

SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIANS

NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIANS

VOLUME 28, NUMBER 2

Fall 2025

Fall 2025 Tour Will Take NCCSAH Members to California's Premier Wine Country

The NCCSAH has organized a great tour of the rich architectural heritage of the City of Napa and historic wineries north of Napa in the area of St Helena (see itinerary, page 10). On Tuesday, October 21st we will begin the tour in the Fuller Park/Napa Abajo neighborhood (1870s-1890s), a National Register historic district, where we will have a catered picnic lunch in historic Fuller Park (1905-06).

The tour of Downtown Napa includes the Historic Napa County Courthouse (1878, Newsom Brothers) and the 1937 Art Deco Uptown Theatre. The October 22nd tour (by bus) in the St Helena area will include the Beringer Winery Historic District (the Rhine House (1883-84), the Old Winery and Wine Caves); the 1888-89 Greystone Cellars (now the Culinary Institute of America), one of the largest stone wineries in the world; and Hall Wines (Signum Architecture, 2013), a stunning winery designed around an amazing contemporary art collection. The tour both days will involve extensive walking and standing. Tour leaders will be Kara Brunzell, morning; Christine French, afternoon.



Greystone Cellars. Photo: CIA

Registration:

The cost, including tour fees and two lunches: \$ 270 for members, \$300 for non-members (includes \$30 annual membership dues). Send your check made out to "NCCSAH" to Ward Hill, 3124 Octavia Street #102, San Francisco, CA 94123. Please include your name, *email* (very important!), and telephone number.

Transportation & Lodging:

A tour bus will take us to the St. Helena area from Napa on October 22. The city of Napa has many beautiful bed and breakfast inns and upscale downtown hotels. A budget alternative is the Riverpoint Resort, which offers cute cottages near Downtown Napa (www.riverpointresort.com). **—Tour is sold out, see p. 11.**

Two Architects and a Builder Who Shaped Historic Napa

Two architects and a builder were among the most important in shaping the built environment of the city of Napa and the Napa Valley.

Luther Turton, active from 1888 to 1920, designed in multiple styles of the era. William Corlett, as well as covering much of the same period, brought Napa into the Art Deco era of the 1930s. Marble and granite contractor, James Newman, worked on these architects' projects with a career ranging from the 1870s into the 1930s.

Luther Turton (1862-1925) Napa's most prominent and prolific architect was Luther M. Turton, who designed residential and commercial buildings in a variety of architectural styles for Napa's leading citizens. Turton was born in Nebraska and

moved to Napa with his family at the age of fourteen. He graduated from Napa Collegiate Institute in 1882 with a master's degree. After working briefly for McDougal & Sons in San Francisco, Turton opened his own office in Napa in 1887.



In his work, concentrated in the city of Napa and Napa Valley, Turton designed buildings in all the architectural styles popular in his time, including Queen Anne, Classical Revival, Craftsman, Prairie, Shingle, Mission Revival and Gothic Revival. As Dave Weinstein observed (*Signature Architects of the San Francisco Bay Area*), his work "straddles the extravagant medievalism of the late 19th century and the quieter classicism of the early 20th century." Some of his finest work is in the Prairie style, such as the Ewer House (1913).

Since Turton was so versatile and his designs inspired other local contractors and architects, his work is hard to categorize, and his buildings are sometimes difficult to identify. Although Turton is not widely known today outside Napa, he was recognized at the time of his death as one of Napa

Valley's foremost architects. Turton's truest fans live in the homes he designed. He was known for his attention to detail, the feeling of spaciousness in the homes he designed, and high quality construction.

