

# BECH FAMILY HISTORY

## The Architect

Detlef Lienau was born in Utersen, Denmark, and had early visions of becoming an architect. At the age of 19 he began a three year apprenticeship with master carpenters in Berlin. He headed for Paris in 1842 where he studied under Henri Labrouste. Lienau made his way to America in the fall of 1848 on a boat chartered by his brother Micheal, who had already established a New York firm called Lienau & Co.

In 1849 Lienau designed his first building in America, a house for his brother in Jersey City, NJ. The following year he designed a New York City townhouse which would change the skyline of the city.

He went on to build many more homes throughout his years in America and the most distinctive feature of all his homes was the "mansard roof" which had first been used in 17th-century France. Lienau had become familiar with it while he was a student in Paris. This new style of a roof caught on immediately in a city that was looking to France for its food, dress and taste.

Lienau was a friend and fellow countryman to the Poughkeepsie industrialist, Edward Bech. Bech hired Lienau to design a main house of stone as well as several dependencies or out buildings for the Rosenlund estate. The Greystone building, St. Peter's and the Gatehouse all survive today as the few remaining examples of Gothic Revival estate architecture.

Sadly, Lienau passed away in New York City in 1887. His contributions to the architectural profession were later recognized in a tribute written by the American Institute of Architect's board of trustees.

The architectural sketch below shows on the left the stables and on the right the carriage house that Detlef Lienau designed for the Bech family. The carriage house is known today as Greystone and houses the college president's office, the admissions office and the Ecommerce lab. This architectural image was featured in the 1992 issue of Marist Magazine.



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# Project Directors

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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.

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***John Patrick Noone, editor***  
***November 15, 2002***

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