

Friends of Alice Austen House Membership

The presentation of Alice Austen's heritage through exhibitions, programs, and events is made possible by the support of the *Friends of Alice Austen House*.

Join the *Friends of Alice Austen House* as a member for one year and share in the excitement of this very special place. All *Friends* receive invitations to exhibit openings and annual events, advance notice of activities, a discount on selected programs and admissions, and a 10% discount in the gift shop.

Donations are tax deductible according to the law.

Please take a moment to complete and return the attached coupon and mail it to:
The Alice Austen House Museum
2 Hylan Blvd.
Staten Island, NY 10305
(718) 816-4506

Please make check payable to:
Friends of Alice Austen House

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____

Email address _____

- Friend \$25 Supporting Friend \$100
 Student/Senior \$15 Business Friend \$100 or more
 Sustaining Friend \$250, receives copy of *Alice's World*.
 Guardian of "Clear Comfort" \$500, receives free admission for two to most events.

I would like to make an additional contribution to:

- Dining room restoration project
 A project where my gift is needed

Sailing the Harbor: Alice's Tall Ships



Sailing Ships in the Narrows, by Alice Austen. Courtesy of the Staten Island Historical Society.

An exhibition at

The Alice Austen House Museum

2 Hylan Boulevard
Staten Island, NY 10305

June 15 - September 3, 2000

Sailing the Harbor: Alice's Tall Ships

an exhibition at the
Alice Austen House Museum
2 Hylan Blvd., Staten Island, NY

June 15 - September 3, 2000

The Austen home, "Clear Comfort," is located on the north shore of Staten Island, over-looking the Narrows of New York Harbor. A person could not ask for a more perfect place to view ships coming and going from New York's ports, and this is exactly what Alice Austen did during the 79 years she lived in her home.

Fortunately for us, Alice found the ships that passed her home an interesting and fulfilling subject for photographs. In addition, she photographed other sailing vessels and extravaganzas occurring around the New York City area. This exhibition is a rare glimpse of romantic days spent watching sailing vessels glide along the water's surface, exciting moments of seeing naval parades and yacht races, and simple times spent just enjoying the seashore.

Many of the photographs in this exhibit show ships traveling past the Austen home or anchored off shore waiting their turn at the city's docks. Every kind of ship passed Alice's home, from schooner to steamer and oyster sloop to luxury yacht. Of the photographs that are dated, we know these pictures span at least 15 years of ship watching. During this short time, Alice witness the growth in technology that changed ships from being mainly wooden, sail-powered vessels to metal-hulled, engine-run ships.

Like Op-Sail 2000, the July 4th parade of ships sailing past the Austen house on their way to New York Harbor to celebrate the Millennium, there were Naval Parades in the 1890's that Alice photographed.

The first was on October 11, 1892, and in one photograph we witness Alice's patriotism symbolized by the large flag she hung from the Yew tree at her property's edge. A second naval parade went past on April 28, 1893 and was the first International Naval Review, organized to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Columbus landing in the New World. Alice took these photographs at 95th Street in Manhattan. A third parade Alice witnessed was for the dedication for Grant's Tomb. In this photograph we see the massive crowds that gathered along the water's edge to view the day's happenings on April 27, 1897.

Within the present day park behind the Austen House, there stands a building that is known as the McFarlane-Bredt House. Today it stands in wait of restoration, but in the 1860's it was known as the New York Yacht Club. Being a prime location, yachts continued the tradition of racing for a cup from this point even after the Club moved. Alice photographed one such race in September of 1885, when the *Puritan* and *Genesta* raced against each other, both with the hope of winning the coveted prize.

In one photograph, we see a nineteen-year-old Alice and her friends gathered at the beach in front of her home to enjoy a cooling respite from the summer's heat. They swam and boated in the Narrows 115 years ago, much the same as teenagers do today.

Presently, as we view the harbor from the same vantage point that Alice had, we are reminded by the passing freighter and container ships of all the changes that have taken place in the world over the last 100 years. And yet, on a clear day we can still look out and see white sails billowing in the warm breeze, as modern boaters enjoy the fine New York waters — the sight of them returning us, in a moment, to the romance of Alice's tall ships.

This exhibit was made possible, in part, by an ENCORE grant from the Council on the Arts and Humanities for Staten Island, and with public funding from the City of New York Department of Cultural Affairs.