

REPORT BY THE PRESIDENT TO THE BOARD

Marjorie Pearson, November 15, 2005

The Cass Gilbert Society has had an active year in 2005 with a wide spectrum of activities. We thank the Minnesota Humanities Commission for its support of our programs, including continued funding of our lecture series in 2005, in cooperation with the National Endowment for the Humanities, and funding for the Media Project.

Lecture Series

February 15, 2005 – Sheila Smith, executive director, Minnesota Citizens for the Arts, STATE CAPITOL COLLECTION. This presentation on collections and meanings of Minnesota State Capitol memorabilia was held at the University Club.

April 26, 2005 – Marjorie Pearson, President, Cass Gilbert Society, THE RESURRECTION OF CASS GILBERT’S WEST STREET BUILDING AND THE ART AND SCIENCE OF FIREPROOF ARCHITECTURE. The lecture was held at the University Club.

September 20, 2005 – Leigh Roethke, Ph.D. candidate, University of Minnesota, and author of *Minnesota’s Capitol: A Centennial Story*, THE HOUSE THAT MINNESOTA BUILT. The lecture was held at the University Club.

November 15, 2005 – Dianne Steinbach, Executive Producer for Arts and Cultural Production, Twin Cities Public Television, CASS GILBERT: STANDING THE TEST OF TIME. The presentation of the documentary was held at the University Club.

Special Events

February 22, 2005 Unveiling of the portraits of Cass Gilbert and Julia Finch Gilbert at the Minnesota State Capitol outside the Supreme Court chambers. The two portraits are on loan from the Smithsonian Institution, supported in part with funds from the Cass Gilbert Society. Helen Post Curry, among others, spoke at the ceremony.

May 8, 2005 Mother’s Day Tea at Cedarhurst, Cottage Grove, the country home of Cordenio and Mary Harriman Severance. Cass Gilbert added the ballroom wing to the house in 1917. Following tea, guests toured the house and grounds. Tom Blanck prepared the background notes.

September 11, 2005 Ramsey Hill House Tour: “A Touch of Cass.” Thanks to the work of Jean Velleu and other Society members, the tour featured houses and churches designed by Cass Gilbert.

October 8-9, 2005 Tour of Cass Gilbert sites in Helena and Butte, Montana. The tour was organized by Linda Bjorklund and attended by 20 CGS members and friends.

October 15, 2005 Minnesota State Capitol Symposium: “Capitol Views, Building, Public Life, and Culture.” This event was held at the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, University of Minnesota, and featured talks and a panel discussion on the history, uses, and perceptions of the capitol.

Communications

Four issues of the *Newsletter* that featured upcoming events and continued items of interest and news pertaining to Cass Gilbert.

The Society's website is available at www.cassgilbertsociety.org. It is maintained by Factorof4.

Media Project

The Cass Gilbert Society issued a request for proposal in February for the preparation and distribution of an educational video about Cass Gilbert and his work that would be aimed at schoolchildren. TPT was the successful proposer. The documentary has been produced in two versions. The shorter version will be distributed to Minnesota schools, along with related educational materials, in VHS and DVD formats and will also be web-based. Funding for the documentary has been provided by a major gift from The John R. Cross Fund in memory of Bert and Bernice Cross, with additional support from the Katherine B. Anderson Fund, the Ramsey Hill Association, the Minnesota Humanities Commission, and members of the Cass Gilbert Society.

Preservation Issues

The West Street Building in lower Manhattan which suffered serious exterior damage in the collapse of the World Trade Center towers has been successfully rehabilitated for conversion to apartments.

The Austin, Nichols and Company Warehouse on the Brooklyn waterfront, designed by Cass Gilbert in 1909 and built in 1914-1915, has been threatened with inappropriate additions for development. The building was the subject of public hearing for local landmark designation. The Society submitted a statement in support of the designation. The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission voted to designate on September 20, 2005. The New York City Council is scheduled to vote on November 22, 2005.

Thank you

Let me offer my thanks and appreciation to our outgoing officers, board members, and committee chairs: Jean Kyle, Troy Musel, and Sheila Meyer. Eva Cross has worked with the board on fundraising for the media project. We also appreciate the willingness of Jim Noonan to sponsor us for our meetings at the University Club. Herb Grika continues to record our speakers to provide a permanent record of our lecture series.

In Memoriam

We note with sadness the deaths of the following members and supporters: Marilyn Vogel, Al Lindeke, and Dewey Berscheid.