

# THE ARTS & CRAFTS MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
COLORADO ARTS & CRAFTS SOCIETY

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*The Van Briggles Pottery, site of a CACS field trip  
to Colorado Springs on September 14*

## JOIN CACS TO VISIT NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK VAN BRIGGLE MEMORIAL BLDG.

COLORADO COLLEGE CAMPUS FOR A SPECIAL TOUR INCLUDING THE INTERIOR!  
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2019

By Dennis Barrett & Robert Rust

If you were a Coloradan in the Arts & Crafts era, and wanted crockery *made* in Colorado, you'd have quite a search. Denver Terra Cotta Company, and Denver China and Pottery Company (which made Lonhuda and Denaura) worked briefly in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, but soon closed. Only the Van Briggles Pottery, in Colorado Springs, produced artistic ceramics through the A&C period... and well beyond.

Artus Van Briggles was one of Rookwood's brightest young stars, sent by the firm's founder, Maria Longworth Nichols Storer, to Paris to soak up the latest ideas and bring them back to Cincinnati. But soon after his return he was diagnosed with tuberculosis, and decided to move to Colorado for drier air. (Storer was perhaps disposed to encourage this

move because her first husband, Nichols, had died of tuberculosis in Cincinnati.) A friend from Paris days, Anne Gregory, joined Artus in Colorado Springs, they married, and together founded the Van Briggles pottery in 1901. Anne taught high-school art to support them; Artus experimented with local clays and with matte glazes, creating an authentically Coloradan ceramic, for which international recognition came quickly. But Artus realized he could not beat the disease – the celebrated Despondency Vase is said to have marked that realization. And on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1904, even while his designs were winning awards at the St. Louis World's Fair, Artus died.

Anne had shared and collaborated in all aspects of the Van Briggles pottery; the mark of

# Van Briggle Field Trip

(cont.)

the pottery is a conjoined A and A. She continued the pottery after Artus' death, using his forms and adding designs of her own, until she sold it in 1912 and moved to Denver (teaching, for a time, under Vance Kirkland at the University of Denver.) In 1908 she opened a new building to house the pottery, as a memorial to Artus. It is that building that we'll visit Sept. 14th, the site of the Van Briggle operation until 1955, and various functions of Colorado College since 1968. The pottery continued, under various leaders and in various buildings in Colorado Springs, for more than a century. When it closed in 2012, it was the oldest continuously operating art pottery in the U.S.

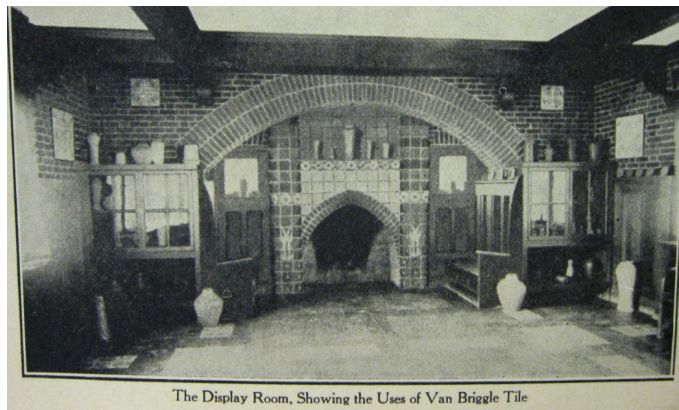
Colorado College has put much effort into conservation of the site, and has recently opened it to the public one day a year - this year, Saturday September 14<sup>th</sup>.

The Pioneers Museum in Colorado Springs has the largest public holdings of Van Briggle ceramics, so the second part of our tour will be a visit to the Pioneers Museum. We will see the well-curated exhibit of Van Briggle ceramics open to the public.



Facade of the Van Briggle building

2.



The Display Room, Showing the Uses of Van Briggle Tile

Archival image of the interior of the Van Briggle building

**To take advantage of this CACS tour opportunity:**

**Inform us** that you're coming. Send an email to Mark Davidson at [mdavidson@fwlaw.com](mailto:mdavidson@fwlaw.com)

### **Bring**

A picnic lunch

\$15 (for ticket to the Van Briggle building tour)

Perhaps a pair of binoculars for the façade of the Van Briggle Memorial building.

