

# THE ARTS & CRAFTS MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
COLORADO ARTS & CRAFTS SOCIETY

[www.coloarts-crafts.org](http://www.coloarts-crafts.org)

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SUMMER 2009



*The Ponderosa Lodge was the summer home of Alice Bemis Taylor, Colorado's "Lady Bountiful." This is the southern entrance which looks over a meadow toward Pikes' Peak. —Photo: La Foret*

## Day Trip to La Foret Planned for Saturday, September 26,

If you have never seen the lodge at La Foret in the Black Forest just north of Colorado Springs, our fall Day Trip in September will give you an excellent chance to enjoy one of Colorado's hidden treasures.

Built in 1928, La Foret's "Ponderosa" is an excellent representation of the master craftsmanship of prominent Denver architect Jules Jacques Benois Benedict. Designed in his "Colorado Alpine" or Rustic style, the 1928 building originally served as the summer home of Alice Bemis Taylor, founder of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, the Colorado Springs Day Nursery and supporter of Colorado College as well as many other city institutions. The log lodge has a soaring cathedral ceiling, eye-catching wood-burning fireplace, and original wrought-iron light fixtures in the main room constructed of custom hammered iron featuring various western and nature motifs. Balconies overlook both sides of the main room supported by beams carved with animal heads. Ponderosa pine lumber cut from the western slope of Pike's Peak was used in the lodge's construction. The elaborate fireplace and outstanding staircase in the main hall form signature elements of Benedict's design. The southeast-facing door of the lodge looks down a long meadow leading to a fantastic view of Pike's Peak.

When Alice's husband passed away prior to the completion of La Foret, she commissioned the Taylor Memorial Chapel dedicated to his memory. A gem in the Spanish mission style designed by John Gaw Meem, designer of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center and La Fonda Hotel in Santa Fe, New Mexico, the Chapel contains interior artwork by Eugenie Shonnard. Shonnard studied with the Art Nouveau master Alphonse Mucha, at the Art Students League with James Earle Fraser, one of the leading sculptors of Western motifs in the country, in Paris with Auguste Rodin and Emile Bourdelle, two of the greatest French sculptors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

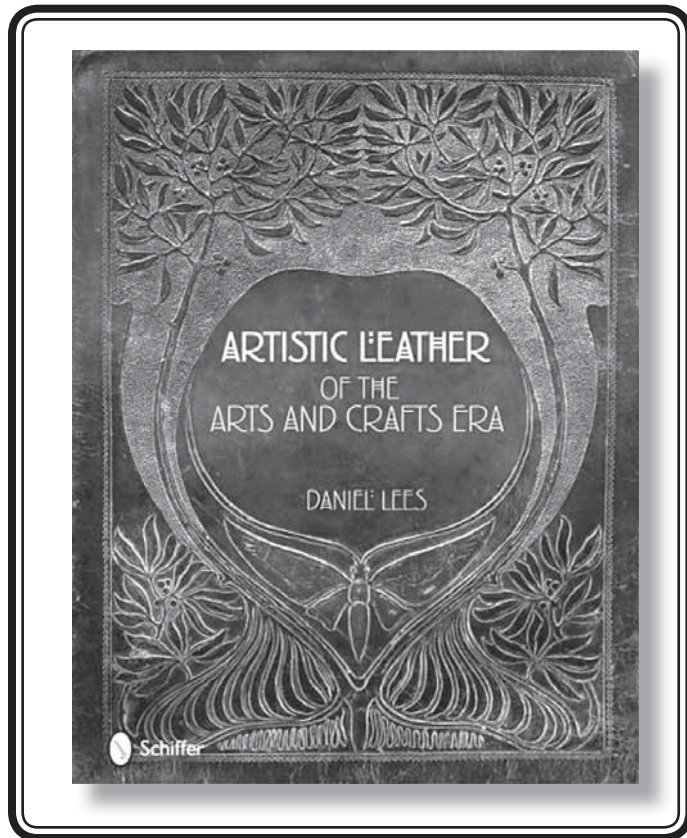
She specialized in human figurative sculpture and was well known for her sculpture of Brittany peasants and Pueblo Indians as well as animals. Her work is found in public collections across the United States and in the Luxembourg Palace and the Jardin des Plantes in Paris. Shonnard said, "sculpture is the 'flower of architecture' and I'll not be content until sculpture and architecture are allied."

