

The Bech Estate



The Bech Property

In the mid-1800s Edward Bech, a Danish immigrant, purchased 65 acres of land along the Hudson River which he named the Rosenlund Estate. The grounds were developed circa 1865, during a period when major tracts of Hudson River land were being purchased by wealthy businessmen for country estates. Bech was a partner in the Poughkeepsie Iron Works Company, a thriving riverfront industry that prospered with the advent of the Delaware and Hudson Canal and Railroad. He was also a partner in the Cunard Steamship Company and from 1842 to 1858 was the first Danish Consul in New York.



A friend and fellow countryman of Bech's, Detlef Lienau, was a prominent architect. Bech commissioned Lienau to design a main house of stone as well as several out buildings for his estate. The European-educated Lienau had come to New York in 1848 and established himself as one of America's leading architects. His design of the first example of the French Second Empire style in New York and the introduction to America of the mansard roof typified by the French chateau were among his many achievements. He also was a co-founder of the American Institute of Architects and actively participated in its formative years.

Due to Bech's death in 1873, Lienau's design for the main house was never executed; however, Greystone, St. Peter's, and the Gate House survive as the few remaining examples of Gothic Revival Estate architecture along the Hudson River. All three buildings have been listed on the National Historic Register.

In 1905 the Marist Brothers purchased the McPherson Estate just north of the Bech property and established St. Ann's Hermitage. In 1908 the Marist Brothers acquired the Rosenlund Estate, joining the two properties to form the core of the present Marist College campus.

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last updated on June 10, 2004

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From the beginning, Marist Heritage has been a collaborative effort.

We appreciate the contributions of the Marist Brothers and the Marists All community, who by supplying information and personal memories, have given vitality, scope and depth to this project

Under the guidance and direction of Dr. Brian Henry Desilets, the initial web pages were designed and created by the following Marist College students: Michele van Brero (Hermitage, St. Peter's, Kieran Gate House, Greystone, Marist Brothers Builders, Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Chapel).....Tage Haun (Bech Homestead, Marian, Donnelly).....Fang Fang Xu (Boat House, Byrne House, Kirk House).....Courtney Gutt (Bech Family History).....Vij lyer (Cemetery).....Rahkee Chopra (Fontaine Hall).

All the final Marist Heritage web pages were either created, revised, rewritten and/or reshaped by John Patrick Noone, who is solely responsible for any errors contained therein.

We thank Richard Branigan for proofreading the Marist Heritage web pages.

We recognize the contributions of our consultants: John Ansley for his input on the format and contents of the various web pages. Also Victor VanCarpels for his frequent consultations and guidance in the graphics included in this CD. His patience and dedication while working with us made the overall results more professional.

We are grateful to Barbara McMullen for the use of the Ecommerce facility at Marist College.

We are indebted to the McCann Foundation which provided the funds necessary to make this project a reality.

John Patrick Noone, editor
November 15, 2002

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