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Richard Upjohn and Richard Morris Hunt: The Evolution of Newport Domestic Architecture

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Senior Art History Honors Thesis
Professor Kathleen Curran
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Introduction

America’s largest and grandest home, the Biltmore (1890; figure 1), was commissioned by George Vanderbilt (1862-1914) to be built in Asheville, North Carolina. The house was designed by Richard Morris Hunt (1827-1895) and bears resemblance to three sixteenth century châteaux in the Loire Valley, France: Blois, Chenonceau, and Chambord. However, Biltmore was not the first of the Vanderbilt’s homes to replicate European designs and aesthetics from previous centuries. The most famous of these mansions were in Newport, and include Marble House (1888-1892; figure 2) and the Breakers (1893; figure 3), both designed by Hunt. Centuries after these homes were built in Newport, they continue to be synonymous with the wealth and decadence of Gilded Age Newport, and indeed, Gilded Age America.

Hunt’s Newport legacy was based upon his work for the Vanderbilts, but his Newport career, perhaps surprising, began years before his work for this prominent family. He designed cutting-edge, so-called Stick-Style homes in the 1870s, and these buildings demonstrated his ability to create homes based upon his clients needs and desires. Richard Upjohn (1802-1878), an English-born architect, was the first professional architect to design homes in Newport. With his designs, he laid the groundwork for the future of professionally designed homes in Newport, such as these by Hunt.

1978), a professor of art humanities at Columbia University. There is also a considerable amount of information about Upjohn in Judith Salisbury Hull’s Ph. D. thesis, *Richard Upjohn Professional Practice and Domestic Architecture*. There is much more information on Hunt in books by Paul Baker, *Richard Morris Hunt* and series of essays in Susan Stein’s *The Architecture of Richard Morris Hunt*. Both books were written in the 1980s and include information on Hunt’s background, works of architecture, and professional practice. Even though there are materials on Upjohn and Hunt’s Newport domestic architecture, there is not a book that specifically details Upjohn and Hunt’s works in Newport as a symbiotic relationship.

I decided to undertake the study of Upjohn’s and Hunt’s domestic architecture in Newport for several reasons. I grew up going to Narragansett, Rhode Island, in the summer and would occasionally go to Newport for the day. Seeing the cottages and the Newport Casino (1879; figure 4) always intrigued me. As a child, it was hard for me to understand why so many people would build houses that large and designed in various styles in Newport. I always thought about the original inhabitants of the houses. I knew little concerning the context of the cottages, but they were works of architecture I would always remember. Several years later during my sophomore spring, in my introduction to the history of architecture course, I briefly read about Hunt’s architecture. I finally felt that I was starting to understand the cottage architecture I was enamored with as a child.

When studying in Paris the following spring, I was exposed to the inspiration for several of Hunt’s designs. In one of my courses, Châteaux, we visited châteaux, hôtels, and decorative arts factories, and museums to learn about the history of the Château in France. On one weekend trip to the Loire Valley, we visited six châteaux: Chambord, Blois, Menars, Cheverny, Beauregard, and Chenonceau. Since three of these châteaux inspired Hunt’s Biltmore, it made me
think about how and why Hunt was inspired by these sixteenth century châteaux built for French royalty when designing homes for Gilded Age industrialists.

In the exploratory stages of my thesis, I was chiefly concerned with exploring the connection between the sixteenth century châteaux and Hunt’s Biltmore. After meeting with my thesis advisor, Kathleen Curran, she encouraged me to focus on Hunt’s work in the northeast, either in New York City or Newport. After discovering that Hunt’s archives were closed due to relocation to the Library of Congress from the American Architectural Foundation, Professor Curran suggested including Upjohn’s domestic architecture in Newport. This would enable me to visit his papers at the New York City Public Library and his drawings at Columbia University. After exploring Upjohn’s work further, it was logical to include Upjohn in my thesis. This addition would contribute to the monographic thesis.

I chose to focus specifically on Newport because the seaside town has an appealing historical background going back to the eighteenth century, and was especially renowned for its nineteenth century Gilded Age cottages. By concentrating on Newport, I would be researching and writing about homes that were people’s vacation residences, which have a specific set of defined functions and purposes. Within Newport domestic architecture of the nineteenth century, Upjohn and Hunt were not the only two architects to design houses, but I chose to focus on them because of their high status in the history of American architecture. I decided to include Upjohn because understanding his work in Newport was imperative in order to comprehend the context of Hunt’s work. Furthermore, Upjohn was the first professional architect to design homes in Newport. Hunt is arguably the most famous architect to design homes in Newport. Hunt rightfully associated with the Gilded Age cottages that would influence Newport domestic
architecture for centuries to come. However, it is also necessary to study his earlier Stick Style homes in Newport because these contributed to his later palatial commissions.

In the first chapter of my thesis, I go into detail about how Newport came to be an upscale summer destination that encouraged the construction of the palatial summer cottages. The chapter on the cultural background of Newport sets the stage for the following three chapters of thesis. Next is a chapter about Upjohn, which includes information on Upjohn’s background, Kingscote (1839; figure 5), Edward King House (1845-47; figure 6), and touches upon the Hamilton Hoppin House (1856; figure 7). Writing about these three houses of Upjohn, helps the reader understand the evolution of domestic architecture during Newport in the nineteenth century. In the next chapter about Hunt, I write about his background and what led him to receive commissions in Newport. This chapter also includes information about Hunt’s early clients in Newport and the homes they commissioned including: Griswold House (1862-64; figure 8), Linden Gate (1871-73; figure 9), and the T. G. Appleton House (1871; figure 10). In the last chapter, I discuss Hunt’s later commissions in Newport: Marble House and The Breakers. This chapter also includes information about the clients and Hunt’s design process for his palatial Beaux-Arts cottages. The goal of the thesis is to understand how the architecture in Newport, starting in the 1830s, evolved from smaller pattern book cottages and villas to some of the most extravagant homes in American in the 1890s, and how it impacted the posthumous reputation of their architects.
Newport’s Rise to Prominence

Newport’s popularity as an upscale summer destination was rooted in the eighteenth-century, when Newport became one of the wealthiest cities in America. It was ideally located between Boston, New York, and Hartford, with a felicitous location along the water. This location allowed Newport to be one of the arms in the triangular slave trade, and as a result, Privateering, distilling, and spermaceti factories were some of Newport’s original industries.¹ By 1729, with a regular economy and ideal location, Newport became known as a resort for wealthy southerners wanting to escape the southern heat. Historian James Yarnall describes Newport’s reputation as “being one of the most cosmopolitan, cultured, and urbane [atmospheres] in the New World.”² These factors contributed to Newport’s growing reputation as a prominent watering hole, which would lay the groundwork for its nineteenth-century reputation.

By the 1820s and 30s, the cultural ambitions of the wealthy southerners in Newport were apparent. They designed Georgian style buildings, a generic term referring to a style that pervaded during the reigns of British Kings George I–IV (1714-1830).³ Vacationers of Newport who built in the Georgian style included Colonel Godfrey Malbone (1696-1762), a privateer, slave trader, and shipping merchant from Virginia. President George Washington’s visit to Malbone at his home in Newport in 1759 illustrates the prominence of the Newport’s summer residents.⁴

As with most cities, Newport went into a depression after the American Revolutionary War. There was over a fifty percent population decrease with the onset of the war, which

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¹ The triangular slave trade was the trading system that operated between West Africa, the Caribbean, and America from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century.
³ Ibid, 9.
coincided with the British occupation of Newport for three years, beginning in 1776. The presence of the British was felt throughout Newport. At least a third of the 1,100 wooden buildings in Newport were consumed by the British to be used as firewood. Five years into the war, most buildings were in disrepair and ruin, and the British were using churches and important municipal buildings as barracks or hospitals. After the war, Newport still felt the hardships of the war. Newport’s shipping industry had decreased; making it difficult to find jobs. Furthermore, the once lively waterfront had fallen to neglect. The Gale of 1815, the worst hurricane to affect Newport until 1935, magnified the state of disrepair.

With the development of transportation systems making Newport a routine stop on steam ferries, along with the rising fashion for the middle-class vacation in the early nineteenth century, Newport was revived from its post-Revolutionary War depression. Two years after the Gale of 1815, Newport became a regular stop on steam ferries, and in 1829, the Fall River Line leased harbor space on Long Wharf. This would play a pivotal role in the development of Newport’s vacation and tourism economies, with approximately 5,000 to 6,000 visitors arriving per week by 1835. The Fall River Line allowed for daily travel between New York, Newport, Fall River, and Boston. In an article from 1846, a visitor to Newport commented on the ease of the evolving transportation systems, “With the increased facilities for traveling, the habit of seeking health and relaxation away from home during the summer has become marvelously prevalent.” In conjunction with the ease of accessibility to Newport, the middle-class vacation became more popular in the early nineteenth century.

Alongside Newport there were several popular nineteenth century vacation spots in America, including Long Branch, New Jersey, Saratoga, New York, Bar Harbor, Maine, and

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5 Yarnall, 23.
Gloucester, Massachusetts. In describing Newport, a John R. Dix wrote, “In short, on a fine bathing day, during the season, no more complete epitome of society could be found anywhere than on Easton’s Beach.” Dix continued to explain Easton Beach: “This beach is a mile, or perhaps a trifle more, in length. At its eastern end is a road which leads to Purgatory and the Second Beach. This is one of the most beautiful drives on the island, and is daily thronged by the seekers after health and happiness.”

Newport’s beaches distinguished the resort from the other cities in the “summer circuit” of America.

First hand accounts of Newport explain why cosmopolitan and wealthy Americans were coming from the South and the North to vacation in Newport. A writer in 1851 described the water-hole phenomenon in Newport: “A watering-place is the play-ground of the nation. It is here that health and happiness resort—that a cup of cool water refreshes the parched lips of Tantalus, and the wheel of Ixion for a time forgets to turn. It is here that the wealthy are most profuse, and the gay are the gayest.” The group of Americans flocking to Newport in the 1830s up until the Civil War played a major role in the development of Newport as an upscale watering-hole. Connected through friendships, business, and marriage, this group of vacationers was prominent, well known, and well traveled.

This fashionable group of Newport vacationers were the first to establish themselves in the private summer “cottage” life of Newport that would culminate in Newport’s trademark reputation. A prominent visitor included, Henry Middleton (1770-1846) from South Carolina.

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11 Ibid, 1.
Plantation near Charleston, South Carolina. In 1830, after spending several summers in Newport, he made Newport his regular summer residence and was the first in his social circle to buy his own house in Newport.

While the first members of the emerging summer colony were prominent and wealthy members of society, Newport continued to have a leisurely and relaxed atmosphere in the 1830s and 40s. Originally, visitors would stay in boarding houses, such as Mrs. Avis Mumford’s. However, to accommodate the growing number of summer visitors, several hotels were established. In 1828, Bellevue opened on Catherine Street, and around the same time, Whitfields opened on Touro Street. These two hotels resembled large boarding houses rather than hotels, and they doubled as meeting places for Southerners and Northerners. Frequent guests included Nathan Appleton, a congressman from Massachusetts, Samuel Ward, a partner of Prime, Ward, and King, and Israel Thondike Jr., a Boston merchant. Some southerners included the Pringles, Izards, and Middletons, all of whom were plantation owners.

