ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY SUMMER SCHOOLS

ALUMNI eNEWSLETTER

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The Newport Summer School

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In honor of the 2020 Newport Class of VSA Summer Schools, with this issue we are reprinting several articles which describe some of the highlights of past Newport Schools. *Note that some videos of the Newport mansions are available at: https://www.newportmansions.org/exhibitions/virtual-exhibition-tours.*

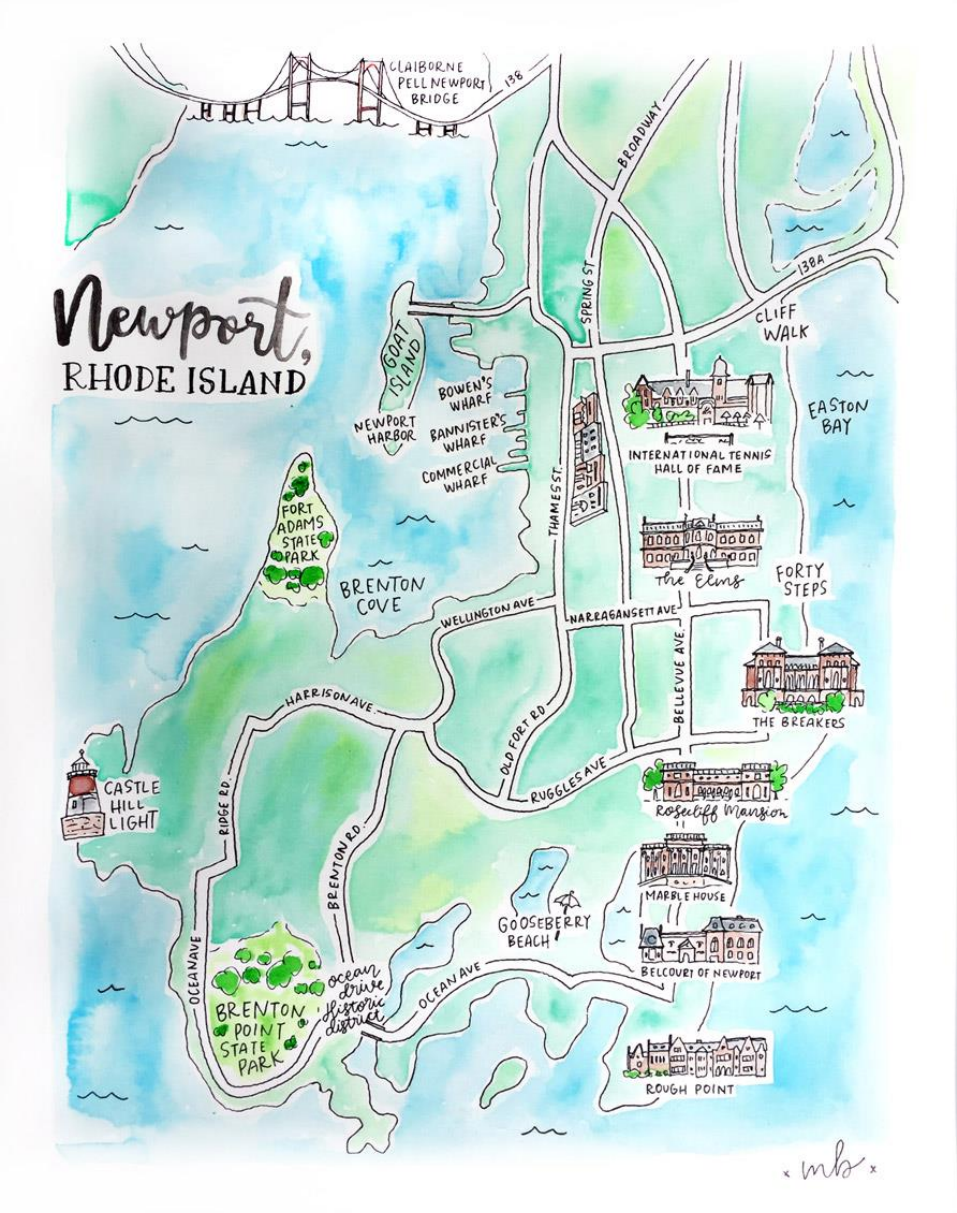
Alumni in the News

Victoria Young (London 1994 and Newport 1995), former co-chair of the Alumni Association of the Victorian Society Summer Schools , was recently elected president of the **Society of Architectural Historians**. *Photo from the SAH website.*

William Cullum (2014 London and 2015 Chicago) member of the Alumni Association Board, was recently featured in an **Architectural Digest Pro's** Mother's Day tribute. *Photo from William's Facebook page.*

The Victorian Society in America Summer Schools

THE NEWPORT SCHOOL



This compilation of essays is intended to serve as an appetizer for those considering attending the Newport Summer School as well as a book of memories for the alumni. These and many other essays can be found in the Publications section of the Alumni Association's website: **vsaalumni.org** and on the VSA website: victoriansociety,org

Please post your own memories on the Alumni Facebook page at:

Alumni Association of the Victorian Society Summer Schools 1

*In the Winter 2005 Issue of the **Alumni Newsletter**, Prof Richard Guy Wilson, Director, VSA Newport Summer School, reflected on:*

Twenty Years of the VSA American Summer School

Undoubtedly if anybody can remember, they would be shocked that a letter written by Joan Wells in the fall of 1978 still reverberates today. Joan, who was executive director of the Victorian Society in America, wrote on behalf of the education committee to ask if I would take over and run the American Summer School. I was surprised, humbled, and filled with self-puffery. Me, a lowly assistant professor with very little to my credit was being offered a plum position!

In the summer of 1976, I attended the second English/London Summer School. It was run by Geoffrey Tyack and we had as lectures and tour guides a number of the luminaries future summer schools have come to expect: Peter Howell, Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, Gavin Stamp, Robert Thorne, Alan Crawford, and many more. To put it mildly, it was wonderful, and I still think one of the best educational experiences I ever encountered: the more you know, the more it means to you!

On the summer school I made a number of acquaintances both in England and fellow students who to this day I still stay in contact. I did not realize at the time, but two people were very important, the late Ruth Emery who had founded the summer school the year prior, and Gwen Koch, who has remained a stalwart in the VSA and especially with the summer schools. We had tea together and casually discussed the possibility of an American summer school.

I came back to the US to teach at the University of Virginia (I had been at Iowa State University since 1972). In 1977 I was invited to a VSA board of director's meeting in Williamsburg, where it was announced that the Boston Chapter headed by Polly Harrell offered to host an American summer school for the summer of 1978. The idea was that various scholars would come and give lectures on topics of their choosing. These included as I remember Margaret Supple Smith, Carl Condit, Robert Rettig, Paul Sprague, and others. I contributed lectures on McKim, Mead & White and the American Renaissance, and also gave a tour of McKim's work in the Back Bay. This first American summer school went well, though there was some disorganization with nobody really in charge, and several students commented that we heard about the filling in of the Back Bay at least ten times. Joan Wells and the education committee were asking me to take it over and develop a program.

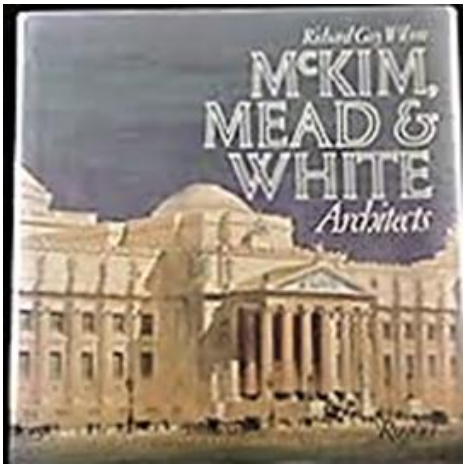
The Boston program for 1979 and 1980 went for three weeks (how I ever did that I don't know!) and it was successful, with lectures by leading experts (only five mentions of the Back

Bay's filling in '79; I got it cut to three in 1980), tours to the textile mills, several days in Newport and Providence, and of course Boston and all its riches. We established then a link with the English Vic Soc and also their National Trust which has continued to this day. I also changed several things from the London model such as having a maximum of two lectures per day (not five or six as in London), trying to pair when possible lectures with tours, and asking students to come prepared to give a brief introduction on their interests.

Problems erupted in 1981 with a change in the VSA. A board member told me "educational programs such as your summer school are not a priority," and the society would focus on other things and not academics. What that was I am not sure, but with no advertising hardly anybody expressed an interest in the summer school, and only eight people even applied. I was told: "you can do it and drive the bus, but you will not be paid." The summer school was canceled.

