chard E. Schmidt

MONTHLY ILLINOIS SOCIETY «OF ARCHITECTS» BULLETIN

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The Architect's Fee a Saving to the Owner

There are firms of contractors operating especially in the industrial field who secure contracts direct with the owners based upon plans and specifications that are prepared in their own organizations.

Some owners apparently are willing to take the chances of having the contract faithfully performed without the protection of the services of an architect. With this practice, the profession can do nothing if the contractors keep within the law. The profession does owe a duty to the owners, however, to make clear what the service of an architect means in the protection of their interests, and the advantages to be gained from the architect's skill and accumulated experience, contrasted with the skill of an unknown architect or draftsman in the contractor's employ and control.

With an honest contractor and with everything going well during construction, the objections from the owner's standpoint may be minimized, but if the market rises or with other emergencies occurring, errors in estimating or unlooked for conditions of soil, weather, etc., the general contractor and his sub-contractors are confronted with the temptation to "take it out of the job." They are, after all, only human and do not relish doing work without a profit.

Plans and specifications of operations herein described are brief skeletons as compared with those usually employed by the architect and the owner's risk is thereby greatly enlarged.

The irony of this situation is that some of these contractors expect to keep the good will of the architects while they are subjecting him to unfair competition, and are resorting to practice which does not square with high professional practice.

The owner, by choosing a contractor to supervise his work and make his plans and specifications, loses a very important function of the architect's service—that of obtaining legitimate competition among a number of qualified builders.

We have in mind a building where there were no unusual foundation conditions and where a complete set of architectural, structural, plumbing, heating and wiring drawings were furnished. The low bid was $629,000—the high bid $817,000. For another similar building the low bid was $665,000—the high $899,000. By what system of magic could an owner hope, without a definite set of plans and specifications, to pick the contractor whose price would approximate the low bid obtained by competition?

There is the artistic side of this problem also. A traveler saw in a central New York town a strange structure. He was interested and hunted up the owner. "What is it that you are building?" he asked. "Oh, just an idea of mine. I am going to have a chap come over from Boston next month and put the architecture on." Now the owner, by selecting an architect, has the advantage of good architectural design.

Supervision is very important. There is a case today of a building built by a contractor from his own plans and under his own supervision. He was unable to finance the completion of the building and the new owner found that the structural slabs, by reason of lumber, straw and other refuse left in the concrete, had to be reinforced. This correction was performed at a cost of approximately $5,000 and was required in order to make the structure safe. Some men even cheat at solitaire!

Supervision by a qualified architect is vital.

We have a word which we use very often that tells a story centuries old. When the Roman architects specified marble, they said it must be sincere, that is, without wax. So when you sign a letter "Yours sincerely," you are reminded of an architect's specification of 2000 years ago.

In the final analysis the architect's FEE might well be architect's FREE because a capable architect will save the owner as much or more than his fee.

Now to summarize, the owner—by the selection of a capable architect—obtains: 1. A complete study of his problems by numerous sketches. 2. A complete set of plans and specifications. 3. An architectural treatment in keeping with the use to which the building is put. 4. Full competition with a number of contractors. 5. A complete budget of the cost before making any commitments. 6. Qualified supervision of the work, including checking of extras and credits.

A service of this kind is certainly worth the architect's fee. Possibly some of you will recall a campaign started some time ago by the general contractors in which the slogan was "Select your General Contractor First." The general contractor would then be in a position to select an architect who in this case would be obligated to the general contractor and not to the owner. This campaign has died a natural death.

In the next article we will endeavor to give you for your consideration suggestions as to the action to be taken to combat the growing evil of "Bootleg Architecture."

—Howard J. White, Chairman,
Committee on Architects Practice.

FHA Helps

John R. O'Conner, District Director at Chicago of Federal Housing Administration, under date of June 18 addressed architects in this district in a circular letter. He says the FHA attempts to check the jerry builder and that prospective home buyers no longer are willing to buy poorly designed homes; that the services of an architect are essential to good construction and design.

The letter closes with an offer of any information possessed by FHA that may be of use to architects.

Modern Domestic Architecture

Aggressive manufacturers will continue to urge the introduction of new structural and decorative materials. Many of these are excellent and they are very attractively presented by modern publicity. So the possibilities in leisurely progress are interesting. We might explore this or that material, or this or that trick in planning, or construction or decoration. But so long as the time-honored set-up involving the speculative builder persists, and so long as good building is a luxury, the progress of housing is likely to be slow.

I shall briefly discuss modern housing under the heads: community planning, group construction, and mass production. They are already beginning to influence the character of home architecture and we can begin to see something of what may develop.

Community planning admits of certain principles such as the interdependence of people in a modern group, and the existence of certain conditions of modern living. Our planners have based their ideas on the English garden cities. The gridiron plan is avoided and the whole treatment is open and informal. The unity of the whole effect controls the slight variations in form and treatment of the single dwellings. Designs are repeated many times but the types are so alternated as to avoid the appearance of monotony. In Radburn, New Jersey, Henry Wright has adapted an English ideal to American requirements. The unit of subdivision is the "superblock" whose nucleus is the school, and of course the playground group. In relation to parks each family has its own yard but they also have ready access to the public space for recreation and circulation.

