

**SOUTH PASADENA LOCAL HISTORY
SOUTH PASADENA PUBLIC LIBRARY MATERIALS
SUBJECT: CRAFTSMAN ARCHITECTURE**

| Table of Contents | Page |
|---|-------------|
| “The Arts and Crafts Movement,” by David Heller | 2 |
| “Charles and Henry Greene,” by David Heller. | 5 |

The Arts & Crafts Movement



Robert R. Blacker House, stairway and entry hall

WRITTEN FOR THE GAMBLE HOUSE
BY DAVID HELLER

The roots of what we now call the Arts and Crafts Movement took hold at the height of the Victorian Period, that time when house and furniture design consisted of rococo embellishment, each layer of ornamental elegance more extravagant than the last. Mark Twain, very much the conspicuous consumer himself, called it the "Gilded Age," with the more tapestry, glass and polished wood the better. Opulence was in and austerity was a thing only the poor could afford.

But increasingly, both in England and in the United States, the rise of large factories and mass production meant that "poor people," too, could begin to emulate the upper class and furnish their modest homes in cheaply made furniture that looked very good until one compared it with its models. The "craftsman," in the medieval sense of applying hand to wood, stone, glass, or metal, to create unique beauty, was now the slave of the assembly line.

It was time for an antidote, and it came primarily in the form of philosopher and Oxford art Professor John Ruskin, who equated industrialized society with an artless one. To him, hands which fed the assembly line could not produce works of personal integrity. Ruskin's ideas inspired another Englishman, William Morris, to found a company to man-

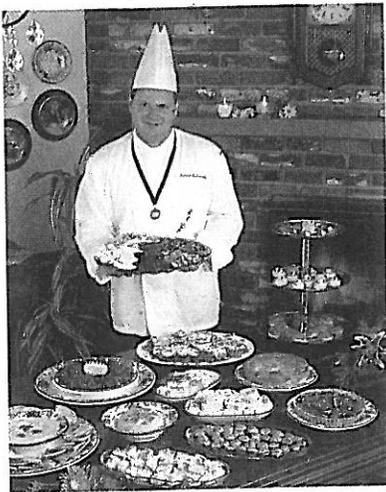
ufacture (literally, "hand make") a complete line of decorative arts from furniture, to textiles, to wallpaper. Like Ruskin, Morris looked to the Middle Ages for direction and meaning, to a time when the integrity of a chair, for example, lay not so much in its applied decoration as in its very construction.

At the turn of the 20th Century, other hearts and hands carried on the crusade. In America, Elbert Hubbard's Roycrofters were at work in upstate New York turning out hand-hewn furniture and accessories in a crafts community organized along the lines of a medieval guild. Then, in October of 1901, there appeared the first issue of Gustav Stickley's *Craftsman* magazine, an issue dedicated to Stickley's own personal hero, William Morris. Like Hubbard, Stickley set out to preach his message of the simple life and to produce furniture of his own design: objects that "frankly state their purpose and honestly meet the need which they were intended to supply."

Although there were many similar journals in the period, *The Craftsman*, published for fifteen years between 1901 and 1916, came to define the Arts and Crafts Movement in America. Stickley said his magazine was "the outward and visible expression of the more philosophic side of the Craftsman idea, just as the houses and their furnishings have put in-

Elegant Hors D' Oeuvres

~ for all events ~



Our Garde Manger Chefs will provide you with the Finest in European Hors D' Oeuvres and exquisite foods.

Sumptuous buffets available.

Call for a free brochure

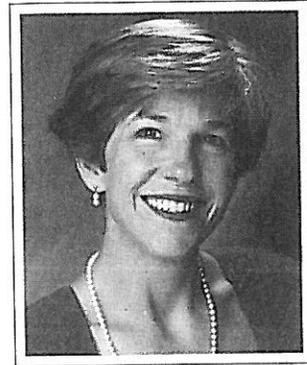
1-800-706-5474

Chef owned & operated since 1976

**Personally Committed
to providing
Unparalleled Service**

Kay Wetzel Leavens

- South Pasadena Real Estate Specialist
- Backed by the Coldwell Banker Nationwide Network