The lifestyle of vacationers in Newport can be explained by examining a regular day of Mrs. Ralph Izard (1745-1832). After eating a substantial breakfast at nine, she would bathe in the ocean. Then she may have taken a walk along the cliffs, followed by a mid-day dinner. Afterward she would participate in games and refreshments in the garden, and then she would meet up friends and acquaintances at Whitfield. The evening program usually consisted of dancing. Even though the lifestyle in Newport was characteristically less formal and less pretentious, compared to their lives the rest of the year, the lives of summer residents followed rules and a schedule not too dissimilar to their lives throughout the rest of the year.

Furthermore, Rhode Island historians Eliza Cope Harrison and Rosemary F. Carroll explain that

12 Ibid, 3.
13 Prime, Ward, and King was one of the leading banks of NY.
14 Harrison and Carroll, 5-6.
at Whitfield, ladies wore simple cotton gowns during the daytime, and they were not expected to change into more formal for the evening activities, which was customary in high society throughout the rest of the year.

However as Newport’s popularity increased, this sense of freedom and informality that pervaded during the 1830s was disappearing.\(^{15}\) Newport was the most accessible and popular resort in America, and the current boarding houses and hotels were no longer supporting the increasing number of visitors. In 1841, George Noble Jones (1811-1876), who stayed at Whitfields noticed that all the boarding houses and hotels were filled to capacity. As a result of the increasing popularity, two hotels, the Atlantic House and Ocean House, were built in the early 1840s and opened in 1844 resulting in immediate success. The Atlantic House’s capacity was 250 guests and was often full. Yarnall explains, “After its opening and throughout the 1850s, the Atlantic House was an important center of Newport’s ‘most thoroughbred’ summer society.”\(^{16}\) Guests from Boston and New York came to stay at the Atlantic House, and it often hosted balls or concerts. The first Ocean House was opened for only a few months into its first full season of business before being burned to the ground. However, the need for a second large hotel was understood, and the owners of the Ocean House immediately started to rebuild the Ocean House twice its previous size.\(^{17}\)

In the 1850s, August Belmont (1816-1890) and his wife, Caroline Slidell Perry (1829-1892) brought lavishness, luxury, and new members of New York society life to Newport. Belmont was a leading New York social figure and banker of the Rothschild family, and

\(^{15}\) Ibid, 8.  
\(^{16}\) Yarnall, 34.  
\(^{17}\) Yarnall further explains that an addition would be completed two years after its rebuilding to accommodate the high traffic of visitors.
likewise, Perry came from a prestigious family. Belmont and Perry would build a house, By-the-Sea, in 1860. This launched the rise of the cottage and villa resort life in Newport.

Due to cottage and country house pattern books, along with the need for alternative housing, and an established summer community, resort life in Newport shifted from the hotel to the villa and cottage. Three popular pattern books, including Downing’s *Cottage Residences; Rural Architecture and Landscape Gardening* (1842); *The Architecture of Country Houses* (1850); and Davis’ *Rural Residences* (1837) prevailed above others. These books promoted picturesque suburban houses with several examples of the Gothic and Italianate styles. Although the terms villa and cottage were frequently used to describe the houses in Newport, mansion is a more appropriate title, due to their size. Villas were often year-round residences, whereas cottages were primarily used during the summer months. Yarnall explains, “In the decade leading up to the Civil War, renting or owning a cottage became de rigueur for a class of residents known as ‘summer colonists.’”

The local newspaper, the *Newport Mercury*, encouraged the transition from hotel life to villa and cottage resort life. At the end of season in 1850, the newspaper wrote, “Newport has doubtless settled into a watering place, and for the future must be known only as such. This we cannot but deplore;…We would take no steps to keep the annual visitors from our Island, but would rather encourage their desire, to locate among us.”

The following summer in an article the *Newport Mercury* reported, “no time have we known the demand to be so great for land and cottages, or more attention paid to building…great changes may be looked for during the next

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18 Yarnall, 39.
few months.” Within the next five years, Newport experienced a building boom promoting the development of habitable land on the island.

Newport was constantly expanding. The original cottage area, Kay Street—Catherine Street—Old Beach Road stretching from the Redwood Library had expanded to former farmsteads, and to the extension of Bellevue Avenue in 1839 led by the Alfred Smith (1809-1886). Development continued in 1851, when a death in the local Bailey family prompted the selling of 140 acres of land. Smith had bought the land in 1851 in conjunction with Joseph Bailey, half brother of the deceased Bailey. A year later, Smith petitioned the Newport Town Council to build a highway through the 140 acres, extending Bellevue Avenue. Off of the new Bellevue Avenue, Smith offered lots that sold almost immediately.

Until the Civil War (1861-1865), southern plantation owners made up a large portion of summer residents in Newport. However, with the onset of the war, southerners felt uncomfortable in the North, and it became common for them to stop vacationing in Newport. For example, George Noble Jones, a southern plantation owner who built Kingscote in 1839, would transfer the title to the house to prevent confiscation. Two years later, in 1864, he sold the house to William Henry King (1818-1897), a China Trade merchant from Massachusetts.

Even though Newport was affected by the Civil War, like most cities in America, Newport was also viewed as “a disconnected haven, advancing its resort lifestyle and architecture throughout the era,” writes Yarnall. As previously explained, the homes of southern plantation owners were being bought by members of New York high society. Yarnall

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20 Yarnall, 48 from [Editorial], Newport Mercury, 10 Jul. 1852, p. 3.
22 Yarnall, 49.
23 King’s nephew David was responsible for hiring Sanford White (1853-1906) to enlarge and renovate Kingscote.
24 Yarnall, 63.
described a post-Civil War affluence resulting from the growth in industry and manufacturing encouraged by the war, which “made the ground fertile for the development of a different culture.” Yarnall continues, “New ways of banking, working, vacationing, and recreation all evolved between 1865 and 1870.”\(^{25}\) The new money and population in Newport led to the development of Ocean Drive. After sixteen years of suggestions and proposals, Ocean Drive became a reality. Not surprisingly, Smith was behind the development of Ocean Drive, just as he was in several other areas of Newport’s expansion efforts.

Post-Civil War Newport was described by historian Van Wyck Brooks as an “American Eden” that was “half-rustic, half cosmopolitan.”\(^{26}\) As Newport developed as a summer community, the days of less expensive and informal times at the boarding houses were disappearing. The norm was to own a house and to participate in several costly activities. These rituals involved owning carriages, riding outfits, and fine horses. At the time, the exclusive clubs that began to develop in the 1850s could characterize the new society in Newport. In 1853, the Newport Reading Room, a men’s club, and the Newport Historical Society, were founded to preserve anything dealing with Newport’s history. By the 1880s, the establishment of several other clubs emerged characterizing the Newport atmosphere. These clubs included the Newport Golf Club, Bailey’s Beach or Spouting Rock Beach Association, the Clambake Club, the Casino, the Newport Reading Room, and the New York Yacht Club.\(^{27}\) In addition to these formal clubs, there were several informal organizations. One of particular importance was the Town & Country Club\(^ {28}\). The club perpetuated culture in Newport’s summer society. Guest speakers

\(^{25}\) Yarnall, 73.
\(^{27}\) Yarnall, 86.
\(^{28}\) According to Yarnall, the Town & Country Club was founded by author, Julia Ward Howe. A group of writer, politicians, scientists, artists, and other met at her house in Newport. At first, the group did not have a
included Samuel Clemens, Charles Dudley Warner, and several professors from Harvard and MIT.

Even though there were several land development projects in Newport throughout the beginning and middle of the nineteenth century, there was still land available for development. Eugene Sturtevant (1838-1899) saw the opportunity to develop the farmland flanking Sakonnet River. Smith, a limited partner in the venture, and Sturtevant initiated the growth of what would become almost 100 lots of land. However, Smith and Sturtevant realized they would have to build a road to make the lots more accessible, and after an eleven-year struggle, Hanging Rocks Road was opened. Even though there was a need for more land, the lots did not immediately sell because of the inconveniently far distance from Bellevue Avenue.

Despite the unsuccessful development of Hanging Rocks Road, there was an area of Newport, Ochre Point, that would lend itself to the building boom initiated the palatial cottages of the 1880s and 90s. In 1835, George Champlin Mason Sr., and William Beach Lawrence purchased sixty acres of land to build their houses. Gradually, Lawrence sold plots of land, and after his death in 1881, his heirs immediately sold the rest of the land and his home. The plots of farmland would set the stage for the sweeping building boom in the 1880s.

Up until the 1880s, Newport was a summer resort known for its elegance, luxury, and prominent summer residents. Therefore, Newport residents wanted homes in French Beaux-Arts style. When writing about the American Renaissance, a period from 1876-1917, architectural historian, Richard Guy Wilson wrote, “How men perceive themselves influences what they see and how they create their surroundings,” and he continues, “Yet the conservative, largely

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29 Yarnall, 88-89.
30 Mason’s house was named Ochre Point, which would lend its name to the section of Newport.
European-oriented art had an impact in its time; overwhelmingly popular, the art projected an image of culture and civilization that many people approved of.” In the 1880s, the houses and lifestyles of Newport summer residents reflected their desire to be apart of the European noble and aristocratic lifestyles. This idea can be examined through “The 400.” The 400 were considered, according to socialite Caroline Blackhouse Astor, 400 of the most elite members of New York society who could fit into Mrs. Astor’s ballroom. When not in New York City, it was customary for this elite group to travel to each other’s homes for special events in places like Hudson River Valley, Newport, Long Island, and North Carolina. This practice was not too dissimilar to the lifestyle of the French court, which traveled to various residences throughout Paris, Versailles, Loire Valley, and Fontainebleau. Several of these families, if they had not already done so, would build palatial summer cottages based on French Ecole des Beaux Arts concepts. The Vanderbilts were among the prominent families whose opulent houses commanded Newport’s streets. The houses of the 1880s and 90s characterized the lifestyles of the late nineteenth century associated with the Gilded Age. The Gilded Age was a period of decadence in American History. This period represented America’s first age of millionaires, and even billionaires. Notorious family names like Rockefeller, Carnegie, Gould, Morgan, and Vanderbilt all made their fortune during this period. However during this time period, the other half of the American population went through a depression and urban poverty was immense. So while wealth was shared by the few, with the ability to build Newport mansions, most of the American population was living in poverty and destitution. These families would hire notable architects to communicate their needs and wishes when designing their homes.

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Professionally Designed: Upjohn’s Villas and Cottages in Newport

Richard Upjohn (1802-1878), an American architect born in England known for his contributions as a church architect, also designed approximately ninety houses. He was among the first notable architects to design houses for the Newport elite. The members of Newport Society wanted an architect who could create a house representing the latest architectural fashions as well as their social aspirations. A letter of commendation from Samuel A. Eliot illustrates Upjohn’s credentials, “Though I can hardly imagine the architect of Trinity Church in New York to stand in need of recommendation from any body…” Eliot continues, “In domestic architecture Mr. Lyman’s house is a beautiful specimen of your taste, universally recognized among us as a very fine example of the style he desired.” Upjohn’s ability to successfully design both churches and houses in a variety of styles demonstrates his talent.

