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# Authors on Architecture: Welter on Tremaine Houses

**SAH/SCC Zoom Lecture**

**Saturday, September 26, 2020, 1-2PM**

Join SAH/SCC on Zoom for a fascinating exploration of one family's involvement in a range of modern architecture and design projects. SAH/SCC Life Member Volker M. Welter shares from his book, *Tremaine Houses: One Family's Patronage of Domestic Architecture in Midcentury America* (Getty Publications, 2019).

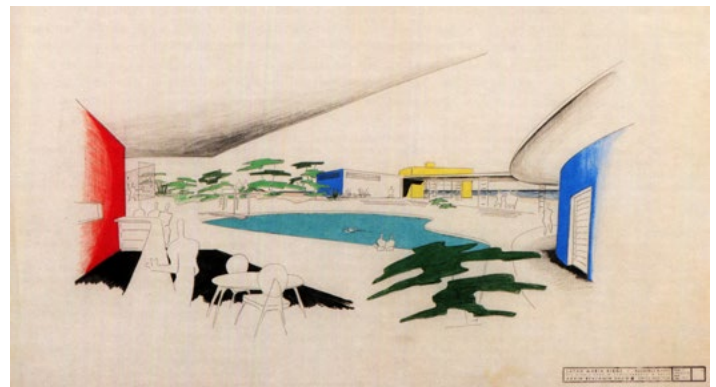


Tremaine pool and pool house in Montecito by Robert Garland, FAIA (1966).  
Photo: Julius Shulman © J. Paul Getty Trust

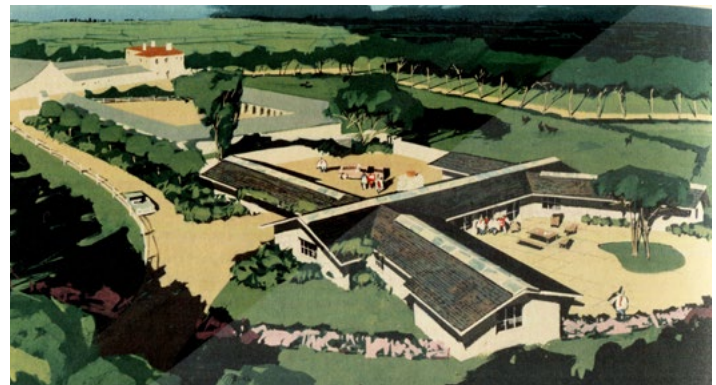
Two brothers, Burton G. Tremaine and Warren D. Tremaine—and their respective wives, Emily and Katharine—commissioned architects such as Richard Neutra, FAIA, and Oscar Niemeyer, Hon. FAIA, along with other noted practitioners, to design some 30 projects. Lavishly illustrated, this book offers the first peek into their architectural legacy. From the famed Tremaine Residence (Neutra, 1948) in Montecito, to the Meteor Crater Visitor Center (Phillip Johnson, FAIA, 1956) in Arizona, the family's motivations and ideas about architecture and art are explored by Welter.



Welter is a professor in the Department of the History of Art and Architecture at the University of California, Santa Barbara. A favorite lecturer of SAH/SCC, Welter will provide a charismatic and informative presentation.



Tremaine beach club near Montecito (not built) designed by Lulah Maria Riggs and Arvin B. Shaw III seen in perspectival view drawn by Shaw (c. 1947).  
Image: courtesy Lulah Maria Riggs papers, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara.



Proposed Tremaine-Alexander ranch house by Cliff May (1960).  
Image: courtesy Cliff May papers, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara

*Authors on Architecture: Welter on Tremaine—Saturday, September 26, 2020; 1-2PM; \$5; reservations required—see order form on Page 6, email [info@sahscc.org](mailto:info@sahscc.org), call 800.972.4722, or go to [www.sahscc.org](http://www.sahscc.org); Zoom connection information sent upon registration.*

# SAH/SCC President's Letter

With September upon us, the idea of "Back to School" in 2020 conjures mixed emotions. What used to be a rite of passage marking the end of carefree summer days in favor of the educational and social evolution of young people is met with emotions ranging from concern, to fear, to resignation by parents and teachers. And as of this writing, California has become one of the nation's hot spots for COVID-19.

News images of educators across the country attempting to fabricate outdoor classrooms to comply with best practices about social distancing and maximum ventilation evoke in this architectural historian a familiar vision: Corona Avenue Elementary School (Richard J. Neutra, FAIA, 1935) in Bell, CA.

