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[Alumni Membership - Victorian Society](#)

Click on an amount that corresponds to the membership level and proceed to enter your credit card info. If you wish to contribute to a scholarship fund in addition to your membership level, click on CUSTOM AMOUNT, enter the total amount of your contribution plus the membership level, and then indicate to which scholarship fund you wish to donate.

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In 2023, the Alumni Assoc donated \$24,000 for scholarships. THANK YOU for your continued support.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you have already renewed your membership by PayPal or paper check, in all likelihood, we have received your renewal. Unfortunately, due to his increased professional responsibilities, our new Membership Secretary, Travis Brock Kennedy, has been forced to resign. Our thanks to Travis for his efforts on our behalf. This situation has resulted in our having delays getting your donation recorded and an acknowledgement sent thru our membership system. We are working to get this resolved ASAP. If you need the acknowledgement for tax purposes or for some other reason before we get this resolved, please contact David Lamdin at DALAMDIN@gmail.com. He will try to send you a personalized acknowledgement letter.

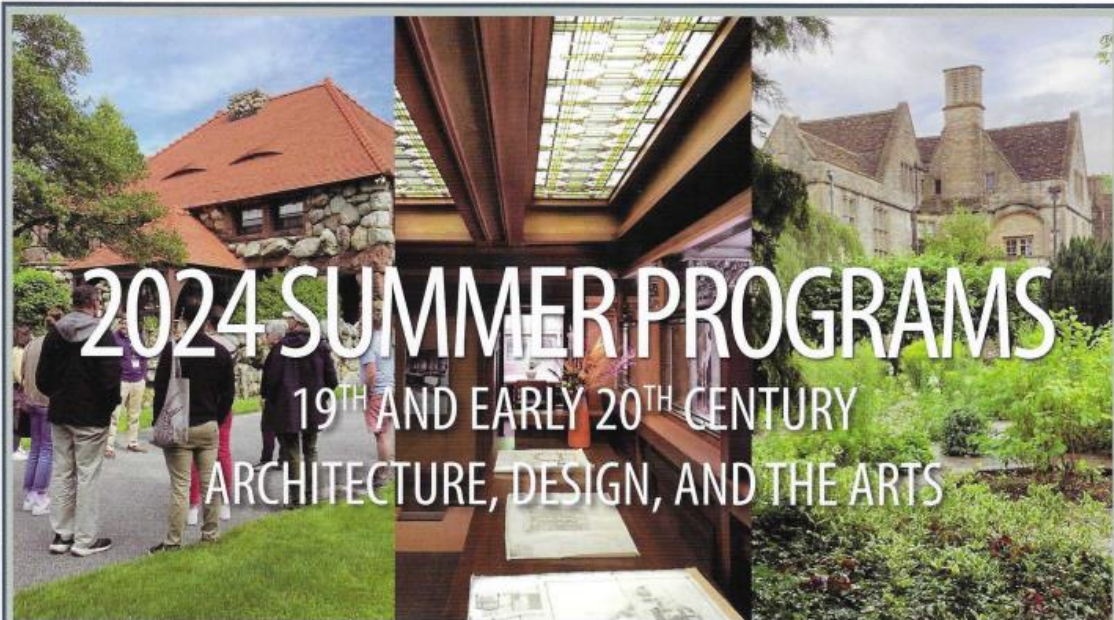


Our 2024 Study Tour will be an escorted tour to Northern Italy from April 23 to April 29, 2024. We will be headquartered in Bologna known as the Fat City for its rich cuisine! We will stay in Bologna at the 4-star Royal Hotel Carlton in the center of Bologna, near the train station.

There will be day trips to Forlì where Peter Trippi will offer us a guided tour of the exhibit he co-curated (Pre-Raphaelites: A Modern Renaissance). There will also be a day trip to Ravenna (a World Heritage site known as the capital of mosaics), and other places of interest as shown on the itinerary. The itinerary also includes information on costs, single supplements, meals, transportation, what's included and what is not, etc. Airfare is not included. The Travel Agent will assist those who need help in arranging flights, etc. Some are considering a pre-tour trip to Milan and the Lake District. The Travel Agent can help with that as well if requested.

