

**THE ARTS
& CRAFTS
MESSENGER**

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
COLORADO ARTS & CRAFTS SOCIETY

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Historic
Downtown
Denver
Walking
Tour

SATURDAY, OCT. 25TH

UNION STATION

1 P.M.

The Colorado Arts and Crafts Society

has arranged for a group walking tour of Lower Downtown Denver presented by our colleagues at Historic Denver Inc. on October 25 starting at 1:00 pm. The tour begins and ends at Denver Union Station, covers about one mile of walking and lasts about 75 minutes. The tour focuses on the unique history and architecture of Lower Downtown Denver and is led by highly-trained volunteer docents. More information can be found at www.historicdenver.org. The regular ticket price of \$15 is being reduced to a group rate of \$12 for CACS members attending the tour.

Tickets have been reserved for the first 15 CACS members who sign up for the tour. Please RSVP to Cynthia Shaw at 720-497-7632 to reserve your spot today.



CACS Winter Symposium



SATURDAY, JANUARY 17, 2015

4:00 - 8:00 pm

Boettcher Mansion

900 Colorow Road Golden, CO 80401

www.jeffco.us/boettcher

Please join The Colorado Arts and Crafts Society on Saturday, January 17, 2015 for our annual meeting and symposium. We'll begin at 4:00pm with a cocktail hour where beer, wine, and light appetizers will be served. Promptly at 4pm, our guest lecturer Richard Mohr will delight us with his presentation on American Art Tile. Afterwards, our annual business meeting will take place followed by the buffet. Admission is \$40 for members (\$50 for guests) and will include a catered dinner brought to us by The Pines at Genesee. If you would prefer to just come for Richard's lecture, the price will be \$10 for members, and \$15 for non-CACS members. RSVP to Cynthia at 720-497-7632 by January 9th. As a reminder, many memberships are up for renewal at this time of year as well.

This year, we are honored to have Richard Mohr as our guest speaker. Richard is a decades-long writer and frequent lecturer on American Arts & Crafts tiles. He has been a plenary speaker at the annual Grove Park Inn Arts & Crafts conference on four occasions, talking on great lodges of the West, the Van Briggles, and twice on art tiles. Since 1993, he has been a regular contributor to the Journal of the American Art



Upcoming Guest Speaker, Richard Mohr

Pottery Association with consciousness-raising, puzzle-solving, and scholarly works including multi-part articles on Van Briggles tiles (2007), Rookwood tiles (2010), Prairie School architects' uses of tiles (2011-12), and Teco tiles (2013-14). He has also published on art pottery and tiles in *Flash Point* (Tile Heritage Foundation), *Folk Art*, *American Bungalow*, *Old House Journal*, and *Interpreting Ceramics*. He is the author of the book *Pottery, Politics, Art: George Ohr and the Brothers Kirkpatrick* (2003) and curated *Anna Pottery: Plagiarism as Art* at the Krannert Art Museum of the University of Illinois, from which he has recently taken emeritus status as Professor of Philosophy and of the Classics.

Richard's article on the next page will give you a taste of what's in store for you this coming January. ●

IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP UP-TO-DATE?

The Colorado Arts and Crafts Society thrives when members renew. We look forward to providing continued programs, tours, and speakers and your membership and participation keep us going strong. We want to grow, and with your help we can spread the word about CACS.

Please invite your friends and together we can continue our education and appreciation of the Arts and Crafts Movement.

“IT TAKES TILES TO TANGO”: ADVENTURES IN AMERICAN ARTS & CRAFTS TILES

BY RICHARD D. MOHR

In the decades flanking 1900, Arts & Crafts tiles grouted their way into nearly every type of public building in America – subway stations, train terminals, churches and cathedrals, museums, schools, libraries, orphanages, civic auditoriums, National Park lodges, restaurants and Ratskellers, department stores and office buildings, banks, theaters, clinics and hospitals, even football stadiums. And they helped define domestic life by being set as hearths and surrounds for living-room fireplaces and by civilizing and beautifying wet-spaces. Yes, the same tiles that image the divine in the chancel of St. John the Divine could also grace your bathtub dado. But this infusion of artistic elements throughout America’s material culture has largely been forgotten.



Rookwood Tile at Fulton Street Stations, New York.



Van Briggles Fireplace, Pioneers Museum, Colorado Springs, CO

This presentation raises awareness of and vivifies this largely lost art form – by exploring histories of America’s major tile-making art potteries (Grueby, Rookwood, Pewabic, Van Briggles, etc.), the tiles’ material elements, and the tiles’ aesthetic origins in the design theories of Arthur Wesley Dow. It also presents still extant, major tile installations from coast to coast, and briefly addresses the revival of art-tile making from the 1980s to the present.

