

Town of Greenburgh
**ASSISTANT
TOWN HISTORIANS**



— felicia barber + riley wentzler —

Lost History: The Tragedy of Malkasten

By: Riley Wentzler & Felicia Barber



Greenburgh has had many grand estates. Some like the Warburg Estate in Hartsdale, built in 1902, have stood the test of time and are still standing, other's

like the artist Albert Bierstadt's home, Malkasten, in Tarrytown, have disappeared. This is the story of the rise and fall of Malkasten.



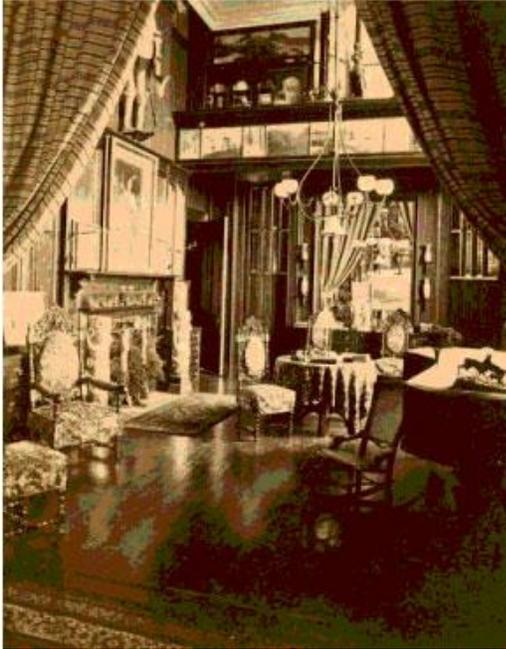
Albert Bierstadt (1830-1902)

Albert Bierstadt was born in Solingen, Germany in 1830 and raised in New Bedford, Massachusetts. He always had a passion for art, and after graduating high school he began drawing, but what he really wanted to do was to paint. So at the age of 23, against his father's advice, he sailed to Dusseldorf, Germany to study painting with his idol Emanuel Leutze, the artist who painted *General Washington Crossing the Delaware*. However, Leutze declined to teach him after seeing the quality of his drawings (Case, 1991, p. 75). He stayed in Germany for three years looking for a teacher, but ultimately decided that Germany was not the best place for him to continue his studies, so he left for Rome, Italy. He finished art school in late 1857 and returned to the United States (Microsoft Encarta 1993-2003).

In 1859, he went on an expedition to survey the West. As a result of this expedition he created his most famous work *Rocky Mountains (1863)* (Microsoft Encarta 1993-2003). After he was given \$25,000, what was then the highest amount of money ever paid to an American artist, for this painting, he realized in order for him to create high quality art, he needed to be close to nature (Case, 1991,p. 76).

Accordingly, in 1866, he commissioned the architect Jacob Wrey Mould to create a grand estate overlooking the Hudson River. Bierstadt chose a location which was then in Irvington, but is today part of Tarrytown. The estate was called *Malkasten*, the German word for painter's box (Horne, 2018, p. 134). When finished, the impressive blue/gray gneiss and granite trim structure was 75ft wide and 100ft long. The kitchen, dining room, and billiard room were on the first floor, the parlor, and the library/music room were on the second floor and the bedrooms were on the third (Case, 1991, p. 77).

In contrast to the cold stone of the fortress looking exterior, Malkasten's interior was entirely made of wood as can be seen below from this picture of Bierstadt's dining room:



Bierstadt's Dining Room

While living in Malkasten he painted more fine works of art including *Merced River* (1866), and *Yosemite Valley* (1866) (Microsoft Encarta 1993-2003). Malkasten burned down in 1882 (New York Times, November 11, 1882, p.5). Bierstadt died in 1902, but most of his works, except for those destroyed in the fire, are on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and therefore live on forever (Microsoft Encarta 1993-2003).



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About the Authors:

We are both Assistant Town Historians at Greenburgh Town Hall and we are engaged to be married and are currently looking for permanent employment.

Riley Wentzler:

I was born and raised in a small rural town in central Pennsylvania. In high school, I took every honors course available including four years of Spanish. I received A's in all of them. I graduated third in my class of 146 students. This brought me to Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. Once there, I continued my trend of academic excellence. I graduated summa cum laude in Political Science with a minor in Spanish and a Master's in Communication Studies, with a G.P.A of 3.94. Within Communication Studies, I specialized in semiotics. It was also there that I met my lovely fiancée, Felicia Barber. My Master's in Communication has promoted public speaking, teamwork, and customer service. My Political Science degree has developed my research skills using computer-based tools and provided me with experience using the Microsoft Office products. My minor in Spanish has facilitated my bilingual capabilities. During my internship at Greenburgh, I created the petition for the State Roads project using website tools. My diverse education and areas of interest have provided me with a wide range of skills. I look forward to finding a career opportunity in business or government. **To suggest a topic for next week's article, you can contact me at assistanthistorian@greenburghny.com. To help me find employment you can contact me at rjwentzler413@gmail.com**

Felicia Barber:

I was born in New York City and raised in Hartsdale, New York. I graduated from Ardsley High School. I recently earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Graphic Design at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. It was here that I met my fiancé, Riley Wentzler. As a result of my academic excellence, I won a scholarship every year. I learned and applied many graphic design skills to projects during my summer internships and at school. I am proficient in using Adobe graphic design applications including Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign. For my Identity/branding course at Edinboro, I created logos to appear on the tee-shirts of Physical Education majors. For a veteran's upcoming event, I used a typeface to focus the reader to the soldier in the poster. For the State Roads Legislative Campaign project, I created the embedded graphic-photo that accompanied the petition I am looking for a job to utilize my skills as a Graphic Designer in an agency, print shop, company or government **To suggest a topic for next week's article, you can contact me at assistanthistorian@greenburghny.com. To learn more about my artwork or to help me find employment you can contact me at feliciadbarber@gmail.com.**

Two Interviews with the authors

<https://riverjournalonline.com/around-town/a-love-of-history-and-each-other/13708/>

<https://wchs880.radio.com/articles/news/stories-main-street-couple-cerebral-palsy-brings-manytalents-town-greenburgh>

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