



What Minerva Built
Episode 6: Gatekeeping
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Molly Lester: The most famous project in Minerva Parker Nichols' entire career—the one that brought her the most praise from around the country and cemented her place in contemporary conversations about architecture—never actually got built. Minerva's pavilion for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago was to be her crowning achievement. She'd been specifically invited by the Queen Isabella Association to design their pavilion for the World's Fair, which meant that she would be solely responsible for one of the largest spaces on the world stage created explicitly for women. The project was among the largest buildings she'd ever been asked to design. It was the culmination of so many themes in her work, and a coming-home of sorts for this Illinois born-and-bred woman.

That is, until everything fell apart.

[THEME MUSIC BEGINS]

The events surrounding the Queen Isabella Pavilion and the World's Columbian Exposition comprise a roller coaster of politics and personalities, fortunes and failures—not just for Minerva, but for the women stepping into the profession around her. It's a story of women pitted against each other, and others who refused to abandon one another. Mostly, it's a saga vexed by the question that hung over Minerva's entire career, and lingered in professional circles long after her death: Who gets to decide what makes an architect?

This is "What Minerva Built," a podcast about the story of architect Minerva Parker Nichols, and a conversation about what she can teach us about the work of architecture, history, and preservation today. I'm your host, Molly Lester, and this is Episode 6: Gatekeeping.

[THEME MUSIC ENDS]

Molly: As the first world's fair to be held in the United States, the 1876 Centennial Exhibition was a popular failure. It drew hordes of people to Philadelphia, including Minerva and her family, but it lost money overall, and architects were

underwhelmed by the fairground buildings. So, a decade later, when civic leaders began to do the math about the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus landing in the Americas, the country was determined to out-do itself with a new fair. Cities such as New York, St. Louis, Washington, D.C. competed to be the host. In each city, the richest financiers pooled their funds in an effort to outbid each other. Eventually, Congress settled the issue by deciding on Chicago. The fair's organizers sent out a save-for-date for an opening ceremony to be held in May 1893, and then got down to business. (By the way, if you're doing the math, then you've realized that they missed the mark of the quadricentennial by a year; Congress decided to push back the fair to allow more time for design and construction, although they fudged the delay by holding a dedication ceremony for the fair in October 1892.)

An exposition corporation was formed, and a national exposition commission was set up with renowned architect and planner Daniel Burnham in charge as the director of works. At the same time, Congress established a "Board of Lady Managers." They spent extensive time debating where and how women should feature in the Exposition: should exhibits by women be scattered throughout the fair, or concentrated in one place? On the one hand, distributing them to all of the pavilions would have the effect of mainstreaming their contributions; on the other hand, they might receive more attention and celebration if they were featured in one commemorative building. In the end, the latter option won out, and the Exposition's board allocated funds for a Woman's Building. Ultimately, the Board of Lady Managers hoped that as women organized around their own goals and projects getting this Woman's Building constructed, they would also build a sense of solidarity to organize for larger issues such as suffrage.

Meanwhile, a counterpart to the Board of Lady Managers emerged in the years leading up to the fair. At a meeting of women to discuss the big event, one woman raised her hand to ask, "Why should Columbus only be honored, when Queen Isabella was the one that made the discovery of the New World possible?" There was a murmur of agreement in the room, and soon after, several women founded the Queen Isabella Association to commemorate the queen's contributions to Christopher Columbus' 1492 voyage. Together, the association's members quickly set about raising funds for a pavilion and statue at the fairground in her honor.

In 1890, the "Isabellas" (as they called themselves) hired Minerva Parker, impressed by her credentials and the number of buildings she already had under her belt by this time. The project overlapped with her commission for the New Century Club of Philadelphia, and represented yet another scaling-up of her specialization in residential architecture and yet another chance to prove herself as a professional architect.

