

# history in full Bloom



Celluloid Art Deco haircomb with blue and green rhinestones. 1910-1920



Decorative vase of Eastern influence from the Willowbrook collection, mid- to late- 19th century

**A**UBURN is just around the corner... Spring that is! From March 20 to 29, the Cayuga Museum will host the first ever floral exhibition titled "History in Full Bloom."

Decorative arts pieces from the permanent collection will be complemented by floral displays created by local florists. Organic and floral motifs, as seen in the object chosen, will be highlighted.

The opportunities gained in organizing an exhibition of this nature were summed up by Museum Director Jim Richerson: "History in Full Bloom" has the potential of serving three new frontiers for the museum. First, the floral theme will bring visitors in with interests in horticulture, introducing a new audience to the museum. Secondly, the exhibition presents a different way to utilize the collection and the Willard/Case mansion. It broadens the way the museum is perceived in a refreshing and colorful way. Finally, it strengthens the museum's communal role by partnering with the florists. The exhibition draws on both the uniqueness of the collections and the aesthetic of local florists, creating a synergism that neither could produce alone. A bonus will be the lecture series held during both weekends of the exhibition, which promotes the museum's role as an information source. The entire production promises to blossom into a big win for the community."

Flowers and horticulture are not unfamiliar subjects to the Willard/Case mansion. Photographs and journals from the

Willard family, who resided in the mansion from 1843 to 1916, illustrate the importance of horticulture in their lives. Lush tropical plants and flowers landscaped into extensive paths and gardens once adorned the surrounding property.

The Willards spent generous amounts of money on an ongoing basis to preserve the manicured environment they created. These investments included two sizable greenhouses, one rectangular shaped and the other a glass octagon. "History in full Bloom" will bring this interesting element of the Willards' lives to light, while providing local florists with an opportunity to add a contemporary twist on the theme. Photographs of the property, complete with the functioning greenhouses, will be included in the exhibition.

### Blooming Magnitude

The magnitude of the Cayuga Museum's collection made it easy to pull nearly 100 objects from various cultures with the floral theme in mind, including Middle Eastern, European, Native American and Japanese materials.

For example, colorful European beaded bags provide viewers with an interesting stylistic comparison when seen adjacent to Native American beaded bags. To quote Museum Curator Stephanie Przybylek, "It is exciting to give the public the opportunity to see the breadth of our collection. Many of these objects were donated to the museum in the 1930s and 1940s and have been rarely seen by our visitors. It will be interesting to see how the florists interpret these themes."

Please see "HISTORY" on C10

Story by Jessica Kline • Correspondent

## celebrate the coming of spring



Exported Oriental fan made of wood and black fabric, late 19th century



Woman's European beaded handbag, late 19th century



# History in full Bloom

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Other objects in the show will include Victorian pieces from the Willardbrook and Dykman estates; frosted green glass perfume bottles and a soap dish with brass detailing; two delicate thimble cases and two calling card cases, one finished in mother of pearl and the other silver plated with designs of *art nouveau* influences. Country crocks and vases of various influences, one embellished with an Islamic abstract pattern of bright blues on a white background, and others with Japanese bird designs, provide worldly facets to the exhibition.

Also on display will be four late 19th- and early 20th-century hair combs, complete with deep blue and green rhinestone accents, fashioned in the *art deco* style. A mini three-way mirror from the 1920s with romantic overtones, featuring angelic birds fluttering high in the sky with a church in the backdrop, complement the woman's manicure toiletry kit echoing the same creamy imagery found on old-time Valentine's Day cards.

On the frivolous side, five oriental fans manufactured for export offer viewers a wide variety of artisan techniques including faux gilded leaves and insect and foliate motifs and ivory inlaid detailing on the fan handles. Additionally, Victorian lamps, one comprised of rose-called hurricane-style glass, the other recalling Near East Indian influences with the lamp shade covered by organic brass openwork with gold tassels along the rim, will be on view. Tapestries patterned

with bright metallic thread and a Victorian silk shawl also adorned with floral embroidery provide yet another approach to the theme, as does the ceramic copper English lusterware pitcher featuring a woman admiring herself in a mirror while lounging on a divan outdoors.

