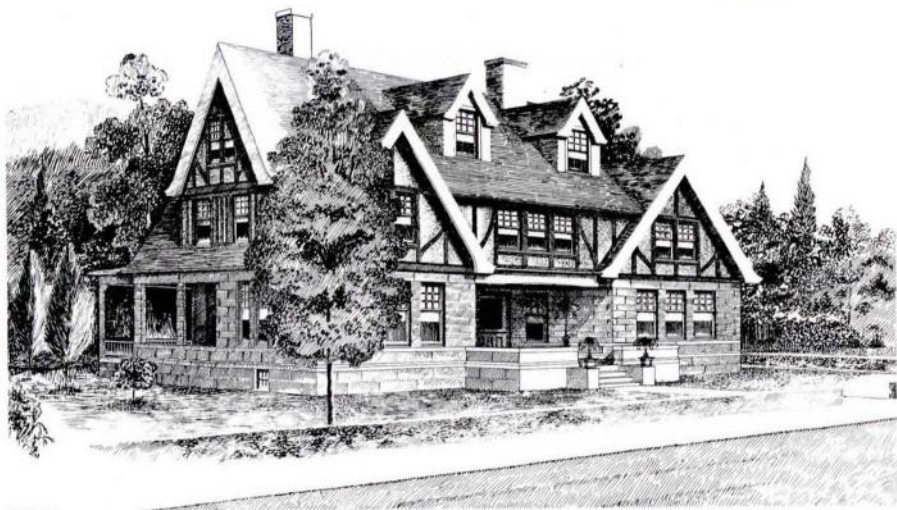




Fred Savage's House, *Hilltop Cottage*, in Northeast Harbor. Circa 1887

"Atlantean"
Fred C. Savage
ARCHITECT
BAR HARBOR, ME.



Fred Savage's House, *Atlantean*, in Bar Harbor. Circa 1901.

Fred Savage, The Cottage Builder

by *Jaylene B. Roths*

Fred Savage was Mount Desert Island's most prolific native-born architect. He was responsible for the design and construction of a majority of the summer cottages in Northeast Harbor during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as well as for a significant number of summer houses in Bar Harbor, and others scattered around the island.

Early on, Savage had the good fortune to meet prominent Boston architect, Robert Peabody who had designed a house in Northeast Harbor. Savage was offered an opportunity to study architecture in Peabody's office in Boston. It is due in large part to Peabody's tutelage of Savage that Mount Desert Island is a mecca for superior late nineteenth and early twentieth century Shingle style architecture.

Fred Lincoln Savage, the third of Augustus Chase Savage and Emily Manchester Savage's eight children, was born on November 14, 1861. He was a descendant of the island's earliest settlers. His great-grandfather John Savage first came to America from Glasgow, Scotland, and settled in Salem, Massachusetts, around 1770. John Savage later enlisted in the Continental Army and fought in the Battle of Bunker Hill. He and his wife, Sarah Dolliver, arrived on Mount Desert Island, Maine in 1798 and built a cabin near Harbor Brook in Northeast Harbor.¹ Their children settled in Asticou, a section of Northeast Harbor named for a Native American chief, an earlier summer visitor.² Fred's mother, Emily Manchester, was the daughter of John Manchester and Linda Myra Clement. Emily's father was a grandson of John and Comfort Manchester, the first settlers in Northeast Harbor.

"Freddie" Savage, as his name appears on school agent H. D. Robert's report in 1871, attended school in Northeast Harbor with his siblings and about 40 other students.³ School records from the period show that the curriculum emphasized the basics--reading, writing and arithmetic. After graduation, Fred made a living on the water. When he was eighteen, he reported his occupation as "fisherman" on the local census, a typical choice for men growing up on the Maine coast in the nineteenth century. Savage also assisted his father in building hotels and cottages for the village's developing summer community. Along with fishing and carpentry, Fred served as the village postmaster for a short time.⁴ In 1881 or 1882, at the age of 19 or 20, Fred went to Boston to become an apprentice of Robert Swain Peabody one of the country's most prominent architects, who became his mentor. According to the Savage family legend,

young Fred met Peabody in Northeast Harbor in 1881, where the young man was working on Charles Eliot's new summer house. (Peabody designed the house for Eliot, his brother-in-law.) One man or the other evidently saw in Savage the potential to be much more than a skilled carpenter.

A picture of Fred Savage's experience at the firm of Peabody and Stearns is offered by Robert Andrews, who came to the firm as an office boy a few years before Savage. Savage, most likely, also started out as an office boy. According to Andrews, he would have been responsible for keeping the office neat, maintaining files, running errands, and copying letters, specifications and drawings. There were usually about 20 to 25 people on the staff, of whom 10 or 12 were permanent employees. In an interview with Cornell Appleton, Peabody and Stearns' chief designer, Mr. Appleton explained that each building designed by the firm was first sketched by Peabody at home and then brought to the office and given to the design team to work out details. From copying these drawings, Savage learned the techniques of architectural design. By the end of his employment, with the training provided at Peabody and Stearns, he would have been able to produce plans on his own.⁵

The period that Fred Savage worked for the firm has been designated by the architectural historian Wheaton Holden as Peabody and Stearns' "triumph of the eclectic" years. Peabody's earlier work tended toward the Victorian Gothic and French Academic styles, but he came to favor the Queen Anne style, and in the 1880s he began blending the forms. During a trip to England in 1882, he became interested in the manner in which the architectural styles had changed dramatically in two English villages that were separated by a hill. The architecture of the two villages, which were in distinctly different natural settings, convinced Peabody that designing buildings to blend with the landscapes was more important than following a prevailing style. Fred Savage was most assuredly influenced by Peabody's observation and many of Savage's cottages are designed to blend in with the island's dramatic surroundings.