But of course, there is a comeback, things changed again with the VSA board, Guy Schless came on as president in 1984 and a dedicated group from the New York Metropolitan Chapter petitioned the national to let them try and revive the summer school. The major figures in this resuscitation were Katharine Baetjer, Billie Britz, Sibyl Groff, Pauline Metcalf, the late David Pettigrew, and of course the indomitable Gwen Koch and Ruth Emery. I was asked to organize a two-week summer school in Philadelphia.

The summer school of 1984, 1985, and 1986 followed the same format as Boston, but focused on the Philadelphia region with lectures, tours of Germantown, the Mainline, Cape May, the Hagley Museum, and elsewhere. It went very well, though I did notice that some students who came from towns and cities not used to buses, subways, and mass transportation were a bit nervous (this had been true in Boston as well). My philosophy that to know a place you need to experience it by walking and taking public transport and not just through the tinted windshield of a bus made some people uncomfortable. Many of you know, **we still walk the town!**



We decided after the 1986 summer school to move it again, and while a number of places were suggested, Newport seemed right. While in the Navy in the 1960s my ship had been home ported out of there, and indeed I developed my interest in McKim, Mead & White and Richard Morris Hunt back then and I had stayed in touch. In 1987 and 1988 we operated the summer school for two weeks, but in 1989 cut it to ten days. This has proved popular and indicates an interesting (and perhaps a disturbing?) trend; people no longer have the time they did have in the 1970s. Of course, I am not sure I would want to try and lead a three-week summer school with the same intensity as then, but also, we as a society are much more rushed today.

Although some have suggested moving the summer school elsewhere (Chicago, San Francisco, or Boise!), Newport continues to prove popular since it combines a sense of being on vacation (especially with the Salve mattresses) with learning, and I really don't think we could find anyplace with such a wealth of material within the proverbial twenty-minute march.

Also, Newport's location provides easy access to places such as New Bedford, Fairhaven, Providence, Fall River, and North Easton, which cannot be duplicated anywhere. For several years I would take the summer school to Boston, but I have decided that nobody except a crazy Victorian would understand New Bedford, and since it is not a tourist destination (yet), let's go there.

One of the reasons the summer school has been such as success is due to the dedication of education committee members past and present such as Sibyl Groff, Billie Britz, Pauline Metcalf, and Kathleen Bennett; the various administrative assistants; and numerous others. The various hosts who year after year open their homes, galleries, and historic sites and supply us with goodies, such as Richard Nelson and Jim Michael, Eileen Slocum, Bill Varieka, who good naturedly answers my perennial "can we come again" with a "yes!," all make it happen.

Out at Greenvale Farm, we have watched the Parkers and Wilsons create a whole new industry as we have appreciated and consumed their wine. So many others—in Newport, New Bedford, North Easton, and Providence—have willingly shared their wonderful properties, including Anne Culiver, Sandra Craig, Henry Wood, Jed Pearsall and Bill Doyle, Deborah Whiteway and Bart Sayles, the Ames family, and Ron Fleming.

A number of institutions: Salve Regina University, the Newport Art Museum, the Redwood Library, the Newport Historical Society, and the Preservation Society of Newport County (especially John Tschirch and Paul Miller) have always given us tremendous support. And the list of lecturers we have had over the years is I think pretty amazing: I am not going to even mention any since it would take up more space than I am allotted, but when you add them up when you add them up they are a virtual roll call of the major scholars of the period.

And of course, there are the students, now the alumni, some of them have even repeated their Newport experience. By my count we are somewhere over seven hundred, who have come from almost every corner in the United States, from New York to Dogpatch, as well as from abroad: England, Australia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Russia, Belgium, France, and elsewhere. The range of interests and background is what always amazes me and helps keeps me going since they demonstrate how vast and different our experiences are. That is really the fun part, getting to know the students and watching as they encounter the new, the old, the familiar, and the strange. These are some of the reasons why I still find the summer school invigorating and also a challenge. That education committee back in 1978 didn't know what they were letting themselves in for; I am still doing it!!

In the Winter 2005 Issue of the ***Alumni Newsletter:***

Newport Summer School 2004

Gail Ray (Newport 2004)

From across the globe (Australia, Poland, England, and all corners of the United States), from all walks of life, from student to scholar to dilettante, from the young and supple to "sages" with tired bones (the author speaks), thirty eager students gathered in Newport, Rhode Island for the twenty-fourth VSA American Summer School, directed by University of Virginia Commonwealth Professor Richard Guy Wilson.

For eighteen years Professor Wilson has developed loyal and lasting relationships with the Newport movers and shakers in the preservation and restoration scene including scholars, curators, and sometimes sixth generation heirs to some of America's finest architecture. These relationships have opened private homes and even precipitated invitations to afternoon tea and evening cocktails in the most exquisite mansions hosted by America's elite.

We architects, scholars, curators, antiquarians, interior designers, artists, businessmen— even a token dentist, attorney, and flight attendant— brought with us our individual goals and

expectations for the week. NONE of us were disappointed. We were immersed in scholarly learning, astoundingly beautiful and breathtaking architecture executed by the masters, confronted on each side by the cleverest and most expansive of details, finishes, furnishings, stained glass, and art created for the corporate royalty of the Gilded Age.

Even the comparative simplicity of Newport's colonial architecture, with rooms full of Townsend and Goddard furniture, precious native treasures pretending to be just chairs and highboys, was an experience beyond previous compare. All in the company of thirty students, sharing equally in the awe and excitement, mouths open in wonder, necks stretched, eyes consuming exquisite craftsmanship, sighing oooh and aaah repeatedly or stunned into absolute silence. And all trying desperately to commit to memory or film everything in sight.

Newport is a microcosm in time, a cross section of American architectural history created by three hundred and fifty years of cycles of economic expansion and preserved for our time by periods of economic decline. Because of its close proximity to New York and Boston, trade connections, an amenable seaport, temperate climate, and a wide variety of intellectual, cultural and artistic influences, Newport became a germinating ground for experimental creativity in the arts, architecture, literature, philosophy, and even religion. Paired with wealthy patrons to support those artists, Newport became a cultural center and a watering ground for the rich and famous.

Professor Wilson, along with other excellent guest lecturers each morning, exposed his students to the historical trends and cultural background of the time. He wove together an intricate web of influences and personalities that formed the Newport tapestry of the time. Pencils flew and pages were filled with rich history and intimate stories of the era.

After the lecture, Professor Wilson would raise his umbrella and give the command "march". Youngsters of all ages had a hard time keeping up with our professor's endless energy and enthusiasm. Those of us who could listened to great stories along the way. Towards the end of the week, tired troopers strung blocks behind, but enthusiasm never lagged.

*In the November 2009 Issue of the **Alumni Newsletter**, the following two essays were featured including Prof Richard Guy Wilson discussion of:*

The Teacher and the Summer School

Over the years I have been asked many times, "What is the purpose of the Victorian Society's American Summer School?" The following answer lies hopefully somewhere in between a short quick response and the long-winded, professorial dissertation.

The short answer, but the essence, is to teach or to create an awareness of the special character of the arts of the Victorian period, with an emphasis on the architecture, landscape, furniture, interiors, and other elements of the city in which we are located—Boston, Philadelphia, and for the past twenty-three years, Newport, Rhode Island. In many ways, the major theme of the course, and also the big draw, is the architecture, the impressive houses, cottages, and mansions designed by Richard Upjohn, McKim, Mead & White, Richard Morris Hunt, and other leading nineteenth century architects.

The architecture, along with the landscapes and gardens designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Nathan Barrett and the interiors and furniture of Jules Allard, Ogden Codman, and others, is a major focus of the Newport program. **Newport has more great architecture and associated elements per square foot than any other American city!!** But behind this quick overview lies a host of other perspectives and themes.

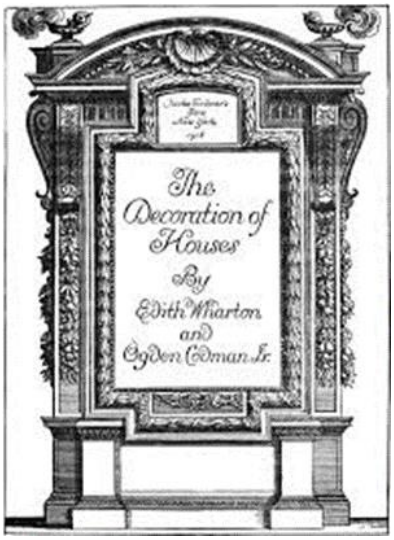
One issue is the term Victorian. Strictly speaking, it refers to the time of Queen Victoria's reign, 1837-1901, but for most Americans it is associated with the period from after the Civil War to the start of World War I, or from 1865 to 1914. This period has also accumulated a host of other names, such as the Gilded Age, the White, Brown, and Mauve decades, the American Renaissance, and the age of Energy, Opulence, and Conspicuous Consumption. However, the Newport Summer School is not limited to this period. It extensively addresses the early decades of the nineteenth century and even earlier eras as well as designs from the 1920s and even beyond.

