter. In the commission of one of these nudes he wrote: "All I want to impress on you is the fact that I want you to make the picture alluring enough to scare all the straight-laced people in New York. If I carry out my intention and get a pretty decent little collection of nudes I mean to give it to the Metropolitan Museum to shock everybody for all time."²² It is apparent that the design for the frame was derived from lace, and in this case the gilding of the lace panel was applied directly onto the wood without a layer of gesso. This technique gives a soft tone to the gilding, which is partially absorbed into the surface of the wood. In addition, the texture of the wood grain reflects the gilding in a slightly diffused manner.

White made several other extraordinary frames for paintings by his close friend Thomas Wilmer Dewing. These include two early portraits of Mrs. Robert Goelet and her son, Robert Goelet, Jr. White executed a number of projects for the Goelet



67. Photograph of Stanford White's frame corners, from *Sketches and Designs by Stanford White*, plate 35, by Lawrence Grant White, 1920

68. Photograph of Stanford White's frame corners, from *Sketches and Designs by Stanford White*, plate 36, by Lawrence Grant White, 1920



69. Wood, metal grille, applied composition ornament, gilded, designed by Stanford White, made by Alexander Cabus, on *The Piano*, Thomas Wilmer Dewing, 1891. Courtesy the Freer Gallery of Fine Art, Smithsonian Institution

70. Wood, "u-decoration" applied composition ornament, gilded, designed by Stanford White, on *Summer*, Thomas Wilmer Dewing, c. 1890. Courtesy the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution





71. Wood, applied composition ornament, gilded, designed by Stanford White, on *Summer*, Dwight Tryon, c. 1891. Courtesy the Freer Gallery of Fine Art, Smithsonian Institution

72. Wood, applied composition ornament, gilded, designed by Stanford White, on *Autumn*, Dwight Tryon, c. 1891. Courtesy the Freer Gallery of Fine Art, Smithsonian Institution





73. Wood, applied composition ornament, gilded, designed by Stanford White, made by Joseph Cabus, on *Portrait of a Young Girl (Miss Julia Baird)*, Thomas Wilmer Dewing, 1888. Courtesy the Freer Gallery of Fine Art, Smithsonian Institution

family, including the design of a country house in Newport and commercial buildings in New York City. (It was not unusual for him to be friends with artists as well as with patrons such as Robert Goelet, Charles Lang Freer, or the Cheney Family.) The carved and gilded frame on the portrait of Mrs. Goelet incorporates the Goelet family crest. The design is derived from northern Italian seventeenth-century frames typified by the use of applied sculpted ornament. The intricacy of the carving is a tour de force of craftsmanship. There is a lovely relationship between the frame and the picture, evident in details such as the repetition of the painted leaves of the background in the carved leaves of the frame.

The second Goelet frame, on a Dewing portrait of Robert Jr., is loosely based on Venetian sixteenth-century frames. It has a pierced half-round lace structure made of comp with a wire armature painted white and suspended over a gilded cove. The delicacy of the lace armature complements the detailed rendering of lace on the child's sleeves and collar. The use of white, rather than gilding, is unusual in frames of this period but provides a successful and harmonious border for the portrait.

Another of White's special patrons was J. Montgomery Sears of Boston, for whom he made several unique frames, each one specially designed for the picture it bordered. The frame on George de Forest Brush's *Mother and Child* (FIGURE 75) is related to the one on Dewing's *Reclining Nude Figure of a Girl* (FIGURE 74) in both the shallow carving and the profile of the frame. The ogee curve of the frame profile gently slopes from the painting to the wall, making a graceful transition between the spaces. White described his first impression of seeing the finished frame in a letter to the original owner, Mr. J. Montgomery Sears: "The frame for the Brush has just come to my office, finished in carved oak. It is a beautiful piece of delicate relief work."²³ He further detailed the process of making this frame: "The frame has been beautifully carved in hard oak, gilt and gilding burnished, then carefully gone over and dulled, rubbing up the highlights in the burnishing so that the delicate carving would come softly out of the background. Brush's picture is so fine a one that it seemed to me to deserve the best setting it could get."²⁴ The frame cost more than \$400 and was one of the most expensive frames ever designed by White.

