



PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

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Focus On: Bailey-Rugg Building

Located at 219-225 North Neil Street, the Bailey-Rugg Building is one of the few remaining Italianate commercial buildings in downtown Champaign. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1997.

In 1851, a charter to build the Illinois Central Railroad through Illinois was granted. Work immediately began on the railroad near Chicago and in July, 1854, the section between Ludlow, in northern Champaign County, and a site two miles west of Urbana was opened to railroad traffic with a depot called "West Urbana."

The opening of the railroad fueled a building boom in West Urbana that had begun in the early 1850s. Within a year after the arrival of the railroad, several commercial buildings and over hundred residences had been built. The Bailey-Rugg Building occupies Lot Two of the Farnham, Clark, and White Addition platted on March 18, 1854.

Daniel Rugg was one of the early merchants in Champaign. A boot and shoe store was founded on the site of the future Bailey-Rugg Building by Rugg in 1858. In 1863, he purchased the building at the southwest corner of Neil and Church streets for \$2500 and moved his business one door north. Rugg took out a mortgage of \$9,000 in 1871 to erect his three-story brick commercial building. At the same time, at the south end of the block, the Walker Brothers were planning a large brick building. The *Champaign County Gazette* noted in November, 1870

... We also hear it stated upon good authority, that Mr. D. Rugg will erect a like building; of like dimensions, on the corner of Neil and Church streets, in the place now occupied by Faulkner's Drugs and Rugg's boot and shoe store. If this be done, if the Walker Bros., and Mr. Rugg put up buildings of the character mentioned, it will become, in that event necessary for Mr. Bailey, who owns the frame buildings intermediate, to build in a corresponding style. We think we can vouch for Mr. Bailey in this matter, and do not believe



The historic Bailey-Rugg Building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1997. It is now owned and occupied by Soltec, a computer and internet company.

he is the man to be found lagging where capital and enterprise are needed for the development of our thriving young city.

David Bailey and Daniel Rugg agreed to jointly erect a three-story building with a common staircase between. The building was completed sometime in 1871 and contained stores on the first floor, offices and storage on the second floor, and meeting halls on the third floor.

From time to time the building has been referred to as the Metropolitan Building and the two buildings (Bailey-Rugg and Walker buildings) as the Metropolitan Block. Research suggests that the "Metropolitan" name was created by the *Champaign County Gazette* as individual street address numbers were not given to buildings in Champaign until the 1880s. Before then, location was given by landmarks or the specific names of buildings. Thus, when the new three-story brick buildings were constructed by the Walkers, Bailey, and Rugg, there would have been some movement for convenience to name the buildings. Newspaper stories in 1871 detail the

name debate, but the Walkers refused to have their building included as part of the Metropolitan Block nomenclature.

An opera house occupied the south meeting hall of Bailey's half of the building when the building opened. However, the use of the building for an opera house was short lived as by January 10, 1872, it was noted that the Champaign Masons had taken a five year lease for the space.

The north half of the third floor, owned by Rugg, was occupied by the Independent Order of Odd Fellow (I.O.O.F.). The *Gazette* offered this description:

It occupies the whole of the third floor of Mr. Rugg's portion of Metropolitan Block, corner of Church and Neil Streets, the extreme size is 33 x 100 feet, 16 foot ceiling. The main room is 33 x 67 feet, the remainder being divided into a reception, ante-room and two private rooms, (which latter are supposed to contain the "properties" of the institution). The rooms are all handsomely carpeted, and the main room has a platform extending around it which adds much to its appearance.

Both the Masons and I.O.O.F. later built their own halls in Champaign. However,

of the three lodges built, only the Jefferson Building at 202-204 West Hill, built by the Mason's in 1914, remains extant.

During the 1920s, Champaign High School used the third floor rooms for indoor 6-man team football and basketball games.

Earlier, on the first story of the building, Faulkner's Drug Store occupied the corner store on Church and Neil streets. To the south was Rugg's Boot and Shoe Store. It is not known who first used the south storefront of the Bailey portion of the building when it was erected.

Sometime after 1878, F.K. Robeson's Dry Goods expanded to the north, into the south portion of the building (Bailey's half). The dry goods firm also occupied storefronts in the Walker Brothers Building. In 1898, the firm occupied the storefront formerly used by Rugg's store. F.K. Robeson's Dry Goods became Robesons Department Store and erected a department store building to the west on the southeast corner of Church and Randolph streets between 1915 and 1920. For some time the firm continued its business in both locations; but by the 1920s, the store had moved out of the Walker Brothers and Bailey-Rugg buildings.

Faulkner Drugs moved out of the corner storefront in 1903 and S.C. Tucker moved his drug store into the space. Tucker had a painted sign installed on the north elevation of the building advertising his drug store.

In 1915, Charles Hamilton purchased the building. In 1916, Hamilton sold the building to the Hamilton Hotel Company. The company took out a \$50,000 mortgage on the property in 1919-1920 and remodeled the building. Alterations included the lowering of the first story floors, the placement of large steel beams above the first story storefronts to open them up, and the removal of the first floor dividing wall between 223 and 225 North Neil Street. The Champaign City Directories for 1919 and 1920 lists the addresses at 221 and 223 North Neil as vacant, confirming the remodeling.