It should be emphasized that Fred Savage's mentor was first an artist, and second an architect. Peabody taught his students that they needed to create a work of art that reflected architectural vision, before they could produce drawings. In the years that Savage spent in Robert Peabody's office, he would have heard Peabody's creed, "Sketch! Sketch! And if you can't find anything else to sketch, sketch your boots."⁶ Peabody's chief designer, Julius Schweinfurth, recalled, "Of those who knew Mr. Peabody, questioned as to their opinion of what constituted his greatest work, some have said it was his influence on the men in his employ...."⁷

However, while Savage became a talented designer, he never

accepted his work as art. For Savage, being a good craftsman was more important than being a good artist. In the small rural island community where he was raised, it was difficult to make a living and art was considered a leisure time activity--a luxury only the wealthy summer people could afford. When Savage began his professional work as a designer and builder, he approached his work as a businessman who listened to his client, created the best possible design within a budget, executed it, and moved on to the next job.

Upon his return to Northeast Harbor in 1887, Savage was quickly recognized not only as a dependable building contractor but also as a person with architectural ability. He developed a characteristic architectural style that distinguished his name with both summer and year-round residents, and he established and maintained a solid building and architectural practice from the 1880s into the 1920s. For nearly 40 years, he was Mount Desert Island's preeminent architect, and these were the decades when many of the island's great cottages were built.

In 1887, Savage built a home for himself and opened an architectural office. One year later, at the age of 27, he married 15-year-old Flora Salisbury, one of 10 children of Ann Maria Salisbury and Stephen Salisbury, an Ellsworth farmer.⁸ Fred and Flora had three children--Frederick (their first born who died in his first year), Floralee, born in 1894, and Francis Chase, born in 1896. Emily Phillips Reynolds, Fred Savage's niece, who had fond memories of her "Aunt Flo" wrote, that Flora "was of a cheery, laughing disposition and we always got a sample of her good cooking and were welcomed [in her home]."⁹ Fred and Flora's marriage lasted for 12 years but did not end happily. They divorced in the winter of 1900 and Flora signed over all of her interest in their property to Fred in 1901. Less than a year after the divorce, in October 1901, Savage married his secretary, Alice Raye Preble, a woman 18 years younger than he. Alice Preble was the daughter of Caroline Kennedy Preble and Henry Preble, a carpenter, of Harrington, Maine, in Washington County. Most likely, a relationship with Alice led to the breakup of his marriage to Flora.¹⁰

At first, Savage designed summer cottages primarily in Northeast Harbor, but gradually he began to receive contracts in Bar Harbor. In 1893, he opened an office in Bar Harbor, and by 1896 he had merged his practice with that of another Bar Harbor architect, Milton Stratton.¹¹ This partnership lasted only for a few years. After it dissolved, Savage built a small Tudor style office on Cottage Street near the intersection with Main Street. Savage continued to live in Northeast Harbor but became more involved in Bar Harbor's community life. After marrying Alice Preble, he moved permanently to Bar Harbor.

Savage played a large role in the up-and-coming village of Bar Harbor apart from his architectural work. He joined the Bar Harbor Yacht Club, despite the fact that the membership consisted mostly of wealthy summer people, and later became its commodore. Around 1915, he opened a Franklin Motor Car dealership, one of the first auto dealerships on Mount Desert Island. Apparently, his thinking about the value of having automobiles on Mount Desert Island differed from his father's. According to Robert Pyle, Northeast Harbor librarian and Savage family friend, A. C. Savage objected to automobiles on the Island.¹² A.C.'s other son, Herman, also made a statement on this subject by driving his car into the middle of Northeast Harbor, stopping to have a meal at a local restaurant, and continuing on to his hotel--at a time when autos were still banned in the town of Mount Desert.¹³

Savage was a long-time member of Bar Harbor's Board of Trade (predecessor of the Chamber of Commerce) and served once as its secretary. He had many plans for the development of Bar Harbor. In 1919, for example, he proposed building a waterfront "Victory Road." Trees named for each Bar Harbor "boy" who served in World War I would be planted along the roadside. Savage's intention was to create a more attractive entrance to Bar Harbor for tourists who disembarked at the steamboat wharf. He suggested closing the road to business traffic. At that period, when the Bar Harbor wharf area was not very genteel, Savage thought it was not an appropriate place for visitors to be welcomed into Bar Harbor. The thoroughfare was planned to by-pass Main Street and curve around from the public landing along the shore path up to Albert Meadow.¹⁴

Savage's business prospered. Savage was one of few architects available year-round on the island and therefore was able to oversee work from start to finish. For the same reason, architects of major firms often engaged Savage to oversee the construction of their projects on Mount Desert Island. The best Philadelphia, New York and Boston families chose Savage to design their summer homes even though they were familiar with the top firms of the day such as McKim, Mead and White of New York, Tilden, Register and Pepper of Philadelphia, and, Peabody and Stearns. Charles W. Eliot and William C. Doane's son-in-law, James Gardiner, encouraged their friends to employ Savage. Bishop Doane and Eliot were the founders of the Northeast summer colony, so many of those who followed took cues from them about its people and resources, and thus the Savage trend was set.

Robert Peabody

Savage's mentor, Robert Swain Peabody, also designed summer cottages on Mount Desert Island, but his firm was better known for their work in and around Boston and other cities. His firm, Peabody and Stearns, designed well-

known buildings such as the Providence Railroad Station, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and the Union League Club of New York. Peabody was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts, the capital of America's whaling industry, on February 22, 1845.¹⁵ He was the son of the Reverend Dr. Ephraim Peabody, minister at King's Chapel in Boston, and Mary Jane Derby, who came from a wealthy merchant family in Salem, Massachusetts. The Peabody's had five other children including a daughter, Ellen, who married Charles W. Eliot.