Group construction has long been used in apartment structures. Usually it does not produce low-cost housing but this may in part be attributed to the land costs involved. Apartment development has often been a high-pressure method of extracting returns from high-priced land. Certain economies inherent in the mere act of large-scale construction are available here for housing. In these projects the architect finds a new opportunity. Good group planning is followed by unit dwelling planning based on proper orientation, efficiency as to cost and operation; attractiveness of the whole building complex as well as attractiveness in the various apartments.

As to the single house, there is a desperate need for a better commodity at a lower cost. Architecturally the prospects here are good, with a whole community planned as one design and carried out with sufficient variety in the units that make up the pattern. The margin of profit, however, is so slight in the well-built small house that there may not be much real gain in this kind of production.

The other way is through increased factory production and new fabrication of parts for dwellings. It is only natural that in an industrial age we should endeavor to apply industrial methods to the production of housing. That is what the prefabricators are trying to do. Thus far their efforts go only part way and their success has been modest. Insofar as I know, no fully prefabricated house in rooms or sections has been placed on the market, and I know of none in which all the parts are brought to the site requiring only rapid assembly. The term prefabrication is therefore only one of convenience. In spite of its tentative character, however, the arrival of the completely fabricated dwelling to be merely assembled at the site would have such a decisive effect on architectural practice and appearance, and on the whole housing industry, that I should like to indicate the possibilities.

Prefabrication is not exactly new. Before the War, at Forest Hills, Long Island, Grosvenor Atterbury, the New York architect, was building prefabricated concrete slabs cast in a plant at the site. These dwellings were tentative in design for at that time no one, at least in the vicinity of New York, dared depart from a conventional style to make a more consistent use of a new material. These houses proved to be costly and instead of a settlement for workingmen as intended, Forest Hills became a rather exclusive suburb, though not entirely due to building costs.

A high degree of standardization and complete fabrication seem, with the other features, to offer the best bet for new values in housing. The possible savings in prefabrication will lie largely in mass production, factory control of manufacture, and the limiting of field work to simple assembly. Other things being equal, the system that lends itself best to this organized production will obtain the best results.

There can be no great progress in housing without more efficient production. No house, however skillfully fabricated, can expect consumer acceptance unless it is good to look at and comfortable to live in. The housing industry is just beginning a new day in the production of homes. Successful new methods will result in tremendous activity in building and better homes for people everywhere.

—W. I. Bennett.

Better Joints for Timber

The radio broadcasting tower of the Edgeworth Tobacco Co. station, WRVA, at Richmond, Va., is an all-wood structure, 326 feet high, or 39 feet higher than the Capitol at Washington. It is built of southern yellow pine and framed with split rings. Recently station WEBC, at Superior, Wis., decided to increase the height of its steel tower from 240 to 360 feet. A wooden base section 120 feet high was built with the aid of modern connectors, and the steel tower was mounted on top. Wood supplies the need, long felt, for a nonconducting material for broadcasting towers; only since the introduction of modern connectors has the necessary height for powerful stations been reached with timber.

Among numerous structures recently built in the United States with plate or ring connectors are rock and gravel bins at Berkeley, Calif., roof trusses for a large riding hall in Virginia, tank towers, theaters, school auditoriums, and a building for club use. As proved by European experience, the way is open for the use of timber in many other large structures, such as warehouses, railway sheds, and aircraft hangars.

—Forest Products Laboratory.

When burning winds sweep Spanish hillsides, the one tree that remains green and flourishing is the cork oak tree. Its trunk and branches are sheathed with nature's own insulation and are so well protected from the heat that the life of the tree is not impaired.

The Archaic Arch at Nippur, discovered in 1894 by Dr. Haynes, is probably the first example of the use of the arch principle in drainage. According to our foremost archaeologists, this drain was constructed during the reign of Naromsin, about 3750 B. C. The main sections of the arch are composed of unbaked clay brick, with terra cotta pipe underdrains and overdrains.

—George C. D. Lenth.

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Editor Monthly Bulletin

ARTHUR WOLTERSDORF, 520 NORTH MICHIGAN AVE., CHICAGO

President Jensen's Message

The affairs of your Society have fared reasonably well the past year. As the depression wanes there is more business and, naturally, more optimism. As business and optimism increase, so do the problems in the profession and they, in turn, increase the problems of the Society's Board and Officers.

I refer specifically to increasing irregularities in the practice of manufacturers of new and ingenious specialties. There is a correspondingly increasing tendency of brokers, dealers, and sales agencies to arrange for the use of such specialties without the services of architects. These interests are, figuratively speaking, "biting the hand that feeds them." There is also the increasing practice of building contractors to include in their service the preparation of plans and specifications by some licensed architect under their control and in their pay. The gullible owners are made to feel that they are receiving architects' services, forgetting that there is a broad distinction between preparation of drawings and specifications on the one hand, and complete professional services on the other. If these contractors are within the law, the profession can have no quarrel on that score, but it should recognize the attack this method is making on professional practice and aim to stop, or at least to minimize it.

The profession should know the kind of competition it is confronted with. The able Committee on Practice—Howard White, Chairman—has already taken steps to study the situation.

Violations of the license law continue and the Committee on Public Action—Victor Matteson, Chairman—seeks your cooperation in finding cases and securing direct evidence. In this connection there is, according to printed reports of building operations, an apparently increasing practice of speculative builders and home owners to use what the reports call "private plans." Your Society is endeavoring through this committee to learn the nature of these "plans," their authors, etc., and whether the practice is legal. This committee wishes volunteers to ferret out some of these facts in a large list of reports.

