

ON EXHIBIT AT THE HARNESS RACING MUSEUM



TROTTING ON THE AVENUE: VIEWS OF THE NEW YORK SPEEDWAY 1898 - 1919

"THE NOW FAMOUS HARLEM RIVER SPEEDWAY IN NEW YORK IS WITHOUT QUESTION THE MOST REMARKABLE ROAD IN THE WORLD," OBSERVED LONDON'S *SKETCH* MAGAZINE IN AUGUST 1901. FROM 1898 TO 1919, THIS PICTURESQUE DRIVE PROVIDED A PLAYGROUND FOR NEW YORK CITY'S TROTTING HORSE ENTHUSIASTS. RESTRICTED TO USE BY VEHICLES BUILT FOR THE DRIVING OF LIGHT HARNESS HORSES, THE SPEEDWAY WAS THE SITE OF THRILLING "BRUSHES" AND SPECTACULAR PARADES IN A SETTING OF EXTRAORDINARY BEAUTY. A TRIBUTARY OF THE OLDER HARLEM LANE, THE 2.3 MILE DRIVE WAS CONSTRUCTED ALONG THE WESTERN SHORELINE OF THE HARLEM RIVER AMONG COLORFUL OUTCROPPINGS OF ROCK AND PASSING BENEATH THE ENGINEERING WONDERS OF BOTH THE WASHINGTON AND HIGH BRIDGES. LITHOGRAPHS, POSTCARDS AND TURN OF THE CENTURY PHOTOGRAPHS ILLUMINATE THE HISTORY OF THE SPEEDWAY IN THIS NEW EXHIBIT BY THE HARNESS RACING MUSEUM.



HORSE-DRAWN: THE SLEIGHS OF CURRIER & IVES

UNTIL THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY, HORSE-DRAWN SLEIGHS WERE AN ESSENTIAL MEANS OF WINTER TRAVEL. FROM THE PRACTICAL HAULING OF GOODS TO THE JOY OF TAKING PART IN A "SLEIGHING CARNIVAL," THE ARTISTS OF THE ESTEEMED CURRIER & IVES PRINTING FIRM CAPTURED IT ALL IN CHARMING, WHIMSICAL DETAIL. THESE COLORFUL, FESTIVE SCENES PROVIDE US A GLIMPSE OF THE WINTER FASHIONS OF THE PERIOD AS WELL AS THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HORSE IN SOCIETY OF THE TIME. THE HARNESS RACING MUSEUM, HOME OF ONE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST COMPILATIONS OF CURRIER & IVES EQUINE LITHOGRAPHS, IS PROUD TO PRESENT THESE HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR COLLECTION.



AN ARTISTIC HERITAGE: THE VAN ZANDTS OF ALBANY

THIS INSTALLATION COMPARES THE PAINTING STYLES OF THOMAS KIRBY VAN ZANDT (1814-1886) WITH HIS SON WILLIAM GARRETT VAN ZANDT (1867-1942). THE VAN ZANDTS, WHOSE FAMILY ROOTS IN ALBANY, NEW YORK DATE BACK TO THE 1600S PRODUCED WONDERFUL FOLK AND FINE ART SCENES DEPICTING THE FARM ANIMALS AND HORSES OF THEIR UPSTATE NEW YORK REGION. THOMAS' HIGHLY ESTEEMED ARTISTRY ATTRACTED COMMISSIONS FROM WELL-TO-DO LOCALS WANTING TO PAY HOMAGE TO THEIR PRIZE-WINNING LIVESTOCK OR HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGE TEAMS. HIS SUCCESSFUL CAREER AS A PAINTER PROMPTED HIS SON TO CONTINUE THE FAMILY TRADITION AND PICK UP THE BRUSH AS WELL. THE TALENTED DUO GRAVITATED TOWARD THE RACETRACKS OF SARATOGA FOR EQUINE INSPIRATION. THE YOUNGER VAN ZANDT TOOK HIS INTEREST A STEP FURTHER BY PARTICIPATING AS A STARTER AT THE SARATOGA RACES AS WELL AS A BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE ALBANY DRIVING CLUB.

THE HARNESS RACING MUSEUM IS SUPPORTED IN PART
BY THE NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS
WITH THE SUPPORT OF GOVERNOR ANDREW M. CUOMO
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