At Corona, the architect was able to realize elements of his progressive school designs for the Ring Plan School project (c. 1926). Most notably, large expansive walls of glass/sliding doors were designed to open each classroom to an outdoor space. Learning could take place indoors, outdoors, or in some combination of the two. With portable desks in support of this idea, classrooms offered maximum seating flexibility and Southern Californian breezes.

The horrors of World War I as a catalyst for architects to seek a more utopian society through the built environment is a long-discussed element of

the modern movement. However, I have found that the connection between pervasive illness (cholera outbreaks, the Spanish Flu pandemic, tuberculosis) and the health and wellness concerns of early 20th-century modernists has been less precisely exhibited. Clearly, the ravages of war were not the only horror, as the ravages of disease also played a role.

A recent episode of NPR's "On The Media"—a show examining a far wider range of topics than its name implies—featured an [interview](#) with *Slate* reporter Vanessa Chang, who examined the work of Le Corbusier, FAIA, Adolph Loos, Alvar Alto, FAIA, and other modern masters in the light of how pandemics inherently change people's relationships to the built environment. Light, space, and ventilation offer more healthful environments for living or convalescence. The absence of ornament results in fewer nooks and crannies hiding dust and disease. Chang looked at how, undoubtedly, COVID-19 will shape new forms in architecture.

Perhaps the best outcome for difficult times is that they inspire people in all walks of life and all areas of study to ask new questions and attempt to answer them with a new lens. I urge some of you to take up this mantle and report back to us.

—Sian Winship



Corona Avenue Elementary School (1935) by Richard J. Neutra, FAIA.

Photo: Julius Shulman ©J. Paul Getty Trust

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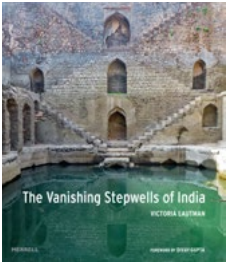
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# Authors on Architecture: Lautman on the Stepwells of India

**SAH/SCC Zoom Lecture**  
**Saturday, October 10, 2020, 1-2PM**

Tune in for a trip to India that is sure to be enlightening! The journalist Victoria Lautman first encountered stepwells three decades ago and now, a seasoned traveler to India, she has devoted several years to documenting these fascinating, but largely unknown, edifices. Her book, *The Vanishing Stepwells of India* (Merrell Publishers, 2017; released in paperback, 2020), assures they won't be forgotten.

Stepwells are ancient water stores and some of the most stunning architectural structures in India. Found below ground, stepwells are unique to India and date from around the 3rd century CE. They were built throughout the country, particularly in the arid western regions. Excavated several stories underground in order to reach the water table, these cavernous spaces not only provided water all year long but also fulfilled other functions, such as offering pilgrims and other travelers a respite from the heat and becoming places where villagers could socialize. Stepwell construction evolved so that, by the 11th century, the wells were amazingly complex feats of architecture and engineering.



Adi Kadi Vav in Junagadh, Gujarat. .  
Photo: courtesy Victoria Lautman

Of the thousands of stepwells that proliferated across India, most were abandoned as a result of modernization and the depletion of water tables. Often commissioned by royal or wealthy patrons, the wells vary greatly in scale, layout, materials, and shape. Those in what is now Gujarat state also served as subterranean Hindu temples with columned pavilions and elaborate stone carvings of deities. Islamic wells were generally less flamboyant, but incorporated arched side niches. Today, few stepwells are in use. The majority have been left to silt up, fill with



Chand Baori in Abhaneri, Rajasthan, c. 1800.  
Photo: courtesy Victoria Lautman

rubbish, and crumble into disrepair. Gradually, however, the Indian government and heritage organizations have come to recognize the need to preserve these architectural wonders. In 2014 India's best-known stepwell, the Rani ki Vav in Patan, northern Gujarat, became a UNESCO World Heritage site.