If the Society is to be aggressive and successful, it must have effective committees. Men who accept appointment and do nothing are a discredit to themselves and the Society. Generally speaking, the committees will be active in proportion to the interest displayed by the membership in wanting abuses corrected and practice elevated.

The proposed new building code has at last reached the stage of public hearings and thus far the indications are that the Council subcommittee of which Alderman McDermott is Chairman, will be careful and thorough. Your Committee, of which John Davey is Chairman, has been aggressive and attentive.

Your Legislative Committee—Robert L. Franklin—Chairman, has held meetings and has considered desirable changes to the license law and awaits expressions from the profession.

It is a pleasure to express appreciation of the efforts and results of the Program Committee, of which Leo Weissenborn is Chairman.

The Bulletin, of which Arthur Woltersdorf is Editor, has carried on creditably and continues to deserve the high reputation it has earned. Reduced income has at times tempted your Board to curtail issues and size, but they realize the importance of an organ in keeping up the morale.

The financial affairs of the Society are slowly improving. The debt has been reduced and the bank balance increased, notwithstanding a very large amount of unpaid dues. In 1935 aggressive efforts were made to reduce the amount outstanding and the new board should again make efforts in the same direction.

As the name implies, this Society is statewide. There are at present 1,061 names (residents) on the list of registered architects in the state. Of this number, 705 are in Chicago and 175 in the suburbs. One of the early aims of your Board should be to increase the membership throughout the state. This added membership would be effective when new legislation is sought.

Through an agreement of November 25, 1924, your Society is joined with the Chicago Chapter, A. I. A. and the Chicago Architectural Club in the Glessner House matter. Since the demise of Mr. Glessner, steps have been taken to secure facts upon which a decision can be made. Your Board will bring the facts before the Society in due time for a decision of the membership.

This very brief summary would be incomplete without my thanks to the Board of Directors and the Officers for their help and courtesy and especially in the case of Herman Palmer. He has been helpful when help was needed and has been very willing. He has also been effective as Chairman of the Membership Committee. Your President also wishes to acknowledge the effective service rendered by Miss Dallach of Mr. Palmer's office.

—Elmer C. Jensen.

Wolverhampton Church. 1690.
Here lie the bones
of Joseph Jones,
Who eat whilst he was able;
But once o'er fed
He dropt down dead,
And fell beneath the table.
When from the tomb,
To meet his doom,
He rises amidst sinners:
Since he must dwell
In heav'n or hell
Take him—which gives best dinners.

Illinois Society Annual Meeting

In the Belden-Stratford Hotel overlooking Lincoln Park and the lake, the Society's authorities selected wisely and happily the place for the annual meeting of the Society falling on June 23. Members were asked to bring their ladies and friends and a company of ninety-two assembled. During the dinner, a young woman sang and in this epoch a group started singing in chorus "Sweet Adeline." It was not taken up generally and though it was untimely and inappropriate, why should the spirit of mortal be proud when the evening's future was yet uncertain!

After dinner the President welcomed the members and guests and called upon the Secretary, who read the minutes. The Secretary then read his annual report, referred to the treasurer's report not yet being out of audit and a number of reports from committes were read, some of which were very interesting. Among these were the Legislative Committee, Publicity Committee, Committee on Membership, Program Committee, Materials and Methods and Building Code Committee, Public Action Committee and the Committee on Violations of Architectural Practice.

The latter committee, composed of Alfred S. Alschuler, John R. Fugard, John A. Holabird, Howard J. White, Chairman, are active in bringing before the profession the practices of manufacturers and purveyors of building material as well as big building corporations, such as the Austin Company and Leonard Construction Company, which tend to undermine and destroy the position of the architect in private practice. Mr. White's article in the June-July Bulletin was an example. Further evidence appears on other pages of this issue.

From the report of the Membership Committee it is seen that the Society has 324 active members, 8 emeritus members, 4 honorary members—total membership 354.

Leo J. Weissenborn as head of the tellers then announced the results of the letter ballot election for officers for the coming year. The administration ticket, renominating all the present officers, carried.

President Jensen now proceeded to read his address—an able paper which discussed frankly problems that the profession is wrestling with and which the Society aims to solve. The various phases were treated lucidly under the headings Unfair Competition, Building Code, Financial Status of the Society, Membership, I. S. A. Bulletin, and Glessner House. In some instances he had strong recommendations; in others he appealed to the membership for thoughtful consideration. This message is printed on page 3.

Past-President Alfred Granger, now resident of New York City, was a welcome visitor. He spoke on the appearance of Chicago where demolition and parking lots were the conspicuous feature. He held that if this process continues long enough, architects would all be busy in building up an entirely new community. He deplored the fact that this wrecking had carried away certain fine monuments of an earlier generation, such as the Marshall Field Wholesale and the Illinois Theater.

John Merrill, newly-elected President of the Chicago Chapter, A. I. A., was introduced.

The Program Committee which had functioned successfully throughout the year had been told that for the annual meeting their services would be dispensed with. Others took over the securing of a special speaker. The choice fell on John Y. Beaty, author and editor of a financial journal who spoke on the subject "The Business Mind in a Changing World."

Requiescat in pace.
Amen.

