



PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

Box 2555, Station A, Champaign, Illinois 61825

"The Past Has A Future"

Volume 11

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Tenth Anniversary Membership Meeting

PACA's tenth anniversary membership meeting will be held from 2-4 pm. on Sunday, March 17 at the offices of Norman Baxley & Associates and Carle Medical Communication, 110 West Main Street, Urbana. The business portion of the meeting will include a short synopsis of the past year and election of three members to the Board of Directors. The 1991 Heritage Awards will then be presented and the meeting will conclude with a short film about the demise of the small town movie theater. The film, entitled "Coming Soon," was selected for viewing at the New York Film Festival, along with "Chariots of Fire."

Orpheum Preservation Project

The winterization of the theater has progressed slowly. Due to technical difficulties in finalizing the agreement with the City of Champaign, PACA was unable to begin work until mid-January—after a heavy dose of winter weather! However, soon the heat should be on and a general "thawing" of the building can begin.

Meanwhile, the Orpheum Committee has continued its public awareness and fund raising efforts by sending New Year's Greetings to Orpheum supporters. In addition, the Theater, along with Catholic Social Services, will be the beneficiary of a St. Pat's Day Run/Walk. The Committee also took part in the "Tourism Expo" held in mid-February at Market Place Mall. This was a great opportunity to acquaint the general public with plans for a children's cultural center to be headquartered in the Orpheum Theater. A special thanks goes to these Orpheum V.I.P.'s:

PIP Printing
Perry Morris
Susan Appel
Charles Butzow
Gisele Atterberry
Leonard Doyle
Charol Hanson

Marrienne Murphy
Laird Thompson
Rick Ewing
Vic Wojnar
Sharon Gunnason
Alice Edwards



Focus On: Illinois Central Railroad Station

The City of Champaign owes its existence to the Illinois Central Railroad, due to the company's decision to route the rail line three miles west of Urbana. Ever since then, the IC Station has played an important role in downtown Champaign. That role is currently undergoing transformation under the auspices of the building's new owners, Neil Strack and William Youngerman. While the station will continue to serve Amtrack passengers from the north end of the first floor, the remainder of the station will contain restaurant, commercial, and office space. With this development, the station will regain its former downtown prominence. PACA salutes the adaptive use of this historic building.

The following history of the IC Station is from Nancy Retterer's 1989 architectural thesis, "Adaptive-Use Proposal for the Illinois Central Railroad Station and Depot, Champaign, Illinois."

The section of line between Chicago and West Urbana was completed July 24, 1854. The first train to arrive from Chicago was greeted with enthusiasm by citizens of both West Urbana and Urbana. Originally a shed-like structure was constructed to act as a depot. This was soon replaced by the Doane House. The Doane House was

built in 1856 by John and Archa Campbell. It served as a hotel and ticket office/depot for Illinois Central passengers for many years until it burned July 12, 1898.

The Depot

After the Doane House burned, temporary quarters for the sale of tickets and passenger waiting had to be found. The first floor of the trainmaster's office served this purpose for the interim period before a new depot was constructed. It did not take long before talk of a new depot began amongst the citizens of Champaign. Champaign was the best business point on the Illinois Central line between Chicago and Cairo, and having the University of Illinois located there made the town even more important. Champaign felt they deserved a new depot, and a nice one at that.

The townspeople began to speculate about where the new depot would be

Make sure you keep up-to-date with local preservation activity. Check your mailing label for your current PACA membership status.

located. A petition was passed around and signed by the citizens of Champaign and Urbana. They hoped that a depot would be built at the crossing between Illinois Central and the east-west Wabash line. Later it was learned that due to conditions set in the original charter the depot had to be located on the land currently owned by the company.

Illinois Central kept their plans discreet early in the planning stages. Their officials visited Champaign in July 1898 to look over the railroad grounds and decide on the best location for the new depot. The townspeople continued to speculate. At a city council meeting November 15, 1898 it was decided by Mayor Scott, upon recommendation of the Illinois Central, that the new depot would sit at the end of Main Street on the west side of the tracks. This location would totally cut off access to Main Street from the east side of the tracks. There would not even have been a foot passage. Excavations started November 28, 1898 at this location, but work was stopped soon after due to opposition by the people. The city council reconsidered its decision and the depot ended up being built to the south of Main Street.

The original plans for the building were for quite a large, two story structure. The first floor was to have waiting rooms, ticket office, baggage room, lunch counter and restaurant. The second floor would have offices and a parlor/reading room for the train men. It was to look like the depot in Kankakee, but 50' longer. The people of Champaign were very pleased with the plan. In August the local papers praised the new depot plan, calling it "an architectural ornament of the city." They believed it would be the finest and most complete depot on the line, except for Chicago.

In November the Illinois Central saw they could save quite a bit of money by reducing the number of sections along their line. They saw that by lengthening each division slightly, they could eliminate at

least three sections totally. This meant that Champaign would no longer hold its position as a division. They planned to make Mattoon the first division after Chicago. With this news, the original plans for Champaign's depot were altered. The depot ended up being a smaller one story structure. There are waiting rooms in the center with the baggage room and lunch counter flanking either side, but no provisions for the trainmen or trainmaster.