In a nod to Queen Isabella's native country, Minerva wrote to someone in Spain to request plans of the Alhambra palace to serve as inspiration, and she sketched out ways to incorporate what she called "Moorish motifs" in the building. The final design included apartments for women and children, as well as medical, press, and legal departments to serve the women attending the fair. All told, the project was a testament not only to the organizing power of the women who funded it, but also to the social independence of the women who could travel and stay there, and to the professional clout of the architect who could see it completion in a relatively short period of time.

But the design's promising intentions were soon lost in a dispute between the Queen Isabella Association and the Board of Lady Managers. The two groups apparently felt the need to compete with each other, and fight for space and superiority at the fair. As we see so often in American history—the people who are already under-represented are pitted against each other to fight for an even smaller piece of the pie. Very few women were involved in the planning of the World's Columbian Exposition, and here they were, competing such that even fewer would be.

So it was that, in a gambit of politics, the Board of Lady Managers managed to outmaneuver the Isabellas with what amounted to a pretty literal case of gatekeeping. Led by its chairwoman Bertha Palmer, the Board of Lady Managers convinced the men on the fair's Committee on Grounds and Buildings to outlaw any private clubhouses on the fairgrounds. Because the Isabellas were funding their pavilion with private donations, while the Woman's Building was financed by official Exposition funds, the Isabellas were basically pushed out of the fairgrounds. Confined to a smaller site outside the Exposition, the Queen Isabella Association was forced to abandon Minerva's elaborate Moorish-inspired pavilion in favor of a more modest design.

Meanwhile, for its pavilion, the Board of Lady Managers hosted a nationwide design competition, soliciting entries from architects who were women. It was a relatively small pool of available people, made even smaller when Louise Blanchard Bethune refused to participate because the prize money for the competition's female architect was a mere fraction of what male architects earned for Exposition buildings. As if to underscore how little they thought of the winning designer for the Woman's Building, the fair's organizers promised \$1,000 to the winning female architect...and \$10,000 to the fair's male architects.

After getting muscled out of the Queen Isabella Association project, Minerva was essentially blackballed from the Woman's Building competition. So, with two of the country's highest-profile and most-qualified women architects out of the picture, a crop of newcomers placed in the competition instead. The prize purse, and the

opportunity to see her building constructed, went to 24-year old Sophia Hayden, a recent graduate of the architecture program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The Woman's Building was quite the breakthrough for Sophia Hayden, but it ultimately led to her breakdown. Only a year out of university at the time of the competition, she was teaching art in a high school in Massachusetts because she hadn't been able to find work in an architecture office. Winning the competition offered her a foothold in the profession, and she jumped at it, despite never before having supervised a building's construction at any scale, let alone one as massive and monumental as the Woman's Building. For a year after winning the competition, she traveled back and forth to Chicago to oversee the project. Her professional greenness was clear, and it didn't help that Bertha Palmer was a demanding and powerful client. The whole experience proved overwhelming, and in the summer of 1892, she suffered a nervous breakdown.

This was catnip for members of the press and the architecture profession who were eager to point out the failures of women as architects. Hayden's collapse was publicized as an attack of "melancholia," and as she traveled home to recover, the press quickly made hay of the situation in her absence, pointing to the particular case of Sophia Hayden as the reason that all women should not be architects. The *American Architect and Building News* was especially critical, questioning "how successfully woman with her physical limitation can enter and engage in the work of a profession which is a very wearing one." Barely concealing its smugness, the publication went on to write: "If the building of which the women seem so proud...is to mean the physical ruin of its architect, it will be a much more telling argument against the wisdom of women entering this especial profession than anything else could be." In practically the same sentence, the *American Architect and Building News* managed to both bemoan the fact that "Miss Hayden has been victimized" and revel in the conflict between her and "her fellow-women."