The Public Action Committee Says

Many complaints have been received of conditions which undoubtedly interfere with the interests of architects but which are not violations of the law. Evasions are not difficult. There is no action in connection with these that this committee can take effectively. There is the practice of some manufacturers, distributors and builders of offering, as an adjunct to sales promotion, seemingly gratuitous architectural services. Advantage is taken by these people, through their superior financial position and by exploiting the handicap of the architect's ethical place, to reach the public in a manner impossible to the architect. Inasmuch as the word "architect" as applied to these people is seldom used, there seems to be no legal redress. It would seem that the development of a public sentiment against such conditions, together with a better understanding on the part of the public of the advantages of professional architectural services, may be the only solution.

Your committee recommends that there be appointed as an adjunct to the Public Action Committee, a number of observers whose duty it shall be to report bona fide violations and secure evidence. Your committee further recommends that the Public Relations Committee be requested to co-operate with such other committees as may be practical in an endeavor to find means for the discouragement of those who, while not claiming to be architects, function more or less as such, to the detriment of the interests of the architectural profession.—*Public Action Committee, Victor A. Matteson, Chairman.*

Malpractices in Architecture

The Editor: Much has been said on the merits of the Illinois Architectural Act. From the point of view of enforcement, the following cases may be of interest. They are from the records of the north shore municipality with whose building department I have been associated for several years. Each is a variant among the evasions of the spirit and letter of the Act.

1. (a) Mail order company furnished plans for a dwelling, bearing the seal of the architectural firm which handles their factory work. Quite apparently a plan stamping job, without supervision. (b) Co-operative organization regularly engaging in contracting furnished their own plans bearing seal of one of the large Chicago firms. May be a case of (3) below.

2. Contractor left plans with application, plan bearing architect's seal. Trouble developed as building proceeded. When called by telephone, architect did not even remember the job but said he would "be right out."

3. Notice was filed by architect that if any plans were received bearing his seal, he should be notified at once, since he had found one of his draftsmen using his seal without permission.

4. Draftsman without certificate of registration incorporated in his own name. He submits plans bearing architect's seal. Latter permits and condones this.

5. Son of architect attempts to continue use of father's seal upon the decease of latter. Son not registered. Later associates himself with an architect who has retired from active practice because of illness.

These cases are distinctly out of keeping with the principle of registration. Of course, the result is permitting unqualified persons to practice a profession without necessary ability and in competition with able men who are duly registered. The persons so engaging in practice must be unskilled if they cannot pass the examination. The examination is but a preliminary step along the way.

It pleased me to learn that Mr. Pond was opposed to all architects' license laws The impossibility of enforcing them has forced me to a similar conclusion.

There must be a solution to the problem. I have heard of no good one. An extensive general educational campaign by the Society or Institute would, of course, be of some use.

The operation of the law of survival of the most fit seems to me to be the ultimate answer. I have been recently engaged in practice of a profession other than architecture, in which the former state law was invalidated. Anyone can hang out a shingle. This experience has called the following to my attention:

Fees: The novice cuts his fees and learns that he has a basic charge. If he earns a living on a cut rate, his quality of service must suffer. If he maintains first quality service, he is obliged to raise his charges.

Clients: He soon learns to look at the situation with a detached viewpoint. If the client wishes to employ him, he is eager to serve his client. If the client wishes to cut a fee, let him

employ other grades of service. Energetic solicitation of work has undesirable consequences. If the client is unsatisfied with the work, the practitioner is "on the spot."

Competitors: Ethical cooperation between competitors is desirable. A practitioner who strives to render high grade service and be accurate builds up a clientele who come to him again and again. The practitioner is pleased to have them try his competitors occasionally, for the merits of the service he offers are then more clearly shown.

The old idea of hanging out a shingle and waiting for clients may be good after all. Those who cannot afford to do this will not prove to be lasting competition.

I trust that my remarks may not be out of order at this time.

—Dana Dodge Corrough.

The New Deal in Architecture

The New York Times in its Magazine Section of June 7 calls attention, with an intimation of approval, to the New Deal's set-up of a centralized system of design for public buildings. "The new centralized system has naturally invited criticism—sometimes touched with considerable acid," writes H. I. Brock, author of The Times' article that is illustrated with drawings of buildings proposed or constructed in all parts of the country for which the Treasury Department furnished the money. "Thus," the article says, "a centralized government agency is directly, and no longer indirectly responsible for what the country gets in the way of postoffices, whether in Oshkosh or New York City."

Does this centralized bureau of the Treasury Department, under the guise of Supervising Architect, accomplish anything that the architects in private practice could not and did not accomplish prior to this injection of bureaucracy into architecture? Mr. Brock insists that the chief purpose of the central bureau "is to produce buildings, whatever their scale, which fit into the modern picture, urban or rural, with no lack of variety; yet which in each case bear the distinct and distinguished stamp of a government building." This was something, he argues, that was not generally achieved under the old system with "its tendencies, outside of a few important buildings, to makeshift and haphazard designs, often reflecting vagaries or lapses of taste in local architects assigned to a very special task with very special requirements."

As proof that the new system of centralized design is giving the country a new architecture, the author of this article calls attention to what cannot be termed in any other light than an unfair comparison. For example Mr. Brock cites the ancient granite pile in Lower New York City, known as the Old Postoffice and long condemned by public and architects alike as a design of a period and style of the past.