Highlights of Luther Turton's portfolio that are included in the NCCSAH tour:

Semorile Building, 975 First Street (1888)

Winship Building, 948 Main Street (1888)

Goodman Library, 1219 First Street (1901)

Napa Register Building, 1202 First Street (1905)

Squier House, 1801 Oak Street (1905)

First United Methodist Church, 601 Randolph St. (1916)

—continued on page 4



Goodman Library, Napa. Luther Turton, architect
Photo: California Preservation Foundation
Photo col. one: Luther Turton. napahistory.org

Master San Francisco Architect Left His Mark on Napa



Cedar Gables Inn, Ernest Coxhead architecture.arthistoryresearch.net

Ernest Coxhead (1863-1933) designed only one building in Napa, a residence for E. Wiler Churchill, now a bed & breakfast called Cedar Gables Inn. Coxhead was one of the most important Bay Area architects of the late 19th-early 20th centuries, and the design of the house is unusual.

Although there is no documentation that Coxhead was the architect for this residence, it is very similar to two other buildings he designed, including his own home in San Mateo and the Greenleaf house in Alameda (currently extensively modified). In addition, the idiosyncrasies of the design all point to the conclusion that this is indeed a Coxhead work.



The exact date is unknown, but the deed dates from 1891, and the house was probably built soon after. Modifications were later made to this house.

The Churchill House is a picturesque and somewhat mannered contribution to the Shingle Style, with a roof designed to look like thatch. The exterior is a combination of wood shingles over brick, with a heavy two-story tower above the entry supported incongruously by four Tuscan columns.

Stairs from the low entry open up to the expansive main rooms. The living room and large landing above the entry flow together, connected by wide stairs and warm wood-paneled walls. Light pours in from a two-story bay window, reminiscent of a large English manor house. Wide openings to the dining room and study serve to include those rooms in the spatial flow. As Richard Longstreth observed, "The sophistication of this plan would seldom be matched until Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie house after the turn of the century." (*On The Edge of the World: Four Architects in San Francisco at the Turn of the Century*)

Photo: Ernest Coxhead
architecture.arthistoryresearch.net

—Betsy Yost

"Coxhead buildings appeal to both connoisseurs and casual passers-by with their sensuous, enveloping shingle roofs and amusingly incongruous details, like the immense medieval tower of the Churchill House (today the Cedar Gables Inn in Napa) delicately poised on four slender classical columns."

Dave Weinstein, special to the Chronicle, June 5, 2004.



Zinfandel Bridge (1912) over the Napa River, St. Helena.
James B. Newman. Photo: noehill.com

James B. Newman (1851-1933) was a marble and granite contractor who became one of Napa's premier builders in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Born in England, Newman was trained as a stone mason. He came to Napa in 1873, where, later that year, he and another local stone mason, H.W. Wing, also trained in England, started one of Napa's first quarries just east of the city. Newman's Napa City Marble Works was very successful and, by 1901, he employed nineteen stone cutters and masons. The business still operates where it first started, in 1878, on Silverado Trail next to Tulocay Cemetery, although nothing remains dating from this period.

Newman returned to England in about 1900 to study the latest designs in marble stone cutting and, upon his return, became the sole owner of the company, moving it to the downtown area (Third and Brown) in 1901. After Newman's death in 1929, Al Smith took over the company and moved it back to the Silverado Trail location.

Newman was known for bridge and building construction throughout the city and county, worked with Luther Turton on many projects and was the primary stone cutter for the Tulocay Cemetery.

Founded in 1858 on a lovely rocky hill east of town donated by Cayetano Juárez, the cemetery provided a major source of work for Napa City Marble Works.

At one time, the cemetery was entirely surrounded by stone walls built by Newman & Wong. The family that now owns it estimates that over 90% of the headstones and monuments were made by the business over the years.

Some of Newman's other important projects include *Napa State Asylum for the Insane* (1873-1875), *Goodman Library* (1901)—included on tour, *St. Helena High School*, *Sonoma City Hall*, *Zinfandel Bridge near St. Helena* (1912) *Tulocay Cemetery walls and headstones*.

William Corlett (1856-1937) was co-owner with his brother of the Enterprise Planing Mills on Third Street, the largest in Napa County. He trained as an architect, and also served on the Napa City Council. His son and his grandson also became architects in the region. Corlett designed a number of prominent buildings in Napa, and was especially influenced by the Shingle style and Frank Lloyd Wright's Oak Park Prairie-style designs. One of his most important buildings is the Franklin Station Post Office, in the Art Deco style.