But it was another one of her "fellow women" who came to Sophia Hayden's defense, and came out swinging. Minerva Parker Nichols' essay, titled "A Woman on the Woman's Building," was published in the *American Architect and Building News* issue published on December 10, 1892. Despite the maneuvers that cost her her own design at the fair, Minerva was firm in her rebuke of the Board of Lady Managers and, more pointedly, the *American Architect and Building News*—critiquing the male editors of the trade publication in their own pages. In a scorching essay, she began:

Minerva V/O: *Comment on the success or 'lack of success' of the Woman's Building designed by Miss Hayden is unfair to her and to the general architectural profession. The conditions of the competition and the selection of a design made it*

impossible to secure satisfactory results. What other building, whether given by appointment or by competition, could have fallen into the hands of an architectural student without experience or practice? (Minerva voiceover, 46:27 – 46:51)

Molly: Over the course of 400 words, Minerva stood between Sophia Hayden and her detractors, calling into question Sophia's preparation for the project but laying the blame for her inexperience at the feet of those who were supposed to equip her for this work. In Minerva's eyes, the real reason Sophia Hayden had a breakdown was because M.I.T. (and other university programs like it) spent too much time in the classroom and not enough time on the construction site. Minerva was not alone in making this argument at this point in the late 19th century, but she was uniquely positioned to make it. Minerva respected and even advocated for the new university architecture programs, even if as a woman, she was barred from attending many of them. But she did not support these programs at the expense of the building trades and the apprenticeship model.

That's why Minerva faulted the system around Sophia Hayden more than the woman herself, and she was careful to distinguish Sophia Harden's experience—or inexperience, to put it more accurately—from the broader prospects for women in architecture.

Minerva V/O: *Because one woman suffers from exhaustion in the daily wear and tear of her household duty, you would not say that women were unfitted for domestic life....And [yet], because one inexperienced woman, tried by a new position,...is ill, you rush into the ranks to save all other women from a like fate.*

Molly: In truth, Minerva had little patience for anyone who merely studied, and did not *practice*, architecture. Again and again in her opinion pieces, and most pointedly in the essay in *American Architect and Building News*, she called out the failings of the entire architecture system as it became increasingly formalized and institutionalized. She demanded that it take responsibility for equipping practitioners (men *and* women) for this work, and called out anyone (man or woman) who wasn't willing to put in that work.

Minerva V/O: *It is not fair, because one woman makes a doubtful success, to draw conclusions from her example. It is time to put aside prejudice and sentimentalism, and judge women's work by their ability...We do not need women as architects, we do not need men, but we do need brains enough to lift the architecture of this country beyond the grasp of unskilled and unqualified practitioners.*

Molly: Minerva's passionate essay in the *American Architect and Building News* stands out because in many ways, she had a clearer idea of what made an architect "professional" than many of her colleagues in the field did. In fact, Minerva's whole career played out in an era of uncertainty about the very word "professional." As

the divide deepened between those trained in the building trades and those educated in the new university programs, members of the architectural field in the late 19th century had an identity crisis of sorts, waging debates over credentials and certification in order to promote the qualified and weed out the unqualified. If the profession of architecture was not as *coarse* as the building trades, and if it wasn't as *commonplace* as patternbooks, then what was it?

Apparently, masculine.

In their eagerness to exclude, the emerging institutions for professional architects defined their discipline in terms that explicitly reinforced masculine associations. For instance, the American Institute of Architects' Committee on Education issued a statement at one point that said,

Male V/O: "An architect, we define as one ranking in the class of men of culture, learning and refinement, differentiated from the others of his class solely by his function as a creator of pure beauty...From these assumptions, it follows necessarily that the objective of architectural education must be the breeding of gentlemen of cultivation...who can inspire, organize, and direct widely different classes of men."

Molly: Men of culture. Gentlemen of cultivation. Different classes of men. There's no mistaking who was included in that definition of a professional architect, and who was not, at a time when the American Institute of Architects was consolidating its power as the primary gatekeeper for the architecture profession in the United States. And before you posit that their definition predated any practicing women architects, let me say that that definition was published in 1906—35 years after the American Institute of Architects inducted Louise Blanchard Bethune as a member and then elevated her as one of its fellows. (Yes, let's note that the American Institute of Architecture...along with plenty of other institutions...refers to its most important members as fellows.)

