

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 consuming 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 l'Aureillard who emigrated from Europe and was a member of l'Esprit d'Eglise Church in New York City in 1759. His son, Peter, was killed in Hackensack by Hessians during the American Revolution. Peter's three sons, Peter A., George, and Jacob, all made their fortunes—Jacob as a tanner and currier, and his brothers in the chewing-tobacco and snuff business, established in 1760. (The company's brand "Newport"—named after the Rhode Island enclave where the Lorillard's owned an estate, the first Breakers—is still the best-selling menthol cigarette in the United States.)

Peter A. (1763–1843) outlived his brothers and, at his death, the term "millionaire" was first coined for his obituary. Diarist Philip Hone wrote at the time, "He was a tobacconist, and his memory will be preserved in the annals of New York by the celebrity of 'Lorillard's Snuff and 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 Schultz, and they are both buried in New York's Marble Cemetery. One of his granddaughters was the philanthropist Catherine Lorillard Wolfe, while another, Eleanor Lorillard Spencer, married the seventh Prince di Vicovaro Cenci 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 Catherine Ann Griswold, whose father, Nathaniel, 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. Kernochan, whose grandson, Herbert C. Pell, became a U.S. congressman, while his son, H. Claiborne Pell, became a senator, whom wags referred to as "Well-born Pell." Another Lorillard daughter, Eva, married Colonel Lawrence A. Kip (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 I. Barbey, became duchesses, marquises, countesses, and baronesses. One descendant, Countess Hermann de Pourtales, in 1900 became the first



Opposite: Pierre Lorillard, Jr.

Above: Pierre's champion racehorse, *Iroquois*, was the first American-owned horse to win the English Derby, in 1881.

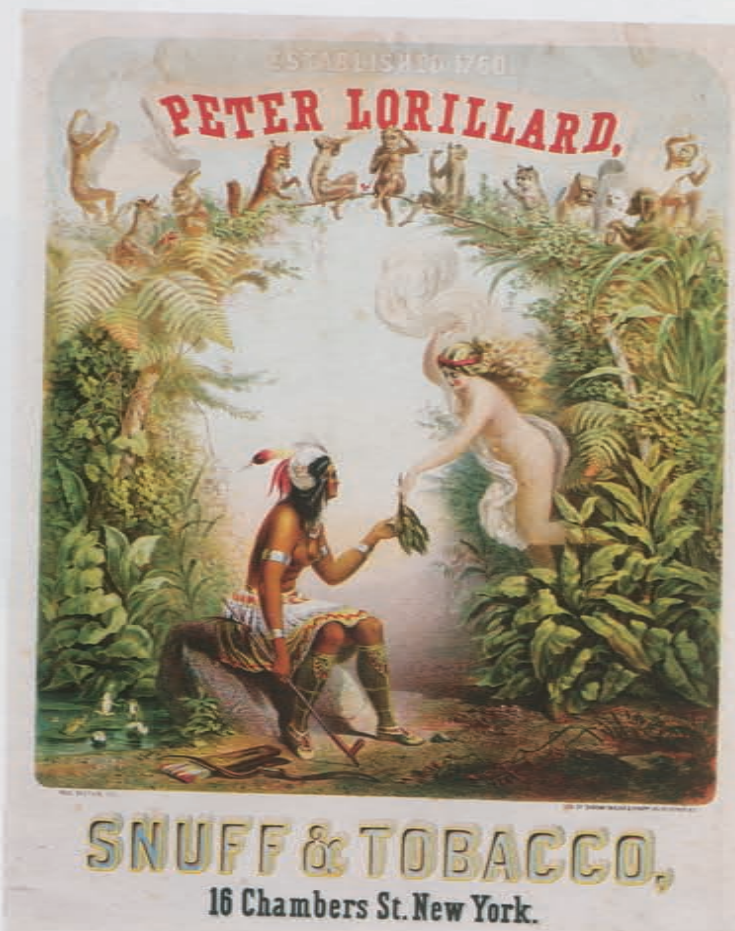
Below: An early ad for the Peter Lorillard Snuff & Tobacco company

woman to compete in the modern Olympics, representing the Swiss sailing team with her husband. The present Princess Clemens von Altenberg, wife of a great-grandson of Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria, is the Barbey's great-granddaughter.

Katherine, Eva, and Mary had four brothers, George, Jacob, Louis, and the better-known Pierre Lorillard Jr. (1833–1901). 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 Jekyll Island Club (off Georgia's coast), and was building another home at Harris Neck near the South Newport River in coastal Georgia, but died before its completion.

According to one descendant, the Lorillard children "were moved at the appointed seasons 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]; Rancocas, 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 Osgood (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 \$30,000. The three yachts—Lorillard's *Vesta*, Osgood's *Fleetwing* (which was to lose two crew members in fierce storms), and Bennett's *Henrietta*—set sail on December 11 in



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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, Lorillard helped to make Newport, RI, a yachting center with his schooner *Vesta* and his steam yacht *Radba*.

Pierre Lorillard was also an early proponent of horseracing. In the 1878 Preakness Stakes, all three entrants were owned by Pierre or his brother George. Pierre owned the Rancocas Stable at Johnstown, New Jersey, where his two most famous horses, Iroquois and Parole, were trained. Lorillard 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 foxhunts is Kentucky's Iroquois Hunt, formed in 1880 and named after Lorillard's prize-winning horse.

