



# PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION OF CHAMPAIGN COUNTY

Box 2555, Station A, Champaign, Illinois 61820

"The Past Has A Future"

Volume 3

March 1983

Number 1

## RANTOUL LITTLE HOUSE

Rantoul's Little House is not little. At 6000 square feet it is too large for most families today, but its preservation is being achieved through an adaptive use scheme as proposed office space. This will assure the preservation of the main features — the elaborate fretted woodwork, the grand planning, and the handsome interaction of spaces that characterize its plan.

The house was built by Bertha Smith, who owned it in her own right; a somewhat unusual situation for a woman of the time, but as it turns out, not for the property. The land had previously been owned by Lucy S. Bois and the house was later bought by Margaret Morrison. According to tax records, Bertha Smith bought the property in 1904 and when she sold it in 1908 the value had risen more than fourfold, indicating that the house was built between those dates. Mrs. Smith's husband, Sep S., was mayor of Rantoul from 1907 to 1910.

The house was bought by Edmond G. Coon through a warranty deed filed February 20, 1908; Mr. Coon sold it to Robert G. Morrison in 1912. Mr. Morrison sold it to his wife Margaret in 1920 for one dollar and love. The widow Morrison married the Rev. Charles L. Blood in 1924 who served as mayor of Rantoul twice (1921-1922 and 1925-1927). On April 30, 1927, Margaret Morrison Blood sold the house to Arthur Little whose widow, Edith M., sold it in 1976 to Joanne R. Dobson. The property



was bequeathed to the Roman Catholic school of the parish of St. Malachi in 1981 by Lenore Murray.

The parish planned to expand the school and build parking facilities on the property. The church Building Committee, recognizing the architectural value of the house, tried unsuccessfully to interest someone in moving the building to a new site. In despair, St. Malachi's considered selling as much as possible of the interior and demolishing the house.

The Salvage Committee of PACA was informed of the situation and several members examined the property for salvageable items. It was evident to the Committee that, while much could be salvaged, the interaction of space and materials in the overall plan of the house could only be saved by preserving the building. The Committee reported this to the PACA Board which decided that PACA should publicize the situation through television and newspaper reports.

Several people interested in acquiring the house were found

through this publicity and eventually Ken Roessler, a Rantoul contractor, purchased and moved the building to the corner of Belle and Sangamon. Future restoration work will include repair of the elaborate ornamental wood trim and entry stair, the reworking of the handsome limestone foundation, and the removal of the exterior aluminum siding.

## Cattle Bank "Grassroots Regrant"

The Champaign County Arts and Humanities Council has awarded PACA a "Grassroots regrant" to develop an audio-visual presentation and a photographic display documenting the restoration of the Cattle Bank. The display will give a brief overview of the restoration, while the slide-narrative presentation will examine the process in more depth, including specific problems in the restoration sequence. A preliminary showing of this presentation was made at the PACA annual meeting held in the Cattle Bank, January 31.

## PRESERVATION TAX INCENTIVE CONFERENCE

The Preservation and Conservation Association of Champaign County, in cosponsorship with the Champaign County Board of Realtors, the Downtown Urbana Promotion Committee, the Rantoul Area Chamber of Commerce, the Urbana Chamber of Commerce and the Vintage Champaign Council, presented a Preservation Tax Incentive Conference on October 13, 1982 from 8:30 a.m. until 12:00 noon. The conference, held in the Champaign City Council chambers, drew over 35 registrants representing a variety of interests: real estate brokers, bankers, business people, city officials, students and private citizens.

Participants in the conference included: Lott Thomas, Attorney, Thomas, Mamer & Haughey, who explained the legal aspects of the Economic Recovery Tax Act as it pertains to historic preservation; Martin Verdick, Certified Public Accountant, McGladrey, Hendrickson and Company, who discussed the financial aspects of the Act; and

Anne Manuell, Cultural Resources Coordinator, Historic Sites Division, Illinois Department of Conservation, who described the technical aspects of compliance. Rodney Haynes, Special Assistant to the City Manager, Peoria, and Gary Olsen, Architect, Olsen-Lytle Architects, presented detailed case studies on how actual projects are developed, the special problems that must be considered and how the tax benefits provide incentives for renovating older historic buildings.

The Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 makes dramatic and sweeping changes in the federal tax treatment of investment in real estate. The Internal Revenue Code has been revised to add a new accelerated cost recovery system, to repeal existing incentives for rehabilitation of older buildings and for certified rehabilitation of certified historic buildings, and to substitute a new three-tiered investment tax credit for rehabilitation. The bias in favor of new construction has been

effectively eliminated. The tax incentives for rehabilitating older buildings have been simplified and substantially improved, especially in the case of historic buildings. Basically, they provide a 25% investment tax credit for the cost of rehabilitating historic commercial, industrial and residential rental buildings. In addition, nonhistoric buildings 40 years old or older qualify for a 20% tax credit and those 30 to 40 years old for a 15% credit.

The importance of these credits cannot be over stressed. Developers are learning that historic preservation is the greatest thing happening in real estate. There has been a tremendous surge of interest in private investment in older structures, expected by the National Park Service to exceed \$5 billion dollars next year. Through this conference, PACA hopes to generate a similar interest in Champaign County.

Further information concerning the new Tax Act is available from PACA.

## Notes

### Preservation Programming

WILL-TV offers two half-hour breaks for the dedicated weekend preservationist. On Saturdays at 2:30 p.m. Channel 12 offers "The Old Houseworks," a how-to-do-it series hosted by Bob Callahan with the help of expert craftsmen and critics. The program gives sound and sensitive advice on authentic restoration, home repair, and National Register nominations. This is by far the best preservation/restoration series on the air.

On Sundays at 3:30 p.m. "This Old House," originating in Boston and hosted by Bob Vila, features the renovation and remodeling of various buildings in the Boston area. Despite some fairly extreme approaches to updating old buildings, there is valuable information here for do-it-yourselfers and preservationists.

We recommend that you watch both these programs, and let the station know if you like what you're seeing.

### Home Renovation Workshops

Due to a number of Saturday conflicts, the home renovation workshops originally slated for September/October have been postponed. Sponsored by PACA, the Champaign County Historical Museum, and the Urbana Park District, these workshops will provide a series of "hands-on" demonstrations of renovation techniques at the Greek Revival Cottage. More information can be obtained from the Champaign County Historical Museum.

### NEH Youth Planning Grant

PACA is pleased to be the recipient of a National Endowment for the Humanities Youth Grant. This \$2500 award is being used to plan a program which will engage the interest of junior and high school youth in the community's history and development as it is expressed in its architectural heritage. Recent years in Champaign-Urbana have seen many valuable older buildings destroyed for new development, including parking lots, while

the revitalization potential of preservation has been ignored. By engaging the interest and help of local young people in identifying the value of their built environment, it is hoped that the preservation consciousness of both individuals and the entire community can be raised.

Participants in this planning project include Michael Cahall, Director, Champaign County Historical Museum, Barbara Roberts, Archives Director, Champaign County Historical Archives of the Urbana Free Library; Bobbie Herakovich, Superintendent of Recreation, Urbana Park District; Terry Schwartz, Recreation Superintendent, Champaign Park District; Robert Sutton, Director, Illinois Historical Survey; Lachlan Blair, Professor and Chairman, Historic Preservation Option, Department of Urban & Regional Planning, University of Illinois and past President of PACA, and Karen Lang Kummer, Executive Director, PACA.

**DOWNTOWN URBANA:  
PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE**

Saturday, October 2, turned out to be a perfect day for the beginning of Urbana's Historic Week. PACA's walking tour, which attracted about sixty people, started at the Urbana Free Library with a short slide presentation by Lachlan Blair. The presentation and walking tour focused on the original nine blocks of Urbana bordered by Green, Vine, Water and Race with the County Courthouse at the center. One of the last intact alleyways was given special recognition by the City with the erection of a sign marking the intersection of Goose and Crane alleys (located behind the Cinema Theater).

Focusing on Urbana's past, present and future, some of the more than twenty stops on the tour included: Lincoln Square, Jumers, U.S. Post Office, County Courthouse, old Jail, Masonic Temple, Old City Building site, Bennett Building, Cohen Building and the Civic Center. The tour concluded at the Courier Building with a free phosphate at the Courier Cafe.

With many of downtown Urbana's old buildings disappearing, this tour and the entire Historic Week were important lessons for understanding and appreciating Urbana's past so that the future can be better planned.

**REVOLVING FUND —  
A STEP CLOSER**

PACA's Revolving Fund is a step closer to reality. A task force committee, made up of some members of PACA and the general community, have provided a structure for the management of the Fund. This committee included Dan Eaton of First National Bank, Jane Henneman of Thomas, Mamer & Haughey, Karen Miller of Hoggatt-Dawson, Gerald O'Neill of American National Bank and Linda Mills of the Junior League; along with Lachlan Blair, Greg Hargus, Karen Kummer and Jim Mathien from PACA.