The Elite Candy Kitchen later occupied the Tucker Drug Store's corner location. In 1935, Newman's Fashions moved into the north storefront. After Robeson's moved out in 1920, Buehler's meat market occupied the storefront to the south of the drug store. By 1925, Sholem Fashion Boot Shop opened in the storefront formerly occupied by the meat market. The south store was occupied by Harvey's Ladies Ready-To-Wear shop in the 1930s, Ralph Miller's Ladies Shop in the late 1940s, the Three Sisters Shop in the early 1950s, and later Lane's clothing store. During the tenure of Lane's, the

four windows on the second story were covered with a large metal facade. This facade has been removed exposing the original windows and arches. In the 1970s a series of taverns opened in the building. In the mid-1980s, the DSC Thrift Store occupied the storefront for sometime.

Italianate Style

The Italianate style was a popular style in American architecture from 1850 through the early 1880s. The earliest Italianate buildings in the United States were built in the late 1830s. Andrew Jackson Downing's pattern books increased the style's popularity throughout the 1840s and 1850s. The style, along with the Gothic Revival, began in England as part of the Picturesque movement, a reaction against formal classical styles that had influenced architecture for over two hundred years. It was loosely based on rambling, informal medieval Italian farmhouses, although formal Renaissance town houses also served as models for some buildings. The style declined during the financial panic of 1873, and when prosperity returned, new styles, such as the Queen Anne, became dominant.

Italianate features on the Bailey-Rugg Building include its ornate metal cornice with decorative brackets; wide, overhanging eaves; and the round and segmental arched windows with elaborate window hoods and stone sills. On the interior of the second and third floors, the heavily molded woodwork around the doors and windows is Italianate in style. The interior also has tall, heavily molded paneled doors on the upper stories.

The article was adapted from the National Register of Historic Places nomination form prepared by the former owner, Robert Hamilton Tilden.

Historic Preservation: Champaign's Past and Present

PACA is sponsoring a five-week class that will cover Champaign County history, architectural styles, vernacular building types, building genealogy, and local preservation efforts. The classes, on Tuesday evenings from 7-9 pm, start February 4.

Details will be included in Parkland's "Live & Learn" catalogue, to be mailed soon. Registration for the class is through Parkland and costs \$15.00. Classes will be held in Robeson Hall, 222 N. State St., Champaign. For further information contact PACA.

Tax Freeze Turns Twenty

This year marks the twentieth year since the creation of the Property Tax Assessment Freeze Program. Since 1983 almost fourteen hundred property owners have taken advantage of its benefits, spending nearly a quarter of a billion dollars on historic rehabilitation. From kitchen upgrades to roof repairs, owners of historic homes and condominiums have seen their property tax bills reduced, while preserving their living spaces.

The Tax Freeze's popularity has taken off in its two-decade existence. After receiving only seven applications in the program's first year, that number has grown each year, to almost two hundred in 2001. What many owners of historic property are finding out is that spending their time and money on rehabilitation projects is worth the effort when they receive a Certificate of Rehabilitation. This Certificate freezes their assessed evaluation for eight years, and saves them significantly on their property tax bills. The money that will eventually be saved makes a historic rehabilitation worth the property owner's extra effort, in the application process for the program.

To take part in the Property Tax Assessment Freeze Program a property must be listed on the National Register of Historic Places either individually or be within a district. Also a property could qualify if it was locally designated by a city with an approved preservation ordinance. Secondly, a property must be residential and must be one of the following: a single-family, owner-occupied residence; a condominium building; a cooperative building; or a rental building with up to six units, in which the owner occupies one unit. A minimum of 25 percent of the property's fair cash value as determined by the county assessor must be spent on the rehabilitation, which includes work done on the historic building, not additions and landscaping. All of the work, however, must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

There are three parts to the application process that must be approved before a Certificate of Rehabilitation is issued. Part one is to certify that the property is historic, which means that it's on the National Register or is designated a local landmark. The second part is a description of the rehabilitation work that will be taking place on the building and photographs of the pre-rehab condition before work began. Finally, part three includes the financial documentation, proving 25 percent of the fair cash value was spent on the rehabilitation, along with photo-

graphs of the completed work. A copy of the property tax bill from the year the work started should also be included, as it is at this level that the assessed evaluation is frozen.

Pre-approval of projects is not a requirement of the program, but it is recommended. Less than one percent of projects are denied. A Certificate of Rehabilitation does not transfer to a new owner, so if property is sold during the span of the freeze, taxes will be brought up to their current value.

The renovation of the National Register-listed Ricker House was completed under this program and the owners took advantage of the Tax Freeze. Although there are few qualifying National Register buildings in Champaign County thus far, local landmarks are also eligible for the Tax Freeze. This program is the only financial incentive available to owners of historic homes, and an added reason for landmarking a historic house.

