

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

DRAFT

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name High House & Studio

other names/site number _____

name of related multiple property listing _____

Location

street & number 7134 Indian Neck Lane ☐ not for publication

city or town Southold (hamlet of Peconic) ☐ vicinity

state NY code NY county Suffolk code 103 zip code 11958

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

 entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register

 determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register

 other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

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Name of Property

Suffolk, NY

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	2	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	2	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

COMMERCE/TRADE/professional/artist studios

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

COMMERCE/TRADE/professional/artist studios

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COLONIAL/Dutch Colonial

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: BRICK

walls: WOOD/cedar shingle

roof: WOOD/cedar shingle

other:

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

High House and its Studio are two separate buildings located at 7134 Indian Neck Lane in Southold, hamlet of Peconic, Suffolk County, New York, on a 4.41-acre parcel of land on the North Fork of Long Island in the Hamlet of Peconic. It is within the jurisdictional Town of Southold, New York, which was settled in 1640 and proclaimed the “the oldest English town in New York State.”¹ Peconic is due west from Southold, and the property is located south of the Main Road, (Rt 25) at 7134 Indian Neck Lane, which is situated on a wooded spit of land between Richmond Creek and Hog Neck Bay, part of Little Peconic Bay.

Narrative Description

Location and Setting

Accessed from a sand driveway off Indian Neck Lane, the first structures are two garages along the drive; as the drive becomes an entry circle, the house and adjacent art studio come into view. They front on a north-facing lawn and landscaped areas, surrounded by predominantly oak and cedar woods. The house and studio’s south sides face Peconic Bay, with landscaped gardens and terraces overlooking the water. Set on a bluff and protected by a bulkhead, a set of stairs descends to the 200-foot beachfront. Wooded areas separate the house and studios from two adjoining residential properties to the east and west – which were once part of an original larger property, purchased in the late 1800’s by Cornelius Mitchill, Edith Mitchill Prellwitz’s father, from the Case family.

Brief History and Context

High House and its adjacent studio building both front onto Indian Neck Lane, and their rear, south elevations face Peconic Bay. A circular driveway and two non-contributing wood-frame outbuildings, used for storage, are also located on the property to the northwest of the house and studio.

High House

High House originally stood on the Main Road in Aquebogue and was built in 1814 by Joshua Livingston Wells (1776–1855). In 1911, when it was discovered by Henry Prellwitz (1865–1940) and Edith Prellwitz (1864–1944), it had been abandoned for some years (Figure 1). The Prellwitzes purchased the house, and it was dismantled beam-by-beam and transported by water thirty miles to Peconic. There it was faithfully rebuilt, on land Edith Prellwitz inherited from her father, with a kitchen addition, an adjacent double studio building, and garages (Figure 2).

The footprint of the original house is rectangular, twenty-four-by-thirty-six-feet, and three-and-one-half-stories tall. It’s the kitchen addition is sixteen-by-twenty-two-feet. Most of the original architectural features survive; however, the house was reversed in the 1911 reconstruction, and the original rear elevation now faces the street. Inside, most rooms retain Federal style details and trim, including original mantelpieces. The Prellwitzes combined smaller rooms on the first floor into one large room with Colonial Revival elements and replaced the original stairs.

¹ Antonia Booth, *A Brief Account of Southold’s History*, Town of Southold. <https://www.southoldtownny.gov/159/History-of-Southold>.

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Between 1913 and 1944, the house interior was updated to incorporate modern conveniences, such as indoor plumbing and electricity. Since 1944, the interior has been renovated to modernize one half bath, two bathrooms, the kitchen, and a 1950s-era north skylight for the third-floor bathroom.

Exterior updates have primarily been for maintenance and replacement. In 1999–2000, all the roofs were replaced in kind (cedar shingles on gambrels and roll roofing at very top and porches); the front wood porch base and fluted wood columns were replaced; some screen porch columns were replaced; and the glazed panels on the kitchen porch were renewed. In 2010, replacements were made to the façade sheathing; insulation was installed; and the siding was replaced with new royal-size cedar shingles. In 2023, the cedar roof shingles were replaced in kind, and one new dormer was built on the kitchen addition roof in a sympathetic style to the historic house dormers.

Studio Building

The Prellwitzes had their studio constructed with its front elevation facing due north, so the building's skylights admitted only light from the north, an even cool illumination preferred by artists of the era.

It is typical early-twentieth century wood-frame construction with two interior studios for Henry and Edith and high open cathedral ceilings suitable for painting and storing artworks. The interior of Edith's studio remains intact to the period of significance with many of her paintings still hung on the walls. Between 1913 and 1944, a bathroom addition was constructed.

In 2000, the roof was replaced, with asphalt on the south slope and cedar shingles on the north. Due to water damage to the north façade, new awning windows were installed, and skylights were replaced. These were based on a historical pattern, with custom galvanized framing. Existing ribbed glazing was reinstalled on Edith's side, and new ribbed glazing was installed on Henry's side due to damage.

In 2010, Henry's studio was modified by Wendy Prellwitz, Edith and Henry's great granddaughter, for her work as a contemporary painter and printmaker. On the back exterior, new south-facing doors were installed with views of the bay along with two skylights. The bathroom addition was rebuilt in 2020. On the interior, a new sink was installed for printmaking along with storage shelving.

Resources

High House, constructed 1814; moved 1911

Contributing primary building

Exterior

High House is a three-and-one-half-story, three bay wide, Dutch Colonial style residence with a side gambrel roof with flared eaves, original brick foundation, and a one-and-one-half-story, two bay wide side addition. All elevations are clad in cedar shingles.

The main entrance, located in the third bay, features a portico with a hipped roof supported by fluted columns and an original door and trim flanked by sidelights. There are two twelve-over-twelve double hung wood sash windows with wood shutters on the first and second stories and a nine-over-nine double hung wood sash window above the main entrance, all with shutters.

A 1911 two-story kitchen wing addition, also clad in cedar shingles, extends from the side, west elevation of the 1814 house. Its front, north elevation features an entrance to the kitchen and an enclosed wood-frame porch

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with fixed six-light glazing. The first story contains a twelve-over-twelve wood sash kitchen window and a small six-light awning window; the second story has two six-over-six double hung wood sash windows. The north elevation also includes bulkhead access to the basement and an attached storage shed. The side, west elevation of the 1814 house, above the kitchen addition, features two nine-over-nine wood sash windows on the first story and a gambrel roof dormer with an eight-over-eight wood sash window.

The kitchen wing, added in 1911 when the house was moved, is 1½ stories, also clad in cedar shingles with the upper eight-over-eight window in the cedar shingle gambrel roof dormer. Below are two nine-over-nine windows matching those of the main house.