Proper gilding and burnishing were essential to the effect of all White's frames. He paid careful attention not only to the different gilding techniques but also to the color of the gold and how it harmonized with the painting it surrounded.

The frame on Dennis Bunker's *Portrait of Eleanor Hardy Bunker* (FIGURE 76) was originally intended for a painting by Abbott Thayer. When Dennis Bunker, one of White's close artist friends, died, the frame was put around this portrait and presented to the Metropolitan Museum of Art as a gift from White and friends. The original gilding was specified as light yellow, rather than the green gold that was probably the tone for Thayer's frame.²⁵ Stanford White made some of his most interesting frames for Abbott Thayer. He differentiated between those frames that were combinations of standard designs and a frame that was specifically created for a special painting. "Nothing would delight me more than to make your frame. I hear great things of your picture . . . if it is a possible thing, will make a design for it; and if not, will pick out or combine a frame from the models which he has already on hand. It does seem as if this picture should have framing of its own."²⁶

The frame for Thayer's *Diana* (FIGURE 77), based on the bold carving of earlier Spanish and Italian frames, is a most unusual frame among White's designs. The bud motif might be an illusion to Diana as the goddess associated with birth. The preliminary drawing for the *Diana* frame (FIGURE 78) shows the underlying bud motif. The full-scale detail indicates the working method for creating a specially carved frame. This full-scale detail would then be given to the framemaker to follow. After it was carved it would be gilded. Because the design was changed, this drawing was marked "superseded" to indicate that it was no longer to be used.

White was not only aware of the relationship of the painting to its frame, but he was also very sensitive to the issue of how frames related to one another in single collections, such as those adorning works in the collections amassed by Sears and Freer.

The *Portrait of Helen Sears* by Abbott Thayer (FIGURE 79) was originally owned by J. Montgomery Sears of Boston. The design is defined by the elongated scroll at the outer edge of the frame. This same motif with different embellishments is also seen on another frame originally in the Sears collection: Thayer's *Virgin Enthroned*.²⁷ White told Sears: "I have made the design purposely in character with the frame for the Madonna, but only so in its general style, all the details and its effect will be quite different."²⁸

White worked on a number of different projects for the Cheney family in Hartford, Connecticut, including an office building, several houses, interior decoration, and picture frames. The magnificent frame on Dewing's *The Days* was designed

with a companion sofa and is most certainly unique. The ornament on both is different but complementary; both sofa and frame use combinations of floral scrolls and patterned moldings of different widths. The painting and sofa were placed in a specially constructed alcove in the Cheney House. Like many of White's other clients, the Cheneys got to enjoy his generous friendship. Anne Cheney wrote to White in May, 1888: "The bench has come, it is simply stunning & we are all in a state of great delight over it . . . I can't find any words to thank you for all the lovely things you do for us & each new lovely thing that comes, deepens the debt that we owe you. With thanks for the seat which is exquisite in all its details."²⁹

Charles Lang Freer, like the Cheney family, was especially appreciative of White's talent. Freer was the most prolific collector of White's frames. He owned about sixty frames that were used on his American paintings.³⁰ The three artists who were especially prominent in this collection were Thomas Wilmer Dewing, Dwight Tryon, and Abbott Thayer. All three were friends of White, and it is no surprise that Freer and White became good friends. White was particularly eager when it came to creating frames for Freer. He told Thayer: "Of course I will design you any darned thing you please—any frame you want, and as for designing a frame for one of Freer's pictures I am doubly at your disposal."³¹

Freer was especially dazzled by the frame on Tryon's *New England Hills*. (FIGURE 80) He wrote to the artist: "I saw for the first time your 'New England Hills' in its new frame and I was more charmed than I can tell you. Stanford White has produced another of his masterly things, and I don't believe a more harmonious setting was ever conceived for a picture . . . I am sure it will make your back go 'goose flesh' when you see it."³² The frame, made by Oscar Rudolph, cost \$85.³³

