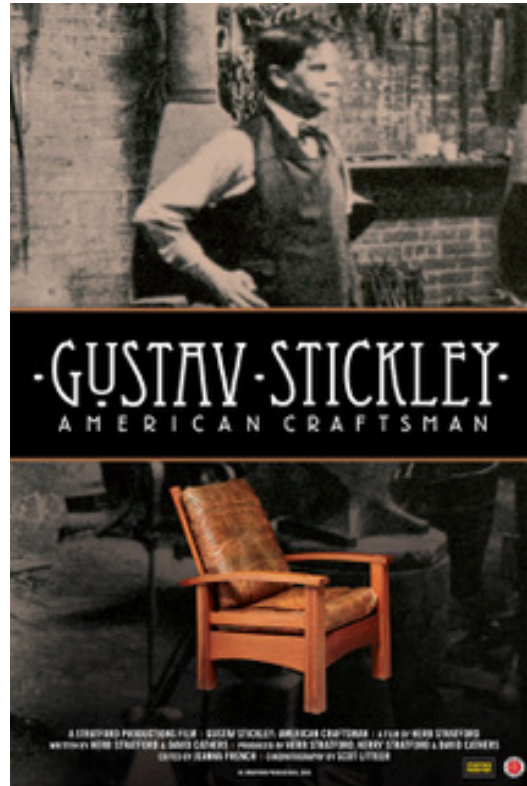


Gustav Stickley: American Craftsman

A film by Herb Stratford

68 minutes, color, 2020



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Logline

The rise, fall and resurrection of the father of the American Arts and Crafts movement is chronicled in the new documentary *Gustav Stickley: American Craftsman*.

Synopsis

The rise, fall and resurrection of the father of the American Arts and Crafts movement is chronicled in the new documentary *Gustav Stickley: American Craftsman*.

The film offers an unprecedented look at the life and works of Gustav Stickley as told through interviews, archival materials, and a close examination of his most iconic works. It traces the development and evolution of Stickley's unique style, as well as the creation of his diverse businesses including the Craftsman Magazine, Craftsman Farms and his ground-breaking Manhattan store. It also details the eventual loss of his businesses - and, after several decades, the rebirth and recognition of the movement he inspired.

The film visits several key locations in his lifetime, including his Syracuse home, where he lived and created his first arts and crafts interior, and the pump house at Skaneateles Lake in upstate New York, which he restored as a summer family camp; as well we meet some of the talented collaborators Stickley surrounding himself with, such as Harvey Ellis, Lamont Warner and Irene Sargent.

Director's Statement

As a passionate fan, collector and student of the American Arts and Crafts Movement—as well as its architects, designers and craftspeople. Telling the story of Gustav Stickley has been on my radar for over twenty years. The challenge was to find a way to tell the remarkable story of

Stickley's life and work briefly and succinctly. Given the incredible depth and breadth of his work, this was no small task as his catalog of accomplishments could easily fill a mini-series.

I felt the pressure of capturing the broader story of the Arts and Crafts (A&C) Movement and one of its champions in a way that would be engaging to current aficionados as well as novices. Thankfully, I was able to collaborate with author, biographer and historian David Cathers, who not only offered the depth of his decades-long research and insight but also assisted in making connections to the Arts and Crafts world, Stickley family members and others.

The film took four years from start to finish, and our crew's frequent trips from the Southwest to the East Coast, Midwest and Southeast offered remarkable access to some of the best examples of Stickley's work in museums and private collections and offered a chance to meet key figures to help tell the story. Sharing Stickley's legacy has broadened and deepened my appreciation for his work and the collectors, historians and craftspeople now carrying on the traditions he championed, and I am happy to now call many of these people friends.

Locations

Craftsman Farms, Morris Plains, NJ

Stickley House, Syracuse, NY

Stickley Museum, Fayetteville, NY

Stickley Factory, Manlius, NY

Former Stickley building/store, Manhattan, NY

Stickley summer home, Skaneateles, NY

30th annual National Arts and Crafts Conference, Asheville, NC

Crab Tree Farm, Private Collection, Chicago, IL (1st production to ever film here)

Private collection, Boston, MA

Private collection, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Private collection, upstate NY

Museum of the American Arts and Crafts Movement, St Petersburg, FL

Two Red Roses Foundation, Palm Harbor, FL

Subjects

David Cathers, Historian & Biographer of Gustav Stickley

Vonda Givens, Executive Director Craftsman Farms

Peter Mars, Board member, Craftsman Farms

Ben Wiles, Stickley Grandson

Tim & Cindy McGuinn, Stickley Great-grand daughter

Barbara Fuldner, Stickley Great-grand daughter

Peter Wiles, Stickley family

David Rudd, Stickley House Foundation Board member

Cleota Reed, Author and biographer of Irene Sargent, Craftsman Magazine editor

Bruce Johnson, National Arts and Crafts Conference Director

Fred & Patsy Porter, early A&C collectors, Ann Arbor MI

David Rago, Rago Arts, American Arts and Crafts dealer

Suzanne Perrault, Rago Arts, American Arts and Crafts dealer

Tracy Kamerer, Chief Curator, Museum of the American Arts and Crafts Movement

Alberto Alfonso, Architect, Museum of the American Arts and Crafts Movement

Gustav Stickley Biography

Gustav Stickley (1858 -1942) was an American design icon, a furniture maker, architect, and publisher. Through his designs, writings and teachings, he became a leading advocate of the Arts and Crafts movement, which flourished in the United States around the turn of the 20th century.

Based in a suburb of Syracuse, New York, Stickley's company manufactured furniture, metal-work, and textiles from 1900 to 1916. Although Stickley called his style “Craftsman”, it's also often referred to as “Mission” or “Mission Oak”.

Stickley believed furniture should be rational - that is, well-made, comfortable and practical. He wanted it to be attractive as well, but argued that its attractiveness should stem from a harmonious shape and quality materials, instead of superfluous, purely decorative details. The aim of good design (and, in fact, of the entire Arts and Crafts Movement) was "to substitute the luxury of taste for the luxury of costliness; to teach that beauty does not imply elaboration or ornament; to employ only those forms and materials which make for simplicity, individually and dignity of effect."

It was through *The Craftsman* magazine, which ran from 1901 to 1916, that Stickley promoted his principles. Along with articles about other Arts and Crafts advocates and designers, like John Ruskin and William Morris, the magazine published plans showing readers how to construct their own furniture, handicrafts, and even houses.

In addition to his monthly publication and furniture enterprise, Stickley owned and operated retail locations across the country including a flagship store in Manhattan that featured whole-home planning and shopping options with architectural services and a top floor farm-to-table restaurant. He owned a 650-acre farm in New Jersey that was to become a Craftsman school for children that is now a national historic landmark.

Filmmaker Biography

Stratford is a filmmaker, artist and writer. *Gustav Stickley: American Craftsman* is his first

feature-length documentary, following several documentary short films. He is also a film critic and film festival programmer, and a nationally recognized leader on the restoration of historic theatres. He is currently developing additional documentary films as well as unscripted television projects. Stratford and his professional film crew are located in Tucson, Arizona.

Full Credits

Director

Herb Stratford

Written by

Herb Stratford & David Cathers

Producers

Herb Stratford, Kerry Stratford, David Cathers

Director of Photography

Scot Litter

Production Design

Kerry Stratford

Editor

Jeanna French

Special Narration

Brendan McGinn

Colorist

Scot Litteer

Final Audio Mix

Fred Porter

Film Title Design

Kerry Stratford

Production Assistant/Crew

Matthew Stratford