Proceeding right, to the west elevation, the kitchen wing, added in 1911, extends from the 1814 house beyond. It features the side kitchen entry and an enclosed wood frame porch, with fixed six-light glazing. The two-story facade is clad in cedar shingles, with two six-over-six double-hung windows on the upper level, and a twelve-over-twelve kitchen window and small six-light awning window on the lower level. This elevation also includes a bulkhead access to the basement and an attached storage shed. To the right of the kitchen is a one-story open screened-in porch, framed in wood with bronze screening. Beyond that is the cedar-clad 1814 house, which features nine-light attic awning windows, third-floor twelve-over-twelve and nine-over-nine windows, and a second-floor door that opens onto the porch roof.

Proceeding around to the right is the south elevation, facing Peconic Bay. On the left is the wood-frame screened-in porch, attached to the kitchen wing beyond, with a cedar-shingle gambrel roof and dormer. (The dormer was added in 2022 with a six-over-six window). On the right is the original 1814 three-story house, with a brick foundation, three bays wide, and clad with cedar shingles. The cedar-shingle gambrel roof features two dormers and twelve-over-twelve windows added to the original house in 1911. Below that, on the second floor are three double-hung windows, one nine-over-nine and two twelve-over-twelve, with wood shutters. The first floor includes an original entry door, sidelights and trim on the left, with two twelve-over-twelve windows flanking a narrow six-over-six window in between, which was added in 1911.

Proceeding around to the right, the cedar-shingle-clad east elevation is true to the original 1814 house, except for the addition of an external brick chimney. The uppermost half-story attic has two nine-pane awning windows. The third floor has four double-hung windows, two nine-over-nine and two twelve-over-twelve. Below that, the second floor has three double-hung, twelve-over-twelve windows, with shutters. The first floor has one twelve-over-twelve double-hung window with shutters.

Interior

The interior was modified when it was reconstructed in 1911 to accommodate the Prellwitzes' lifestyle, although most rooms retain Federal-period details and trim. On the first floor, upon entering through the front door, the original stairs were replaced in the long hallway that connects to the back, bay-side doorway. Edith's painting *The Open Door* (Figure 3) memorializes that view. It hangs in the adjacent living room, over the fireplace and original mantle. Two smaller parlors were combined to create the large living and dining room, with two original doors and an original corner china cabinet. The room has a lovely view of the bay and still has many original furnishings such as the dining table and secretary, couch, and Henry and Edith's paintings on the walls.

The first-floor kitchen addition retains a few cabinets and beadboard paneling from the original kitchen. It has been remodeled and modernized but retains an historic feel. The room above the kitchen was originally for household staff; although not used for that purpose now, its details remain much the same, with original beadboard walls and ceiling.

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The dining porch remains intact, with marble floors, reused wood-shutter wall paneling, plaster upper walls and ceiling, and the original painted wood dining table.

The second and third floors house five bedrooms: two on the second floor and three on the third. They remain much the same as when the Prellwitzes were in residence, including some furnishings, paintings, and original doors, and mantelpieces. Although the 1814 central chimney location was moved to the side of the house, the bedrooms retain mantelpieces as decorative elements. There was no indoor plumbing when High House was rebuilt; two bathrooms were subsequently added and remodeled in 2008.

The attic consists of one single room under the eaves, where wood-peg joinery is visible on the beams that support the roof construction.

Studio, constructed 1911-1912

Contributing secondary building

The studio building is sited just west of High House. Built in a sympathetic Dutch Colonial Revival style, it is one-story high and three bays wide with an asymmetrical side gambrel roof. Beginning with the north elevation, the slanted roof is clad in cedar shingles, with two symmetrical north-facing skylights, one for each studio. The skylights are fabricated from galvanized steel and glazed with ribbed panels that diffuse the light inside. Below that is the cedar-clad façade, with three six-pane windows aligned below the skylights on each side, with a center awning and flanking casement windows. In the center of the facade is the studio entry and porch, with a Dutch barn-type split door, painted a custom blue-green color.

Proceeding to the right, the west elevation is cedar-clad, with no windows—just two wood-shutter vents. To the right is the cedar-shingle-clad south elevation, which has been modified in different generations. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles, punctuated by three skylights added in 2010 and 2021. The left end of the façade features four single-pane swing doors, added in 2010. The middle portion extends forward of the façade for a bathroom added in the 1930s, with two small windows: a six-pane awning and a four-pane casement. The right end has three six-pane windows, matching the north elevation.

The cedar shingle-clad east elevation faces the house, creating a courtyard between the two buildings. There is an original wood door to the right, no longer in use, and a fixed sixteen-pane upper window, added in 2015, as well as two wood-shutter vents.

The building's interior has a high, cathedral ceiling and is centrally divided into two studio spaces. Henry Prellwitz's studio was in the western half of the building and Edith Prellwitz's in the eastern half. The eastern studio has a storage mezzanine for paintings.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☒ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ART

Period of Significance

1913-1944

Significant Dates

1913

1944

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Prellwitz, Edith Mitchill (1864-1944)

Prellwitz, Henry (1865-1940)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

George Barnabus Horton (builder)

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Summary Paragraphs

High House & Studio, located at 7134 Indian Neck Lane in Southold, hamlet of Peconic, Suffolk County, New York, is significant under **Criterion B** in the area of **Art** for its association with artist couple Edith Mitchill Prellwitz (1864-1944) and Henry Prellwitz (1865-1940). Though High House was moved to its present location in 1911, the property does not need to meet Criteria Consideration B, as it was relocated prior to its period of significance (1913-1944). The Prellwitzes were leading figures in the Peconic Art Colony and were known for their Impressionist, figurative, and landscape paintings. Edith Prellwitz is also significant for her work to advance women's involvement and opportunities in the art world.

Edith Mitchill Prellwitz was born in 1864 in South Orange, New Jersey. In 1883, she enrolled in the Arts Students League of New York where she completed her formal training as a painter and later studied in Europe. Along with several other women painters, she formed the Women's Art Club of New York, which became the National Association of Women Artists. She married fellow painter Henry Prellwitz in 1894. Henry was born in 1865 in New York City and studied at City College of New York, the Art Students League of New York, and in Paris from 1887 to 1890. Both had parallel training as artists: They attended the Academie Julian in Paris and the Art Students League in New York, both worked at the Tiffany Glass Company, and they were associated with groups like the Society of American Artists and the National Academy of Design.

On the recommendation of Henry's mentor Thomas Wilmer Dewing, the Prellwitzes initially purchased a cottage in Cornish, New Hampshire, and became integral figures in the development of the Cornish Art Colony. Their cottage was struck by lightning and destroyed ca. 1898. They never returned to Cornish, but the country setting influenced their later landscape paintings. The Prellwitzes went to Peconic in 1899 and summered there until they became full-time residents in 1913.