Complete details are in the Alumni's eNewsletter No 46. Contact Alumni President David Lamdin at DALAMDIN@gmail.com (703-243-2350) for further info.

The Alumni Associations organizes these Study Tours not only as an educational experience for our members, but also as a fund raiser for Summer School student scholarships. We sincerely request a tax-deductible donation of \$400 per traveler payable to the Alumni Association.



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All applications due by March 1, 2024

2024 SUMMER PROGRAMS

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June 12-19

LONDON
June 29-July 14



For more information visit victoriansociety.org/summer-schools or contact the Summer Schools Administrator at admin@vsasummerschools.org.

RENEWAL / ENROLLMENT FORM
Alumni Association of The Victorian Society Summer Schools



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MY NEWS Email updates about new positions, licenses, degrees granted, moves, etc. to dalamdin@gmail.com

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The terms of office for the Alumni Association Officers and Directors expire on 12/31/2024. We will have an election for new officers for a three year term beginning on 1/1/2025 and expiring on 12/31/2027 in the fall of 2024. If you have an interest in serving on our Board as an officer and/or Director, please contact David Lamdin at DALAMDIN@gmail.com.



Reflection on the 2023 VSA Chicago Summer School

Maria Gryshko

Chicago. This city is best known for its criminals and the first skyscraper in the US. As an architecture student I couldn't help but notice the great architecture of this city, and the desire to visit it is consequent. In my career, I want to specialize in historic preservation. And so, when I recognized that Victorian Society of which I part of is hosting a such project as summer schools in Chicago, New Port, and London, I decided to go through Chicago to learn more about the city and subject of preservation and to see people who work in this field.

And I want to say that I've got much more from this school than I expected. I was convinced that being a preservationist architect is just the right job for me because everything that I saw and learned about made me even more interested in this subject.

Summer school creates a platform for meeting new people from different places with various educational backgrounds and experiences. However, everyone has the same field of interest – preservation and art, and this creates a big number of themes for the conversations, where everyone can provide his own expertise, opinion or thoughts on the topic discussed. I personally became a part of a wonderful group with interesting, intelligent, and well-educated people, and made good friends with some of them.

Summer school hosted by the VSA is not only about new acquaintances but also about visiting some marvelous places which you might not normally visit during ordinary tours. Our tours had a great variety. We certainly get a chance to see some architecture of the 19th century in the center of the city, museums, and different historic districts. However, I wasn't expecting that we would visit a historic farm with a collection of works of Art and Crafts movement and private historic homes whose owners are keeping them in the great state and walk in the cemetery to see some gravestones of the very influential people and architects of the past.

Moreover, there were many small, interesting things shown to us which tourists or even residents of Chicago might not know about such as Tiffany's mosaic in the department store Macy's or museum of the stained glass and sign of the cultural center of the city under it.

Another great aspect of the summer school is its lectures. First, it is incredible that we had them in the place where The Cliff Dwellers club has residency. The club itself was established in 1907 by prominent members of the Chicago arts community and still exists and operates nowadays. Second, all lectures were well selected and presented, and they gave a good background and understanding of the history of the city and art developed there. Although the lecture course was very intense, it remained interesting and non-boring as it sometimes might be.

Separately, I want to highlight the "Congress Plaza Hotel" in which our group lived. It was in the very historic center of the city, and the rooms had beautiful views. The hotel itself is a great example of the architecture of the late 19th century, and therefore is a great addition to the tour program which helped us to immerse ourselves in the art history of Chicago.

Overall, I had an amazing experience in this summer school, and as I know so far everyone else in the group also enjoyed it. And now, I'm looking for going to another summer school hosted by VSA.

Victorian Society in America Chicago Summer School, 2023

Jeff Rosenberg

In the summer of 2023, I was privileged to attend the Victorian Society in America's Chicago Summer School, an intense six-day course focused on the city's architecture of the late Victorian era. Having previously attended other field schools, and study tours, I was excited to be able to attend such an in-depth program that includes so many prominent figures in architectural history and preservation among its instructors. To have their insight to guide us through dissecting some of the nation's most notable buildings, as well as exposure to lesser-known buildings that are reflective of broader patterns in both Chicago and America's history was an undeniable honor.

