



# PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

Box 2555, Station A, Champaign, Illinois 61820

"The Past Has A Future"

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## FOCUS ON: THE MILITARY DRILL HALL

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in November, 1986, the Military Drill Hall is now known as the Gym Annex. It was listed as part of the Nathan C. Ricker Thematic Nomination. Ricker achieved the distinction of being the nation's first graduate in architecture, receiving his diploma from the University of Illinois in 1873. He went on to serve as both the Dean of Engineering and as Head of the Department of Architecture of the University of Illinois. The discipline and determination which enabled him to be the first to earn an architecture degree continued throughout his academic and professional career, distinguishing him as an educator and practitioner at the U of I.

Ricker's second design for the University of Illinois, the Military Drill Hall, was perhaps his finest in terms of the engineering skill involved. (His first design was Harker Hall, 1877.) Constructed in 1889 in response to the need for a large, unified space for military training, its interior is entirely given over to its structure, which is so trussed as to need no interior pier support. Ricker's design was for a wood and steel-trussed framework, progressive for the 1890's, which would give "strength, lightness, and symmetry" to the structure. Ricker's competence as a designer of such technology is evident as the interior structural system stands unaltered.

The Military Department was one part of the initial curriculum proposed by President Gregory in 1867; he was of the belief that military education was advantageous to the university as well as to the young men enrolled therein. The first drill hall was on the second floor of the Mechanical building (J.M. Van Osdel, 1872, destroyed 1900). Ricker's new building, placed on the parade ground, was to be used only in the instruction of military engineering and tactics. Other than for the purpose of Commencements, beginning in June of 1890, the building was used only to fulfill its intended function until 1914, at which time it underwent repairs and improvements to make the building appropriate for the Department of Physical Education.



*Military Drill Hall (Kenney Gym Annex)*

It serves in this capacity today as the Kenney Gym Annex. The building's appearance, excluding the additions to the east and west of the early 1900's, has not been altered.

The Drill Hall's significance lies chiefly in its large, column-free interior space. Its impressive structure, especially for 1890, displayed Ricker's talent for engineering and, specifically, truss design. It is the best example of Ricker's educational theories rendered in wood and steel. The construction of the Drill Hall preceeded the University's adoption of a new Architectural Engineering curriculum in the 1890's, and it must have in part influenced the large increase of incoming architecture students after 1890. It was a visible demonstration of what the School had to offer in terms of

advanced structural theories as taught by Ricker. Indeed, the School's catalogue of 1891-1892 announced courses for "those students preferring the mathematical and structural side of architecture to its artistic side, and for those who wish to acquire a thorough knowledge of iron and steel construction as it is now executed in architectural structure." The Drill Hall was just such a progressive structure.

In 1902 the Men's Gymnasium, designed by Nelson Strong Spencer, was constructed immediately adjacent to Ricker's Drill Hall. Spencer, in addition to emulating Ricker's style on the exterior of his building, was also able to draw upon Ricker's educational methods in designing a safe and economical building while using