In 1911, the couple purchased a ca. 1814 Dutch Colonial style house in the town of Aqueboque and had it deconstructed and shipped twenty miles by barge to Indian Neck where it was reassembled on a then-vacant lot Edith inherited from her father. The house was originally built by Joshua Livingston Wells, a relatively wealthy resident of Aqueboque. Wells was influenced by the residential architectural styles of New York City and wanted a "tall" house. The resulting residence was twenty-five-feet-wide and three-and-one-half stories with a side gambrel roof. It was built entirely from materials native to eastern Long Island and was of wood frame construction and clad in large wood shingles. The house was called "High House Josh" because of its atypical height in comparison to other Aqueboque residences of the time and based on its owner's name. The Prellwitzes discovered the house in 1911 while touring down Long Island in their automobile and commissioned George Horton, a carpenter from New Suffolk, to deconstruct it for them. It was relocated to its present site in 1912 on a cliff that overlooks the Peconic Bay. At this time, the Prellwitzes also had a building to house their respective studios constructed on the property.

Peconic's early-twentieth century community was a haven for artistic professionals, and the Prellwitzes became central figures in the Peconic Art Colony, a professional and social group of local artists whose members included Edward August Bell, Caroline Bell, and Irving Wiles. Edith and Henry had distinct but complementary styles, though they worked independently for most of their careers. Edith's early figurative work focused on portraits of working-class people, and her later portrait painting turned to images of mothers and children. Henry was more noted as a landscape painter. Their paintings were widely exhibited and won acclaim in important shows. Henry won an award at the St. Louis Exposition in 1904 for his painting Lotus and Laurel. In 1894, Edith was the first woman to win the second Hallgarten Prize at the National Academy of Design for her

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painting *Hagar*, and in 1906, she was elected with seven other women to the National Academy. According to curator Ron Pisano, "Henry and Edith Prellwitz represent the height of academic painting in America. The quality of Mrs. Prellwitz's paintings were compared to those of Mary Cassatt, Cecilia Beaux, John Singer Sargent and William Merritt Chase." Several of the couple's paintings are part of the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, including Henry's *The Laundry Yard* and Edith's *Moonlight* and *The Elevated*.

Around 1928, the Prellwitzes purchased a home in New York City where they lived most of the year while maintaining ownership of the Peconic property and summering there. They returned to live fulltime in Peconic in 1938. Henry Prellwitz died in 1940 in East Greenwich, Rhode Island, where the Prellwitzes were visiting their son, Edwin. Following Edith's death in 1944, Edwin became owner of High House & Studios, and it has remained in the Prellwitz family since. Edith and Henry's paintings, nearly all of which remained intact in their studios after their deaths, have been the subject of several exhibitions, including "Henry and Edith Mitchell Prellwitz and the Peconic Art Colony" at the Museums at Stony Brook in 1995 and "The Power of Two: Artist Couples of Long Island" at the Long Island Museum in 2024. Edith's painting *The Elevated*, was included in The Metropolitan Museum of Art's 2023 exhibit, *New York Art Worlds, 1870-1890*.

The period of significance begins in 1913 when the Prellwitzes become year-round residents of High House and ends in 1944 with the death of Edith Prellwitz.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Historical Context

The house originally stood on the south side of Main Road in Aquebogue. It was built in 1814 by Joshua Livingston Wells (1776–1855), a prosperous and well-known farmer and carriage maker. It was called "High House Josh" because of the unusually tall nature of the house. (Wells was influenced by the residential architectural styles of New York City and wanted a "tall" house.) Joshua was a descendant of William Wells, one of the original settlers of the North Fork of Long Island. The house was built on land that William Wells received in the first Aquebogue Division of 1661. It was constructed entirely from materials native to eastern Long Island and was of wood-frame construction and clad in large wood shingles. The house immediately to its east was built by Joshua Livingston Wells's parents in the late eighteenth century and expanded by one of his sons in the mid-nineteenth century. It still stands on Main Road in Aquebogue.

Joshua Livingston Wells was an unusual man in his time. He was not only a farmer, but also a talented carriage maker and craftsman. A desk he made is now part of the collection of the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum at Colonial Williamsburg.

By 1911, when the house was discovered by Henry and Edith Prellwitz on a drive out from New York, it had been abandoned for some years. Henry arranged to purchase it, have it dismantled beam by beam, and transported by water thirty miles to Peconic, to a then-vacant lot that Edith inherited from her father. As reported in the news of the day: "After the dismemberment of High House Josh, with each beam, casement, door, panel, and all else carefully numbered, everything was carted a mile down to the inlet over the old Wells farm and there was loaded on the scow."²

² "High House Josh Goes to Sea," *New York Sun*, September 24, 1911.

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Henry towed the scow, with all the house parts, behind his boat--the Tortoise--to its current location. It was faithfully reconstructed, from the post-and-beam structure to interior trim, mantles, cabinets, and doors, etc., under the direction of George Barnabus Horton, head carpenter, from Southold. At that time a kitchen wing, outdoor porch, and dormers were added to the house.

The art studios were built next to the house in 1911. Edith and Henry occupied the house until 1940. From 1950 to 1980, it was occupied and owned by Edwin and Eunice Prellwitz, Henry and Edith's son and his wife. From 1988 to 2008, it was owned by Samuel and Margery Prellwitz. Currently it is owned by their children, Henry and Wendy Prellwitz (great-grandchildren of Edith and Henry), as a family entity, High House Woods Inc. In 2023, it was designated a Historic Landmark by the Town of Southold.

Edith Mitchill Prellwitz and Henry Prellwitz: History Together

Edith Mitchill Prellwitz was born in 1864 in South Orange, New Jersey. Henry was born in 1865 in New York City. They married in 1894. Both attended the Art Students League in New York and the Académie Julian in Paris, and both worked at the Tiffany Glass Company, they exhibited their work at the Society of American Artists and the National Academy of Design.

On the recommendation of Henry's mentor Thomas Wilmer Dewing, the Prellwitzes initially purchased a cottage in Cornish, New Hampshire, and became integral figures in the development of the Cornish art colony. Their cottage was struck by lightning and destroyed circa 1898. They never returned to Cornish, but the country setting influenced their later landscape paintings. In 1899, The Prellwitzes went to Peconic, purchasing a house and summering there until they built their new house and double studios in 1911. They became full-time residents in 1913.

Peconic's early twentieth-century community was a haven for artistic professionals, and the Prellwitzes became central figures in the local group of artists, which included Edward August Bell (1862–1953) and Irving Wiles (1861–1948).

Though they worked independently for most of their careers, Edith and Henry had distinct but complementary styles. In her early work, Edith painted scenes of urban laborers and allegorical subjects. Later, she continued allegorical work as well as portraits, including images of mothers and children. Like Henry, she also painted landscapes, mostly in Peconic. Henry, similarly, created allegorical works during his early career, but established his reputation principally as a landscape painter. Both exhibited their paintings widely and won acclaim in important shows. In 1899, they were featured in a joint retrospective of forty of their works at the Charcoal Club in Baltimore and the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn.