Chicago proved to be an excellent case study of the Victorian era. What was swampy prairie land at the beginning of the era, became one of the world's notable powerhouses by its end. The lectures at the beginning of the course laid out an excellent framework for the tours that would follow, placing these buildings into their Victorian context. The success of Chicagoans in this era saw them seeking out vacation retreats on the Mississippi Gulf Coast among other places. During the course, the exposure I received to the primary residences placed these vacation retreats -a principal area of my research- into better context.

To have our classwork take place in the Cliff Dwellers Club, Louis Sullivan's writing retreat, proved to be a humbling experience, as upon the club's desk is where he reflected upon his time spent in Mississippi. Perhaps still too painful for him to reflect upon – as the loss of his Ocean Springs property was representative of both his financial and marital downfalls- but to view the spot where he wrote “'Twas here (Ocean Springs) Louis did his finest and purest thinking”, was humbling. This experience has allowed me to further reflect on how Sullivan's time spent writing and thinking would vary between Chicago and Ocean Springs, as well as how this impacted his larger work.

The chance to have this experience, will certainly lead to further research trips to Chicago, thanks to the introductions made during the Summer School. While the connections to the buildings through the lectures and tours alone were incredibly valuable, the connections made through the VSA, outside of the schedule school programming were incredibly valuable as well. From something as simple as grabbing a Chicago Dog lunch at a mid-century modern spot recommended by the school's Assistant Director Andrew Elders, to Course Director Tina Strauss connecting me with Glessner House Curator Bill Tyre, who was generous enough to spend an afternoon touring me through the Glessner House and discussing the Charnley family's Chicago and Ocean Springs homes.

My classmates were of a wide array of disciplines and experiences that all offered a variety of insights during both lectures and site visits.

I had long hoped to attend the Chicago Summer School to better understand these places, and the generous scholarship I received from the Victorian Society in America made this possible at this point in my career. To see places and spaces I've read about and studied for years from afar, attended lectures by world class experts, and made connections and friendships that brought these building further to life. It was an experience that I will treasure for my lifetime. Anyone interested in architecture, or the decorative arts I would highly recommend applying.

VSA London Summer School 2023 - My Summer in London with the VSA

Sheila Lopez

From the moment that I first heard about the Victorian Society in America and their London Summer School; I knew it would be an amazing experience. Two weeks packed with historic houses and museums visits, all accompanied by lectures. Sign me up! I knew instantly that this would be a once in a lifetime experience that I would look back on for years to come.

History and Art has always been an interest for me, something very meaningful. I received my BA in Art History, with a focus in 19th century European Art and Photography, and my MA in Interior Design. During my studies I had my fair share of history classes and my only complaint about them was that we could not visit any of the places. Everything was based on images, books, and lectures. My goal for attending this program was to learn more about the Victorian period and to get the chance to finally visit the artworks, homes, or architecture that up until this point I had only ever seen in photographs.

In a way I wanted to rediscover and fall in love all over again with history and art. My journey to the VSA London Summer School started in 2020. I first discovered the VSA when I was studying for my master's degree at the New York School of Interior Design. It was there, while taking a class on the history of architecture that our professor, Warren Ashworth, mentioned the VSA. I quickly envisioned myself traveling to London and learning about Victorian Architecture and Design. However, I did not apply immediately, mostly because I was afraid of getting rejected. It is safe to say that I was beyond thankful when I received my acceptance letter.

Unfortunately, 2020 was the year the world was introduced to Covid-19, and due to the severity of the virus our trip was canceled. I remained in touch with the organization, specifically with Anne Mallek, knowing that I would someday reapply. In 2023, I was accepted to the London Summer School, and I was fortunate enough to receive a partial scholarship, which played a crucial role in helping fund my trip to England. Our cohort was made up of mostly Americans. We all brought different experiences and knowledge to the group, but above all we all had an interest in the Victorian Era.

Everyone was so wonderful, kind, and open-minded to the experience and journey that

we were about to embark on. I knew immediately, based on the energy in the room on day one, that it was going to be a great two weeks. The first part of the program was primarily based in London and some of the surrounding areas. We got to visit places like the Victoria & Albert Museum, Palace of Westminster, and Standen. For the middle portion of the trip, we packed our bags and hit the road. Our road trip took us to Litchfield, Liverpool, Manchester, and Cheltenham, just to mention a few. This was the most memorable part of the program for me. The final part of the program took us back to London and it allowed us to do a day trip to Oxford.

