



Dr. Barbara Christen to Speak at Fall Lecture

Dr. Barbara Christen, research associate at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts/National Gallery of Art, will speak at the upcoming Cass Gilbert Society lecture. Dr. Christen's talk will address Cass Gilbert's design process for the Minnesota State Capitol approaches and the University of Minnesota campus plan and how they relate to his other comprehensive plans.

The plan for the capitol approaches marked Gilbert's early interest in master plans, later influencing his proposals for master plans for New Haven and Waterbury, Connecticut. The campus plan for the University of Minnesota went through a series of changes, affected in part by university politics. Nonetheless, the Minnesota project had an impact on his later ideas for the University of Texas and Oberlin College.

Dr. Christen is the co-editor with Stephen Flanders of Cass Gilbert, Life and Work: Architect of the Public Domain (W. W. Norton and Co., 2001), a collection of essays based on the symposium "Cass Gilbert, Life and Work: From Regional to National Architect." held in New York City, November, 1998. As the executive director for the Committee on Cass Gilbert projects, she organized the symposium, five exhibitions, a full-day walking tour, and special building tours and lectures.

Her talk for the Cass Gilbert Society is based in part on her contribution to the Norton volume; her disser-

Cass Gilbert, Life and Work: Architect of the Public Domain



Book to be published during Fall of 2001

tation "Cass Gilbert and the Ideal of the City Beautiful: City and Campus Plans, 1900-1916," awarded in 1997 by the City University of New York; and her essay "The Architect as Planner: Cass Gilbert's Response to Historic Open Space" in Inventing the Skyline: The Architecture of Cass Gilbert (Columbia University Press, 2000). ☒

The lecture will be held at the University Club of St. Paul, at 7:00 PM, Tuesday, September 25, 2001. The Minnesota Humanities Commission sponsors the 2001 Lecture Series. Admission is free to members of the Cass Gilbert Society. There is a nominal charge for nonmembers.

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Mark Your Calendars

Please put these dates on your calendar so that you will be able to join us. The lectures begin at 7:00 PM and are held at the University Club of St. Paul, unless otherwise noted.

Tuesday, September 25, 2001 - Lecture: Barbara Christen, New York

Sunday, October 14, 2001 - Tour to New Richmond, WI

Tuesday, November 13, 2001 - Lecture: Owners of

the D. H. Watson house located in West St. Paul, MN

Message from the President

By Jean Velleu

I am confident Cass Gilbert would have liked the new tech age for its convenience and communication possibilities. It would have allowed him to add to his already strong work ethic and produce even more. His reputation for hard work follows him everywhere. I doubt if he even thought about slowing down in the summer, as some of us are inclined to do. Here's how Sharon Irish describes him in her new book: Cass Gilbert: Architect, Modern Traditionalist, Monacelli Press, 1999. "He had a strong constitution, artistic talent, business sense, and sheer gumption. He worked relentlessly, he could win commissions, both in competition and by persuasion, he had a good eye for detail and massing. And he could stand his ground against government institutions and countermending clients. ... His success as an architect and as a businessman was aided in good measure by a world that wanted what he had to offer. And offer it he did. Time and again. Gilbert obtained commissions to build some of the major monuments of his generation."

Speaking of high tech: On April 29, 2000 the Board of the Cass Gilbert Society met on retreat to talk about our future as an organization and what we hoped might happen. One of the goals postulated that day was the desire to have a web site for the organization. We are now beginning to make that happen and before long you will be able to log on.

Linda Bjorklund, Marjorie Pearson and Jean Velleu (with help from Sheila Meyer) have been wrestling with what it takes to mount a successful site and going through the steps our consultant, Lanny J. Linehan of Wexford Resource Group, directs us to make. Lanny was hired by the Board in June with the goal of a September launch for our new web site.

One of the major things we want our site to feature is a Picture Gallery to illustrate Cass Gilbert's wonderful buildings. We are thankful to the MHS and Tracy Baker (in charge of photographs) for allowing us to peruse their collection and choose ones pertaining to Cass Gilbert. We will, of course, give credit to the MHS acknowledging the source. If you have pictures that you have taken of Cass Gilbert designed homes or other buildings we want to hear from you. Perhaps you would allow us to scan your photos as well. We will happily credit you too. Call me at 651-298-1127.

Soon you will be able to contact the Cass Gilbert Society by e-mail with your questions and/or information for us. A membership invitation will allow you to print out the form and return it with your membership fee.

Lastly, I hope to see many of you at our September lecture and October bus tour. It is always interesting to learn more about Cass Gilbert and it should be fun to combine fall colors, lunch and architectural history on the tour. ☐

Postponed New York Trip Update

We know you want to go to New York to see the buildings that CG de- originally planned we indicated in our ter. However, we izational road- have the trip when come together. We will keep you posted. ☐



Committee Chairs

A special "Thank You" to a group of individuals that work so hard to make our Society special.

