

*Top: Roycroft Print Shop c. 1930
Bottom: Huber Press in Roycroft Print Shop c. 1930*

A DOCUMENTED LIFE:

Connecting the Past to the Present through the photographs of a Roycrofter

**By Drew Jensen,
Roycroft Renaissance Photographer**

My life thus far has been filled with moments that connect me to the Roycroft, the Arts and Crafts movement, and my great-grandfather, a Roycrofter. Many passed by insignificantly, like so many things in life, only to reveal themselves as undoubtedly crucial in guiding me to where I am today.

One of my first Roycroft moments was when my grandmother led a field trip in elementary school, which brought my class to where her father worked when she was a child. Many years later I was able to interview Roycroft Renaissance Master Printmaker, Laura Wilder, for a college project. Even my wedding reception was at the Inn on the Roycroft Campus! Most recently, I had a chance meeting with Roycroft Renaissance Master Painter Julie Leidel at an art show I went to on a whim after moving to Denver. Occurrences like these go on and on.

The most impactful of which came during a holiday party my uncle hosted a few years after my grandfather's passing.

I don't recall who, but someone came into the living room with a box from the basement and placed it on the coffee table in front of us. On it read "prints, photos, books, etc." and was from my grandparents' house. My grandfather had passed away about five years before and while going through his basement, someone found several boxes of family keepsakes. There was so much we decided they'd be stored away to go through at a later time, and that time had come.

We all gathered to have a look at the stored family treasures. It felt like a magnetic force drew everyone into the living room. As we opened each box, somebody handed out prints and photos, and we all began sorting through them. Brochures, quotes, mottos, and other prints covered the floor, most of which contained the distinctive Roycroft mark.

These examples of work my great-grandfather was a part of are invaluable to me.

As we were sorting, out came a small shoe box. It was heavy and dusty, and inside were thick unopened

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DOCUMENTED (cont.)

envelopes. Most envelopes had short descriptions like Denz Family, Roycroft Shop, Roycroft Chapel, and Terry Shooting. We opened one, and inside there was a glass photo negative! We opened each envelope, revealing a decade's photo documentation my great-grandfather had captured.

I was captivated.

My great-grandfather, Terence Denz, lived his entire life in East Aurora, NY. Born in 1891, he was raised with his brother and two sisters on the outskirts of town. In a time when farm labor was the most common way to earn a living in rural America, the Roycrofters afforded him a rare opportunity to work in a new industry with the rise of the Roycroft Print Shop. The son of a contract painter, he understood a hard day's work and what it provided.

Sometime between 1906-1910, he began working at the Roycroft Print Shop, and by 1910, he had earned himself a position as a Pressman. He continued his work there until March of 1918 when he enlisted in WWI. After nearly a year overseas, he returned from Brest, France, in February 1919. Upon his arrival home, his skills, hard work, and reliability earned him a letter from the Roycroft requesting his return to work as a Pressman in the Print Shop.

I know, he never used his lifetime of printing skills and knowledge again. He closed that chapter in his life and moved on. By the beginning of 1942, he was employed at Bell Aircraft as an assemblyman, helping prepare the US for another World War, one that, at the spry age of 50, he honorably enlisted in.

My great-grandfather passed away in 1968 at the age of 77. Through the personal effects he left behind and the stories told by his children and grandchildren, I never got the impression that, beyond providing for his family, he thought his work would hold any value after he was gone, let alone leave a legacy. A legacy his great-grandson would strive to uphold 50 years after his passing!

Having digitized my film negatives in college, I was tasked by my family with scanning and protecting these glass plates. A process that would profoundly impact the direction of my life, ultimately leading to the pursuit of a dream I never thought was possible.

My great-grandfather's life is an inspiration to me. His skills as a Pressman were appreciated and valued, and his longevity at the Roycroft Print Shop was admirable. In truth, I probably have a romanticized view of the man, at least when it comes to him as a Roycroft Artisan.

He was a Roycrofter, and his skill set was a greatly



Roycroft employee photo (Terence is in the 3rd row, 12th from the right).

There he would work for nearly 20 years, until the close of the Print Shop in 1938 when the Roycrofters filed for bankruptcy. And though the details aren't clear, when Samuel Guard purchased the Roycroft Campus, he reopened it with the help of former shop workers. My great-grandfather was one of those workers, continuing his tenure at the Print Shop until 1941 when Sam Guard, too, filed for bankruptcy, closing the shop for good.

My great-grandfather didn't take his skills to another print shop after the close of the Roycroft. As far as

valued asset to the Roycroft Print Shop. I have gleaned from his personal effects that his career at the Print Shop was dictated more by the circumstances of the time than an internal drive to be a part of something revolutionary or creative. I would consider him a skilled and knowledgeable tradesman by modern standards. The Roycroft uniquely positioned itself with a foundation based on the Arts and Crafts values of handcraftsmanship and the use of technology to share its work with the world. It's easy to forget today that the Roycroft Print Shop was a modern outfit at the

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DOCUMENTED (cont.)

time, requiring skilled labor to function—the skilled work of its Roycrofters.