According to curator Ronald G. Pisano, "Henry and Edith Prellwitz represent the height of academic painting in America. The quality of Mrs. Prellwitz's paintings was compared to those of Mary Cassatt, Cecilia Beaux, John Singer Sargent, and William Merritt Chase."³ Paintings by both artists belong to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, including Henry's *The Laundry Yard* and Edith's *Moonlight* (Figure 4) and *The Elevated*.

Around 1928, the Prellwitzes purchased a home in New York City at 330 East 41st Street, where they lived most of the year while maintaining ownership of their Peconic property and spending summers there. They returned to live full-time in Peconic in 1938. As Lisa N. Peters states, "Peconic would be the place where they

³ Ronald G. Pisano, *Henry and Edith Mitchill Prellwitz and the Peconic Art Colony*, exh. cat. (The Art Museum of the Museums of Stony Brook, 1995), 9.

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felt most at home. Balancing each other, Henry provided Edith with a sense of joy and pleasure in life that emerges in her art, while she inspired him to believe in himself and find passion in painting the subjects he loved, a feeling that comes across in the vitality and freshness of his Peconic art.”⁴

Henry Prellwitz died in 1940 in East Greenwich, Rhode Island, where the Prellwitzes were visiting their son, Edwin. Following Edith’s death in 1944, Edwin became the owner of High House and Studios, and it has remained in the Prellwitz family since. Nearly all of Edith and Henry’s paintings, which remained intact in their studios after their deaths, have been the subject of several exhibitions, including Henry and Edith Mitchill Prellwitz and the Peconic Art Colony, at the Museums at Stony Brook in 1995 and *The Power of Two: Artist Couples of Long Island* at the Long Island Museum in 2024. Edith’s painting *The Elevated* was included in the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s 2023 exhibit, *New York Art Worlds, 1870–1890*. High House and Studio were added to the Town of Southold’s registry of historic landmarks in 2023 for the property’s association with the Prellwitzes and for High House’s architectural significance.

Edith Mitchill Prellwitz

1882-1913



Portrait of Edith Mitchill Prellwitz, ca. 1900.

⁴ Lisa N. Peters, “Edith Prellwitz & Henry Prellwitz: Painters of the Peconic,” online exh. cat. (Spanierman Gallery, 2012).

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Born in 1864 to Cornelius Smith Mitchill and Helen Emma Reed Mitchill, Edith had a comfortable upbringing. Following her childhood and education in South Orange, New Jersey, she joined a formative trip with her aunt to Europe and several friends in 1882, studying German, along with drawing, singing, and dancing. On her return, she decided to dedicate her life to art. In 1883, she enrolled in the Arts Students League of New York, where she received instruction in drawing and painting under George de Forest Brush, William Merritt Chase, Benjamin Fitz, and Kenyon Cox until 1887.

From 1889 to 1890, Edith studied in Paris at the Académie Julian and with Gustave Courtois. She was serious in her purpose, writing in her diary in 1884, “I am a woman with ‘aspirations,’ with an ambition and strong intentions to fulfill that ambition to become an artist, a great artist.”⁵ In 1906, she was elected an Associate of the National Academy of Design. Along with three other women painters, she formed the Women’s Art Club of New York in 1889. It became the National Association of Women Artists, which is still in operation today.

Edith exhibited *The Steam Drill*. (Figure 5) at the National Academy in 1887. In 1894, she became the first woman to win a Hallgarten Prize at the National Academy of Design for her painting *Hagar*, (location unknown). In 1895 she exhibited and won the silver medal at the Cotton States and International Exposition for *Tannhäuser Legend* (location unknown) and the Dodge Prize at the National Academy of Design. She was elected a full member of the Society of American Artists in 1898. Her *Child with Azaleas* won a bronze prize at the Pan-American Exposition in 1901 in Buffalo. In 1906, she was elected an associate at the National Academy, along with seven other women.

Edith was intensely passionate about her work and dedicated herself to constant improvement. As Lisa N. Peters notes: “Edith had a similar intellectual bent [to Henry]. Yet, by contrast with Henry, she was introverted and filled with self-doubts. Extremely driven, she had high aspirations and worked relentlessly to achieve them.”⁶

1913-1944

In 1913, Edith began living full-time in Peconic with Henry. Having established her career with distinction, she continued to paint and win acclaim. Her painting *The Convalescent* (Figure 6) won the Julia A Shaw prize at the National Academy in 1929. Among the Prellwitz family papers, a congratulatory letter from the Shaw family survives (Figure 7), as well as a photograph of the model who posed, with Edith’s reflection in a mirror (Figure 8).

Another important work was Edith’s monumental mural (Figure 9) for First Universalist Church in Southold, New York (a town adjacent to Peconic), which was dedicated in 1926 to her parents. Since it was costly to bring in models from the city to pose, family friend George Wells served as the model (Figure 10). This was a massive project, measuring twelve-by-sixteen feet. It took two years to complete and depicted an allegorical Figure emerging from the desert. The dedication program indicates that the subject was “the coming of the Divine Messenger to bring a gospel of Light and Joy to all on earth.” Unfortunately, the church burned down in 2015, and the mural was lost.

While Edith continued to create important works in Peconic, she was also inspired by the locale, “producing pure landscapes that express the emotions that her sites evoked.”⁷ She captured beautiful water views of the bay

⁵ Edith Mitchill, *Diary*, volume 2, 1884, 1.

⁶ Peters, “Painters of the Peconic.”

⁷ Peters, “Painters of the Peconic.”

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in a more colorful palette, resulting in works that feel freely painted. These paintings evoke the sense of season and place familiar to all who visit Peconic, such as *The Scallopers*, 1920 (Figure 11).

Some of her other paintings completed during this time include beloved family favorites of the Peconic landscape and house, such as *The Lady in Pink*, 1913, *The Open Door*, 1915 (Figure 3), and *The Breakfast Table*, 1920, depict scenes in the house. *The Bathers*, 1922 (Figure 12) portrays the bay-side yard. Edith was known for her sensitive portraits of local friends, such as *Portrait of Mrs. George Fitz*, 1935 (Figure 13).

Edith was described by her family as stern and a perfectionist, but this characterization likely reflects her ambition and dedication to the spiritual underpinnings of her profession. She died in 1944, in East Greenwich, Rhode Island, while living with her son Edwin and his family.

Henry Prellwitz

1865-1911



Portrait of Henry Prellwitz, ca. 1890.

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Henry was born in 1865 in New York, the son of Randolph and Margaretha, who had emigrated from East Prussia. He was a precocious student and advanced quickly, studying at the City College of New York, beginning at age fourteen. At age seventeen, he was one of the youngest students to enroll at New York's Art Students League, where his teachers were Thomas Dewing, Kenyon Cox, George de Forest Brush, and Robert Reid. He became Dewing's studio assistant in 1885 and worked in the office of the prominent architect Stanford White, creating decorative drawings. Strengthening his connection to Dewing, Henry was invited to spend the summer assisting him in Cornish, New Hampshire, where he stayed with Dewing's family, including his wife, the artist Maria Oakey Dewing and their daughter Elizabeth. Henry maintained a life-long friendship with the Dewings.