Freer owned four identical extraordinary frames on Thayer paintings. It was first designed for Thayer's *Cornish Headlands*. (FIGURE 81) Thayer seems to have ordered the frame directly from White, replacing the frame that he must have originally put on it.³⁴ This was the first frame in the Freer Collection that was made by Oscar Rudolph. White had a falling out with Alexander Cabus after he botched the reproduction of an antique frame.³⁵ At the time that this frame was ordered, White wrote to Abbott Thayer: "Young Cabus, however, is no good as a framemaker, and I would much sooner have it go to Rudolph."³⁶ The cost for the frame was \$215,³⁷ and Freer wrote to Thayer, "By the way, did you have a chance to see the frame which Stanford White designed for your painting which I purchased last spring? . . . The picture is here and it is really wonderful. Its new setting is so much better than the old, and I prize it as one of my finest possessions."³⁸

That White's picture frames figured among Freer's finest possessions testifies to the success that White's frame design enjoyed—work for which he was rarely, if ever, paid. He clearly took frame design very seriously and gave much consideration to the aesthetics of the painting and the manner in which the frame would enhance it. He derived much pleasure from his involvement in the creative process of his artist friends and his role in the decorative process of interior design for his patron friends. The tireless energy he devoted to their frames designs is a rich and sensitive legacy.

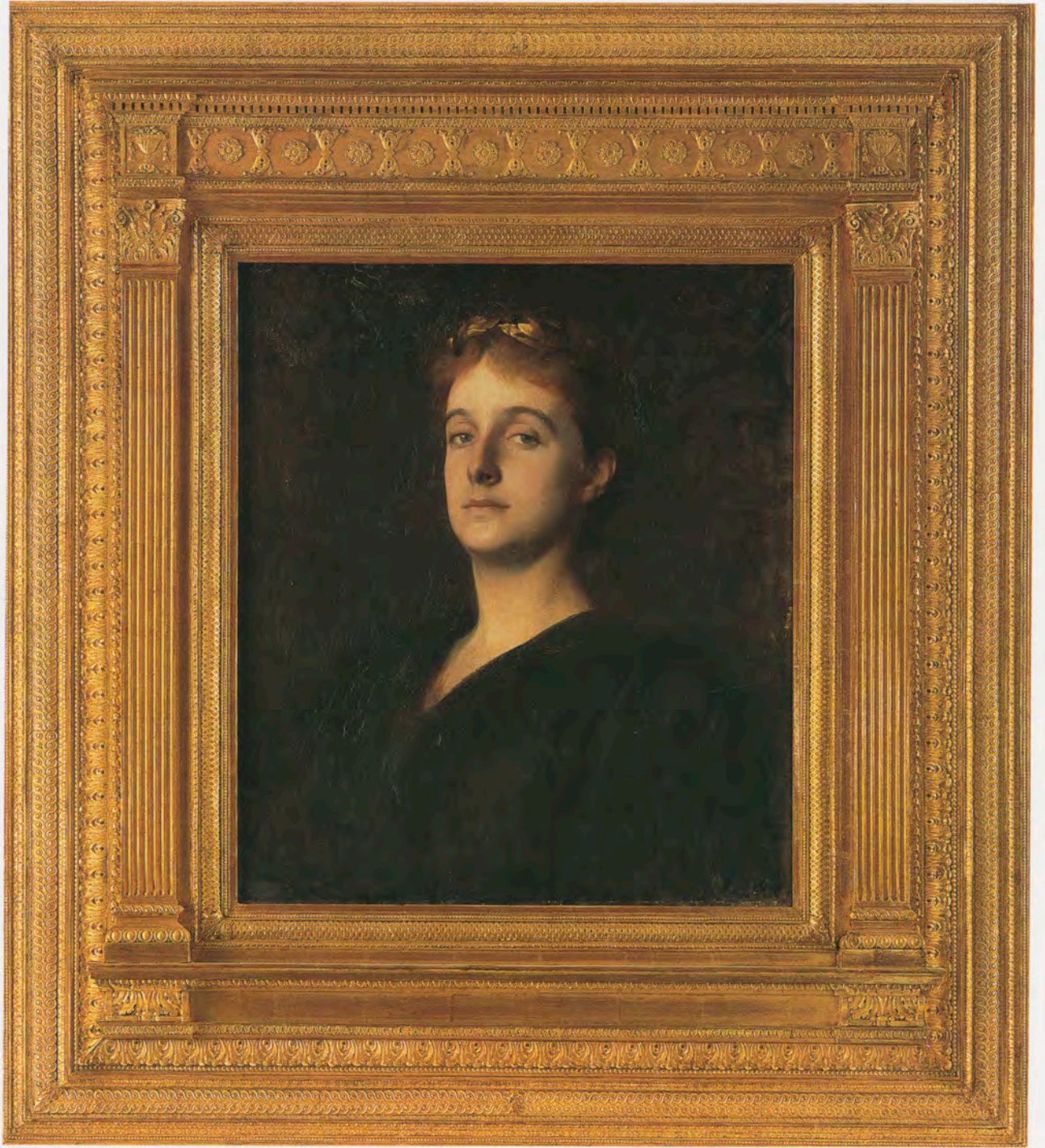
Nina Gray, independent curator and scholar, was formerly the associate curator of decorative arts at the New-York Historical Society. Her projects have included Historic Furnishings Reports for Lawnfield, the James A. Garfield National Historic Site in Ohio; for Meadow Croft, the John Ellis Roosevelt Summer Home; and for the Frederick W. Vanderbilt Mansion in Hyde Park. She researched and wrote cultural medallions for the New York Preservation Foundation and a history of the Rhinelander-Waldo Mansion, home of Polo/Ralph Lauren's flagship store. She has taught at the Cooper-Hewitt/Parsons School of Design master's program. Among her publications are "Leon Marcotte, Cabinet-Maker and Interior Decorator" in American Furniture; "Frame Choices for the French Impressionists" in Picture Framing Magazine; and "Within Gilded Borders: The Frames of Stanford White" in American Art. While at the New-York Historical Society, she curated exhibitions including: "The Belknap Collection of Silver and Portraits," "Artistic Houses: Lavish New York Interiors of the Nineteenth Century," and "The Rise and Fall of New York: Building and Unbuilding Manhattan." Mrs. Gray has a masters degree from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.



