Yates Castle was one of James Renwick's two Syracuse structures. The first was the second home of the First Presbyterian Church at the corner of East Fayette and South Salina Streets. It was completed in 1852. In 1905, it was torn down. Woolworth's now occupies the site.

In 1852, Renwick was employed by Colonel Cornelius Tyler Longstreet, a clothing merchant and his second wife, Caroline Redfield Sanford Longstreet to construct a residence on an estate of 49 acres in what was then the "Highlands" district of Syracuse. Upstate Medical Center now occupies much of the site. The only remnants are part of a wall and a small avenue bearing Renwick's name.

The grounds of the estate cost $27,595, and the building was to cost over $185,000. It adjoined the Magg Estate, the residence of Mrs. Longstreet's sister.

The castle itself was constructed in the Tudor Gothic style, adapting the style of several buildings at Oxford University. This style has come to be referred to as "collegiate Gothic". It was constructed of brick, sanded over to give a stone effect. The walls were extremely thick-13-14 inches. The floors were "recessed" and a false floor added below the real one to preserve the wood and deaden sounds.

The interior was decorated by Henry C. Allweit, who later founded the oldest interior decorating firm in the United States.

All the walls and ceilings were frescoed, each with their own design. Glass and marble were imported from Europe.

The first landscape gardening in Syracuse was on the castle grounds.

Despite all the money expended by Mr. Longstreet, the Castle could not be completely finished, as the costs were way over the estimates.

Some of the supervision of the work was attended to by Horatio White, the Syracuse architect and designer of the S.U. Hall of Languages.

Yet, despite all this, the Longstreets were not happy at their castle.
Mr. Longstreet was frequently away. When he did return, he often suffered from colds caused by the dampness of the castle. Entertaining was difficult as roads were bad and the castle was hard to reach. As the Longstreets were beginning to feel that they had a "white elephant" on their hands, there arose on the scene another clothier, Alonzo Chester Yates, Sr. Yates had made a fortune in army uniforms, correctly guessing the long duration of the Civil War. As such, Yates had more money than Longstreet and felt that a castle would rightly suit his station in life. The Longstreets longed for the more fashionable sectors of town. So, in April 1867, the two couples exchanged houses, the Longstreets moving to the 900 block of James Street. Mr. Yates made an additional payment of $30,000.

The castle then went through a period of gaiety and richness. Yates sent his coach and six to collect his guests. But soon, the joy ended. There was a divorce and Mr. Yates remarried, but led a more subdued existence.

The estate came into the hands of Alonzo Jr. and there the castle met its doom. In several years, amid large parties at the castle and trips to Europe, Alonzo succeeded in squandering the fortune he had inherited.

The castle lay idle for several years. In 1900, it was purchased by a Mr. Travis who established the Syracuse Classical School. In 1906, Syracuse University purchased the property for the Teacher's College. Mrs. Russell Sage (a member of the Slocum family) donated funds for an endowment to support the school in memory of her younger years spent at the castle as a governess to the Longstreet children.

From 1934 to April 1954, the School of Journalism and the University press occupied the building.

Ever since the Depression, the future of the castle had been precarious. It was saved by World War II. Though structurally sound, it occupied land eyed for other purposes. Despite protests, the University sold the rights to the State of New York and in April 1954, the building was razed to make way for a new medical center.
Preservation attempts and protests arose from various sources. They were, however, futile.

The Daily Orange for January 15, 1953 said: "Kings have gone and castles too must crumble."

This about sums up the apathy and "passing the buck" attitudes that allowed the building to be destroyed. The local historical association had no interest in preserving portions of the building.

Mayor Corcoran of Syracuse is quoted in the Herald Journal for January 27, 1953 as saying: "It's none of our business." His only interest in the building was as a hobbyist, desiring to obtain a section of stair railing or something like that to use in his wood working shop.

The best defense came from a Princeton University professor, Dr. Donald D. Egbert. He is quoted in the Post Standard for Sunday, April 12, 1953. This also is an appropriate way to summarize Renwick's work:

As a historian of architecture, I have been distressed to learn that Yates Castle, designed by James Renwick, is about to be torn down... The fact that it is a major work by James Renwick, one of the greatest American architects of the 19th century, of course adds to its importance. On the basis of a knowledge of art history, I sincerely believe that if Yates Castle can be preserved for 20 years, no one at Syracuse would even think of proposing that it be destroyed... No doubt you who bear the responsibility for the development of Syracuse University feel strongly that Yates Castle is an obstruction to the proper growth of the university. As one professionally trained in architectural design I know that almost always it is possible to find several good solutions to any specific architectural problem.
## Churches and Chapels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Calvary Episcopal</td>
<td>21st &amp; 4th Ave.</td>
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<td>Church of All Saints</td>
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<td>1887</td>
<td>Italian</td>
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<td>Gothic</td>
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<td>1846</td>
<td>Romanesque</td>
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<td>Grace Church</td>
<td>Broadway &amp; 10th</td>
<td>1843-1844</td>
<td>Gothic</td>
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<td>Riverdale Presbyterian</td>
<td>Henry Hudson Pky. 1863</td>
<td>1863</td>
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<td>1859-1870</td>
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## Hospitals

