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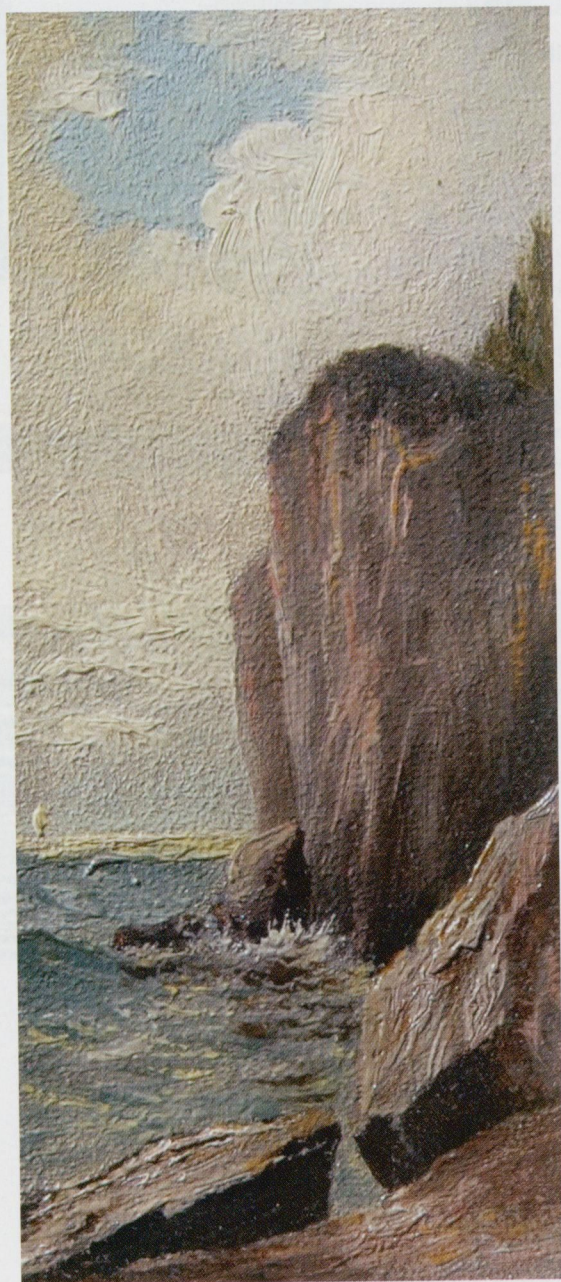
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Downeast Design

How Arts and Crafts Architects Shaped a Maine Resort

By Mark E. Weaver

Unless noted, all photographs are by the author.



Courtesy of the Northeast Harbor Library, Northeast, ME.

Cross over the causeway from Trenton, ME, onto Mount Desert Island, and you enter a scenic phenomenon of lakes, tidal coves, mountains, conifer forests, and rocky coastlines. Today, the island's 108 glacially-formed square miles welcome millions of visitors each year to towns like Bar Harbor and to the splendors of Acadia National Park. It's an annual flood that began as a trickle in the second half of the 19th century, when Mount Desert first became an escape for nature lovers retreating from a post-Civil-War, industrialized America.

Invasion of the Rusticators

The island's beauty first caught public attention through the work of artists such as Thomas Cole (1801–1848), Fitz Henry Lane (1804–1865), Frederick Edwin Church (1826–1900), and Daniel F. Wentworth (1850–1934). Exhibitions of their work, and illustrations in publications of the era such as *Harper's*

Left *The Coast of Maine*, oil on board by Daniel F. Wentworth, 1882. Paintings like this one (from the author's collection) drew the first rusticators to Mount Desert Island.

Above Rusticators enjoy nature at Jordan Pond, Mount Desert Island, Maine, circa 1897.



Magazine and N. P. Willis's book *American Scenery* (1838), captured the island's visual drama. Fueled by the philosophical writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, a tourist trade began to take shape as early as the 1840s, as so-called "rusticators" came to the island seeking a quasi-*Walden* experience.

Although often well-to-do, the early rusticators were less in line with the ultra-fashionable summer residents of Edith Wharton's Newport, RI, than with what William West Durant called the "great camp" builders in New York's Adirondack Mountains. Theologians, academics, and naturalists, they were primarily of the Episcopalian and Unitarian denominations, with a strong Anglophile ideology. At first, islanders took them in as summer boarders for the amount of \$10 per week. As word spread, however, steam boats brought more rusticators, creating a hotel trade that would grow for the next six decades.

Not content with hotel living, regular summer visitors began to build seasonal cottages, often hiring the best-known architects of the day. Many of these were Boston-based. Prominent in Arts and Crafts circles in that city, they were influenced both by the Colonial Revival aesthetic favored



Courtesy of the Northeast Harbor Library, Northeast, ME.