Background is important to understanding, and Newport's prominence in design and the arts came much earlier than the nineteenth century. It is sometimes surprising for students to learn that Newport was the third or fourth largest trading port in the British Empire. It was also a hub of revolutionary activity in the 1770s.

The remains from this time period are impressive. Newport boasts one of the largest collections of Colonial American buildings and major monuments, such as the Old Colony House and **Trinity Church** by Richard Munday and the Redwood Library, Touro Synagogue, and Brick Market by Peter Harrison.

The city also produced some of the finest furniture of the eighteenth century, and the chance to see Townsend and Goddard desks and chairs up close along with what are probably the earliest surviving examples of interior wood graining and wall painting from the seventeenth century helps to put the later—Victorian—period in perspective. **Perhaps the finest examples of sculpture from this time, i.e., gravestones, were also made in Newport.**

Literature is an important perspective in trying to understand any historical period and for the Victorian period in Newport, it is essential. Students are asked to read a novel by Edith Wharton and a novella by Henry James. Because both authors lived in Newport and Edith Wharton wrote **The Decoration of Houses** with Ogden Codman during her time there, these readings help to provide context. In addition, James's work from this time contains the beginning of themes that will preoccupy him for the rest of his life.



Newport was a major literary center with many of the leading figures of the nineteenth century either living there or spending time there during the summers. You can see the stage where **Oscar Wilde** addressed a summer audience, look at the rock on which Bishop George Berkeley sat and composed one of the earliest poems written in America, and, if you wish, even sit in Julia Ward Howe's pew in the **Channing Memorial Church**.

Newport was also a center for American painting, both in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, and works by Gilbert Stuart (a local boy from across the bay who trained in town), John Kensett, and William Trost Richards are well represented in many American museums.

Most American artists visited the city, but it also produced some painters not as well-known but very significant, such as Jane Stuart, Gilbert's daughter, who was one of the earliest women to succeed in the field. Between the Newport Art Museum housed in Hunt's Griswold house, other collections, and **William Varieka's** wonderful art gallery, students have the opportunity to study some gems of American art.

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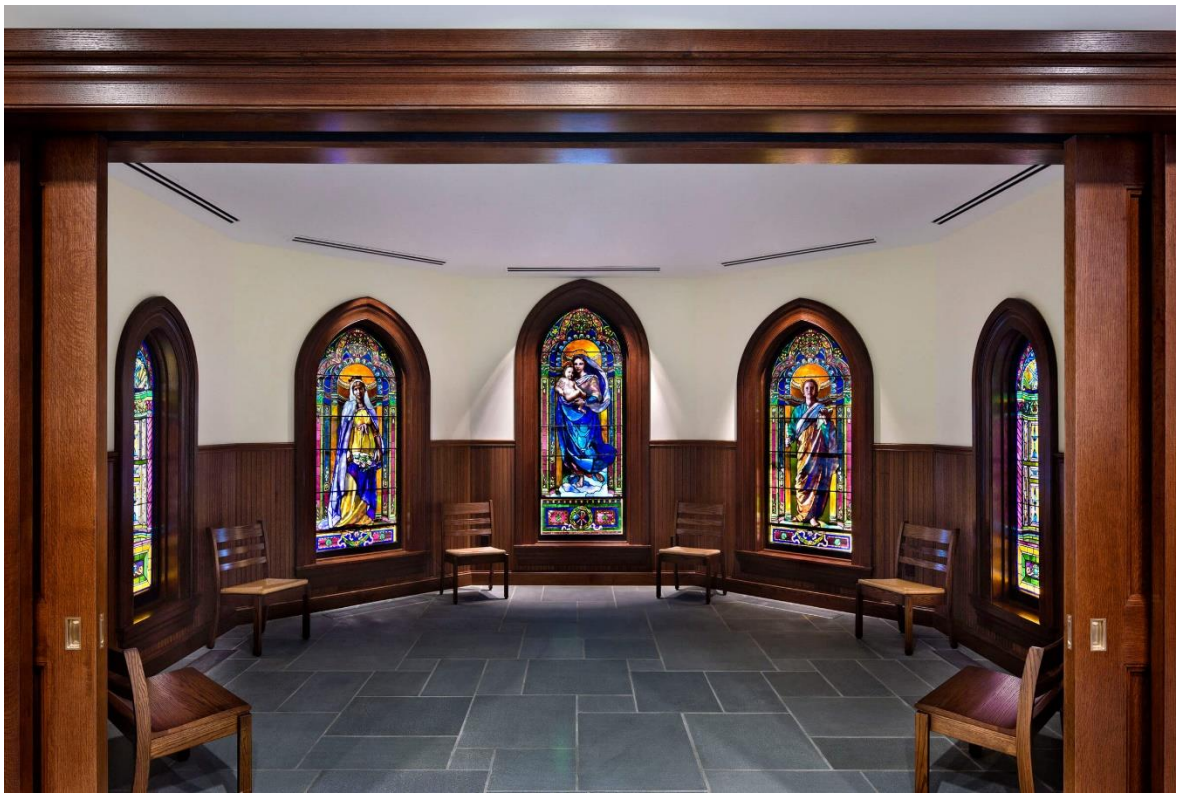


other theme in Newport is the development of opalescent (or luminescent) stained glass, or what became known internationally as “American glass.” Opalescent glass is one of America’s major contributions to nineteenth century art and Newport was a center for this art. John La Farge, who created it, spent much of his time in town, living with his wife and other partners. Stained glass is, of course, not that well known or studied, but it was a major art form and Newport provides the opportunity to see a wide variety.

In addition to the work of La Farge, masterpieces by D. Maitland Armstrong can be seen at St. Columba’s Chapel in Middletown, which has perhaps the best jeweled glass anywhere, and Fairhaven has an amazing set of Tiffany windows that will take your breath away.

Newport, of course, does not exist in isolation, and another theme over the years has been the exploration of the surroundings—farmlands, country estates, or the mill towns that provided the source of the area’s wealth. Great examples of Egyptian Revival smoking

rooms for the men exist, along with music rooms for the women, and the earliest surviving shopping arcade in the United States can be found in Providence.

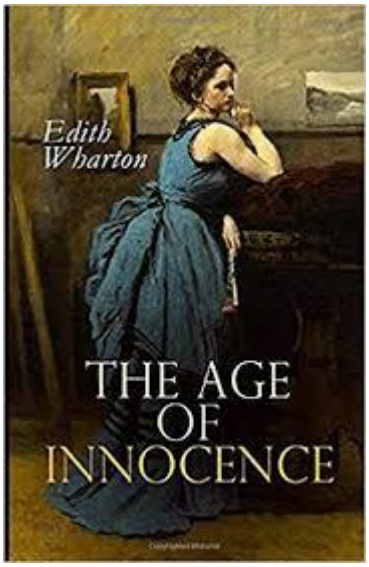
Another theme explored during past summer schools is the impact upon a town of a family, such as the Ameses of North Easton, who commissioned great works of architecture. Much less well known, but equally significant, is the work in Fairhaven made possible by the wealth of Henry Huttleston Rogers and the architectural talent of Charles Brigham. The Vanderbilts were not the only people who commissioned architecture!!!

Of course, there are other themes I've just touched upon that could be expanded, but the real point is that **the intention of the Summer School is not just big rich people's "white elephants" as Henry James labeled them, but the multidimensional nature of the arts and the context of the place and its many periods**.

Nerd Camp, Before and After

Warren Ashworth (Newport, 2009)

In 1893 Edith Wharton expressed the idea that a woman might be compared to a house full of rooms. Writing in the short story "**The Fullness of Life**," she imagined the compartments of a woman such as a front hall for greeting people, a drawing room for entertaining, a nursery for nurturing children, a kitchen for preparing nourishment, and so on. And far away, she wrote, "in the innermost room, the holy of holies, the soul sits alone and waits for a footstep that never comes."



This salient note came in Richard Guy Wilson's very last lecture on the final day of the Victorian Society Newport Summer School. Salient because it helped clarify something that had bewildered me. Just the night before I had finished Wharton's **The Age of Innocence**, published in 1920 (belatedly alas, since it was assigned reading and we were to have finished before we got to the program). I was left devastated and completely confused. At the end of this exquisite book, Madame Olenska, the great love of our protagonist Newland Archer, waits upstairs in her Paris apartment while he sits on a park bench outside debating whether to go up and consummate the love that once so inflamed them both. But after a long while he gets up, turns away, and goes back to his hotel. Why didn't he go up? It would have been so easy, so right, so natural.

