



## PRESERVATION MATTERS

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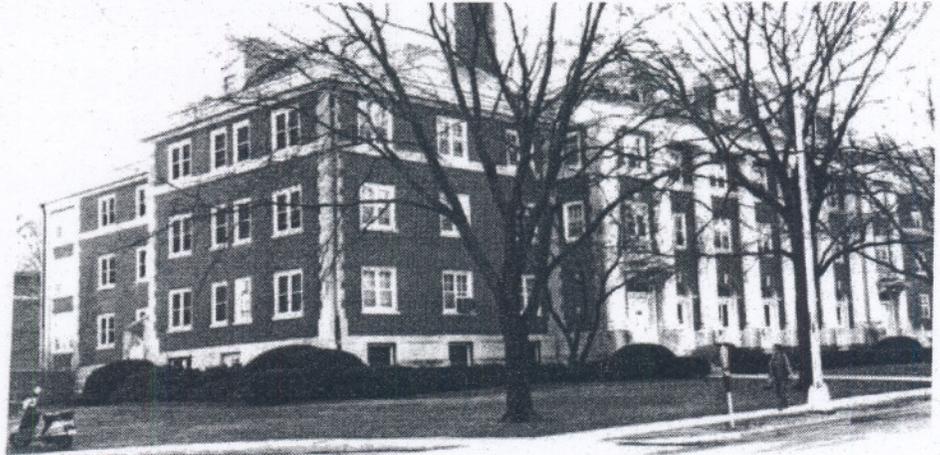
NUMBER 4

### Focus On: Busey-Evans Hall

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Women's Residence Hall (Busey)/West Residence Hall (Evans) is significant for listing in the National Register under Criterion A for the area of social history and under Criterion C for significance of architecture. The West Residence Hall is also significant under Criterion C for community planning and development. The residence halls are an excellent local example of the Georgian Revival style; the period of significance for the dual building is 1916-1952.

Busey Hall was constructed in 1916; it was the first residence hall on the campus. Pressure on the Board of Trustees to build suitable living quarters for female students led to its construction. The presence of this building on campus promoted the welfare of female students as it provided an appropriate living environment for students. Busey Hall is a three and one-half story building constructed in Flemish bond brick. Campus architect (1907 to 1933), James White designed Busey Hall and is claimed to have had the greatest influence on the material development of the campus. He was involved in the design of eighty main campus buildings, not including those built in the second half of the 1900s. White designed in a number of styles, including the Georgian Revival architectural style.

Evans Hall was built in 1926 from designs of New York architect, Charles A. Platt, who also designed eleven buildings on campus. His buildings are strictly Georgian Revival. This consistency of style and materials contributed to the realization of Platt's campus master plan. Evans Hall is also a three and one-half story building in Flemish bond brick. Elaborate entrances on the main facade, multi-light windows, detailed gable roof dormers, scuppers, slate roofing, and symmetry in



*The Women's Residence (Busey) Hall was the first dormitory built on the University of Illinois campus. Constructed in 1916-1917 to designs of Prof. James White, the building first housed men of the School of Military Aeronautics during World War I. Women occupied it in 1919.*

facade design are key Georgian Revival elements present on both sections of the connected buildings.

#### History

The University of Illinois was established in 1867. At the time of its conception, only one large building existed near University Avenue. On-campus housing was available to men at the top of this building; the floors below were used for classrooms and administration.

Two years later, the Board of Trustees met to discuss the admission of women. Word traveled fast and many of the male students heard of the possibility of women becoming their fellow classmates. A prominent alumnus of the class of 1873 tells a significant story about the admission of women to the UI. In 1869, as the Board of Trustees was in session to discuss the admission of women, a room below was packed with eavesdropping men. "After hearing the verdict announced that women were to be admitted, all were so overjoyed that nothing could retain the applause." Women were admitted the following academic year, 1870-1871.

Coeducation was not initially popular; consequently, at the beginning, female enrollment was low. Most of the women attending the UI were local and continued to live with their families, relatives, or close family friends.