Upjohn has a posthumous reputation as “the father of the American architectural profession.” He played a major role in the foundation of the American Institute of Architects, an organization working to professionalize the architect. As Judith Salisbury Hull writes, “His success stemmed from his ability to create all types of buildings in a variety of styles.” Viewed by his peers as an innovator, he contributed to the Gothic Revival, which he used in all building types.

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35 Hull explains in a letter from Martin Van Buren (1782-1862) to Francis Preston Blair (1791-1849) dated 5 March 1849, Van Buren refers to Upjohn as “that great architectural oracle.”
Upjohn was born on January 22, 1802, in Shaftesbury, a market town in England where his family had lived for several generations. His father, James Upjohn was a surveyor, and his mother, Elizabeth Plantagenet Dryden Michell, died the same year Richard was born. Growing up in Shaftesbury, Upjohn was exposed to buildings, people, and professions that would help him build the foundation for his career as an architect. Hull explains that growing up, Upjohn would have been aware of the cathedral in Salisbury, England, an example of English Gothic from the thirteenth-century (Figure 1). This was important because Upjohn would become enthralled in Gothic architecture, later designing some of the first and most important Gothic churches in America. Upjohn’s father was a surveyor, a job which shared similar duties to what we consider the responsibilities of an architect. This relation exposed Upjohn to the skills required of an architect including designing buildings, measuring and evaluating land, and supervising a building or estate. At a young age, Upjohn was interested in, and pursued, his interests in tools, drawing, and mechanics when he apprenticed with a cabinetmaker. This apprenticeship, which lasted seven years, gave Upjohn, as Hull explains, “the ability to plan and draw three-dimensional objects on paper” and exposed him to the English building world. The skills acquired during his apprenticeship as a cabinetmaker would give Upjohn the foundation to succeed as an architect in America.

When Upjohn was six years old, his father went to Newfoundland with a mercantile company. Hull suggests that during the time his father spent in Newfoundland, Upjohn became aware of the opportunities for an architect in America, because of discussion of “development

37 Hull, 35.
38 Upjohn, 18.
39 Hull, 38.
40 Ibid, 39.
and exploration taking place in America.”  

As a result of his time spent in Newfoundland, Upjohn viewed American as a place for opportunity. In England, Upjohn had received several jobs to keep him busy, but had trouble making money. In 1829, Upjohn immigrated to America in hopes of earning a living.  

After living in Manilus, New York, for a year, Upjohn moved to New Bedford, Massachusetts, where his older brother Aaron lived. In New Bedford, Upjohn had his first opportunity for employment, when Samuel Leonard, a builder and lumber merchant hired him between 1830-1834. However, little is known of Leonard’s background, the details of employment, and the extent of the work done for Leonard. Upjohn could have worked as a draftsman for Leonard or casually provided plans for structures. While in New Bedford, Upjohn helped found the Mechanics’ Association and opened a drawing school.  

It was during his time in New Bedford that Upjohn started to consider himself an architect. After seeing the word architect written next to designer’s name on a set of plans for a courthouse in Leonard’s office, Richard Upjohn wrote in a letter to his father, “If that’s architecture, then I am an architect, and after that I hung out my shingle.” Hull examines the circumstances surrounded urbanization, new technology, and the Industrial Revolution that allowed Upjohn to shift from a carpenter to an architect. In New Bedford, through designing houses and municipal buildings, Upjohn gained the experience, clients, and business relationships necessary to practice architecture in Boston.  

While practicing in Boston, Upjohn formed business relationships and gained clients and contacts that would make up the base of his clientele. Upjohn’s clients included members of the Episcopal Church building committees and congregations for whom he built. Upjohn’s clientele  

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41 Ibid, 40.  
42 Upjohn, 23.  
43 Ibid, 42-43.  
44 Upjohn, 31.  
45 Hull, 45.
would grow to include Congregationalists and Presbyterians, but principally High Church Episcopalians. Hull explains, “for the most part, this entire group of clients was wealthy and socially prominent; moreover, they formed a part of a cohesive elite which their geographic distribution often belies,” and continues, “They were interconnected by marriage, by financial interests that were national and even international in scope, by politics and civic activities, and by their respect for organized religion.”\footnote{Upjohn’s association with this “well-educated, well-traveled” group of Americans, who were interested in establishing American culture, would provide him with several jobs. Members of this clientele spent their summers in Newport, a popular summer destination.}

One of the members included, George Noble Jones who came from a distinguished line of colonials and American politicians. Born in England, Jones’ father, Noble Wimberly Jones (1723-1805), immigrated to Georgia as a child and became a prominent Georgian politician, playing a major role in the American Revolution (1775-1883).\footnote{As was true for many leading politicians at the time, the Jones family owned a plantation. Jones continued managing his family’s plantation in Jefferson County, Georgia, and when he married Mary Savage Nuttall in May 1840, he took over management of her family’s plantations in Florida, El Destino and Chemonie.} To escape the summer heat in the south, Jones and his family visited Newport in the summer. Jones, as well as his second wife Nuttall were a part of the group of southerners who stayed in the Newport hotels in the 1830s.\footnote{Abbey, 188.}

\footnote{Ibid, 285.}
\footnote{Ibid, 286.}
When Jones decided to build a house in Newport, it was no wonder he chose Upjohn as the architect, whose work he had admired. Jones had taken a liking to and was interested in Upjohn’s work when he was building a house for his first wife’s family, the Gardiners. 51 The Gardiner house in Maine was a “battlemented Gothic structure” with hood moldings and very little applied decoration (figure 10). 52 Upjohn integrated the Gothic ideas into local architectural tradition of Georgian architecture, which was more symmetrical than picturesque Gothic. 53

In September of 1839, Upjohn had received a letter from George Noble Jones, asking Upjohn to build a house for Jones on his plot of land in Newport. 54 Even though his house still stands, very little, if anything is known about Jones’s house in Newport or his time spent there. His house is now referred to as Kingscote, referencing the family who bought the house from Jones in 1861. Much more is known about Jones in regards to his family’s history and the three plantations he owned.

Prior to Upjohn, there were very few, if any professional architects designing houses in Newport. Upjohn decided to design a house unlike anything already in Newport, which included Federal style and Greek revival houses. The Samuel Whitehorn Jr. House (1811; figure 11) is one of the two examples of brick Federal style houses built in Newport. 55 Its perfectly square form, low-hipped roof, half-round portico, and two stories with a smaller attic story are all common architectural elements of the Federal style. Two houses in Newport designed by Russell Warren exemplify the Greek revival style, a part of the popular neoclassical styles found in America from the 1820s to the 1850s. 56 The Levi H. Gale House (1835; figure 12) has two-story

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52 Ibid.
53 Upjohn, 39.
54 Yarnall, 39.
55 Yarnall, 24.
56 Ibid, 29.
colossal pilasters, and the William Vernon House (1833; figure 13) has a giant order Ionic
colonnade. These features, along with the white exteriors are examples of how the Greek revival
was expressed in domestic architecture.

Upjohn designed a house for Jones that was in accord with the popular styles of America.
A picturesque cottage, Kingscote is made up of irregular and asymmetrical projections and
rooflines. Yarnall describes the house as, “loosely organized and lost in complicated
articulations.”\(^{57}\) The multiple cross gables and gabled dormers as well as the veranda, porches,
and the polygonal bay tower attest to the picturesque quality of the house. Upjohn added several
Gothic details to enliven the exterior of the house, especially in comparison to the Gardiner
house in Maine. These details included crenellations under the edges of porch’s roofs and
castellation along balconies (figure 14). Upjohn included drip moulds and leaded-glass diamond-
paned windows, which were details reminiscent of the Tudor-Gothic.\(^{58}\) Other details
communicate Upjohn’s Gothic Revival ornamental repertoire, including pointed arches over
doorways, especially on the front porch, and clustered chimney pots. Upjohn lightened forms of
the house with jigsaw work details, including sawn serpentine bargeboards, trefoil droplets under
porch roofs, and a scalloping line of dropped fleur-de-lis along the eaves.

In keeping with the ideas of picturesque houses, Upjohn was concerned with how the
house interacted and integrated with nature. The large doors and windows, as well as the
verandas “promoted the communication of indoor and outdoor spaces.”\(^{59}\) Yarnall further
explains, “The picturesque touches break up the exterior profile and create busy patterns of light
and dark to integrate the building into its landscape.”\(^{60}\) This effect Upjohn achieved is best seen

\(^{57}\) Ibid, 40.
\(^{58}\) Ibid.
\(^{59}\) Ibid.
\(^{60}\) Ibid, 41.
in the watercolor perspective of the house (figure 15). Playful and prominent, the pockets of shadow are extenuated by the projecting pavilions and dynamic roofline.

By designing an irregular floor plan for the cottage, Upjohn made sure Jones would be able to take full advantage of the three-sided ocean views and cool breezes from the inside (figure 16). This was a contemporary way to design a floor plan. Architectural historian Roth explains this contemporary idea about floor plans by highlighting Andrew Jackson Downing’s view, “The plan of the house, he argued, should be arranged so as to take advantage of the views of the landscape, making it as irregular as need be.” The asymmetrical first-floor plan creates a rambling feeling of the house, but also allows for residents and visitors to enjoy the beautiful views of the ocean. All of the major rooms, including the library, parlors, dining room, and office, open off of the entrance hall. They emphasize the entrance, which becomes a dynamic and important room of the house. William Pierson explains that Jones requested two parlors into the first-floor plan instead of a single large living room.61 These parlors spread across the entire east end of house, adding light and openness to the floor plan.

Kingscote is most popularly described as being a cottage orné, a style Henry-Russell Hitchcock explains in detail in his book, *Architecture: Nineteen and Twentieth Centuries*. Hitchcock writes that the cottage orné dates back to the seventeenth century with, “The development of individual urban dwellings with party walls, ancestors of the terrace-houses.”62 In America, the conditions of settlement, with small towns and the rarity of large estates, encouraged the building of the detached house of moderate size. As the development of the home continued throughout the eighteenth century in America, the development of Picturesque homes in England began towards the end of the eighteenth century. Hitchcock continues to explain how

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61 Pierson, 76.
the “Picturesque point of view…gave prestige to the modest detached dwellings, raising the
social status of the ‘cottage’ from an agricultural labourer’s hovel to a middle-class habitation or
even on occasion a holiday ‘retreat’ for the upper classes – at first by adding the French adjective
orné.”63 In English, orné translates to “decorated.” Hitchcock describes these decorated homes
from being anything from the “towered Italian Villa” and the Swiss Chalet to the Tudor
Parsonage.64

In conjunction with designing a home in the a cottage orné, Upjohn may have found
pattern books like Alexander Jackson Davis’ Rural Residences (1835) as a source for the
building’s content.65 Davis was one of three architects, in addition to Upjohn, and possibly James
Renwick, whom Pierson attributes to the creation of the Gothic in America.66 He explains that
there is no evidence proving that Davis, Upjohn, and Renwick communicated with each other,
and they might not have been on speaking terms. However, they definitely knew of each other
and their work, which is obvious when looking at correspondence between Upjohn and Jones.