That morning Professor Wilson's reference, in his elegant fashion, to an obscure 1891 essay led me to understand how Wharton's Pulitzer Prize winning novel, published some 30 years

later, ends with the heroine “waiting for the footsteps that never come.” At that moment of the lecture it became clear to me that she wrote the book to work out that very idea. This was just one of many moments over the ten days of the summer school program when clarity suddenly dispelled clouds of confusion.

Coincidentally, 30 years is about how long it has been since the acorn of what is now the oak of my passion for architectural history sprouted. It was in 1978, the year I graduated from architecture school, that I started making a record of the rampant diversity of American house forms. As I drove around the country looking for the perfect job, I began taking photographs and making sketches of houses I admired. I was drawn to them for their elegant proportions, fine details, or just because the personality of the house spoke to me. I put these in a series of notebooks, not even knowing why. My kids and architectural career left little time to wonder about it. I rarely even had time to paste the pictures in, and they would gather between the bindings. But during vacations over the years, the family got quite used to my pulling the car over on some country road, backing up 50 feet, and hopping out to take a picture of a house, which I would add to the notebooks.

I came late to scholarship. I realized four years ago that I should try to fathom why I had hundreds of photographs and sketches of houses. So, I took up the study of architectural history, focusing on the invention of balloon framing and its subsequent influence on house forms.

Before going to the Victorian Society Newport Summer School, which my grown children dubbed Nerd Camp, I had been gathering disparate facts about the evolution of American domestic architecture. I had done some research and some writing, had attended a conference, and had applied to graduate school to pursue a Master’s degree part-time. Having heard Richard Guy Wilson lecture twice, I had a hint of the treats in store. Furthermore, the Historic House Preservation conference I had attended was held on the Salve Regina campus, so I was familiar with its glories. But I was not prepared for the innumerable connections I was to make with people, architecture, and ideas.

During our ten days I met many people pursuing the same interests as mine. How extraordinary to walk into a (never open to the public) classic nineteenth century house with 33 other people and find a group of them next to me also photographing the cast Aesthetic Movement silver plated butt hinges. This is just not the stuff that makes most people vibrate with excitement. But our group was palpitating regularly.

The before and after of my architectural knowledge is night and day. I knew, I thought, a good deal about American domestic architecture. But I was delighted at how much more there was to learn. I had, for instance, seen photographs of the F. L. Ames Gatehouse in Easton, Massachusetts, designed by Henry Hobson Richardson, in various texts. So, as we drove up to it, I was not expecting to be stunned almost to tears by the real thing. And since only one view is ever published, I was astonished to discover exquisite details around the back and within the house. In addition, standing on the lawn chatting with the direct descendant of the owner about her grandfather's remarkable working relationship with Mr. Richardson is incomparable in terms of a learning experience.

The lectures, however, really brought everything into focus. Learning the details of Charles Follen McKim's life, having stood in front of his nascent work the day before, makes an indelible impression about the man.

Then, hearing the details about the partnerships (and concluding that it is probably a bad idea to marry your partner's sister), based on primary source material such as letters, invoices, and client correspondence, from the author of the definitive book on McKim, Mead and White is pretty good stuff.

After 30 years of vague interest in architectural history, these ten days with the Victorian Society in America Summer School have helped make palpable the scope and range of my future in architectural history like no other course could have. I recommend it to nerds everywhere.

*In the Fall 2015 Issue of the **Alumni Newsletter**, the following three essays are featured including Prof Richard Guy Wilson discussion of:*

William Morris Hunt and his Newport Studio

Anybody who has attended the Victorian Society Summer School or spent time (more than a day trip!) in Newport, knows, it offers a lot, much to see and experience. Although the scenery, the landscape, and the architecture capture much of our attention, there is something else, which sometimes comes as a surprise: **Newport's central role in the development of painting and art in the United States.**

In past essays I focused on the earlier periods and the importance of John Smibert, Robert Feke, Gilbert Stuart, Jane Stuart, the Kings, and the way that almost all major American artists such as Winslow Homer, Martin Johnson Heade, and others visited and painted Newport scenes.

Another event of extreme importance was William Morris Hunt's establishment of a teaching studio in town in 1857 and his attraction of a group of aspiring young artists such as John La Farge, William and Henry James, and others.

William Morris Hunt (1824–1879), the elder brother of the architect Richard Morris Hunt (1827–1895), was born in Brattleboro, Vt. into a wealthy family. Hunt, always aspiring to be an artist, was frustrated by the lack of training at Harvard, and after his father died, his mother Jane Marie Leavitt Hunt took her five children abroad to experience real culture and art that she felt was missing in the United States. The family traveled extensively and settled in Geneva, Switzerland and then William and his brother moved to Paris. Richard studied architecture at the École des Beaux-Arts while William studied with Thomas Couture and later Jean-François Millet and the newly formed Barbizon School, which helped to transform French painting. He learned to paint "plein air" out in nature. He became very accomplished.

Feeling that America needed the artistic spirit of Paris, the two bothers returned to the U.S. and Richard in 1857 set up a studio/atelier in New York City to train aspiring architects, and William set one up in Newport. William purchased a house to which he added a studio located at the head of Bellevue Avenue, across from the Touro Cemetery and on the site of the present-day Viking Inn's swimming pool. He painted many pictures of Newport, some of which contained French peasant women common to Barbizon scenes, but also views of "Bishop Berkeley's Rock" and "Paradise Valley."

Hunt's teaching studio opened shortly after; he took in as students La Farge, the James boys, and others who came and went over the next four years, including several women, Sarah Whitman, Sarah Gibbs, and apparently during the summer of 1860 Richard Morris Hunt brought up his young student, Frank Furness. John La Farge (1835–1910) was born into a wealthy Catholic New York family and had studied very briefly with Couture in Paris. Reportedly, La Farge and Hunt did not get along well and tensions were common in the studio. Among the other students were the young William James (1842–1910) and Henry James

(1843–1916), both of whom aspired to be artists. Their father Henry James Sr. had taken them and their siblings abroad as youths to experience real culture and art, but in 1860 he decided to return to the United States and choose Newport as the most sophisticated location.

Both William and Henry studied with Hunt and became close friends with John La Farge. William James exhibited considerable talent as a painter and some of his work remains; however, in 1862 he decided to go to Harvard, where he ultimately studied philosophy, became a professor, wrote many books, including The Varieties of Religious Experience (1901–02), and is known as the father of American pragmatism.

William James' connections with La Farge would remain and his face appears in paintings and numerous stained-glass windows. Of particular interest is an altarpiece La Farge started in 1862 but never finished in which his wife appears on one side as the Virgin Mary and William James stands as St. John on the other with Second Beach in Newport in the background. James' face, done by La Farge in 1862, appears in stained glass windows from the 1880s.

Henry James, Jr., the younger brother, did not exhibit much talent as a painter and, reputedly, La Farge told him one day, why not become a writer? Henry went off to Harvard and in time became one of the best-known American writers of all time.

In 1860 La Farge married Margaret Mason Perry, the daughter of an old and distinguished Newport family, and he would remain connected to the city for the remainder of his life with a house outside of town, numerous city residences, and assorted mistresses. Of course, he had a studio in New York City and did extensive work as a muralist, painter, and stained-glass artist across the United States. Numerous examples of his work are in Newport; in addition to paintings on display at the Newport Art Museum and William Vareika Fine Arts, he did the interior of the Congregational Church and windows in Channing Memorial Church. William Morris Hunt left Newport in 1862 and moved around considerably before finally settling in Boston, where he taught at the school of the Museum of Fine Arts and did many portraits and murals.

His house and studio on Bellevue Avenue were taken over by his architect brother, Richard Morris Hunt, and would serve as his Newport office for many years; from it emerged portions of the designs of many mansions and houses, including Newport's historic Griswold House, considered a pioneering example of Stick architecture and now the home of the Newport Art Museum. Relatively brief as it was, William Morris Hunt's time in Newport had a major impact upon American art that would be long lasting.

Showers of Delight on a Rainy Day

DEBRA MANCOFF (Newport 2015)

At first glance, the 16-page itinerary for the 2015 Newport Summer School looked absolutely daunting. Lectures, tours, sites and events unfolded in quick succession, and one day in particular gave me pause. We were scheduled to hear two lectures, tour a church, visit three sites and then—in a scant 90 minutes—make the rounds of ten houses. To make matters worse, the weather forecast was dire: plunging temperatures, high winds and plenty of heavy rain.

So, would this be one of Richard Guy Wilson's fabled "Death Marches," testing our commitment and stamina, let alone our attention spans? As it turned out, the day was absolutely memorable, not for its inherent challenges, but for its delights and discoveries. Thinking back on that day reveals why I found the course to be a remarkable and unparalleled experience. The morning's lectures—Richard discussing McKim, Mead & White's patrons as well as the firm's contribution to the development of the Colonial Revival and Paul Miller's introduction to the decorative work of Jules Allard et Fils— were focused and relevant, building on what we have previously heard in the classroom and preparing us for what we would see.