Top Architectural historian Vincent Scully cites William Ralph Emerson's 1879 Redwood Cottage (Bar Harbor) as the first fully-realized example of the Shingle Style.

Above This image, ca. 1910, shows the living room at Fred Savage's Fermata Cottage (1890) in Northeast Harbor. The even-armed Craftsman settle shows that the Arts and Crafts style was considered well-suited to island living.



Above The second Asticou Inn, built in 1900 by architect Fred L. Savage, continues to host rusticators in the 21st century. The original inn burned in 1899.

Left Fred L. Savage was the most prolific architect on Mount Desert Island. The building in this caricature is his own home, Atlantean.



Courtesy of Mr. Rick Savage.

by Boston's Society of Arts and Crafts, and by the Shingle Style architecture pioneered by Bostonian Henry Hobson Richardson (1838–1886) from a combination of Old English, Gothic, Queen Anne, and vernacular New England styles. On Mount Desert as well as up and down the East Coast, architects of the 1870s through the 1890s (many of them former employees of Richardson, or employees of his employees) were creating seaside cottages that used “honest,” natural materials like shingles, stone, brick, and wood to blend harmoniously into their sites. Their “organic,” American style would come to inspire Midwestern architects like Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Sullivan and the West Coast designs of Bernard Maybeck, Willis Polk, and Charles and Henry Greene.

Roughing it, Shingle-Style

The island's most active architect was Fred L. Savage (1861–1924), a native of Mount Desert. Savage apprenticed with the Boston firm of Peabody and Stearns between 1884 and 1886. There is no doubt that Savage would have been aware of Arts and Crafts thought in Boston through his work at the firm, and through readily-available

publications like the *Sanitary Engineer*. The prolific Savage eventually worked on nearly 300 projects on Mount Desert, either as principal architect, or as the on-site architect for other firms.

The Shingle Style dominated Mount Desert's early cottage architecture, from Redwood Cottage (1879, pictured on page 57), the celebrated exemplar of the style by William Ralph Emerson (1833–1917), to Nannau (1904), a mother-in-law cottage by the Boston firm of Andrews, Jaques, and Rantoul. (Unsurprisingly, Nannau is steeped in English Arts and Crafts design; Jaques had traveled with H. H. Richardson to England where he met both William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones.) In Northeast Harbor, Savage designed small shingle cottages such as his own home Hilltop Cottage (1888). Interior designs were primarily in the Colonial Revival taste, but Savage also used a more understated Craftsman interior, as documented in a photograph of his 1890 Fermata Cottage (page 57). Far larger and more involved was Savage's greatest interpretation of the Shingle Style, his Rosserne Cottage (1891, pictured next page), which incorporated all of Savage's original and borrowed design repertoire encrusted in shingles: a gambrel roof, asymmetrical window placement, wraparound porches, bay windows, turrets, eyebrow dormers, and the repeated use of a Palladian window (an idea he may have assimilated from H. H. Richardson's Robert Treat Paine house (1884–87) in Waltham, MA).

The half-timbered Tudor Revival style, and use of finely-fitted native stone masonry, distinguished Savage's later work for wealthy Anglophile clients in Bar Harbor. Savage used his office (1898) and his home Atlantean (1903) as laboratories for his Tudor style, which he expressed in the 13,500-square-foot Breakwater (pictured next page), built for a grandson of John Jacob Astor in 1904. Two years later, a Tudor-style commission for the West Gouldsboro Library opened Savage's career as a designer of public buildings. He worked on the library with Eric Ellis Soderholtz (1867–1951), a Swedish-born architectural photographer, coppersmith, and designer



Top The West Gouldsboro Library (1906) by Fred L. Savage is an example of his municipal architecture. The planters at the base of the entry stairs are by Eric Ellis Soderholtz, who invented the all-weather planter used in gardens throughout Downeast Maine. Landscape architect Beatrix Ferrand used many of these pots for her gardens on the island.

Above In Bar Harbor, Nannau Cottage (1904) by the Boston firm of Andrews, Jaques and Rantoul weds Shingle Style with English Arts and Crafts architecture.



Top Breakwater (1904), now Atlantique Cottage, was designed and built by Fred L. Savage for John Inness Kane. The cottage represents Savage's largest expression of the Tudor style at 13,500 square feet.

Above Built for the Reverend Dr. Cornelius Bishop of New York, Fred L. Savage's ultimate shingle cottage Rosserne (1891) is a masterpiece of the style.

of garden planters and birdbaths that would withstand the Maine climate year-round. Famed landscape architect Beatrix Ferrand (1872–1959), who designed many estate gardens on Mount Desert, used Soderholtz's pots in her garden designs, including her own shingled home, Reef Point (1883, Rotch and Tilden architects). Soderholtz's stone Arts and Crafts bungalow in Gouldsboro, Boreas Lodge, is now on the National Register of Historic Places.