74. Wood, carved and gilded, designed by Stanford White, made by Alexander Cabus, on *Reclining Nude Figure of a Girl*, Thomas Wilmer Dewing, not dated. Courtesy the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution



75. Wood, carved and gilded, designed by Stanford White, made by Alexander Cabus, on *Mother and Child*, George de Forest Brush, 1894. Courtesy the Metropolitan Museum of Art

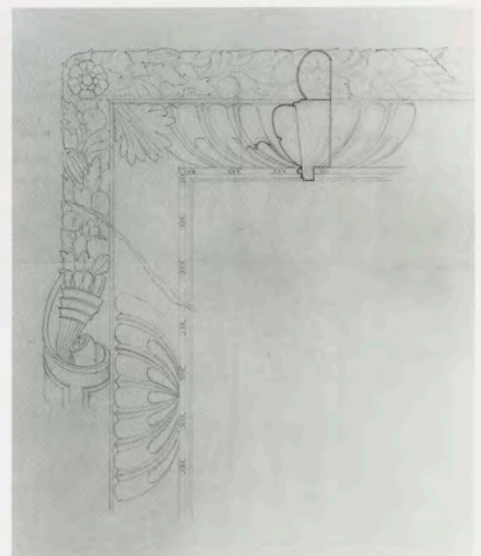


76. Wood, applied composition ornament, gilded, designed by Stanford White, made by Alexander Cabus, on *Eleanor Hardy Bunker*, Dennis Miller Bunker, 1890. Courtesy the Metropolitan Museum of Art



77. Wood, carved, applied composition ornament, gilded, designed by Stanford White, on *Diana*, Abbott Thayer, 1893. Courtesy the Freer Gallery of Fine Art, Smithsonian Institution

78. Preliminary drawing for Stanford White's "Diana frame." c. 1890s. Courtesy the Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in the City of New York





79. Wood, carved, applied composition ornament, gilded, designed by Stanford White, on *Portrait of Helen Sears*, Abbott Thayer, 1892. Courtesy the Toledo Museum of Art



80. Wood, applied composition ornament, gilded, designed by Stanford White, made by Oscar Rudolph, on *New England Hills*, Dwight Tryon, 1901. Courtesy the Freer Gallery of Fine Art, Smithsonian Institution