And then we zipped up our raincoats, raised our hoods and unfurled our umbrellas, and went on to our tours, with Channing Memorial Church as our first stop. On that dim, sunless day, we were treated to the glowing opulence of windows by La Farge and the striking chancel-end window by Donald MacDonald that translated Millet's heroic Sower into jeweled-toned glass.

We moved on to the **Edward King House**, a beautiful Italianate villa built by Richard Upjohn, where local seniors gathered for conversation, card games and services; donated to the city, the house now serves as a senior center.

The handsome **Griswold House, Richard Morris Hunt's first major commission in the city, is now home to the Newport Art Museum**. The woodwork in the dining room, ranging from the complex chevron patterned floor to the whimsical guardian dogs carved into the fireplace, provided a surprisingly harmonious setting for an exhibition of seascapes.

And, while new uses gave these fine old buildings new life, the **Redwood Library**, one of the longest-lived lending libraries in the country, presented a powerful reminder of the city's ongoing vitality.

The rain had relented by the time we embarked on our 10-house tour in the vicinity of Old Beach Road. We gathered around Richard to view the facades of several of the buildings, including the imposing, red-brick William Cabell Rives, Jr. (now the Hambly Funeral Home) and the stately Roman brick, colonial revival house built by McKim, Mead & White for Commodore William G. Edgar.

But one of the greatest privileges of the course is the access granted to private homes, and this privilege provided the highlight of my day.

The house built by McKim, Mead & White for the Boston piano dealer Samuel Tilton appealed to my own personal preference for the often-unorthodox taste of the Aesthetic Movement. Before we entered, Richard walked us around to point out the last-minute addition demanded by the client, a music room with a cathedral ceiling that upped the price of the commission and disturbed the symmetry of the back façade. He also drew our attention to the curious exterior decoration, incorporating shingles, half timbering and stucco panels embedded with broken glass, shells and pebbles.

But none of this prepared me for the interior of the **Tilton House**, where the woodwork—from the magnificent entry hall and serene public rooms, along the grand staircase, to even the more modest of bedrooms—was thoroughly inventive, highly varied, occasionally eccentric and absolutely beautiful.

Each member of every summer school class brings a special expertise to the program. As an arts writer, I valued the company of architects and preservationists, house museum directors and collection curators, glass and silver experts, skilled photographers, horticulturalists and several genuine enthusiasts whose knowledge on a wide variety of topics added to the intellectual mix. If you had a question, there were people who had answers.

And each of us had a reason for our participation. My work explores the intersection of art, fashion and culture in the late Victorian and Edwardian eras, and I wanted to see the grand

houses and walk in the gardens so that I could better understand the decorum of dress in its original context.

While I enjoyed the famed cottages and their collections, it was inside the Tilton House that I could truly envision the devotees of the Aesthetic Movement in their embroidered silks, their Liberty prints and their lace. **On a day that showcased the vitality of historic sites, that was, for me, the moment when history came to life.**

Reflections on Newport

ALEXANDRA RUGGIERO (Newport 2015)

Towards the end of a whirlwind 10 days, I found myself standing in the middle of **Unity Church** in North Easton, Mass. While Richard Hill, organ player extraordinaire, filled the church with music, I watched as sunlight cascaded through the two glorious John La Farge windows, casting colorful shadows and pockets of illumination across the dimly lit interior.

That day epitomized my Newport summer. Over the years my most memorable learning experiences have occurred away from my desk, and the Victorian Society in America's Newport Summer School was no exception. I came to Newport eager to round out my understanding of architecture, decorative arts and design in Victorian America. But—and this comes as no surprise—as a glass historian and curatorial assistant at The Corning (N.Y) Museum of Glass, I arrived with glass in mind. I wanted to understand how the material was incorporated into the designs of these opulent Gilded Age homes and churches. I longed to see these beautiful works of art as they were meant to be seen: in situ.

The Newport Summer School did not disappoint in providing many such opportunities. Stained and leaded glass windows have been an influential and important aspect of architecture for centuries. They provide a way to break open architectural walls and allow natural light in. These windows have another important job, though—they act as a canvas, another surface to be filled with iconography and design. In this regard, stained and leaded glass windows located within a building not only allow for illumination, but also alter the incoming light in a manner appropriate to the building.

In what can only be described as Victorian-opulence overload, I found myself constantly pausing in front of the glass: a moment of peace in front of the windows by Tiffany Studios at Trinity Church, time alone in front of the relocated John La Farge windows at Salve Regina's Our Lady of Mercy Chapel, careful inspection of a window at **Chateau Sur Mer**, a splash of color and light in the dim stairwell at the Governor Henry Lippett House. Time and again I found myself reflecting on how glass can act as a bridge between the interior, exterior and the architecture within. These windows and their interaction with the outside light were an inspiring break from the interior decoration and design.

One doesn't get such inspiration when researching or exploring windows in a museum collection. In the field, though, the artistry and interaction of glass and light with their architectural surroundings were, at times, simply breathtaking.

Each of us arrived at the Summer School with varied backgrounds and different approaches. While I was inevitably drawn to glass, I enjoyed watching the passions of others rise to the surface: those of the horticulture expert, for example, who shed light on how a landscape may have originally looked; the lead building surveyor who provided insight into the buildings we visited from the perspective of care and maintenance; our contextual historians who gave us insight into background of the families and eras we studied. It was this diverse group of individuals, led by the knowledgeable Dr. Richard Guy Wilson, which enriched and enhanced my experience.

Since joining the decorative arts field, I've watched colleagues leave for the Newport Summer School and return as ambassadors of the program. Their recalled experiences greatly influenced my decision to apply. Now I've returned from the program not only as an ambassador of the Newport Summer School for years to come, but grateful for newfound knowledge and an expanded group of remarkable colleagues.

*In the Winter 2018 issue of the **Alumni Newsletter**, the following three essays appeared including Prof Richard Guy Wilson discussion of:*

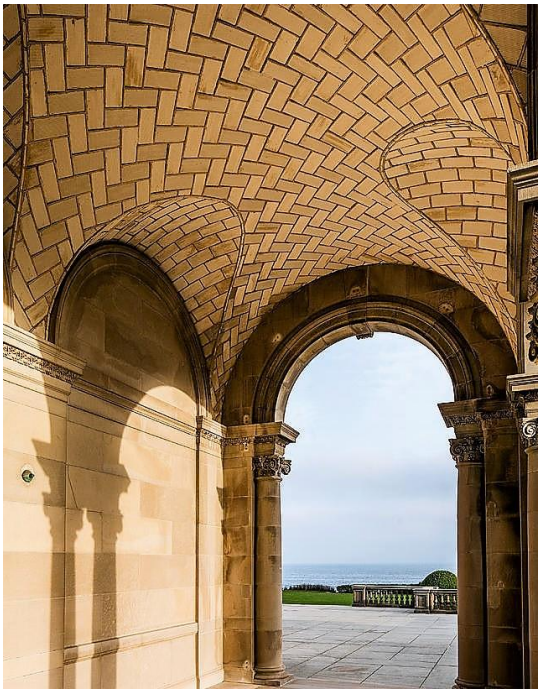
Newport: The Center of Modern Architecture in the 19th Century

"Wilson, you have to be kidding! Newport as Modern? Why, it was the center of Gilded Age excess!" This is a paraphrase of what several individuals have yelled at me when I assert that some of the architecture built in Newport during the 19th century was very innovative and might be considered "modern." One must be careful with the term since in the 19th century, "modern" without a capital M meant design that was new, up to date. It also meant buildings that employed new technology. Today of course, it is "Modern" (with a capital M) and means a style (or styles) that rejects history and usually rejects ornament.

Depending on the Modern style one is discussing, it can be minimalist, has flat or low roofs, and lots of glass. There are many Modern styles. However, the capital letter "Modern" doesn't come into usage until the 1920s and reflects the new designs emerging in Paris, Berlin, Dessau, and Weimar. This usage of Modern was picked up in the United States with institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York, founded in 1929, and has become the ruling interpretation. But as noted, lower case "modern" meant new ideas, not a style, and much of the architecture produced in Newport was innovative.

Richard Upjohn's Kingscote, originally built 1839-41 for George Noble Jones, a planter and cotton merchant from Savannah, is one of the first Gothic Revival cottages in the United States. He took the idea from English sources (Upjohn emigrated from England) and converted it into the standard American building material, wood. Upjohn's design for Jones caught the attention of Andrew Jackson Downing, who adopted it and published numerous iterations in his books: **Cottage Residences** (1842), and **The Architecture of Country Houses** (1850). Jones's Newport house passed into the hands of the King family, who in 1880 hired McKim, Mead & White to make a major addition which was innovative for the day in its open space.

