

**“AS IF IT HAD GROWN THERE”:
RESORT ARCHITECTURE AND THE
NEW ENGLAND LANDSCAPE, 1875 – 1915
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Abstract

This dissertation reconsiders the late nineteenth-century architecture of Northeastern resort and country destinations and situates the development of a new style - later named the Shingle Style - within period interpretations of the region's landscape. Contextualizing designs, buildings, and material choices with environmental, landscape, and art histories, and building on existing architectural scholarship, I argue that understandings of, and values surrounding, the landscape impacted the selection of sites, reshaped the design and construction processes, and influenced the interpretation of finished buildings as well.

My first chapter considers how the New England landscape was interpreted at the end of the nineteenth century, and what factors figured into the marketing of property for seasonal development. The second chapter analyzes changing architectural tastes and recognizes new practices that evolved in resort architecture during this period. This chapter argues that architects approached the design process pictorially, envisioning completed buildings within their surroundings from the start. The third chapter considers how construction materials were selected and used to foster tangible connections with

sites, and also how finishes were employed to conceal the role of humans in the building process. The raw materials – stone and wood – were not unlike those found in urban contexts, but in this chapter I contend that architects and builders approached the construction process differently in resort areas, consciously obscuring the means by which materials were produced and buildings were realized. Chapter four considers how completed buildings were presented and discussed, and addresses the ways these presentations were curated and manipulated to suggest new buildings were part of their sites, or even organic, instead of products produced by humans.

Writing to his mother in 1887, the Boston architect Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow, Jr. proudly relayed comments he had heard about one of his recently realized designs. Admirers, he claimed, felt the new summer residence “kind of looked as if it had growed there.” With its rough stone chimney and olive-brown stain, the building “goes beautifully with the surroundings,” he wrote. Anxious to atone for the effects new structures had on the landscape, my dissertation argues that architects like Longfellow were involved in the creation of a new style of architecture and new approaches to the design process. To minimize visual impact and foster congruity between new resort buildings and their surroundings, materials were selected and employed in novel ways and, to obscure the newness of these buildings, they were represented and discussed as though they were parts of the landscape itself.