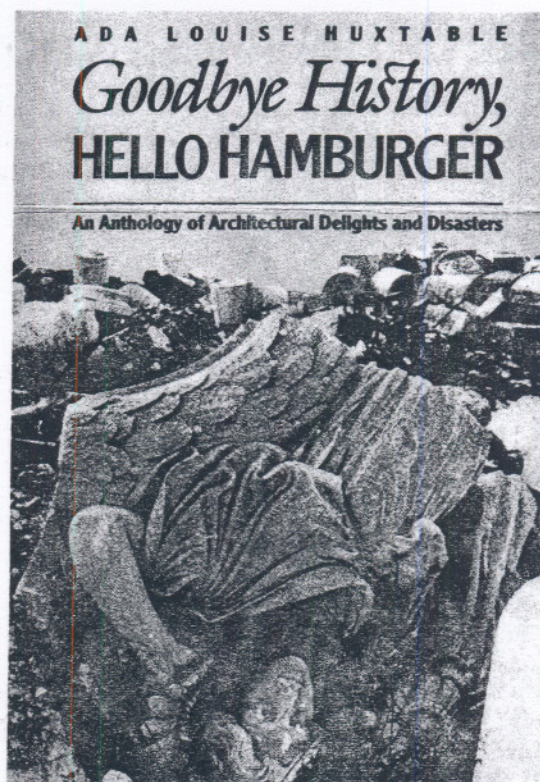
*Men's Gymnasium (H.E. Kenney Gym)*



## GOODBYE HISTORY, HELLO HAMBURGER: AN ANTHOLOGY OF ARCHITECTURAL DELIGHTS AND DISASTERS

Ada Louise Huxtable, winner of the first Pulitzer Prize for distinguished criticism, has been called "the best architectural critic now alive." One of the most articulate advocates of preserving cities and landmarks, she is by turns evangelist, judge, historian, educator, satirist, advocate and prophet—all in the name of urban excellence.

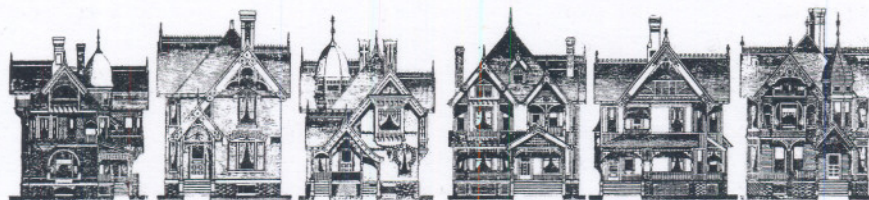
In *Goodbye History, Hello Hamburger: An Anthology of Architectural Delights and Disasters*, the Preservation Press of the National Trust has assembled 68 of her pieces, mostly done for the *New York Times*, on the classic urban confrontations of the 1960s and 1970s. The book offers Huxtable readers the opportunity to savor some of the best work of this nationally acclaimed author who wrote for the *Times* for almost 20 years. Recently, Huxtable was honored as a MacArthur Foundation fellow. A new introduction by Huxtable to these pieces assesses the progress of urban design and preservation in the last 20 years.



*Goodbye History, Hello Hamburger: An Anthology of Architectural Delights and Disasters*, by Ada Louise Huxtable, with a

foreword by John B. Oakes, is available by mail from the Preservation Shops, 1600 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

The price is \$14.95 (less 10 percent for Trust members), plus \$3 for postage and handling. Please specify stock number 5517.



the most up-to-date materials and methods. The two buildings were actually joined after 1914, at which time the new Armory was built to replace Ricker's Drill Hall. It was then that the Drill Hall was renamed as the Gymnasium Annex.

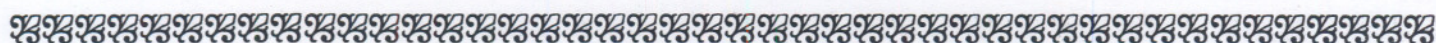
The late 1890's had seen the Drill Hall's function turn to the support of physical exercise as well as military training: It was used as the university's temporary gymnasium. Aside from the fact that this inconvenienced the military department, the Drill Hall was simply too small to accommodate both athletics and military related activities. Under strong pressure from the Athletic Association and the student body, it was requested that the Administration appropriate funds for a new gymnasium. That same year the State Legislators agreed to make funds available

for the construction of a gymnasium, a wood shop, and a testing laboratory.

In 1902 the Men's Gymnasium opened its doors for use. "The building was designed to yield the greatest facilities to be secured with the money available, and to do that it was necessary to expend little on ornament." Spencer did, however, recall the Drill Hall's fine rusticated base as well as its abundance of arched window openings. He also continued Ricker's tradition of engineering, with a trussed roof and column-free space for the activity area. The facility contained many up-to-date features, such as a much needed uniform depth pool, as well as a track suspended above the large gymnasium floor. Unlike Ricker's Drill Hall, however, this feature was stabilized in the 1920's with columns for additional support.

