

WOMEN'S FORUM

Sharing Wisdom

Dear Ladies,

Happy Spring - it's finally here!! May it bring a long awaited rebirth to all our lives.

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American history between 1870 and the turn of the century tells of an era of remarkable progress and growth. Our country was on the march with intellectual, artistic and industrial achievement that would soon put it on a coveted par with Europe. Yet the triumphs of the Robber Barons of industry and the excesses of the very wealthy were set on a foundation supported by greed, inequality and the extremes of poverty. This dichotomy would inspire Mark Twain to co-opt the name "Gilded Age" from one of his novels to describe the era. It is a very suitable metaphor. Because as we

examine the history of those years we find that the "golden" glitter that blinded so many to the foibles of the high society also covered with gilding "gold" social issues of repression and suppression.

Women were still second class citizens, prejudice both racial and ethnic ran rampant and poverty was a miasma few could escape from.

However, the need to create a new and prominent image of the US grew commensurate with the momentum of the times. The American Renaissance in Architecture was a period of fecundity never before seen in the nation. Our cities, libraries and museums, government buildings, private homes and even train stations became beacons of culture and beauty for it.

The Architecture of the Gilded Age is our next topic for discussion. Along with a visit to magnificent buildings we'll meet personalities of the time, from architect supreme Richard Morris Hunt

and socialite Alva Vanderbilt, to the brilliant and scandal fraught Stanford White. Sophia Hayden (first female graduate of the architecture program at MIT) and Louise Bethune (first American woman known to have worked as a professional architect) will close our discussion proudly as we celebrate their breakthroughs - a fitting crack in the gilding.

For links to the documentary videos and to join in our programs please contact us at womensforumusa@gmail.com. You'll then be added to our email distribution list for detailed announcements of all events.

Warmest Springtime regards,

Evelyn