After all the controversy and arguments were set aside, the construction of the depot went quickly. By December 17, 1898 the foundation had been completed and the walls were up to the window sills. The new depot was open for business in February 1899.

The small depot played host to many important persons and events throughout its history: President McKinley spoke from the rear of his train on his tour of the country. President Diaz of the Republic of Mexico spoke from his train. Theodore Roosevelt spoke from the platform during his presidency, and the Liberty Bell was displayed there on its way to the St. Louis exposition. After serving Champaign and the University for almost 30 years, the depot had finally been found inadequate in its function. Ever increasing crowds of passengers were arriving at the depot to support the University of Illinois' sports events. There were plans to construct a larger stadium facility on campus meaning the numbers of fans would grow accordingly. Also, the regular traffic at the beginnings and ends of semesters and for vacations had overgrown the depot's accommodations. In an effort to meet the increasing needs of its passengers, Illinois Central decided to build a modern and much larger station at Champaign. The old depot was saved, but relocated to make way for the new station.

The brick building, over 200' long by 40' wide, was moved about 114' north, then west to sit on its new foundation. It never

stopped operation throughout the entire move. Water and gas were supplied by rubber hoses and electricity was supplied through extension cords. Not even the food service was interrupted. In preparation for the move a 6'x3' trench was dug around the entire foundation. Steel rods acted as reinforcement while the old foundation was torn out. A track was constructed out of timber and steel rails. The building was placed on large timbers with a metal sheet attached across their bottom. Steel rollers, much like a train, were then attached to the metal sheet. The entire operation took place over 9 days. At 11:40 am June 20, 1923 the team of horses began to wind around a capstan inching the depot forward. Each revolution moved the building only 3 inches. On July 2, 1923 the depot was eased onto its new foundation with only a couple minor cracks in the masonry for the wear. William H. Brown & Co. of Chicago was the contractor for the job. The depot continued to serve as the passenger station from its new location until the new station was complete. After the new station was in operation the depot was closed for renovation into an express building. The express building was occupied on November 24, 1924.

The Station

The railroad industry was at its prime in the early 20th century. Business was growing steadily, especially since W.W.I. Illinois Central underwent a vast construction program in 1923 to accommodate this growth. Their plans for improvement ranged from additional lines and improved grade crossings to new stations and additions to many of their facilities. The entire program would cost over \$120,000,000. Improvements at Champaign were included in the plans. Champaign's ticket sales followed the pattern of the nation. Sales had grown from \$365,829.71 in 1917 to \$573,503.28 in 1922. Illinois Central realized the need to expand and improve their facilities in Champaign to better serve its patrons.



Negotiation between Illinois Central and Champaign city officials began in January of 1923. Along with providing a new passenger station, Illinois Central proposed to elevate the tracks through the city and to build subways at major crossings. They asked for the cooperation and financial support from both the city and the Illinois Traction System. Their proposal was met with extreme favor by Champaign and its citizens. Negotiations took only 4 days. By March 20, 1923, the basic plans were set. It was decided where the subways would be constructed, and the layout of the new station was described in the *News Gazette*. The design of the new station and subways was under the direction of C.O. Westfall. The Illinois Central engineer involved in the project was F.L. Thompson. Minor changes to the plans were made throughout the next few months, but the basic proposal remained. The newspapers rallied for support from the community. Bond issues for \$185,000 were voted upon and passed with enthusiasm.

Work on the new station got underway once the old depot was moved to its new location. Plans for the new station went out for bids August 1, 1923. The contract was awarded to the low bidder, Ellington and Miller Construction Company of Chicago, in late August. Construction proceeded smoothly until April 1924 when a strike was called by the Building Trades Council. The strike held up prog-

ress for about a week creating a slight rush for completion.

Plans for the dedication of the new station began in May of 1924. The dedication of the station was to be a major event in the city. Therefore early and thorough planning for the big event was called for. Construction was still moving along, although slower than was expected. This made planning difficult. They were unable to select a dedication date until early July of 1924. The dedication was set for August 9, 1924. Finally the big day came. Illinois Central officials visiting the city for the occasion were treated with high honor. They began the day with a luncheon at the Champaign Country Club. The new station was decorated appropriately for the occasion. The festivities began at 2:00 with a band concert by W.M. Ewing's Band. The band paraded down Main Street leading the way to the track side of the new station. The speeches began with Mr. Markham, I.C. president, as he gave his address to the citizens of Champaign and dedicated Illinois Central employees. Next, Attorney O.B. Dobbins responded in behalf of the citizens and city of Champaign. At the close of the program the people were invited to walk through the building. A stream of visitors meandered through the new facilities in admiration. The Illinois Central and city officials rounded off the afternoon with a game of golf back at the Champaign Country Club.