Rusti-Churches

If the churches of Mount Desert Island reflect the domestic architecture, it is for good reason, since many of the same architects designed them. Saint Saviour's Episcopal Church (1878), designed by Charles Coolidge Haight (1841–1917), is illuminated by 42 stained-glass windows, including eleven by Tiffany Studios, as well as an 1893 rose window by D. Maitland Armstrong

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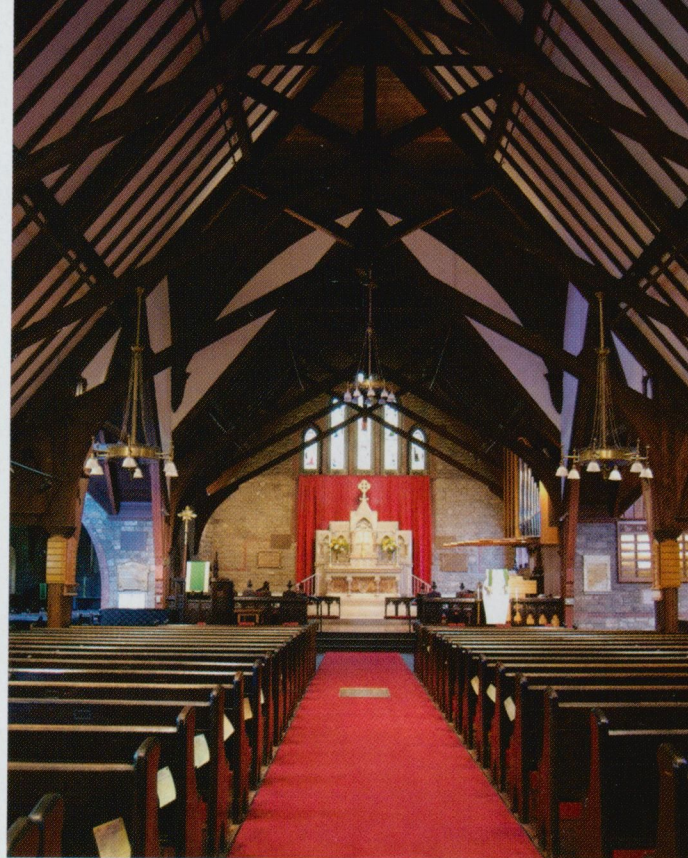
(1836–1918) who worked with both Tiffany and John LaFarge.

Although small in stature compared to Saint Saviour's, the summer chapels that dot the island are architectural gems in their own right, echoing the design of their larger domestic cousins. In Seal Harbor, parishioners raised \$2,500 to construct Saint Jude's Episcopal chapel (pictured next page), commissioning a design from William Ralph Emerson. Local residents and builders finished this miniature masterpiece in 1887. A natural stone foundation and the steeply pitched roof line, accented with eyebrow windows, nestle the chapel into its site. Shingle covered buttresses support the walls. The leafy 1911 Tiffany window behind the altar incorporates a design very similar to a 1906 tile design by Boston's Grueby Faience Co. Tiny St. Jude's is the epitome of "honest architecture:" a natural building, set in a natural environment of tall conifers and undisturbed nature.

In the June 1909 issue of Gustav Stickley's *The Craftsman*, an article appears highlighting the theories of New York architect Grosvenor Atterbury (1869–1956). Completed in 1902, Atterbury's Seal Harbor Congregational Church, with its locally-quarried stone first story and its upper shingled sanctuary, exemplifies his precept that a building's design should result from its surroundings. Originally named the "Abby Chapel" in honor of the wife of John D. Rockefeller, the church was maintained for many years by the Rockefeller family who summered in Seal Harbor, though it is now a private residence.

Park-itecture in the Same Vein

Rusticator Charles W. Eliot (1834–1926) was president of Harvard University, a Unitarian, and a friend of H. H. Richardson and of H. Langford



Right top The sanctuary of Saint Saviour's in Bar Harbor, as realized in 1885–86 by Boston architects Rotch and Tilden.

Right middle Seal Harbor Congregational Church (1902) by New York architect Grosvenor Atterbury exemplifies Atterbury's theory that a building's design should be the result of its surroundings. The church has been converted into a private home.

Right bottom At the Northeast Harbor Union Church (1887) by the Boston architectural firm of Peabody and Stearns, the stone foundation gives the illusion that the structure has grown out of the ledge it is built upon. Island architect Fred L. Savage worked on the design while apprenticing at Peabody and Stearns, and later rebuilt the sanctuary following a fire in 1913.



Warren, a founder of the school of architecture at Harvard, as well as of the Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston. Eliot was also a naturalist, who, with others, became concerned about development on the island as early as the 1880s. He helped lead an effort to collect donations of private land, which, in 1916, led to legislation setting aside the 35,000-acre tract that was later named Acadia National Park.

