



Tile Heritage Foundation

for research and preservation of ceramic surfaces

Founded in July 1987 Tile Heritage is celebrating its 32nd anniversary this year. Supporters like YOU... members, major contributors, industry sponsors, generous grantors... everyone... have made possible the *continued fulfillment* of the Foundation's mission to Document and Preserve tile history in the U.S., both past and present. THANK YOU!

E-News for Winter 2019

Here's What's Below

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo
Stands Tall in Long Beach, California

Massive Collection of Post-Depression
Tiles Preserved

Museum of Architectural Ceramics

Batchelder in Birmingham!

Mud Making Magic

Wanted:
Tilenuts with Cameras in Hand!



Since 1959 Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, the first European to have stood on California soil, has proudly adorned the soon to be demolished Port Authority Administration Building.

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo Stands Tall in Long Beach, California

Dedication and patience are the keys to preservation, and our congratulatory salute is extended to Long Beach Heritage and the Port Authority of Long Beach whose negotiations achieved what appeared several years ago to be a pipe dream, namely the careful removal, tile by tile, of the magnificent, historically important mural that had adorned the Port Authority Administration Building for nearly 60 years. The building itself had been scheduled for imminent demolition.

Brian Worley Art & Restoration of Claremont, California tackled the job. Work commenced on September 26, 2018 with the careful marking of every tile, numbering each row and lettering

Cabrillo Stands Tall...

each column consecutively, before the tiles were removed column by column.

Over 450 tiles, each measuring 14" x 28" and weighing between 20 and 30 pounds, were crated in numeric order for ease of re-installation once a site is selected. The entire project was completed in just over a month. Please take a minute to watch the youtube video of the entire process; it's miraculous!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-ypIMiwO2I>

The 18 x 74-foot mural was produced in 1959 at Gladding, McBean & Co., 2901 Los Feliz Blvd., Los Angeles under the direction of Sheridan Stanton. The ceramic masterpiece, depicting the growth of international trade in San Pablo Bay, was designed and painted by Paul Marciel Souza, a well-known Southern California artist.

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo is reputed to be the first European to have set foot on the California coast. Son of a ship builder, he spent much of his life at sea, sailing under the Spanish flag. After visiting what is today the Long Beach harbor in 1542, he sailed to Catalina Island where he died in early January of '43 at the age of 45.



Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo surrenders to temporary storage from his prestigious position at the Port Authority.
iPhoto by Sheila Menzies, Oct. 24, 2018.



Historic ceramic tile mural (18' x 74') produced at Gladding, McBean & Co., Los Angeles, California in 1959 was painted by Paul Marciel Souza under the direction of Sheridan Stanton, head of the art department at Gladding.

Photo courtesy Long Beach Press-Telegram.

Massive Collection of Post-Depression Tiles Preserved

by Andy Rosten

After 27 years as a general contractor repairing older homes in the Sacramento area, I decided to start selling my accumulation of vintage tiles as I'd found most of my sources had gone out of business and/or run out of supply. I soon realized my inventory was severely limited and that in order to become the premier source of these historic objects, I'd have to search for more material. I sought out used building supply firms and found Mortarless Building Supply in Los Angeles through the internet about 2 years ago. My first call shed little light on the extent of its inventory, and I concluded that I must visit the facility the next time I was in the LA area.



A small section of the yard we scavenged through at Mortarless Building Supply, Los Angeles. Photo by Andy Rosten.

A few months later I met Joe Ranieri, the gregarious owner, but due to limited time and his lack of organization, I was still unable to grasp exactly what Mortarless did or did not have other than it was the most historic tile I'd ever seen in one place. In June 2017 Joe informed me of his intent to retire and said "bring a truck and your money." After several trips with a U-haul truck, there was simply too little time to go through even 10% of the inventory before the property was sold on August 4, 2017 - with the remaining tile left behind.

