



CASS GILBERT SOCIETY

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

THE CUBA REPORT, MAY 11, 2010, at the University Club 420 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, 7 P.M.

Is there a Cass Gilbert connection with Cuba? In January 2000, the baseball team of the University of St. Thomas visited Cuba for a series of games. Subsequently, Jim Caple of the *Saint Paul Pioneer Press* reported on the trip, illustrating his article with a photograph of the Cuban national capitol with a caption that stated it had been designed by Cass Gilbert. In the wake of that report, Dewey Berscheid, then the editor of the Cass Gilbert Society *Newsletter*, did additional research and headlined the next issue of the *Newsletter*, "***Our Man in Havana?***" in which described his unsuccessful efforts to verify the attribution.

Dewey's article was the inspiration for a Cass Gilbert Society research trip to Cuba. The organizational effort of several years was undertaken by Jim Hirsh. Last July the U.S. Department of the Treasury issued a license for six members of the Cass Gilbert Society to visit Cuba to investigate the possible role of Cass Gilbert and other American architects in the construction of the Cuban capitol and related buildings. Wendy Weimer, president of the Cass Gilbert Society, is a Spanish speaker and assisted with translation. Cindy Stephani, vice president of the Cass Gilbert Society, is a tour guide at the Minnesota State Capitol. Tom Blanck, an architect, is an expert on the architecture of Cass Gilbert and a founding member of the Cass Gilbert Society. Marjorie Pearson is an architectural historian, historic preservation consultant, and past president of the Cass Gilbert Society. Jim Hirsh, who was the chief organizer of the trip, is the general counsel of the Cass Gilbert Society. Carol Highsmith is a nationally known architectural photographer. She has recently donated the

photographs she has taken of the Woolworth Building to the Cass Gilbert Society and to the Library of Congress.

Five of the six members of the group will be reporting on the Cuba trip, what they observed and researched, and the Cuban architects and historians with whom they consulted. The talk will be illustrated with the photographs of Carol Highsmith and other tour participants. While the focus of the evening will be the Cuban capitol, *El Capitolio*, and its environs, other topics will include a brief overview of Cuban history and the country's relationship with the United States; the role of American architects in Cuba, including several contemporaries and associates of Cass Gilbert, and their buildings; and historic preservation efforts in Havana.

Admission to the lecture is free for members of the Cass Gilbert Society and the University Club as well as students. There is a \$5 charge for non-members. Refreshments will be served following the presentation.



El Capitolio Photo: Carol Highsmith

WHAT ABOUT THE DOME?

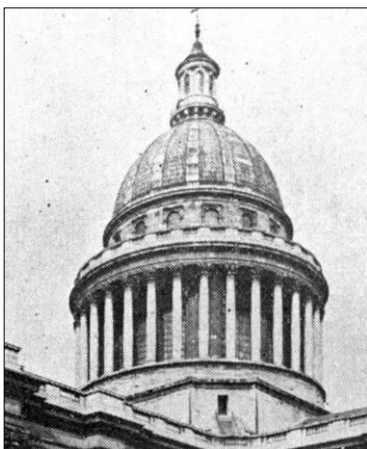
Most state capitol buildings in the United States are crowned with domes, many of them inspired by the dome of the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C. The domes of the three capitols designed by Cass Gilbert are particularly impressive. The dome of *El Capitolio* dominates the skyline of Havana and is a constant presence in many parts of the city. The following domes are offered for purposes of comparison.



The Minnesota State Capitol, Gilbert's first dome, inspired by the dome of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome



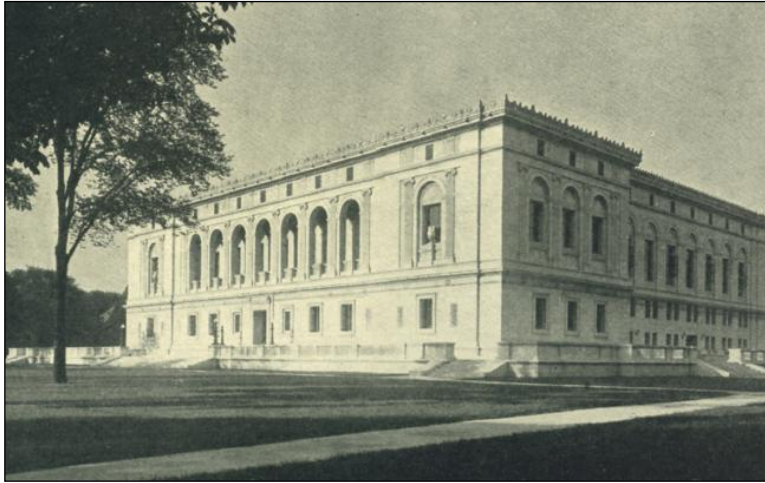
Arkansas State Capitol (left) was begun by architect George Mann in 1905 and completed by Cass Gilbert in 1915. The West Virginia State Capitol (right) was Gilbert's last capitol building. The scale and detail may have partially inspired *El Capitolio*.



The designers of the *El Capitolio* dome stated that they were inspired by the dome of the Pantheon in Paris (left).

SAVE THE DATES FOR THE UPCOMING CASS GILBERT SOCIETY TRIP TO DETROIT

The Cass Gilbert Society is organizing a trip to Detroit for October 8-11, 2010. The **Detroit Public Library** (see below) is Gilbert's most prominent building in that city, but other interesting sights are also in store. More information will be published in the next issue of the *Newsletter*.



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Thanks to all who have renewed their membership for 2010 or have joined the Society. The following list reflects current membership status as of April 15, 2010. A form is included in this Newsletter for those who have not yet renewed their membership.

Donna Allan & William
Mahlum
Bonnie & Brian Alton
Clyde & Judy Anderson
Kristin Anderson
Patricia Anderson
Donald Bergmann
Richard & Catherine Black
Tom Blanck & Linda Bjorklund
Lock & Linda Bounds
Frank R. Braun
Darlene J. Carroll
Barbara Christen
Sally S. Cole
Mary Michael Connolly
John & Eva Cross
Helen Post Curry
Sandra S. Engquist
Gail Fenske
Mary Ann Finegan
Steven Flanders
Susan Flynn
Cathy Gilbert-Rogers
Hess, Roise and Company
James & Debra Hirsh
Sharon Irish
Merle & Ellen Johnson
Allan Klein & Harriet Lansing
Carolyn Kompelien
Mary Alice Kopf
Colles & John Larkin

Ted & Ona Lentz
Perrin & David Lilly
Orville Lindquist
Nick Marcucci & Ann Schroder
Sonja Mason
Mary Ann McCoy
John McNeil
Sheila & Raymond Meyer
Donald Moe & Colleen Halpine
William Towner Morgan, Ph.D.
Robert Muschewske
Charles S. Neimeyer
James & Ardis Niemann
Noonan
Robert and Ann Nye
Don & Florence Ostrom
Marjorie Pearson
Nancy G. Peterson
Julian G. Plante
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Nayematsu
Chuck Post
Charlotte Prentice
Gail L. Shea
Mary Jo Skaggs
Sheila Smith
Charles Stander
Nancy Stark
Cindy Stephani
Sheila Terryll & Troy Musel
Edith Thurber

Michael & Nicole Tietel
Nancy Tracy
Paul & Jane Tschida
Jean Velleu & Jim Law
Andrew VonBank
David & Ann Thomas Wilkins
Vista Wealth Management
Dan Wagers
Ken & Shirley Wahlborg
Wendy Weimer
Laurel Winsor
Donald Z. Woods
Ron Zweber

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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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El Capitolio in Havana, Cuba. Photo: Carol Highsmith