81. Wood, carved and gilded, designed by Stanford White, made by Oscar Rudolph, on *Cornish Headlands*, Abbott Thayer, c. 1899. Courtesy the Freer Gallery of Fine Art, Smithsonian Institution



NOTES

1. Charles Baldwin, *Stanford White* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1931), p. 186, citing an anonymous quote from a gossip column in a syndicated interview of the New York Press, 1887.
2. This subject was first explored in an excellent article: Joyce Schiller, "Frame Designs by Stanford White," *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts*, 64, no. 1 (1988): 21–31. I would like to thank Mr. Eli Wilner of Eli Wilner & Co. for his generous support of this research and Ms. Suzanne Smeaton for her invaluable assistance.
3. See *Inventory of Household Furniture, Paintings and Works of Art in the Residence of Stanford White*, c. 1899. Stanford White Collection, Box 18, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in New York City.
4. In the estate sale held by the American Art Galleries, November 25, 26, and 27, 1907, lots 590–651 were antique frames. It is interesting to note that these frames were purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art as well as by many of White's clients including Robert Goelet, Annie Cheney, and Robert W. DeForest.
5. *Stanford White Sale*, American Art Galleries, November 25, 26, and 27, 1907.
6. Edward Simmons, *From Seven to Seventy: Memories of a Painter and a Yankee* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1922), pp. 249–50.
7. He was originally known as a cabinetmaker, working for a short time with Alexander Roux, before becoming partners with Anthony imbel in the firm of Kimbel & Cabus. The partnership was dissolved in 1882, at which point Joseph continued in business alone until he was joined by his son Alexander in 1891. Alexander continued the business in his own name from 1895 to 1901. See *New York City Directories* including Rode's, Trow's, and Wilson's.
8. Among the many references to the alternation of frames see: Stanford White Papers, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in New York City. SW to Oscar Rudolph, 4/30/1898, PB #20; SW to Allard & Sons, 4/10/1899, PB #22; SW to Oscar Rudolph 10/21/1901, PB #26.
9. This picture is now in the collection of the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institute, gift of William T. Evans.
10. Stanford White to Alexander Cabus, September 28, 1894, PB #10, Stanford White Collection, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in New York City.
11. The photographs are credited as the property of Newcomb-Macklin, who ended up with the designs some time after Stanford White's death. Newcomb-Macklin, originally a Chicago frame-maker, opened a New York branch in 1912. The earliest documented Newcomb-Macklin/Stanford White frame is on an Abbott Thayer painting, *Monadnock II*, dated 1912, framed in 1913, Freer Gallery of Fine Art.
12. Stanford White to Charles B. McDonald, October 10, 1898, Stanford White Collection, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in New York City.
13. See Susan A. Hobbs, *The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing, Beauty Reconfigured* (Brooklyn: The Brooklyn Museum, 1996), p. 83.
14. Susan Hobbs, Smithsonian Institute research collaborator and Thomas Wilmer Dewing scholar, first mentioned this concept. I would like to thank Dr. Hobbs for generously sharing her research with us. Since the majority of grille frames have been regilded over the years, it is difficult to imagine how the frames appeared in their original splendor.
15. J. Eastman Chase to Stanford White, February 18, 1898, Box 13, Stanford White Collection, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in New York City. The term *u-decoration* appears in a letter from Charles Lang Freer to Alexander Cabus, August 3, 1894, Freer Papers, Archives of American Art, roll 1212, as well as in the bill for the same frame from Alexander Cabus, August 11, 1894 in the Freer Archives. The painting and frame are seen hanging in White's picture gallery.
16. Alexander Cabus altered the frame after Thayer reworked the canvas. See Voucher Register Book A, p. 16, Freer Gallery of Fine Art Archives, July 18, 1893. Thayer was concerned that when he altered the painting, it would change its relationship to the frame. In a letter from Thayer to Freer, he said that he would be writing to Stanford about whether these modifications would affect its relationship to the frame. Letter, May 1893, Freer Gallery of Fine Art Archives.
17. The paintings owned by John Gellatly are now in the North Carolina Museum of Art, and I would like to thank John W. Coffey for bringing them to our attention. The work owned by Edward D. Adams is now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum owns the painting that Mrs. Gardner purchased.
18. Stanford White to Caroline Hecker, February 26, 1889, Pressbook #1, Stanford White Papers, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in New York City.
19. The frame cost \$120. Stanford White to Caroline Hecker, May 29, 1889 and June 27, 1889, Pressbook #2, Stanford White Papers, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in New York City. A third frame of this design is on a Henry Walker portrait in a private collection.
20. That painting, *Dublin Pond, New Hampshire*, 1894, is now in the National Museum of American Art. It was owned by Stanford White and can be seen hanging in the photograph of the Green Room. A third frame of the same design is on a Henry Walker portrait in a private collection.
21. Compo, short for composition, is a mixture of gilder's whiting (chalk), resin, and hide glue. It is molded and applied to a frame before gilding.
22. Stanford White to H. Siddons Mowbray, January 4, 1893, PB #7, Stanford White Collection, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in New York City.
23. Stanford White to J. Montgomery Sears, December 17, 1894, PB #12, Stanford White Collection, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in New York City.
24. Stanford White to J. Montgomery Sears, January 30, 1895, PB #12, Stanford White Collection, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in New York City.
25. Stanford White to Abbott Thayer, April 14, 1891, PB #4, Stanford White to Sarren & LeLacheur, February 11, 1892, PB #5, Stanford White Collection, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in New York City. Another frame of this design was made in 1895, Stanford White to Alexander Cabus, July 15, 1895, PB #14, Stanford White Collection, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in New York City.
26. Stanford White to Abbott Thayer, December 27, 1892, PB #7, Stanford White Collection, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in New York City.
27. This painting is now in the collection of the National Museum of American Art.
28. Stanford White to J. Montgomery Sears, November 27, 1892, PB #7, Stanford White Collection, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in New York City.
29. McKim, Mead & White Collection, the New-York Historical Society, Anne Cheney to Stanford White, May 9, 1888. See also Susan A. Hobbs, *The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing, Beauty Reconfigured* (Brooklyn: The Brooklyn Museum, 1996), pp. 109–10. The design of the frame is attributed also to White's assistant, Joseph Wells.
30. I would like to thank Linda Merrill, formerly associate curator, American art, Freer Gallery of Fine Art, for her extraordinary assistance with Freer's frames, making the frames accessible for our study, and for her careful review of and input toward the documentation of each of the Stanford White frames. I would also like to thank Colleen Hennessy, archivist, Freer Gallery of Fine Art, for her help in locating some of the original bills of sale.
31. Stanford White to Abbott Thayer, May 3, 1899, PB #22, Stanford White Collection, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in New York City.
32. Charles Lang Freer to Dwight Tryon, October 12, 1901, AAA roll 1222, #316.
33. Freer Archives, bill paid October 14, 1901. Tryon was so taken with the frame that he ordered a duplicate to be put on *Twilight May*: 06.81, also in the collection of the Freer Gallery of Fine Art.
34. Charles Lang Freer to Abbott Thayer, January 15, 1900, Freer Papers, AAA roll 453.