This kind of gatekeeping didn't happen by accident, and it didn't happen only here in the United States. Despina Stratigakos is the historian from the University at Buffalo we heard from in previous episodes; she's documented it happening at this same time in Germany:

Despina: The entry of women into the field happens in a very concentrated way because Germany has all public architecture schools. And so, when the women are able to push to change the law so that they are able to matriculate at universities, this happens very quickly. It happens within five years that all German universities and architecture programs open up to women. So, the shift there happens very quickly, it's noticed that there's this new, you know, this wave of new people coming into architecture. And you can see the architectural professionals, various branches, kind of rally against them, and in that moment, we begin to see ideas being articulated

that really were not so concrete before. So for example, there are articles written in this period as women are trying to enter practice of what makes for a good architect. And lo and behold, you know, qualities that are considered feminine are all of a sudden, you know, a liability if you want to become an architect, and masculinity becomes a necessity if you want to practice architecture.

They at that moment begin to define architectural practice—what good architecture is—against the newcomers in this.

Many, many articles are written in this period of like, women cannot be architects because...And then the list starts: They're reproductive instead of productive.

Molly: As the 19th century gave way to the 20th century, membership in the American Institute of Architects became the norm for practicing architects. In turn, the AIA amassed more power to determine who qualified for membership in the organization and—by extension—the profession. It set the terms for educational expectations, and credentialing, and eventually, licensure. Women existed in architecture long before these standards did, but that didn't stop the profession's institutions from setting the terms such that women rarely qualified.

So, why does this matter? Is it just much ado about nothing—meaningless words, rather than a substantive reflection of the profession of architecture then and now?

Actually, it's anything but meaningless. For over a hundred years, the gatekeepers of the architecture profession have been writing the rules in ways that exclude women—both explicitly and implicitly, intentionally and accidentally.

And it's worked. More on that after a break.

BREAK

In recent years, a group called Equity by Design in San Francisco has been collecting the largest data set ever on equity within the profession of architecture, surveying over 14,000 people in the field about their professional education and experiences. Their findings have been sobering.

Efrie Escott: *What the 2018 one says is that 47% of the people participating in architecture and related fields are women.*

Molly: This is Efrie Escott, an architect in Philadelphia and a co-chair of AIA Philadelphia's Women in Architecture group.

Efrie: *And that says, great, we're doing an awesome job. We're almost hitting parity; 1% or a little under are non-binary. So we've got a little bit of representation, we're almost at 50%. Awesome. You turn the page on the report, and then you find out*

that the majority of it is in the most junior positions at firms. And even though the number of women that were getting licensed was increasing, and we thought that it was just about the pipeline and education, and that once we got parity there, or even slightly more women than men there, we would see more parity once you hit licensure and above. And what they found is actually the number, the percentage of women who have licenses as a part of the overall population of registered architects was increasing, and then started dropping again. So what we can say from that is, well, the majority, the diversity is in the younger generations, it's in the more junior positions. The fact that that doesn't seem to be changing is a problem.

And the other thing that they found is that women are paid less than men at the same level, across all levels in the field. And that is infuriating.

Molly: There's lots more data to back up these findings, and decades' worth of debate about why these structural trends have persisted. If you're interested in learning more, I recommend you check out the work of Equity by Design and dig into Despina Stratigakos' research on women in architecture.

But what I've been curious about, as I think about the ways that Minerva's story connects to current conditions of the architecture profession, is how this kind of gatekeeping has persisted in the 130 years since Minerva entered practice. For over a century, women have been practicing architecture, and for over a century, the formal institutions of architecture have found ways to set the terms of the profession so that women continue to exist at the margins—or worse.