We are also planning a short side-trip that day to Palmer Lake to view the Katrina Murat cottage. Countess Katrina Murat, was one of Colorado's most famous pioneer women, maker of the first U.S. Flag in Colorado. The Countess got her title through her husband, a French nobleman who was a great-nephew of Napoleon. In 1887, at the age of 63, she moved to Palmer Lake and lived in the little cottage for 23 years.

Save the date on your calendar and we will send out a card with more details and a map in early September. Watch for it.



*The Taylor Memorial Chapel as it looked in 1929. —Photo: La Foret*



## First Book On A&C Leatherwork To Come Out In Early Fall 2009

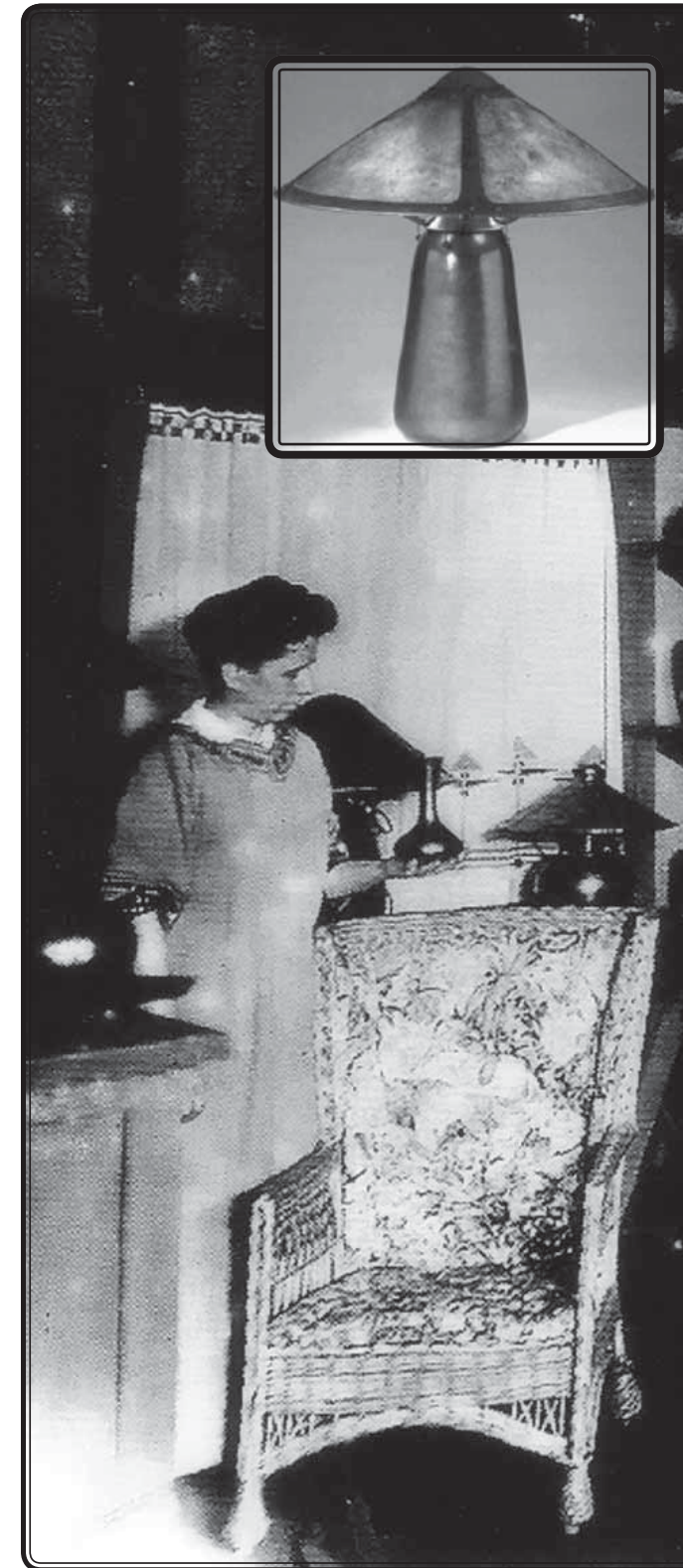
**Artistic Leather of the Arts and Crafts Era**  
by Daniel Lees

