



PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION OF CHAMPAIGN COUNTY

Box 2555, Station A, Champaign, Illinois 61820

“The Past Has A Future”

Volume 2 3

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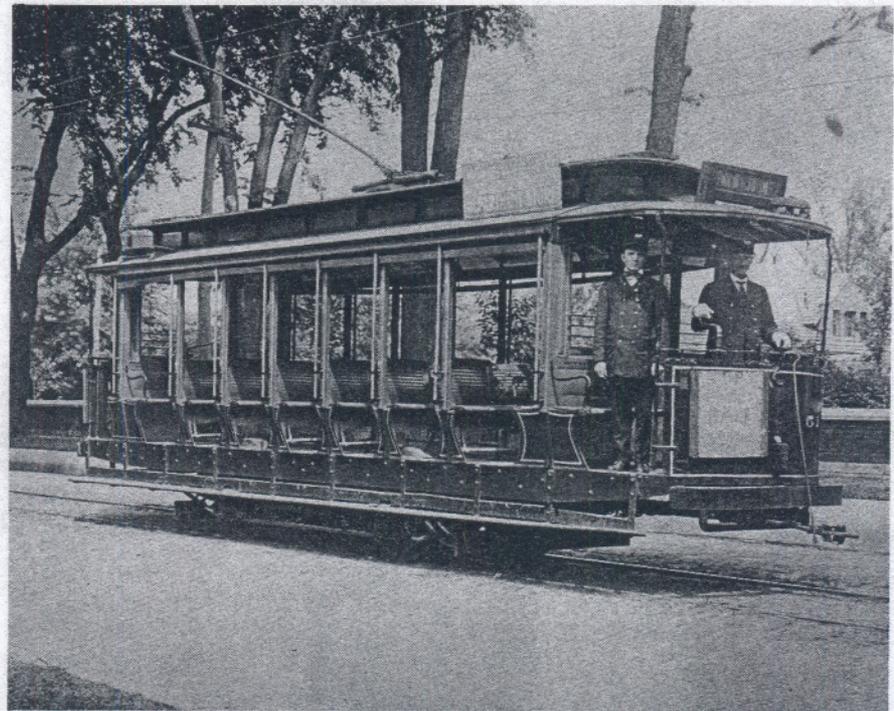
Number 4

“HE’S OFF HIS TROLLEY”

“He’s off his trolley” is an expression that is seldom heard any more because few people under forty have ever ridden on a city streetcar. Some members of the younger set may not even know that at one time many cities had streetcars that ran on tracks and were powered by overhead trolley wires. Until 1936, Champaign-Urbana boasted a trolley system with the quaint charm of those in other American cities. The abandonment of the system in that year was quite early in comparison with the trolley demises of many other Midwestern communities: Peoria, 1946; Indianapolis, 1953; Chicago, 1958; St. Louis, 1966. In Philadelphia, Boston, New Orleans, and San Francisco, trolleys are still revenue producing streetcar systems, as opposed to museum lines.

In 1892 the Champaign-Urbana street railway system of horse-drawn streetcars, in service since 1859, became electrified. This came only two years after Chicago got its first electric streetcars. Chicago’s system grew into the world’s largest urban system.

The Champaign-Urbana system was most interesting in terms of the routes which served the twin cities. These included the Oregon Street line which crossed the campus quadrangle east and west between the Administration and English buildings, the Church Street line which ran almost to Mattis Street, and the Lake Shore line which ran north on Coler in Urbana up to Woodlawn Cemetery, to name but a few. One of the nicest lines, begun about 1892, was the New Street Line. It traversed pleasant residential neighborhoods beginning at Neil and Randolph and running to Green and Prospect before its early abandonment in 1925. Until this past July, one could see a fine vestige of this old line at the



West Church Street Line, 1921

Photograph courtesy of the Champaign County Historical Archives, Urbana Free Library.

corner of Clark and New streets where a well-preserved twelve-foot stretch of track with both rails intact crossed that intersection. Unfortunately, when Clark Street was repaved with asphalt overlay recently, this entire stretch of track was completely covered up, an act of unnecessary destruction of the traces of our urban history.

A community which takes the pains to restore and to preserve its old stone-arch bridge, part of the pre-Civil War, horse-drawn streetcar system, might want to preserve the few remaining traces of a fine transit system. In this system the institution of electric streetcars predated the 1895 construction of the Burnham Athenaeum. Apropos to the Athenaeum, today you can look west down Church Street from the corner of Church and State and still

discern in the pavement in front of the Athenaeum cracks outlining the passing switch which enabled the Church Street streetcars to pass each other. Actual pieces of track from some of the various systems are still visible at the corner of Springfield and Third, and on North Matthews near the Engineering Research Laboratory. A folder of old photographs of the city streetcars can be viewed by patrons of the Champaign County Archives at the Urbana Free Library.

In a related issue, the preservation of brick streets, legislation was introduced into the Champaign City Council by Alderman Dannel McCollum to require City Council notification of the repavement of any part of a brick street.

THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Background

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's cultural resources worthy of preservation. The need to protect and preserve our cultural resources has been recognized by groups of private citizens since the mid-19th century. Federal involvement in preservation has been shaped by several major pieces of legislation beginning with the Antiquities Act of 1906 and the Historic Sites Act of 1935.

The governmental mandate was expanded by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 which called for the preservation of cultural properties of state and local as well as national significance. The Secretary of the Interior was authorized to establish the National Register as a list of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology and culture, and to grant funds to assist the States in preparing comprehensive surveys of such properties within their boundaries. A program of matching grants-in-aid for the preservation activities of the States and the National Trust for Historic Preservation was also authorized. Title II of the act created the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to review and advise the President and Congress on Federal actions related to preservation.

The importance of Federal participation in preservation activities was further emphasized by Executive Order 11593, signed May 13, 1971, which states that "the Federal Government shall provide leadership in preserving, restoring and maintaining the historic and cultural environment of the Nation." In cases where proposed Federal actions would affect cultural properties that have been determined to be eligible for National Register listing, the order requires Federal agencies to seek and consider comment from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation before implementation of the proposed action.

Passage of the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 was another major positive Federal action designed to encourage preservation. Incorporated into the act are Internal Revenue Code provisions intended to stimulate private sector rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures and neighborhoods eligible for National Register listing.

Program

All historic areas in the National Park System, together with those properties eligible for designation as National Historic Landmarks, are of national significance and are listed in the National Register. Properties of national, state, or local significance may be nominated by the States and the Federal agencies and are placed in the National Register with the approval of the Secretary of the Interior.

The significance of properties nominated to the National Register is evaluated in accordance with an established set of criteria:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and

A. that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or

B. that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or

C. that embody the distinctive type, period, or method of construction, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguished entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

D. that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history.

Implementation of the Program

State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs) are appointed in each state by the governor. Their responsibilities include the nomination of properties in their state to the National Register, development of a State Preservation plan, administration of the Federal preservation grants program within their state, and review of federally funded or licensed projects for their effect on the State's historic and cultural resources.

The nomination form requires information concerning the legal owner and the legal description (location) of the property or site. It also requires a statement of significance; this is a narrative stating the reasons why the property should be listed on the National Register. It usually contains a list of all the owners and a general history of the

property and should be documented. A detailed architectural description of the property is also required. Photographs and other support material should be submitted with the nomination form.

Before submission to the National Register, all nominations must be approved by a State review board. If the property meets the National Register criteria, the board recommends it for nomination. The nomination form is then signed by the SHPO and forwarded to the National Register where it is again reviewed. Owners of the property and the governmental body with jurisdiction over the property are notified of the nomination and are given an opportunity to comment on the action. The nomination process usually takes a minimum of six months. If the nomination is approved at all levels, the state, the local government and the property owner is notified that the property has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The property owner also receives a certificate to this effect.

Effect of Listing

Listing in the National Register makes property owners eligible to be considered for Federal grants-in-aid for historic preservation through State programs, provides protection by requiring comment from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation on the effect of federally assisted projects on these resources and makes owners who rehabilitate certified historic properties eligible for Federal tax benefits. On the state level as of January 1, 1983, National Register listing also makes owner-occupied homes eligible for a local property tax freeze on improvements for up to eight years.

Summary

The National Register DOES NOT:

- disallow private property owners from making changes or painting their house
- force property owners to make any improvements on their property
- force businesses to change signs
- create a review commission
- limit the use of buildings
- cost the property owner anything to be listed on the register
- make the owners erect or buy any signs or plaques
- request the owners to research their property

The National Register DOES:

- bring national recognition to an area by identifying it as an important place
- protect properties from any federally funded or licensed projects (such as a state highway or sewerage plant using federal funds) affecting National Register sites by comment through an Environmental Impact Statement
- allows owners of income producing properties (both commercial and rental) to take advantage of benefits concerning historic properties as provided for in the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981
- often increases the value of property
- increases community awareness of local history and creates a sense of pride in achievements

For further information concerning the National Register contact PACA or the state SHPO's office (Illinois Department of Conservation, Division of Historic Sites, 405 E. Washington St., Springfield, IL 62706).

The City Council then has the opportunity to review the planned repavement and may deny permission. It is an issue in which the interest of the Council is not high, but the review process does provide an opportunity for Council members to become sensitive to the issue. Perhaps the remaining trolley tracks could be handled in the same manner.

One American city which had streetcars almost identical in design to those of Champaign-Urbana was Fort Collins, Colorado. The system was abandoned in 1951; however, one car was fortuitously stored for three decades and will soon be seen running in service over a line which the city is reconstructing. How nice it would be if our community could at least consider the possibility of uncovering the blacktop overlay at some key points such as that at Clark and New and at the Burnham Athenaeum. The low costs involved would be worthwhile in terms of the cultural significance for present and future generations.