Although his work in the Print Shop was the driving force behind my infatuation with my great-grandfather, the most inspiring thing didn't come from his work there. It came from the glass negatives we found of his family, his town, and his place of work. The documentation of the people, places, and things he valued enough to capture on his bulky 4 x 5 field camera, his documented life.

In 2022 I fulfilled an aspiration of mine to become a Roycrofter like my great-grandfather. To earn the distinction of Roycroft Artisan and the right to adorn my photographic work with the "RR." To carry on the legacy my great-grandfather left me. To document the world around me as a Roycrofter, with HEAD, HEART, and HAND.

The images shown throughout this article, taken by my great-grandfather, are the inspiration for the direction I intend to take my photographic work in the coming years. Shifting back to analog photography, the version of this medium that I fell in love with nearly 20 years ago. With several 35mm and 120mm film cameras, I have begun to curate a body of work documenting the people, places, moments, and experiences I value.

A series I call "A Documented Life." Below are a couple of recent images included in this series.

In time, I will introduce even older photographic processes, like dry plate (silver gelatin) and wet plate (collodion) photography, into my work as I regain my knowledge and experience with film. Though time-consuming and labor-intensive, these forms of photography produce stunningly beautiful images and represent the type of photography my great-grandfather used to document his life.

I'm excited to share this evolution with those who wish to follow my work. For current imagery and ongoing projects, you can find me on social media and my website (linked below).

Website - drewjensenphotography.com

Instagram - [DrewJensenPhoto](https://www.instagram.com/DrewJensenPhoto)



Terence Riley Denz
May 11, 1891 -
December 11, 1968

“
Photographs hold great power.
They connect the past with
the present. They tell stories
and teleport viewers to
places they've never been.
Photographs bring about
associations unknown,
speaking to each viewer
individually.
Photographs are magic.”

-Drew Jensen

*Left: Terence with Mary
(my grandmother) Spring 1927*

*Right Top: Sunrise over Denver (2023)
Right Bottom: Claire & Lili in yard,
Denver (2023)
Both (120mm/Portra 400/
FujiGW690iii)*



THE VICTORIAN HOUSE OF ARTS AND CRAFTS

By Beth Bradford



Rod Hughes, Niamh Wimperis, Patch Rogers, Ilsa Braniff, Anita Rani, Keith Brymer Jones, Abdollah Nafisa, Bryony Knox, and Stephen Winstanley in front of Wyndcliffe Court

The *Victorian House of Arts and Crafts* is a four-part series of one-hour episodes originally broadcast on BBC2 in 2019. The program is currently available for viewing on YouTube. The series title is a misnomer; the beautiful Wyndcliffe Court House, in the Welsh hills of Monmouthshire is not a Victorian house. The house was commissioned in 1910 with architect Eric Francis producing the design but wasn't complete until 1922 due to the intervention by World War I. The house's style is primarily Jacobean, and the gardens are Arts and Crafts Italianate style.

This program is an interesting piece of reality television overlaid on the loose structure of an Arts and Crafts commune. The series shows the creative endeavors of six 21st-century craftspeople living and working together for one month. The artisans wear clothes loosely based on those of working-class people from the Victorian era, perform some of the daily necessary chores of living, and eat traditional meals prepared by a cook with some help from the crafters.

The artisans use the traditional methods and tools of their Arts and Crafts era predecessors to transform a different room in the house for each of the first three weeks and, in the final week, provide pieces for the communal spaces. Each week's room renovation is overseen by one of the crafters as project director. For each episode,

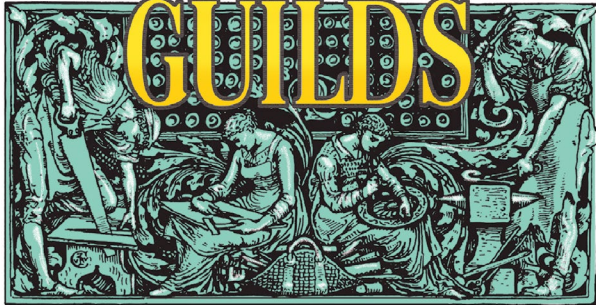
there are three main projects assigned to specific craftspeople with the other crafters assisting to complete the room renovation by either creating additional pieces or pulling in extent furnishings from elsewhere in the house. The assigned tasks may or may not have some relation to the assigned craftspeople's specialty. At the end of the week, the judges decide which of the three objects best represents the Arts and Crafts movement.