It is uncertain where Robert Peabody began his schooling, but his younger brother, Francis, went to a Dame School run by the widow Mrs. Brown, so it is probable that Robert attended Mrs. Brown's school also. Later, Robert entered a Latin school directed by Epes Sargent Dixwell, and then attended the Boston Latin School. At Boston Latin School, he studied math, English, Latin, Greek, and French and certainly became familiar with classical architecture, which was then going through a revival along with Greek art, literature and political philosophy.

The Reverend Dr. Peabody died in 1856, leaving his widow to raise their four children on a very limited budget. In later years, his son, Francis Peabody wrote:

My mother proceeded to apply her executive energy, of which my spiritual minded father was completely destitute, to the discovery of a home which should be convenient and agreeable but practically without cost. She finally discovered on the western slope of Beacon Hill what seemed to me the smallest house in the world...where two daughters, ready to face the world of society, two school boys with insatiable appetites, and an untiringly energetic mother, could find room to eat and sleep, not to speak of bathing...¹⁶

Despite the her restricted means, Mary Jane Peabody prepared her sons for the complete education which her husband had arranged before his death. Robert's education was financed by his namesake "Governor" Swain, and Francis was supported by a parishioner of King's Chapel. In 1860, Robert entered Harvard College.

Architecture was then a fairly new profession in the United States. In 1866, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology offered the nation's first course in architectural design that was taught as a discipline separate from engineering.¹⁷ Most college-level architecture classes had been taught, up to that time, as part of an engineering program with an emphasis on classical European designs. The best architectural students usually went to Europe and to train at Paris' École des Beaux-Arts, the French National school of fine arts.¹⁸ Even with the

development of architectural schools in America, many architects began their training in the office of a mentor. After graduating from Harvard Peabody found a position in the office of James Fox Gridley Bryant in Boston. This firm utilized the elements of classical design on architecture. After a few months, Peabody moved to the office of Henry Van Brunt, also of Boston. His new mentor had been a student of Richard Morris Hunt, the first American to graduate from the *École des Beaux-Arts*.

In Van Brunt's office, Peabody met John Goddard Stearns, Jr., Van Brunt's chief draftsman, who had graduated from Harvard three years before him. Their friendship eventually developed into a life-long partnership. First, however, Peabody, like his mentor, went to Europe to study architecture. Initially, he went to London and traveled through the English countryside before taking up his studies at the *École des Beaux-Arts*. This visit to England enhanced his appreciation of rural English architecture, an influence most apparent in his church designs. He wrote, while in Paris, "although we rendered the French projects, the thought of England and the picturesque was ever present with us." He also took time to travel through Italy, Germany and other parts of Europe. In Italy, he became acquainted with a travel writer, Augustus J. C. Hare, who wrote later of Peabody, "I don't know when. . . I have seen any one I like so much---so clever, so natural, so unworldly, so large-minded, so good looking."¹⁹

Peabody returned to the United States in 1870 as the Franco-Prussian War commenced in Europe. Upon his return, he formed a partnership with John G. Stearns, Jr. The firm of Peabody and Stearns opened its first office at 14 Devonshire Street in Boston. In 1874, the firm moved its offices to 60 Devonshire Street, where Fred Savage would eventually work. Peabody was the firm's designer, and therefore he was the partner with the highest visibility. Stearns served as the firm's engineer, supervised construction, and carried out Peabody's designs to perfection.

In 1871, Peabody married Annie Putnam, daughter of John P. Putnam of Boston. Robert and Annie had three daughters and two sons, of whom only three--Katherine Putnam Peabody, Mary D. Peabody, and Robert Ephraim Peabody--lived to adulthood. Their marriage lasted for 40 years, until Annie's death in 1911. In 1913, Peabody married a much younger woman, Helen Lee, daughter of Dr. Charles Carroll Lee, a Virginia aristocrat and a descendant of General Robert E. Lee. Peabody met Helen on a cruise to Greece, during which he sketched her and her friends.²⁰

Peabody was an artistic explorer who sketched perpetually. His son, Robert Ephraim Peabody, recalled that the senior Peabody was never without his sketchbooks.²¹ He made many trips to Europe to study and draw its buildings and looked for their timeless qualities that could be rejuvenated and implemented

in his own designs. Peabody, who was inspired by Europe's cathedrals and palaces, made drawings of these monumental buildings which he used as inspiration for his designs. He published several of his sketchbooks, among them, *An Architect's Vacation*, which included a series of essays accompanying the illustrations he made in the various European cities he visited over a period of years. In his later years, while being treated for cancer at Johns Hopkins Hospital, he produced *Hospital Sketches*. Included were sketches that he created by imagining buildings formed by the clouds outside his hospital room. These drawings were accompanied by Peabody's own stories and by the works of several famous poets.

Even while Peabody approaching his work as an artist, he recognized the importance of being a good businessman. He believed that due to their "artistic personalities" most architects did not tend to run efficient establishments. In an article entitled "Architecture as a Profession," Peabody urged his fellow architects to be involved in their business operations, not simply supply the drawings while an office manager dealt with clients.

Peabody's sketches and writings, from every stage of his career, make it possible to trace the influences on his architecture and to understand how he trained Savage. One of his earliest essays examined the Queen Anne style. A later one dealt with the Georgian style in New England (he signed it "Georgian" in place of his name, perhaps being unready to come out publicly in favor of the Georgian style). Still later, he revealed his admiration for Gothic architecture in an article entitled, "Architecture and Democracy," in which he claimed that the Gothic cathedrals of Europe were the product of a democratic people, built by and for the masses to honor God, and therefore were much better than palaces built for despots. "Architecture has flourished, and that most vigorously, when the common people were the only masters of the state."²² Late in his professional life, Peabody concentrated primarily on designing civic structures.