Encouraged by Dewing, Henry studied in Paris from 1887 to 1890. After returning home in 1890, he again spent summers at Cornish art colony, which had been established by the sculptor Augustus Saint Gaudens. Henry exhibited at the National Academy for the first time in 1892, showing *Idlewild* (location unknown). In 1896, he received critical acclaim for his tonalist painting *Dusk* (Figure 14), which was exhibited at the Society of American Artists. He showed *Dante and Virgil* (location unknown) and *An Idyll* at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo in 1901. In 1904, he won the Silver Medal at the St. Louis Exposition in 1904 *Lotus and Laurel* (Figure 15) and the Thomas Clark prize at the National Academy for *Venus* in 1907.

Henry kept a scrapbook of sketches and model photos, as part of his studio process—including model photos for *Lotus and Laurel* (Figure 15). He was elected to the Society of American Artists in 1897 and to full membership in the National Academy in 1912.

Henry was an active art instructor. He taught at Pratt Institute from 1893 to 1912, where his colleagues included Arther Wesley Dow. He served as the director of the Arts Student League from 1894 to 1898 and secretary of the Society of American Artists in 1906. He also managed family matters, such as overseeing the business of Cornelius Mitchell (Edith's father) following his death in 1909.

1913-1940

In 1911, Henry supervised the move and reconstruction of their home from Aquebogue to Peconic. In 1913, he sold their house on West 71st Street in New York and he and Edith moved full-time to Peconic. According to Ronald G. Pisano he “devoted much of his time to painting local landscapes but continued occasionally to exhibit allegorical pieces at the National Academy of Design.”⁸

As Lisa N. Peters notes, “Henry was an outgoing and carefree bon vivant. He had a passion for a life steeped in literature, which he read voraciously and recited frequently.”⁹ He was popular in classes at the Arts Student League and according to his grandson, Sam Prellwitz, he had a twinkling eye and a wonderful sense of humor. Henry himself said he had painted “not as much as I should. I have been doing some small pictures but no important work since 1907 when I won the Clark prize, *Venus*... mostly winter scenes. It is very beautiful down there in the winter” (Figure 23 Henry with painting boxes, circa 1930's).¹⁰

By 1924, after purchasing a New York City co-op with good light and two studios at 330 East 41st Street, Henry moved with Edith back to the city, while continuing to summer in Peconic. The small landscapes of

⁸ Pisano, *Henry and Edith Mitchell Prellwitz and the Peconic Art Colony*, 3.

⁹ Peters, “Edith Prellwitz & Henry Prellwitz: Painters of the Peconic.”

¹⁰ Dewitt Lockman, interview, June 10, 1927, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 20.

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Henry's later years are small treasures, notable for their wonderful light effects and simple cropped compositions that feel almost contemporary (Figures 16 and 17).

In Peconic, Henry socialized with his fellow artists Edward Bell and Irving Wiles. He participated in local town activities, such as designing a logo for the Town of Southold's anniversary, and he was often occupied with family business matters and his role as treasurer of the National Academy of Design from 1928 to 1940. However, he still completed several important pieces based on the Peconic area, including *The Old Mill*. ca. 1930, which was based on a tidal grist mill built in colonial times near the Long Island Sound in Peconic (Figure 18). Henry made several sketches and took photographs as reference material for his paintings.

Henry was also an accomplished photographer, amassing an impressive collection of glass photographic plates documenting family, local scenes, and models used in his figurative painting. It is fascinating to compare the actual model photographs alongside the paintings they informed. *The Road Home*, ca. 1927, is one such painting (Figure 19). It depicts Indian Neck Lane after a winter thaw near the Prellwitz home in Peconic, with reference photo taken by him March 27, 1916.

Nocturnes were one of Henry's specialties. He created several paintings of figures around beach fires, presumably near the Prellwitz bayside house, and many canvases depicting the effects of moonlight on the water and behind clouds and trees. *Nocturne*, ca. 1929, combines an angel hovering over the moonlit bay, merging Henry's love of direct painting with classical themes (Figures 20 and 21).

Henry died in East Greenwich, Rhode Island, on September 13, 1940, while visiting his son Edwin and Edwin's family.

The Peconic Art Colony

Henry and Edith Mitchill Prellwitz moved to Peconic in 1899 on the suggestion of Edward August Bell, a painter whose studio was near theirs in New York's Holbein Studios at 152 West 55th Street.

The North Fork of Long Island was much less populated and well-known than the South Fork (the Hamptons). Edward was acquainted with Benjamin Fitz, a fellow painter who also worked in the Holbein Studios and had family in Southold New York. Bell invited Henry to his Peconic home in 1891. Edward was so taken with the beauty of the North Fork, that he persuaded Irving Wiles to join him there in 1895, to teach art classes. Wiles subsequently built his home, The Moorings, overlooking Peconic Bay in 1898.

According to art historian Lisa N. Peters, "By the time the Prellwitzes arrived in Peconic in 1899, they were well-established artists, as were Bell and Wiles. All four had been elected to full membership in the Society of American Artists ... and all four had won many awards for paintings shown in major national and international exhibitions."¹¹

Knowing Bell and Wiles, Henry and Edith had decided to summer in Peconic instead of the more distant art colony in Cornish. They rented and then purchased a home on Indian Neck Lane, built a studio, and became involved in the community, becoming leaders in the Peconic art colony. They were instrumental in its creation, especially after they built their house and studios on the bay between the homes of Wiles and Bell (Figure 22).

¹¹ Peters, "Edith Prellwitz & Henry Prellwitz: Painters of the Peconic."

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The focus of the Peconic artists differed, but they all took drew inspiration from their surroundings and benefited from their association. They enjoyed each other's company, and both Henry and Wiles painted outdoors, recording the marine scenes and farmland of the coastal terrain. Sam Prellwitz, the applicant's father, recalls that they very much greatly enjoyed each other's company, once recounting that his grandfather, would play reveille on a bugle every summer morning at 8 a.m., Edward would reply with a blast from his carbide cannon, and the day would begin.

Henry died in 1940, Edith in 1944, Wiles in 1948, and Bell in 1953. Subsequently, the Peconic art colony ended.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☒ Other

Name of repository: **Google Docs**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 4.41 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 41.029649 | Longitude: -72.441033 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

See attached property survey and site map

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary was selected to encompass the entirety of the Prellwitz property as it existed during the period of significance (1913-1944), which duplicates the contemporary parcel.

