



# CASS GILBERT SOCIETY

*Organized to preserve the work of Minnesota's most important architect.*

## CASS GILBERT SOCIETY CELEBRATES ITS 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY October 13, 2018, Minnesota State Capitol

Members and friends of the Cass Gilbert Society celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the organization on October 13, 2018, at the Minnesota State Capitol. The L'Etoile du Nord Vault, a reclaimed space in the basement of the Capitol, was an excellent venue for the occasion. The Society's interpretative display panels that highlight important aspects of Cass Gilbert's career were arranged around the perimeter of the room. John Yust, Cass Gilbert Society president, welcomed everyone and introduced proclamations by Governor Mark Dayton and St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter. Helen Post Curry, a great-granddaughter of Cass Gilbert, recounted her experiences with the Cass Gilbert Society, beginning with her first visit to St. Paul in 2004, and her ongoing advocacy for the preservation and restoration of Cass Gilbert buildings. Among these efforts are the tour program she offers for the lobby of the Woolworth Building in New York City (<https://woolworthtours.com/>) and ongoing efforts to save the Seaside Sanatorium, Waterford, Connecticut, one of Gilbert's last works that is unique in his oeuvre.

Jean Velleu, the first president of the Cass Gilbert Society, recounted the first years of the Society and its origins in the efforts of the U.S. Courts Second Circuit Committee on History and Commemorative Events to organize a symposium in New York City in 1998. As part of that effort, the symposium group toured St. Paul and invited participants to the New York City conference. Some of that early history is also recounted in the *Cass Gilbert Society Newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 4 (<https://cassgilbertsociety.org/cgs/nls/CGS-NL-1-4-Dec1999.pdf>). Marjorie Pearson, the second president of the Cass Gilbert Society, spoke about the educational mission of the Cass Gilbert Society and how it was carried out through the Newsletters (now fully available at <https://cassgilbertsociety.org/cgs/newsletters.html>), the Society's website, and the ongoing tour program. The first website was introduced in 2001 and subsequently upgraded in 2008 and 2010, thanks to several grants awarded through the Minnesota Historical Society. The tour program has featured local sites in St. Paul and vicinity as well as other cities throughout the United States where Gilbert made significant contributions. One very important project was the sponsorship of the Twin Cities Public Television video, *Cass Gilbert Standing the Test of Time*, with major funding from the John R. Cross

### Program

**Cass Gilbert Society**  
- 1998-2018 -  
- Celebrating Twenty Years



October 13, 2018  
L'Etoile du Nord Vault - Room B-15  
Minnesota State Capitol

Fund (2006), winner of two regional Emmy awards.

Ted Lentz, Cass Gilbert Society president between 2010 and 2016, spoke about the success of the interpretative display panels, originally created in 2008 and expanded in scope and content in 2010. Most recently the panels were installed for six months in the Capitol (January – July 2017). He also recounted his participation as the representative of the Cass Gilbert Society as a member of the Minnesota State Capitol Preservation Commission and its role in the restoration of the building. John Yust summarized the Society's most recent program, a project to locate and record furnishings from the Capitol, completed at the end of 2017. This project was enabled by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the Minnesota Historical Society. The project has its own dedicated website <https://furnishings.cassgilbertsociety.org/>.

Katherine Solomonson, Ph.D., Associate Professor, University of Minnesota College of Design, and Marjorie Pearson, Ph.D., Cass Gilbert Society President Emerita and Newsletter Editor, then presented "Cass Gilbert: Architect of Intersecting Worlds," an overview of Gilbert's life and career and the Midwest and East Coast forces that shaped his work. Their presentation was followed by a buffet lunch. Following the lunch, Ted Lentz led a tour of the Capitol for those who wanted a more detailed look. Tour visits have greatly increased with the opening of the Capitol following the restoration. The Capitol is open for visitors seven days a week with tours on the hour. For more information, see <http://www.mnhs.org/capitol/activities/tours>.