Distressed by the thought of it going to a landfill, I located the new owner a few days later with the help of a title company and appealed to him to contact me before disposing of the remaining inventory. Finally in January 2018 we met and he agreed to my proposal to clean up the property in exchange for my right to procure whatever tile I could haul away. The task was daunting: loose tiles, many broken and chipped, scattered everywhere, aisles impossible

Tiles Preserved continues...

to walk through without stepping on material, boxes deteriorated and spilling, pallets disintegrating from termites and piled with loose tiles that fell like an avalanche with the slightest bump. In addition, there were numerous tires, an abandoned car, chairs & tables, automotive parts and even 55 gallon drums of grease that had to be removed. For six months I made biweekly 400-mile trips with 5 helpers, working 10-hour days and staying in local hotels. The work was not unlike an archeological site with daily surprises.

The vast majority of the tile is from Aztec, Gladding, McBean, Pomona, Huntington, B&W, Mosaic, Redondo, PT&P, AO, and Dal, but there are specimens from over 70 manufacturers, some of them obscure such as Ace, Angelino, Balka, Columbine, Coorsite, Doric, Downey, Golco, Hoffman, Marshall, Santa Anita, Stronghold and Superior. I also found a few specimens of Batchelder, Malibu, Old Bridge, Taylor, and Sant' Anna of Portugal, USET and even an original box of AET with the tiles still hand-wrapped in the August 1929 Los Angeles Herald stock market pages. In all I hauled no less than 60 tons of field & trim tiles some dating as early as the 1920s and a vast selection of standard and reeded box caps and "brick" caps.

Story continues on page 8



Helper Glen Caldwell poses while the driver examines the cargo. Photo by Andy Rosten.

Museum of Architectural Decorative Ceramics Saint-Petersburg, Russia



Saint-Petersburg, Russia hosted a major event on October 5th, 2018 . On the grounds of the Peter-and-Paul Fortress, the Museum of Architectural Decorative Ceramics was founded. It is the only museum of its scale in all of Europe. The exposition showcases the use of ceramics in interior and exterior Russia throughout the 17-20th centuries. More than 200 exhibits can be viewed in the museum. Included among them are tiled stoves, fireplaces, fragments of various buildings, icons and numerous other objects.

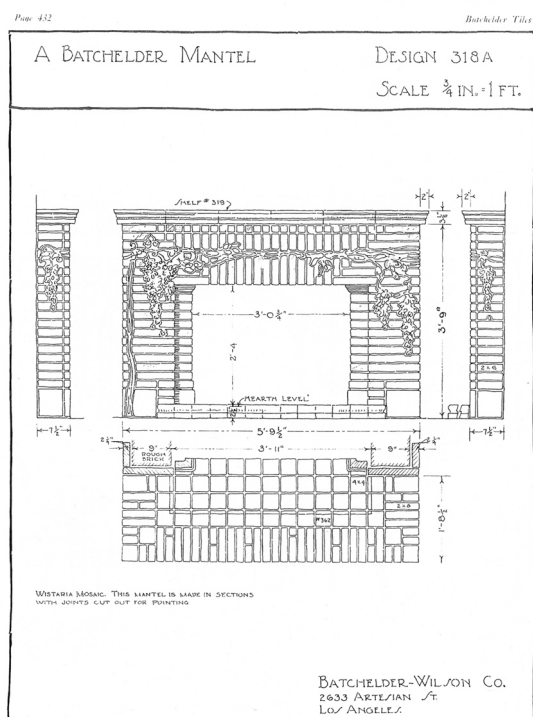
The International conference of Architectural Decorative Ceramics was tied to the opening of the museum. Thirty-five field professionals shared their reports with the public. **Ksenia Pirvits** (above) presented a report on **Pewabic Pottery** of Detroit, Michigan. Ksenia, a THF member, is a tile maker and owner of **Moshkoff Studios** in Saint-Petersburg.



Batchelder in Birmingham!



Batchelder Mantel No. 318A with its Wisteria design provides the centerpiece for this Tudor Revival home in Birmingham, Alabama.



Photos courtesy of the home owner who wrote to Tile Heritage hoping to have the fireplace mantel properly identified.