After receiving the initial designs for the house from Upjohn (figure 17), Jones wrote to Upjohn,
“It is very pretty, but it is not sufficiently large for my purposes…I recollect a plan of a cottage—
two stories in front—which you showed me some time ago, which with a few alterations I think
will suit my views.”67 Pierson suggests Jones’ reference to “a plan of a cottage—two stories in
front” was from Davis’s Rural Residences. When comparing a design for the east façade of
Kingscote (see figure 17) to Davis’s Villa for David Codwise (1837; figure 18), there are striking
similarities. Both are classified as cottage orné, symmetrical, have low pitch roofs, and a

63 Ibid.
64 Ibid, 354-5.
65 Andrew Jackson Downing’s Cottage Residences (1842) and Architecture of Country Houses (1850) were
published after the design and construction of Kingscote. The Gothic Revival would gain popularity in Downing’s
pattern books.
66 Pierson, 366.
Newport County, Newport, Rhode Island.
veranda. Hitchcock suggests that, at Kingscote, “Upjohn easily rivaled Davis as a designer of Picturesque Gothic Houses.”

Inspiration for the Gothic elements of Kingscote, as Yarnall explains, may have come from popular Gothic novels. These novels, including a book by Horace Walpole (1717-1797) entitled *The Castle of Otranto* (1764). The plot of the book takes place throughout a castle and the book includes spooky imagery. Beginning in 1747, several years before Walpole wrote *The Castle of Otranto*, Walpole decided to Gothicize a cottage into a castle, known as Strawberry Hill (1749-1776; figure 19). Although some of the Gothic elements were incorrect, Strawberry Hill was the first major monument of the Gothic Revival.

Almost a century after the Gothic Revival gained popularity in Europe, Upjohn had brought the Gothic Revival to Newport by designing and building Kingscote. As an early work designing, Kingscote gave Upjohn the opportunity to explore the Gothic Revival in a non-ecclesiastical direction, while reinforcing the purpose of the commission. Jones wanted a house where he could spend time with his new bride, but also a house where his mother and sister could live year round. The picturesque cottage reflects the ideas that were taking shape throughout America at the time, and Pierson views the house as a design that pointed toward the future.

Pierson describes Kingscote as, “the first and certainly the most important of those early summer houses: it was also the predecessor the fabulous summer palaces.” Although Kingscote was the most important of the early summerhouses and demonstrates a successfully articulated Gothic Revival house, its style did not spread throughout Newport. Additionally, it was only one

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68 Hitchcock, 156.
69 The new bride died before she saw the completion of the house. However, he married shortly after in 1840, and his second wife was able to enjoy the house.
70 Pierson, 378.
of the four Gothic houses designed by Upjohn.\textsuperscript{71} Yarnall suggests this could be due to the high price of building a house in the Gothic revival. However, A.J. Downing suggests the Gothic was fit for plebeian taste of the middle classes, whereas Italianate Style suits the patrician tastes of the wealthy.

Four years after the completion of Kingscote, Upjohn built a home for China tradesman Edward King (1815-1875) in the Italian Villa style. King was a Newport native who devoted seven years of his life to the China Trade, beginning at age twenty-two as a supercargo for the firm of Russell & Company.\textsuperscript{72} As did most China tradesman, King retired early after sacrificing his youth to solitary and difficult life as a merchant tradesman. Two years after his retirement in 1844, he arrived back in Newport and was worth an estimated $400,000.\textsuperscript{73} With plans to settle down, King decided to build a year-round villa on a hillside site near Kingscote, overlooking the Narragansett Bay. By hiring Upjohn as an architect, Yarnall explains, “King chose one of the best and most trendy professional American architects available.”\textsuperscript{74} Upjohn was the perfect architect to design a house, which would be able to represent the wealth and importance of not only King, but also Newport.

Yarnall suggests Upjohn’s Italian Villa, the Edward King House, laid the “groundwork for the popularity of the Italianate style of Newport.”\textsuperscript{75} With round arches, projecting balconies, and a three story tower, the villa is recognizably Italianate. Additional Italianate details include a heavily bracketed cornice, sculptural balconies, and a flat roof. When the house was built, in order to look more like an Italian villa, there was a layer of light tan or gray stucco applied to the

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{72} Yarnall, 51-52.
\textsuperscript{73} $400,000 is equivalent to $10 million today.
\textsuperscript{74} Yarnall, 52.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid, 50.
brick. The villa for Edward King had all of the decorative and architectural elements to classify it as a successfully designed Italianate villa.

The house for Edward King gained popularity because Downing included a picture of the villa in *The Architecture of Country Houses* (1850; figure 20) to illustrate “A Villa in the Italian Style.” He gives the utmost praise to Upjohn’s design writing, “It is one of the most successful specimens of the Italian style in the United States, and unites beauty of form and expression with spacious accommodation, in a manner not often seen, and which is very creditable to Mr. Upjohn.” Upjohn designed a house that was fashionable of the time for a man of power and wealth in the Newport social scene.

King was a native Newport resident who was dedicated to increasing Newport’s popular and improving its commercial center. In the introduction to the *Journals and Letters of Edward King*, Ethel King Russell writes, “Edward King devoted his energies, in the later years of his life, largely to the development of Newport as a ville d’eau, and invested in big tracts of land near town. To his efforts and plans is due the “Ocean Drive” which so many of us enjoy today.” In accordance with King’s interest in promoting Newport, Hull suggests another motive for the construction of the villa, “It served not only as a residence and as a place to entertain his large family, many friends, and associates, but as an advertisement to his visitors of the possibilities for gracious living which Newport offered.”

Just as Upjohn successfully created homes in both the Gothic and Italianate styles, he also successfully created a home in Middletown that is considered to have laid the groundwork

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76 Ibid, 52.
79 Hull, 301.
for the Stick Style homes of the 1870s. Everything about the Hamilton Hoppin House was Italianate except the cross timbering in the attic level. Several architectural historians, including Scully, attribute this home as being the precursor to the development of the Stick Style in Newport. Scully explains, “More important than this [the plan and interiors], however, is the fact that Upjohn develops upon his exterior wall surfaces a series of vertical and horizontal members...his wall therefore breaks up into a series of panels, articulated by wooden stripping and further divided by a whole series of crossed diagonals...”

It was this ornamental half-timbering that architect Richard Morris Hunt expressed more completely in his Stick Style Homes that would become the “apotheosis” of skeletal expression.

By looking at three houses Upjohn designed in Newport, Kingscote, Edward King Villa, and the Hamilton Hoppin House, one sees not only Upjohn’s successful ability to create buildings in a variety of styles, but also the potential of Newport as place for architects to practice. In Newport, Upjohn designed houses that demonstrated the clients’ goals, ambitions, and tastes all within the styles of the nineteenth century. The clients were not only concerned with building a house for their own sake, but were a part of a group of Americans interested in furthering American culture, which included its architecture. They wanted to hire the most fashionable architects to communicate their ideas. Having designed Trinity Church Wall Street, along with several other churches, Upjohn was a sought architect associated with defining style

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81 On this point see, Sarah Bradford Landau, “Richard Morris Hunt, the Continental Picturesque, and the ‘Stick Style.’” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 42, no. 3 (Oct., 1983), 275-6. http://www.jstor.org/stable/989950. Landau refutes Scully’s idea that the half-timbering corresponds to the interior, and explains that it is probably contradictory. Landau believes that ‘Hunt’s ornamental half-timbering was a design device intended to enhance and unify the forms of the house, not to express its structure.’ She suggests to see D. Chase, “The Kay Street-Catherine Street-Old Beach Road Neighborhood, Newport, Rhode Island,” Statewide Preservation Report N-N-1, Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Jan 1974, 28; and Chase, “J.N.A. Griswold House and Stable,” in Jordy and Monkhosue, *Buildings on Paper*, 88, where Chase points out that Montgomery Schuyler was initially responsible for the mistaken notion that the exterior siding reflected the actual framing.
in America. Creating houses for Newport’s elite, Upjohn laid the groundwork for professional
designed houses in Newport.
Hunt’s Intellectually Driven Designs

The Continental Picturesque and Stick Style of domestic architecture in Newport was carried out by several architects; including Richard Morris Hunt. It was a defining period of architecture for Newport. The Griswold House, the Thomas G. Appleton House, and Linden Gate are some of the finest examples of Hunt’s domestic architecture in Newport. However, I will argue that these three smaller, picturesque cottages were necessary for the development of Hunt’s later Newport domestic architecture, including Marble House and the Breakers, which reflect Hunt’s European training.

Newport was an important place for Hunt and his career. His brother, William Morris Hunt (1824-1879) had a home and wide social circle in Newport, which would help R. M. Hunt win commissions in the seaside town. Hunt met his wife there and would later establish their residence in Newport. Furthermore, Hunt’s designs for Newport cottages, to this day, are some of his most well-remembered and well-loved works.

Hunt did not always have roots in Newport and there were several other factors throughout his lifetime that played a significant role in his success. Hunt was born into a prominent family in Vermont. His father, Jonathan Hunt, (1787-1832), a Dartmouth graduate, was involved in law, banking, and politics. Shortly after the death of Jonathan Hunt, his mother, Jane Maria Leavitt Hunt, would moved the five children to Connecticut in hopes of providing them with a better education. Ten years later, in 1842, due to the ill health of William, the Hunt family traveled to Europe for the winter in search of a calmer climate.

This trip would become an extremely influential factor in R. M. Hunt’s architectural career. After the family traveled throughout France and Italy, it seemed that the yearlong

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83 Ibid, 4.
vacation to Europe would be extended to several years. R. M. and his younger brother Leavitt enrolled in boarding school in Switzerland, providing the family with further reason to stay in Europe. It was at the all-boys school in Geneva that R. M. Hunt would first express his interest in becoming an architect.\textsuperscript{84} Outside of his school’s curriculum, R. M. Hunt learned architectural drawing and design from an Ecole des Beaux-Arts student, Samuel Darier. After studying with Darier for a year, Hunt made plans to prepare for the entrance exams for the Ecole des Beaux-Arts.

In the months following August 1845, Hunt strove for admittance into the Ecole, and on September 4\textsuperscript{th}, he received a letter from Hector Martin Lefuel (1810-1880) expressing his interest in serving as Hunt’s patron for his studies.\textsuperscript{85} Hunt was grateful to study in Lefuel’s atelier, as he was a notable French architect and recipient of the Prix de Rome, when he was a student at the school. Hunt’s studies at the Ecole started late in 1846. During his time there, Hunt had the opportunity to experience the architectural upheaval of Paris in the 1840s first-hand. Several defining buildings and monuments of Paris were constructed or completed in the 1840s, including the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, Arc de Triomphe de l’Etoile, Church of the Madeleine, Les Invalides, Church of Sainte-Clotilde, and even the Place de la Concorde was decorated to highlight the obelisk gifted to Louis Philippe in 1833.\textsuperscript{86}

Hunt’s education equipped him with an architectural training unlike that of architects in the United States. Baker explains, “At the Ecole, the principles of composition taught were those of unity, proportion, scale, and balance of architectural forms, but, above all, the working out of

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid, 22.
\textsuperscript{86} Baker, 27.
a logical solution to the particular problems encountered in a structure.” The skills Hunt learned at the Ecole would be invaluable to Hunt’s career. Several of the projects and competitions Hunt worked on at the Ecole included designing public buildings, which Baker explains as “formal in composition and frequently monumental in scale.” The teaching style at the Ecole prepared Hunt with the capability to win commissions. In their students’ designs, the school emphasized the massing, a relationship between the interior and exterior, and tradition derived from Renaissance classicism. Eight years after beginning at the Ecole, in the spring of 1852, Hunt had completed his work at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. In addition to the time he spent in Paris studying architecture, Hunt had the opportunity to expand his education when by traveling throughout Europe, Asia Minor, and Egypt.

