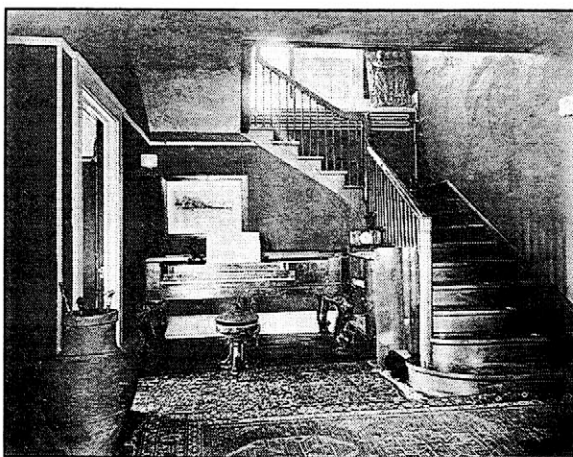




PATRICIA MURPHY TO SPEAK ON SEPTEMBER 14 AT THE UNIVERSITY CLUB

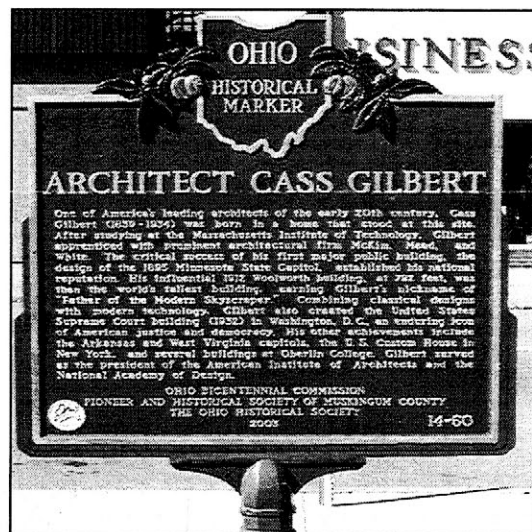
American architect Cass Gilbert (1859-1934) has become the subject of increasing scholarly and popular attention in recent years, both in Minnesota and elsewhere, as appreciation for late nineteenth and early twentieth-century American architecture and historic preservation has grown. Learn more about Cass Gilbert's background, his family and friends, how he got his start, and what motivated and inspired him by attending a Cass Gilbert Society lecture on **Cass Gilbert: Midwestern Origins, Architectural Education and Early Career**. Patricia Murphy will look at Gilbert's origins in his birthplace of Zanesville, Ohio, and in St. Paul. She will examine Gilbert as a person and how and why he was able to be so successful in St. Paul and elsewhere. She'll describe how he entered the profession and how he as a young upstart capitalized on his considerable talents and his business, social, and family connections and friendships to boost his remarkable career and build a national practice. His career culminated in the design of some of our nation's best-known monumental public and commercial buildings of the early twentieth century. His colorful personality and strong opinions are revealed in his letters, papers, newspaper accounts, and other sources. Ms. Murphy will also look at how Gilbert and his work are remembered and memorialized in Zanesville and elsewhere.

Pat Murphy has been delving into the career of Cass Gilbert for over 25 years. Like Cass Gilbert, she was born in Ohio and grew up in Minnesota.



Hall of Cass Gilbert House, 1891
Photograph from the Minnesota Historical Society

Unlike Gilbert, she later returned to Ohio where she is the executive director of the Oberlin Heritage Center. She is a graduate of Grinnell College and the University of Virginia. Her master's thesis was on "The Early Career of Cass Gilbert." She directed the Historic Sites Survey of St. Paul and Ramsey County, completed in 1983. Her Gilbert projects include a University of Minnesota exhibit, a walking tour of Gilbert's St. Paul houses, and several articles on Cass Gilbert including a chapter in *Cass Gilbert Life and Work: Architect of the Public Domain* (New York: W.W. Norton Press, 2001).



Cass Gilbert marker in Zanesville, Ohio
Photograph by Patricia Murphy

She helped apply for an Ohio Historical Marker honoring Cass Gilbert that was erected at the site of his birthplace as part of the commemoration of Ohio's Bicentennial in 2003.

Join us at the University Club, 420 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, on Tuesday, September 14, 2004, at 7:00 P.M. Admission is free to Society members. There is a nominal charge for nonmembers. Refreshments will be served after the lecture.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Marjorie Pearson

Early this spring I was contacted by **Helen Post Curry**, who introduced herself as Cass Gilbert's great-granddaughter. She was planning a visit to St. Paul. Ms. Curry, a resident of Connecticut, knew some of Cass Gilbert's buildings on the East Coast, but had never seen any of his Minnesota work. A number of Society members were able to meet with her during her April visit and introduce her to Cass Gilbert's Minnesota architecture. Special thanks are due to Jean Velleu and Tom Blanck. The following Society members also made their Cass Gilbert-designed homes available for touring: Judy Dean, Allan Klein and Harriet Lansing, Ardis and Jim Noonan, Jean Velleu and Jim Law, and Herb and Marilyn Vogel. Ms. Curry is planning a return visit to St. Paul and hopes to bring along an aunt who is a granddaughter of Cass Gilbert.