Some of Corlett's better known works that are included in the NCCSAH tour:

E. Manasse House, 433 Brown Street (1886)

Migliavacca Mansion, 1475 Fourth Street (1893)

Fagiani Building, 813 Main Street (1908)

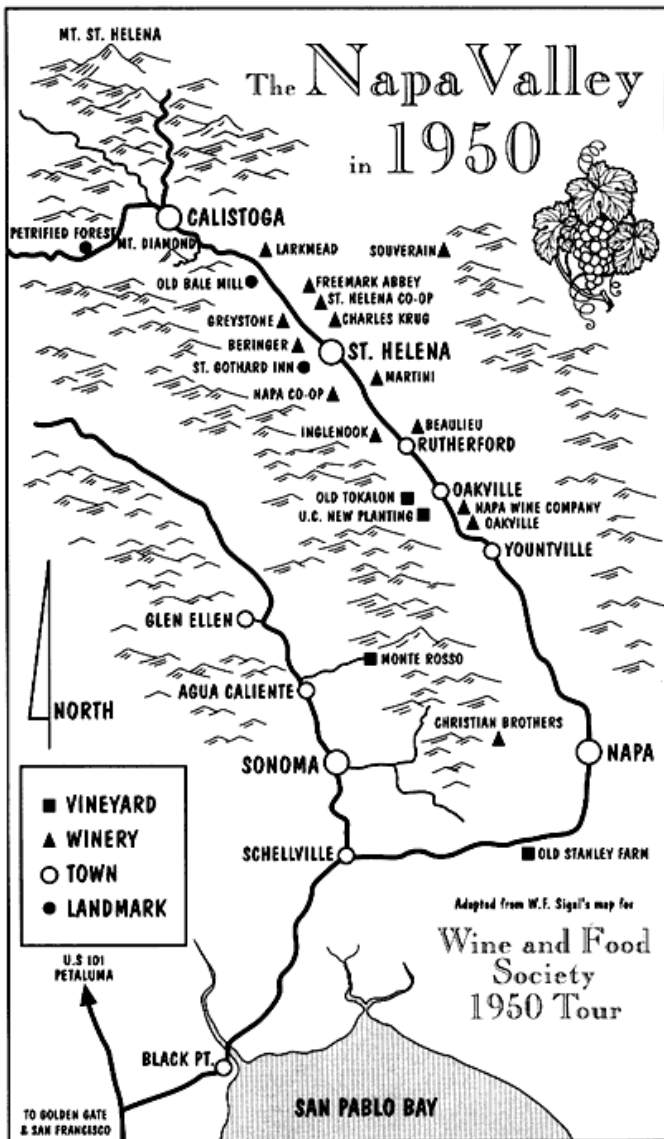
Corlett's own residence, 507 Jefferson Street
(1908-1910)

Alexandria Hotel, 840-844 Brown Street (1910)

Franklin Station Post Office, 1351 Second Street
(1932-33)

Portrait of William Corlett, c. 1910. *University of California Blue and Gold Yearbook*, 1910. pcad.lib.washington.edu

—Betsy Yost



This map shows 14 wineries in the Napa Valley in 1950. Today there are some 400. Cartography by Dino Gay, 1996

Other Important Napa Architects

Numerous other local and Bay Area architects worked in Victorian-era Napa, including:

Ira Gilchrist
 William Henry Weeks
 The Newsom Brothers →
 Wright & Sanders
 John Marquis.



Alexandria Hotel, Napa (1910). Builder: William Corlett. Photo: National Register of Historic Places



Franklin Station Post Office, Napa (1932-33) Builder: William Corlett. Photo: National Register Of Historic Places



Napa Valley Opera House. Samuel and Joseph Newsom (1878) Photo: National Register of Historic Places.

Introducing Newest Addition to the NCCSAH Board

Betsy Yost, AIA, is a recent addition to the Board of NCCSAH. Betsy retired after being a partner in the Oakland-based architecture firm of Pyatok Architects. She specialized in multifamily housing, building rehabilitation and reuse projects. Her historic projects included the Al-tenheim Affordable Senior Housing in Oakland, and the Bowles Hall Residential Student Housing at UC Berkeley. In addition, art and architectural history have always been her passions.