*Authors on Architecture: Lautman on Stepwells—Saturday, October 10, 2020; 1-2PM; \$5; reservations required—see order form on Page 6, email [info@sahscc.org](mailto:info@sahscc.org), call 800.972.4722, or go to [www.sahscc.org](http://www.sahscc.org); Zoom connection information sent upon registration.*



Rani ki Vav in Patan, Gujarat, c. 1063.  
Photo: courtesy Victoria Lautman

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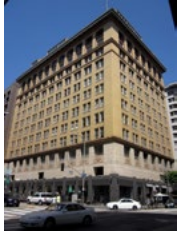
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# ICYMI: John Parkinson's Iconic Vision

## SAH/SCC Zoom Lecture

Saturday, October 17, 2020, 1-2PM

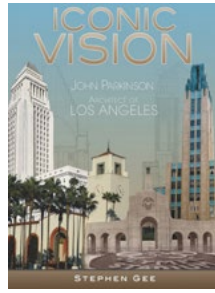
SAH/SCC re-visits architect John Parkinson's legacy with Stephen Gee, author of the book *Iconic Vision: John Parkinson, Architect of Los Angeles* (Angel City Press, 2013). Gee—a prolific writer about LA's architectural history—will share his research on this important, yet lesser known, contributor to our built environment.



The Beaux Arts-style Union Oil Building by Parkinson and Bergstrom (1911).

Although Parkinson is best known for his design of Los Angeles City Hall (Parkinson & Parkinson, with John C. Austin and Albert C. Martin, 1926-8) and Bullock's Wilshire (Parkinson & Parkinson, 1928), he designed dozens of important buildings in downtown Los Angeles. There are still several major intersections where all four (or nearly all) of the corner buildings were designed by this seminal figure.

Joined in practice by his son Donald to form Parkinson & Parkinson (during which time he was most prolific), he also had an earlier partnership with Edwin Bergstrom. After Parkinson's death in 1935, his son continued to carry on the firm's architectural traditions and name for 10 more years.



Author Stephen Gee



A Hugo Balin tile mural on the Art Deco Title Guarantee Building by Parkinson & Parkinson (1929-31).

When we first presented this program, a tour of Parkinson's work in Downtown LA was included. Go to Page 5 to order the four-color self-guided walking tour brochure, "John Parkinson, Downtown," to plan your own tour of the 26 buildings mapped out.

*John Parkinson's Iconic Vision*—October 17, 2020; 1-2PM; free; reservations required—email [info@sahscc.org](mailto:info@sahscc.org), call 800.972.4722, or go to [www.sahscc.org](http://www.sahscc.org); Zoom connection information sent upon registration.

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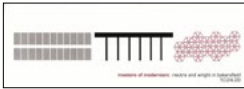
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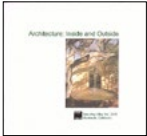
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**Masters of Modernism:** eight-page, two-color brochure featuring works of Richard Neutra and Frank Lloyd Wright in Bakersfield.



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**Architecture: Inside and Outside:** 5"x5" folded color brochure featuring Santa Barbara's Lotusland, Casa del Herrero, and Val Verde.



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**Irving Gill: Los Angeles:** 10-page booklet featuring photos and articles on Gill and three residential projects in LA.



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**Rodney Walker 3 30 90:** 12-page brochure featuring nine homes on five sites, as well as the architect's use of the three-foot module.



\_\_\_\_\_ \$4 each

**Greta Magnusson Grossman:** 3.5" x 8" 2-page color brochure featuring two residences by Greta Grossman.



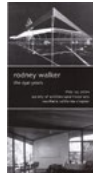
\_\_\_\_\_ at \$8 each

**Space and Learning:** eight-page, four-color brochure on the historical and contemporary legacy of LA school architecture, featuring projects by Richard Neutra, Thom Mayne, Rios Clementi Hale Studios, and others.



\_\_\_\_\_ at \$5 each

**John Parkinson, Downtown:** 11"x17", four-color brochure featuring a self-guided walking tour of Parkinson buildings in Downtown LA's historic core and beyond.



\_\_\_\_\_ at \$5 each

**Rodney Walker: The Ojai Years:** tri-fold, black-and-white brochure featuring Walker's important residences in Ojai, with pictures and article by historian David Mason.



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**Kesling Homes:** bi-fold, two-color brochure from the "Kesling Modern Structures" tour.



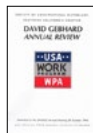
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**Union Station and MTA Transit Center:** bi-fold map for a self-guided walking tour including historical facts and photos.



\_\_\_\_\_ at \$10 each

**Modernism for the Masses:** tri-fold brochure with inserts of detailed floor plans of Eichler homes visited on the Orange County tour.



\_\_\_\_\_ at \$5 each

**David Gebhard Review:** essays on the Works Project Administration by Robert W. Winter, Orville O. Clarke, Jr., and Mitzi March Mogul.