From the beginning of women's admissions there was a lack of suitable housing. One option for females was a cooperative home near the original university building called "White Hall" or "Ladies Hall." It was only able to accommodate around forty students. This endeavor was not a success, and was thought a fad of Regent Gregory. The need for female housing still existed, but another attempt at organized living did not occur until 1895 when two groups of women formed chapters of national sororities and rented houses for their members. By 1911, 350 out of 695 students were living in private houses specifically for women.

A number of advocates had begun to voice their opinions about the living arrangements for females. Dean Mary E. Fawcett emphasized this need by saying, "The University's great work is to give

students a new point of view, and this is accomplished best in residence halls. The residence halls can become a cultural curriculum of the University." Dormitories throughout the country were beginning to be seen as a place for university students to develop culturally, socially, physically, and mentally. Dean Fawcett's comment seemed to inspire University President Edmund James and the Board of Trustees.

In 1914, the long-awaited campus residence for women seemed near reality with the condemnation of three lots in Urbana. The Board of Trustees set a budget of \$160,000 for the construction of the building. James White stated, "It is not intended to build with the \$160,000 a hall which will rival the elaborate dormitories at Michigan, Cornell and at some of the girls schools out east. However, it is believed that the Illinois residence hall will be the best for these Middle Western girls that can be built."

On June 21, 1916, groundbreaking for an official residence hall was held on West Nevada Street. Busey Hall was to be the first dormitory at the UI. The cornerstone was laid in October 1916 by Mrs. Laura B. Evans, an acting member of the Board of Trustees at the time and a strong advocate for women's housing at the university. On that same day, Pres. James announced that dormitories were to now be officially called "residence hall[s]" to distinguish them from dormitory sleeping arrangements in fraternities, sororities, and rooming houses. The residence hall had space for 104 girls with 46 single and 29 double rooms on the second and third floors and a hospital suite on the fourth floor. The Committee on Students' Welfare, consisting of three women, advised on the administration of the new hall. They recommended a Social Head and a Housekeeper/Director for the social management of the building. Women from all four classes were to reside in the hall, and rooms were to be assigned according to date of application and seniority.

Busey Hall was completed and ready for occupancy in the fall of 1917. However, women were not the first occupants of the hall. The building initially housed men as it was designated Barracks No. 2 of the School of Military Aeronautics during World War I. It became the temporary home of cadets in ground training school. In the fall of 1919, the first women students, along with the Social Head and



*Built in a complimentary Georgian Revival style, the West Residence Hall was opened in 1926. Designed by Charles Platt, the building firmly established a "women's campus" on the east side of the quadrangle. Both photos are from PACA's 1986 campus survey.*

Director moved in. The women learned social graces and cultural development from the first Social Head, Daisy Blaisdell, and attended teas every Sunday and Wednesday after dinner. From this point on, only women have resided in this residence hall.

In 1924, the Board of Trustees appropriated \$250,000 for a new residence hall to provide additional women's housing. Evans Hall would be the second residence hall constructed at the university. The Trustees approved the recommendation of White that the new Women's Residence Hall be located immediately west of the first unit. Construction for the new hall moved quickly due to the urgency of the situation. Evans Hall was one of eleven buildings Platt designed for the university.

The new building opened in 1926 with accommodations for 167 women. There was no kitchen; the dining room was served by Busey Hall's kitchen. Management was similar to Busey Hall with a Social Head and a Housekeeper/Director. The residence halls were named Mary E. Busey Hall/Laura B. Evans Hall in 1937. Mrs. Busey and Mrs. Evans were both longtime members of the Board of Trustees during the time of construction. Mrs. Evans was also an early advocate of women's housing at the university.

Busey/Evans Hall underwent an \$8 million renovation in 1987; the project lasted eighteen months. Care was taken to preserve the building's original architecture. Chandeliers were refurbished and staircases and fixtures were rebuilt as part of the renovation. "University officials

agreed that the building's storied past and striking architecture made it worth preserving."

#### **Significance in Social History**

Busey/Evans Hall is significant in its effort to promote the welfare of women attending the university in the early 1900s. American history reveals trends linking women's entry into higher education with economic and social factors that have shaped American life. "As a result of colleges and universities shifting to coeducational policies, student services were adapted to respond to the needs of the changing student population. Deans of Women, separate dormitory and gymnasium facilities, women's organizations, and attention to male and female social interaction on campus were examples of how student services had adapted to the changes brought about by coeducation."