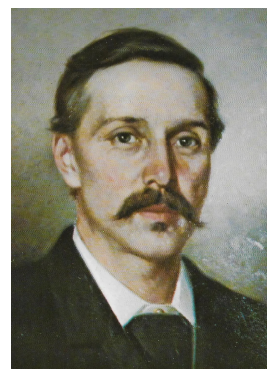


Our thanks to Betsy for contributing the articles on architects and builders who shaped Napa. She reports that for these items she drew from various sources including National Register of Historic Places Registration Forms, the City of Napa website, the Napa County Historical Society website and Wikipedia, as well as two sources attributed in the articles. We are grateful also for Betsy's invaluable help in organizing the Napa tour.

Robert Louis Stevenson in the Napa Valley

—*Scottish novelist, Robert Louis Stevenson (1850 - 1894), honeymooned with his young bride, Fanny, in the Napa Valley the summer of 1880. He wrote an account of their time there in a work published under the title The Silverado Squatters, from which the following text is taken.*

Wine in California is still in the experimental stage; and when you taste a vintage, grave economical questions are involved. The beginning of vine-planting is like the beginning of mining for the precious metals: the wine-grower also 'prospects.' One corner of land after another is tried with one kind of grape after another. This is a failure; that is better; a third best. So, bit by bit, they grope about for their Clos Vougeot and Lafite. Those lodes and pockets of earth, more precious than the precious ores, that yield inimitable fragrance and soft fire; whose virtuous Bonanzas, where the soil has sublimated under sun and stars to something finer, and the wine is bottled poetry: these still lie undiscovered; chaparral conceals, thicket embowers them; the miner chips the rock and wanders farther, and the grizzly muses undisturbed. But there they bide their hour, awaiting their Columbus; and nature nurses and prepares them. The smack of Californian earth shall linger on the palate of your grandson.



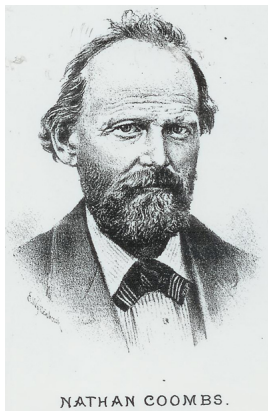
—*Robert Louis Stevenson, The Silverado Squatters
Portrait by Ernest Narjoy, 1884*



Monument marking site of cabin on Mt. Saint Helena, where Stevenson and his bride honeymooned. ordinaryphilosophy.com
Posted by Amy M. Cools, 5/11/2017.

Napa's Founder Was a Bay Stater

Born in Bridgewater, Massachusetts, in 1825, Nathan Coombs soon traveled with his parents, first to Iowa (1833), then to Oregon (1841), and after just two years relocated, on his own, at 17 years of age, to the Russian River in California. A year or so later, flooding of the river drove him south to the Napa Valley (c.1846), where he became known—in the words of his obituary many years later, “as a youth of energy and uncommon good sense.”



By 1847, Coombs had obtained, surveyed and subdivided a tract of land that would become the city of Napa. In 1855, he was elected to the first of two terms in the State Assembly. “Possessed of a cool judgment, a silent tongue, and extraordinary acuteness, it is not to be wondered at that he became a man of great influence in his party.”

—Taken from obituary in the *Napa County Record*, December 28, 1877.