35. The story of this ruined frame is recorded in the following letters: Stanford White to Alexander Cabus, April 4, 1895, April 10, 1895, April 13, 1895, PB # 13; Stanford White to Messrs. Gramm & Rudolph April 6, 1895, April 9, 1895, April 13, 1895, PB #13; Stanford White Collection, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in New York City.

36. Stanford White to Abbott Thayer May 3, 1899, PB #22, Stanford White Collection, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in New York City. Oscar Rudolph had been making White's frames since 1895.

37. Voucher made out to Stanford White, September 2, 1901, Archives, Freer Gallery of Fine Art.

38. Charles Lang Freer to Abbott Thayer, January 15, 1900, Freer Papers, AAA, roll 1220. Freer had the frame duplicated for three other Thayer paintings: *Portrait of Capri*, *Monadnock in Winter*, and *Monadnock II*. The first three frames (*Cornish Headlands*, *Portrait of Capri*, and *Monadnock in Winter*) were made by Oscar Rudolph. All three are constructed with lap joints. The last frame (*Monadnock II*) made after 1912 was made by Newcomb-Macklin, and has the characteristic variant of a miter joint seen on Newcomb-Macklin frames.



THE
**GILDED
EDGE**

The Art of the Frame

EDITED BY

Eli Wilner

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