## Exhibit's Versatility

The exhibition's more functional items will include a fireplace bellow decorated with a delicate hand-painted flower on the front side; a brass ink stand; a rose covered crocheted tablecloth and doilies; a child's cream colored outer garment with elaborate embroidery, made in the early 19th century; and a pink silk and lace baby's bonnet made in 1848. An *art nouveau* favrite-like candy dish represents another everyday item crafted with elegance.

Historic period rooms, furnished in turn-of-the-century decor in the Willard/Case mansion will provide an elegant backdrop for the displays. There will be floral pieces made of silk as well as live arrangements. Different approaches by each participating florist are a given: the end result should be very exciting. These will include a live landscaped garden complete with trees, shrubs and a walkway, attached to a large dollhouse and also 12 international fairies representing different parts of the world, both created by Judy Vorreuter of Grasmere Garden Art.

"I find the challenge of creating a live garden appropriate to the period of the dollhouse fascinating!" said



photo provided by The Cayuga Museum

East wing exterior view of the Case/Willard Mansion, circa 1880.

Vorreuter. "My piece will include a pond, blooming flowers and a gravel walk."

Twelve local florists and landscapers will be included in the exhibition, the majority based in Auburn.

## Supplementing Lecture Series

To supplement the exhibition, the museum will host four half-hour afternoon lectures focusing on various topics for those with an interest in horticulture. They are as follows:

- Saturday, March 21, 1 p.m. "Trees and Their Care" by Cayuga Tree Service, Inc.
- Sunday, March 22, 1 p.m. "Where Flowers Come From," by Cosentino Florist.
- Saturday, March 28, 2 p.m. "Home Orchids for New York State" by Fleur-de-Lis Florist.
- Sunday, March 29, 2 p.m. "How to Approach Landscaping" by Guido's Town & Country Florist.

While discussing the focus of her presentation "Where Flowers Come From," Ann Marie Cosentino explains

Mary Ellen Avery, owner of May George Floral across from 84 Lumber, will be adorning the banister of the museum's grand staircase and perhaps the museum's front door and the moldings above the doors in the entrance hallway.

Dickman Farms, equipped with photographs of the gardens of the Willard/Case property at its height, will feature plants reminiscent of those seen on location during the Victorian time period. Cathy Bardwell, manager of Dickman Farms Garden Center, will be designing their display. Her selection of plants will also be influenced by what is then in season at the Farm.

Foley Florist's display will be located in the area surrounding the 12-foot mirror in the museum's entrance hallway.

The exhibition's opening wine and cheese reception will take place March 20 from 7 to 9 p.m. Admission fees for the exhibition are \$2 for museum members, \$3 for non-members, children under 12 are free. Initial ticket purchases will allow visitors unlimited re-entries, including admission to

all Saturday and Sunday afternoon presentations.

For further information, contact Jessica Kline at 253-8051.

Jessica Kline is educator/outreach Coordinator for The Cayuga Museum.

## History in Full Bloom Participants

The museum is grateful to Cayuga Tree Service, Inc., Cosentino Florist, Marilyn DelloStritto, Dickman Farms, Enchanted Florist, Fleur-de-Lis Florist, Foley Florist, Grasmere Garden Art, Guido's Town & Country Florist, May George Floral & Garden, McEvoy Florist, Preston's Florist, Inc. and Shaw and Boehler Florist for their participation.

Cayuga Museum board member Carla Vorreuter coordinated the planning behind the exhibition, acting as the initial liaison between the florists and the museum. She also helped create the "History in Full Bloom" logo with help from Laura Coburn, another museum board member.