The six craftspeople are: Rod Hughes- (62) a bladesmith from Surrey, Niamh Wimperis- (27) an embroiderer from Stroud in Gloucestershire, Ilsa Braniff- (37) a product designer from Liverpool, Abdollah Nafisa- (36) an Iranian-born cabinet maker from West Sussex, Bryony Knox- (46) a silversmith from Edinburgh, and Stephen Winstanley- (25) a potter from Dundee. These craftspeople have varying levels of experience and expertise ranging from Ilsa as an award-winning product designer and University lecturer to Stephen having only two years' experience as a self-taught potter. The judges are Patch Rogers, an Arts and Crafts expert, and Keith Brymer Jones, a renowned potter. Anita Rani is the television host and presenter.

Stay tuned for the highlights of each episode in coming issues of the CACS Newsletter.

The Colorado Arts and Crafts Society Pauses

A GATHERING OF THE GUILDS



CACS is currently reevaluating its longtime "Gathering of the Guilds" event to see if we can harken back to the days of yore when we had a smaller show and sale with educational demonstrations and presentations more focused on the original Arts and Crafts Movement (c. 1880-1920).

Please bear with us as we put on our thinking caps and redirect ourselves! If you have questions or suggestions, kindly contact Cynthia Shaw at cshaw8623@gmail.com.

36TH GROVE PARK INN CONFERENCE

By Dennis Barrett

Representing CACS at this year's GPI conference were Robert Rust, who attended as a small-group leader, Julie Leidel, who attended as a vendor, and I, who attended as a civilian. We were charged with reporting on: 1. what was different this year, and 2. the health of the A&C revival, as reflected in the conference.

The major difference this year was in the director's post. The face of the conference — up there at the podium in the grand ballroom and enlarged on all three screens, introducing every single speaker — for the first time ever, wasn't Bruce Johnson! It was Kate Nixon, well known to us as Bruce's chief assistant over the last several years. True, the hand over from Bruce to Kate had been announced as early as last year, but suddenly now it was real.

I didn't see Bruce, in fact, until he co-led a "small-group discussion" entitled "A 35-year Retrospective on the National Arts & Crafts Conference and Shows." The history is relevant to us, because Bruce started by noting that Robert Rust and the late Kitty Turgeon in 1985 started the first national conference dedicated to the A&C Movement, at the Roycroft Inn. (The same Rust who is on our CACS Board; and when Bruce mentioned his contribution, the crowd burst into spontaneous and prolonged applause!) Two years later at the third such conference in 1987, Robert and Kitty announced that the Roycroft Inn was closing for an eight-year renovation, so the conference would be no more.

With their blessing, a very young Bruce Johnson took over the conferences, siting them near his new home in Asheville, NC, at its iconic A&C hotel, the Grove Park Inn. The Inn had been constructed in 1913 (at the height of the mature A&C period in the U.S.) in the side of a mountain, using local stone, and fitted with A&C furniture crafted locally and lighting fixtures by the

Roycroft. The Vanderbilt Wing was added to the main building in 1984, and then the Sammons Wing in 1987-88. In order to scout the site in 1987, Bruce asked to tour the wing under construction, but was denied! He then found in downtown Asheville both a well-used hard hat and some used blueprints... and with his props was welcomed, unquestioned, at the construction site. Now as then, Bruce is skilled at finding a way.



The first Grove Park Inn conference in 1988 saw 30 dealers and 300 attenders. It was entirely contained in the grand ballroom, partitioned into part for the lectures and part for the dealers. Stephen Gray, the late great A&C collector, hosted a closing cocktail party, at which Bruce asked whether the attenders would come back next year. They said they would, and they did, and they continue to do. Now the conference uses the whole of the grand ballroom for the lectures, and all the common rooms in the Inn for the dealers, the exhibits, small group discussions, workshops, the book club, and the silent auction (which raised nearly \$14,000 this year to benefit the research fund). The conference is on the third weekend in February, the only weekend in the year when GPI schedules a single conference to take over the whole place!

What has changed?

Apart from the director: The cost to attend! Air fares, car rentals, restaurant meals, and drinks at the GPI bar have all jumped — while the charge for attending has risen only moderately.

The exhibit case that used to be in the Great Hall moved this year to an out-of-the-way site near the vendors.

But generally, after a few COVID years (2021 was exclusively virtual; for 2022 everyone was masked) the 2023 conference represented "back to normalcy" with few changes in evidence.

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Passing of the torch: Kate Nixon, at the podium, is the new director of the Grove Park Inn conferences. At right is Bruce Johnson, who headed the first 35 years of the meetings (shown on the left in the photo with Dave Rudd, he is relaxed at a small-group discussion of the 35-year history)

What has not changed?

The camaraderie: old friends reacquainting, and new attendees genuinely welcomed.