**Gather by 9am** on Saturday September 14 in the parking lot of the Stickley Showroom:

9515 E. County Line Road  
Englewood, CO 80122

to carpool to Colorado Springs. (Take I-25 south to County Line Road, exit 195; use the far right lane to exit. Make the first right turn from County Line Road; Stickley is first building on your left.)

For some reading ahead of the trip: [coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/van-briggle-memorial-pottery-building](http://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/van-briggle-memorial-pottery-building)

# ASILOMAR: JULIA MORGAN'S REFUGE BY THE SEA



*Asilomar State Beach & Conference Grounds*

## By Cynthia Shaw

In the summer of 2014, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) finally awarded Julia Morgan its signature Gold Medal, celebrating her as “the early 20th-century architect whose copious output of quality work secured her position as the first great female American architect.”

Born in San Francisco in 1872, Morgan became one of the first women to graduate from the University of California (CAL) with an engineering degree. While in Berkeley, she met Bernard Maybeck, a faculty member and architect who would become a leading figure in California’s Arts and Crafts movement. He encouraged her to apply to the most prestigious design school of the period - the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Here, in 1902 (just shy of her 30th birthday), she earned a Master’s degree in Architecture.

Returning to the Bay Area, she worked briefly under John Galen Howard, CAL’s supervising architect. Gaining status as the first woman licensed to practice architecture in California (and operating her own firm for nearly 50 years),

she received her first major commission for the El Campanil tower at Mills College in Oakland. Thanks to her ingenious use of reinforced concrete on this prominent campus landmark, it survived the 1906 earthquake intact. As a result, her reputation as both a designer and structural engineer soared and she was subsequently hired to rebuild San Francisco’s ravaged Fairmont Hotel.

After receiving rave reviews for St. John’s Presbyterian Church in Berkeley, she was promptly recruited by local Young Women’s Christian Association leaders to create a chapter building in Oakland. This project led to dozens of other commissions for this burgeoning non-profit organization dedicated to women’s empowerment and civil rights. Having held their annual conference meetings at Capitola, a resort on the northern shore of Monterey Bay since 1910, the Pacific Coast chapters were now searching for a site of their own.

In the spring of 1912, Phoebe Apperson Hearst (whom Julia had befriended in Paris) hosted the group at her estate in Pleasanton. Here they decided to ask the Pacific Improvement Company (Monterey Peninsula’s largest



*Historic lodging designed by  
Julia Morgan*

## JULIA MORGAN (CONT.)

landholder) to donate property. PIC offered the YWCA 30 acres near Moss Beach, stipulating that in order to receive the deed, the non-profit must construct \$30,000 worth of permanent structures on the grounds within 10 years. And the architect to receive this coveted commission to direct the design of the buildings and grounds from 1913-28 was of course Julia Morgan!



*Interior of Merrill Hall*

Using topographic maps and taking inspiration from the surrounding forest and majestic views of the Pacific, Morgan drew the preliminary plans for a circular site with three main buildings serving as social, spiritual and sustenance centers. These primary structures were built in the "First Bay Tradition", Northern California's variation of the Arts and Crafts Style emphasizing a connection between nature and site through the use of such vernacular materials as native oak, pine and stone.

Christened "Asilomar", a made-up Spanish term for "refuge by the sea", the property was enjoyed as a conference center for YWCA student leaders and as summer camp for girls from 1913 until the Great Depression closed its doors in 1933. For nearly two more decades, the grounds were used primarily for military training and overflow housing. In 1956, the State of California purchased the site for use as a financially sustainable park.



*YWCA summer camp attendees, c. 1916*



*Asilomar's motto*

Today, Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds attracts year-round lodgers for meetings, weddings, vacations and hikes along the coastline (a protected State and Federal Marine Reserve and Sanctuary). With its low-key ambience and rustic architecture, it offers a peaceful (and surprisingly affordable) respite for those in need of some rest and relaxation within a spectacular nature preserve overlooking the sea. For more information, visit [visitasilomar.com](http://visitasilomar.com)



*Phoebe Apperson Hearst Social Hall interior*

# Save the Date!

for  
**Our Winter Symposium:**  
**January 18, 2020**  
**at Boettcher Mansion**

*Professor James Spates Ph.D., marking the 200th anniversary of John Ruskin's birth, will speak on Ruskin and his relationship to the Arts and Crafts Movement today.*



**Jim Spates** is Professor of Sociology Emeritus at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, New York. He can be reached at [jimspates43@gmail.com](mailto:jimspates43@gmail.com).