Peabody and Stearns were the preferred architects at the famous resort of Newport, Rhode Island, Bar Harbor's main rival as a summer colony for the wealthy. One of the firm's most celebrated buildings was the *Breakers*, a Queen Anne design built there in 1877-78 for Pierre Lorillard. The *Breakers* was purchased for \$400,000 by Cornelius Vanderbilt in 1886 and remodeled by Peabody and Stearns at his request. For the Vanderbilt children, they added a \$5,000 Queen Anne style playhouse.

Another of the firm's famous buildings was *Kraggsyde*, built for George Nixon Black, Jr., at Manchester-by-the-Sea in Massachusetts. Vincent Scully, the architectural historian, called *Kraggsyde* "one of the characteristic monuments of the Shingle style;"²³ it was probably designed during Savage's employment. *Kraggsyde* was torn down in 1929, but the plans were rediscovered in the early

1980s, and a copy of the house was built on Swans Island, six miles from Mount Desert.

Peabody and Stearns also designed buildings in the midwest and maintained a branch office in St. Louis, Missouri, as well as a representative in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The St. Louis office was managed by Pierce P. Furber, who was born in Bangor, Maine. Included among the buildings produced by the firm in St. Louis were the Unitarian Church of the Messiah, the Museum of Fine Arts, and the St. Louis National Bank.

On Mount Desert Island, formal architecture was almost unheard of until Peabody and Stearns built Charles W. Eliot's summer house in Northeast Harbor in 1881. The island's first summer cottage, *Birch Point* in Bar Harbor, was built for Alpheus Hardy, a wealthy Boston merchant in 1868. Eleven years later, in 1879, the celebrated architect William Ralph Emerson designed *Redwood* for Charles Morrill.

Before Morrill and Eliot's summer residences set the precedent for houses designed by professional architects, most buildings were relatively simple timber-framed, owner-built structures. Some of these houses used pilasters to represent classical columns with touches of dentils and molding around doors or windows to imitate the Greek Revival style which continued as the dominant form of folk architecture into the twentieth century. The majority of houses on Mount Desert resembled the square, unadorned, one-and-a-half story Cape Cod style houses favored by the Island's first settlers. Although there was a simplicity in the island's folk architecture, fine craftsmanship was prominent. This is evident in the surviving Greek Revival and Colonial houses of the early settlers and in the exquisite summer cottages built in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries.

The architecture of east-coast America's first summer colonies, especially in Newport, Rhode Island, was greatly influenced by early vernacular houses from the colonial period. The Shingle style, which was prevalent in Savage's and Peabody's cottage designs, became a symbol of a rural life to which urban people wished to escape from the fast pace of city life. Architectural historian Vincent Scully, wrote that vacationers in Newport "found Colonial houses mellowed in place as nothing else in America seemed to be" and out of their admiration for Colonial houses, "the Shingle style came into being."²⁴ This eclectic style borrowed and blended features from other styles. Particularly, it incorporated the Queen Anne and the Romanesque styles, yet appeared simple and reasonably unpretentious. These shingled houses featured the asymmetrical attributes of the Queen Anne style, but also used Romanesque accents such as grand arches and stone work on the lower stories. This eclectic style emerged at a time when architects were searching for a uniquely American style, and

while the Shingle style may have been borrowed to some extent from European traditions, it was one of the first truly American trends. Another American innovation, porches, were a necessary part of the rural vacation experience and were incorporated in Savage's Shingle style cottages.

Redwood, in Bar Harbor, set the precedent for the Shingle style architecture on the Island that has been embraced up to the present. This style was introduced by Henry Hobson Richardson in the *Watts Sherman House*, a house built in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1874. Architectural historian Vincent Scully wrote about *Redwood*, "...a house like that [Shingle style] at Mount Desert of 1879, by William Ralph Emerson, shows the amalgam complete." Many architects and historians consider Emerson instead of Richardson the originator of the Shingle style. The *Boston Society of Architects Journal* in 1918 reported that Emerson "...was the creator of the Shingle-style country house of the New England Coast, and taught a generation how to use local materials without apology, but rather with pride in their rough, homespun character."²⁵ By the end of the nineteenth century, however, shingled summer houses designed by this country's leading architects were a significant feature of Mount Desert Island.

Eliot's house, *The Ancestral*, built in 1881 at a cost \$6,840, is on a steep slope along Peabody Drive overlooking Bear Island. Today the view of Bear Island is still unobstructed, but the cottage is surrounded by trees. *The Ancestral* opens into a great hall, with a staircase that rises to a landing with a long seat in front of three windows divided by sturdy mullions. Over a front Colonial panel door is a Colonial style fan light. President Eliot's library was to the right of the hall, and on the opposite side of the house were a kitchen, a china closet, and a dining room (informal at the time) that opened to a piazza overlooking the ocean. From the kitchen, a servants' stair led to the upper floors. Straight through the front hall is a parlor with a fireplace. The house is straightforward, and lacks any fussy details. The interior woodwork is plain, and the upstairs bedrooms are simply laid out; some have fireplaces. Several bedroom doors are topped with transoms to let light into the hallway. The third floor has small rooms for servants and a trunk room. It was Savage's exceptional carpentry work on this house that earned him the opportunity to study architecture with Peabody and Stearns.