[This article was written by guest author Thomas Kilton, Assistant Modern Languages and Linguistics Librarian at the University of Illinois Library. PACA invites other guest articles or suggestions for articles. Send them to Editor, PACA Newsletter.]

Thomas D. Kilton

ILLINOIS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Illinois State Historical Society's 84th annual meeting will be held in Champaign-Urbana on October 21-23, with headquarters at the Champaign Ramada Inn Convention Center, 1501 S. Neil St., Champaign. On Friday afternoon there will be a chance to see the University of Illinois campus and its surrounding area, as well as Chanute Air Force Base in Rantoul, where the annual awards banquet will be held that evening. Saturday morning will be the annual business meeting and election of officers and a program on Champaign County. Later two concurrent bus tours will begin. Tour A will stop at an 1869 renovated Urbana home and at the Early American Museum in Mahomet. After lunch at the Grey Goose, a restaurant and antique shop, there will be time to investigate nearby shops before returning to Champaign for homemade ice cream at Vriner's, a turn-of-the-century confectionery recently listed on the National Register. The tour will end with a visit to the Champaign County Historical Museum. Tour B, meanwhile, will have begun with a visit to the Round Barn Restaurant and a presentation on barns. Next stop is Monticello, home of the Railway Museum where there will be a train ride and a luncheon buffet. A stop in Tolono will feature a 17-room Second Empire home. Back in Champaign, Tour B will end with a visit to the Krannert Art Museum. That evening there will be a dinner and program at the Ramada Inn. The speaker will be Dean Weller who will talk on Lorado Taft's sculpture. Sunday morning will feature a brunch and program by Secretary of State Jim Edgar at the University of Illinois Illini Union.

PACA will have a display table set up in the registration area at the Ramada Inn, Friday, Oct. 21. You are invited to stop in and see the display which will include a continuous showing of the Cattle Bank Restoration slide show. PACA will also conduct a short walking tour of the campus quadrangle with stops at Altgeld Hall and the World Heritage Museum.

For further information about the ISH Annual Meeting contact the Illinois Heritage Association, 359-5600.

NOTES

For reasons of economy, PACA does not yet have a telephone listing. To contact the Executive Director, Karen Kummer, call 359-7404.

HISTORIC DISTRICTS

The Board of Directors has authorized a new PACA Committee to deal with the establishment of historic districts in Champaign County. The Committee will deal initially with residential districts in Champaign and Urbana, but will eventually consider commercial districts and districts outside of C-U. Volunteers are needed to serve on this committee. Members will work on issues such as district location, boundaries, surveys, research and political acceptance. For further information or to serve on the committee contact Bill Schmidt, Committee Chairman, 359-9760 or Karen Kummer, 359-7404.

Notes

Two staff members of the Historic Sites Division, Illinois Department of Conservation, will be guest speakers in the "Planning for Preservation" course at the University of Illinois. Ted Hild will speak on preservation law, the new Tax Act, and certified local preservation commissions. Ann Marvell will discuss various economic issues related to preservation. The lectures will be Tuesday, October 25 from 10:30-11:50 a.m. in the seminar room at 1001 Nevada. The public is invited.

Jim Mathien, PACA Board Member, and Karen Kummer, Executive Director, will be attending the annual meeting of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.



37th National Preservation Conference

October 26-30, 1983

National Trust for Historic Preservation

PRESERVATION CALENDAR

October

- 21-22 Illinois Historical Society Annual Meeting, Ramada, Inn, Champaign
- 22 Candlelight Tour of New Salem, Petersburg Vicinity, 7-9 p.m.
- 22-23 Fort Massac Encampment, Metropolis
- 26-30 National Trust for Historic Preservation Annual Meeting, San Antonio, Texas

November

- 16-17 Holiday House, 2000 East St. Louis Street, West Frankfort

- 27-29 Jul Marknad (Christmas Market), Bishop Hill

December

- 2 Frankfort Candlelight House Tour, Frankfort, 6-9 p.m. Christmas Walk, Geneva
- 3-4 New Salem Christmas, Petersburg Vicinity, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
- 2-4 Christmas Candlelight Tours, Pettengill-Morrison House, Peoria
- 3-4 Holiday Open House, Ellwood House Association, DeKalb Christmas Festival, Graham-Ginestra House, Rockford, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

FOR SALE:

An exciting new book is being published this year in commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of Champaign County. This publication will provide an updated overview of county history. Its purpose is to increase understanding of the historical development of the County and its contributions to the state, the nation and the world.

A Commemorative History of Champaign County, Illinois: 1833-1983 by Willis "Bud" Baker and Patricia L. Miller. Printed in limited number by Walsworth Publishing Company. Hard cover. \$24.95. For ordering information contact the Illinois Heritage Association, 359-5600.



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CHAMPAIGN COUNTY ARTS AND HUMANITIES COUNCIL
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PACA Newsletter

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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 (½ 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.