## **A Legacy of Preservation and Restoration**

The following buildings designed by Cass Gilbert are among those that have been rehabilitated, restored, and/or put to new uses in the past 30 years.

### **Connecticut**

Ives Memorial Library, New Haven, completed in 1911, restored and expanded in 1990  
Waterbury City Hall, completed in 1915, restored in 2010  
New Haven Railroad Station, completed in 1918, restored in 1985

### **Minnesota**

Blood Warehouse, now the Gilbert Building, St. Paul, completed in 1894, converted to offices in 1980s  
Endicott Building, St. Paul, completed in 1890, converted to apartments in 2013 and Minnesota Museum of American Art in 2018-2019  
Gotzian Company Buildings, St. Paul, completed in 1892 and 1895, converted to apartments in the 1980s  
Minneapolis Realty Company Warehouse, completed in 1909, converted to Theater de la Jeune Lune in 1992, now Aria Event Space  
Minnesota State Capitol, completed in 1905, restoration completed in 2017  
Northern Pacific Railway Depot, Little Falls, completed in 1900, converted to offices in 1990  
Roselawn Cemetery Chapel, completed in 1904, exterior restoration work in 2015

### **Missouri**

St. Louis Art Museum, completed in 1904, restored and expanded in 2013  
St. Louis Public Library, completed in 1912, restored and expanded in 2012

### **Montana**

Metals Bank (State Savings Bank), Butte, completed in 1906, converted to offices and apartments in 2007

### **New Jersey**

Essex County Courthouse, Newark, completed in 1908, restoration completed in 2006  
First National State Bank Building, Newark, completed in 1912, restored and converted to a hotel in 2014

### **New York**

R. C. Williams Warehouse, Manhattan, completed in 1928, restored in 2012 as a school  
SJM Warehouse, Manhattan, completed in 1928, converted to apartments in 2002, with synagogue added to lower level in 2016  
U.S. Army Supply Terminal, Brooklyn, completed in 1919, ongoing rehabilitation since the 1990s  
U.S. Custom House, Bowling Green, completed in 1907, restored in 1987 as George Heye Center of the National Museum of the American Indian and the U.S. Bankruptcy Court  
U.S. Federal Courthouse, Manhattan, completed in 1936, restoration completed in 2013  
West Street Building, Manhattan, completed in 1907, converted to apartments in 2000, ongoing restoration in 2003 and 2012  
Woolworth Building, Manhattan, completed in 1913, ongoing restoration work since the 1990s

### **Ohio**

Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, completed in 1915, restoration completed in 2016

### **Canada**

U.S. Legation Building, Ottawa, completed in 1932, to be converted to museum use, ongoing 2018

## **Cass Gilbert Society**

### **Highlights of 20 Years, 1998 - 2018**

#### **1998**

Cass Gilbert Society is incorporated in the State of Minnesota

Cass Gilbert Society founders participate in **New York City Symposium on Cass Gilbert** organized by the U.S. Courts Second Circuit Committee on History and Commemorative Events

#### **1999**

Debut of *Cass Gilbert Society Newsletter*

Cass Gilbert Society awarded Minnesota Humanities Commission grant for lecture program

- Thomas O'Sullivan, "Gilbert's Minnesota State Capitol: Think globally, design locally"
- Carolyn Kompelien, "Minnesota's Showplace: Politics and Preservation"
- Geoffrey Blodgett, "The Early Years: From Hard Times to Takeoff"
- Gail Fenske, "The Woolworth Building"
- Tom Blanck, "History of the Bethlehem Presbyterian Church"

First Cass Gilbert Stroll: Summit Hill

#### **2000**

Cass Gilbert Society awarded Minnesota Humanities Commission grant for lecture program

- Paul Clifford Larson, "Missing in Inaction: Some Reflections on the Lost Beginnings of Cass Gilbert's Architectural Career"
- Sharon Irish, "Beyond Modern Traditionalism: The Architecture of Cass Gilbert in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century"
- Steven Flanders, "Cass Gilbert, Life and Work: Architect of the Public Domain"
- Geoffrey Blodgett, "The Young Cass Gilbert: 1880-1882"