I have been working on **John Ruskin** for more than a quarter century, first introduced to him by a long-time colleague at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Claudette Columbus, in the mid-1980s during a semester when we co-taught a course on "London in the Nineteenth Century." Sociologist that I am, I wanted our students to read the giants in my field who not only had lived in London during that tumultuous time, but who had written works regarded as classics of social thought while they walked and talked there—Marx and Engels prime among these. While Claudette had no objection to including such celebrated thinkers, her list, given that she was a Professor of English and Comparative Literature with a specialty in 19th century English writers,

was different. We would read some Tennyson and Browning, she said, some Dickens, some Carlyle, and some Ruskin. Delighted with the suggestion of the first four, I was forced to admit, a bit sheepishly, that I had no idea who this last fellow, Ruskin, was. She replied that, unfortunately, I wasn't alone in my ignorance. Many were enveloped in the same darkness, a tragedy given the level of Ruskin's genius and the depth of his thought on virtually every matter of significance in and for life.

Once I began to learn for myself how correct my colleague was, my intellectual life was transformed. For in this now-all-but-buried (formerly) eminent Victorian, I found what I had been looking for over the course of the more than two decades which had evaporated after I received my PhD—a sociologist (actually, a “proto-sociologist”) whose analytical brilliance was not only unsurpassed, but whose approach to social life, in contradistinction to most of those who call themselves sociologists these days (the majority of whom regard themselves as “objective, scientific reporters” for whom value judgments are anathema), was unabashedly moral. Like Plato, my other great mentor in thinking carefully about the nature of social life, Ruskin took it as axiomatic that the reason anyone studied society was that we might come to understand what forms of social arrangement were good for human beings and which were inimical.



I've never looked back, for soon I learned that Ruskin was about much more than social critique. Before his turn in that direction, he had been Britain's most renowned art and architecture critic, the author of many books which had substantially transformed how people thought about these vital subjects; had been, as well, an early, if not the first, environmentalist, his love of nature causing him to react angrily against all those who were wantonly destroying our natural world as the Industrial Revolution marched rough-shod across the Western world. Then there was his abiding respect for everyone who worked, whether in high or low position, his belief that each person had something positive to offer for the betterment of the social whole, a view which became the core of our current, world-wide, Arts and Crafts Movement. To read Ruskin, in other words, is to learn much about all of the vital issues which touch our lives.

SAVE THE DATE: NOVEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup>  
 FOR POTLUCK, MOVIE & SILENT AUCTION  
 AT BOETTCHER MANSION

Back to the Mansion! The Gathering of the Guilds in April this year forsook the Boettcher Mansion to try out an alternative venue in downtown Golden. But a November event will afford CACS members and their guests another chance to see the quintessentially Arts & Crafts building and its furnishings.

On Friday November 15th, you are invited to meet or reacquaint with fellow members in the cozy Fireside Room, with appetizers, drinks and tours of the interior starting at 5:30 PM. Our potluck supper will begin at 6:30 PM, followed by the showing of a recent or not-yet-released film (tba) on an American Arts & Crafts theme.

We will also feature a Silent Auction where you can display and sell any decorative and/or useful A&C items you no longer love or wish to keep. If an item sells, CACS will take 20% (you pocket the rest). Please plan to arrive as early as 5:00 PM to set up your wares on designated tables.

You might consider what recipe (for a main dish, side dish, salad or dessert) would meet A&C standards – honest treatment of ingredients, no excessive decoration, hand-crafted rather than machine-made. Or you might not.

Mark your calendar, for a low-key informal evening with old and new friends! RSVP by November 8th to Cynthia at (720) 497-7632 or [cshaw@jeffco.us](mailto:cshaw@jeffco.us). CACS will provide appropriate beverages for this hearthwarming event.



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**Directors & Officers of the Colorado Arts & Crafts Society:**

President:  
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*All correspondence concerning the society or membership should be sent to Colorado Arts & Crafts Society, 900 Colorow Road, Golden, CO 80401 | [www.colorarts-crafts.org](http://www.colorarts-crafts.org)*



www.colorarts-crafts.org  
900 Colorow Road  
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### GIVE A FRIEND THE GIFT OF MEMBERSHIP TO THE COLORADO ARTS AND CRAFTS SOCIETY

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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