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1:12,000

0 500 1000 ft

 High House & Studio



New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation

Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N

Mapped 05/15/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

DRAFT – High House & Studios

Name of Property

Suffolk, NY

County and State



1:2,400

0 100 200 ft

Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N



Nomination Boundary (# ac)



Tax Parcels

Suffolk County Parcel Year: 2024



**New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation**

Mapped 05/15/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

DRAFT – High House & Studios

Name of Property

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County and State



1:2,400

0 100 200 ft

Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N



Nomination Boundary (4.41 ac)

New York State Orthoimagery Year: 2022



**New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation**

Mapped 05/15/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

DRAFT – High House & Studios

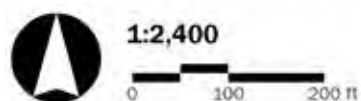
Name of Property

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Resource Status Map

See Resource List for details



Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N

Contributing Non-Contributing

Nomination Boundary

Suffolk County Parcel Year: 2024



**New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation**

Mapped 05/15/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

DRAFT – High House & Studios

Name of Property

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Wendy Prellwitz, owner (edited by Jeff Iovannone, PhD, NYSHPO)

organization _____ date May 2025

street & number 3 ½ Wendell Street telephone 617-448-3605

city or town Cambridge state MA zip code 02138

e-mail wendyprellwitz@gmail.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets - *attached***
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: High House & Studio

City or Vicinity: Southold (hamlet of Peconic)

County: Suffolk

State: NY

Photographer: Wendy Prellwitz

Date Photographed: 2024

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

0001 of 0029: High House front (north) elevation, facing south.

0002 of 0029: High House front elevation with landscape, facing southeast

0003 of 0029: High House side (east) and rear (south) elevations, facing northwest.

0004 of 0029: High House rear (south) elevation, facing north.

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0005 of 0029: View of Peconic Bay from rear of High House, facing south.

0006 of 0029: High House side (west) elevation, facing east.

0007 of 0029: Interior view, High House living room.

0008 of 0029: Interior view, High House dining room.

0009 of 0029: Interior view, fireplace with Edith Prellwitz painting.

0010 of 0029: Interior view, High House stairwell.

0011 of 0029: Interior view, High House second floor hallway.

0012 of 0029: Interior view, High House second floor window seat.

0013 of 0029: Interior view, High House second floor main bedroom.

0014 of 0029: Interior view, High House second floor main bedroom mantle.

0015 of 0029: Interior view, High House second floor secondary bedroom.

0016 of 0029: Interior view, High House third floor bedroom.

0017 of 0029: Studio front (north) elevation, facing south.

0018 of 0029: Studio front (north) elevation, facing southeast.

0019 of 0029: Studio side (east) elevation, facing west.

0020 of 0029: Studio rear (south) elevation, facing north.

0021 of 0029: Studio side (west) elevation, facing east.

0022 of 0029: Detail of Studio entrance, facing south.

0023 of 0029: Interior view of Henry Prellwitz's studio, facing north.

0024 of 0029: Interior view of Henry Prellwitz's studio, facing south.

0025 of 0029: Detail of entrance to Henry Prellwitz's studio.

0026 of 0029: Interior view of Edith Prellwitz's studio, facing north.

0027 of 0029: Interior view of Edith Prellwitz's studio with mezzanine for painting storage, facing south.

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0028 of 0029: Interior view of Edith Prellwitz's studio, facing southeast.

0029 of 0029: Outbuildings, facing northeast.

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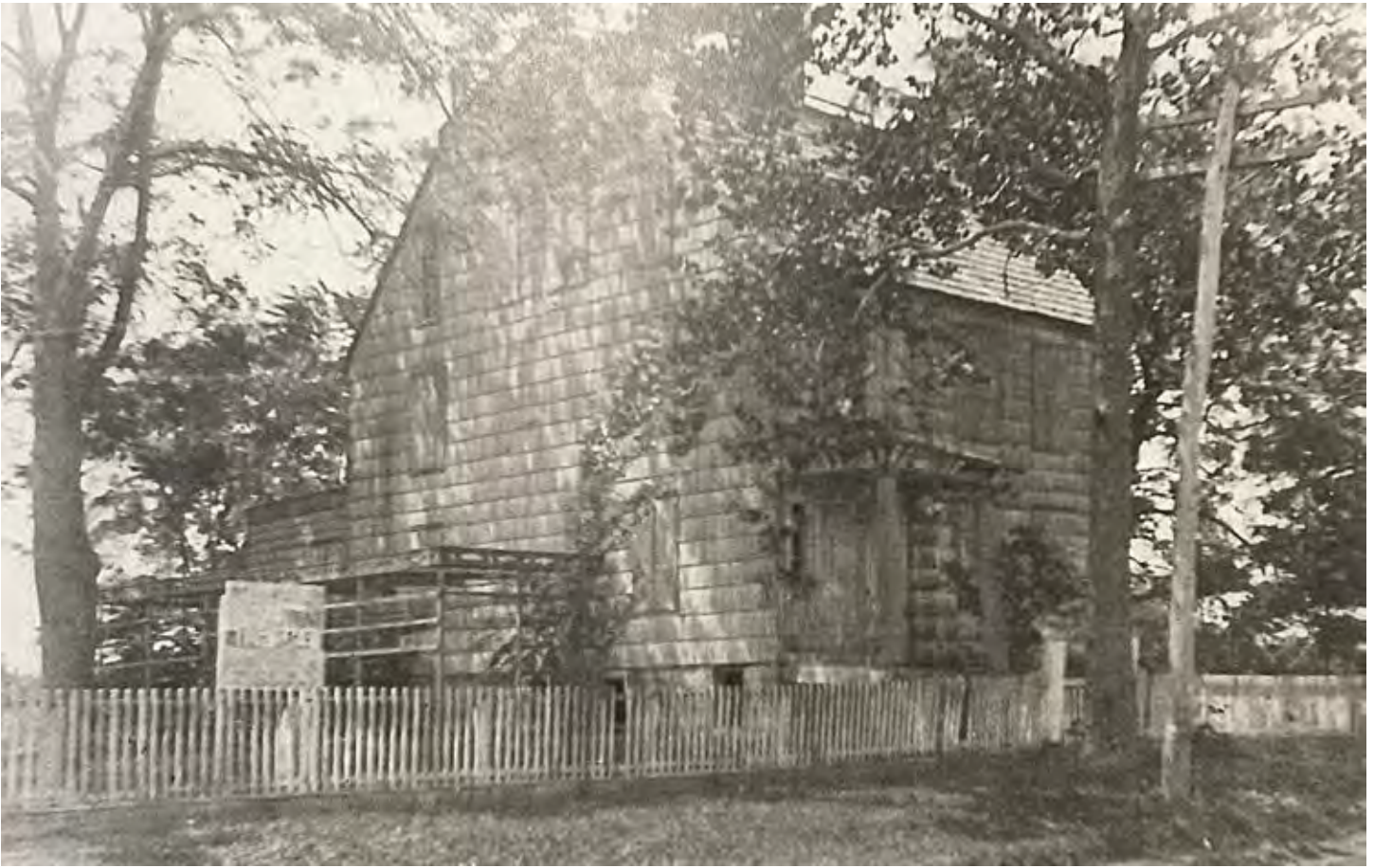


Figure 1. High House Joshy in Aquebogue, ca. 1911.