Linda Bjorklund	<i>Fundraising</i>
Tom Blanck & Charles Locks	<i>Research & Documentation of CG Projects</i>
Lana Mahoney	<i>Arranging Lecture Series</i>
Jim Noonan	<i>Legal Advisor To Board</i>
Nancy Peterson	<i>Historian</i>

NEW Cass Gilbert Society Web Site

www.cassgilbertsociety.org

State Capitol History

The cornerstone for the State Capitol was laid July 27, 1898. It was the third of Minnesota's 19th-century capitols. The first was destroyed by fire in 1881, and the second was deemed too small by the time it was completed in 1883.

Cass Gilbert's design was chosen from 96 entries. Done in Italian Renaissance style, it cost \$4.5 million and was completed in 1904.

The four gilded horses at the base of the dome (formally known as the Quadriga), represent earth, wind, fire and water. Created by Daniel Chester French, they were added in 1907.

— Sandy Date; *Star Tribune*, July 29, 2001

Cass Gilbert Society

Fall Special Event**Bus Tour to New Richmond, WI****Sunday, October 14, 2001****Departure time: 12:00 Noon Sharp***From Overlook Park at Summit & Ramsey, St. Paul**(400 block of Summit Avenue near the University Club)*

Join us for this fun excursion to New Richmond via Hudson where we will have brunch at the Hudson Country Club overlooking the beautiful St. Croix River Valley. (The fall colors should be at their prime.) In New Richmond we will tour the historic Mosher home designed by Cass Gilbert, and built in 1887. Tom Blanck will share tales of Cass Gilbert in Wisconsin and we will visit other historic sites in this charming city. Then on to historic Stillwater for a look at the Cass Gilbert designed staircase in the Grand Garage Mall. It was originally from the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, saved from demolition and relocated here.

Cost and Details:**\$25.00 per person, Cass Gilbert Society Member****\$30.00 per person, Non-member****Cost includes bus ride, lunch and tour. Please note: there will be limited space.****Bus will return all passengers to Overlook Park between 5:00 & 6:00 PM****If you have questions, please call 651-291-1541****Bus Tour to New Richmond, WI - Sunday, October 14, 2001****Deadline for reservations: October 5, 2001****Make checks payable to: Cass Gilbert Society**

Mail check and this portion of page to:

Cass Gilbert Society - 550 Portland Avenue - St., Paul, Minnesota 55102

Enclosed is check for # _____ members, # _____ non-members. Total enclosed \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Long Lost Gilbert Documents At Auction

The Cass Gilbert event of the season was held not in New York, Washington, St. Paul or any of the other Gilbert haunts. It wasn't even held in a place that he is known to have visited. San Francisco was the scene of the most recent chapter in the discovery of Gilbert. On May 9th, perhaps the largest remaining collection of Cass Gilbert papers and memorabilia in private hands was auctioned at Butterfield's auction house in San Francisco.

The collection was a treasure chest of materials from all parts of his career and included nearly a thousand drawings as well as a similar number of pages of letters and related materials. This collection had been in the possession of a former neighbor of Cass Gilbert's in New York.

The sale was conducted by Butterfields to a live audience as well as a global audience though the internet. Bidding was intense, driving every lot well above its expected sale price. The estimate for the entire collection was about seventy thousand; it brought close to one hundred thousand dollars.

Included in the auction:

Lot 3032: "New York Buildings" included drawings of the Woolworth building, the New York Lawyers Association Bldg., and 130 West 30th Street building. **Lot 3033** included 300 drawings of buildings at Oberlin College. **Lot 3034:** "Designs for the Scott Fountain" included designs for this important Detroit landmark for the Detroit Library.

Lot 3035: "West Virginia Capitol Designs" included drawings and correspondence related to the capitol building. **Lot 3036:** "Minnesota Designs" included drawings for site improvement at the James J. Hill house, the Hill Seminary St. Paul, and sketches for the

design for the Mall at the University of Minnesota Mall; **Lot 3037:** "Supreme Court Designs" included photographs, and correspondence about the building; **Lot 3038:** "Personal Archives" included drawing of festival hall in St. Louis, a sketchbook of Gilbert drawings done in Europe, office records and personal correspondence.

Just the web site description of this remarkable collection provided otherwise hard to establish information about Gilbert's work. For example, the inventory of drawings of the Hill House being sold was perhaps the most complete list of what he actually made for the project, indicating that he did do drawings for the power plant. James J. Hill contracted Gilbert to do this part of the mansion after he fired the original architect. The Hill Seminary drawings by Thomas Johnson of Gilbert's New York office indicate his involvement in the design of Festival Hall at the St. Louis World's Fair.

This Gilbert event of the season caused a rustle or two in Minnesota. The *Minneapolis Tribune* carried a small article on the auction. As the day of the auction approached, the Minnesota Historical Society, University of St. Thomas and the University of Minnesota set upon an effort to acquire the lot containing most of the Minnesota items. A collector's consortium in St. Paul raised ten thousand dollars for the other lot containing the Minnesota items. Oberlin College and the State of West Virginia went after lots. As near as this writer can determine only the State of West Virginia was successful in acquiring the lot they sought.