It begins by forgetting that women have been professional architects for nearly as long as men. Louise Blanchard Bethune and Minerva Parker Nichols were in practice within the first few decades of the profession. But when I ask current practicing architects what women they learned about in architecture school, it's clear that they barely learned about any women at all—and certainly not a century's worth of them.

Fon: *Honestly, the architects that the professors pushed at the time as precedent were all male architects.*

Molly: This is Fon Wang, an architect we first heard from in Episode 5.

Fon: *You know, Corbusier, Richard Meier, Gehry, all these folks, it really just seemed like the ones that were highlighted were male architects.*

Molly: That's what I heard from other women, too, including Mary DeNadai. I asked her how many female architects she learned about in architecture school.

Mary: *There were only two. This is this was in the mid 60s, there were only two—two, in my best of my recollection, only two female architects that I was aware of in those*

days. One was Julia Morgan. And the other one was Natalie Le Blois, who was at SOM.

Molly: Fon's and Mary's experiences are anecdotal, of course, but I heard it over and over again—and experienced it myself in 6 years of higher education in design schools. Every time I speak on Minerva to these audiences, there's a general response of "I had no idea about her!" One time I even heard that from my former professor! Which is to say, this kind of gatekeeping is not always malicious, but it is persistent, and it requires active work to undo. Because where there's gatekeeping in education, there's usually gatekeeping in practice.

Nicole: *I met a woman who was a Fellow of the AIA, and she was from New York City.*

Molly: Nicole Dress is an architect in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She's been practicing for about 30 years.

Nicole: *She became a Fellow in the AIA, which was fairly rare for women in those days to become Fellow of the AIA.*

Molly: Unsurprisingly, most of the Fellows were...fellows.

Nicole: *When she became a Fellow at the AIA Convention in Philadelphia, and celebrating—so it must have been '76, 1976. They had the fellowship ceremony at a building where she, as a woman, was not allowed to enter the building from the front door. So, she had to come in the back door. (Nicole Dress continued, 02:51 – 03:16)*

Molly: This is what gatekeeping looks like. It's what it looks like when the pattern becomes personal. For many reasons, and for over a century, architecture has had a problem assimilating women into the profession—and it must be stated that, as with most aspects of American society, this marginalization based on gender is compounded by marginalization based on race.

So, I interviewed a bunch of architects who are women, to understand how gatekeeping operates in implicit and explicit ways in the profession—and how the ripple effects of that kind of gatekeeping can permeate American society, so that *everyone* associates the architect with masculinity and whiteness.

I made a point to interview women of different ages, ranging from graduate students to experienced principals who have been practicing for decades. How do their experiences mirror those of Sophia Hayden, and Louise Blanchard Bethune, and Minerva Parker Nichols? How has the definition of an architect changed over the past century...or has it?

Nicole: *So, a friend of mine, Susan, was one of the few older women architects I knew at my one firm.*

Molly: This is Nicole Dress again.

Nicole: *And she said that when she joined the AIA, she was sent a tie clip. Even though her name is obviously Susan, because that was what they did when you join the AIA. They sent you a tie clip as a thank you, without even thinking about the fact that gee, maybe not all of these people want a tie clip.*

Molly: And then there's Nan Gutterman, an architect who's been registered since 1984. She bumped up against the entrenched definition of an architect before she even got into design school.

Nan: *In the summer between my junior and senior year, the Assistant Principal would personally arrange the schedules of those people who were the...rising seniors.*

Nan: *And when I went to talk to her, I decided to ask if I could take a mechanical drawing class, because I know I had in my mind that I wanted to become an architect. To which she sort of went, but why?*

I had to, you know, explain that I wanted to be an architect and thought this would be a good idea. I'm in a class of about 20-plus students. I was one of two women.

Molly: Sarah Dreller had a similar experience, interested in architecture school in the 1980s, but steered away from it by someone who had absorbed the idea that architecture and masculinity were inextricably linked. As Sarah's experience demonstrates, gatekeeping doesn't have to be malicious to be effective.