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<td>BLACKWELL</td>
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<td>ISLAND</td>
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<td>Foundling Hospital</td>
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<td>ISLAND</td>
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<td>Smallpox Hospital</td>
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BERMARLE HOTEL
NEW YORK CITY
LARENCON HOTEL
NEW YORK CITY
RENTS HOTEL
Broadway at 11th
NEW YORK CITY

BREAT WEST (proposals)
Brooklyn & Mercer
NEW YORK CITY

RENWICK ROW (Renwick Triangle)
NEW YORK CITY

LIBRARIES

CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART
17th & Penna. 1859
WASHINGTON, D.C.
(Renwick Gallery)
WASHINGTON, D.C. 1846-55
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
WASHINGTON, D.C.
ASTOR LIBRARY
NEW YORK CITY
LENOX LIBRARY
NEW YORK CITY

MENS AND COUNTRY HOMES

ARCHBISHOP'S RESIDENCE
Madison Ave.
NEW YORK CITY
ASPINWALL'S RESIDENCE
near 10th St.
NEW YORK CITY
AUSTEN HOUSE (additions)
2 Hylan Blvd.
Rosebank, S.I.

*CORCORAN HOUSE
WASHINGTON, D.C.
FREDERICK GALLATIN HOUSE
5th Ave. & 53rd.
NEW YORK CITY
P. WILLIS JONES
NEW YORK CITY

C.T. LONGSTREET RESIDENCE
900 Irving Avenue 1852-55
(YATES CASTLE)
GOTHIC
SYRACUSE
RENAISSANCE
ROMANESQUE
GOTHIC
REVIVAL
CHARLES MORGAN HOUSE  NEW YORK CITY
CORTLANDT PALMER HOUSE  NEW YORK CITY
ROBERT RENSEN HOUSE  NEW YORK CITY
"SEE HOUSE"  Lafayette St.  1887
DAVID THOMPSON HOUSE  NEW YORK CITY
W.H. TOWNSEND HOUSE  STATEN ISLAND

HOOLS AND COLLEGES

FREE ACADEMY  Lexington at 23rd  1848
MAIN HALL, VASSAR COLLEGE  Poughkeepsie  1860

RELLANEOUS

BOOTH'S THEATER  NEW YORK CITY
*DISTRIBUTING RESERVOIR OF CROTON ACQUEDUCT (Super.)  NEW YORK CITY  1839-43
FULTON BANK OF STATE OF NEW YORK
OLD TONTINE BUILDING  NEW YORK CITY
*RHINELANDER GARDENS  110-124 W. 11th  1854
STOCK EXCHANGE (Front)  Wall Street  NEW YORK CITY
UNION SQUARE FOUNTAIN  NEW YORK CITY
YMCA  NEW YORK CITY


* Indicates buildings no longer standing
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McKenna, Rosake Thorne. "James Renwick, Jr. and the Second Empire Style in the U.S."


Onondaga Historical Association. Newspaper clippings including a letter of Mrs. Margaret Smith, sister of Mrs. Longstreet.


"Renwick gallery of designs and crafts," *Americas*, XXIV (March 1972), 46.

"Renwick gallery opens as national showcase for craft and design," *Craft Horizon*, XXXII (February 1972), 3.


"Smithsonian empire; opening of Renwick gallery," Newsweek, LXXIX (February 1972), 76.

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Thorpe, Marjorie H. "The Story of Renwick Castle, 1852-1932."


JAMES RENWICK, Jr.

James Renwick, Jr., was an American architect of the nineteenth century and exponent of the second empire style of design.

He was born at Bloomingdale, New York, on November 3, 1818, the second son of James and Margaret Ann Brevoort Renwick. On the paternal side, he was of Scotch descent, while he could claim the Knickerbockers as ancestors on his mother’s side.

James Renwick Sr. was a professor of engineering at Columbia University. In 1814, he submitted a Gothic design for Columbia University. The younger Renwick was to gain prominence as an architect of the Gothic Revival period. Renwick attended Columbia University, graduating in 1836, at the age of 17. Though his background was mostly that of an engineer, he proceeded to win several competitions for his architectural designs. It has been said that his best works were churches, although he also designed numerous public (hotels, hospitals, and galleries) and private dwellings. The term "prolific" has aptly been applied to him.