Cass Gilbert Society hosts celebration in the restored Minnesota State Capitol Rathskeller

First Mother's Day Stroll: Grand Hill

Fall Tour to New Prague

#### **2001**

Cass Gilbert Society awarded Minnesota Humanities Commission grant for lecture program

- Samantha Sanchez and Tim Coulter, "The Seligman House, Helena, Montana"
- William Towner Morgan, "My Life with Cass Gilbert: Updating Early Scholarship"
- John Neess and Mark Thomas, "The D. H. Watson House"

Second Mother's Day Stroll: 4 Cass Gilbert churches

First Cass Gilbert Society website is launched

Fall Tour to New Richmond, Wisconsin

#### **2002**

Cass Gilbert Society awarded Minnesota Humanities Commission grant for lecture program

- Barbara Christen, "Cass Gilbert's Capitol Approach and University of Minnesota Campus Plans"
- David Lanegran, "Historic St. Paul in the Days of Cass Gilbert"
- Mary Beth Betts, "Cass Gilbert's Architectural Aesthetics 1890-1934"
- Carol Highsmith, "Photographing Cass Gilbert"

Third Mother's Day Stroll: St. Martin's on the Lake, Minnetonka Beach

Jean Velleu receives St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission award

Fall Tour to New York City

#### **2003**

Cass Gilbert Society awarded Minnesota Humanities Commission grant for lecture program

- Report on New York City tour
- Paul Clifford Larson, "Of Hormones, Hubris, and High Hopes: Cass Gilbert's First European Tour as the Gateway to His Career"
- Sally Webster, "Signs of Civilization: Cass Gilbert and the Decorative Program of the Minnesota State Capitol"

- C. Ford Peatross, “Cass Gilbert in the Library of Congress”
- Fourth Mother’s Day Stroll: Cass Gilbert in Lowertown  
 Fall tour to Roselawn Cemetery and Taxbox House, White Bear Lake

## 2004

- Cass Gilbert Society awarded Minnesota Humanities Commission grant for lecture program
- Lance Neckar, “Cass Gilbert and the Northrop Mall: Precedents, Methods, and Implications”
  - Patricia Murphy, “Cass Gilbert: Midwestern Origins, Architectural Education, and Early Career”
  - Helen Post Curry, “Cass Gilbert in Connecticut: A Personal View”
- Cass Gilbert Society attends a performance of *The Ballroom* at the Theater de la Jeune Lune (Minneapolis Realty Warehouse)  
 1<sup>st</sup> Mother’s Day Tea and Tour: Cedarhurst Mansion, Cottage Grove  
 Fall Tour: Summit Hill and Ramsey Hill

## 2005

- Cass Gilbert Society awarded Minnesota Humanities Commission grant for lecture program
- Sheila Smith, Tom Blanck, Herb Grika, “State Capitol Collectors”
  - Marjorie Pearson, “The Resurrection of Cass Gilbert’s West Street Building and the Art and Science of Fireproof Architecture”
  - Leigh Roethke, “The House that Minnesota Built”
  - Dianne C. Steinbach and Daniel Pierce Bergin, Preview of *Cass Gilbert: Standing the Test of Time*
- Celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Minnesota State Capitol  
 Cass Gilbert Society sponsors the loan of portraits of Cass and Julia Gilbert for installation in the Capitol, unveiling on February 22  
 Cass Gilbert Society receives grant to sponsor the production of *Cass Gilbert: Standing the Test of Time* with Twin Cities Public Television  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Mother’s Day Tea and Tour: Cedarhurst Mansion, Cottage Grove  
 The work of Cass Gilbert, “A Touch of Cass” is featured on the Ramsey Hill Association House Tour  
 Fall Tour: Cass Gilbert in Montana  
 Symposium with the University of Minnesota College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture on the architecture and meaning of the Minnesota State Capitol