The task force developed guidelines and by-laws for the governance of the Fund, modeled upon those of two of the leading preservation revolving funds in the United States: the Hartford Architecture Conservancy and the Providence Preservation Society. The recommended guidelines and by-laws have been approved by the PACA Board of Directors.

The task force has also approached some community residents who have expertise in architecture, finance, law and real estate to serve on the Revolving Fund Management Committee. To date, Ellen Cunningham, Robert Edwards, Ronald Kiddoo, and Mark Reinhardt have accepted. It is our intent to have the remaining

committee positions filled within the near future.

The next major goal for the Revolving Fund is fundraising. Sources of funds must be discovered, applied for, and received. Once adequate funds are in hand, then the Revolving Fund will be operative. Needless to say, the task of fundraising will be the most difficult step in making the PACA Revolving Fund a reality and volunteers to help in the effort are welcome. Progress in this and related tasks will be reported in future editions of the newsletter. Anyone interested in contributing to this tax-deductible cause may send their donations to: PACA Revolving Fund, P.O. Box 2555, Station A, Champaign, Illinois 61820.



**The Old-House Journal®**

Published Monthly For People Who Love Old Houses

Would you like to subscribe to the *Old House Journal*, or renew your current subscription? If you do so through PACA, you can get a special discount, provide PACA with six dollars of shared revenue, and qualify us for a \$1000 grant to be awarded in December. Contact us for information.

**PACA COMMITTEES**

PACA is continually looking for members to serve on various committees or to volunteer for specific activities. Please indicate what your interests are and how you would be willing to help.

- FINANCE
- MEMBERSHIP
- NEWSLETTER/PUBLICITY
- PROGRAM (purpose is to arrange programs for meetings of members and community groups)

- SALVAGE
- SPECIAL PROJECTS  
(a troubleshooting committee)
- TOUR (purpose is to develop, research and conduct tours in the county)

**Specific activities of interest:**

- initiate ideas
- type
- telephone
- survey neighborhoods
- organize a neighborhood association
- give accounting advice
- solicit funds

- do research
- do physical work
- provide transportation
- provide a vehicle
- contact public officials
- give legal advice
- other (explain)

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

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

**PRESERVATION CALENDAR**

**March**

- 2 Lecture: Jared Shlaes, "Marketing Historic Properties: Legal and Economic Considerations" Temple-Buell Gallery, 8pm
- 12-13 Homer - Maple Sugar Days, 1-5 p.m. Salt Fork River Forest Preserve
- 17-19 Edwardsville - Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council
- 23 Lecture: Walker Johnson, "Preservation as an Important Dimension in a Multi-Dimensional Firm" Temple-Buell Gallery, 8pm
- 25-27 Chicago - City House, a

preservation fair for older houses, at Donnelley Hall, McCormick Place West

**April**

- 10-30 Lincoln - Family Treasures: A Quilt Show, Postville Courthouse
- 15 Application Deadline - National Register of Historic Places/Illinois Register of Historic Places
- 17 Chicago - Ridge House: Resource for Restoration, Ridge Park Fieldhouse 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. (Features rehabilitation craftsmen)
- 24 Lockport - Annual Will County Folk Art Festival,

Will County Historical Society, 12-5 p.m.

- 30 (May 1) Decatur + Yesteryear Antique Show, Masonic Temple, 11 a.m.-9 p.m. (11 a.m.-5 p.m.)

**May PACA Events**

- 8-14 Historic Preservation Week
- 8 Piety Hill Promenade, Walking Tour of University/Church Avenues.
- 15 Lost Champaign-Urbana, opening of Photographic Exhibit at Champaign County Historical Museum

Board Meetings are held every second Monday, call 359-7404 for location.



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Box 2555, Station A, Champaign, Illinois 61820

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY ARTS AND HUMANITIES COUNCIL  
17 E. University Avenue  
Champaign, Illinois 61820

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- President:** Neil Strack
- Vice President:** Bill Schmidt
- Sec.-Treas.:** Mark Replogle
- Exec. Director:** Karen Lang Kummer

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

**Membership Application P.A.C.A**



**MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY:**

**INDIVIDUAL**

- Adult ..... \$10.00
- Student (1/2 time or more) ..... \$ 5.00
- Family (includes all members of a household with no more than two members being over age 21) ..... \$15.00
- Additional Contribution \_\_\_\_\_

**CIVIC**

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

**CORPORATE**

- ..... \$ 50.00

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  RENEWAL  NEW MEMBERSHIP

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
Street State Zip

Make check payable to: PACA, Box 2555, Station A, Champaign, Illinois 61820.