During his years studying architecture, Hunt developed a rapport with Lefuel. In a letter to Hunt’s wife several years later, Lefuel speaks highly of Hunt, “[my] greatest work was done while dear Dick worked with me, and he can justly claim a great share of its success. I do not hide from you those circumstances of which his own modesty does not permit him to speak.” Hunt’s relationship with Lefuel, afforded Hunt considerable opportunities, including the appointment to the Inspecteur des Travaux for the project of connecting of the Louvre with the Tuileries. This project provided Hunt the experience of working on a monumental government project.

If Hunt were to spend the rest of his career in Paris, he surely would have had an exciting career; however, from the beginning of his career as an architect, Hunt expressed interest in

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87 Ibid, 34.
88 Ibid.
89 Ibid, 34-5.
90 Ibid, 60. From the manuscript biography of Richard Morris Hunt writing by his wife, Catharine Clinton Howland Hunt, 1907. Pages 33-44.
91 Lefuel was appointed the official architect of the Louvre.
contributing to the aesthetics in America. At an early age, Hunt understood the need for European trained architects in America, and in a letter from Leavitt and R. M. Hunt to their mother, R. M. Hunt explains his aspirations as an architect, “[I would] endeavor to take a degree at the ‘Ecole Centrale’ at Paris, or some other first rate academy in Europe. [Then I would] return to America where an architect of the first quality would be much sought for.”92 Almost ten years later in another letter to his mother, Hunt discusses the need for artistic development in the United States, “There is not place in the world where they are more needed, or where they should be encouraged.”93 At the age of 25, Richard Morris Hunt fulfilled his wishes and returned to America as a well-trained, cultured, knowledgeable, and competent architect. Baker regarded Hunt as, “[having] more personal acquaintance with more Western European architecture than any other American of his time.”94

From the beginning of his time in America, Hunt would continually be a part of the center of artistic and cultural life. He established a studio in the University Building, which rented out to tenants such as Alexander Jackson Davis, Samuel Colt, Henry T. Tuckerman, and Winslow Homer.95 Influential scholarly groups were also headquartered in the building, including the New-York Historical Society, the American Institute of Architects, and the New York Academy of Medicine. By renting a studio in the building, Hunt was associating himself with the influential artists of New York City.

In 1857, sons of a wealthy merchant had commissioned Hunt to design the Tenth Street Studios (figure 21). For almost a century after its completion, the Studio Building was the center

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93 Ibid, 62. Catharine Hunt quoted the letter in RMH’s biography, 34-35. She dated the letter Christmas 1855 before Hunt return to the United States, but since the letter has not been located, Hunt could have been wrote the letter in 1854 while he was making plans to return or after his return.
94 Ibid, 63.
of artistic life in NYC. Tenants included John W. Casilaer (1811-1893), John La Farge (1835-1910), and Frederic Church (1829-1900). This commission strengthened his reputation as a notable architect, and, as the architect, Hunt was associated with designing a successful artistic center. Even though Hunt had few noteworthy commissions during the beginning years in New York City, Baker explains Hunt still had the “reputation as one of the city’s leading architects.” 97 In part, this was due to the influence of the Tenth Street Studios and his work of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). Baker explains that, in Hunt’s studio, Hunt did his best to “transmit something of the Beaux-Arts atmosphere and principles to his own students on Tenth Street.” 98

Hunt also involved himself with the AIA, a group invested in promoting the architectural profession. Due to his involvement with the association, Hunt’s name was frequently publicized alongside notable contemporaries.

Hunt’s successes can be partly attributed to his social circle, which expanded across continents and throughout social classes. Several of Hunt’s clients, especially in the beginning of his career, were a part of his social circle. Much to Hunt’s advantage, his brother William had established himself in Newport with a wide circle of friends, from which R. M. Hunt would draw clients and friends. 99 Hunt’s career in Newport began in the summer of 1860. He was busy that summer with making alterations to two houses and designing a new house. Newport would become more important to Hunt when he fell ill with dysentery in the spring of 1860 during a trip to Providence, Rhode Island visiting friends. 100

With the advice of his doctor, Hunt spent the subsequent summer away from the city air, in Newport. During his summer vacation in Newport, Hunt met and proposed to his wife,
Catherine Clinton Howland (1842/3-1909/10). Catherine’s family was a part of an elite social circle in Newport, who did not approve of the engagement in the beginning.\textsuperscript{101} Hunt now had a stronger connection to Newport. In the fall of 1862, following their wedding and a year and a half trip to Europe, the newly wed couple bought Hunt’s mother’s house in New York City.\textsuperscript{102}

Just as the University Building and the Tenth Street Studios, the Hunt’s new home became the center of rich social life in New York City. Baker explains, “Their Sunday dinners became features of New York artistic and literary life.”\textsuperscript{103} Guests included painters, sculptors, writers, musicians, actors, scholars, lawyers, businessmen, and architects. The Hunt’s social circle now extended beyond the artists of New York City and into the elite of New York City. After a dinner party at the home of the John Jacob Astor, George Templeton Strong (1820-1875), a prominent lawyer wrote in his diary, “Dick Hunt and his exuberant Sultana of a Mrs. Hunt would put life in to the dullest Fifth Avenue dinner party or into convivium mortuorum.”\textsuperscript{104} Many of Hunt’s clients would be a part of his social circles, which is true for the subsequent three Newport commissions discussed in the chapter.

Not all of Hunt’s time was spent socializing in Newport and traveling to Europe. Hunt was involved in promoting the AIA and teaching students who would go on to establish some of the first architecture schools in America. It was also during this time, which Hunt would become busy designing several buildings and homes.

Architectural historian Vincent Scully suggests that the Griswold House was perhaps Hunt’s best work of architecture, even though it was created in an early part of his career that

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid, 124-5.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid, 133.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid, 227. George Templeton Strong, Diary (New York, 1952), IV, 237, 471.
most architectural historians ignore. Not only was it possibly his best work of architecture, but it was also his first major commission in Newport. In 1861, while on his honeymoon in Paris, Hunt received a commission for a cottage in Newport. John Noble Alsop Griswold (1821-1909), an heir to a China-trade fortune and leading railroad financier, had been living in Europe for several years with his wife. Griswold and Hunt most likely knew each other through Charles H. Russell, whom Hunt probably met the same summer he met Mrs. Russell’s sister at Oaklawn in Newport, where C. H. Russell spent his summers. Griswold was President of the Illinois Central Railroad Company, Chairman of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad Company, and also involved in the house of Charles H. Russell & Co. It is also possible that the owner of the merchant and shipping company introduced Hunt and Griswold. When Hunt and his wife stayed with the Griswold’s during their honeymoon in Paris, the Griswolds expressed interest in moving back to the United States, because they feared living abroad as expatriates during the Civil War. Soon after, Griswold and his wife would move back to New York City and would have Hunt build them a cottage in Newport. At the time, having a cottage in Newport was fashionable and several expatriates resided in Newport, considering it a place that would ease the transition back into American life. Griswold purchased land on Bellevue Avenue in October 1863 and he and his family would occupy the house for the first time in May 1864.

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106 Yarnall, 75.
108 Ibid.
109 Ibid, 39. These terms dealt with defined use. The villa was a year-round residence and a cottage was a residence used primarily during the summer season.
110 Ibid, 49. The plot of land would be in the first “cottage area” of Newport, the “so-called Kay Street-Catherine Street-Old Beach Road neighborhood. In the 1840s, Alfred Smith (1809-1886) focused on developing this area of into a thriving middle class enclave. The Griswold house is less than a mile from the area of land that Smith bought from the Bailey family in 1851 that would include the construction of Bellevue Avenue. As construction of the road progressed, Smith offered plots of land for sale on the new avenue, which would become prime real estate in Newport.
In the first sketch of the J.N.A. Griswold house in 1861, Hunt emphasized the picturesque massing of irregular rooflines, dormers, gables, and chimneys.\textsuperscript{111} Hunt stressed the bracing, which he placed anywhere possible—to support the protruding roofline, on the bottom of the gables, and as a way to denote the first and second floor. In this sketch, it is evident that there is some stick work, especially in the gables, but the extent of the diagonal bracing in the final plan of the house is not as apparent in the preliminary sketch. However, the sketch communicates the general idea of the house.

The completed cottage consisted of a variety of forms, and varied use of materials and colors. With asymmetrical steep cross gables, clipped gables, dormers, a bay tower, and a veranda, the house communicated picturesque ideas. Hunt carried out the stick work half timbering in a “modern,” nonstructural fashion. The stick work on the façade, the fretwork along the veranda railings, and the struts on the porch posts were all decorative embellishments. Despite all the variety of materials, ornament, and forms, Baker described the house as retaining unity, “The house still had a unity by sheltering the multipitched roof with repeating pattern of shingles and by the exterior tying skeleton of posts, plates, bracketing, and braces.”\textsuperscript{112} Without these unifying elements, the house would not have been as successful.

Baker believed the symmetry of the interior contradicted the picturesque irregularities of the exterior. However, just because it does not evoke the same picturesque additive plan of Philip Webb’s Red House in England (1859; figure 22), does not mean the Griswold’s floor plan did not carry out picturesque ideas (figure 23). One entered through the port cochere and ascended a flight of steps to the central hall, from which the main rooms opened. When standing in the central hall, one sensed the verticality as the grand staircase rose through all three stories (figure

\textsuperscript{111} Baker, 134 and 136.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid, 134.
24). The open staircase exuded a feeling of openness and airiness to the core of the house, and this would have brought in light. Directly across from the entrance is a well-lit alcove facing into the outdoor veranda, which brings one into the outdoors. The principal rooms, reception room, drawing room, dining room, and library, are all directly off of the main hall. One would not be directed to a specific room, but one would wander from one room to the next however one chose. The many bays in the principal rooms and the irregular shapes of the dining room, alcove, and library further communicate the “sense of discovery” in the house. Hunt adapted devices such as an open floor plan with a central staircase and irregular geometric forms to communicate the picturesque ideas that are apparent on the exterior. This was appropriate for a summer cottage where the flow of air was crucial during the hot, humid summer days in Newport.