## 2006

- Cass Gilbert Society awarded Minnesota Humanities Commission grant for lecture program
- Patty Dean, “‘Unique and Handsome’: Cass Gilbert’s Designs for the Montana Club”
  - William Towner Morgan, “Rediscovery of the Kerr Block in St. Cloud”
  - Marjorie Pearson, “Cass Gilbert: Architectural Ambassador”
  - William Seale, “The Late Work of Cass Gilbert and Cass Gilbert, Jr.”
- Cass Gilbert: Standing the Test of Time* released for viewing on Twin Cities Public Television. The program receives two regional Emmy awards.  
 Work-in-Progress tour of Cass Gilbert mansions on Summit Avenue  
 Fall Tour: Cass Gilbert in Texas

## 2007

- Lecture series continues despite shift in Minnesota Humanities Commission funding
- Michael J. Bjornberg and Robert D. Loveridge, Jr., “Restoration Challenges at the Minnesota State Capitol”
  - Texas Travelers Report on Austin and San Antonio tour
  - Hampton Smith, “Cass Gilbert and St. Clement’s Church”
  - Larry Millett, “Cass Gilbert and St. Paul”
- Cass Gilbert Society receives State-Grant-in-Aid from the Minnesota Historical Society to expand and update its website  
 Fundraising reception at the Emerson Hadley House  
 Fundraising reception at the Lightner House  
 Cass Gilbert Society participates in National Trust Conference held in St. Paul  
 Fall Tour: Cass Gilbert in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut

## 2008

Lecture series

- Report on the New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut tour
- Annette Atkins, “From Cass Gilbert to Minnesota Modernism”
- Ethan Anthony, “Ralph Adams Cram and Cass Gilbert”
- Katherine Solomonson, “Cass Gilbert: Re-Imagining the Western Landscape”

New Cass Gilbert Society website is launched

Fall tour: Living with Cass Gilbert (3 architects’ homes designed by Gilbert)

## 2009

Lecture: Gail Fenske, “Cass Gilbert and the Woolworth Building”

Mother’s Day Tour: Cass Gilbert on Summit Hill and Ramsey Hill

Fall tour: Cass Gilbert at Oberlin College

150<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration for Cass Gilbert, November 21 and 22, 2009

## 2010

Lectures:

- Report on Oberlin College tour
  - Report on Cuba Tour
  - Katherine Solomonson and Marjorie Pearson, “Cass Gilbert: Architect of Intersecting Worlds”
- Cass Gilbert Society receives a History and Cultural Heritage Grant from the Minnesota Historical Society, funded by the Minnesota Legacy Amendment, to expand its interpretative display panels on the work of Cass Gilbert and to expand its website and database of Gilbert’s work.

Tour of Cuba by a select group of Cass Gilbert Society members to investigate the Cuban capitol, the connections of American architects in Cuba, and discuss preservation and restoration work with Cuban architects

Fall tour to Washington, D. C. and Baltimore to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court

## 2011

Lectures:

- Report on Washington-Baltimore tour
- Preview of “Who Built the Minnesota State Capitol?” on role of workers in the construction of the capitol
- Ted Lentz, “Waterbury City Hall Renovation: Lessons Learned and Cass Gilbert’s Continuing Impact on the City of Waterbury, Connecticut”

Expanded exhibit: *150 Years of Cass Gilbert*, installed in Minnesota State Capitol

May tour: Tarbox House, Manitou Island, White Bear Lake

Fall tour: Cass Gilbert and His Contemporaries in Detroit

Holiday fundraiser at the George Freeman House

## 2012

Lecture: Barbara S. Christen, “Envisioning a Grand City: Cass Gilbert’s Detroit”

Governor Mark Dayton announces the formation of the Minnesota State Capitol Preservation Commission; appoints CGS

President Ted Lentz as a member

Fall Tour: Cass Gilbert on Summit Hill

## 2013

Lecture: Katherine Solomonson, “Cass Gilbert Star Architect: From St. Paul to Manhattan”