Standardization of design, called "rubber stamp" by architects has followed local conditions, adopted sectional styles, and otherwise conformed to the work of private architects, who set the pace to begin with and who now see their work copied enmasse, pigeonholed and revised by draftsmen to meet requirements of plot and adjoining buildings. It is hardly possible that a Southern California architect charged with designing a postoffice for a small city in his territory would seek to impose upon his public a Colonial Georgian type of the Eastern seaboard. It would indeed be difficult to imagine that a Boston architect would design a small Massachusetts postoffice building after the Spanish Colonial style. But under this New Deal bureau at Washington local architects are out of the picture. The fees that they might have earned during the depression and might earn in the future, if this bureau continues to function, are lost to every community that gets a new government building. Only for the largest projects are local architects called upon to furnish the designs and under central bureau control the job must be fraught with unpleasant supervision of details, including the selection of materials, that takes all of the joy out of the fees.

America was not raised to heights of greatness by bureaucracy and if the practicing architects are deprived of the rights to design public buildings, architecture will suffer. Human nature, as such, militates against the observance of bureau rules and submersion of individuality in design into the melting pot of standardization. Only dire necessity will force really great architects to work like machines to see their work designated for the files under some such mark as XYZ—B—99. This same design can be used in a dozen cities of the same state or district and unless the public has other landmarks to go by, innumerable instances of wandering in a strange town may result. Can public architecture attain a really high level under bureau control? Will architects submerge ideals and their rights as individuals and bury self respect in the cauldron of standardization?

It may be true, as charged by The New Deal, that the old system of making the Supervising Architect the paymaster for public jobs designed by local architects, had glaring faults. Will the new system stand the acid test of public approval? Will it satisfy the demands for an American architecture in keeping with the growing inclinations of the public for more permanent public buildings of distinctive types as models for privately constructed structures. Will the oncoming, architecturally inclined youths of the country be able to carry on under a system that stifles artistic ability!—*Stone.*

New Architects in Illinois

The following candidates were granted registration in Illinois either on the basis of examination held on May 11, 12 and 13, 1936, by transfer from other states, or by restoration of lapsed license:

BY EXAMINATION:

Benedict, Earl R. Jr., 320 S. Scoville Ave., Oak Park
Del Bianco, Anthony J., 4050 Crystal St., Chicago
Gaul, Michael Felix, 1530 N. Hoyne Ave., Chicago
Keller, Norman Edward, 1823 Thirteenth St., Moline
Lindl, Gordon Joseph, 830 - 64th St., Kenosha, Wis.
Michel, David Daniel, 3800 Lake Shore Drive, Chicago
Saylor, Raymond Lewis, 106 Cook St., Springfield
Stoshitch, Savo Milan, 3205 E. 38th St., Indianapolis, Ind.
Taylor, Carl Coder, 5111 University Ave., Chicago
Varraveto, Patrick Michael, 5471 Division St., Chicago
Peterson, Raymond A., 2441 Berteau Ave., Chicago
Tomlinson, Herbert W., 414 Washington St., Glencoe
Cohen, Arthur S., 14 W. Washington St., Chicago
Dubsky, Frank Anton, 1835 W. Garfield Blvd., Chicago
Forester, Benjamin X., 1436 S. Springfield Ave., Chicago
Kalischer, Mark D., 520 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago
Knox, Robert V., State House, Springfield
Marberg, Gustaf A., 10351 S. State St., Chicago
Poe, Morris, 4646 Magnolia Ave., Chicago
Rummel, Charles G., 6608 Bosworth Ave., Chicago
Schmidt, Karl Morton, 504 Barry Ave., Chicago
Marshall, Warren D., 308 Main St., Lafayette, Ind.
Narovec, George, 2107 S. 57th St., Cicero
Scheick, William H., 504 W. Illinois St., Urbana
Berbiers, Lee D., 1357 Sedgwick St., Chicago
Greth, Paul William, 5523 Kenmore Ave., Chicago

BY STANDARD NCARB JUNIOR EXAMINATION:

Houlihan, Raymond F., 8015 Parnell Ave., Chicago
Abramovitz, Max Spring, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York City

BY TRANSFER:

Joseph C. Schaeffer (New York to Illinois), New York City
Carl F. Kressbach (Michigan to Illinois), Jackson, Mich.

BY RESTORATION IN ILLINOIS:

Karl H. Sheldon, Shorewood Hills, Madison, Wis.

One city architect committed suicide and seven others were arrested on June 9 as King Carol acted to punish those responsible for the Bucharest grandstand collapse which killed 20 and injured 500 on June 8.

Thomas Jefferson Subject at Chicago Chapter June Meeting

Sixty members and guests of the Chicago Chapter, A. I. A. attending the Chapter's annual meeting at the Architects Club of Chicago on June 16 concentrated on the achievements and influence of Thomas Jefferson as an architect and a cultural influence. The occasion was the unveiling of the portrait of Thomas Jefferson, a copy of the famous portrait by Thomas Sully hanging in the United States Senate Chamber. This copy comes to the Chicago Chapter through the efforts of Miles Colean, Washington member of the portrait Committee, and other Chicago Chapter members in Washington. The copy is a Federal Arts project which is loaned by the federal government to the Art Institute of Chicago who in turn loans it to the Chapter for inclusion in the Chapter's gallery of distinguished architects.

Preceding the portrait ceremony and immediately following the dinner, came a short business meeting. Secretary's minutes and treasurer's report were followed by a report by Earl H. Reed on the Historic American Building Survey. The following officers were unanimously elected for the year 1936-1937: John O. Merrill, President; Denison B. Hull, First Vice-President; John Howard Raftery, Second Vice-President; Carl E. Heimbrodt, Secretary; Elmer C. Roberts, Treasurer. Retiring President Hall turned the gavel over to President Merrill who outlined a three-fold platform: Maintenance of the Glessner House, increased membership, an active program of public information.

