

# A Trip To Newport, Rhode Island To Discover LeRoy History and Jell-O

by Lynne Belluscio

It wasn't by coincidence that the Historical Society's spring trip headed off to Newport, Rhode Island this past weekend. Although Newport is known for the Gilded Age mansions and great food, it is also the place where Jacob LeRoy's brother, Daniel, lived

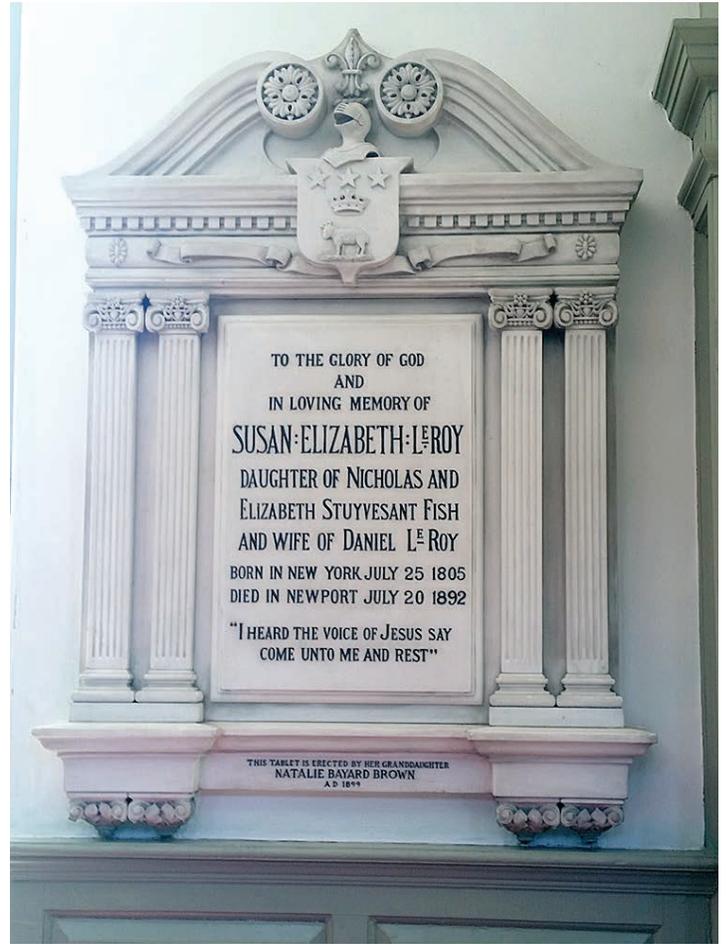
Daniel lived in LeRoy for a few years, and then he moved back to New York City where he married Susan Fish in 1826. Daniel's house in New York City, at 20 St. Mark's Place was built in 1832, and is still standing. It is listed in a historic district. Daniel and Susan moved to Newport and raised five children. Their home was located at 206 Bellview Avenue. It was torn down many years ago. Now, it would be adjacent to the International Tennis Hall of Fame which we drove past several times on our way to visit the Newport Mansions.

Susan and Daniel had a daughter also named Susan, who married George Warren Dresser. He had graduated from West Point and served during the Civil War. He served at Manassas and Bull Run and was an assistant instructor of military tactics at West Point. After retiring from the Army he became a civil engineer.

Tragically, Susan Dresser and her husband died in 1883, leaving the five children orphans who were raised by their grandparents, Susan and Daniel LeRoy.

One of the granddaughters, Edith Dresser, married George Washington Vanderbilt in 1898. If George Washington Vanderbilt sounds familiar, he is the man who built "Biltmore House" in Ashville, North Carolina. His brother, Cornelius Vanderbilt II built the "Breakers" in Newport. Another brother, William, built Marble House in Newport. All three mansions were designed by famous architect Richard Morris Hunt, who also lived in Newport. (And just for an additional connection, Richard Morris Hunt, also designed the base to the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor.)

On Saturday, while we toured William Vanderbilt's Newport mansion, known as Marble House, I looked into the kitchen cupboard, and there, believe it or not, were three small Jell-O molds – marked "Jell-O." Ray Yacuzzo helped with a small flashlight so I could get a better photo with my cell phone. I have never seen this shape before, and I hope to do



LeRoy plaque in Trinity Church in Newport Rhode Island.

a little more research, but it sure seems like someone in William Vanderbilt's family - or his household, enjoyed Jell-O.

On Sunday, we visited the Breakers and the Elms, two other Newport mansions. I



Jell-O mold in kitchen at Marble House.

had hoped to visit Trinity Church in Newport to photograph the marble plaque dedicated to Susan Fish LeRoy and to find the graves of some of the LeRoy family buried there, but as luck would have it, there was a huge police parade on Sunday and we had to find an alternate route to avoid getting caught up in the parade traffic. The bus driver looked for a detour, and turned down "LeRoy Street." Yes, you've guessed it, named for Daniel Le-

Roy. We asked a few folks in Newport how they pronounce LeRoy and were surprised that they pronounce it LeeRoy. Poor Daniel and Susan I'm sure they wouldn't approve.

May 11th, 7:00 pm  
LeRoy House  
Suzi Parron, Author of  
"Following the  
Barn Quilt Trail"  
FREE  
Everyone welcome!