Today, we interpret architects whose buildings appeared in Newport, such as Richard Morris Hunt, McKim, Mead & White, Peabody and Sterns as bound by tradition, tied to the historical past. But their work could be very innovative such as that of Richard Morris Hunt (1827-95), whose work was constantly praised and appeared with great regularity in the most influential architectural publications.



Hunt's Breakers (1892-95), frequently seen as the crown jewel of excess, was historical in the sense that its outer form was derived from Italian palazzi. But underneath the Hunt palazzo were very progressive elements, such as a steel frame, which was very new for the time, **Guastavino** vaulting, which was both fireproof and created large spans, electricity (very new), multiple water systems, and fire suppression. Technologically, it was one of the most advanced buildings in the United States, if not the world.

Richard Morris Hunt, who frequently receives the label "the King of Excess" with the Breakers, Marble House, and Ochre Court, had a very experimentalist earlier career. Hunt, the first American to study at the École des Beaux–Arts in Paris, 1848-1853, came under the influence of the leading architectural theorist, Eugene-Emmanuel Violletle-Duc. Viollet-le-Duc, who was a medievalist, argued in his various treatises that buildings should directly express their structure, it should not be hidden. Hunt's Griswold House, 1861-1864 (now the Newport Art Museum), was his first major work in town and demonstrates its structure with the heavy exposed timbers on the exterior. This was the first of a totally new design in America. The Griswold House was also revolutionary with the vast and tall interior staircase hall and the different levels and balconies. Hunt designed several other similar houses in Newport (a few of which still exist) before he fell into his "mansion" or Breakers mode.

Many years ago, the great American architectural historian Vincent Scully put Newport back on the map with his book, **The Shingle Style (1955), with the sub-title: Architectural Theory and Design from Downing to the Origins of Wright.** Scully also coined the term "Stick Style," and both were the outcome of his Ph.D. dissertation at Yale, titled "The Cottage Style." Scully argued that a new architecture appeared in the houses by McKim, Mead & White, and others, from the later 1870s and 1880s that were covered in shingles and also contained open floor plans.

Of McKim, Mead & White's various Newport houses, **the Isaac Bell,1882-83**, is perhaps the best example of the free-flowing space that connects the hall, the parlor, the dining room, and then windows from floor to ceiling that open on the porch. On the exterior, the shingled gables and forms were derived from 18th-century houses that McKim had closely studied and commissioned photos of them. In the 1880s, the **Bell House** was described in a publication as "modernized Colonial." The impact of the Bell's open space can easily be seen in the Chicago suburban houses that Frank Lloyd Wright began to design in the late 1880s and would continue for the rest of his life. And to be noted, Wright copied many of the forms of the Newport shingled houses in his own work, such as his "Home and Studio" (1889), in Oak Park.

While Wright deserves the title of "Father of American Modern" (spelled with a capital M), he was eclectic in his early days. In addition to cribbing on the Shingle Style, he also did full-fledged "Colonial/Georgian Revival." His Blossom House (1892), located in the south side of Chicago, is a direct copy of McKim, Mead & White's H.A.C. Taylor House,1882-84, in Newport. McKim, Mead & White had very carefully studied the grand American houses of the so-called Georgian period, c.1700-1800, and created one of the most magnificent, with Palladian windows on the first floor. For its time the Taylor House was one of the most radical and modern in the United States. Unfortunately, it was destroyed in the 1950s, but with the VSA's Summer School, we can drive by and bow.

Newport contains many other buildings by those that have been mentioned, and others such as the leading San Diego architect, Irving Gill, who is sometimes credited with creating the International Style before the Europeans. **The point is, Newport is a treasure trove of great designs and buildings that date across the spectrum. It represents many different approaches and styles, and they need to be understood as very innovative and modern for their time.**

Ten Days to Shake the World

Ted Bosley, Director, the Gamble house, Pasadena CA

For the better part of 30 years I have listened to colleagues rhapsodize about the VSA's Newport Summer School, famously led for more than three decades by Professor Richard Guy Wilson. I have routinely exhorted others to attend, and I've written letters of recommendation for my own staff and earnest volunteers, all the while wondering how I could carve out time to participate myself. For a raft of reasons that probably seemed excellent at the time, I couldn't join the legendary de rigueur march through the dense sweep of America's architectural heritage that is Newport, Rhode Island. Until 2018.

With apologies to John Reed and his classic account of the Bolshevik Revolution, ten days in Newport with Richard Guy Wilson shook my world, and entirely for the better. Please understand, as an unreconstructed California-centric bungalow enthusiast, far removed from the fame and grandeur of Newport, I may have been a little slow to grasp references to New York society doyennes of the 1880s, or the maze of Vanderbilts that inhabited Newport, and the architectural allegories that characterized them. By about Day 3, however, I found myself nodding knowingly (with our tremendously collegial and knowledgeable cohort of students) to tales of Marble House Alva's swipes at her sister-in-law's exuberant entertainments at the Breakers, and the smug pride of less flush wealth whose servants were occasionally hired ad hoc at the more prestigious estates for special occasions. By then, too, I had gotten the drift of pots calling the kettles black.

These were not only ten days that shook my view of this particular world, they shook the dust off my appreciation for the vast sweep of American architectural design. **To my delight, the Victorian Society's Newport summer program covered the Victorian era and reacquainted us with the rich legacy of Colonial, Revolutionary, and post-Revolutionary architecture.** This made the anticipated focus on the late 19th and early 20th centuries all the more meaningful. Newport enjoys one of the densest concentrations of comparative American housing stock of every era (Salem has more 17th-century examples), showing the full range of American design from the 1600s to the early 20th century. With its rich legacy of each era (the city had never been burned, and then the first fire hydrants in America appeared here), it is possible in this highly walkable community to appreciate one of the best immersive experiences in American architecture.

Personal highlights from the program are simply too numerous to list. I'll note only a few. I learned from Professor Wilson (respectfully "RGW") how the iconic William Watts Sherman House (H.H. Richardson, 1874-76) had exuberant flourishes added to the south elevation—Aesthetic movement carvings of sunflowers on the barge boards—potentially without HHR's full knowledge, by young associates Stanford White and Charles Follen McKim.

The La Farge-decorated Newport Congregational Church—a comprehensive and important conservation work-in-progress—was a standout visit for understanding how a small congregation could dedicate itself to such a huge task; an inspiring story unfolding over years.

Among the turn-of-the-century “cottages” along the Bellevue corridor I confess that Marble House was my favorite, for its scholarly approach to historical references and decorative allegory. While not as big as the Breakers, its owner, Alma Vanderbilt, was justly proud of its standing in the day.

Who knew that San Diego architect Irving Gill designed three houses in Newport, including the magnificent shingle-style **Wildacre** (1900-01)? We had the privilege of touring the spectacular house, and waterside site, with its owner, who fully grasped its aesthetic connection to Arts & Crafts architecture in California.

The wonderfully Japonesque Rev. Knapp House in Fall River (Ralph Adams Cram, 1894) was opened to us, bottom to top, by its gracious owners, who also have a finely tuned understanding of its significance, this time as one of the finest architectural examples of the Japan craze in Victorian America.

It was striking to witness the affection that these homeowners feel for RGW. I’ll just note here that the privileged access we routinely enjoyed at so many private residences, along with lovely evening receptions put on by enthusiastic owners and supporters, is clearly thanks to RGW’s respectful and attentive care shown to all of the property stewards, who have become his friends, over many years. It was therefore a pleasure to write letters of thanks to the owners and caretakers of the properties, especially knowing that it may help pay forward the goodwill.

I cringe to recall the many, many, excellent moments along the Newport program’s path that I have not mentioned here. Suffice to say that I will always cherish the people and places that made up the 2018 Newport Summer School. Thank you, RGW, and thank you to everyone who participated, for ten days that shook my world.

The Six Cities of Newport

Merrily Gumpel, Retired Museum Advisor

Indelible, that is my takeaway from VSA's Newport Summer School experience. While scrolling through Instagram the other day, slogging through a session on the LifeCycle, I suddenly began thinking of shingles, and I immediately recalled the houses we examined and studied with shingles such as the enchanting Bell House. While this is just one moment, I feel like there have been many of these moments since Summer School ended, and I also feel like there will continue to be more of them in the future. Why? Because the subject matter is great in so many ways. **Anyone with an eye for design, decoration, architecture, history, sociology, and urban development would agree that VSA's Summer School covered these topics intensely, interestingly, and indelibly.**

Sort of like the **"Cities of Newport"** mentioned in the novels **Theophilus North and The Maze of Windermere**, so let's imagine VSA's Newport Summer School as Six Cities. These "City" categories are the lectures, the itinerary, the architecture, the administration, the student body, and the leader.