Savage Houses

Most of the houses designed by Savage were in the Shingle style. And, following Emerson's philosophy, he preferred to "use local materials without apology." This was part of the charm of his cottages for summer visitors who came to the island to escape into the natural landscape and who did not wish to reproduce city architecture in the "wilderness." Savage's Shingle style cottages

blended with the rocks and trees. The owners usually left the shingles unpainted; as they weathered, the houses became integrated into the landscape. Cottage names such as *Grey Pine*, *Tree Tops*, and *Overedge* reflected such harmonization.

Savage began designing buildings for his family while he was still a student in Boston. He produced drawings for his father and brothers who built hotels and cottages for the Northeast Harbor summer community, including guest houses for his brother, Herman, at the *Rock End Hotel*. When his apprenticeship ended in 1887, Savage built his first Shingle style cottage, a charming country house that was his home at Asticou. A piazza on the first floor, spanning the front of the gambrel-roofed house, supports a five-sided dormer window flanked by two shallow dormers. The first floor, in Savage's time, contained a dining room, pantry, a parlor, and study; the second floor had four bedchambers and a bath. The third floor served as an attic. Today, the building houses staff of the *Asticou Inn*, an elegant summer hotel that his father established in 1883. Through the end of the 1880s, Savage designed cottages primarily in Northeast Harbor, all in the Shingle style. During his career, about 90 percent of his designs were in that style.

In 1887, James Gardiner, a civil engineer and the son-in-law of Bishop Doane, purchased most of Harborside (the northwestern area of Northeast Harbor) and, in 1890, commissioned Savage to design six cottages. This was Savage's big break. Gardiner, a summer resident, was one of the first major land developers in Northeast Harbor along with the Savage family.²⁶ The cottages built at Harborside were *Sweet Briar*, purchased by Miss Anna Davis of Morristown, New Jersey; *Grey Pine*, bought by Miss Agnes Irwin, founder and president of the Agnes Irwin School for Girls, and Miss Sophy Irwin; *Isis*, purchased by Dr. John C. Jay and Mrs. Peter Jay; *Aerie*, acquired by a Mrs. Howe; and *Wagstaff*, bought by a Miss Robert. In addition, an inn named *Harbourside* was also constructed along with a building where meals were served to both the inn patrons and cottage residents. Most of the cottages were built with separate outside kitchens. In the days of giant wood cookstoves, locating the kitchen outside the cottage kept the heat and cooking odors out of the house.

In 1890 and 1891, Fred Savage designed at least 14 summer cottages, including the Harbourside development, and the first Northeast Harbor Library on South Shore Road. His other early cottages included *Rock Crest* for Lieutenant R. G. Davenport of Washington, D.C., the *Morris Cottage* for Dr. Caspar Morris of Philadelphia and the *Phillips Cottage* for his brother-in-law Fred I. Phillips, a school teacher and local health official. In 1893, Savage spent increasingly more time in Bar Harbor designing and building Tudor and Colonial Revival style buildings. Many Bar Harbor summer residents appreciated his popular Shingle style designs, but some owners required a grander approach that incorporated classical details of the Colonial style. By that time, Bar Harbor

was no longer a rural fishing and farming village. Summer people brought horses, liveried servants, and household staffs, along with their urban social standards. William Vaughn, a summer resident of Northeast Harbor, wrote:

Bar Harbor early graduated from the midday dinners and country suppers of its huge caravansaries and of its first summer folk, and settled into the ways of the world which lunches at noontide and dines at night. But the Bishop [William C. Doane] was very strenuous in his efforts to maintain the "simple life" in our part of the island, and he regarded the apparently innocent late dinner as our entering the edge of city life, and therefore as a corrupting influence to be kept out. So we all dutifully followed his lead--some of us even till now--and supper it was, all through our colony.²⁷

Savage's straight-lined and symmetrical Colonial Revival cottages were received well by Bar Harbor's social elite. One of his most celebrated works and earliest Colonial Revival designs was the Georgian style *Reverie Cove* built for Dr. John Davies Jones in 1892 on a hillside sloping down to the ocean. The house, which still stands, also incorporates Italian features. The hipped roof is slightly pitched, and narrow dormer windows peer like eyes from the attic floor. Two porches extend toward a circular driveway, with one serving as the main entrance. A central feature of the front of the house is a one-story high arched window with diamond panes, flanked by smaller windows on each side. The rear of the house, facing Frenchman's Bay, has two balconies on the first floor, each topped by arched windows on the second story. There is no grand entrance in this house--only a small vestibule. To the right of the vestibule is a smoking room and on the left is a living room with a piazza that opens to a terrace on the ocean side of the house. The highlight of the living room is the double staircase leading to a large hall on the second floor. The dining room lies beyond the living room where a stairway connects to the basement kitchen. To the right of the living room is a drawing room. A second porch on the left side of the front of the house balances the one on the right. However, it was inaccessible, because a toilet room was placed between a small hall outside the dining room and this porch. In a study of Savage's Colonial Revival designs, Jared Knowles explains the design of the porches: "Savage, it seems, was more concerned with the symmetrical layout of this house than with the relationship of one room to the other."²⁸ This may also account for the small vestibule as the entrance. Knowles continues, "Savage's strengths are evident in his ability to resolve issues related to volume and form."²⁹ Upstairs, on opposite corners of the front of the house, identical dressing rooms lead into nearly identical bedrooms. Four additional bedrooms are at the rear of the house. There is also a central boudoir which has a curved wall and a balcony. The house no longer retains its original Mediterranean flavor, as shingles have replaced the stucco walls. Nevertheless,

it is still an outstanding example of Savage's early work in the Colonial Revival style.