No significant change took place in the education of women until the whole social structure of the nation was changed by the beginnings of industrial production outside the home and westward expansion. Women's colleges appeared early in the 19th century; however, the curriculum merely better prepared women to be housewives. The first college to fully open its doors to women was Ohio's Oberlin College in 1837. At the close of the 19th century, coeducation was gaining popularity. The passage of the Morrill Land Grant Act greatly assisted the growth of governmental involvement in higher education. By enacting such legislation, Congress encouraged the growth of state universities. "Taxpayers supporting these institutions demanded that their daughters, as

well as their sons, be admitted." Presidents of universities were more inclined to admit female students in increasing numbers. The UI's counterpart, the University of Wisconsin, Madison, began admitting women in 1863 with a limited number of course options. The University of Minnesota and Indiana University admitted women, with full academic opportunities, from the time of their establishments in 1869. The University of Michigan followed this lead a year later, in 1870, the same year as Illinois. By 1872, ninety-seven coeducational universities were in the United States. Today, nearly 95% of all college women are enrolled at coeducational universities.

The university's part in this social movement is seen in the buildings constructed for the specific use of women. Due to pressure on the Board of Trustees by female students and alumni, Busey/Evans Hall was constructed as a suitable home for women attending the university.

Busey/Evans Hall's location was the first building in a series constructed for women. Platt's campus master plan suggested a "women's" campus on the east side of the quadrangle near existing sororities. The Women's Gymnasium was constructed nearby to facilitate physical education and recreational activities. The later siting of Bevier Hall (Home Economics), across the street, is also a result of his plan.

*This article was adapted from the National Register nomination prepared by graduate students Leslie Griesbaum and Jennifer Grobe. The building, along with the Women's Gym, was listed in 2003.*

## Heritage Grants Awarded

At the May Board meeting, two Heritage Grants were awarded for 2006. The Sesquicentennial Neighborhood Association in Champaign was given \$2,000 for the design, manufacture, and installation of nine descriptive plaques around their historic neighborhood as an aid to a planned walking tour. The University YMCA, also in Champaign, was awarded \$1,800 for a chimney cap and repointing on their historic building.

The Heritage Grant program was established in 1994 as a way for PACA to fund community preservation projects. Each year at least ten percent of the previous year's salvage proceeds are distributed. Eligible applicants are non-profit organizations, public institutions, recognized neighborhood associations, and public agencies based in Champaign County. Projects must involve preservation, conservation, and/or education related to history, architecture, or archaeology in Champaign County. Projects may fall into any of five categories: bricks and mortar, land acquisition/move, professional architectural feasibility study, preservation education, and interpretation.

Since its inception almost \$60,000 has been distributed throughout the county for various preservation projects. Requests for Proposals for 2007 grants will be issued next February.

## New Board Member Appointed

At the July Board of Directors meeting, Brian Duffield, Thomasboro, was appointed to fulfill the unexpired term of Matt Malten. Brian is a long time PACA salvage volunteer and serves on the newly formed Salvage Committee. Other members of the Board are: Jerry Schmidt, Catherine Barbercheck, Susan Frobish, Kathleen Jones, Rich Cahill, Robert Nemeth, Carol Knepp, and Elisabeth Jenicke.

## Preservation Commissioners Needed in Champaign & Urbana

The City of Champaign is actively looking for individuals to serve on various governmental commissions. Currently there are two vacancies on the Historic Preservation Commission. The HPC meets the first Thursday of each month at 4 pm. This commission deals with preservation issues within the community, recommends local landmark nominations to the Plan Commission and City Council, and reviews National Register nominations. There are also openings on the Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals. For more information about the City's boards and commissions and for an application see <http://www.ci.champaign.il.us/government>.

The City of Urbana has openings on their Historic Preservation Commission, Plan Commission, and Community Development Commission. The Preservation Commission meets the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm and has duties similar to those of the Champaign commission. For further information see <http://www.ci.urbana.il.us/Urbana/>.