But Pierre Lorillard's true legacy was the fulfillment of a vision begun by his father—the creation of America's most exclusive enclave, Tuxedo Park. Peter A. Lorillard took 13,000 acres for debt in 1814, built a shooting box, and used the land for timber. By 1852, his son Pierre Sr. had ensured that the family owned most of the

area formerly known as the Cheesecock Patent, which was clustered around three lakes beneath the Ramapo Mountains. In 1885 and 1886, Pierre Jr. employed land planner Ernest Bowditch of Boston, architect Bruce Price of New York, and 1,800 Italian and Slovakian laborers to create "the Versailles of the United States."

In just 18 months, 30 miles of roads, a gate, a clubhouse, and three dams were built on 2,050 acres of parkland, all surrounded by beautiful stone walls. Some of the nation's most prominent architects were enlisted to design 22 "cottages" (none of which had fewer than five bedrooms) plus all the necessary infrastructure to support the village, including stores, stables, tennis courts, a bowling alley, a swimming pool, a boathouse, and an icehouse.

On Memorial Day of 1886, three special trains from New York brought 700 guests for an opening inspection. Those who were invited to be a part of Lorillard's vision represented what was then referred to as "a guide to Who is especially Who in the Four Hundred." Once invited for membership, a resident wearing a gold oak-leaf pin could have any Erie train—even those serving only the largest cities—stop at Tuxedo. J.P. Morgan's daughter even had her own railroad station built closer to her cottage.

Tuxedo's annual Autumn Ball quickly became the most coveted occasion to bring out a daughter of the "Four Hundred." At the first ball, in 1886, Pierre Jr.'s son, Griswold, appeared in a tail-less

Above left: Fire destroyed the Tuxedo Club, a mecca for high society, in January of 1943. The blaze caused \$1 million in damage, but no one was injured. Above right: Elaine and Louis Livingston Lorillard 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 Lorillard descendant Claiborne Pell.

Opposite top: Pierre Lorillard, Sr.'s granddaughter, Valerie Norrie (1903–1998), the Duchess Pozzo di Borgo, with her great-grandson, Nicolas, heir to his father, the current Duke. Inset: Vinland, the Newport estate of Catherine Lorillard Wolfe, was built adjoining another Lorillard home, the Breakers. It is now part of Salve Regina University.

dinner jacket with satin lapels. Thus was the "tuxedo" born (the Tuxedo Historical Society still has the tailor's invoice from London), although it was not an instant success. *Town Topics* reported at the time that young Lorillard looked "for all the world like a royal footman."

Pierre Jr. and his wife lived apart during their last years. When he died at the Fifth Avenue Hotel in 1901, his acknowledged mistress, Lilian Barnes Allen, was left his horses and farms at Rancocas Stable. The family contemplated a protracted legal battle, but finally settled out of court. Pierre's widow, who outlived him by 24 years, was given an annuity of \$50,000 per year, while \$4 million was divided among his children, young Pierre, Emily (who married William Kent), Maude (who married T. Suffern Tailer, then the future third Baron Revelstoke), and Griswold. Their father had already given each child a house at Tuxedo Park.

Young Pierre married Caroline Hamilton and had two sons, although they now have no descendants. After young Pierre's death in 1940, Ruth Lorillard became one of the first two women elected vice president of the Jekyll Island Club. Widowed for the second time, Ruth later married Emile John Heidsieck; the nature photographer Peter Beard is a grandson by her first marriage.

Today, Lorillard Tobacco continues as a division of the Loews Corporation. It is the nation's fourth-largest cigarette manufacturer, with more than a billion dollars in sales each quarter since 2000. As *Town & Country* said of Pierre Lorillard in 1868, "It has been said that 'There never was a poor Lorillard.' Appearances seem to indicate that there never will be one." ♦

THE ART OF GIVING

CATHERINE LORILLARD WOLFE (1828–1887), A GRANDDAUGHTER of Pierre Lorillard, Sr., was taught philanthropy at an early age by her father, merchant David Wolfe. He founded a high school for girls, Wolfe Hall, in Denver, and a diocesan school for girls in Topeka; gave a theological seminary building to Kenyon College; built homes for crippled and destitute children; and established the Sheltering Arms charity in New York City. His wife, Dorothea Ann Lorillard, inherited her own sizeable fortune from her father's tobacco company.

Catherine, who never married, inherited more than \$10 million while still a young woman. For the remainder of her life, she gave away at least \$100,000 annually and, in particularly profitable times, as much as \$825,000 in a year. She continued to support her father's charities but also established her own, including a "Home for Incurables" at Fordham, Union College, St. Luke's Hospital, the American Chapel in Rome, and many others connected with the Episcopal Church.

Although Grace Church in New York City was the largest beneficiary of her largesse during her lifetime (as well as a recipient of a generous bequest to promote "women's work"), Catherine is best known as one of the original female subscribers to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in 1870. She commissioned Pierre-Auguste Cot to paint "The Storm" in 1880, and collected such fashionable French artists as Cabanel and Bouguereau. At her death, she left her extensive painting collection—together 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 endowment) currently comprise more than 100 works, including Sargent's exquisite triple portrait of the Wyndham Sisters as well as works by Renoir, Goya, Ingres, Bonnat, Delacroix, Cezanne, Corot, Fantin-Latour, Bonheur, Boldini, and Manet.

In addition to her art-filled home at 13 Madison Avenue, Catherine built adjoining the Breakers a Newport villa, Vinland, modeled on Longfellow's poem about Newport Vikings, "The Skeleton in Armor." Members of the British Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, including William Morris, supplied the interior décor. Vinland was left to her cousin, Louis L. Lorillard, and is now owned by Salve Regina University—a use that would have pleased its creator.