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**The Historic and Modern Spirit of Ventura:** 20-page guide from Ventura tour.



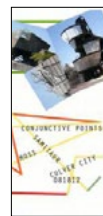
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**Killingsworth: A Master Plan for Learning:** 11"x17", four-color walking tour brochure of the Cal State Long Beach campus features history of master plan development by architect Edward A. Killingsworth, FAIA.



\_\_\_\_\_ at \$8 each

**Ray Kappe-Apotheosis:** eight-page brochure features five Kappe Houses from 1959 to 1966 in the Royal Woods development of the San Fernando Valley.



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**Conjunctive Points:** four-color, 11"x17" brochure featuring a 20-building walking tour of the Hayden Tract, designed by architect Eric Owen Moss and developed by Samitaur Constructs.



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SAH/SCC is a 501c 3 nonprofit organization dedicated to providing its members with opportunities to learn about and experience the rich architectural heritage of Southern California and beyond. Our volunteer board members create tours, lectures, travel tours, and other events that explore the ideas behind the architecture as well as the buildings that result from them. From modern to craftsman, from Spanish Colonial to contemporary, our programs are the best-kept secrets in Southern California!

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All event ticket sales are final. We are sorry, refunds cannot be accommodated.

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**Lautman on Stepwells—Saturday, October 10, 2020**

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## SAH National's Stand on Confederate Monuments

On June 19th ("Juneteenth"), the National organization of Society of Architectural Historians (SAH) issued a statement signed by the SAH Heritage Conservation Committee. Below are excerpts; the full statement can be read [here](#).

"The Society of Architectural Historians (SAH) supports and encourages the removal of Confederate monuments from public spaces. In its 80-year history, SAH has never before advocated for the direct removal of any historic resource, let alone listed monuments. As architectural historians committed to preserving significant elements of the built environment and cultural landscape, we have vigorously championed the preservation of difficult aspects of our nation's history such as Wounded Knee, Manzanar, and the Stonewall Inn. From those painful examples, we can gain perspectives about ourselves as Americans, and learn from our past mistakes. In contrast, Confederate monuments do not serve as catalysts for a cleansing public conversation, but rather express white supremacy and dominance, causing discomfort and distress to African-American citizens who utilize the public spaces these monuments occupy. Our inaction gives these monuments power. By leaving them in place, we allow the dead hand of the past to direct some Americans away from that which belongs to all of us. History has proven that progress is possible, but also that the persistent racial schism in our society will not be conquered without radical, sustained action. The removal of Confederate monuments is a necessary and important step in this process, and one that cannot wait any longer. ...

"Because scholarly consensus indicates that the original intent of monuments to the Confederacy was to reinforce racist ideals, a concept that should be abhorrent to all Americans, SAH supports and encourages the removal of Confederate monuments from public spaces. Their existence can no longer be justified based on aesthetics, as works of art or public sculpture. These monuments, especially the ones erected between the 1890s and the 1920s, are not so much objects of public art as proclamations of white supremacy rendered in granite and bronze. Their meaning was clearly understood both by those who erected them and by the Black community. ... Their presence is a reminder of a racist societal structure that led to a nation divided against itself, followed by an era of Reconstruction that began with the promise of equality but soon retreated to race-based social and economic disparity. Nearly sixty years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act—and 155 years after the end of the Civil War—we are still wrestling with these issues, and are left questioning why a nation founded on the principle of equality continues to fall so far short of that noble and essential ideal. ...

"As students of architectural history, we have been taught to look as objectively as possible at historic events, and to place them in context. When contextualized properly, symbols of oppression and societal evil can be understood in terms of what these objects meant to their creators as separate from what they might mean to us. Removing monuments that have stood for decades is decried by some as 'erasing history,' but we cannot change the events of the past. What changes is our understanding and our interpretation of these past events. People made choices to erect these monuments in public spaces, and people can decide to take them down. ..."

Adopted June 19, 2020, by SAH Heritage Conservation Committee.  
Chair: Bryan Clark Green, Ph.D., LEED AP BD+C. Members: Kenneth Breisch, Ph.D.; Jeffrey Cody, Ph.D.; Anthony Cohn, AIA; Phyllis Ellin; David Fixler, FAIA; Victoria Young, Ph.D.; Theodore H. Prudon, Ph.D., FAIA; Pauline Saliga; Deborah Slaton.