The Society enjoyed a record turnout for its Mother's Day event at **Cedarhurst**, the summer home of Cordenio Severance and Mary Harriman Severance, in Cottage Grove. Following a sumptuous multi-course tea in the Cass Gilbert-designed ballroom, we toured the main rooms on the first floor and admired the two grand porticoes on the exterior. In his tour

notes, Tom Blanck commented that Colonial Revival style country homes of this scale are uncommon in the Midwest and that the "Severance Cottage," built between 1911 and 1917, is the largest of Gilbert's grand Colonial Revival residential designs in Minnesota. The Severances entertained extensively at Cedarhurst. Their guest list included many notable political figures. Society member Lucy Fricke told those at her table of attending tea at the house as a child, but of being banished to the garden to pick dandelions. Today the house and grounds are owned by Tue and Xoua Thao who operate it as a small conference center and catering facility. Tea is served on several afternoons each week by reservation.

Plans are well underway for a wide-ranging celebration of the centennial of the **Minnesota State Capitol** in 2005. Although the Capitol was officially opened in January 1905, the centennial celebration will extend throughout the year. The Cass Gilbert Society will be partnering with the University of Minnesota College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture to organize a symposium and related tours on the architecture, image, and meaning of the Capitol to citizens across the state.



Front of Cedarhurst
Photograph by Herb Grika

THE MINNEAPOLIS REALTY WAREHOUSE

The following article is adapted from Tom Blancke's notes for the Society's event at the Theater de la Jeune Lune on March 18, 2004.

A clear understanding of Gilbert's work on the Minneapolis Realty Warehouse awaits a truly detailed inspection of the building, a careful analysis of archival materials, and probably some good luck.

The warehouse began life as the three-story Produce Exchange Building, constructed in 1889 to a design by Minneapolis architect Edward S. Stebbins. The Boston and Northwest Realty Company had acquired the building by 1895, when construction began on another larger Produce Exchange Building at 608 First Avenue North. That year Cass Gilbert added a fourth story to the building at a cost of \$10,000. The Boston and Northwest Realty Company had previously commissioned the Blood Company Warehouse in St. Paul and several buildings in Montana from Gilbert.

The Stebbins-Gilbert building was gutted by fire on October 12, 1899. At that time it was occupied by a shirt company and a tobacco wholesaler. The central portion of the building had been rebuilt as the Realty Company's Fireproof Storage Warehouse when it was illustrated in the 1901-02 Twin Cities Blue Book. It is described as "Most modern fireproof plan. Highest regard for safety from fire and theft. Individual isolated fireproof

locked rooms. Large fireproof general storage rooms." The building was expanded to the north and south over the next few years, continuing the design of the central portion. Gilbert's name appears on permits for the building in 1902 and 1904. In all, \$60,000 worth of work was done on the building between 1895 and 1908. There are plans for the building in the New-York Historical Society and correspondence at the Minnesota Historical Society.

Gilbert chose "Italian Gothic" as the departure point for his design. The windows were kept at a minimum size and widely spaced and set within large Gothic arches. With some effort he convinced the client that the expense of the beautifully designed portcullis (vertical opening gate) on the First Avenue side, was justified. He claimed that in the long run it would save the owner money by eliminating the need for an overnight guard.

As we observed on our visit, some portions of the building are very early twentieth-century reinforced concrete. The same flat-slab floor system is found in the Allen Building in St. Paul, designed and executed by Gilbert's office in 1906. Both of these buildings are an important part of the yet-to-be-told story of Gilbert's warehouse designs.

After a long life as a warehouse, this remarkable design was skillfully converted in 1992 as the home of the Theater de la Jeune Lune.



Minneapolis Realty Warehouse in 1948
Photograph from Minnesota Historical Society

The **25th Annual Statewide Historic Preservation Conference**, co-sponsored by the Minnesota Historical Society and the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, will be held in St. Cloud at the historic Paramount Theater on September 23-24, 2004. The theme is **Improving Community Life with Historic Preservation**, and will feature lectures, working sessions, and field trips. Cass Gilbert's 1887 Masonic Temple building on St. Germain Street is just down the street from the Paramount Theater. The Cass Gilbert Society hopes to have the portable exhibit we prepared last fall for the Minnesota AIA conference on display. The conference pre-registration deadline is September 9. For more information, call 651-296-5434 or visit the Minnesota Historical Society website at www.mnhs.org/preserve/index.html.

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The
minnesota
humanities
COMMISSION

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.

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Have you renewed your membership? Would you like to join the Cass Gilbert Society?

See the Cass Gilbert Society website, www.cassgilbertsociety.org, for more information and a membership form, or send a check for \$25.00 for an individual/household membership to the **Cass Gilbert Society, P.O. Box 4066, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104.**

Welcome to the following new members:

Clyde and Judy Anderson
Peter and Dawn Gudel
Colles and John Larkin
Frank Edgerton Martin
Peter O'Brien and Helen Pearce

Corine Wegener, assistant curator of decorative arts at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, will speak on Wednesday, September 1, 2004, on **Back from Baghdad: Reconstruction of the Iraq National Museum**. She will share her experiences in physical reconstruction and artifact preservation at the Iraq National Museum as a member of the U.S. Army Reserves. The Minnesota Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians is hosting her lecture at the Minnesota Humanities Commission, 987 East Ivy, St. Paul, 7 P.M. A reception will follow.