During the construction of *Reverie Cove*, on March 9, 1893, a "Walking Delegate of Union 148" wrote to the Bar Harbor Record, "I wish to recall the time that every man in his [Savage's] employ went out on strike in December last." According to the "Walking Delegate," when the men were hired to work on *Reverie Cove*, Savage's foreman, B. A. Candage, had promised 10 hours of work per day, but the promise was not fulfilled. The Delegate reported that Candage did not have control over the hours the men worked and later he encouraged them to strike. The article explained that Savage finally compromised and paid the workers for nine hours per day. Answering the Delegate's claim in the *Record* of March 16, 1893, Savage asserted that "no difficulty between the Mechanic's Union [and Savage] exists." His reply makes clear that he did not welcome union labor on his jobs. Such feelings were common among business owners and workers alike at the time. Labor unions did not have strong support in Maine's rural areas. Most workers preferred to make contracts directly with their employers.

One of the best examples of Savage's work in the Tudor style is his own house on Atlantic Avenue in Bar Harbor, a grand residence built in 1901. The three-story Tudor-style home has two front-facing, and two rear-facing gables, and one gable on each side with decorative half-timbering. Among the 16 spacious rooms are a reception hall, parlor, formal dining room (off a butler's pantry), kitchen, den, and former servants' dining room. A piazza behind of the house has been enclosed. Visitors reach the front entrance by walking through a small outside terrace that opens into an elegant reception hall with a fireplace. In the hall, the walls were once covered in tapestry. The dining room features a large open corner cupboard. The pantry has the traditional bells for summoning servants. Beyond the kitchen is a servants' stairway that goes to the third floor. The eight mantels and fireplaces are grander than those in Savage's earlier designs, which tended to be factory made. Dark woodwork, including dentil molding around the ceilings, was used throughout the house. The second floor originally had six bed chambers with two bathrooms; the third floor had five bed chambers, a bath room, trunk room, and linen closet. This house, the *Atlantean*, is now known as the *Wayside Inn*.

At the peak of his career, in 1912, Fred Savage built another significant Georgian Revival house, *High Seas*, for Professor Rudolph E. Brunnow of Princeton University, which has been judged the best of his designs apart from his Shingle style work. This house has 22 rooms and is entirely constructed from brick. The original plans show its main entrance in the center-front of the building flanked by porches on each side and covered by a second-story open porch. The servants' wing to the left breaks the symmetry of the house.

The brick exterior and dormers across the third floor give the building an institutional look, which makes it very appropriate for its present-day use as a dormitory for summer students from the Jackson Laboratory. The front door opens to a large hall with the main staircase to the left and a coat room and recreation room to the right. The living room, which is as long as the hall, leads to French doors and then to a covered veranda and open terrace. To the right of the living room are a library, recreation room, and formal dining room. Pilasters around interior doors, medallions, relief scenes, arched doorways, and built-in corner cupboards echo the Colonial features of the exterior. On the left is a porch overlooking the ocean. A glassed-in breakfast room adjoins the servants' wing. In the servants' wing is a butler's pantry and a separate butler's room, a kitchen and second pantry, a storeroom, the servants' dining room and an ironing room. On the floor above are five bedrooms originally for servants. The initial design of the main wing showed nine bedrooms and four bathrooms with a balcony outside each bedroom on the water side of the house. Additional bedrooms were on the third floor. Savage has been criticized by some architects for concentrating more on the exterior presentation of his buildings and not giving enough attention to the interior design,³⁰ but his interior design in *High Seas* is one of his most attractive. Perhaps his interiors lacked the imagination he displayed on exterior design because vacationers did not expect to spend much time indoors.

Peabody's Houses

Peabody and Stearns designed only one house for Bar Harbor, a cottage commissioned by James Garland which was never built. The firm worked almost exclusively in Northeast Harbor and Seal Harbor. Among their best designs was a cottage for Peabody's brother, the Reverend Francis G. Peabody, on what would become Peabody Drive. Weston Milliken writes that this cottage has a "sculptural shape . . . interesting from afar, without being insistent--the perfect summer retreat for a rector."³¹ A gable is in the Tudor style, and there is an octagonal bay as well as an octagonal turret. There are three large dormers. The heavy stone foundation below the porches anchors the cottage to its site. The house, still today an architectural feature of the harbor, is visible from both the town dock and the head of the harbor.

In 1903, Peabody designed a summer house for the American historian James Ford Rhodes in Seal Harbor. *Ravenscleft* stretches out like a raven's wings on a jagged cliff overlooking Bunker's Ledge. The shingled house has Tudor style features, with half-timbering in most of the gables and small diamond-shaped glass panes. The living room opens to a covered piazza. Milliken notes in *A Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Maine* that "this extensive use of Tudor style trim became characteristic of the firm's late residential work."³²

That same year, another Tudor-style house was designed by Peabody and Stearns for Mrs. W. T. Blodgett on South Shore Road in Northeast Harbor. *Westward Way* originally had nine bedrooms with an additional five bedrooms for the staff. The gables are half-timbered; and two are on the street side. One gable has a large dormer window that provides light for a staircase. The roof slopes precipitously from the third story to the first. On the ocean side is a three-story octagonal tower and turret containing the living room and two bedrooms. A second-story balcony opens onto the ocean side of the house and is topped with two small round dormers. Another gable on the water side contrasts with the octagonal tower. Weston Milliken calls the house, "the grandest shingled house designed by the firm in Maine."³³

Peabody and Stearns also built a church in Northeast Harbor and it is worth mentioning here because it has been called, by architectural historian Wheaton Holden, one of the "minor masterpieces of ecclesiastical architecture of its time."³⁴ Peabody and Stearns received a commission to design the Union Church in 1887. According to Robert Pyle, Northeast Harbor librarian, Fred Savage was directly involved in the design of the church and it may have been a practicum--a final project--in his architectural training.³⁵ As well, Charles W. Eliot and his family were very much involved in planning and raising funds for the church.