In applying to tiles the going methods of contemporary art history and criticism, the talk also raises the appreciation of tiles from underappreciated craft object to art work unqualified.

Richard’s talk will be well illustrated with slides.



Grueby “Santa Maria” Tile in a New York Subway

BOETTCHER MANSION: TOO GOOD TO LEAVE?

BY CYNTHIA SHAW



Enjoyed for more than half a century by Charles Boettcher and his offspring, the former “Lorraine Lodge” was built in 1917 as a seasonal retreat. Constructed of stone and timber taken from its secluded 62-acre site atop Lookout Mountain, the Arts & Crafts-style residence was oriented to take advantage of the views of Denver and the plains below. With the Carriage House providing guest quarters above the garage and the Gazebo offering shelter for picnics and hunting parties, invitations to the estate were coveted by friends and family.

Rumor has it that some may have stayed on indefinitely...

After Charles died at age 96 in 1948, the property was inherited by his granddaughter, who went on to raise her three children here. During the 1960s, Charline Breeden was assisted by a live-in housekeeper plus a caretaker chauffeur who looked after the house when the Breedens were away. On one such evening, stopping by for a security check, this man recalled, “The moment I put my key in the door, I felt the hair on the back of my neck stand up. Something told me not to go inside. As I drove away, the previously dark house suddenly had all its lights on.”

In 1968, preparing for her untimely death from cancer at age 42, Charline bequeathed the property (which now encompassed an additional 48 acres) to Jefferson County for public use and enjoyment. In the early '70s, while the county pondered what to do with this generous gift, trespassers frequently partied on the grounds, sporadically breaking into the buildings. A security guard assigned to nighttime patrol during this time reported feeling an eerie sensation and hearing odd noises every time he went inside the house.

Since opening in 1975 as the Jefferson County Conference & Nature Center, the Boettcher Mansion has become a popular special events venue, catering to weddings, conferences and cultural programs including those of CACS. Over the

last 40 years, both long-term employees and first-time visitors have heard such mysterious noises as running water, slamming doors, loud crashes and shrill screeches in an otherwise empty building. Some have even witnessed the apparition of a girl or young woman – dressed in vintage clothing – near the former kitchen.

Independently during the past two years, one medium sensed the presence of a female with a strong attachment to Charles Boettcher inside the house and another detected a young girl “with a secret” returning to look for something she had left behind. In 2012, paranormals with special equipment recorded voices and whistling in various rooms during an investigation that took place in the dark.

These days, the staff hardly blinks when tourists mention the “energy” emanating from the room at the top of the stairs. After all, when one is accustomed to working late nights in a historic landmark that caters to all walks of life...there is no specter of doubt that for us, a ghost is simply just another customer! 🌀



Charline Humphreys circa 1934

WOMEN OF THE ARTS & CRAFTS MOVEMENT

ARTICLE ADAPTED BY BETH BRADFORD

This is the first in a series of articles that will feature women of the Arts and Crafts movement. Some you may know and some names may be new to you. We will start with one of the better known names.

Margaret MacDonald (5 November 1865–10 January 1933) had a profound effect on Charles Rennie Mackintosh. While Charles was studying at the Glasgow School of Art he was introduced to two young English sisters of Scottish descent – Frances and Margaret MacDonald.

Born Margaret MacDonald, near Wolverhampton, her father was a colliery manager and engineer. By 1890 the family had settled in Glasgow and Margaret and her sister, Frances MacDonald, enrolled as students at the Glasgow School of Art. There she worked in a variety of



Margaret MacDonald

media, including metalwork, embroidery, and textiles.

She was first a collaborator with her sister, and later with her husband, the architect and designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Her most dynamic works are large gesso panels made for the interiors that she designed with Mackintosh, such as the *Willow Tearooms* and private residences.

Together with her husband, her sister, and Herbert MacNair, she was one of the most influential members of the loose collective of the Glasgow School known as "The Four". She exhibited with Mackintosh at the 1900 Vienna Secession, where she was arguably an influence on the Secessionists Gustav Klimt and Josef Hoffmann.



Painting details of Margaret MacDonald's artwork.

Macdonald, along with her sister, is one of the many “marginalized wives” who have suffered from patriarchal art historical discourse. She was celebrated in her time by many of her peers, including her husband who once wrote in a letter to Margaret “Remember, you are half if not three-quarters of all my architectural...” and reportedly “Margaret has genius, I have only talent.”

It is not known exactly which of Charles Rennie Mackintosh’s works Margaret was involved with (or the extent to which she worked on them) but she is credited with being an important part of her husband’s figurative, symbolic interior designs. Many of these were executed at the early part of the twentieth century and include the Rose Boudoir at the International Exhibition at Turin in 1903, the designs for House for an Art Lover in 1900, and the Willow Tea Rooms in 1902.

