



William Cullen Bryant was born in a log cabin near Cummington Massachusetts on November 3, 1794 and died on June 12, 1878.

He spent two years at Williams College, then studied law, and was admitted to the bar in 1815. He began writing nature poetry around that time as is best known for his poem, "Thanatopsis." On January 11, 1821 he married Frances Fairchild. Writing poetry could not financially sustain a family, and he continued to practice law in Great Barrington until 1825 when he was hired as editor of the New York Review in New York City, then as editor of the United States Review and Literary Gazette. Two years later he was hired as assistant editor of the New York Evening Post, and in two more years he became Editor-in-Chief and part owner. He remained in that position for half a century (1828- 1878). He made his considerable fortune at the Evening Post and exercised considerable political power in the city, state and nation. Bryant's views, always progressive but never quite populist, led him to join the Free Soilers, and in 1860, he was one of the prime supporters of Abraham Lincoln, whom he introduced at Cooper Union where Lincoln made the speech that lifted him to the nomination and then the presidency. Bryant was a major force behind the idea that became Central Park. He was one of a group of founders of the New York Medical College, had close affinities with the Hudson River School of Art and was an intimate of Thomas Cole, was an early abolitionist, and he defended immigrants and championed the rights of workers to form labor unions. Truly, he was a Renaissance Man, a man ahead of his time in many ways, and a man who deserves to be remembered with honor.

To Join Friends of Cedarmere

The Friends of Cedarmere is a tax-exempt corporation that cooperates with Nassau County and the Roslyn Landmark Society to preserve, restore and promote public use of the Cedarmere estate in Roslyn Harbor, the home of William Cullen Bryant, prominent 19th-Century poet, newspaper editor and civic leader. Our first project will be restoration and maintenance of the Boxwood Garden whose layout and plantings recreate the flower garden Bryant designed in the 1860s, and the adjacent Sunken Garden designed by his grandson Harold Godwin ca. 1916. Our longer term goal is restoration and enhancement of the museum rooms in the Bryant House to be open for the public to enjoy learning about Bryant's life and legacy.

Information about membership, future events and volunteering to work on the gardens can be obtained at

friendsofcedarmere.com

or

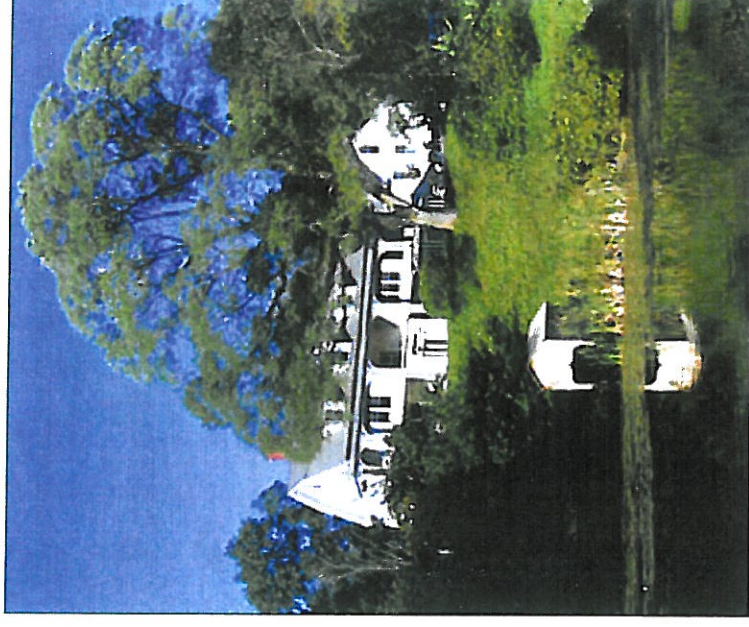
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The Friends of Cedarmere

Cedarmere is the historic 7-acre Roslyn Harbor home of William Cullen Bryant, 19th Century American poet, abolitionist, newspaper editor, civic leader, friend of the arts and of working people.



Help us to preserve, promote and support the Cedarmere Museum and get it reopened for the purpose of perpetuating its literary, educational and historical significance in the memory of William Cullen Bryant, who lived there from 1843 until his death in 1878.

History of Cedarmere

Cedarmere, the historic property of prominent 19th-century poet, newspaper editor and civic leader William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878), includes the Bryant home and several other structures on a beautiful 7-acre property overlooking Roslyn Harbor.

Cedarmere served as the rural Long Island home of Bryant from 1843 until his death in 1878. Bryant purchased the Cedarmere property as a retreat from the pressures and congestion of the city, so that he could work on his poetry and indulge his love of nature.

Born in Massachusetts in 1794 to parents whose ancestors traced their history in America to the Mayflower, Bryant was educated at Williams College and studied law at Worthington and Bridgewater, gaining admission to the bar in 1815. Bryant worked as a lawyer in Massachusetts until 1825, when he moved to New York with his wife and began contributing to such literary journals as the North American Review and New York Review. After the New York Review went out of business, Bryant became editor of the New York Evening Post, in 1829, a position he held until his death and from which he pressed his anti-slavery and liberal views, including support for the newly formed Republican Party (of which he was a founder) and the candidacy of Abraham Lincoln.

In February of 1860, Bryant introduced Lincoln to New Yorkers, as the then-presidential aspirant made his famous address before a packed auditorium at Cooper Union in Manhattan. Upon Lincoln's death, Bryant penned "The Death of Lincoln," including this verse:

"Thy task is done; the bond are free
We bear thee to an honored grave
Whose Proudest monument shall be
The broken fetters of the slave."

Today, Bryant is scarcely remembered by the general public and even among professional historians may only receive a passing mention, but in his era Bryant was a major American figure in both the arts and politics. In New York, flags were flown at half mast upon his death and crowds at his memorial service in a New York City church spilled out into the street. The great poet Walt Whitman immediately returned to New York from Philadelphia to attend the funeral when he heard of Bryant's death.

"I had known Mr. Bryant over thirty years ago, and he had been markedly kind to me," Whitman wrote of Bryant's death. "Off and on, along that time for years as they pass'd, we met and chatted together. I thought him very sociable in his way, and a man to become attach'd to. We were both walkers, and when I work'd in Brooklyn he several times came over, middle of afternoons, and we took rambles miles long, till dark, out towards Bedford or Flatbush, in company. On these occasions he gave me clear accounts of scenes in Europe — the cities, looks, architecture, art, especially Italy — where he had travel'd a good deal."

THE PROPERTY. The oldest section of Cedarmere was constructed in 1787 by Richard Kirk, a Quaker farmer. Bryant greatly enlarged the original farmhouse, renovating it several times. He also planted numerous exotic trees and flowers on the grounds, transforming the estate into a horticultural showplace. "To understand Mr. Bryant's inmost poetic life," The New York Times wrote upon his death with a reference to Cedarmere, "one should have visited him on a Summer's day in the old-time mansion, smothered in forest trees and vines planted by his own loving hand, near the pretty village of Roslyn, on Long Island."

Following Bryant's death, Cedarmere was occupied by his daughter, Julia, and his grandson, Harold Godwin. Godwin ultimately added such features as a stone bridge and sunken garden to the landscape. He also rebuilt the house following a major fire in 1902. The estate was left to Nassau County by Godwin's daughter, Elizabeth, to preserve as a memorial to Bryant.