Arthur Woltersdorf, chairman of the Portrait Committee, presided during the portrait program. Telling of the collection's inception, Mr. Woltersdorf outlined a history of the portraits, enumerating the artists and donors of the eighteen subjects in the collection. Charles Fabens Kelley, Assistant Director of the Art Institute of Chicago, then unveiled the nineteenth acquisition—the portrait of Thomas Jefferson.

Chicago's well-known architect and author, Thomas E. Tallmadge, was the principal speaker of the evening. He sought to answer the question "What makes Jefferson's work as an architect immortal?" Not beauty, said Mr. Tallmadge, because Monticello does not compare with the serene loveliness of Mount Vernon; not magnitude, because even the capitol at Richmond could not compare in size with the capitol at Washington.

Jefferson's fame rests on three works—Monticello, built when he was 27; the capitol at Richmond; the buildings of the University of Virginia. He had long been convinced that American architecture was provincial and amateurish and when, as Ambassador to France, he had an opportunity to study French architecture, he awoke to the glories of classic art The Virginia House of Burgesses wrote to Jefferson in Paris, asking him to have fitting plans made for a capitol building and Jefferson immediately proceeded to make the plans himself, consulting with Clérisseau who —having made the Grand Tour with Robert Adam—was well versed in the lore of classic architecture. Any other American architect would have designed the capitol after the fashion of the old capitol in Boston, but Jefferson chose the temple form which, though well known through books, had never been used in a building of any magnitude.

For many years after his return to the United States Jefferson was busy with other things and he was already in his 70's when he conceived the idea of a great state university. Again he did something entirely unprecedented when he determined on a domestic scheme of separate buildings instead of following Christopher Wrenn's plan at William and Mary and the plan at Harvard where the students were all housed in one building. Jefferson's plan was something completely unknown and has remained the model to the present day.

For the design of the library, Jefferson chose as a model the Pantheon in Rome, making it one-half as large in its lineal dimensions as the original. He wrote a specification for stucco and cement according to his own experiments and calculated the bricks, figuring exactly how much they would cost. This is all the more extraordinary when it is remembered that Jefferson had no architectural education other than his own interest in the subject.

Jeffersonians like to argue, Mr. Tallmadge continued, that Jefferson was the father of the classic revival. Mr. Tallmadge believes that Jefferson turned the current in architecture from English Georgian to a correct and sophisticated architecture, based on Roman style but having a strong French flavor, and since he worked with American timber and craftsmen, Jefferson's buildings became Colonial American. Jefferson was the last of the amateur architects because his introduction of sophisticated architecture made necessary the entrance of the professional architect upon the American scene.

A motion was carried to extend the thanks of the Chicago Chapter to Miles Colean and his associates in Washington for their achievement.

—Dorothy Gliffe Wendt.

New Orleans' Iron Galleries Charm

Among its many attractions, the city of New Orleans has something which may or may not be called distinctive architecture (for no one can deny its specialty) and that is the peculiarly effective decoration of its iron galleries. If architecture really means art applied to structure then, certainly, of all art ever employed in the design of a building it is here most effectively engaged, for the most simple design of a building, in absence of all pretensions to architecture, immediately becomes characteristic of New Orleans when adorned with these enchanting galleries.

Ever since I selected architecture as my life work I have sought, here and abroad, for distinctiveness marked by productions indigenous to the soil, so to speak, but nowhere did I find such localized atmosphere created by the intense consistency of these productions—all of the same relationship, yet interestingly varied in physiognomy.

For more than 50 years I have been returning again and again to wander through "French Town," impressed by its quaintness and absorbed in sketching odd picturesque structures and iron galleries. Some of the examples which have attracted me particularly are the residence at the downtown river corner of Third and Coliseum streets, the two houses on Esplanade avenue, numbers 533 and 539 (river side from Chartres), and that most beautiful example, the residence at the lake corner of Esplanade and Royal. This building should, by all means, be preserved for its decorative value is inestimable.

There is a house at 606 Esplanade, the side of which (very ordinary otherwise) is effectively ornamented with a rather small, square, several-storied gallery which beautifies the side view and holds one's attention. Royal street has many diversified examples of this ornate embellishment of the highly-developed exigency of Southern life—"the gallery."

Then there is the long row of nine bays extending over four entrances at houses numbered from 1111 to 1117 Royal. These galleries are characteristically beautiful.

The interest in these productions of New Orleans' past should be awakened and the beauty and charm of the finer examples preserved. I have tried to define for myself why I am so particularly under their spell and I have reasoned that it is the association of all things with reference to New Orleans, its early history, its romance, the bygone days of a different people and, perhaps, my boyhood happy days spent there during occasional visits.

—Henry J. Schlacks.

Foremost among New York City's defense against the fire peril is its high pressure system, by means of which water can be forced to greater heights than otherwise would be possible. These lines honeycomb the city—especially Manhattan. Because of the corrosive conditions, the municipal engineers specified corrosion resistant bolts for all flange fastenings on the lines as precaution against failure.

The Nation's Memorial to George Rogers Clark

The President of the United States, two governors, many distinguished guests and a large crowd of interested spectators assembled on June 14 to dedicate the Congressional memorial to George Rogers Clark at Vincennes, Indiana, and do honor to his name. The building is officially complete, but the ultimate effect will not have been achieved for a number of years, not until the planting has developed fully, the adjacent property to the rear has been improved to harmonize with the monument, and the whole group has mellowed as only time can mellow it.