\$69.99, hardcover, 8.5x11 in., 272 pp.,  
Available September 2009, ISBN:978-076-4-33371-2

The rich beauty and craftsmanship of leather objects dating from 1900-1929 is captured here in 540 beautiful color photos. These items include fine leather accessories, such as billfolds, blotters, bookends boxes, cigar cases, document cases, glove cases, mats napkin rings, paperweights, purses, and wastebaskets. They were made to enhance American interiors with Stickley furniture, Van Erp lamps, and Roycroft hammered copper vessels. Historical information features individual artists and commercial firms includes Roycroft, Newcomb College, and Elizabeth Eaton Burton. German design influence that became known as "Buffalo Nouveau" is included. This is an essential guide to the hand-tooled craftsmanship of this bygone era. *(from publisher's catalog)*

Schiffer Publishing, 4880 Lower Valley Rd., Atglen, PA 19310. [www.schifferbooks.com](http://www.schifferbooks.com)

## D'Arcy Gaw: Designer for Dirk Van Erp



A rare photo of D'Arcy Gaw, c. 1910, around the time she was beginning to work with Dirk Van Erp. The inset shows a typical lamp made by the studio which bears the joint stamp of D'Arcy Gaw and Van Erp on its base.

Elizabeth Eleanor D'Arcy Gaw was born in Quebec, Canada in 1868. By age 12, in 1880, she was living in Lake County Colorado. Her father, Henry W. Gaw was a brewer, born in Ireland. He moved his family from the Montreal area to Idaho Springs, Colorado, where he bought a brewery around 1876. They subsequently moved to Leadville where, by 1890, The Gaw Brewery was the largest brewery in the area.

He and his wife had one son, Henry S., and three daughters: Mary, born about 1862-3, Clara, born in 1870 and the youngest, Elizabeth Ellen D'Arcy, in 1868. After attending local Leadville schools her father, recognizing her talents, sent her to attend the famous Chicago Art Institute from about 1892 to 1903-4. During her later years there she was also a teacher at the school. She also appears to have moved to Denver for a short period of time in 1899-1900 and taught art and design at one of Denver's high schools. Her designs were published in the school's magazine and in national journals including *International Studio*. During this early 20th Century time frame she started a business in the new field of interior design with two classmates at the Chicago Art Institute. The firm, called The Crafters, advertised in the Chicago-based *House Beautiful* magazine from 1901-1903. She then attended the School of the Guild of Handicraft under Charles Robert Ashbee in Chipping Campden, UK in the summer of 1904. Her family moved to San Jose, California after her father sold the brewery in Leadville to live with their daughter Mary by 1910.

Eleanor moved to California at this time and formed a partnership with Dirk Van Erp in Oakland, California. This short-lived enterprise lasted from 1909-1910. She was the both the designer and metalworker. Her copper and mica lamp designs were what made the Van Erp Studios famous. They are all jointly signed by D'Arcy Gaw and Dirk Van Erp. She worked with architects in the Bay area and later in Santa Barbara with her friend Lillian Palmer (another famous Arts and Crafts lamp designer) from the late teens through the 1940s. Little is yet known about her later life. She died in 1944 in Monterey, California at age 76.

*In future issues of the Messenger I will provide a series of short biographical introductions to the men and women who contributed to the history of the Arts and Crafts in Colorado. Among them: Oscar Wilde, Ann and Artus Van Briggie, Josephine Evans, The Boutwell Brothers, William Long, Ralph Hubbard and the members of the Art-Crafts Department of the Artist's Club of Denver. The Craftwood Shops, Denver Denura and Lonhuda and the Denver Terra Cotta Potteries will be examined along with the history of the Manual Arts Training School in Denver and some of its famous students such as Allan True. If you know of any artists, craftpersons and/or architects of this era who worked in the Craftsman/Bungalow style, please don't hesitate to contact me at [roycroft.r@comcast.net](mailto:roycroft.r@comcast.net). —Robert Rust*



*The Arts & Crafts Messenger*, the newsletter of the Colorado Arts & Crafts Society, is published quarterly for the society's members as part of their membership contribution. Send comments to the editor, Philip Normand, 2732 Williams Street, Denver, Colorado 80205, or e-mail to [phil01@normanddesign.com](mailto:phil01@normanddesign.com). All articles are © 2009 the Colorado Arts & Crafts Society, with rights reverting to the authors after publication.