Sadly, poor health cut short Margaret’s career—as far as we know, she produced no work after 1921. She died in 1933, five years after her husband.

Her best known works include the gesso panel *The May Queen*, which was made to partner Mackintosh’s panel *The Wassail* for Miss Cranston’s Ingram Street Tearooms, and *Oh ye, all ye that walk in Willowood*, which formed part of the decorative scheme for the Room de Luxe in the Wil-

low Tearooms. All three of these are now on display in the Kelvingrove Museum in Glasgow.



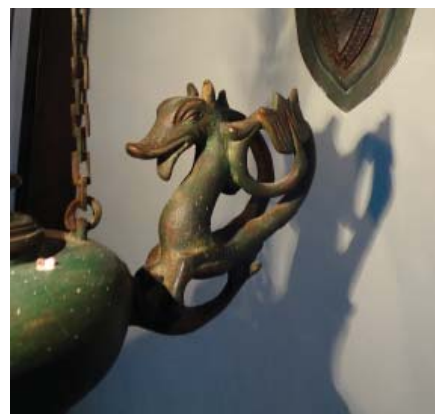
CACS Summer Event—Tour of the Highlands Ranch Mansion

Article By Lexi Erickson

Members of CACS had a delightful private tour of one of the most architecturally unique mansions in Colorado, the Highlands Ranch Mansion, located in the center of Highlands Ranch, in northern Douglas County. The mansion’s more than 22,000 square feet is filled not only with some interesting antiques, and a butler’s pantry, complete with the original appliances, but beautiful and unusual light fixtures, plus it comes with a most fascinating story—-one of the Mistresses of the Mansion, a lover’s triangle and murder.

Several in our party were familiar with the book, *Murder at the Brown Palace: A True Story of Seduction and Betrayal* by Dick Kreck, but no one knew that at the center of the storm was the beautiful socialite, Isabel Springer, whose husband was the powerful Denver businessman, John Springer, owner of the mansion. The story of the manipulation and downfall by the lovely Isabel made for a whole new way of viewing the mansion.

Originally, Highlands Ranch was a



Exterior and interior views and details.

160-acre farm of Dad Clark, the Potato King of Colorado, The mansion, which was constructed over a number of years, boasts of 14 bedrooms, 11 bathrooms, and the hand-painted walls and doors in the bathroom were subject of many photographs. The hand-carved fireplace in the great room tells the story of the mansion.

Originally, the land was homesteaded by Allen Long, the owner of the B&O Railroad. (Yes, of Monopoly fame.) He built a small stone home, called Rotherwood, on the rolling land east of the foothills. Later, Denver mayoral candidate, John Springer owned the mansion and ranch from 1897-1913. He began building the current mansion in 1891, named it Castle Isabel, and completed over 50% of the current structure. Later he passed the home to his daughter, Annie. At that time, much of the mansion looked as it does today inside, though the exterior presented more of an imposing Russian castle façade. In 1920, the mansion was purchased by Waite Phillips, one of the brothers who started Phillips Petroleum. He named it Highlands Ranch.

In 1926, the new owner, Frank E. Kistler, bought the mansion for \$425,000.00 and changed the name to the Diamond K Ranch. He changed the façade of the building from a castle to the Tudor Revival style that one sees today. Kistler sold the ranch and mansion for \$250.00 to Lawrence Phipps, Jr, during the Great Depression, and the name changed back to Highlands Ranch. It was also the home of the Arapahoe Hunt Club, which continued for 50 more years. In 1978, the mansion became best known as the setting for the magnificent Venneford Ranch in the 26 hour mini-series, *Centennial*, written by James A. Michener.

In 1980, Highlands Ranch was purchased by Mission Viejo Corp from California, and the ranch became one of the first planned communities west of the Mississippi. In 1910, Shea Homes gave the mansion 6 million dollars for additions and renovations to the back of the mansion. It is now available to the public as an events center for weddings, conferences and some special events for the residents of Highlands Ranch.



After the tour, CACS members picnicked on the back lawn of the home, and enjoyed each other's company. As the proverbial sun sank slowly in the West, the members, with many stories of historic Colorado floating in their heads, bade each other a fond adieu. ☺



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Make a special gift of the growing enthusiasm, activism and educational opportunities offered by the Colorado Arts and Crafts Society. Our members are always the first to learn about our special events, such as our annual Winter Symposium and Gathering of the Guilds, plus neighborhood walking tours and field trips to significant Arts and Crafts sites. Plus, as members they'll receive discounted or free admission to all CACS events, and our quarterly newsletter. Give a gift today!

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