Architectural historian Sarah Bradford Landau attributed the picturesque imagery of the American wood houses to the contemporary revival of half-timbering and vernacular rustic architecture abroad.\textsuperscript{113} Americans were interested in the rustic, vernacular-like domestic architecture as seen in \textit{Architektonisches Skizzen-Buch}.\textsuperscript{114} Degan’s sketchbook of domestic architecture and patterns was in Hunt’s library along with a number of German ornament and pattern books.\textsuperscript{115} Landau explains how Hunt employed European influences at the Griswold House, “Its overhangs and outcroppings are genuinely evocative of the old half-timbered buildings found in many parts of Europe…its red and gray roof slates form the class French diamond pattern familiar to anyone who has toured Burgundy.”\textsuperscript{116} Additionally, Landau believes

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\textsuperscript{113} Landau, 272.
\textsuperscript{114} Ludwig Degen’s \textit{Les Constructions En Bois: Motifs De D\'coration Et D\'ornement} (1866), \textit{Les Constructions en briques} (1867), and \textit{Suppl\'ement aux Constructions en bois} (1867) are examples of the pattern books nineteenth century architects would have looked at.
\textsuperscript{115} Landau, 273.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid, 276.
\end{flushright}
the plan resembled early nineteenth-century English villa plans of the picturesque variety. Americans were chiefly attracted to the charm of the French Picturesque movement. Scully suggested, “Hunt’s inspiration for this kind of design in wood came mainly from European examples of ‘rustic’ architecture, like the picturesque pavilions in the Bois de Boulogne and elsewhere, which were built by his colleagues at the Ecole in the early fifties (figure 25).” The picturesque imagery, decorative gables, polychromy, and colorful slate roofs would have inspired Hunt’s houses in Newport.

Throughout the two decades following the construction of the Griswold House, several of Hunt’s cottages and villas in Newport further demonstrated the European picturesque influences. Two in particular are the Thomas G. Appleton House (1870-1871) and the Henry G. Marquand House (“Linden Gate;” 1872-1873). Hunt built the Appleton House for a close friend who was a poet, essayist, and writer of travel books. This house is Hunt’s version of the villa normande with, “steep roofs, picturesquely combined materials, Swiss gable and balconies, and diamond-patterned, slatted upper walls.”

Linden Gate was built for Henry Marquand, a banker, railroad financier, and the president of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Marquand commissioned the house the same year he was elected as a trustee to the Metropolitan Museum and appropriately earned the nickname “Bric-a-Brac Hall” because it was filled with art and artifacts. The patterned red-and-black

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118 Downing and Scully, 145.
119 In Mosette Broderick’s book, Triumvirate: McKim, Mead & White: Art, Architecture, Scandel and Class in America’s Gilded Age, Broderick defines the villa Normande in relation with Hunt’s resort houses as being, “wood framed with a set of features common in northern-European vernacular houses. The primary identifying feature of these houses was exposed areas of wood truss work of a decorative and non-structural nature. Hunt used these northern European houses as models for his new resort houses at Newport in the 1860s.”
120 Landau, 287.
brick panel can be compared with European villas like Eugène Leban’s design for a country house (1850s; figure 26). The house also had an irregular roofline with jerkin heads, a decorated truss in the apex of the main gable, and a variety of materials.

Hunt’s design for Marquand’s house in Newport was the beginning of a symbiotic relationship between the two. Marquand was a patron of the arts and, “In his early days, he was impressed by the poor design of much of the local architecture, and it was his zeal for improvement that led to his becoming the first honorary member of the AIA.” Marquand’s interest in the arts is clear by his involvement in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, as well as his honor from the AIA exemplifies Marquand’s appreciation of beautiful works of art and architecture. Marquand and Hunt became close and they continued to exchange letters throughout their lifetime. Some of the letters included more personal matters, while some of the letters concerned business matters. Marquand relied on Hunt not only to design his homes, but also to find particular items for his houses while Hunt was in Europe. Marquand valued and trusted Hunt’s particular style of architecture and innovative designs, demonstrating Hunt’s ability to create personal and unique designs for his clients.

Hunt’s distinctive style seen in the Griswold, Appleton, and Marquand houses, was a result of Hunt’s exploitation of the architectural trends of the time. According to historian James Yarnall, there were already five Swiss chalet cottages in Newport before Hunt designed the Griswold House. However, this style may still have been unfamiliar in Newport. Observations of the Griswold House in newspapers suggest this unfamiliarly, but also demonstrate that style was well received. In an article from the Providence Daily Journal, a reporter writes, “J. N. A. Griswold has built one of the best houses in the city on the corner of Bellevue Avenue and Beach

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123 For more information about these chalet, see Yarnall, 236 footnote 9.
Street. It is two stories high, Gothic, with a slate roof, as is the carriage house and stables. The house is quite particular but attractive. Several years later, as the picturesque half-timbered houses were becoming more prevalent, a local society reporter wrote, “The new villas are very costly and elegant seaside residences. They are constructed after the Swiss style and are very showy. One could easily imagine himself in a Swiss village, so rapidly have houses of this description sprung up on the avenue.” Hunt’s use of ornamental half-timbering was the most innovative aspect of the house.

By articulating the exteriors of his buildings, as seen at the Griswold House, Hunt was following a French precedent. Landau exemplifies Hunt’s knowledge of this French precedent to a book he owned, Châteaux de la vallée de la Loire des XVe, XVIe, et XVIIe siècles by V. Petit. Architectural historian, Francis R. Kowsky, uses the illustration of the Château de Montalivet-Lagrange from Petit’s book to demonstrate the, “system of overall articulation of the wall by means of horizontal and vertical bands.” (figure 27) Even though Kowsky uses this example when analyzing Richardson’s Dorsheimer house, it is an equally legitimate example to explain Hunt’s design aesthetics.

It is not known what the Griswolds thought of their new Newport cottage, but they maintained the residence for forty-five years. Hunt once told his son that he must remember, “it’s your clients’ money you’re spending. Your business is to get the best results you can, following their wishes. If they want you to build a house upside down, standing on its chimney, it is up to you to do it and still get the best possible result.”

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125 Ibid. From the cover of the Evening Post, May 19, 1870, Deane Scrapbook.
abnormal in the nineteenth century as architects usually insisted on their artistic integrity and would even turn down commissions if a client would not accept the architect’s point of view. This willingness, along with his vivacious manner and French demeanor, can be attributed to his several successful commissions in Newport throughout the last half of the nineteenth century. Hunt earned the trust of his clients in the 1860s and 70s, showing them how he was able to take French precedents and create a home that fit their needs. Hunt’s attitude led to the Beaux Arts palatial cottage commissions. All of his homes strengthened the authority for which they were made.
Marble House and The Breakers: America’s Châteaux

"So long as all the increased wealth which modern progress brings goes but to build up great fortunes, to increase luxury and make sharper the contrast between the House of Have and the House of Want, progress is not real and cannot be permanent." Henry George, *Progress and Poverty*

Hunt’s domestic architecture in the 1860s and 1870s in Newport, Rhode Island, demonstrated his ability to create custom houses to meet his clients goals and needs. He continued designing cottages throughout the 1880s and 90s, and Hunt is most famously remembered for these later homes, known as the Gilded Age palatial cottages in Newport. The cottages were no longer only being built for friends and close acquaintances of the upper middle class, but now Hunt was designing mansions for extremely wealthy clients. These clients were a part of the “House of the Haves” and could have anything money could buy. For the Vanderbilt family, who were concerned about their social standing, Hunt elevated the academic eclecticism trend in Newport to a new level of intensity with the design of Marble House and the Breakers.

As a member of New York society, it was logical for William Kissam Vanderbilt (1849-1920) and Alva Smith Vanderbilt (1852-1933) to build a house in Newport. William commissioned Hunt to design a house as a birthday gift for his wife, Alva. Baker explains, “By the mid-1880s Hunt had become the most fashionable architect of his time, and some undoubtedly considered a house designed by him to be a badge of high social position.”

Previous to this commission, the Vanderbilts had already worked with Hunt. He designed a château (1882; figure 28) for Alva and William Vanderbilt in New York City, and it is considered to be one of the most important commissions of Hunt’s career. Alva was consumed

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128 In 1873, Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner coined the term Gilded Age in their book, *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today*. The term originally mocked the decadent, tasteless lifestyle of the aristocratic American class. The term is now more used to describe an era of luxury and sophistication.

129 Baker, 334.

130 Ibid, 274.
with elevating her social position, so much so that she has been compared to Lady MacBeth. She was determined to be apart of the 400, and when the Vanderbilts threw a costume party at their new château on Fifth Avenue, they let New York society know that they had arrived. Baker explains, “[people realized] something new was being signaled on Fifth Avenue that night: wealth and fashion could be united to good taste, derived from the past, albeit with ostentatious display.” In the Vanderbilt’s opinion, Hunt had created a house in the late Gothic, early French Renaissance style that demonstrated the Vanderbilt’s wealth and stability in New York society.

In comparison to the size of the house, Marble House sits on a small piece of land off of Bellevue Avenue overlooking the ocean. The plot of land is a half of a mile down the road from William Kissam’s brother, Frederick William Vanderbilt’s house, Rough Point. Frederick William (1856-1938) was the first of his four brothers to build a cottage in Newport. Frederick William commissioned the architectural firm of Peabody & Stearns to design the house in 1887 on lots he bought the previous year. The cottage is in the Elizabethan manner, and Peabody & Sterns decided to use a dark, rusticated stone for the exterior. Upon construction of the house, it was noted for its size and cost. In an article from the Newport Mercury in May 1888, a reporter wrote, “it not only to occupy one of the grandest locations in the world but, when completed, it will probably be most costly private residence in America.” Another article remarked on the scale: “The colossal size of Mr. Frederick Vanderbilt’s new house at Newport, and especially the entrance hall, is still a topic of conversation.”

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131 Alva came from old Southern gentry, whose fortune was destroyed from the Civil War, but she was determined to be back on top.
132 The 400 were the list of people who were a part of high New York society. Caroline Astor (1830-1908), the wife of William Backhouse Astor Jr. (1829-1892.) created the list, and apparently 400 was the number of people that could fit into her ball room.
133 Baker, 284.
134 Yarnall, 130.
was unprecedented by Newport standards, but Frederick’s brother would soon outdo his brother with Marble House.

Hunt was not the first architect to design Beaux-Art palatial cottages for the elite in Newport. Detlef Lienau (1818-1887), a German born, Ecole-trained architect is credited with designing “the earliest cottage to attain a set of Beaux-Art purity.” Lienau designed Beach Cliffe (figure 29) in 1852 for Delancy Kane (1816-1874), a New York banker. For Beach Cliffe, Lienau was inspired by a nineteenth century French suburban illustration modeled after an eighteenth century hôtel. The house was appreciated by Newport’s public, but was considered unique because it was not designed in the Italianate style. Other houses in a châteauesque design predating Marble House in Newport included The Orchard (arch. George Champlin Mason & Son; 1873-74; figure 30) and Wakehurst (arch. Dudley Newton; 1883-1888; figure 31). Colonel George R. Fearing, a founder of the Casino apparently requested blueprints for the Orchard directly from a French architect. In the English style, Wakehurst was designed for an Anglophile, James J. Van Alen (1846-1923) who requested the house to be adapted from a sixteenth-century Elizabethan stone manor house in Sussex, England.