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## The Happiest Man

The happiest life is that which most fully expresses the best there is in man and that therefore the aim of every man should be to give full and perfect expression to his better self. The cabinetmaker should express himself in his furniture, the blacksmith in his iron, the housewife in her home, the architect in his house, the statesman in his laws. Only the man who is mentally as well as physically free can expect to make life as full and rich as it ought to be. The man whose mind and actions are tied down by convention, by fashion, by thought of what others will say, is never free. —from *The Craftsman*

## Decorative Design

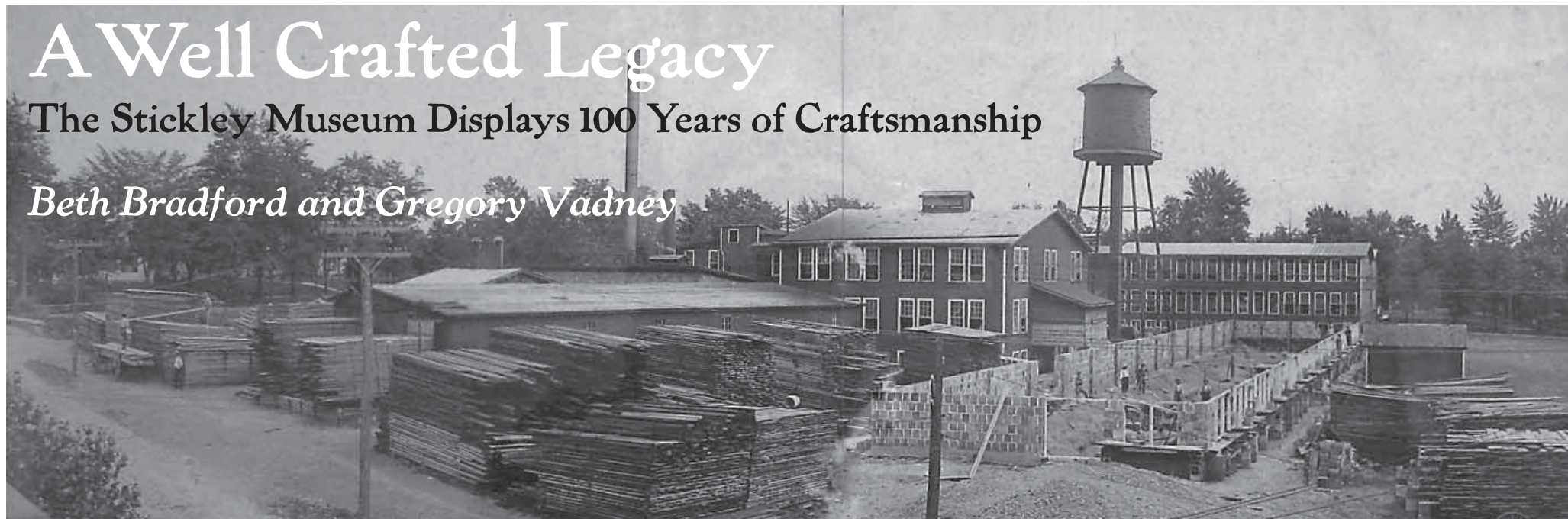
A beautiful decoration is one that makes the object to which it is applied more pleasing than if unadorned. Its various spaces and lines are harmonious and graceful. The design shapes itself to the object; if not filling the whole surface, it seems to cover it. The first principle to consider in a design is fitness to the exact purpose the design is to be used for. Naturalistic things are not designs and should not be used in that sense. A natural form is only a design when drawn symmetrically and made to fill some given space.

Indefinable quality of character, allied with simplicity and breadth of effect, are valuable points in decorative work. [...] A copy of a good historical ornament is far better than the ridiculous designs often created by people with kind intentions. —Grace Church Jones, 1905

# A Well Crafted Legacy

## The Stickley Museum Displays 100 Years of Craftsmanship

*Beth Bradford and Gregory Vadney*



The original L. & J.G. Stickley Furniture Company factory, circa 1912. —Stickley Museum photo