St. Pat's Day Run/Walk

Come join the fun and help support the Orpheum Theater at the first St. Pat's Day Run/Walk on Saturday, March 16 in Crystal Lake Park. The 4 mile run and 2 mile walk is being sponsored by Body n' Sole, Covenant Medical Center, Johnston's Sport Shop, Kraft General Foods, Oldies 92, Pepsi-Cola, PersonalCare, and Schnucks; race management is being provided by Second Wind Running Club. This is a great way to support the Orpheum Project while doing something good for yourself. If you've lost the registration form sent in the last newsletter, PACA can easily provide you with additional forms. So come support the Orpheum and put your feet where your heart is!

Former PACA President Honored

Former PACA Board member and president, Lachlan F. Blair, has been honored with the "Distinguished Illinois Preservationist" Award by the Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois. One of the first two such awards to be presented, the award is given for life-long dedication to the preservation or appreciation of historic architecture in Illinois. The other award is going to noted Chicago architect Harry Weese.

When Lachlan Blair came to Illinois twenty-five years ago, he brought with him a wealth of experience as a planner and preservationist. Trained in architecture and city planning, he had served as Planning Chief for the State of Rhode Island, and later as principal of Blair Associates, one of the largest planning consulting firms in the Northeast, with a record of service to more than two hundred communities. In this role, Blair directed the widely acclaimed College Hill

study in Providence, recognized as the first urban renewal study which considered historic preservation. First published in 1959, the College Hill study pioneered new techniques for inventory and evaluation of historic buildings, and continues to be used as a model for preservation planning today.

Professor Blair's influence is perhaps most importantly seen in the stream of more than 4,000 students he inspired during his twenty-two year tenure at the University of Illinois. Blair launched the popular Preservation Planning concentration in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning and his student workshops and special studies have assisted more than twenty communities in Illinois. Professor Blair's alumni are found in preservation offices and organizations throughout the country. Professor Blair's role as an educator extended to enlighten campus

administration about preservation, resulting in the creation of the Campus Committee on Historic Sites.

Lachlan Blair has maintained an equally strong preservation involvement outside of the classroom. In June, 1969, he was appointed to the newly-formed Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council, on which he served eleven years. As a counselor, Blair was involved in the nomination of one out of every two Illinois listings now in the National Register of Historic Places. In 1977, he organized and chaired the first Illinois statewide preservation conference. And of course, PACA is honored to have Lachlan as a founding member and second president.

Retired from the University in 1988, Lachlan now devotes his time to his consulting firm, The URBANA Group. PACA offers its congratulations to Lachlan for an honor well deserved!

New & Renewing Members

Mark Sieja	Mr. & Mrs. Edwin C. Rae
Joanne Chester Family	Dick Cannon
Douglas Miller	Dannel McCollum
Alice Edwards	Joe Donahue
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Sharen Slade	Linda Bastyr
David Lazarus	Mr. & Mrs. Robert Espeseth
Mr. & Mrs. Harry Querry	Mr. & Mrs. John Gilpin
Dr. & Mrs. Victor Wojnar	Frank DiNovo
Nancy Coombs	David Childress
Larry & Roberta Jones	Joan Lathrap

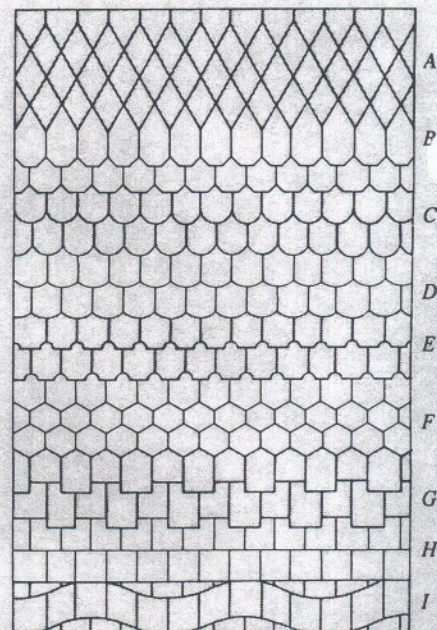
Charter Members

Mary B. Altenbernd
Mr. & Mrs. Reid T. Milner
Clareta Walker

The Lumber Room

Imbrication

The weathertight covering formed by overlapping rows of plain or end-modified tiles or shingles thereby producing distinctive surface patterns. Illustrated are nine commonly seen wall and roof patterns: (A) diamond, (B) octagonal, (C) fish scale, (D) segmental, (E) cove, (F) hexagonal, (G) staggered, (H) square, and (I) wavy.



V.I.P.'s

Dick Elkin
Keddy Hutson

Steve Romero
Jim Dobrovolny

Membership Application P.A.C.A.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY:

INDIVIDUAL

- ☐ Adult \$10.00
☐ Student (1/2 time or more) \$ 5.00
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☐ Additional Contribution

NAME

ADDRESS
Street City State Zip

CIVIC

- ☐ Over 100 members \$100.00
☐ 50-100 members \$ 75.00
☐ Up to 50 members \$ 50.00

CORPORATE

☐ \$ 50.00

☐ RENEWAL

☐ NEW MEMBERSHIP

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Please submit material for publication in the next newsletter before 15th of month.