One of the things that I appreciated about the program was the lectures. We were lucky to have various guest speakers. Each lecture was packed with so much information and went into detail about various architects and structures. Some of the lectures focused on Williams Morris, Augustus Pugin, the Railway, and Victorian Gardens. I love a good lecture, it gives me the opportunity to sit down and really take in what the speaker has to say, and of course I was able to take down notes that I will be able to look back on.

My favorite part of the program was the site visits. The VSA was able to grant us full access visit to various private estates and homes, gardens, civic buildings, and churches. I recognize how fortunate we were to be able to visit these places. My favorites were Standen, Hidcote Manor Garden, All Saints Church in Selsley, Liverpool Cathedral, and Oxford.

It has been a few weeks since the program ended, and I am both thinking fondly of my time in London and missing my fellow London Summer School 2023 cohort. Was I able to achieve my goal? Yes! I fell in love with history all over again. I've even been thinking about the possibility of continuing my Art History education, maybe getting my PhD someday. As an Interior Designer I want to make a stronger effort to incorporate my passion for history and use the likes of William Morris, for example, as inspiration when designing. I can see myself specifying Morris & Co. wallpaper for clients and talking to them about design theory such as "truth to the nature of materials and methods of production," a key component of the Arts and Craft movement.

The VSA Summer Schools has something for everyone. It was a privilege to participate in the London Summer School, and someday soon hope to attend the other Summer Schools and Study Tours.

A Journey of Discovery with the London Summer School Program

Kayla Lowry

This summer has been the most rewarding of my life and the London Summer School Program with the Victoria Society of America is to thank. When my professor, Warren Ashworth, informed our Architecture and Design II class about the VSA's various Summer School Programs, I was immediately intrigued. Since Mr. Ashworth is my all-time favorite teacher, I took his endorsement of the programs to heart and did my own

research. It didn't take much to convince me to apply for the London program, specifically because I have loved learning about the Arts & Crafts Movement in school. I anxiously awaited news if I had been accepted and if, most importantly, I would receive a scholarship. As a graduate student, without a scholarship, I had no hope of participating in what I understood to be an incredible opportunity for my academic journey. I was overjoyed to receive my acceptance and a full scholarship!

As I prepared for the course, I never expected to have the experience I ultimately had. I anticipated the program would be a fun way to see London and that I would get a chance to see some architecture that I had only encountered through textbooks. It was so much more than that. I cannot recommend this course enough because of its access to breathtaking architecture, art, and design as well as the environment that VSA fosters among the group of historical enthusiasts. On the very first day, as we all sat at the Art Worker's Guild on Queen's Square jittery with excitement for the two weeks ahead of us, I felt incredibly comfortable and welcomed by this batch of strangers.

Each person had a unique reason for being there, but many shared similar backgrounds and careers. In fact, two of my classmates from the New York School of Interior Design were there with me and we met two alumnae of our program! It was a reassuring sign that I was in the right place. As I continued through the course, I experienced not just London, but various parts of England through the lens of passionate, knowledgeable, and engaging people who made me fall in love with the era of Victorian Architecture, Art, and Design. The same buildings, gardens, and art pieces we visited were ones that the Victoria Society in London were advocating for and protecting. It opened my eyes to the importance of restoration and the value our histories have in designing the future – a lesson I will absolutely remember as I return to school in the fall.

Although rigorous, the schedule was beautifully organized so our group could get the most out of the course. I was pleasantly surprised to visit several locations that I had not studied in school. For example, the Program included a visit and tour of a church I really enjoyed learning about in my NYSID classes, William Butterfield's All Saints Margaret Street (1849-59). It was particularly important for its early impact on the Gothic Revival style. However, the Program also included a visit to the Anglican Cathedral Liverpool (1904-78) designed by Giles Gilbert Scott which has become my very favorite example of the style – perhaps one of my all-time favorite designs now as well. Experiencing both buildings in person was an opportunity to be immersed into the heart of design evolution.