**CALL
(626) 356-8115**



MAKING REAL ESTATE REAL EASY.™



Telephone 626 793 0520

SATURDAY'S CHILD

"CLASSIC CHILDRENS CLOTHING"



Fashions for
Fall • School • Cotillion

Florence Eiseman
Flap Doodles
Eagles Eye
Anavini
Petite Bateau
Le Top

2529 Mission St. • San Marino
(626) 441-8888
Mon - Sat 10am - 6pm

ISABELLE

Experience boutique shopping at its best

- Elegant Suits
- Stunning Formalwear
- Beautiful Casualness
- Unique Accessories
- Special Gift Items

Nicole Miller • Renfrew • Rex Lester • Carol Horn • Odessa • Kamellia

*You're already beautiful.
Let us make you gorgeous.*



Mission Village Plaza 2537 Mission Street San Marino 626.403.2311

Brighton
Footwear
& Accessories



VERONA

1998 FALL COLLECTION
Boots • Handbags • Accessories

Prevata
Anne Klein

Nicole Miller
Donald J. Pliner

Coach
Amalfi

MISSION VILLAGE PLAZA • 2533 MISSION STREET • SAN MARINO • 626.403.8300

to form its more concrete phases."

Pasadena architects Charles and Henry Greene were readers and contributors to *The Craftsman*, and their work was often cited by other authors in its pages. The Greenes were aesthetic descendants of Ruskin, Morris, Hubbard and Stickley, beginning with their early woodworking training in high school.

The Blacker House commission (1907), and other major works, enabled the Greenes to design furniture to complete the aesthetic environment. Their designs, though adorned with inlays of wood and metal, often fanciful in form also display the older values of symmetry, honest joinery and restraint. A Greene & Greene chair or table shows the most basic and essential feature of Arts & Crafts furniture: beautifully shaped wood artfully joined into a flowing whole. Charles and Henry Greene's art would transcend the Arts and Crafts Movement without abandoning it.

The Arts and Crafts Movement, as such, died away with the advent of World War I. The 1920s brought with them a different consciousness in America. "Arts and Crafts," like the "Gilded Age" before it, had become " quaint," "unmodern," and hopelessly out-of-date. It would not find its rebirth until the 1970s, and the rediscovery continues today with "Rebirth of a Landmark: The Robert R. Blacker House of Greene and Greene."



South Pasadena's
Fremont Centre Theatre

1000 Fremont Avenue • South Pasadena
(across the from the Post Office)

Critics rave about FCT...

"It's great to see theater finally find a home in South Pasadena - and what better way to inaugurate a great theater than with some great theatre!"