Batchelder-Wilson Co., Los Angeles
 "Batchelder Tiles: A Catalog of Mantel Designs"
 Third Edition, 1927

MUD MAKING MAGIC

“The Seasons”: Metuchen’s community mural

Some say that Public Art is the most dynamic form of art being made today. It automatically reaches a vast audience on a regular basis. Well-planned, it can enliven the area and become a genuine source of pride for a community.



Linda Vonderschmidt-LaStella assists young and older community members, creating handcrafted clay objects for “The Seasons” mural in Metuchen, New Jersey. Photos from the artist.

The four-year, multi-panel public art project undertaken by the small Central New Jersey community of Metuchen (pop. 13,000) is a perfect example. Five years ago the Metuchen Arts Council seized on the opportunity to invite local ceramic artist **Linda Vonderschmidt-LaStella**, a ceramic sculptor who creates large-scale ceramic murals, to lead the creation of a public art project, transforming a bland cinder-block storage building into an arts destination.

More than 300 people took advantage of getting their hands in clay to create their own original part of the mural.

Two primary ideas shaped Vonderschmidt-LaStella’s planning of the project: one, that from a distance, each panel needed to ‘read’ as something organic and beautiful; and two, that as many members of the community as possible would be invited to add their own creative elements. The artist recognized that it would be imperative for her to maintain a great deal of control of both the design and final glazing to make that happen.

Hence, Vonderschmidt-LaStella created a whole different approach to the creation of a large mural from what she uses when designing and fabricating one as a solo artist. Very specific design work and a ‘map’ of every individual tile and its shape needed to be created at the outset. Each individual tile had to be cut, numbered and wrapped in preparation for the community art sessions, which took place only on March weekends, both Saturday and Sunday, over the span of four years.

Those sessions were such fun! Taking place at the Metuchen Senior Center, a large, bright, airy room with easy access to places for clean up and immediate storage of the finished tiles, those sessions brought together individuals, families, generations, Girl Scout Troops, neighbors, and friends, all interested to “make their mark on Metuchen!” Since it was an Arts Council project, members of the Metuchen Arts Council volunteered each session as “Studio Assistants” to answer questions, assist, gather materials and tools, set up and clean up.

For some growing families, it became a March ritual to create their tile, and many parents

MUD MAKING MAGIC continues...

could proudly point to 3-year olds who had attended all four sessions!

So while the overall flow of the image was created by the artist, all who came to work on the mural could uniquely sculpt their own tile, and while each panel had its seasonal theme, each individual artist was free to impress and sculpt whatever he or she wished.

During the creation of the “Winter” panel, the project had the additional assistance of two Metuchen high school students as part of a mentoring program that inserted students into areas of professional interest within the larger community. Those two students were a great asset to the program, working along all the steps of the process, through not only the school year, but over the summer as well. They assisted with slabbing and cutting the tiles, with the community art sessions, loading and unloading multiple kilns, wrapping the tiles for transport, and even kiln care.

The lead artist not only identified the panel with its seasonal name but included in the design space to showcase how the town celebrated that season in a communal way: the Junebug ArtFest and outdoor movies in *Summer*, scarecrows on Main, gallery openings in *Autumn*, the Holiday Parade and House Tour in *Winter*. A pink pussy cap was slung impetuously over the edge of a sign since *Spring* was completed in 2017, a reminder that the town had sent 30 buses of marchers to DC earlier that year for the Women’s March.

The men from the Metuchen Department of Public Works were integral to the process, giving the building a new roof, new flashing, adding landscaping to protect the lower tiles, and finally repairing and painting the metal door. But even more directly, they prepped the walls to receive the tile and, with lots of assistance from the community, did the actual installation.

A festive dedication brought the making phase of the project to completion. However, the life of the murals continues to unfold as it is now a destination for walks on sunny days, for “drive-bys” with out-of-town relatives, and for all those who had a hand in the project or who are genuinely delighted that such color and artistry has arisen in town.