And that was just one style under the umbrella that is the Victorian era! The allure of Victorian design extended far beyond interiors; it seamlessly blended with the natural world, transforming outdoor spaces into enchanting dreamscapes. As an interior design student, it is rare I get to discuss landscape design or study the evolution of gardens throughout history. As a part of the London Summer School Program, I got to tour several English Gardens of all shapes and sizes. My absolute favorite, however, was Hidcote Manor Garden. It was like walking into a Jane Austen novel and Alice in Wonderland at the same time with its winding paths and symphony of colors, textures,

and aromas. I had never seen something so peacefully beautiful. It has left an indelible mark on my soul.

With each tour, visit, and lecture, I grew more and more appreciative of VSA and those who made my scholarship possible. Exploring homes like Leighton House Museum, Buscot Park, and Wightwick Manor offered an intimate glimpse into the lives of the era's patrons and their exquisite tastes. This was something I would have never dreamed to experience. To experience it all with such wonderful, like-minded people was the cherry on top. Every single Summer School attendee, lecturer, tour guide, and Victorian Society member taught me something about not only architecture and design but also about myself and how I see the world. I am eternally grateful.

Journey of Victorian Life Lined with William Morris Wallpapers and pre-Raphaelites Art

Michaela Hojdysz

How can I describe the most beautiful two weeks I've ever had in London? Let's say that it changed me. Before, of course, I was able, as an art historian, to look at buildings, paintings, and statues. But now I can also see the structure. Now I notice church tiles on the ground, I know how they are created, and they become an essential part of the church. Stained glass is now more colourful and tells stories. I wander through buildings and ask myself, is it terracotta? Or a different material? Facades speak to me about the materials they are made of; I can recognize if the pointing between bricks is done correctly or if the owners will have to repair it in a few years because it is too high and will take too much water (Thanks Kit!). Railway stations are not boring anymore and when I'm waiting for a train, I don't look into my phone anymore. Instead, I observe the decorations of columns in the hall. London Summer School taught me to be present, observe, and examine; these are the most valuable skills for every researcher dealing with art.

Since reading some books about Victorian London, I have been intrigued by life in London during the Victorian period, especially everyday life. During our London Summer School, we had so many wonderful lectures, and I was always engrossed in every topic we discussed. I learnt so much. Now I can tell you where the mews in the townhouses were located and what they were used for (for carriages, of course, and as an accommodation for male servants – did you know that?). Kit Wedd told us everything about the building of Belgravia Square and the materials and elements essential to building a Victorian house. And Rosemary Hill guided us through the Palace of Westminster as if we were monarchs who came to the Parliament for a parliamentary session and told us everything about the collaboration of A. W. N. Pugin and Charles Barry. We saw almost every aspect of Victorian life. Our journey, lined with William Morris's wallpapers and pre-Raphaelite paintings, covered most aspects of Victorian life, from churches, the Parliament, ordinary dwellings, and Victorian gardens, to the arts and crafts movement, galleries, sewers, and even death.

I like to imagine that I am a Victorian going to a gallery or museum; it helps me to look

at art differently. I had this kind of experience on our tour of Tate Britain on Victorian narrative paintings with Kit. The images somehow became alive and told us their stories. We also saw a fantastic exhibition on Rossetti where I stayed for two hours and read every little label. I was rewarded with a wonderful story about love, friendship and the world of creativity and creation.

The part of our journey where we learnt about Death was in my favourite Highgate Cemetery. I've already visited it before, but this was a completely different and better experience. We planned a twilight tour at 6pm. It is not quite twilight at that time of day in summer, but thanks to our hour-and-a-half delay from Oxford and especially the rainy weather, the Highgate Cemetery and its director Ian Dungavell welcomed us in a very spooky atmosphere.

