



E-NEWS FROM TILE HERITAGE

September & October 2006



Originally Hotel Duluth designed by architect Martin Tullgren in 1925, one of the most elegant accommodations in the Midwest, the building today is known as Greysolon Plaza and houses seniors in one-bedroom apartments. Facade by the American Terra Cotta Company.

Here's What's Below:

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Tiles of the Northern Plains: A Review

Our warmest thanks to all who joined us in Minnesota for "Tiles of the Northern Plains," September 13-17, 2006, to commemorate the fourth anniversary of "Tiles in the Twin Cities" and the Handmade Tile Association's fifth annual festival in Minneapolis. These were great days and we were blessed with sunny, warm weather to enjoy the fruits of Karin Kraemer's prodigious mapping efforts in Duluth - so many interesting and diverse sites. It was especially fun for us to share Glensheen's tile bounty and Michelle Lee's fondness for everything Nemadji! The gallery tile events where we could view and purchase work by local artisans were an added attraction, and Dennis Gonsolus' cast iron stove collection, staggering.

Karin Kraemer, potter and tile maker at Duluth Pottery across the bridge in Superior, Wisconsin, organized the tour and served as our guide in Duluth and Superior. With the help of a Doty Research Grant, she did the research of historic and contemporary tile installations in the Twin Ports for the map, "Living with History."



Tile artwork by
Wendy Penta-Nelson,
part of
"Tiles of the North,"
an exhibition for
members of the
Handmade Tile Association
and local artists
in and around
the Twin Ports.



The reception for the "One Square Foot" juried tile show, hosted by Clay Squared to Infinity, was a great way to meld into the Minneapolis phase of the conference. The lectures on Friday, where the space was graciously provided by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, were a highlight - especially with David Dahlquist's inspiring talk on the importance of public art installations.



One of eleven tile mantels at Glensheen, the country estate of Clara and Chester Congdon on the shore of Lake Superior, completed in 1908. This particular mantel is unidentified.

We also wish to acknowledge Ken Forster, Jennifer Olivarez and Sabra Waldfoegel for their excellent presentations.

Kitchi Gammi,
a private men's club
in Duluth
built in the Georgian
and Elizabethan-style,
houses four original
Moravian fireplaces.
The building was
designed by
New York architect
Bertram Goodhue
in 1912.



Friday evening at the Holiday Inn was delicious! Our keynote address from Eric Astrachan was engaging and timely, providing everyone with a better understanding of the current decorative tile marketplace. Of course having Eric come as the keynote speaker involved a bit of subterfuge on our part! We wanted him there to receive the Tile Heritag Award

One of scores of cast iron stoves in the collection of Dennis Gonsolus, north of Duluth. This particular stove is adorned with Low Art Tiles from Chelsea, Mass, dating to the 1890s.



for his work in protecting, preserving and validating ceramic surfaces, old and new—bringing tiles and tile art further into the public consciousness. He appeared delighted with his "Oscar" and we were honored to present it to him. The ceramic statue was designed by the late Don Schreckengost for Summitville Tiles and was donated by Summitville's president, David Johnson, for this occasion.



"History of the Neighborhood House,"
the first of four 15' x 15'
panels in limestone, slate and porcelain
by local artist Craig David.
Neighborhood House, funded by
the Wellstone Foundation,
is a multi-cultural
and multi-lingual center
that helps refugees and
immigrants from more than
50 ethnic populations
build new lives for
themselves in the Twin Cities.

The Tile Festival on Saturday presented by the Handmade Tile Association at the American Swedish Institute was a grand success. The Institute is one of America's Castles, housing a fine collection of tile stoves and archives recording the history of Swedish immigrants in the region. The food was terrific and tile sales were brisk and breezy on a warm fall day for the 700 plus people who attended and purchased from the abundance of tile art presented by members of the Handmade Tile Association and other tile artisans from the surrounding states.

The conference culminated on Sunday with a well-organized and lively contemporary mosaic tour in the Twin Cities led by Merribeth O'Keefe. The one historic site, the chapel at the Lakewood Cemetery, was a favorite! Programs of this kind would not be affordable without the generous financial support from our sponsors. A Tile Heritage Salute is extended to Arizona Tile, Coverings, the Meredith Collection, the Tile Council of North America, and one anonymous donor for underwriting the conference. Additional assistance came from Continental Clay, Duluth Preservation Alliance, Fantasia, Jeff Heller, and Manitou Arts in Michigan. Behind the scenes, for the twelve months prior, many people were involved creating this program, and we would like to thank them all. Our special thanks to Josh Blanc for his boundless energy in organizing and promoting the event—awesome!