100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Woolworth Building in New York City

Fall tour: Cass Gilbert and His Contemporaries in St. Louis

## 2014

Lecture: John Guenther, “The Work of Cass Gilbert in St. Louis”

Mother’s Day Tour: Cass Gilbert in Lowertown

Collaboration with Minnesota Historical Society on Cass Gilbert Home and Building tours

AASLH conference: Cass Gilbert in St. Paul tour; introduction to Minnesota State Capitol Furnishings project

## 2015

Lecture: Ted Lentz, “Rediscovering the Minnesota State Capitol”

Collaboration with Mary Lahammer, Twin Cities Public Television, on “Connecting with Cass,” a series of short features on Cass Gilbert’s work in St. Paul

Collaboration with Minnesota Historical Society on Cass Gilbert Home and Building tours

Fall tour: Owatonna and Faribault

## 2016

Lectures

- Mary Lahammer, “Connections to Cass”

- John C. Guenther, “Pillsbury Hall and the Legacy of Architect Harvey Ellis”

Collaboration with Twin Cities Public Television on Cass Gilbert tour: Summit Hill and Ramsey Hill

Cass Gilbert Society awarded History and Cultural Heritage Grant from Minnesota Historical Society to undertake Minnesota State Capitol Furnishings project

## 2017

Lectures

- Marjorie Pearson, “Approaching the Capitol: The Story of the Minnesota State Capitol Mall”

- Peter O’Toole, “The Work of Edwin Lundie”

Minnesota State Capitol Furnishings project is carried out

June tour: Newly renovated Minnesota State Capitol

Participation in official Minnesota State Capitol reopening celebration including installation of Cass Gilbert interpretative display panels in the Cass Gilbert Library

Fall tour: Oberlin and Cleveland

## 2018

Successful completion of the Minnesota State Capitol Furnishings project

Local partner for Society of Architectural Historians 71<sup>st</sup> Annual International Conference; participation in conference session on “Cass Gilbert and His Collaborators” and tour, “Cass Gilbert in St. Paul”

Organization of Cass Gilbert Society Archives for donation to Minnesota Historical Society

Cass Gilbert Society celebrates 20 years

**The M, Minnesota Museum of American Art**, celebrated its grand reopening in the Pioneer and Endicott Buildings on Sunday, December 2, 2018. The new museum space has been designed by VJAA architects. The entrance, lobby, and reception space are located in the Robert Street wing of the Endicott Building. The inaugural exhibit, “100 Years and Counting: Selections from the Permanent Collection,” is installed in the Pioneer Building gallery space. Administrative offices are in the Robert Street wing of the Endicott Building. The next phase of galleries will open in the Endicott Arcade. Professor Katherine Solomonson will be leading a tour of the buildings on Sunday, January 20, 2019, 1 p.m. Free and open to the public.



*View of the Endicott Arcade. Courtesy of The M.*

## Cass Gilbert Society Completes Minnesota State Capitol Furnishings Project

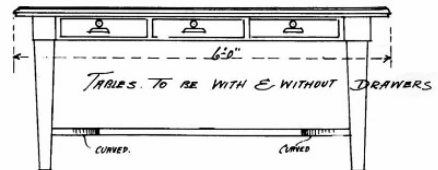
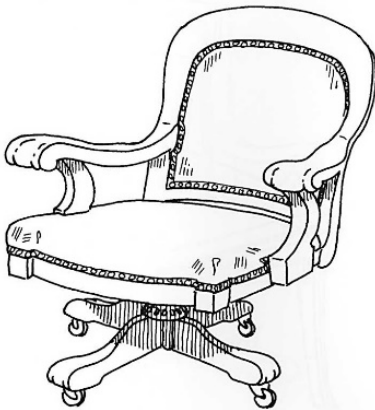
In August 2017, the Minnesota State Capitol celebrated its grand re-opening after a massive, \$310 million restoration nearly a decade in the making. The restoration has sparked greater interest in the building, its history, its design, and its purpose. The Cass Gilbert Society decided to embark on this furnishings treasure hunt to complement the work of the restoration team and to boost appreciation for Gilbert's detailed vision for the Capitol, both inside and out.