Highgate Cemetery, located in North London near beautiful Hampstead Heath, was founded in 1839, is one of the Victorian cemeteries in London. It helped with the appalling lack of burial places in the crowded churchyards of the city centre. Because of the fear of corpse thieves in the 19th century, people who could afford it used lead coffins with wooden ornamental cases. But the absence of ventilation holes in the coffins caused pressure inside, sometimes resulting in explosions. The mourning visitors could thus witness strange sounds in the cemetery. Later, ventilation was added. We were advised not to touch fragile coffins that could be easily damaged since some are still under pressure. We walked down Egyptian Avenue to the beautiful Circle of Lebanon with twenty vaults along both sides of a circular path. One vault could hold up to fifteen coffins. Did you know that the beginnings of Egyptian archaeology influenced the architecture and sculpture of burial places or tombstones? Motives such as pyramids, obelisks, and urns were widespread, following the example of Egyptian funeral art in the 18th and 19th centuries. There is even a tunnel under Swain's Lane, which divides the cemetery into two parts and through which the coffins could be lowered and then carried from the chapel to the East Cemetery. Today it is closed, and the east wall of the tunnel is part of the private house. Thanks to our excellent guide, the Highgate Cemetery tour was probably my absolute favourite.

Another place I enjoyed was The Sambourne Family Home, a museum of the famous draughtsman Linley Sambourne. I especially love house museums such as Sir John Soane's and Charles Dickens' museums, so this was a hidden gem for me. I love seeing how generations before us lived. I could finally see the typical layout of a Victorian house with kitchens in the basement, salons and bedrooms upstairs, and a narrow staircase – even with a fern vitrine! Fern fever or madness took over the Victorian era, and many people, mostly amateur naturalists, searched for new kinds of ferns in the countryside, collecting, sketching, and growing them indoors. Ferns thrived in Victorian houses because of moisture and became popular in patterns of fabrics, wallpapers and even on biscuits!

Do you know the feeling when you read a book that has everything you like in it? That was the London Summer School for me. And thanks to the generosity of the Victorian Society in America, I could fulfil my dream to be part of it. I anticipated seeing beautiful

architecture and artwork, but I didn't even dare to dream about being there with such a wonderful group of kind, lovely and generous people. In the end, we dined together, and I must say, it felt like a big family gathering full of kind aunties, funny uncles, kind grandmothers and funny and joyful cousins, and, of course, wise, and charismatic leaders as the head of the family. I miss them all, and I would like to meet them again; some of them I know I will. Together with memories of two incredible weeks in London, they will stay with me forever. I thank you all – you were amazing!

Newport Summer School 2023

Emma Mooney

It was such an honor to spend a week in Rhode Island learning from Richard Guy Wilson, Ted Bosley, and several wonderful guest lecturers. The experience was enriched even further by the diverse group of participants, whose expertise and motivations for attending offered additional critical perspectives.

I went to Newport expecting to be dazzled, and that I was. The experience of witnessing the city's layered history through its built environment, as well as exploring the greater history of Rhode Island, was a brilliant one. Each day I stood in awe of figures whose names I'd heard, but never really known until now—such as Irving Gill and his whimsical, meandering rooflines and picturesque landscape at Wildacre; John LaFarge and his inventive achievements in opalescent glass and mural painting at several churches we encountered; or McKim, Mead, & White's early experimentations with ornamental shingles and subtle Orientalism at the Isaac Bell and Samuel Tilton Houses. I was just as struck, if not more so, by the works of artists and architects with no such household reputation. The crude, yet enigmatic, murals at the Wanton–Lyman–Hazard House and the mysterious, quasi-chinoiserie murals at the Vernon House both offered a rare window into early American interior tastes.

But where my mind wandered the most consistently, as a preservationist working in New York City, was the way in which Newport and its architecture appeared in many ways to be trapped in amber. Newport embodies a version of preservation of which we spoke critically during my graduate studies in historic preservation, but which (for better or for worse) continued to comprise the majority of the curriculum nonetheless—a reality in which time stands still and Architecture with a capital A occupies the top tier in the preservation triage. Newport's physical isolation and its continued reputation as an upper-crust-summer-place are what enable it to remain, in many ways, how it has always been (at least since the late 19th century). This second characteristic is the most apparent one, as I quickly realized that the primary factor sustaining our relics of the 19th-century ruling class are their contemporary counterparts. This is no secret in preservation or in any otherwise under-funded pursuit of beauty, art, or community enrichment. Privately held wealth is a machine on which we are dependent. Notable also were the honest admissions I heard from members of the Newport community that

the most profitable house museums—the ones keeping the rest of Newport’s diverse architectural history afloat—were the most monumental ones.