The Union Church has the architectural feel of the English country churches for which Peabody developed an admiration while Savage was serving his apprenticeship. Like many English country churches, the Union Church has Gothic elements, including heavy arches, and evokes a medieval feeling that is especially influenced by a heavy door with massive iron hinges. The walls and curving granite steps are built of Maine stone. A simple roof curves slightly as it approaches the apse. Considering Charles Eliot's involvement in raising funds for the church, the heavy Gothic influence is somewhat surprising. Eliot's biographer wrote, "He [Eliot] might recognize a Gothic Church as a "vast, dim, old, beautiful House of God," but he considered Gothic structures inappropriate for "rational worship."³⁶ He found Gothic churches to be dark and dim and claimed they were not well suited for reading the "word of God." Peabody was not convinced that there was an "appropriate" style for a modern Protestant Church. In addressing the American Institute of Architects in 1877, he asserted, "I think that the style matters less and less, and the artist more and more--and this in church as in domestic designing."³⁷

Other Peabody and Stearns work on the island includes renovations for the *W. W. Vaughn Cottage* in 1905, which was built by Fred Savage in 1893 but later burned; the cottage of Mrs. R.H. Harte, built in 1905 and altered by Peabody and Stearns in 1912 but later destroyed; the *Tyson Cottage* in Northeast Harbor, built circa 1892 for Clara Williamson of Philadelphia and later owned

by the artist Carroll Tyson; and, in 1915, an addition to the Northeast Harbor Library, which had been built by Fred Savage.

The Savage Legacy

Savage's reputation for designing and building many of the magnificent summer homes on Mount Desert Island won him commissions such as the Kebo Valley Club House and the Pot and Kettle Club, both privately owned. The original Kebo Valley Club opened in 1889 as a racing club. In 1896, it added a nine-hole golf course, with another nine holes in 1916. Savage was apparently a member of the club, as documentation exists demonstrating that he was involved in the fundraising for completing the course.³⁸ The club house burned in 1899 and was rebuilt by Savage in 1899 and 1900. It was again destroyed by the Great Fire of 1947. The Pot and Kettle Club House was built by Savage in 1899 in Hulls Cove, a village near Bar Harbor. Pot and Kettle is an exclusive men's club that to this day meets every Thursday during the summer months.³⁹

Savage did not confine his work to Mount Desert Island. He designed houses throughout the country in such places as Redlands, California, where he had vacationed for several winters and in Ann Arbor, Michigan and Cornish Hills, New York. The last of these was commissioned by S.D. Sargeant, for whom Sargeant Drive, which runs along Somes Sound, is named. Savage's work elsewhere in Maine was concentrated on the island of Islesboro in Penobscot Bay, where he designed and built most of the summer cottages near the turn of the century.⁴⁰ Most were in the Shingle style mixed with some Tudor style and Colonial Revival. Peabody and Stearns also designed a number of cottages there.

While the majority of Savage's designs were for residences, his work also included commercial and educational buildings. He designed schools for Bar Harbor, Seal Harbor and Somesville, as well as for towns throughout Maine, including the Normal School in Machias, a high school in Presque Isle, and a renovation of Bangor's high school. He designed the Donald Mayo Picture Theater in Southwest Harbor, which is now McEachern and Hutchins hardware store and a theater in Ellsworth that may not have been built. He created architectural designs for the William Ward Ballroom in Manset (never built), the Hamor and Stanley Plumbing shop in Northeast Harbor, the Bangor Motor Company Garage, and a factory in New York state. He entered a competition for the Bangor Public Library, but the contract was won by Peabody and Stearns.⁴¹ Peabody and Stearns had several other contracts in Bangor, including the Bangor high school and the six-story Exchange Building for the Bangor Real Estate Corporation.

Between 1887 and 1924, Fred Savage's architecture and design work profoundly influenced the character of architecture on Mount Desert Island. Even so, his contributions were nearly forgotten after his death. On February 26, 1924, at the age of 62, Savage died from what the doctor called "acute indigestion," presumably a heart attack. He was taken ill during a meeting with school board and warrant committee members. He died at his home late in the afternoon. Alice Preble Savage continued to live in the house on Atlantic Avenue until the 1950s, when she moved nearby to the home of her nephew, where she lived until her death in 1961. Savage's daughter, Floralee Guyer of Los Angeles, and his son, Francis Chase Savage of Brewer, survived him. His funeral, which took place at his home on February 28, 1924, was attended by many prominent people from Bar Harbor. His obituary states that he "was in the truest sense one of Bar Harbor's most valuable citizens."⁴²

In the 1950s, Alice Savage sold the Atlantic Avenue house along with its contents, including boxes of Savage's original architectural drawings. When the new owners sold the house several years later, they took the collection with them and eventually transferred the materials into the care of two local libraries. Once researchers became aware of the collection, new light was shed on Mount Desert's architectural heritage, and some previous assumptions about Savage's designs had to be revised. Until that time, many of his cottage designs had been attributed to the nationally known architects such as Peabody, who has himself only recently been acknowledged by architectural historians for his eclectic style that so greatly influenced this region of Maine. Robert Peabody never settled into a single style but pulled together elements from the many historic structures he admired. This allowed him to follow his creativity free from domination by the prevailing style. Whereas other major firms of the Peabody and Stearns era, such as their predecessor Henry Hobson Richardson in Boston and their contemporaries McKim, Mead and White in New York, developed distinctive styles that became their signatures.