The lectures, City 1, were excellent and were delivered by lecturers who are experts in their fields. They lectured on interesting and pertinent material to the syllabus. They were enriching. I particularly enjoyed how the lectures mostly came in the morning before the tours in the afternoon, when the subject matter was still fresh in our minds. Delivered in this way, they broke up the subject matter in digestible pieces, and then applicable visuals followed to form the indelible impressions I speak of.

The itinerary, City 2, was chock full of not just the excellent lectures and tours of the buildings, but a pleasant mix of lectures, lecturers, tours of buildings, tours of landscapes, meet-and-greets at cocktail hour, walking tours, and bus rides. Nothing was really the same from day to day, so it was always fresh and fun, even on the dreaded big walking day—the day we composed the Class of 2018 anthem sung to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

As expected, the architecture, City 3, was exceptional. The different historical periods, the different styles, the different purposes, the different architects…and their personalities…and the patron's personalities. No one should be fooled into thinking the Summer School is an aggrandized version of taking a tour of the Bellevue mansions. It is so much more than that! And what it did for me was to pull all these architectural details together and sort them into the wider category of Victorian and helped me to understand why they are Victorian.

The administration, City 4, was better than I expected. Not fair, but when I showed up the first day and was greeted with a paper folder in this electronic, app-infested time of ours, I was skeptical about the week to come. I was wrong. The Summer School was scheduled to perfection. We met all timelines, places, houses, and buses. Summer School Administrator Anne Mallek did a wonderful job communicating and organizing and worrying that everyone was comfortable and satisfied. So, an A+ on administration!

Our student body, City 5, was diverse, which made for interesting discussions, thoughtful analysis, and differing points of view. It is really difficult to corral 25 people, all unknown to each other, from all over, in tight quarters, throughout long days; and, then leave them affable, friendly, and polite. I loved that there was a mix of ages, the very young—oh, my gosh—to the retired but energetic. The brew of people was terrific. Maybe a bit of magic went into the pot?

Richard Guy Wilson, the leader, City 6, is a Merlin and he is full of spunk! If we all came for an immersive program in Victorian architecture, we sure as heck got it. RGW has a knack to keep things rolling, keep things interesting, and convey SO MUCH information. I cannot say I was bored, ever, during my time at Summer School. He knows what to say, how quickly to say it, how deeply to study it, and how to keep the mood of the course uplifted and his students' curiosity satisfied.

Combined, all six Cities of the VSA Newport Summer School made for an indelible experience. I cannot say enough positive about it, but I can say all of us in the Class of 2018 are the better for understanding what we came to learn.

*In the December 2019 issue of the **Alumni Newsletter**, the following two essays appeared:*

The 2019 Newport Summer School

by Rachel Pool (Newport 2019)

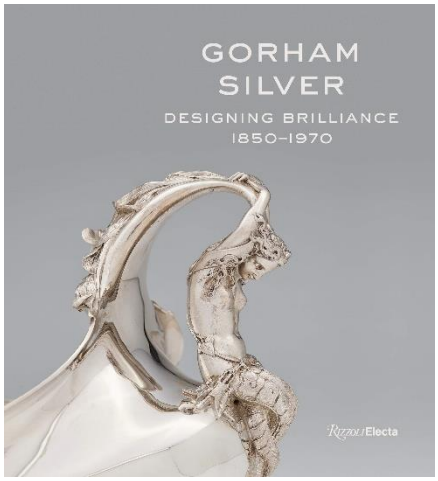
I am extremely grateful to have received a full tuition scholarship to the Victorian Society in America's 2019 Newport Summer School. I received my undergraduate degree in Interior Design, and I am currently a second-year graduate student at the Parsons School of Design's Master's Program in the History of Design and Curatorial Studies at the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum.

The ten-day Newport Summer School exceeded my expectations: the accommodations on the Salve Regina University campus were pristine and in a picturesque location, the guest lecturers were engaging, the varied site visits were exceptional, the schedule was extremely well organized, and Dr. Richard Guy Wilson's leadership and lectures were incredible. The most beneficial parts of the course were networking with colleagues that had similar interests and having private access to resident's homes that are not open to the public.

I recently moved to New York City for graduate school. In my previous position I regularly networked with museum professionals from Southwestern or Native American-oriented museums. The opportunity to visit beautiful Rhode Island for the first time and meet professional individuals from around the country did not disappoint. Over a dozen graduate students, designers, curators, and museum employees made up the 2019 roster. The group was diverse, energetic, and collaborative. I enjoyed learning about people's backgrounds, where they lived, what they did for work, and why they were interested in taking the course.

In addition to the great contacts I made with my peers, the guest lecturers, local hosts, museum curators, and historical preservationists were amazing people to interact and converse with as well. As I am interested in a future career in a museum's curatorial department, I benefited the most from meeting Dr. Elizabeth Williams (Newport 2009) at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) Museum during our tour of the exhibition that she curated, **Gorham Silver: Designing Brilliance, 1850– 1970**.

https://risdmuseum.org/art-design/projects-publications/publications/gorham-silver-designing-brilliance-18501970



The tour of the Gorham show was also a highlight of the course for me. Prior to the class I was not very interested in silver as a medium for design and did not know anything about the Gorham Manufacturing Company. The RISD exhibition showcased a myriad of incredible and intricately designed Gorham pieces that ranged from women's fashion accessories to large soup tureens. After the Gorham exhibition tour with Dr. Williams, I had a newfound appreciation for silver, and I enrolled in a survey of silver class for the upcoming fall semester.

In addition to really enjoying the day in Providence at the RISD Museum and being introduced to a new medium, I relished in the private home tours throughout Newport. Although the popular attractions' architecture and design were incredible, such as The Breakers, the Isaac Bell House, and Chateau-sur-Mer, my favorite site visits were the private homes we were invited into.

My favorite home that we visited was Wildacre. I really enjoyed Wildacre because of the property's remote location and impeccable grounds. The exterior and interior's Japanese aesthetic and influence from the Arts and Crafts Movement spoke to my research interests. The home tour was also very engaging because we walked throughout the property and interior with the home's owner. We had several private home tours on the Newport course, which really provided a personal element to the sprawling residences.

Pauline Metcalf's (London 1980) lecture on the first women interior decorators was also a highlight of the course. I learned a lot from Pauline's lecture, and it was nice to have a unit that focused on women. The Newport Summer School course was an enriching experience that provided a vast amount of site visits from varying time periods and social classes. The information from this course could not have been received in the classroom and I would highly recommend the course to anyone interested in nineteenth or twentieth-century architecture and design. I look forward to staying involved with the Victorian Society in America and to attend the Chicago course next summer.

Newport: More than Hunt Mansions

by Lauren Henry (Newport 2019) Associate Curator, Biltmore

Prior to attending the 2019 Newport Summer School, my knowledge of Newport was limited to the fact that it was a summer playground for the rich, with lots of big, pretty houses, the most important and interesting of which were those that were built by Richard Morris Hunt for members of the Vanderbilt family. It did not take long to realize that Newport is a much more complex creature than I originally thought, and it is one that must be experienced in person to fully comprehend.

Within a day of arriving in Newport, my ignorant perspective was immediately tested by seeing the Chinoiserie panels at Vernon House, the Eastlake motif explosion at the Sanford-Covell House, and even the stunning claw feet of a Townsend-Goddard table at Hunter House. To see so many historic structures in one city, representing the various "cities" and trends in Newport's past, was overwhelming and immensely enjoyable.

