THE LORILLARD LEGACY

BY RICHARD JAY HUTTO

WHEN ASKED HIS DEFINITION OF WEALTH, AN early Pierre Lorillard (one of many of that name in his family) replied, "A thousand a day plus expenses."

For more than 200 years, the Lorillards have been creating and maintaining wealth with impressive success. They made their fortune in tobacco, but also made their mark in horseracing, yachting, and philanthropy. Their daughters and granddaughters were unsurpassed in their transatlantic marriages to titled Europeans. But to New Yorkers, they are known today, if at all, for creating the exclusive Tuxedo Park, just 40 miles northwest of the city.

The first recorded Lorillard in America was Jean George, who emigrated from France and was a member of the Episcopal Church in New York City in 1739. His son, Peter, was killed in Hackensack by Hessians during the American Revolution. Peter's three sons, Peter A, George, and Jacob, made their fortunes—Jacob as a tanner and currier, and his brothers in the chewing-tobacco and snuff business, established in 1769. (The company's brand, "Newport," named after the Rhode Island enclave where the Lorillards' owned an estate, the first Newport—the best-selling menthol cigarette in the United States.)

Peter A. (1763–1849) outlived his brothers and, at his death, the term "millionaire" was first coined for his obituary. During his lifetime, he was a tobacco merchant, and his memory will be preserved in the annals of New York by the celebrity of Lorillard's Snuff & Tobacco. He led people by the nose for the best part of a century, and made his enormous fortune by giving them that to chew which they could not swallow.

Peter A. married Maria Dorothea Schulz, and they were both buried in New York's Marble Cemetery. One of his granddaughters was the philanthropist Catharine Lorillard Wolfe, while another, Eleanor Lorillard Spencer, married the seventh Prince di Veccevo-Cesni and was a lady in waiting to Italy's Queen Margherita. Eleanor's brother, Lorillard Spencer, was president and publisher of The Illustrated American and owned a mansion in Newport, "Chastellux," on Halidon Hill.

Peter A's son, Pierre Sr. (1796–1867) married Catharine Ann Griswold, whose father, Nathan, was a partner in the great New York City mercantile house N.L. & G.G. Griswold. They were known to their rivals as "No Loss and Great Gain Griswold," importers of rum, sugar, and tea. One of their daughters, Katherine, married James P. Kemochan, whose grandson, Herbert G. Fell, became a U.S. congressman, while his son, H. Claborne Fell, became a senator, whom was referred to as "Well-born Fell." Another Lorillard daughter, Eva, married Colonel Lawrence K. Hip (whose father was the first bishop of California), and their daughter married a son of the ninth Earl of Coventry.

However, it was the third Lorillard daughter, Mary, whose family was so fond of titled husbands. The daughters and granddaughters of Mary and her husband, Henry L. Barby, became duchesses, marquises, countesses, and baronesses. One descendant, Countess Hermann de Pourtales, in 1906 became the first woman to compete in the modern Olympics, representing the Swiss sailing team with her husband. The present Princess Gisela von Altenburg, wife of a great-grandson of Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria, is the Barby's great-granddaughter.

Katherine, Eva, and Mary had four brothers: George, Jacob, Louis, and the better-known Pierre Lorillard Jr. (1813–1901). The latter married Emily Taylor in 1858, and lived for decades in an imposing mansion at 8 Washington Square. He also built the original Breakers at Newport, was a member of the exclusive Tuxedo Island Club (off Georgia's coast), and was building another home at Harris Neck near the South River in Georgia, but died before its completion.

According to one descendent, the Lorillard children "were moved at the appointed season between their parents' house on Fifth Avenue, Bronx Park [the 600 acre estate and mansion that were later given to the City of New York and are now home to the New York Botanic Garden]; Rumson, New Jersey (where he bred most of his champion racehorses); Southampton, Long Island, and Newport."

A member of the New York Yacht Club, Lorillard convinced George Ogden (a son-in-law of Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt) in 1866 to put up $30,000 to help him create the first transatlantic yacht race. Their friend, 21-year-old James Gordon Bennett Jr. (later publisher of The New York Herald), entered with his boat and another $40,000. The three yachts—Lorillard's Vice, Ogden's Flying Cloud (which was to lose two crew members in fierce storms), and Bennett's Henrietta—set sail on December 11 in

Opposite: Pierre Lorillard, Jr., Above: Pierre's champion racehorse, Trigolum, was the first American-owned horse to win the English Derby. In 1901, Below: An ad for the Peter Lorillard Snuff & Tobacco company.
Above left: Fire destroyed the Tuxedo Club, a neccia for high society. In January of 1943. The blaze caused $25 million in damage, but no one was injured. Above right: Elaine and Lewis Liverpool helped found the annual Newport Jazz Festival in 1954. They are shown here at the following year’s event with Senator Theodore Green, whose Senate seat would eventually be held by Lewis’s descendant Cluane Pelt.