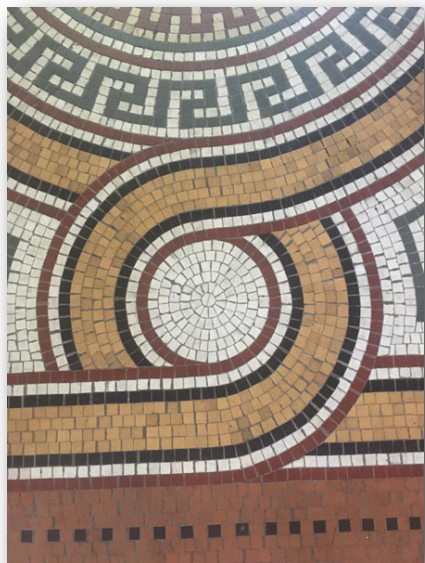
“The Seasons”: *Winter and Spring*



“The Seasons”: *Summer and Fall*

Wanted: Tilenuts with Cameras in Hand!

by Josh Blanc, Clay Squared to Infinity



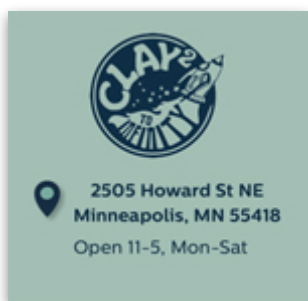
Ceramic mosaic floor.
Pleasant Home, Oak Park, Illinois.
Architect: George W. Maher, 1897.
Photos by Josh Blanc.

On a recent trip to Chicago I was searching for things to do, and I happened upon the Pleasant Home in Oak Park, which is one of the earliest and most distinguished examples of Prairie School Architecture. Designed in 1897 by noted architect George W. Maher, a contemporary of architects Joseph Lyman Silsbee, Frank Lloyd Wright and George Grant Elmslie, this 30-room architectural gem is a showcase of 19th century craftsmanship and artistry, with rich custom woodwork, extraordinary art glass windows, intricate wood-carvings and extraordinary tile work.

I have been to many historic house museums throughout the country. Some notables: Fonthill, Henry Mercer's home; the Glensheen Mansion in Duluth; Hearst Castle and the Adamson House on the California coast; among many more. In each one there is an abundance of historic tile, unusually great examples of unique tile designs and custom work. Most of the docents in the homes point out the tile but rarely have historical information to talk intelligently about the tile work. Tile Heritage Foundation

members, however, have always enjoyed identifying tiles and debating about the makers. There are hundreds of these historic house museums throughout the U.S. Tens of thousands visit these locations each year. THF would like to encourage our members and friends to identify the house museums near where you live or those you find while traveling and to document the sites as you tour them with photos of the tiled fireplaces, bathrooms, pools, verandas, kitchens etc. Email the pictures to Tile Heritage and post them with hashtags of #tileheritage and the house museum to get exposure. You will have enhanced the Tile Heritage photo archive and educated tile enthusiasts about these significant tile sites.

Thanks for your help!



Pleasant Home, Oak Park, Illinois.

Tiles Preserved continued from page 4

The work is not over as the tiles still need cleaning, sorting by manufacturer and inventorying. Some need mortar removal. I have learned so much about each manufacturer's tiles that I plan to write a reference book on post-Depression tile firms including brief historical information, identification of the backings, lug size/spacing and different profiles of trim pieces. I am also adding to my website sample boards/pieces showing the various colors and patterns made by each manufacturer. Eventually I hope to open a tile museum in my hometown of Sacramento that would serve as an educational tourist attraction. I would love to hear from others who can provide any historical information as well as any old catalogs, sample boards or photographs of tiles (front & back) or manufacturing plants that I am lacking.

I appeal to anyone who has suggestions on the best way to remove mortar from reclaimed tiles. We currently use an angle grinder which is laborious and somewhat destructive. We have been told tiles can be put in a kiln to loosen the mortar but do not know the specifics nor if it is different for porcelain tiles such as box caps.

It is a wonderful feeling to hear customers tell us how grateful they are to have found us after having searched for weeks at several other tile suppliers and now are able to restore their vintage tile installations.

Andy Rosten, Vintage Tile

Visit: <https://vintagetile.weebly.com>



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of Hand Prints*

*for the Global Monumental Hand
Print Mural to be installed at TCNA!*

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