Sarah: *I actually wanted to go to architecture school in undergraduate, and this was in the 80s. Now when I was in high school, my dad took me to the local architecture school and I met with the head of the department, a man, and he told me, you know, if you want to apply, here's how you do it. But I need to tell you that it's hard for women in this field. And I can't tell whether he was a jerk or whether he was trying to be a nice person. But that turned me off. I was 17 years old.*

When I was in architecture school, about half of my studio was women, but there was kind of an acknowledgement,...it was an open secret...we all knew that many of us were not going to end up in architecture for one reason or another. Whereas there was definitely an expectation that the men were going to do it.

Molly: And then there's Fon Wang, who started practicing more recently, in the 1990s.

Fon: *When you first graduated, the first couple years, there's a lot of women, that's probably 50/50.*

I think, generally speaking, then and even now, when you look up from that field of staff, it's the leadership that is definitely heavy towards men and less women. And I think you noticed that right away when you start working.

Fon: I was in my late 20s, and I just joined this firm, and we were having a consultant meeting, a big team meeting at their office, and the consultants didn't quite know me yet because I was new. We were all sitting around this big table and one of the engineers comes in. And I'm like the only female in the room, and I'm the project architect. One of the consultants comes in and sits down and he's like, "Oh, you know, I was running out of my office, and I forgot to make copies of this report. I'm so sorry. Could you make some copies?" And he basically handed the reports to me.

Molly: By this point, perhaps you're thinking that this is an old story—that was then, this is now. But that's the whole point: Minerva and Sophia encountered it then, and women still encounter it now. Susan Kolber recently graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with master's degrees in architecture and landscape architecture. While in grad school, she was involved with the Penn Women in Design student group, cultivating mentorships and firm tours and symposia and events to elevate the visibility of women practicing architecture.

Susan: For us, the exposure part is really important, especially at a school like Penn that isn't, I would say, historically an activist school.

Molly: In many ways, the group exists to hold its institution accountable in achieving better representation, in much the same way that the organization Equity by Design was formed to hold professional institutions accountable. Susan even names Equity by Design and its founder as one of her models in this ongoing work against gatekeeping.

Susan: I was introduced to Equity by Design in San Francisco, which is, run by Rosa Sheng. And she is a complete inspiration to me. I think the work she did—is doing for women in architecture is absolutely phenomenal and has really forced the AIA to address this slow changing profession.

Molly: This is why groups like Equity by Design exist, and the Women in Architecture networking group of AIA Philadelphia, and the Penn Women in Design organization at the University of Pennsylvania: these groups (and so many more like them, including Move Over Bob, which we heard about in Episode 5) represent women and allies organizing to tackle structural barriers in the design professions.

Jazz: I think what's so interesting about that is, I would say, I almost resisted being part of anything that was labeled female or woman in architecture.

Molly: This is Jazz Graves, a practicing architect who co-chairs the Women in Architecture organization of AIA Philadelphia alongside Efrie Escott, who we heard from a little while ago. I interviewed them together about their experiences in getting involved with the organization, and why the architecture profession still needs groups like this, nearly a century and a half after women first graduated from architecture programs.

Jazz: *I was so resistant to that.*

Because when you put the label on, as women, you're now a woman in architecture, you're not just an architect.

Molly: Jazz is practically quoting Minerva's essay in *American Architect and Building News*, despite the fact that their words are separated by 128 years.

Jazz: *You might view this as, you know, I'm just here to do the work. I'm capable. I am. I'm good at this, and that should be enough. And the thing that I have found—it might have been the first meeting, or the second—I just remember walking out of there and being like, I'm gonna get something out of this.*

I am going to get so much out of this, and it was just simple, like, nuanced advice or just having folks going through the same thing, or just willing to listen—almost acknowledging it.

Efrie: *So Jazz and I became co-chairs of the Women in Architecture group last November.*

Molly: This is Efrie Escott, who conducts architectural research when she's not involved in the AIA Philadelphia group.