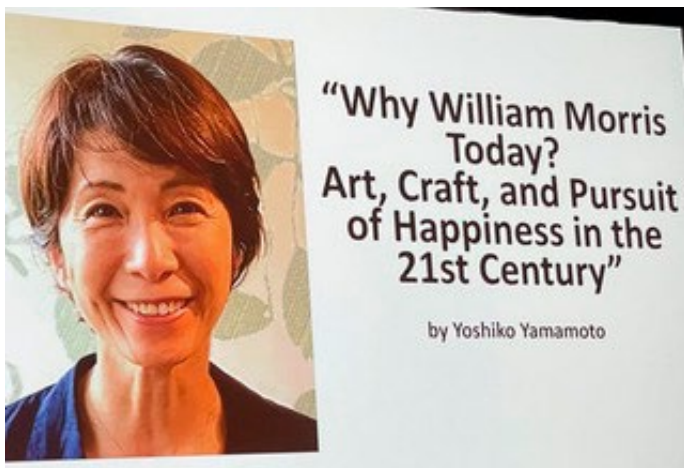
The elegance and scale of the Inn itself, with exposed boulders and the A&C furniture in the bedrooms and the common rooms (ignoring a few ugly pieces brought in when KSL briefly owned the Inn and ‘modernized,’ before selling it to Omni, which has done no further harm.)

Paul Katrich’s modern A&C pots selling out the first day.

The high quality and balance of the lectures.

The plaque on rooms 431 and 433, marking where F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote in the summer of 1936.

The flashy desserts offered free on Saturday and Sunday evenings before lectures.



Health of the Movement

The American Arts and Crafts Movement lasted fewer than 20 years (about 1901 – 1920); the Revival has already lasted more than 40 (about 1985 – 2023), so it is reasonable to ask after the health of the Revival: is it petering out?

It is difficult to reach a firm answer, but on the basis of the Grove Park Inn conference, Robert, Julie and I tend to be optimistic.

I couldn’t get attendance figures, but the numbers in the grand ballroom for lectures appeared to be about the same as in pre-pandemic days. And the number of first-time and, importantly, second-time, attendees was healthy, with a reasonable sprinkling of younger folks.

Local Arts and Crafts conferences are certainly weakened by the availability of A&C pieces on the internet. Whereas a decade ago dealers would come to Denver for the CACS Show and Sale from Wisconsin and Ohio and California, they now stay home and sell online. And we invite local artisans and craftspeople to our Gathering of the Guilds instead.

But the national conference at Grove Park Inn, where collectors can compare prices from dealers who still come from across the country as well as from up and down the Eastern seaboard, attests to the continuing vitality of the Arts and Crafts philosophy and the Arts and Crafts style.



CACS TOUR OF THE COUNTRY CLUB NEIGHBORHOOD

Saturday May 20th 10 AM

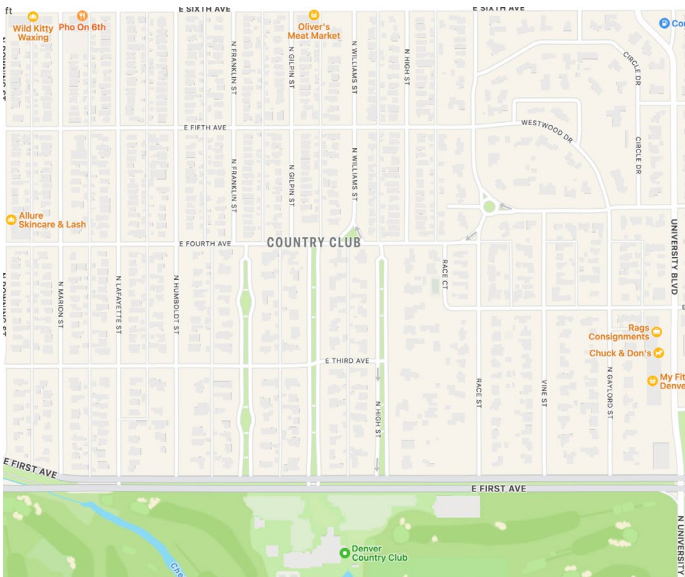
Led by Board Member Robert Rust

Meet up location will be given to those who
sign up by May 10th

Limited to the first 20 members and guests

Cost: Free to members
\$10 donation for guests/friends

Email reservations with name and contact info
to Robert Rust: rust2r@me.com



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Send comments to julie.leidel@gmail.com.

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A Year of CACS Membership

Annual membership fees are below.

You can make your membership payment through PayPal to:
[Paypal.me/CACSmembership](https://www.paypal.com/US/membership).

Checks can also be made out to the Colorado Arts & Crafts Society and mailed to: Beth Bradford at 413 S. Humboldt St. Denver, CO 80209.

Please contact our membership chair, Helene Arendt at CACSmembership@gmail.com with any questions.

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|---|--|
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This is your ticket
To a world of
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A Year's
Membership
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Arts and Crafts
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