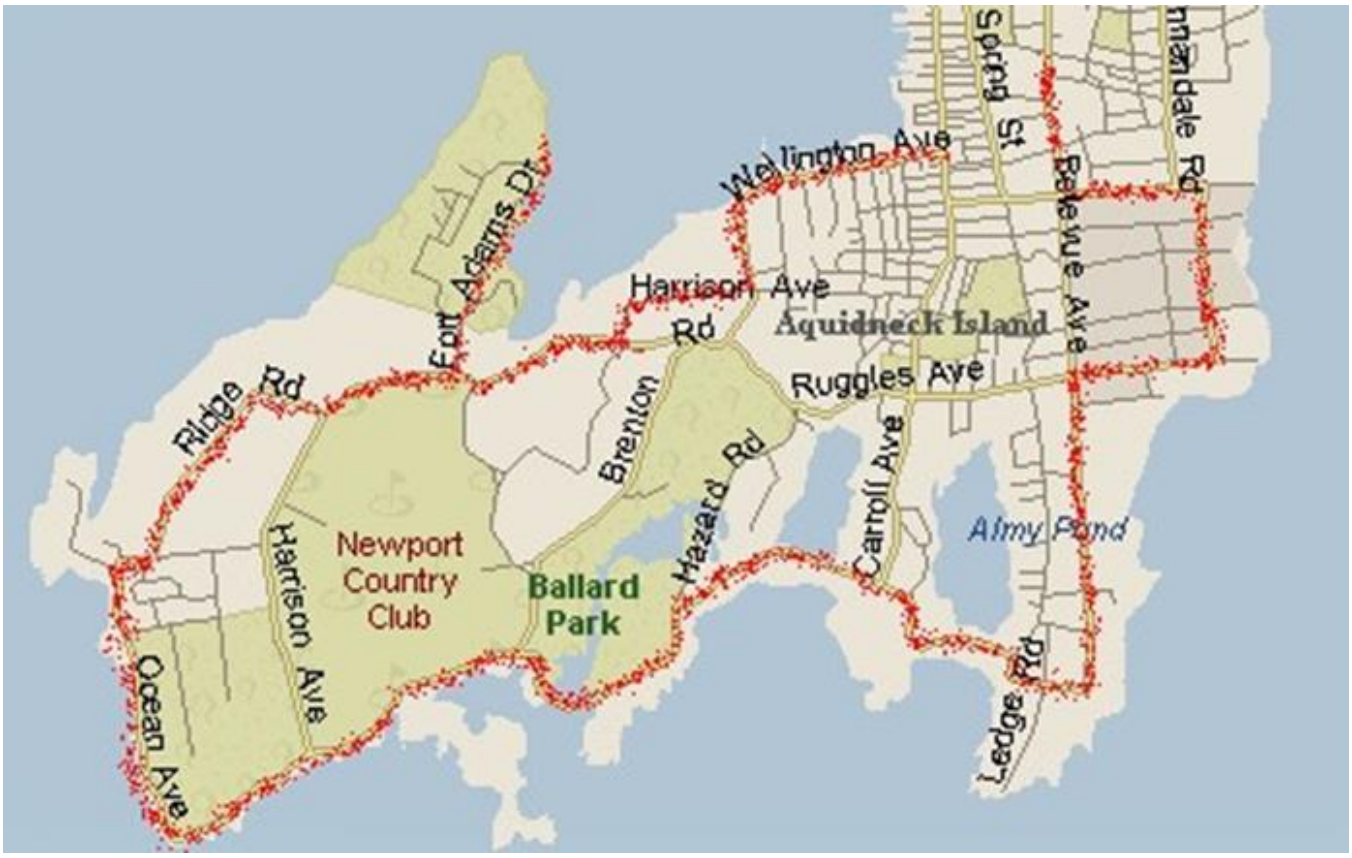
Sandford-Covell House

It was fascinating to see the differences between the historic structures which are now museums, versus those which are private homes or repurposed for offices; similarly, to see fully restored and furnished houses, versus those that need significant work (and funding). Being in Newport, one can more fully appreciate the field of historic preservation in a place where it has been, for the most part, very successful. I can only imagine the journeys that these houses have taken and the things they have seen, to be what they are today.

Another unexpected pleasure of the program was to meet the kind and generous individuals who opened their homes to us, fed us cheese and wine, and shared their passion and dedication to preserving these places and their unique histories.

One of the most valuable parts of the program was addressing my personal misconceptions about an architect I thought I knew something about, Richard Morris Hunt: a man that can live

in a modest yet unique house like Hypotenuse, but also invent the Stick Style, design a billiard room to look like a Roman bath, and bring Second Empire France into Chateau-sur-Mer. This versatility and philosophy of adhering to clients' wishes makes him a true chameleon of an architect, with consistently stunning results. Through seeing several his houses, I now feel I know better not only his own style and influences, but I can better understand the character of the people for whom he designed these homes.



I left Newport with an equal appreciation for the mansions of Bellevue Avenue and Ocean Drive as the unexpected gems of the Point section or the Red Cross Avenue area. Moving forward, I can't help but look at every 17th-early 20thcentury house through the lens that I acquired through the instruction of Richard Guy Wilson, Pauline Metcalf, Paul Miller, and every other person who generously shared their expertise about the architecture, interior design, art, landscape, people, and history that makes Newport so special.

Newport truly is a haven, from all those who sought to escape religious persecution, to those who wanted to escape New York City's summer heat—and most especially for those who want to experience some of the best architecture in the country.

Ode to Newport

by **Henry Kuehn** (Newport 2004)

When ten days are taken for the study of Newport
There emerges a long list of things to re-port.
From the time we students did first gather
Ourselves we found in a Victorian lather!
We learned of the many who to Newport came
And for some reason called their main street Thames.
We knew our experience would challenge our heads
But had no idea of the challenge of our beds.
Our first morning we realized the center of power
Was the person who made it first to the shower.
But our pathetic breakfasts that might have led to despair
Soon gave way to the lectures we heard at O'Hare.
We longed to be around in that great world of servants
And to have seen their dealings with Elva the serpent!
We learned of the Kings home, the Elms and the Breakers
And couldn't quite figure how this squared with the Quakers.
They ran us ragged from dawn to midnight
But when it ended, we'd all seen the light.
So, as we sat puzzling and wondering why
We soon had our answers from a professor named Guy.
Richard (if we can really call him that) spun tales of wonder and awe
Such that Newport seemed driven by some greater law.
So, we're sad to see the end of this near
Especially to be led by a professor so dear.
From the breadth of his classes
As he peered o'er his glasses
Thinking we might even come back next year!

(Presented to Richard Guy Wilson at the Grand Masque Ball)

Newport Summer School

June 4 – 13, 2021

Join renowned architectural historian **Richard Guy Wilson** to experience and study four centuries of architecture, art, culture, and landscape at the acclaimed Newport Summer School. This ten-day program is based in Newport, Rhode Island, the "Queen" of American resorts. You will enjoy lectures by Richard Guy Wilson and other leading scholars, tours of private homes, and opportunities to get behind the scenes at some of America's grandest mansions.

Participants will examine Newport's most iconic sites: Richard Morris Hunt's Marble House, The Breakers, and Ochre Court; Richard Upjohn's Kingscote, and H.H. Richardson's Sherman House. Additional highlights include McKim, Mead & White's Isaac Bell House and downtown casino, as well as historic gardens, churches, and opportunities to view Tiffany windows and paintings by leading American artists. Field trips include visits to Providence, RI and North Easton, MA. Participants are housed in Ochre Lodge at Salve Regina University, designed by local architect Dudley Newton in 1890.

Course Director: Richard Guy Wilson

Past lecturers include Jennifer Carlquist, Pauline C. Metcalf, Paul Miller, Ron Onorato, Laurie Ossman, Pieter Roos, and John Tschirch.

Tuition is $2700, and includes expert instruction, course materials, 9 nights shared dormitory-style accommodation, entrance fees, receptions, and some meals (kitchen facilities are on site; many dining options nearby).

Full and partial scholarships are available.

Please email Anne Mallek, Summer Schools Administrator, at Admin@VSASummerSchools.org, with any additional questions.

"The experience of the VSA Newport Summer School was very beneficial to the understanding of late 19th century architecture, aesthetics, and culture. The knowledge and access gained during this course was especially useful, as I began research for my PhD dissertation" – Elizabeth A. Williams, David and Peggy Rockefeller Curator of Decorative Arts and Design (Newport 2009)

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION of the VICTORIAN SOCIETY SUMMER SCHOOLS

$100,000 BUTTRICK CHALLENGE GRANT

The Alumni Association is very excited to announce the creation of an Endowment Fund to support the VSA Summer Schools. We received a very generous matching grant from Jim Buttrick (Newport 1999, London 2000). Jim will donate a total of up to $100,000 to match dollar-for-dollar donations large or small to the Endowment Fund. These donations must be "new" money received before December 31, 2020.The Endowment Funds will be separately invested for the long term with a small percentage of the value of the fund used each year as needed for summer schools scholarships and operations.

As a supporter of the VSA, you understand the importance that the Schools have played in the lives of those fortunate enough to attend. Students consistently report on how the schools have enriched their lives with the connections made, the first-rate lecturers, and a broadened appreciation of the built environment. The Endowment Fund will provide an ongoing income stream to make the Summer Schools stronger and be our legacy for future Victorians. Please consider a generous contribution.

For additional information contact: David Lamdin 703-243-2350 dalamdin@aol.com

Prof. Richard Guy Wilson with students at the Newport Summer School

Please complete and return the form below to help meet the Buttrick Challenge

I, _____, am including a check for $_____ payable to the "**Alumni Association**". Memo: for the Buttrick Challenge Grant. **AND/OR**

I, _____, pledge $_____ to the Alumni Association for the Buttrick Challenge Grant to be paid before December 31, 2020.

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