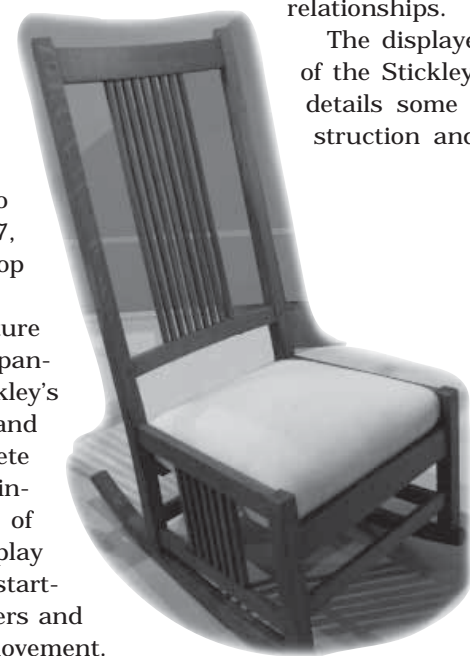


The Stickley exhibit guides you through the details of the furniture maker's history with placards and rare pieces of craftsmanship. —Photo: Beth Bradford

Why would I suggest a trip to the Fayetteville Free Library near Syracuse, New York? Not only is the building the former location of the L. & J.G. Stickley Furniture Factory but it is also the current home of The Stickley Museum and its exhibit “A Well Crafted Legacy,” spanning the 100-year history of Stickley.

A sawmill and furniture factory stood on this site in the 19th century and, following two major fires, the furniture factory was rebuilt in 1888. Various woodworking firms used the building until Leopold and J.G. Stickley purchased the building around 1900. The west wing addition occurred during an expansion in 1912. Alfred and Aminy Audi acquired the Stickley company in 1974. When Stickley manufacturing moved to a new factory in Manlius, NY in 1985, this building was used as showroom space. During a renovation in 1989, a fire again broke out — the evidence of which is still visible. The building became the Fayetteville Free Library in 2003 but the current owners intend to maintain the factory esthetic. In 2007, The Stickley Museum opened on the top floor of the library.

The exhibit displays over 150 furniture pieces, photographs and informational panels. As it spans the entire range of Stickley's production, it isn't limited to the Arts and Crafts movement, but the cycle is complete with the original, early Stickley pieces inspiring the modern interpretations of pieces currently in production. The display material gives a history of the company starting with a history of the Stickley brothers and their influence on the Arts and Crafts movement.



The five Stickley brothers, Gustav, Albert, Charles, Leopold and John George began their furniture making careers in their uncle's factory in Brandt, Pennsylvania around 1877. From 1883 to 1918, every brother had worked with each other brother in at least one venture; though at no time did all five work together. The history of the Stickley companies encompasses nine firms including Craftsman Workshops, L. & J.G. Stickley, United Crafts, Gustav Stickley Company, Stickley Brothers Furniture Company of Grand Rapids, Stickley & Simonds Company, Stickley & Brandt Chair Company, Stickley Brothers Chair Company and Stickley Associated Cabinetmakers. The brothers collaborated and competed with each other and one can only guess at the complications this added to their relationships.

The displayed furniture not only spans the history of the Stickley companies and Stickley style but also details some of the cabinetmaking techniques, construction and joinery that are used to produce the

*The Stickley Museum exhibit placards contain a wealth of background information, such as this about the Spindle Rocker design:*

Peter Hansen is well remembered for his Prairie School designs, especially the spindle chair, created while he was at Gustav Stickley's Craftsman Workshops and developed into the spindle settee when he moved to L. & J. G. Stickley. The vertical, skinny spindles seen on the back of this chair and sofa are characteristic of this school of design, often associated with architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

**Rocking Chair:** Gustav Stickley/Craftsman Workshops, Peter Hansen, designer, 1905-1915. Oak with muslin seat.

pieces and in some cases shows the antique piece from which the Stickley piece received its inspiration. The pieces are not limited to those produced by the L. & J.G. factory so the early history includes many of each brother's work. Gustav Stickley's own bedroom is a highlight of the collection. Some of the early pieces once owned by Barbara Streisand are also included. One of the final examples in the exhibit is a chair constructed especially for the Dalai Lama. It is wide enough for the cross-legged seated position and visitors are invited to sit in it that way.