Due to the scarcity of his professional and private papers, little is known of Renwick's personal life. According to a curator of Columbiana, it is believed that some of the records were destroyed in a fire. Columbia, in 1957, however, acquired 57 of his drawings for St. Patrick's Cathedral.

Renwick's life, however, was one of financial ease. His parents were well-to-do and he himself "married well," as the term was then used. Several sources make mention of the fact that Renwick maintained 2 steam yachts. Standing over 6 ft. tall, Renwick was able to follow the life style of the genteel. He was an art connoisseur and gourmet. Upon his death, he bequeathed 86 paintings and several sculptures to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The authenticity was a debatable question, seemingly. He was well travelled, journeying to Europe sometimes once a year. He was not well liked by his colleagues. This was in part due to the fact that Renwick turned to France for inspiration, while the majority followed
the English tradition.

Much of his early work was through competitions, several won almost immediately after his graduation.

Grace Church—built on the site of the old Brevoort farm—was constructed in 1843. Opponents referred to it as "Renwick's toothpick." On the strength of this design, Renwick received the commission for the design of St. Patrick's Cathedral in 1853.

Renwick's work spanned 3 major periods in 19th century architecture. He began his practice when Greek Revival was on the wane. During much of his career, the Gothic Revival was popular. After the war, we see Neo-Gothic aspects. Renwick prided himself on being au courant. The "second empire" style often employed by Renwick well describes his architectural concepts. Second empire architecture was used for monumental buildings with multiple mansard roofs and highly ornate detailing. The buildings were structurally sound and technically advanced.

Renwick married probably in 1852 an Anna Aspinwall, a woman of considerable wealth. At least three sources claim that he married a Margaret Hanney and spent his honeymoon in Syracuse at work on Yates Castle. However, as his firm later added the name Aspinwall and he obtained commissions from the family, the Aspinwall marriage seems more likely.

During the 1870's, Renwick took a Joseph Sands as partner. About 1880, the firm's name was changed to Renwick, Aspinwall, and Renwick, incorporating James L. Aspinwall and a nephew, William W. Renwick.

The Renwicks had no children.

James Renwick died in New York City at his home at 28 University Place on June 23, 1895.
HISTORY OF RENWICK GALLERY

Located at 17th and Pennsylvania Ave, NW in Washington, D.C., it is next door to Blair House and across from the White House.

The French 2nd Empire building was commissioned by William Wilson Corcoran in 1858 to house his personal collection.

Opened in 1859, the building was taken over during the Civil War as a union clothing warehouse.

In 1871, the building was opened as a gallery.

Corcoran’s collection was moved to its present building in 1899 and the building was sold to the U.S. Government.

The U.S. Court of Claims was housed in the building until 1964. The gallery was scheduled to be demolished shortly thereafter.

Plans were revised when the Fine Arts Commission under President Kennedy developed the restoration plan for Lafayette Park.

In 1965, President Johnson approved the transfer to the SMITHSONIAN Institution and Congress appropriated $2.6-2.8 million for restoration.
In 1964, the same Johnson, then a Senator, introduced a bill to
the Senate for destruction of the Court of Claims on
the grounds it was "nearly 100 years old ... and with
advanced age, has become a fire hazard." (Washington Post)

Architectural Record of April 1968, reports on the restoration
feasibility study conducted by John Carl Warnecke's firm
of the Lafayette Park proposal. At this time, 90% of the
red brick exterior was weathered.

Warnecke's firm and Universal Restoration researched various
archives and located original Mathew Brady photos and Renwick's
original drawings.

Warnecke's firm made basic interior renovations eg. plumbing,
wiring and heating.

New exterior ornamentation is a cast composite containing crushed
particles removed from the crumbling stonework.

Hugh Newell Jacobson and Associates were commissioned to restore
the interior "in the spirit" of Renwick's time.

The Grand Salon and the Octagon Room were designed as permanent
exhibits and the original Corcoran works were rehung.

The national showcase in Washington, D.C. for American design,
crafts and the decorative arts opened to the public on
EXAMPLES OF RENWICK EXHIBITIONS OF
AMERICAN DESIGN, CRAFTS AND DECORATIVE ARTS


THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT IN AMERICA, 1876-1916, June 1, 1973-

DESIGN IS ... , January 28, 1972-


THE GLASS OF FREDERICK CARDER, January 28, 1972-

JAMES RENWICK IN WASHINGTON, January 28, 1972-

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