The one historic installation on the Mosaic Tour was at the Lakewood Memorial Chapel, considered to be one of the most stunning examples of Byzantine-style mosaic design in the United States. A team of six Italian mosaicists created the mosaic in sections and then in 1909 brought it from Venice to Minneapolis to install.



Lori Greene was one of several mosaic artists who contributed to "Mosaic of the Americas: Many Strengths, Many Struggles" that covers the southern facade of the Resource Center of the Americas in Minneapolis.



Sheryl Tuorila and Josh Blanc pose before their collaborative effort, "Daucus Carota (Wild Carrot)," fabricated in 2003 in Minneapolis. Josh produced the handmade tiles at Clay Squared, FK Art Glass supplied the glass tiles, and Sheryl designed and applied the mosaic to the 8-foot tall carrot.



4" x 4" tile by Diane Winters at Winters Tileworks in Berkeley, California.

California Tiles: Arts & Crafts Principles Revive the Golden Era

Riley Doty, Bay Area tile historian, and Joe Taylor, president and cofounder of the Tile Heritage Foundation, will be speaking at the Hillside Club, 2286 Cedar Street in Berkeley on the evening of Thursday, October 26th. The event is being presented by Artistic License, a group of professional period revival artisans serving the San Francisco Bay Area.

Much has been written of late concerning the "Golden Era" of tile production, 1910 to 1940, a period of unsurpassed innovation and creativity throughout the state. Historians Riley Doty and Joe Taylor postulate that a second and comparable golden era is currently underway, having taken root in the 1960s in response to a decade or more of aesthetic stagnation, and

coming to full bloom in the last ten years. Prepare yourself for a lively and informative discussion prompted by images of significant installations from the Middle Ages to the present day and a selection of art tiles, both contemporary and historic, to enhance this hands-on experience.

TCAA Tours San Francisco's Marina District

The Tile Contractors' Association of America held its annual convention in San Francisco, September 30th to October 4th, and invited Tile Heritage to lead a tour of historic tile installations through the city's famed Marina District. Tile historian Riley Doty, who initially mapped out the walking tour for the Tile Heritage symposium in 1994, was on hand to escort the group of some 30 contractors and their families.



An Art Deco apartment where the foyer is adorned with California tiles. Riley Doty can be seen at left with sun glasses.

The Marina District was built on the site of the 1915 Panama Pacific Exposition, and the tour began at architect Bernard Maybeck's magnificent Palace of Fine Arts. The 1920s period was the high point in the use of artistic tiles in California, and the Marina was developed as a residential neighborhood during that decade. No other area in San Francisco offers so many decorative tile installations in such close proximity.

Two types of installations predominate: stair risers for single-family and duplex homes, and outside foyers of apartment buildings. Also there are decorative tiles and groups of tiles set into some of the stucco facades.



A typical residence in the Marina District of San Francisco with Tunisian tile stair risers.



A variety of tiles make up this staircase: Taylor and Malibu among them.

One company, Solon & Schemmel of San Jose, dominated the high-end market in San Francisco. S&S did not distribute its tiles nationally, confining itself to the Northern California marketplace. In addition to S&S the Marina contains tiles from several other manufacturers, primarily from California: Batchelder, California Art Tile, California Faience, Gladding, McBean, Malibu, Muresque, Stonelight, Taylor, Tudor, and Woolenius, among others.



Close-up of a unique staircase of Muresque Tiles made in Oakland in the late 1920s.

New Publication Features Art Nouveau Tiles

Carl Sigmund Luber:
His Life and Work as Artist for the Art Nouveau Ceramics
of Johann von Schwarz, 1896-1906

The fascinating Art Nouveau ceramics produced by the Nuremberg company Johann von Schwarz, coveted worldwide, are documented here for the first time. 548 objects are displayed in their full glory, and 1187 designs are listed in the registry of works.

Until recently, the name of the company's designer, Carl Sigmund Luber, was known, but next to nothing was known about the man himself. Through contact with his grandchildren, however, he has been rediscovered. This book, written by longtime Tile Heritage member Wolfgang König and Rudolf Weichselbaum, describes a unique artistic personality of Art Nouveau.

In her Foreword to the book, Suzanne Perrault astutely points out what sets Luber's work apart from other artists of the period, namely the use of two separate decorating techniques on individual dust-pressed tiles: while bright, opaque majolica glazes fill most of the cloisons, the faces and hands of the lovely Pre-Raphaelite ladies, the hallmark of Luber's work, are left for the artist to paint by hand, resulting in the haunting allure that makes these objects nearly irresistible to collectors.

272 pages (hard cover) in full color with 600 illustrations. Price: \$75. *Books are in stock at THF, ready for immediate shipment.*

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