Meanwhile, in 1909, a revolt by the rusticators achieved a ban on automobiles, although in 1915 the law was overturned. Enter John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who in 1913 began to lay out a 45-mile system of roads on his property, some for automobiles, some exclusively for carriages. Never one to do things by halves, John D. hired landscape architects Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (1890–1957) and Beatrix Ferrand to assist with the project. Now part of Acadia National Park, the roads lead visitors to some of the most spectacular views and incorporate 17 original stone-faced bridges by various architects and designers. Two fabulous

Left top Saint Jude's Episcopal Church (1887) by Boston cottage architect William Ralph Emerson is a masterpiece of shingle architecture in Seal Harbor, Maine.

Left This 1911 window by Tiffany Studios for Saint Jude's helps bring nature into the sanctuary. The design is very similar to the 1906 tile design by Addison Le Boutillier for the Boston Arts and Crafts potter William H. Grueby.

TO LEARN MORE

GENERAL INFORMATION

Acadia National Park
www.NPS.gov/acad/

The Asticou Inn
Route 3
Northeast Harbor, ME
800-258-3373 or www.Asticou.com

Atlantean Inn
11 Atlantic Ave.
Bar Harbor, ME
800-722-6671 or
www.AtlanteanInn.com

St. Saviour's Church
41 Mt. Desert St.
Bar Harbor, ME
207-288-4215 or
www.EllsworthME.org/ssaviour

St. Jude's Church
Peabody Dr.
Seal Harbor, ME
207-276-5588 or www.MaryJude.org

TO READ

Lost Bar Harbor by G.W. Helfrich
and Gladys O'Neill (Down East
Books, 1982)

*Maine Cottages: Fred L. Savage and the
Architecture of Mount Desert* by John
M. Bryan (Princeton Architectural
Press, 2005)

*Revisiting Seal Harbor and Acadia
National Park* by Lydia Vandenberg
and Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr.
(Arcadia Publishing, 1997)

*Architecture and the Arts and Crafts
Movement in Boston: Harvard's
H. Langford Warren* by Maureen
Meister (University Press of New
England, 2003)

French Gothic style.
Grosvenor Atterbury
guard access to the
today are popular
and horseback riding
system through the
trains, lakes, bridges
remains unsurpassed.

In 1947, a developer
Mount Desert, took
sixty summer cottages
some 17,000 acres
many of the summer
declined as the fashions
them felt the effects
and two world wars
suffered the fate of
In Northeast Harbor
continue to enjoy
Savage's second
Inn (1900, pictured
cottages, including
home, Atlantean Inn
B's—a development
save the island's
21st-century rustic

Mark E. Weaver
with the U.S. Coast
on Arts and Crafts
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to thank the residents
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Father Jonathan
Saint Saviour's Ep
William Bigelow
Northeast Harbor

Right top Jordan
one of two Acadia
by architect Gros
Gothic style.

Right The Stan
original stone-fa
Park that divide

French Gothic gate houses (1931–32) by Grosvenor Atterbury were constructed to guard access to the carriage roads, which today are popular for walking, biking, and horseback riding. The resulting road system through the fairyland of mountains, lakes, bridges, and gate houses remains unsurpassed anywhere.

In 1947, a devastating fire swept across Mount Desert, taking with it more than sixty summer cottages and burning some 17,000 acres. As in Newport, RI, many of the summer homes had already declined as the families that owned them felt the effects of the Depression and two world wars. Not a few cottages suffered the fate of the wrecking ball. In Northeast Harbor, however, visitors continue to enjoy the hospitality of Savage's second version of the Asticou Inn (1900, pictured page 58), and some cottages, including Fred Savage's own home, Atlantean, have become B-and-B's—a development that has helped to save the island's architectural charm for 21st-century rusticators.

Mark E. Weaver is the principal trombonist with the U.S. Coast Guard Band. He writes on Arts and Crafts architecture for *Style 1900*, and was recently elected a member of the board of the Craftsman Farms Foundation. He wishes to thank the residents of Mount Desert Island who welcomed him to their homes and sanctuaries, especially his hosts at the Atlantean Inn for supplying a comfortable oasis after each day of trekking. He is grateful to Robert Pyle and Tina Hawes of the Northeast Harbor Library for their kind assistance; Mary Hodge of the W. Gouldsboro Historical Society; Father William Wood of the Parish of St. Mary's and St. Jude's; Father Jonathan Appleyard and Bill Scott of Saint Saviour's Episcopal Church; Reverend William Bigelow, of the Union Church of Northeast Harbor; and Rick Savage.

Right top Jordan Pond Gate House (1931) is one of two Acadia National Park gate houses by architect Grosvenor Atterbury in the French Gothic style.

Right The Stanley Brook Bridge is one of 17 original stone-faced bridges in Acadia National Park that divides the carriage and auto roads.

