

## **Gilbert Stanley Underwood (1890-1961)**

B.A. (architecture), Yale University 1920

M.A., Harvard University 1921-1923

Underwood left behind a diverse body of work from coast to coast including 25 buildings listed on the National Historic Register. The structures listed on the National Historic Register include: The Ahwahnee Hotel, Jackson Lake Lodge, Zion Nature Center & Inn, Bryce Inn, (11) post offices and Annex buildings; (4) train depots and passenger terminals, and (6) additional buildings including the U.S. Mint in San Francisco, Rincon Annex in San Francisco, U.S. Department of State and U.S. General Accounting buildings in Washington D.C.

Underwood made the shift from private practice in the 1920's to government work with the onset of the Depression. Very active career in Washington, D.C., where he worked for several agencies, producing an array of designs between 1932 and 1954.

Became acquainted with rail tycoon, William Averell Harriman, who joined the Union Pacific Railroad in 1915 and served as its chairman between 1932-1946. Both men attended Yale University. Underwood worked extensively with Harriman's Union Pacific Railroad in the 1920's, creating seventeen Union Pacific Depots between 1920 and 1930. The Union Pacific recommended Underwood to the Utah Parks Company, which sought an architect to design rustic hotels for tourists. Underwood collaborated with Daniel Hull, Senior Landscape Engineer with the US Park Service, on accommodations at the Ahwahnee Hotel, Grand Canyon Lodge, Zion Lodge, Old Faithful Lodge, and many others.

In the 1930's, Underwood was involved with the Union Pacific Railroad's ski development at Sun Valley, ID. Underwood designed the Lodge in 1935 before its site had been selected. Construction on the 220-room Sun Valley Lodge began in April 1936 and the \$1.5mm hotel was open to the public in December of that same year.

From 1936-1939, Underwood worked for the US Government, Department of the Treasury, to design several large US Post Offices in CA and along the West coast. These included large facilities in Los Angeles and San Francisco, as well as smaller ones in Burbank and Seattle. Underwood retired from government work in 1954 having served as the Chief Architect, United States Government, General Services Administration. During his career, in addition to the many National Park lodges, it is estimated that he designed 20 post offices, two major federal buildings, and the U.S. State Department Building.

# GILBERT STANLEY UNDERWOOD PROJECTS

## The Ahwahnee Hotel

Located in the majestic main valley inside Yosemite Park, the hotel was built in 1927 and is a National Historic Landmark and one of the most distinctive resort hotels in North America.