Even though Marble House was a birthday gift, Alva was involved in the design process. Alva was knowledgeable and interested in designing her houses, and Hunt, according to his wife, “had the greatest admiration for Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt’s intellect and broad grasp of architecture and he often said: ‘She’s a wonder!’” For multiple reasons, it was fitting that Alva chose the Petit Trianon as inspiration for Marble House (figure 32). Firstly, le Petit Trianon was constructed as a gift for the mistress of Louis XV, Madame de Pompadour, as a hamlet from Versailles court life. Although Alva was William’s wife, it was still a gift. Secondly, le Petit

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137 Yarnall, 123.
138 Ibid, 125.
139 Baker, 275. CCH, 273.
Trianon was a part of the royal family’s property on their most extravagant château, Versailles. It was said that Alva carefully planned her children’s upbringing in hopes that they would marry into European royalty. The children had French and German governesses; they spoke French with their parents, and their daughter, Consuelo recalled that she could read and write in French and German before English.  

140 Clearly, Alva was concerned with the upbringing and reputation of her family and she spent an incredible amount of time and money ensuring her homes would properly represent her family’s name.

Mr. Vanderbilt’s niece said that “no description can possibly give one an idea of how marvelously beautiful it is. It is far ahead of any palace I have ever seen abroad, far ahead of any I have ever dreamed of.” 141 From the beginning, the marvel of the design scheme is visible. The Tuckahoe and Carrara marble façade display an elegance and lightness upon first glance. The curved railings line the drive focusing the eye on the center portico supported by colossal Corinthian columns, which dominate the west entrance façade. 142 Corinthian pilasters placed orderly between window bays on the façade echo the giant order columns. A balustrade spans across a defined entablature and cornice supporting the columns. On the first floor there are arch topped windows, compared to the smaller flattop windows on the second floor.

The same sculptural and design details continue around the entire house, and the giant order Corinthian pilasters, entablature, and deeply carved cornice continues to wrap around the ocean façade. Mirroring the front west façade, the ocean east façade has projecting pavilions on either side of the central mass of the house (figure 33). The windows on the two end wings are designed in the same pattern as the west façade, but the windows arrangement varies in the

140 Ibid, 275.
142 The temple-front portico is aesthetically similar to the portico of the White House.
central terrace. The windows continue from the first floor to the second floor, are arched on the top, and have a decorative baluster denoting the first level from the second level. Coordinating with the interior staircase, the second-story windows are set lower than the other second-story windows on the rest of the facades. This change creates more space between the top of the window and then entablature, which Hunt chose to fill with floral swags and decorative relief.

The highly decorative scheme of the outside continues into the interior of the house. When discussing the interior of Marble House, cultural historian James Maher complements Hunt,

Hunt knew that the French décor- the imperial opulence of Versailles, the subtle grace of the Hermitage of Madame de Pompadour at Fontainebleau- was extremely difficult to replicate correctly and was almost impossible to adapt without great knowledge and great skill. As the protégé of Lefeul in Paris, he had learned from a master of interpretation, and as the leading palace architect in America, he had gone back to Paris, to Allard, for a high quality of collaboration he require.

The carefully planned interiors are not just a result of Hunt’s knowledge and experience, but also a product of Alva Vanderbilt’s interest in design, and French interior design firm, Jules Allard et Fils. By multiple having collaborators in the design process, the Vanderbilts were able to achieve a historically accurate aristocratic presence in their seaside cottage. Entering through the front door, one notices the elaborate bronze and steel doorway grille, modeled after the gates at Versailles (figure 34). The doorway opens to the front entrance hall covered in an Italian yellow marble with a staircase evocative of that found at le Petit Trianon (figure 35). On either side of the entrance hall is the dining room and ballroom. Covered in pink marble, the dining

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143 Ibid, 84.  
145 Baker, 353.
room was inspired by the Salon d’Hercule at Versailles (figure 36).\textsuperscript{146} Gold decorations adorn the Corinthian pilaster capitals, accept decorative details, and surround the mythological ceiling mural. Over the fireplace, opposite of the entrance is a portrait of Louis XIV, further alluding to French imperial decoration. In the dining room, Hunt, Allard and Alva amplified the use of gold, giving the room its current name, the Gold Room.\textsuperscript{147} The Gold Room is adorned with sea mythology, appropriate for the cottage’s proximity to the ocean. The room is not entirely gold, but it also makes use of marble with the \textit{fleur-de-pêche} fireplace. Beyond the Gold Room, the Gothic living room was designed to complement the Vanderbilt’s collection of medieval art (figure 38). In order to accurately represent the Gothic style, the chimney was replicated from a fifteenth-century chimney from the house of Jacques Coeur in Bourges, France.\textsuperscript{148} The decorative detail of the fireplace continues throughout the room to enhance the Gothic aesthetic. Carved Gothic paneling surrounds the lower half of the walls, and silk damask covers the upper half of the walls. The decorated Gothic stained glass windows add to the rooms authenticity. In keeping with the period room theme, there is a library decorated in the Rococo style. Alva’s bedroom is also decorated in the Rococo style with carving throughout the ceiling and paneling and the use of pastel colors. Every part of the architectural design has been scrupulously thought out in order to properly illustrate the family’s ambitions.

The design scheme of Marble House varies greatly from Hunt’s earlier Newport commissions. At Marble House, the clients were very much concerned with maintaining a specific image at their house, and the increasingly popular Beaux-Art eclecticism fit the needs of the clients. The architectural philosophy derives directly from the teaching at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and became popular in the United States as the school became more accessible for

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{146} Kathrens, 86.
\item \textsuperscript{147} Yarnall explains that the Masons-Lafitte Palace, outside of Paris, inspired the room.
\item \textsuperscript{148} Kathrens, 86.
\end{itemize}
Americans. Characterized by classical architecture, rich decoration, and monumentality, the style was used in America for large public commissions and domestic architecture. During the nineteenth-century, the academic teachings at the Ecole stressed the knowledge of the architecture of antiquity, the Renaissance, and seventeenth and eighteenth century France. Therefore, the buildings often alluded to classical styles. Beaux-Arts eclecticism was an ideal design philosophy and style for the homes of America’s “royals.”

Hunt, with the input of his client, successfully designed an artistically pleasing cottage that fit their needs and is well known today for representing the Gilded Age wealth typified by the Vanderbilt family. Understanding the client’s ambition plays a significant role in appreciating the house. Yarnall uses Harry Desmond’s definition of “greater modern residences” to explain the Newport mansions, “[the mansions] will not be understood unless it is frankly admitted that they are built for men whose chief title to distinction is that they are rich, and that they are designed by men who architectural ideas are profoundly modified by the riches of their clients.”

Marble House is a significant piece of architecture for what it represents, and how it brings together various styles in accordance with the owner’s vision to create a home fit for newly wealthy family interested in being compared to European royalty.

As previously mentioned, Hunt was loyal to his clients, creating houses that fit their needs and wishes. In reference to his later commissions, Baker explains, “He could provide his very wealthy clients what they wanted and what they needed, indulging their whims and satisfying their vanity, while giving himself the satisfaction of creating elegant buildings in different architectural styles with a decorative richness that few other architects were able to achieve.”

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149 Yarnall, 133.
150 Baker, 334.
responsible for securing the commissions than the making the sketches and the drawings.\textsuperscript{151} It is a rather ironic idea because these are the houses that Hunt is most remembered for.

Even though Hunt’s Newport commissions in the 1880s and 90s varied in design, they were built for a small circle of extremely wealthy clients, in particular member of the Vanderbilt family. This is true for The Breakers, the most famous Newport mansion today. Cornelius Vanderbilt II (1843-1899) and his wife Alice Claypoole Gwynne (1845-1834) commissioned The Breakers. When Cornelius II father died, he and his wife assumed the supremacy of the Vanderbilt family.\textsuperscript{152} He was the “titular” head of the family, in part responsible for distributing his father’s fortune throughout the family, and amiable with everyone in the family. Auchincloss expresses his opinion on the lives of the Vanderbilts,

I can only suppose that they really believed that it was the duty of leaders of society to entertain according to the fashions of the day. It was not enough to go regularly to church, to give generously to the poor, to maintain the strictest moral standards and set an example in one’s speech and decorum. No, one had to provide some bread and circuses, too, not necessarily for the mob, but for the “society,” a group presumably made up of the community’s responsible leaders.\textsuperscript{153}

Auchincloss statement makes it seem like the Vanderbilts felt it was their responsibility to have an extravagant house in Newport to entertain at because it was what society expected from a family of power. The large houses of America’s elite, including The Breakers, had the power to confirm a family’s stability and security. The cottages brought to American something the country did not already have, an American “palace.”\textsuperscript{154}

\textsuperscript{152} Auchincloss, 38.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid, 40.
\textsuperscript{154} Baker, 335.
In 1885, Cornelius II bought The Breakers, which sat on eleven acres from Pierre Lorillard. After buying the house, they had the original architect, Peabody & Sterns, complete additions. Seven years later, the house burned to the ground and the Vanderbilts commissioned Hunt to rebuild a house on the site. Hunts first proposed the construction of a French Gothic style cottage, but the Vanderbilts felt it lacked originality (figure 39). Instead, they accepted the plans for a cottage based on Genoese palazzi. The Breakers shares the most similarities with the sixteenth century Genoese Palazzo Doria Tursi (now Palazzo Del Muncipio), built in 1565 for a notable local, Nicolò Grimaldi (figure 40).

The Breakers was the first Italianate palatial cottage in Newport and when built, the largest cottage. Arriving at The Breakers, one is first amazed by the sheer size of the cottage. It is three stories tall and broken into six parts, which culminate at the porte-cochère that extends from the central projecting pavilion (figure 41). By including three arches into the front side of the porte-cochère, Hunt alludes the imagery of a triumphal arch. Creating a dynamic façade, Hunt varies the fenestration on the façade. On the second floor of the projecting pavilion, there are flat top windows with carved round arch, which are divided by Ionic columns. On the third floor, there are flat top windows. On either side of the central projecting pavilion, the windows on the first, second, and third floor are grouped in threes, divided by Doric columns on the first floor and Ionic columns on the second floor. Hunt uses a serliana window design for the groups of windows on the first and second floors. Similar to Palazzo Del Muncipio, Hunt uses quoins to outline the ends of the pavilions. Similar to Marble House, The Breakers has a

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155 Kathrens, 106.
deep cornice; however Hunt designed a steeper pitched roof for The Breakers to give more height to the cottage.

Of all of the façades, the ocean façade is the most picturesque (see fig. 3). There are two projecting pavilions at either end with a first-floor loggia and second-floor arcade extends between the projecting wings. Hunt makes use of round arches with three, triumphal arches on the loggia and three double arches for the arcade. Hunt uses the same fenestration on the projecting end wings and the end wings on the entrance façade. The south façade is also of note with a two-story semicircular extension from the central pavilion. Hunt uses round arched windows and arches on the first floor and flattop windows on the second floor and third floor. Hunts successfully used classical Italian motifs to fit the needs of the Vanderbilts.

The opulence of the exterior is matched in the interiors. The Vanderbilts spared no expense in creating stately interiors. Entering through large oak doors, a visitor processes through reception rooms before reaching the focal point of the interior, the Great Hall. The “circulation core of the mansion” has forty-five-foot high ceilings with a fresco of the sky covering the ceiling.\(^{157}\) All of the rooms emanate from the elaborately decorated great hall (figure 42). Similar to Marble House, all of the rooms are period rooms decorated in various historic styles. The music room is designed in an Italian Renaissance style, whereas the dinning room is modeled on the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles.\(^{158}\) The private bedrooms were less sumptuous, and as Yarnall writes, “The

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\(^{157}\) Yarnall, 141.