Efrie: *Event from event, it will completely change in terms of what our population looks like. Some of the larger lectures might be 50/50, or even more men attending than women.*

The mentoring events really are meant to be women mentoring other women. And some of the trainings are also very specific, because the issues that women face within the profession are sometimes very different. And the way that our professional path has developed, the types of skills that we have to have in the room, because we are still a minority in the profession, are different from the ones that men have, and the ones that men need.

Molly: And the ones that the profession's own institutions had been promoting for over a century. When we come back, we'll hear the conclusion of Minerva's experience at the World's Columbian Exposition.

BREAK

Molly: So, Minerva never did get to design a building for the World's Columbian Exposition. It was a real loss for her career, with the eyes of the whole world on Chicago. But her column in the *American Architect and Building News* got plenty of eyes on it, too, elevating her national profile even further in the wake of the fair. In fact, in November of 1893, the *Philadelphia Times* wrote an extended article in which they interviewed important local architects for their perspective on the fair. Architectural historian Aaron Wunsch picks up the thread from here.

Aaron: *The goal of the article was to get 11 Philadelphia architects to weigh in on the implications of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, which was just then winding down. There were remnants of it still standing, but most of it had been carted off already.*

I went back and looked through the article and especially at Minerva Parker Nichols' contribution to it, where she is really kind of reflecting not just on the meaning of this giant enterprise in Chicago for the field, but also indirectly, I think, for her own career. She says things like, The architects of the World's Fair are to be congratulated on their harmony of design.

Molly: In some ways, Minerva was in a double-bind, hemmed in by the expectation of social niceties in order to maintain some professional standing among her male counterparts. She was gracious in praising her colleagues, as she had been in her essay defending Sophia Hayden's Woman's Building—even as her own pavilion design was cast by the wayside. But all of the events surrounding the World's Columbian Exposition did have some positive effect on her career and national profile.

Aaron: *It's an act of real humility on the one hand, because her design doesn't get built. On the other hand, she also gets a kind of recognition from the competition that she hadn't gotten before. So, in many ways she benefits, albeit indirectly and maybe less directly than she should have from that competition, and from the World's Columbian Exposition itself.*

Molly: That's the irony of this saga in the arc of Minerva's work: her pavilion was not built, but her national profile was. And yet, even with her elevated stature, she's forced to contend with the blowback of Sophia Hayden's inexperience. In her editorial in the *American Architect and Building News*, and in plenty of other essays she wrote, Minerva needed to push back against the questions that hovered over her whole career—questions that in many ways still hang over the profession of architecture today: what makes someone an architect, and who gets to decide? The series of events surrounding the Queen Isabella Pavilion are an instructive example of gatekeeping in the architecture profession—beginning in the most literal sense with the Isabellas getting pushed off the fairgrounds and Minerva's design getting scrapped.

Sometimes, the professional gatekeeping has been explicit in other ways, such as the choice of specifically masculine terms that Despina Stratigakos has documented in early 20th century Germany, or the fact that the AIA sent tie pins to its female members, or the fact that when it was inducting *Fellows*, it chose a venue where only men could enter through the front door. Other times, it's more layered. It's subtle. It's pervasive without being pernicious.

Either way, the fact that individual women (including Minerva Parker Nichols) manage to succeed in such an obstructive system, does not mean that the obstructions do not exist. Or that those barriers don't take a toll in the long term.

[THEME MUSIC BEGINS]

Aaron: *The irony, or maybe even the tragedy, of this moment is that it represents the high point of her career. She's still basking in the recognition.*

But she's also gotten married to the Reverend William Nichols, and is preparing to radically curtail her career.

This is probably the high point of her national recognition and her local recognition as well. That's partly because she moves north, first to Brooklyn and then to New England. But it is because as well, her production is going to taper off at this point.

Molly: We'll hear more about that in the next episode.

CLOSING CREDITS