The museum has items to study for those interested in history, furniture making and specifically the Art and Crafts movement. The web site associated with the museum is [www.stickleymuseum.com](http://www.stickleymuseum.com) and starting next month will have a special section called Curator's Corner filled with events, stories and special highlights. —Beth Bradford

### Approaching the Stickley Story: Gregory Vadney, Stickley Museum Director

Four years ago, I would have never thought I would be here. I knew Stickley simply as a high-end furniture manufacturer and, having grown up in the Albany, NY area, I knew Stickley was a New York company. In 2005, I was beginning my second year at the Cooperstown Graduate Program, a two-year museum studies graduate school collaboratively run by the State University of New York and the New York State Historical Association.



Cooperstown Graduate Program is one of the oldest museum studies programs in the country and is located in historic Cooperstown, NY. I had spent my first year taking advantage of the opportunities to intern at Fenimore Art Museum and the Baseball Hall of Fame, two top-tier museum organizations. In the summer of 2005, L. & J.G. Stickley approached the Cooperstown Graduate Program about a collaborative museum project, and I was tapped to lead it. We provided strategic advice to Stickley for a corporate museum start-up, as well as a draft exhibit script. By my graduation in May 2006, the museum was not yet a physical reality. It was then that Stickley hired me full time as its first museum director.

When I started working at Stickley, I was still a neophyte in the Arts and Crafts world. But the Stickley corporation archives, diligently collected by Stickley Corporate Historian Mike Danial, gave me unequalled access to our unique history. Old design drawings, advertising, and employee records give us a vivid picture of the Stickley companies and the people who were responsible for these American treasures. So when I was putting together the museum's inaugural exhibit, “A Well Crafted Legacy,” I wanted to evoke the industrial background of Stickley. I wanted the exhibit to show the popular, if mundane, furniture accompanying the more breathtaking, rare objects. Our story is about the endurance of the company as well as the artistic character of our furniture. When an art museum produces an exhibit on Stickley, it often centers on the virtuosity of each individual piece of furniture. And that's fine for an art museum. But I felt it was important for our visitor to know that Gustav Stickley was not like Rohlfs, or F.L. Wright, or Morris, or Charles and Henry Green — he did not make one-off furniture. He was a businessman and factory owner and was producing furniture for sale. His brothers Leopold, John George, Charles and Albert

—continued on page 6

were producing furniture for a buying public, and running factories full of craftspeople, designers, office staff, shipping personnel, and janitors. Stickley isn't a person, or a piece of furniture; it's a collection of tens of thousands of people over the past century — the makers, the retailers, the homeowners — who have a shared love for scrupulous craftsmanship and inventive design.

It was also important to exhibit more than Arts and Crafts furnishings. Of course that is what Stickley is internationally recognized for, but it does not encapsulate the company's total story. From about 1880 up to today there has been a company with the name "Stickley." During that time, Stickley made Arts and Crafts furniture from 1900 to 1922, and began again in 1989 through present — only one third the lifetime of the company. We stress the continuity of construction methods through the years, but also recognize that the majority of Stickley history is not set within the Arts and Crafts. This can be somewhat surprising to those for whom Stickley is synonymous with "Mission" but it also allows us to show off a more comprehensive collection of Stickley furniture than can be found in any other museum.

The museum opened to the public in April 2007, and has since hosted visitors from nearly all fifty states, Canadian Provinces and numerous foreign countries. The museum is owned and operated by L. & J.G. Stickley, Inc.. We are open to the public, conduct private tours, host special events, and provide corporate education for our network authorized dealers. —Gregory Vadney

## Fayetteville Library Opens Cafe



Artist's rendering of the new Cafe 300 in the Fayetteville Free Library. Complete with Stickley furniture! —from Syracuse.com East Neighbors blog

The Fayetteville Free Library opened its new within-the-library coffee and snack shop, Cafe 300, on July 18.

Located in the reading room, it has seating for 30 people. The cafe has been in the works since 2001, and is named after the library's location at 300 Orchard St.

Along with a performance by the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet, opening ceremonies included a presentation in The Stickley Museum, on the library's top floor, where Stickley-/Audi historian and master craftsman Mike Daniel demonstrated how to make fine furniture.

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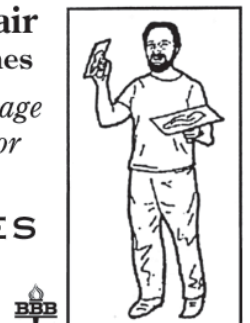
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