- Pasadena Weekly

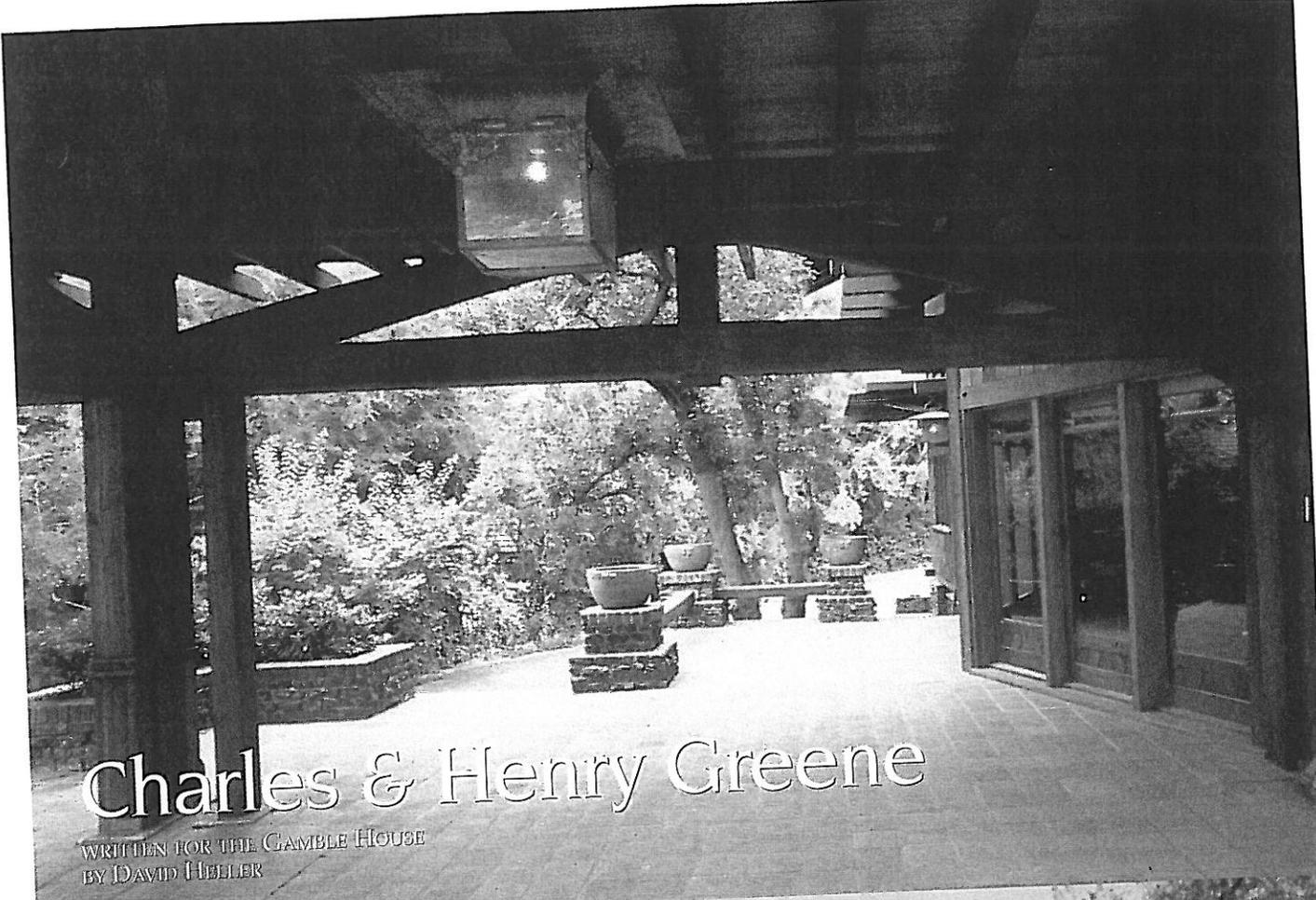
FOR THE BEST VALUE

Get your Fremont Centre Theatre
"BUDDY CARD" - \$49
For details, call (626) 441-5977

Ask about...

Catered Dinners at the Theatre
Becoming a corporate sponsor of FCT
Becoming a guest producer at FCT
Group discounts
Becoming a Theatre volunteer

Reservations/Information
Toll Free 1-888-441-5979



Charles & Henry Greene

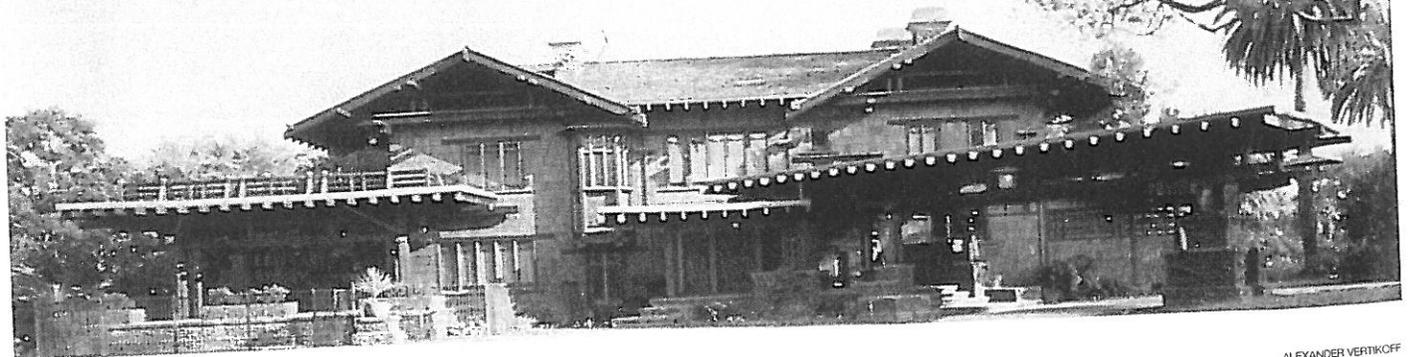
WRITTEN FOR THE GAMBLE HOUSE
BY DAVID HELLER

More than one hundred years ago, in 1894, Charles and Henry Greene began the architectural practice that would bring them an international reputation. Unfortunately, the kind of acclaim now accorded them came only after their deaths in the 1950s. Within the arc of their own professional careers, their influence — though ultimately deep and long-lasting — was fleetingly brief.