These observations put into perspective the radically different forms that preservation can take in communities across the country. In some ways, but not others, New York City is starkly different from Newport. It is an ever diversifying and ever-expanding metropolis, so it is a preservationist’s goal to balance their objectives with the city’s inherent state of constant change. From a traditional perspective, I am perhaps expected to mourn the loss of the original Fifth Avenue mansions, those urban counterparts to the palaces of Newport. But one place cannot be everything.

By far the most impactful experience I had at the summer school was a visit to the Durfee Textile Mills complex in Fall River, Massachusetts—just across the Rhode Island state line. Just as Newport loudly echoes its grandiose past, the inland industrial towns have not healed from the scars of their exploitation. As our gracious host led us up the freight elevator to where we would soon discover a largely untouched 19th-century factory floor (save the machines themselves), our group was quiet. After visiting the houses of those whose livelihoods originated at places like this one, what was there to say? Here we witnessed another means by which preservation is at least temporarily achieved. Sometimes, significant places are given the opportunity to remain—in this case, closer than farther from a state of arrested decay—not because they have been well resourced, but simply because nothing (or no one) has come along to replace or revitalize them. Similar mill complexes elsewhere have been adapted into loft apartments or museums, and in contrast, there are undoubtedly countless mansions throughout the country which are slowly, but surely, deteriorating. In either case, the contrasts are poignant.

Throughout my experience at the Newport Summer School, I was reminded of an important lesson—that while engaging with the built environment, or of any part of the historical record, one should always acknowledge and engage with the negative space. As a visitor to Newport, it can be easy to lose sight of the network of people and circumstances which allowed the city to develop the reputation it still holds. But acknowledging this network makes the study of architectural history all the more rewarding.

Victorian Society in America’s Summer School in Newport, Rhode Island

Seth Frost

In June, I was fortunate enough to attend the VSA’s Summer School in Newport, Rhode Island. I was only able to experience this incredible opportunity through the generosity of the Society’s scholarship program. As a museum professional and public historian working with Gilded Age sites (Hyde Park, the Hudson Valley country place built for Frederick and Louise Vanderbilt by McKim, Mead & White in 1899, and Springwood, the former home of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt), this experience was truly eye

opening and presented a whole new context for understanding both elite society during the Gilded Age, and the experience of the people working in these extraordinary houses. While I had read about the “cottages” that dotted Newport’s famous boulevards, seeing them in person and hearing from experts and lecturers, such as Dr. Richard Guy Wilson and Paul Miller, has already proven to be a valuable experience that is influencing my research with the National Park Service at Hyde Park.

Since returning from the Summer School, I have started to research and write about the generational philanthropy of the Vanderbilt family as they become more accepted into Mrs. Astor’s exclusive “400.” Newport, like New York, was an important center of fetes, dinners, and parties given to raise money for charitable causes that were championed by the Vanderbilts and other families.

The stories of these homes, no matter where they are located, will never be truly understood or fully interpreted unless the stories of the workers that made life in these places possible are shared. Fortunately, some of these stories are being shared at sites in Newport, such as the Elms, managed by the Preservation Society of Newport County. The juxtaposition of the architectural elements and decorative details of the family’s spaces compared to those of the staff areas is telling of the disparity and income inequality that led to and heavily influenced the grassroots movements of the Progressive Era, including the policies of a young, emerging politician from upstate New York who would go on to serve four terms as the President of the United States.

Hearing other perspectives and insightful questions from other students working in the field, at sites including Biltmore, the Frick, and historic preservation offices, was also extremely valuable and has caused me to reevaluate my approach to understanding servants’ experiences and lives in Hyde Park and neighboring estates along the Hudson River. I hope to work with the many connections I was able to make in my career as a museum professional.

Listening to Dr. Wilson’s presentation firsthand on the work and far-reaching influences of McKim, Mead and White, and the ability to speak to him directly, was also an incredible opportunity as someone working with a home designed by Charles McKim that remains largely untouched and intact with original furnishings and in its original, historic landscape.

I am so grateful to the Victorian Society for offering such a wonderful opportunity to learn about the architecture, decorative arts, and society of the Gilded Age. I would strongly recommend this program to anyone interested in architecture from the Colonial Era to the turn of the 20th century.