The design for the building was selected by competition in 1930, F. W. Hirons and Mellor of New York being the winners. Bennett, Parsons and Frost of Chicago, were the landscape architects. The memorial is located in the old section of Vincennes at the point where highway US 50 crosses the Wabash River. The site is to the south of the highway with the Wabash River on the west, the cathedral on the east, and nondescript houses and industrial buildings to the south. Just north of the highway, two short blocks have been cleared to make a small park, and facing it is a row of small and uninteresting shops. This section and the one to the rear or south of the memorial will undoubtedly be improved with time.

The general character of the building, with its chaste proportions and profiling, is well known. This character has been questioned by some to memorialize so rugged a pioneer as George Rogers Clark. The beauty of the monument, with its circular room in the center surrounded by sixteen Doric columns, the whole resting on three deep steps and a base, is not questioned.

The exterior is of Vermont granite and most of the interior of Indiana limestone. The foundations, roof, and certain other portions are of reinforced concrete. Except for the ornamental designs in the bronze work of the entrance door, there is practically no decoration on the exterior beyond the ornamental features of the Classic order itself. All focuses on the interior of the memorial, with a bronze statue of George Rogers Clark by Herman MacNeil in the center. On its walls appropriate mural decorations by Ezra Winter occur. The floor is of Tennessee marble. Around the walls below the murals is first a step of black marble and then a seat and wainscot of warm yellow marble in tones of ochre and grayer shades. Above, all the surfaces except those occupied by the murals are of Indiana limestone. The interior is divided into eight panels, one occupied by the door and the other seven by murals, each with a geographical title and illustrating some phase of the winning of the West.

The first mural is "Kentucky: Entering the Great Valley," showing George Rogers Clark and pioneers descending the west slope of the Allegheny mountains. The second is "Cahokia: Peace or War with the Indians," representing Clark pursuading the Indians not to side with the British. The third is "The Wabash: Through Wilderness and Flood," vividly depicting the hardships and sufferings of the march from Kaskaskia to Vincennes in February, 1779. The fourth, which is opposite the entrance, is "Vincennes: The British Barrier to the West," portraying the attack on Fort Sackville. The fifth is "Fort Sackville: Britain Yields Possession," which depicts the surrender of Lonel Hamilton to Clark. The sixth "Marietta: The Northwest a New Territory," shows the reading of the Northwest Ordinance at Marietta, Ohio, the first capital of the new territory Clark had won. The seventh mural is "St. Louis: the Way Opened to the Pacific," depicting the ceremony in which the United States took possession of the upper part of the Louisiana Purchase.

The light for the interior comes through a gracefully wrought skylight of bronze and glass. The decorations of the glass are delicately moulded into it and are touched with pale greens, reds, and yellows. The glass is translucent and gives a very agreeable soft light. Both interior and exterior are well handled and the simple Classic style with its modern flavor is very appropriate to the problem.

Other features of the group are the statue of Francis Vigo by John Angel which is situated on the axis to the south with its back to the river; the pylons at the bridge approach depicting Indians in modern low relief; the architectural termination of the plaza in front of the memorial as it ends in the bridge approach; the bridge itself; and the Gibault Plaza in front of the cathedral with its statue of Pierre Gibault by Albin Polasek. The historic cathedral of St. Francis Xavier adjacent to the site becomes an interesting and appropriate part of the whole.

The general conception of the group is good, but it is unfortunate and disturbing that from only one approach—across the river—is any adequate view of the memorial possible until one is right upon it. This, no doubt, is caused by the difficult conditions imposed in developing a group with so many fixed elements in it. These fixed conditions were that the memorial itself was to be approximately on the site of old Fort Sackville, that the cathedral of St. Francis Xavier—which it was desirable to keep—already stood to the east of the site of the Fort, and that in front of the site, highway US 50 which was to have a new bridge at this point as part of the scheme, would have to remain where it was.

The space between the cathedral and the river is a little narrower than would have been chosen as ideal, and because of this limit in the width of the site and the rise of the bridge approach at this point, the Plaza had to end at the bridge instead of carrying its axis through to First street. First street is a river front street and not the natural approach for pleasure cars, but might become one if the view were good. Unfortunately, the view of the lower half of the building is cut off by the bridge approach. The designers have made the best of the situation, however, by making an interesting plaza between the bridge and the memorial and terminating it architecturally against the bridge approach. From the only natural approach on the Indiana side, US 50, the view is blocked by the cathedral which stands to the east and a little in front of it. This building is most appropriately a part of the group, but its relation to the approach from the east is unfortunate.

For the most part, however, the memorial and its adjacent features are very satisfying and it is a group that will grow more beautiful and mellow as time develops its planting and improves certain features of its surroundings.

—Juliet Peddle.

Javanese Arts and Crafts

The known history of Java begins after the period of first Hindu colonization. Concerning the early contacts of the Hindus with the Javanese little is known, and it is not certain from which parts of India they came. It is fairly well established, however, that commercial relations already existed between Java and India in the First Century A. D.

While the ruins of many imposing buildings and monuments of the Hindu Period still survive, fine architectural art has disappeared almost totally from the native repertoire. The endless variety of aspects displayed in the arts and crafts, nevertheless, reflect a national culture derived from old forms with vigorous new applications. Each district has its own particular specialty, such as batiked cloth, jewelry, leatherwork and textiles.