Illustration: Napa County Historical Society, napahistory.org

Gold-Rush Napa Was a Mini San Francisco

“During the Gold Rush years Napa also became a mini-version of San Francisco, i.e. a place for entertaining miners traveling from the gold country. The tourists stayed at the American Hotel erected at Main and Third Street in 1850 by Nathan Coombs and the Valley House across the street. Two more hotels went up in Napa in 1851. The hotels each had a saloon and many independent saloons opened nearby. The main entertainments were drinking, gambling and prostitutes.” —*Napa General Historic Context*, Basin Research Associates

Down on The Farm: NCCSAH Tours Stanford Campus



We wish to express our deepest gratitude to Stanford Professor emeritus (and vice president of our chapter) Paul Turner and Stanford Adjunct Professor Tom Beischer for leading the great Stanford University tours for the NCCSAH on May 24 and 31. We all appreciated their sharing with us their deep knowledge and insights about the architecture on the Stanford campus. The tours were a huge success with a total of 46 people signed up for the two dates. We also want to thank banquet manager Rocco Scodella and his restaurant serving staff for our fabulous lunches at the restaurant Tootsie's at the Cantor Art Center.

*Photo: view from Hoover Tower. Heather David.
Additional photographs illustrating the day's activities appear on the following page.*

Photo Gallery: Spring Tour of the Stanford Campus



1 Paul Turner speaking to group in the Main Quad. Photo: Ward Hill. 2 Tom Beischer at the Clark Center. 3 Tom expounding on the Clark Center. Photos 2-3: Jane Shabaker. 4 Tour approaches Chemistry Building. Photo: Heather David

Sam Brannan Develops Napa Valley Spa



Sam Brannan Cottage. Photo: Craig Baker. hmdb.org

Gold! Gold on the American River! These are the words Sam Brannan, with a bottle of gold dust in his hand, cried out on the streets of San Francisco, but not before he had stocked up on as many picks, shovels and pans as he could. He planned to mine the miners who would soon rush to California. Such foresight would characterize much of his life as a California pioneer and make him the state's first millionaire.

It was sheer chance that had taken Brannan to Yerba Buena, in 1846, when he led an expedition of Mormons from New York, around Cape Horn, in search of a land where they might be free from persecution. En route, on a stopover in Hawaii, Brannan learned that the United States would soon acquire California, the outcome of war with Mexico.

Thinking this might be their promised land, a change of course brought the band of Mormons to Yerba Buena. Their arrival on July 31, 1846, increased the village's population three-fold. Six months later, the village would become San Francisco. By 1849, the influx of gold-seekers would swamp the religious community and change the course of Brannan's life.

Brannan pursued lucrative projects in many parts of California, including the Napa Valley. He visit-

S.F. Heritage Seeks RFCP for Historic Property in the Haight



Photo: Alvis E. Hendley

On June 18, San Francisco Heritage announced a *Request for Concept Proposals* to revitalize the historic Doolan-Larson Residence and Storefronts at Haight and Ashbury.

The property, which Heritage received as a gift from long-time member and benefactor, the late Norm Larson, sits at the northwest corner of Haight and Ashbury. The two-story residential portion dates from 1903; the six street-level storefronts were added in 1907.

The site will be open for viewing on Thursdays, from 4 to 6 pm, throughout the fall.

For more information and to stay updated on the project visit www.haightandashbury.org

ed the hot springs at the northern end of the valley, in 1859, and planned a resort. He bought land there and founded the town of Calistoga (1861). He also built the Napa Valley Railroad (1864) to bring visitors to the hot springs. It is said that Brannan named the town with a garbled reference, welcoming visitors to the "Calistoga of Saraformia"—meaning to reference the New York spa—the Saratoga of California.

Napa Valley Tour Schedule

Tuesday October 21, 2025

9:30 - 10:00 am The tour meets at the Napa County Landmarks Office. Christine French, Executive Director of Napa County Landmarks, who has been a great help in planning this tour, will arrange to have coffee and refreshments available when we meet.