**Volunteers needed for  
Fall House Tour  
October 15  
Shifts: 1-3 or 3-5**

## P.A.C.A. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

### MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY

- Adult \$15
- Student \$10
- Senior Citizen \$10
- Family \$20
- Corporate \$75

Additional Contribution \_\_\_\_\_

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO PACA

### TYPE

- New \_\_\_\_\_
- Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

### PACA

BOX 2575, STATION A  
CHAMPAIGN, IL 61825  
WWW.PACACC.ORG  
217 359 7222

### INFORMATION:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

**Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.**

## Fall Tour and Members Party

This year's Fall House Tour, *A Stroll through Historic West Urbana*, will be held on Sunday, October 15 from 1-5 pm. Thirteen houses and one church will be featured on this year's tour. The houses are located on West High, West Green, West Elm, and West Main streets and included a variety of styles including Italianate, Queen Anne, and Bungalow. Tickets will be \$10 for the general public and \$5.00 for PACA members. However, volunteers (this year we will need many volunteers) receive a free ticket in return for two hours of staffing a house for safety and security. To volunteer, call (359-7222) or e-mail (pacaexdir@insightbb.com) PACA with your desired shift: 1-3 or 3-5.

Following the tour will be the annual PACA Members and Volunteer Recognition Party at the Salvage Warehouse. The party will begin at 3:00 and last until? Food and drink are provided, so plan to join your fellow old building lovers in a casual celebration of PACA's 25 years.

### Save the Date

## A Stroll through Historic West Urbana

Fall House Tour  
Sunday, October 15  
1-5 pm

Tickets: \$10.00 public  
\$5.00 PACA members

volunteers needed

## Salvage VIP's

Rich Cahill  
Bob Swisher  
Brian Duffield  
Neil Lasater  
Jerry Schmidt  
Suzanne Ashley-Wannemuehler

Mike Richards  
Dan Leasure  
Betty Swisher  
Darrel Foste  
Kathy Reeves  
Mike Miller  
Anthony Thomas

## Salvage Donations

City of Urbana, Department of Public Works  
University of Illinois  
Adam Davis  
Brady-Miller Realtors (now ReMax)  
Trent Shephard  
Bruce Nix  
Dan Gordon  
Mark Gnaedinger

## New & Renewing Memberships

(received since the last newsletter)

### Charter Members (1981-1983)

Louissette Zuidema

### Fantastic Supporters (Over Twenty Year Members)

Steve & Kathy Roemmel

### Eleven to Twenty Year Members

Irma Lore  
Cheryl Kennedy  
Joe & Phyllis Williams  
Dan & Kim Wurl  
Robert & Sarah Nemeth  
Michael & Bonnie Irwin  
Mark Netter  
Lianne Anderson  
Glenna M. Bartell  
Sally Foote & Thomas G. Wold  
Weibel/Feldman Family  
Andrew White Family

*Remember to check your mailing label for your membership renewal date. The date shown indicates when you last renewed; membership runs for one year from that date.*

## Five to Ten Year Members

Solberg/Seyler Family  
Katie Davidson & Rick Barton  
Harold & Margaret Balbach  
Nanette Koerner  
Craig Flowers  
Jan Kalmar; Adrienne & Maya Bauer  
Alan & Kristine Chalifoux  
Fletcher Johnson  
Susanne Massell  
Ilona Matkovszki & Brian Adams  
Dan McCulley  
Chantelle Hougland & Barry Sanders  
Ronald & Charlotte Hampton  
Mindy Moncel  
Robert Selby

## One to Four Year Members

David Monk  
Mary Ann Bunyan  
Ian Hill  
Brian Duffield  
Charles Lozar  
Stephen Campbell & Heather Munson  
Russ Arnold  
Wes Jarrell & Leslie Cooperband  
Susan & Chris Harbourt  
Bill & Joan Price  
Kate Hunter & Jens Sandberger  
Marsha S. Gates  
Tom & Katherine Auble  
Benny & Lori Dow  
Maureen Reagan

## New Members

Jay Koch  
Margaret Chambers/Robert Springfield  
Nick Hagen  
Robert Motl  
John & Elizabeth Barclay  
Lynne Bechard  
Peter Davis  
David Baker  
Ryan & Maria Bailey  
Nate Schmitz & Gisela Sin

Preservation Matters: newsletter of the  
Preservation and Conservation Association  
P.O. Box 2575, Station A, Champaign, IL 61825

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Celebrating 25 Years of Preserving the History  
and Architecture of Champaign County