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Figure 2. High House & Studio, 1911.

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Figure 3. *The Open Door*, Edith Mitchill Prellwitz, oil on canvas, ca. 1915.

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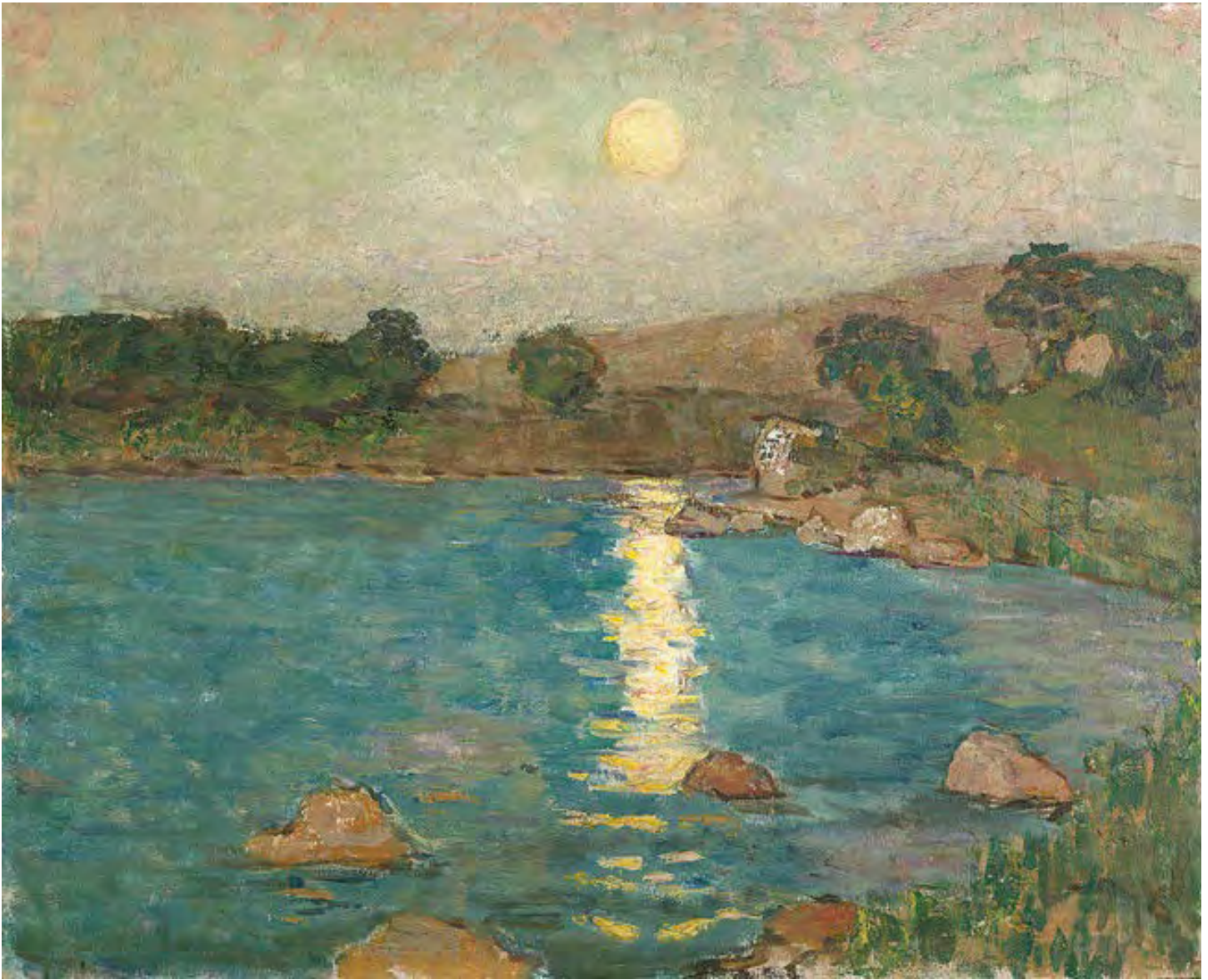


Figure 4. *Moonlight*, Edith Mitchill Prellwitz, oil on canvas, collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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Figure 5. *The Steam Drill*, Edith Mitchill Prellwitz.

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Figure 6. *The Convalescent*, Edith Mitchill Prellwitz, oil on canvas.

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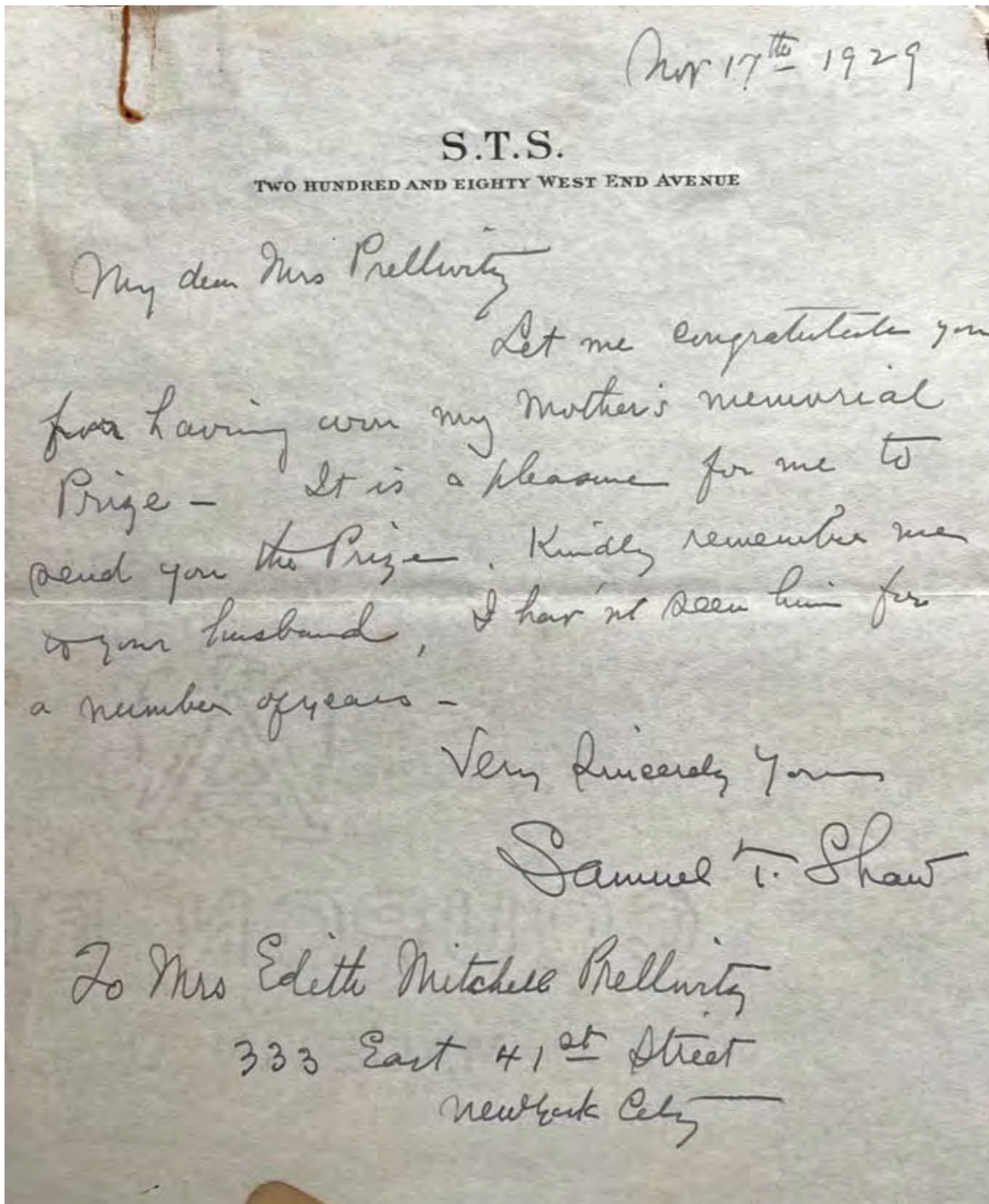