For further information about the Tax Freeze, contact PACA or Andrew Heckenkamp at the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, 217.782.8168. Or visit the IHPA website at www.state.il.us/hpa/.

This article was taken from the Fall, 2002 issue of THE COMMISSIONER, the newsletter of the Illinois Association of Historic Preservation Commissions and was written by Andrew Heckenkamp.

Heritage Award Nominations Needed

Send your nominations to PACA or call 359-7222

From the President's Desk

The end of each year is a time of reflection. Each year I bring out the address book and write holiday cards to many old friends who have left the area. This column reaches many PACA members that have remained loyal even though they have moved away.

You will be glad to know, Steve Roemel (S. Ill.), that the old truck you found for us years ago has served PACA well, but has been replaced with a "new" truck; however, the "blue bomb" is still being used by Bob Swisher. We wish Dick Elkin (Fla.) a speedy recovery and yes, Dick, our new treasurer now has forms for us to fill out and a written policy about collecting sales tax. Louise Krauss (Tenn.), we are still looking for the match to your door. Marilyn Morris (Cal.), even more things have changed in your Urbana neighborhood. Chris and Melonie Hill (Tolono & Fla.), we appreciate your help with the Knoxville PEO Home. And to all of our members who live outside of the C-U area, drop us a line and tell us about preservation issues in your area or a special place you have found to search for salvage.

Locally, we are glad to hear that Steve Hesselschwedt from the University of Illinois is making a quick recovery from heart surgery. Steve has been instrumental in keeping PACA in the architectural loop at the UI for saving elements.

Historic Preservation in Urbana

The City of Urbana recently amended its historic preservation ordinance to clarify a number of sections that came

under criticism during the proposed Main Street Historic District hearing last February. The definitions of what constitute contributing and non-contributing properties in a historic district were clarified. The list of changes to the exterior of buildings that require Certificates of Appropriateness was amended. Project level of review tables were also adopted to make the process clearer for property owners in historic districts. Contact Michaela Bell, Plan Department, for the revised ordinance (344-2440).

The Urbana Historic Preservation Commission recently granted a Certificate of Appropriateness to Norman Baxley to change a set of exterior doors and transom at Busey's Hall/Princess Theater at 120 West Main Street. The new look will be more in keeping with the original and will replace some modern alterations.

In addition, the Urbana Commission received a Certified Local Government Grant from the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency to support speakers, logistics, and publicity for a workshop on historic districts. PACA has pledged additional support for this effort if needed. The dates and place for this workshop are still being decided, but it is expected to occur in early April.

Volunteer Opportunities

The warehouse can always use help, even if it is only for a few hours a month. Recently, because of a large salvage operation in Rantoul, vacations, and a UI football game, staffing the warehouse became difficult. Kathy Reeves and Nicole Swiss were able to hold down the fort, but this points out the need to get more people involved. The salvage warehouse is getting

Membership Application P.A.C.A.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY:

- Adult\$15.00
- Student (1/2 time or more)\$10.00
- Senior Citizen\$10.00
- Family\$20.00
- Corporate\$75.00

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Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

better organized all the time, but it is a constant struggle to keep up with sorting and storing of materials. New storage racks will be added to the west wall to better organize doors and plumbing fixtures. Our office at the Greek Revival Cottage will soon be moved into our new resource room. We hope to have the resource room organized by midwinter and we plan to have a computer with Internet access installed by spring. A volunteer is needed to help guide people in how to research issues or search for items on the Internet. The boiler in the basement will soon be removed. This basement area will then become a place to store ladders, carts, and display items. All of these efforts need help from people that love to organize.

This March we will need volunteers to staff our booth at the annual Home Show at the Assembly Hall. This is a good chance to meet people and talk about PACA programs. Only a few hours of time is necessary on either a Saturday or Sunday. Details will be available later.

Yes, we always need "crow-bar" volunteers, sometimes on short notice. This year we went as far as Knoxville and we are trying to establish salvage ties with Springfield, Mattoon, and Decatur, but that is a subject for the next newsletter.

Lead Paint

It is not too early to start thinking of spring and remodeling projects. If scraping paint is one of them, PACA will be there to help. Jeff Gordon conducted a lead paint workshop this year, and has offered to do others. Thanks to a kind donation and support from the Board, we now have a paint shaver with a connection to a HEPA vacuum. We are developing a policy for the use of this equipment by members on a rental basis. If interested, stop by the warehouse and ask for details.

Until next year, all the best

Richard A. Cahill, President

PACA Newsletter

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New & Renewing Memberships (received since the last newsletter)

Charter Members (1981-1983)

Mary Blair
 Anne A. Ehrlich
 Dr. & Mrs. Edward Kolodziej
 Rex & Karen Kummer
 Samuel Gove
 John & Joan Severns

Over Ten Year Members

Dorothy Neumann
 Nina Rubel
 Gerald O'Bryan
 Tony & Mary Graham
 Colleen & Bruce Brodie
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Five to Ten Year Members

Community Development Department -
 City of Urbana (Corporate)
 Andrew Phillips & Brenda Koenig
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 Ellen Deason & Patrick Roberge
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