Gilbert designed or selected 1,600 pieces of furniture to fill the Capitol's interior spaces. His choice of furnishings reflected the elegant Beaux-Arts, Italian Renaissance-inspired style of the building itself. Over time, roughly half of the original furniture collection has disappeared, and many of the building's fixtures--wood windows, ironwork, signage--have been discarded. Items have ended up in former legislators' homes, auction houses, antique stores, coffee shops, government buildings, and county historical societies.

In 2016, the Cass Gilbert Society applied for a project grant from the State of Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the Minnesota Historical Society. Carol Forbes and Linda Bjorklund played key roles in the successful grant application. John Yust and Carolyn Kompelien managed the project, which was carried out in 2017 by Natalie Heneghan, assisted by Emily Ganzel.

The recent Capitol restoration process focused on increasing public access to the building. The project emphasized the notion that this grand structure does not only serve those who work in and near it; it is intended for all people of Minnesota. Capitol furniture, at times highly decorative and ceremonial, but often simple and vernacular, carries with it innumerable stories of the people who used it and the places for which it was purposed (and repurposed). The Cass Gilbert Society believes that to tell the stories of Capitol furnishings all over Minnesota is to affirm that all Minnesotans have a connection to our Capitol. We possess artifacts, heirlooms, and memories that collectively tell the story of our state.

The project was not intended to reacquire items or return them to the Capitol. Instead, the project has recorded the locations, current uses, and stories of furnishings that have left the Capitol. This information is available through a dedicated website: <https://furnishings.cassgilbertsociety.org/>



Above: 573 1/2 Swivel Chair, now located in Minnesota Department of Human Services

Right: N Work Table, now at Claddagh Coffee, West 7<sup>th</sup> Street, St. Paul

CASS GILBERT SOCIETY, INC.  
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Place  
Stamp  
Here

#### **Our Mission**

To preserve our cultural heritage through advancing scholarship in and appreciation of Cass Gilbert's influence on American architecture.

The Cass Gilbert Society, Inc., is a non-profit tax-exempt organization under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

#### **Officers and Board, 2018**

John Yust, *President*

Marjorie Pearson, *Vice President, Newsletter*

Ted Lentz, *Secretary*

Art Weeks, *Treasurer*

Carolyn Kompelien

Sonja Mason, *Social Media*

Richard Miller

Carolyn Nayematsu

Jean Velleu, *President Emerita*

Rojean Rada, *General Counsel*

#### **A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR**


We mail *Newsletters* to provide information about Cass Gilbert and his works and as a way of informing members about past and upcoming Society events.

The Society has established a Facebook page, administered by board member Sonja Mason, as a means of posting more timely information about items of interest to Society members. Click on the Facebook logo from the Cass Gilbert Society homepage:

[www.cassgilbertsociety.org](http://www.cassgilbertsociety.org).

We are also seeking to use email more efficiently as a way of providing more timely notices. *Please provide us an email address when you send in your membership dues, so we can add you to our emailing list.*

Do not fear; the *Newsletter* will continue to be mailed to Society members and other interested parties.

 Find us on Facebook.

December 2018

#### **RENEW YOUR SUPPORT FOR 2019**

Please use the enclosed form to renew your Cass Gilbert Society support in 2019. Our records are maintained on a calendar year basis, with the expiration date noted on your address label. **We encourage you to provide your email address.** It will be used to send out announcements between the publication dates of the Newsletters.

You can show your support at various levels and any contributions above the basic level are much appreciated. Your support ensures that you will receive our Newsletter via U.S. mail, free admission to lectures, reduced fees for local tours, and eligibility to participate in regional tours. Your contributions are the major source of funding for operating expenses for our all-volunteer organization. You may also support us through **GiveMn.org**.