Conclusion

Savage saw himself as a craftsman and Peabody saw himself as an artist. Both brought genius to their work. Savage's upbringing in rural Maine taught him to respect men who worked with their hands--the craftsmen and housewrights. Peabody, on the other hand, came from a world where art was a significant part of the educational process, and he expressed this appreciation in his designs. Regardless of their individual approaches, the cottages designed by Fred Lincoln Savage and Robert Swain Peabody have stood the test of time, weathering both the winds and the changing architectural tastes that emerged on Mount Desert Island and along the New England coast throughout this past century.

Notes

¹ Robert R. Pyle, "Northeast Harbor," in *Mount Desert: An Informal History*, ed. Gunnar Hansen (Mount Desert: Town of Mount Desert, 1989), 70.

² *Ibid.*, 71. Asticou was the name of a 17th-century Indian chief who summered in the area. The early explorer, Samuel de Champlain, explained in his journal that Asticou meant "kettle" and referred to a rock where a waterfall had hollowed out a deep bowl.

³ Mount Desert School Agent's Report, 1871. Collection of the Northeast Harbor Library.

⁴ Letitia Baldwin, "The Man Who Built Northeast Harbor," *Down East*, February 1995, 32-35, 57-59.

⁵ Wheaton Holden, "The Peabody Touch: Peabody and Stearns of Boston, 1870-1917," *Victorian Architecture in Boston* (May 1973), 115.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁸ At the time of her marriage, Flora's brother, Wellington, was living on Mount Desert which may have offered an opportunity for her to meet Fred Savage.

⁹ Emily Phillips Reynolds, "Fred Savage" (n.p./n.d.), from the collection of Constance Seavey, Mount Desert, Maine.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* The divorce hurt Fred Savage's relationship with his own family. According to A.C. Savage's descendants, Flora lived with his family for a time after their divorce. Shortly after the divorce, Flora and their children went to Brewer, Maine, to live with her mother. In 1905, Flora married Herbert Hawthorn. Emily Reynolds continued to write in her memoirs, "...Aunt Flora later married Bert Hathorne [sic] and they had a happy life together. It worked out pretty well all around.

¹¹ *Maine Register and State Yearbook and Legislative Manual 1896*, (Portland, Maine: G.M. Donham, 1896).

¹² Robert R. Pyle, interview by Jaylene Roths, 1998.

¹³ Reynolds, "Herman Savage."

¹⁴ *Bar Harbor Life*, "Victory Road: The Proposed New Approach to Bar Harbor," 23 August 1919, 8.

¹⁵ Robert Swain was named for a friend of The Reverend Dr. Peabody's who lived in New Bedford and summered near the family on the island of Naushon near Martha's Vinyard. He was known fondly by residents of Naushon as "Governor" Swain.

¹⁶ Francis G. Peabody, *A Little Boy in Little Boston* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: By the Author, 1935), 22.

¹⁷ John Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown, *The Architecture of America: A Social and Cultural History* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1961), 126.

¹⁸ This school had merged with the Academy of Architecture in 1795. Napoleon III placed the school under state control, and architects trained in the school designed many of France's public buildings with a Classical Revival and Renaissance style.

¹⁹ Augustus J.C. Hare, *The Story of My Life* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1896), 488.

²⁰ Cora Emlen, interview by Jaylene Roths, December 30, 1998.

²¹ *The Peabody Touch*, prod. Wheaton Holden, 1984, videocassette.

- ²² Robert Swain Peabody, "Architecture and Democracy," *Harpers*, 1890, 219.
- ²³ *New York Times*, 23 August 1988
- ²⁴ Vincent Scully, "American Houses: Thomas Jefferson to Frank Lloyd Wright," in *The Rise of an American Architecture*, ed. Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), 176.
- ²⁵ *Boston Society of Architects Journal* 1918.
- ²⁶ Pyle, 77-80.
- ²⁷ William W. Vaughn, *Northeast Harbor Reminiscences* (White and Horne Company, 1930), 35.
- ²⁸ Jared A. Knowles, "An Exploration of Colonial Revival Through Selected Works of Fred Savage Architect" (Master's Thesis, Savannah College of Art and Design, 1994), 22.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*
- ³⁰ Baldwin, 58.
- ³¹ Weston Milliken, "Peabody and Stearns," in *A Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Maine*, ed. Earle Shettleworth, Jr. (Augusta, Maine: The Maine Historic Preservation Commission. Vol IV No. 2, 1987), 5.
- ³² *Ibid.*
- ³³ *Ibid.*
- ³⁴ Holden, 1984.
- ³⁵ Pyle, Interview by Jaylene Roths.
- ³⁶ Henry James, *Charles W. Eliot, President of Harvard University*, vol 1 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1930), 133 and John Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown, *The Architecture of America: A Social and Cultural History*, (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1961), 182.
- ³⁷ Kenneth Byrd Story, "The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Peabody and Stearns: An Evaluation and Catalogue" (Master's Thesis, Tufts University, 1985), 1.
- ³⁸ S.D. Hecht to Fred Savage, 11 March 1916, collection of Louis Gerrish, Jr.
- ³⁹ Originally, Thursdays was chosen because it was "the maids' day off," and when the club started, the members cooked their own meals. Eventually this tradition fell by the wayside, and a staff was hired. The "Caterer," an officer of the club, arranges weekly speakers, and the menu for the meetings. Names of members and guests in the club's guest book include William Howard Taft, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, and Harry S. Truman.
- ⁴⁰ Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., *The Summer Cottages of Islesboro 1890-1930* (Islesboro, Maine: Islesboro Historical Society, 1989).
- ⁴¹ F. W. Chandler, Robert Peabody's roommate in Paris and long time friend, was retained by the library to judge the designs.
- ⁴² *Bar Harbor Times*, 27 February 1924, 1, 4.