The legacy of the Greene brothers is scattered throughout California. Their houses can be found from Ojai to Sierra Madre, from Beverly Hills to Long Beach, in Berkeley and Carmel, in Sacramento and Porterville. In their time, the Greenes built houses from British Columbia to San Diego and through their work created what the American Institute of Architects, or AIA, later called “a new and native architecture.”

The finest examples of their art can be found in Pasadena, home of The Gamble House, now a public museum and the best preserved of their so-called “ultimate bungalows.” Also in Pasadena is the newly restored Blacker House, a privately owned residence even grander in scale than The Gamble House.

While the Greenes are thought of today as quintessentially Californian, they were, like so many “Californians,” emigrants from the Midwest and East. Born 15 months apart near Cincinnati, Ohio, Charles and Henry Greene spent most of their youth in St. Louis, later moving on to Boston to attend architecture school at MIT. Charles, the older of the two, was reluctant to become an architect. He preferred art, music and poetry — aesthetic qualities he would bring to his later work. Henry’s penchant for mathematics and engineering



would make its own contribution in straight-line forms and pleasing proportions. As it turned out, the brothers' interests complemented perfectly.

Were it not for the closeness of the Greene family and their parents' frail health and flagging fortunes, Charles and Henry might have stayed in Boston or perhaps joined an architectural firm in Chicago and California might never have known their unique touch.

In 1893, the brothers reluctantly heeded their father's call and joined their parents in the small resort town of Pasadena. When their train stopped in Chicago, the Greenes took a look at the "World's Columbian Exposition." There they saw for the first time examples of Japanese architecture. A reconstruction of a Buddhist temple showed them joinery, lighting and landscape that were to become recurring themes in their mature work.

Once in California, Charles and Henry Greene were exposed to the old Spanish missions, and though most were in ruins, their earthy, organic qualities remained and became yet another influence on the young architects searching for a style that would express their background of art and hand craftsmanship.

Through family connections and good luck, the Greenes began architectural work in Pasadena almost immediately. They opened a small office on Colorado Boulevard and settled in for a long stay. Client after client, house after house, they developed their own distinctive treatments of wood, stone, shingle and brick. Charles experimented with materials in his own home above Pasadena's Arroyo Seco from 1901, and by 1904, Henry had built a house for his own family nearby. The architect brothers by now were sought after and admired, and had wealthy patrons to support their art.

In 1916, Charles decided to move with his family to the Bohemian art colony of Carmel, near Monterey. Henry was left to run the firm in Southern California. Although the brothers worked together from time to time after this, their productive collaboration was behind them. Nonetheless, one of Charles's masterworks, the D.L. James House on the rock cliffs of the Carmel Highlands, was designed and built shortly after his move, and, in 1929, Henry created a masterpiece on a bluff overlooking orange groves outside Porterville, California — the Walter L. Richardson House, a ranch house built of adobe stone and native woods.

By the 1930s and 1940s the Greenes were virtually forgotten. In 1952, however, the AIA honored Charles and Henry Greene as "formulators of a new and native architecture." The recognition came almost too late: Henry died two years later at 84 and Charles died at his Carmel studio in 1957 at the age of 89. †



Custom Crafted
Picture Frames

Also:
Mirrors • Art • Memorabilia • Heirlooms

FRAMES BY JAMES
777 S. Arroyo Parkway • Pasadena
626-583-8382



FLOWER BOX
Full Service Florist Since 1938

(626) 799-5224
822 Fair Oaks Avenue
South Pasadena

Monday 9am-1pm
Tuesday-Friday 9am-6pm
Saturday 10am-4pm

Photo by Brandon Reece