- 10:00 -10:30 am - Ms French and architectural historian Kara Brunzell will provide an overview of Napa Valley history supplemented with images on the big screen TV in the NCL office
- 10:30 -10:45 am - Bathroom Break & Set up with Tour Audio System
- 10:45 -11:00 am - Walk to the Napa/Abajo Fuller neighborhood ([see map for details](#))
- 11:00 -11:15 am - Churchill Manor house
- 11:20 -11:35 am - Cedar Gables house
- 11:35 am - Walk by other homes on tour map
- 12:30 -1:30 pm - Lunch at Fuller Park
- 1:30 - 3:30 pm - Tour of Downtown Napa ([see map for details](#))
- 3:30 - 4:00 pm - Return to Napa County Landmarks Office
 - First National Bank, 1916
 - 1878 Napa County Court-house (Newsom Brothers)
 - Art Deco Uptown Theater
 - 1874 Gothic First Presbyterian Church



Photo: visitnapavalley.com

Wednesday October 22nd

- 9:30 am - Meet at Napa County Landmarks, 1416 Brown Street to organize car pool.
- 10:00 - 10:30 am - travel to Beringer Winery
- 10:30 - 12 noon - Beringer tour of Rhine House, Old Winery and the Wine Caves. Wine reception and stroll in the gardens
- 12 noon - 12:15 - Travel to Tra Vigne
- 12:15 - 1:30 - Lunch at Tra Vigne
- 1:30 - 1:45 - Travel to CIA
- 1:45 - 3:15 - CIA tour
- 3:15 - 3:30 - Travel to Hall Wines
- 3:30 - 4:30 - Hall Wines Tour
- 4:30 - 5:00 - Bus back to Napa

Registration: Napa Valley Tour

[please print]

Name _____

Affiliation _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email address _____

Telephone number _____

Number of places on the tour: _____

_____ Members @ \$270 \$ _____

_____ Non-members @ \$300 \$ _____

Price for non-members includes one-year
NCCSAH membership

Total enclosed: \$ _____

Please make checks payable to NCCSAH and
mail to:

Ward Hill—Napa Valley Tour
3124 Octavia Street, #102
San Francisco, CA 94123

Events Calendar

San Francisco Heritage

Haas-Lilienthal House transformed into *Nightmare House on Franklin Street*. September 26-November 1
haas-lilienthalhouse.org

Filoli

Summer Nights. Wednesdays and Thursdays, 5 pm;
Sunset Hikes, 6-7:30 pm, through September 18,
2025. filoli.org

National Trust for Historic Preservation

PastForward National Preservation Conference.
September 16-18. Milwaukee & Livestream
<http://www.pastforwardconference.org/pastforward19/>

22nd Annual Architecture + the City Festival,

“San Francisco’s Legacy of Reinvention” September
4-26, 2025, presented by the Center for
Architecture + Design, in collaboration with AIA San
Francisco. Tours, lectures, exhibitions and more.
aiaf.org

Society for Industrial Archeology

Fall Tour East Tennessee - Knoxville, Tennessee.
September 25-27, 2025. sia-web.org

San Francisco Historical Society

Interactive Learning Center: City Lab for Kids
Opening January 2026.

DOCOMOMO

19th International Docomomo Conference. “Multiple
Moderns: Climate, Community, Creativity.”
March 17-22, 2026 in Los Angeles
docomomo-us.org/events

SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIANS

The mission of the NCCSAH is to promote the study and discussion of our region's architectural history and its related fields; visit significant works of architecture; and increase public awareness and appreciation of our historic built environment. Membership is open to anyone interested in architectural history and its related fields.

NCCCSAH Officers

President, Richard Brandi
Vice President, Paul Turner
Treasurer, Ward Hill
Secretary, Don Andreini
Betsy Yost

**Remember, you do not have to be
a member of the National SAH to
become a member of NCCSAH
Join or Renew Now!!**

Individual \$30.00

Make checks payable to NCCSAH

Please send your ideas or comments
concerning The Newsletter to:
Don Andreini
NCCSAH Newsletter Editor
nccsah@gmail.com

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Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians**
or to renew your membership return this form
and your dues check for \$30 made out to NCCSAH
to

Ward Hill
3124 Octavia Street, #102
San Francisco, CA 94123

Name _____

Affiliation _____

Occupation _____

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City, State, Zip _____

Cell Phone _____

Home Phone _____

E-mail address _____

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Membership Dues

Is your membership current?
At \$30 per year,
NCCSAH membership is still a great deal.
Please see the coupon above for details.

NCCSAH Web Site

To view back issues of the newsletter, go to
nccsah.org