Breakers bedrooms were among the first interiors to illustrate what soon became a fashion for quiet classical elegance.\textsuperscript{159}

For the clients, it was important that the interiors would provide the proper setting for entertaining. Baker explains, “The Breakers provided richly ornate and theatrical settings for the lavish dinner parties, the costume balls, and other entertainments that became so characteristic of fashionable society during the summer seasons in the years around the turn of the century.”\textsuperscript{160} Hunt designed The Breakers, as well as his other Newport cottages, with a specific lifestyle in mind. However European these interiors were considered, not all found them to be elegant. After visiting The Breakers, Paul Bourget (1852-1935), a French novelist thought the houses to be “senseless prodigalities of high life.”\textsuperscript{161}

Since their construction, Marble House and The Breakers have viewed as both successful and distasteful works of architecture. When writing about Hunt’s domestic architecture in Newport, William Jordy appropriate explains, “Of all the fine buildings in Newport, one can assert of these more than any other that Newport simply would not be Newport without them. This, in itself, is the measure of Hunt’s imperious accomplishment.”\textsuperscript{162} The mansions, which still stand today and operate under the Newport Preservation Society, are a main tourist attraction in Newport. In a book written by Maud Howe Elliot (1854-1948) in the 1930s, she describes the Cliff Walk with great acclaim, “Some of these fine châteaux are so well placed that they are a delight to the passer-by as well as to the occupant. The great architect, Richard Morris Hunt, designed

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid, 143.
\textsuperscript{160} Baker, 370.
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid, 372.
the most superb of these—‘The Breakers.’”¹⁶³ Elliot’s book is well known for its accurate representation of Newport during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and her description of the Cliff Walk is still applicable today.

Marble House and The Breakers became the models for the cottages in Newport. Their construction was the manifestation of all the possibility of design in Newport. Hunt created two houses fit for American “royalty” who were concerned with their appearance to their social circle. Hunt used principles from his education at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts to develop an architectural style for the Vanderbilts. Owned by the Preservation Society of Newport County, the homes are essentially preserved in their original state, so visitors can get a glimpse of lives of the elite from the Gilded Age.

¹⁶³ Maud Howe Elliot, This was my Newport (Cambridge, Massachusetts: University Press, 1945), 161.
Conclusion

Beginning in the 1850s, it became fashionable for vacationers in Newport to build second “vacation” houses. Through his previous commissions, Upjohn was well connected with this elite group of vacationers. He was a well-practiced architect, capable of designing houses that would help promote the development of Newport as a destination that attracted members of high society. He designed homes that were in accordance with the styles of the time but had not yet made it to Newport. They demonstrated the wealth of their residents and they showed Newport’s ability to be a cosmopolitan destination. Upjohn created homes not only for his clients, but also for the community of Newport.

Upjohn’s designs reflected European fashions that had become increasingly popular in America. Kingscote represented a home designed in the cottage orné, a style whose popularity dates back to eighteenth century England. At Kingscote, a Gothic Revival cottage, Upjohn articulated a revival style that could be applied to a summer cottage. This cottage exemplifies how a house can take on elements that, in turn, create a personality. In the villa for Edward King, Upjohn designed a home in the Italianate style; a fashionable style for an even more fashionable man. Italianate architecture was popular in America for years following the construction of the Edward King Villa. King was interested in furthering the development of Newport and by commissioning an Italianate home, he advertised Newport as a cosmopolitan summer destination. In addition to designing homes in Gothic and Italianate styles, he also designed a home in the Stick Style.

Upjohn was well versed in the contemporary architectural movements and styles. He did not stick to one specific type of home when designing the cottages and villas in Newport. He was able to provide his clients with unique homes that could demonstrate their cultural ambition and
knowledge. Upjohn’s domestic architecture in Newport indicates the summer destination’s openness and need for homes designed by professional architects. He showed that creating varied homes, unique to the client’s needs and wishes were necessary for success in Newport. With these homes, Upjohn set the stage for Hunt.

Hunt started designing homes in Newport ten years after he finished his schooling at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Since finishing school, he had traveled throughout Europe and part of Africa. He was well versed with the popular styles of Europe. Due to his education, he was immediately well regarded by his fellow artists in America. Through his connections acquired through his family, travels, and artist connections, Hunt received commissions. In his early picturesque and Stick Style homes in Newport, Hunt used his education from the Ecole and his knowledge of European architecture to create distinctive homes for his clients. Also, the Griswold House, Appleton House, and Linden Gate shared similarities, each found a way not only to reflect Hunt’s design aesthetics but also the clients goals and needs. The Griswolds had spent time in Europe and therefore, knew and appreciated the European aesthetic. Marquand was deeply involved in arts during his lifetime, and so it was only natural for him to have a contemporary, decorative home in Newport. Appleton, a patron of arts also wrote travel books, and would have been concerned with the aesthetics of his Newport home. These homes also provided him with the opportunity to further America’s visual culture, a concern of his since studying at the Ecole.

Hunt’s early homes were especially important for securing his later commissions. Hunt was always willing to please his clients and this facilitated Hunt’s ability to win commissions for the Vanderbilt family. Similar to Hunt’s concern with furthering the design aesthetics in America, the Vanderbilt family was concerned with furthering their position in society. Just as
Versailles elevated the rule of Louis XIV and the renovation to St. Peter’s Basilica elevated the status of the Papal authority, the Vanderbilt family knew that their homes could elevate the status of the family. They appropriately chose Hunt, who was willing to design homes they felt properly demonstrated their wealth. Marble house is modeled after le Petit Trianon and the White House, the homes of European royalty and American democracy, respectfully, whereas the Breakers was modeled after a dignitary’s sixteenth century palazzo in Genoa. The Vanderbilt family supported designs that would elevate their family’s status, and Hunt was willing to fulfill the family’s wishes. He had seen many of Europe’s palaces and knew how to manipulate their designs in order to build a home that fit the needs of a family who thought of themselves as American royalty.

His palatial Beaux-Art cottages in Newport were reflective of his clients, whereas his Newport homes designed in the 1870s were intellectually driven by his studies and designs. These buildings properly reflected his career and originality, but they are not often associated with Hunt’s career. All but one still stands in Newport and it was better associated with the Newport Art Museum and Art Association than with Hunt’s career. People do not remember Hunt for the innovatively designed Griswold house and the unique Marquand house, but he is instead remembered for the Marble House and the Breakers. Both of the palatial cottages are open year-round and operated through the Preservation society of Newport County. To average visitors, they are magnificent and unbelievable works of architecture, but to the educated architectural historian, they are unoriginal. These houses are not only responsible for making Hunt famous, but also for casting his posthumous reputation in doubt.

Upjohn and Hunt both played crucial roles in the development of architecture in Newport, but in different ways. Upjohn demonstrated that there was room for a professional
architect in Newport, and he popularized American styles in the seaside town. Later in the nineteenth century when Newport was developing and more vacationers decided to become residents, they would look at Upjohn’s work and see how a house could define a person and a town. Due to his training at the Ecole and previous experience, Hunt was the architect to hire to create a commission that would satisfy the client’s needs. In the 1870s, he designed homes that stood out in Newport and gathered acclaim. When the Vanderbilt family chose to build in Newport, they commissioned Hunt who was well-versed classical European styles. The potential for professionally designed domestic architecture was first explored by Upjohn and then fully exploited by Hunt.
Figure 1. RICHARD MORRIS HUNT. *The Biltmore*, 1890. Asheville, North Carolina.

Figure 2. HUNT. *Marble House*, 1888-1892. Newport, Rhode Island.

Figure 3. HUNT. *The Breakers*, 1893. Newport.
Figure 4. MCKIM, MEAD, and WHITE. *Newport Casino*, 1879-1880. Newport.

Figure 5. RICHARD UPJOHN. *Kingscote*, 1839. Newport.

Figure 6. UPJOHN. *Villa for Edward King*, 1845-47. Newport.

Figure 7. UPJOHN. *Hamilton Hoppin House*, 1856. Middletown, Rhode Island.

Figure 8. HUNT. *Griswold House*, 1862-64. Newport.
Figure 9. HUNT. *Linden Gate*, 1871-73. Newport.

Figure 10. UPJOHN. *Oaklands*, 1835-37. Gardiner, Maine.

Figure 11. *Samuel Whitehorn Jr. House*, 1811. Newport.

Figure 12. RUSSELL WARREN. *Levi G. Gale House*, 1835. Newport.
Figure 13. RUSSELL WARREN. *William Vernon House*, 1833. Newport.

Figure 14. UPJOHN. Gothic Details, *Kingscote*. Newport.

Figure 15. UPJOHN. Water color perspective, *Kingscote*.

Figure 16. UPJOHN. Floor plan, *Kingscote*. 
Figure 17. UPJOHN. Initial design, Kingscote.

Figure 18. A. J. DAVIS. Villa for David Codwise, 1835. New Rochelle, New York.

Figure 19. HORRACE WALPOLE. Strawberry Hill, 1749-1776. London, England.

Figure 20. UPJOHN. Illustration in Downing, Edward King Villa.
Figure 21. HUNT. *Tenth Street Studios*, 1857. New York, New York.

Figure 22. PHILIP WEBB. *Red House*, 1859. Bexleyheath, England. 
Figure 23. HUNT. Floor plan, *Griswold House*.

Figure 24. HUNT. Grand staircase, *Griswold House*.

Figure 25. G. DAVIOUD. *Madrid Gatehouse*, 1855-57. Bois de Boulogne, Paris, France.
Figure 26. EUGENE LEBAN. Design for a country house, 1850s.

Figure 27. V. PETIT, *Château de Montaliet-Lagrange*, 16th-17th c. Saint-Bouize, France.

Figure 28. HUNT. *W. K. Vanderbilt House*, 1885. New York, New York.

Figure 29. DETLET LIENAU. *Beach Cliffe*, 1852. Newport.
Figure 30. GEORGE CHAMPLIN MASON & SON. The Orchard, 1873-74. Newport.

Figure 31. DUDLEY NEWTON. Wakehurst, 1883-1888. Newport.

Figure 32. ANGE-JACQUES GABRIEL. Le Petit Trianon, 1762-68. Versailles, France.

Figure 33. HUNT. Ocean façade, Marble House.
Figure 34. HUNT. Steel grille, *Marble House*.

Figure 35. HUNT. Entrance Hall, *Marble House*.

Figure 36. HUNT. Dining Room, *Marble House*.

Figure 37. HUNT. Gold Room, *Marble House*.
Figure 38. HUNT. Gothic Living Room, *Marble House*.

Figure 39a and 39b. HUNT. First design, *The Breakers*.

Figure 40. DOMENICO and GIOVANNI PONZELLO. Palazzo Doria-Tursi, 1565. Genoa, Italy.

Figure 41. HUNT. Entrance façade, *The Breakers*.
Figure 42. HUNT. Great Hall, *The Breakers*. 
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