Homespun cotton textures are found all over Java, mostly adorned with patterns of colored stripes or checks which are easy to vary according to taste. Fabrics which have gold and silver threads woven in their texture are still made in a few towns, as are the "ikat" cloths, which are true textures deluxe with yarns locally entwined before their immersion in the different dyes.

The making of batik cloths is the handicraft most typical of Java. The process of drawing or painting a design in wax on cloth, so that when dyed only that part of the cloth which has not been covered by wax takes the color, has been known and practiced in Java for many generations. Cloth which has been treated and dyed in this manner is known as "batik," a Javanese word meaning "painting with wax."

The wax is put on a cloth by means of a small copper container with a long slender spout, a "tjanting." The waxing of the cloth is a slow and tedious process, but a definite richness of color is obtained which makes it easily possible to determine whether a so-called batik is genuine or an imitation. The newer hand-blocking, by means of copper metal stamps, or blocks, is so much more rapid than the old hand-waxing process that it has come into extensive use on a commercialized basis.

After a long period of neglect, the silver industry of Java is actually showing evident signs of revival. Among Oriental races in general, and the Hindu in particular, the working of metals has always had a special attraction, and the trades of the brass founder and the coppersmith were held in high honor. For a lengthy period copper and brass working underwent a pronounced Arab influence, traces of which are apparent to this day in the incised figures of animals. The art of working tin was taught to the native artisans by the Chinese.

The highest form of woodcarving is when the plastic art has acquired an individual form, either as an independent image or as part of the ornament. The latter style is frequently applied in Java where the influence of ancient Hindu art has always predominated and where the ruins of marvelous temples bear witness of a masterful command over this special art expression. Today the wood is modeled and carved into a great variety of objects to suit different purposes, from household furniture to the elaborate carvings on houses and ships. Teak is generally used, for it is one of the best and most durable kinds of wood. Flowers, fruits and leaves of exquisite detail, gracefully interlaced and intertwined, are favorite decorations.

The pottery industry is still very primitive in Java, the articles produced being fairly exclusively destined for native consumption. As a result, a few European enterprises have been started which specialize in art pottery.

The civilization of the Javanese is the product of the complex interaction of innumerable superposed layers of different cultures and waves of immigration. Today the island is passing through a troubled period of adjustment to Western culture, and paved roads, motor cars, airplanes, cinemas, and all the other features of European civilization are forcing their way into the remotest sections of Java where they are rapidly becoming matters of everyday life. The spirit of national unity is growing apace, and a renascence of native culture is at hand, but it will be a new kind of culture for Java. The ancient Indonesian and Hindu traits are falling far into the background, and the issue now is between the Mohammedan and the Western European types of civilization.

—Raymond Kennedy and Charles J. Bernard.

The Mediaeval Church

The authority of the bishop with his diocesans and his good name in the world did not depend on his military and financial resources, but rested, in the final analysis, on immaterial claims: his authority was spiritual. Thus it had been at the beginning when the church was the bride of poverty, and thus and not otherwise it still was in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, after a stream of pious donations, both long and deep, and the grant of the tithe by the state together with freedom from taxation, had transformed it into the wealthiest corporation of the age. But even had its riches disappeared, or had they been appropriated by some such act of force as that by which Siena and the other rising communes deprived their respective bishops of political jurisdiction, the life of the church, its real life, would hardly have been threatened. For the church was an idea, the most powerful and universally distributed idea of the Middle Age, and as long as that idea retained its vigor, any catastrophe, if we can conceive of such, which at some dusk should have obliterated its material existence, its shrines, its houses, its rents, would have been followed the next morning by a rain of donations reestablishing it in its integrity undiminished by a jot or tittle. We call the mediaeval period currently the Age of Faith. There is much mistaken information disseminated in books and sermons about the quality of this faith and the loveliness of its works—and of these misconceptions we shall hear anon—but the mediaeval period is the Age of Faith unmistakably in the sense that all men accepted the church as the divinely appointed instrument of salvation, and believed that the seven sacraments, administered by bishop and clergy, were the seven converging roads to heaven. With such faith abroad, burning in every heart, the church was indeed founded upon a rock.

—Ferdinand Schevill in "Siena."

Professor L. H. Provine, Head of the Department of Architecture, University of Illinois, sailed from New York the end of June bound for Normandy whose houses and churches will be Dr. Provine's summer study.

Past I. S. A. President Stanhope sailed on June 27 from New York on the Cunard-White Star "Britannic" for a visit to England and Continental Europe.

Contributors to this Issue

Howard J. White of Graham, Anderson, Probst & White, architects, Chicago, continues his reported investigations in this number.

D. D. Corrough, architect, Highland Park, Illinois, and Deputy Commissioner of Buildings in that city, has had exceptional opportunities to observe the working of the Illinois Architects Act.

Henry J. Schlacks, Chicago architect, has contributed much to Catholic church architecture in Chicago and the Middle West.

Juliet Peddle, an Illinois architect and graduate of the University of Michigan, for some years architectural assistant in the office of Hamilton, Fellows and Nedved, journeyed to Vincennes to make the report on the George Rogers Clark Memorial for the Bulletin.

Wells Ira Bennett is Associate Professor of Architecture, University of Michigan.

Raymond Kennedy is instructor in the Science of Society at Yale and Charles J. Bernard is Director of the Department of Industry and Commerce in Netherlands-India.