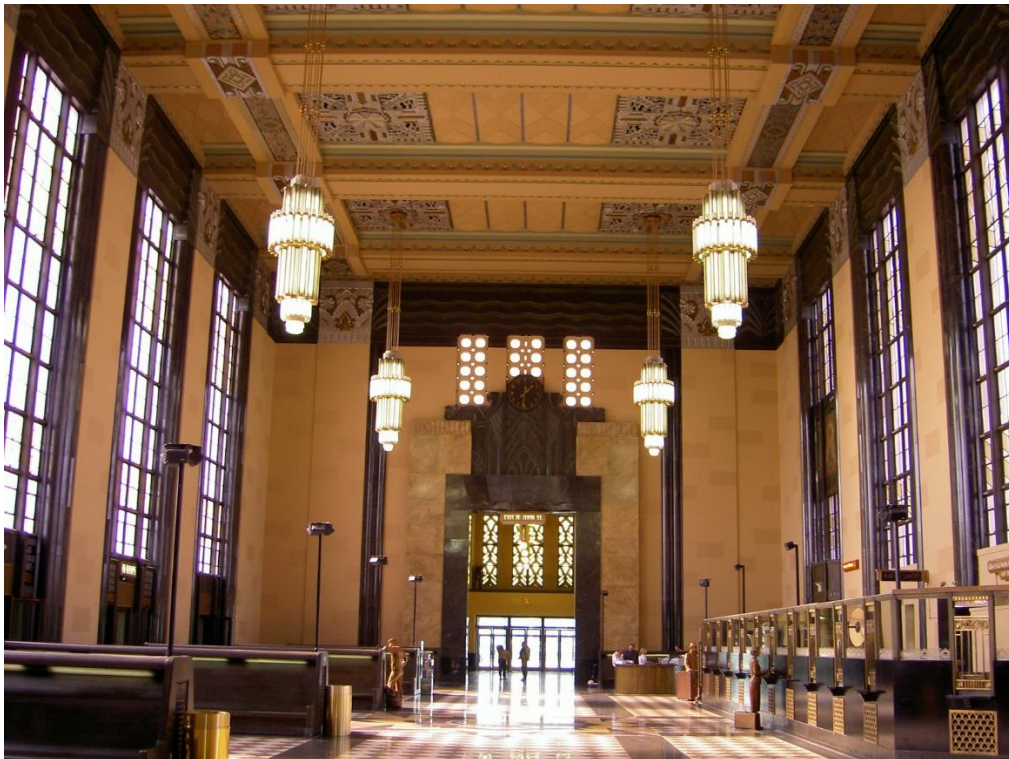
## Sun Valley Lodge

The Sun Valley Resort was the brainchild of Union Pacific Railroad Chairman, Averell Harriman, who thought that creating a resort that rivaled those in Europe might help reinvigorate passenger service for the railroad. An Austrian count was hired to find the perfect mountain and architect Gilbert Stanley Underwood was commissioned to build a lodge to equal, or best, his previous projects in America's National Parks (the original Grand Canyon North Rim Lodge, Old Faithful Lodge in Yellowstone, and many others). Designed and built in less than 9 months at a cost of \$1.5mm, the Lodge opened on the December 21, 1936 with 220 guest rooms.



## Union Pacific Omaha Station

Between 1920 and 1930, Underwood designed 17 railroad depots for Union Pacific. The 124,000 sf terminal in Omaha, Nebraska completed construction in 1931 at a cost of \$3.5mm and was his last. It is considered one of the finest examples of Art Deco architecture in the Midwest and was designated an Omaha Landmark in 1978. Of the building's design, Underwood was said to have remarked, "We have tried to express the distinctive character of the railroad: strength, power, masculinity."



### **United States Post Office, Terminal Annex, Los Angeles**

Designed by Underwood and built by Sarver & Zoss from 1939 to 1940. The building was built for the purpose of processing all incoming and outgoing mail in Los Angeles. Underwood sought to keep the building's design compatible with the city's Union Station, which opened across the street in May 1939.



### **The Wilshire Tower (Desmond's Department Store)**

The first Art Deco landmark tower built on the Miracle Mile in 1929. This striking and optimistic structure helped set the architectural standard for Wilshire Boulevard.



## The San Francisco Mint

Built during the height of the Great Depression, The San Francisco Mint sits on a rocky promontory that towers over the nearby streets. It was a Works Progress Administration (New Deal) project under President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Designed by Underwood, the structure is a modern classical design with a frieze depicting numismatic history of the country. The building was completed at a cost of \$1.072mm and dedicated in May 1937.



## Jackson Lake Lodge

In 1950, John D. Rockefeller Jr. called on architect Gilbert Stanley Underwood to design the Jackson Lake Lodge. Nestled among the sagebrush, pines and aspen on a terrace above its namesake lake, Jackson Lake Lodge was the final National Park creation of Underwood after having designed the Ahwahnee Lodge in Yosemite, Brice Canyon Lodge, the Grand Canyon Lodge and Zion Lodge. This project took root in the mid-1950's and it marked a turning point in national park architecture ("Parkitecture"). Built from slabs of concrete and sweeping panes of glass, this structure stood in stark contrast to Underwoods prior arts-and-crafts-influenced lodging. The Lodge opened for business in 1955.



## Bay Island:

In 1903, Rufus Sanborn bought lands from Canton Andre that included this treasured hunting spot. The land was purchased for \$350 and included an inland parcel on the peninsula but was prized for its small island and waterfront overflow lands. Sanborn and his partner, Sam Tustin (noted real estate developer), were the first two to build homes on the sand island deeded to the Bay Island Club, a holding company. In 1909, the Bay Island Club received governmental approval for dredging and expansion. Once completed, a wooden access bridge was built setting a “no car” policy for the island that exists to this day.



*Aerial shot of Bay Island*

Little else has changed on Bay Island except for the price, size and quality of its homes. Similarly successful businessmen or their families still own the 23 lots on this unique and sequestered islet. The ducks are long gone and hunting has turned into tennis or sailing, but the celebrity of owning a part of Bay Island is unlike anything else in the harbor. The five-acre island was originally divided into 24 bay front lots plus three and one-half acres of common land. Amenities include a large bay beach, docking facilities, a view park overlooking Newport’s largest turning basin, a tennis court, numerous gardens and a caretaker’s unit all submerged beneath a canopy of old growth trees. Off island is a parking structure for residents and their golf carts which is the only way to access the island except on foot.

Those who own homes do so by virtue of membership and ownership in a cooperative. This is accomplished by owning one share in the Bay Island Corporation. A stock certificate is issued in lieu of the usual deed of trust. Owners investing face unusual challenges in buying, selling and borrowing on Bay Island homes. This also allows for a more scrutinized policy for ownership dating back to an old “Bay Island Club” exclusive environment.