Ogontz top: Pierre Leffland, Sr.’s granddaughter, Yolande Rorrie (1903-1998), the Duchess Praza of Burgos, with her great-grandson, Nicolas, her husband, the current Duke, and (below) Vineyard, the Newport estate of Catherine Leffland Wolfe, who bought desalting another Leffland horse, the Breakaway. It is now part of Salve Regina University.

THE ART OF GIVING

Catherine Leffland Wolfe (1838-1862). A granddaughter of Pierre Leffland, Sr., was taught philanthropy at an early age by her father, merchant David Wolfe. He endowed a high school for girls, Wolfe Hall, in Denver, and a diocesan school for girls in Topeka. She gave a theological seminary building to Kenyon College; built homes for crippled and delinquent children; established the Shepherding Arms chapter in New York; and (above) Dorothea Ann Leffland inherited her own slave's fortune from her father's tobacco company. Catherine, who never married, inherited more than $1 million while still a young woman. For the remainder of her life, she gave away at least $14 million annually and, in particularly profitable years, as much as $160,000 in a year. She continued to support her father's charities but also established her own, including a "Home for Incurables" at Fordham, Urben College, St. Luke's Hospital, the American Chapel in Racine, and many others connected with the Episcopal Church.

Although Grace Church in New York City was the largest benefactor of her largesse during her lifetime (as well as a recipient of a generous bequest to promote "southern work,” Catherine is best known as one of the original female subscribers to the Metropolis National Museum of Art, in 1849. She commissioned Pierre-Auguste Cot to paint "The Storm" in oils, and collected with fashionable French artists Antoine Borel and Eugene Boudin. At her death, she left her extensive painting collection—along with a fund for maintenance and future purchases—to the museum, establishing the basis of the museum's European collection. Her gifts there (many bought by her own hand) currently comprise more than one million dollars, including Saugon's exquisite triple portrait of the Wyndham Sisters as well as works by Renoir, Goya, Ingres, Bonnat, Delacroix, Cassandre, Corot, Fantin-Latour, Barbeau, Biliotti, and Monet. In addition to her art-filled home at 11 Madison Avenue, Catherine built adjoining the Brownstone a Newport villa, Winidale, modeled on Longfellow's poem about Newport Vikings, "The Skeleton In Armor". Members of the British Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, including William Morris, consulted the interior design. Wolfe Hall was left to her cousin, Louis C. Leffland, and is now owned by Salve Regina University—a use that would have pleased her heart.

severe winter weather from the Sandy Hook Lightship (just outside New York Harbor) bound for the Needles, a rock formation off the Isle of Wight. So much public attention was given to the race that more than half a million dollars in private wagers was placed on the outcome. On Christmas Day, Bennett's yacht arrived at Cowes, just eight hours ahead of the competition and won the $90,000 prize. In the early 1880s, Leffland helped to make Newport, RI, a yachting center with his schooner Vesta and his steam yacht Ravelin.

Pierre Leffland was also an early proponent of horsemanship. In the 1878 Preakness Stakes, all three entrants were owned by Pierre or his brother George. Pierre owned the Raritan Stable at Johnston, New Jersey, where his two most famous horses, Iroquois and Parel, were trained. Leffland achieved racing history in 1881 when Iroquois, entered by courtesy of the Prince of Wales, was the first American-owned winner of the English Derby, as well as the St. Leger. And among America's most famous footprints is Kentucky's Iroquois Hunt, formed in 1880 and named after Leffland's prize-winning horse.

But Pierre Leffland's true legacy was the fulfillment of a vision began by his father—the creation of America's most exclusive enclave, Tuxedo Park. Peter A. Leffland took 13,000 acres for sale in 1874, both a shooting box and owned the land for timber. By 1882, his son Pierre St. had ensured that the family owned most of the area formerly known as the Cheesequake Patent, which was clustered around the lakes beneath the Ramapo Mountains. In 1885 and 1886, Pierre Jr. employed land planner Ernest Bowlditch of Boston, architect Bruce Price of New York, and 1,800 Italian and Stonehenge laborers to create "the Versailles of the United States." In just 18 months, 30 miles of roads, a gate, a clubhouse, and three days were built on 2,050 acres of parkland, all surrounded by beautiful stone walls. Some of the nation's most prominent architects were called to design 22 cottages (none of which had fewer than before the intervention was necessary, Lewis Brown, his daughter, and her husband, the current Duke. Their vineyard, Vineyard, the Newport estate of Catherine Leffland Wolfe, was built on a saltwater horse, the Breakaway. It is now part of Salve Regina University.

Above left: Pierre Leffland, Sr.’s granddaughter, Yolande Rorrie (1903-1998), the Duchess Praza of Burgos, with her great-grandson, Nicolas, her husband, the current Duke, and (below) Vineyard, the Newport estate of Catherine Leffland Wolfe, who bought desalting another Leffland horse, the Breakaway. It is now part of Salve Regina University.

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