It is hoped that over time, perhaps through the extensive Cass Gilbert Society network, these materials can be located and shared. Many important gaps in our developing knowledge of Gilbert's life and career could be filled by studying these long lost documents. ■

— Thomas Blanck

CGS History Album

We have been working on preserving the history of our Society. The result is a compilation of art, photographs, news clippings and memorabilia that chronicles the Society from its inception in 1998. Volume One is now completed. The volume will be available at our meetings, so please look for it. If you are interested in more information about this very interesting album please call Nancy Peterson — 651-221-0389. ■

Of Note

On September 20 - 21, 2001, the State Historic Preservation Office of the Minnesota Historical Society will sponsor the 22nd Annual Statewide Historic Preservation Conference in Glenwood, Minnesota. The conference will focus on the history and evolution of Minnesota's tourism and recreation industry and the preservation of Minnesota's historic community schools. For more information call: 651-296-5434. ■

Walking Tour of Four Churches: Smashing Success

On Mother's Day, May 13, the Society conducted a walking tour of four St. Paul churches that Gilbert designed. The weather was warm and pleasant. About forty attended the tour. A number of people walked between the churches.

Each church visited expressed the unique character of the congregation and building. Entering the first church, **St. Clement's Episcopal** built in 1896, transports you directly to the English countryside. Were it not for the breathtaking window work by Tiffany Studios of New York there would be little clue that the church is in St. Paul and not in England — or that the year is 2001 as opposed to 1301.

At the second stop, **St. John's Episcopal**, the group was met by members of the Saturday morning club, who extended great effort to guide members of the group to the various rooms from Gilbert's first phase of the building. The present chancel, later raised in height, served as temporary sanctuary with classrooms on either side on the upper level. A small elegant chapel of Gilbert's design survives on the Kent

Street side adjacent to the chancel. The lower level assemble area and the choir practice room date from Gilbert's work on the building. Visitors were able to see the pastel rectangular leaded window lights, as well as pebble dashed stucco, cedar shingle work and half timbering details of Gilbert's design. After the turn-of-the-century, Clarence Johnston designed the present magnificent sanctuary.

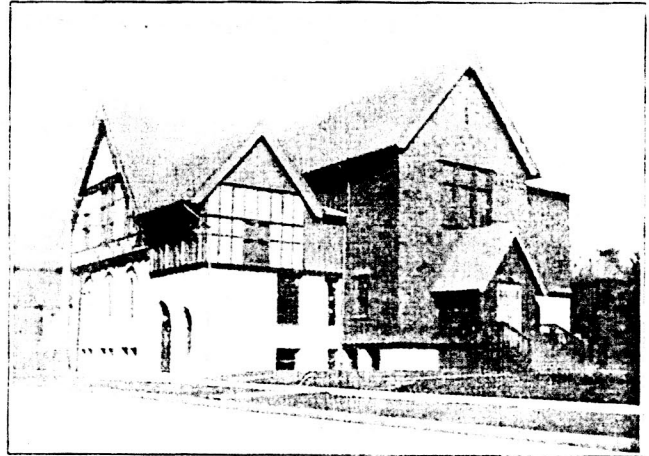
At **Dayton Avenue Presbyterian**, built in 1886, members of the congregation greeted the tour group. A Gilbert designed table graces the sanctuary. The scale of the space, the magnificent colorful geometric pattern windows and sloped auditorium floor of this Akron plan building is impressive. The congregation pre-

sented the society a book about the church. Also, Winston Kaehler, church organist, demonstrated the spectacular organ and acoustics of the space.

The final stop was the **Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church**, also built in 1886. Like St. Clement's, entering the building transports you in time and space. In this case from St. Paul in the year 2001 to Boston in the 1880s. This building is Gilbert's most exquisite Richardsonian shingle style design. It is among the more intact of Gilbert buildings down to the condensation drains mounted below the leaded windows.

The third annual architectural stroll was a huge success, and we thank the churches for sharing their lovely buildings with us. ■

— Thomas Blanck



The old Church of St. John the Evangelist, St. Paul

CASS GILBERT SOCIETY, INC.

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Place
Stamp
Here

Our Mission

To preserve and enhance the nation's cultural heritage through advancing scholarship 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 and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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Membership News

- By becoming a Cass Gilbert Society member you will receive our quarterly newsletter as well as any special mailings, and you will also enjoy free admission to our lecture series. Please use the form below and mail your check today.
- CGS membership extends from January—December. The fees are: \$25.00 per year/household, \$50.00 per year/business. If you have membership questions please call Sheila Meyer (651) 222-4364.

Membership Form



_____ Yes, I would like to become a member of the Cass Gilbert Society *

_____ I would like to renew my membership; _____ I would like to gift the CHS this amount \$ _____

_____ I am a member but would like a gift membership for a friend, listed below

Enclosed is my check for _____ \$25 / Household or _____ \$50.00 / Business made out to Cass Gilbert Society, Inc.

Member's Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone (_____) _____

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Send Check and form to: Cass Gilbert Society, Inc., 550 Portland Ave., St. Paul, MN 55102