Figure 7. Samuael Shaw, letter of congratulations for Shaw Prize to Edith Mitchill Prellwitz, November 17, 1929.

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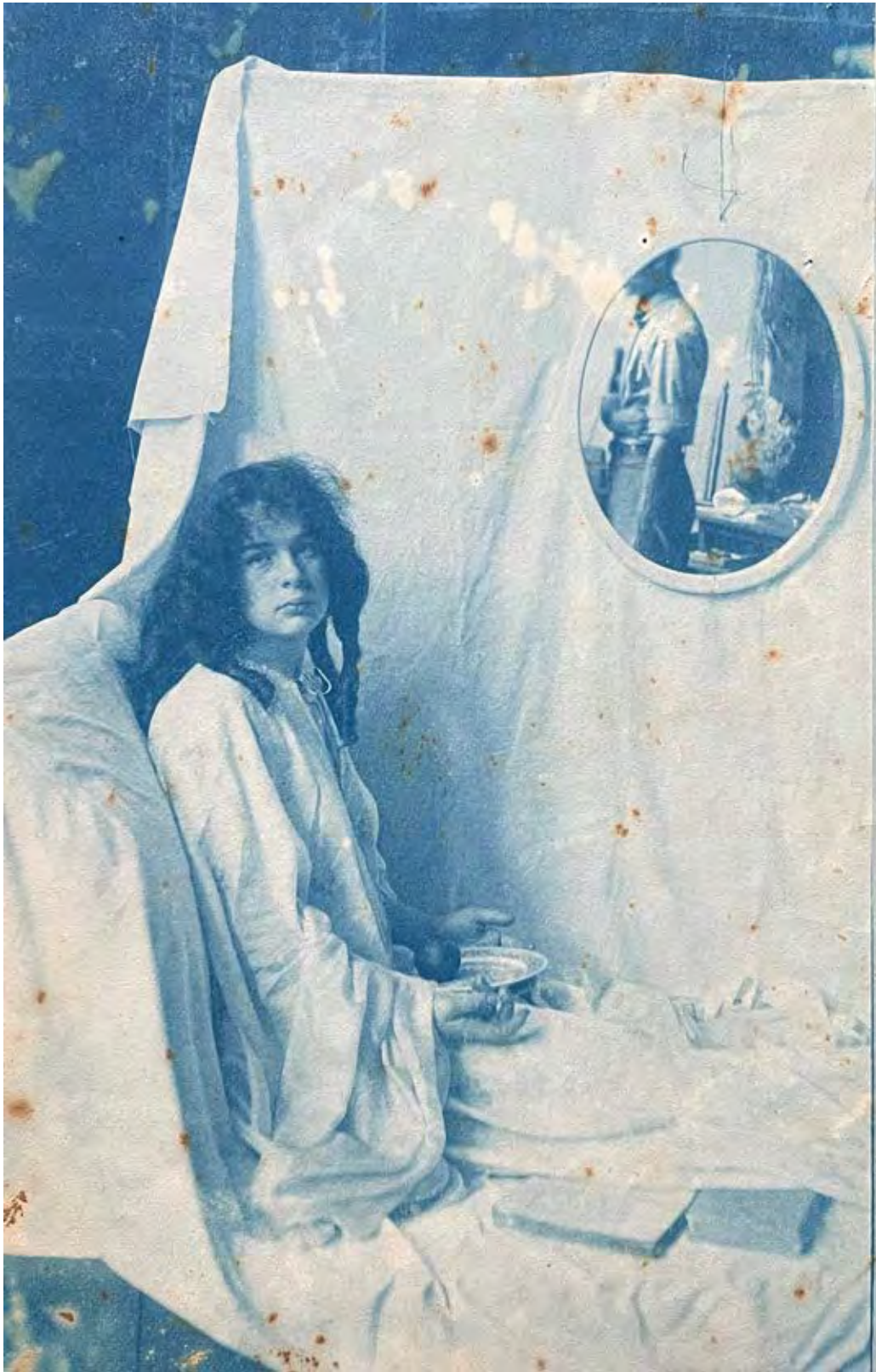


Figure 8. Model for *The Convalescent*.

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Figure 9. Mural for First Universalist Church, Edith Mitchell Prellwitz, 1926.

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Figure 10. George Wells, model for First Universalist Church mural.

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Figure 11. *The Scallopers*, Edith Mitchill Prellwitz.

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Figure 12. *The Bathers*, Edith Mitchill Prellwitz, 1922.

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Figure 13. *Mrs. Fitz*, Edith Mitchill Prellwitz, 1935.

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Figure 14. *Dusk*, Henry Prellwitz, 1896.

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Figure 15. *Lotus and Laurel*, Henry Prellwitz, 1904.

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Figure 16. Untitled winter landscape, Henry Prellwitz, 1920.

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Figure 17. Winter landscape #2, Henry Prellwitz.

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Figure 18. *The Old Mill*, Henry Prellwitz, ca. 1930.

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Figure 19. *The Road Home*, Henry Prellwitz, ca. 1927.

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Figure 20. *Mackerel Sky*, Henry Prellwitz.

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Figure 21. *Nocturne*, Henry Prellwitz, oil on canvas, ca. 1929.

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Figure 22. Peconic Art Colony, ca. 1913. Henry Prellwitz (far left), Edith Prellwitz (next right), Edwin Prellwitz (next right), with Edward Bell, Irving Wiles, and others.

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