Early notables on the island were F.R. Aldrich, famed conchologist with a world-renown shell collection and Moses Sherman, namesake of Sherman Library & Gardens in Corona del Mar, and founder of Sherman Oaks in the San Fernando Valley. The first caretaker for the island was Paul Mariner from 1904 - 1931 setting this position as a treasured and long-standing tradition. Later, H.R. Halderman,

Richard Nixon's aide who was complicit in the Watergate Scandal and May Chandler of the L.A. Times family were Bay Island residents, adding to a long list of influential businessmen, bankers and real estate developers that have occupied this magical island. As kids, it was even rumored that one of the greatest cowboys ever, Roy Rogers, lived there with his "yacht" PT Joe.

Without a doubt, Newport Beach's earliest and most colorful of famous residents was Madame Helena Modjeska and her husband Count Bozenta. Helena Modjeska was a world-renown Polish Shakespearean actress. The couple bought a small cottage at #3 Bay Island in 1907. Because of her widespread fame and adoration, the island was oftentimes referred to as Modjeska Island in those days, but the name Bay Island weathered time and remains. Another example of Madame Modjeska's importance in Orange County history can be seen at the site of her "country estate" in Modjeska Canyon, part of the Santa Ana Mountains.

...being these lots, the brochure predicted, would not only help pay off the Club's debt but also reduce each shareholder's annual payment from \$600 to \$35

...Needless to say, lots were not so and the Island debt...in a most unusual way. E from the minute Board and annual meetings flesh details of this situation.

The seawall needed to surround the beach made sand the city Newport Beach dredged from a channel east of Bay Island and de

...according to the real estate

...ay in 1936, "people in authority" wanted another deep water channel from Balboa Island to the peninsula

**We Present You With Your Treasure Map of BAY ISLAND**

RESIDENT MEMBERS who enjoy the many advantages of BAY ISLAND

- 1 John T. Clark 1907
- 2 Mrs. L. Loring 1907
- 3 Madame Helena Modjeska 1907
- 4 Mrs. L. Loring 1907
- 5 Mrs. L. Loring 1907
- 6 Mrs. L. Loring 1907
- 7 Mrs. L. Loring 1907
- 8 Mrs. L. Loring 1907
- 9 Mrs. L. Loring 1907
- 10 Mrs. L. Loring 1907
- 11 Mrs. L. Loring 1907
- 12 Mrs. L. Loring 1907
- 13 Mrs. L. Loring 1907
- 14 Mrs. L. Loring 1907
- 15 Mrs. L. Loring 1907
- 16 Mrs. L. Loring 1907
- 17 Mrs. L. Loring 1907
- 18 Mrs. L. Loring 1907
- 19 Mrs. L. Loring 1907
- 20 Mrs. L. Loring 1907
- 21 Mrs. L. Loring 1907
- 22 Mrs. L. Loring 1907

Foot Bridge to Mainland  
Bay Island Bridge. Weekday Service During Season to Adult Members and Guests Only. No Auto Traffic. Club Grounds 1 Block Away.

Courtesy Buz Bonsall



## #20 BAY ISLAND

#20 was constructed for May & Roger Chandler (May was one of Harry Chandler's daughter and a sister of Norman Chandler) in 1929-1930. The home has 4 bedrooms and 4.5 bathrooms in 3,504sf of living space.

From Joan T. Seaver Kurze's book *Insular Connections on Bay Island*:

From 1929 until 1987, nearly 60 years, the family of May Chandler Goodan and her husband, Roger Goodan owned #20. One of their four children, Douglas Goodan, described his parents' courtship around 1914. The pair would arrive from town on the Red Car, perch on piles of redwood planks near the George Rogers' unfinished house on Buena Vista, and gaze across the channel at Bay Island. They probably looked straight at the empty lot at #20 – which, in 15 years, would be theirs. In 1929 when Roger and May were planning their Island house, the Ahwahnee Hotel was under construction in Yosemite Valley. Roger was friendly with the Director's of Yosemite's Camp Curry Company, and he hired Gilbert Stanley Underwood, the Ahwahnee's architect, to design the house at #20.

Another Chandler/Goodan connection to Bay Island was the partnership of May's brother, Norman Chandler, former publisher of the Los Angeles Times, with Edward Llewellyn (Lyn) Emmett; they owned Emmett and Chandler, an insurance business. Their company thrived during the Great Depression, and it continued to be a fixture in Los Angeles for over four decades.