Spencer was an 1883 graduate of Architecture at the University of Illinois and Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds from 1898 to 1902. He was serving in this capacity at the time he designed the Men's Gymnasium. As a student of Ricker's he must have held his former professor's work in great esteem, as is evident in the similarity in design between the two buildings: Spencer continued in the same fashion of housing a modern structural form within an eclectic framework of historical reference.

*Excerpted from N.C. Ricker Nomination by Amy L. Cassens, Bret F. Johnson, David J. Garner, Janice A. Stein, Graduate Students in Architecture University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.*





## ANTI-LANDMARKS BILLS INTRODUCED IN SPRINGFIELD

Two bills affecting historic preservation were introduced into the 85th General Assembly.

HP 1659, sponsored by Ellis Levin (5th, Chicago), required that the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA) hold a public hearing in a proposed National Register Historic District community before nomination. Landmark's Preservation Council of Illinois (LPCI) opposed the bill for several reasons, notably the logistic difficulty of conducting such meetings around the state. LPCI also objected because any community with Certified Local Government status may conduct such a hearing anyway. The sponsor withdrew the bill.

SP 432, sponsored in the Senate by James "Pate" Philip (DuPage) and Harry "Babe" Woodyard (Edgar), would require owner consent before a building could be listed on the Illinois Register of Historic Places. This measure was defeated last year when Philip introduced it. However, this year it passed the Senate despite calls from numerous preservationists statewide and is now on the floor of the House.

LPCI opposes owner consent because the Illinois Register does not place any restrictions on owners of listed properties. The Register allows for a limited period when the state may hold nonbinding discussion with property owners who plan to alter or demolish a listed building. At the end of this time period the owner is allowed to do as they please with their property.

(Reprinted from Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois Newsletter.)

## COTTAGE UPDATE

Slowly the building is beginning to take shape. The structural work is almost completed and the electrical, plumbing, heating and air conditioning systems are being installed. Work will soon shift to the exterior where repairs to the clapboard sheathing will be made and new paint applied.

A deep debt of gratitude is extended to the dedicated PACA workers who have consistently given of their weekends to save the Cottage. They have persevered in this heat and humidity to get the job done. A "HAT'S OFF" to: Marylee MacDonald, Greg Hargus, David Garner, Rex and Karen Kummer. As the work becomes less skilled and more generalized, PACA will be calling on those people who have volunteered their unskilled time. We will soon need help stripping and sanding woodwork; consolidating, re-glazing, and painting windows; painting the exterior; and insulating the wall cavities. Please volunteer to help — 359-0114.

The Cottage Campaign has recently received two major donations. Ray's Heating and Air Conditioning Company, Urbana, has donated the installation of the furnace system. Steve Ross of K. Reinke Jr. & Co., Illiopolis, has donated all the insulation necessary for the first floor. Among the major items still needed are: 5/8" fire-rated wall board, ceiling light fixtures (fluorescent), emergency exit signs, recessed light fixtures, acoustic ceiling tiles and runners for a suspended ceiling, resilient flooring. If you would like to donate one of these items or know of a firm PACA should contact, please call 359-0114. All donations are tax-deductible.

## THEATER WORKSHOP

A one day workshop on theater re-use and restoration will be held on September 18, 1987. The Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois (LPCI) is sponsoring the workshop with funding provided by the Illinois Arts Council. The workshop will be held at the restored Egyptian Theater in DeKalb.

Topics of discussion at the workshop will include identifying theaters for restoration, the economics of preservation and potential for adaptive re-use. For more information contact PACA or LPCI (312-922-1742).



## A REMINDER TO RENEW

PACA WANTS YOU! . . . to renew your membership. We depend on you to renew your membership each year. To determine if your membership is approaching renewal time, check the mailing label on this newsletter. The numbers indicate the month/year of your last renewal. If that was twelve or more months ago, you are due to renew! For example "2/86" means that you last paid your dues in February of 1986 and you need to renew for 1987. If your label has a letter instead of numbers, you are receiving complimentary copies of this newsletter for a limited time, but we invite you to become a member. Continue to be a part of preservation. Renew your membership today!

## Membership Application P.A.C.A.



### MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY:

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

#### CORPORATE

☐ ..... \$ 50.00

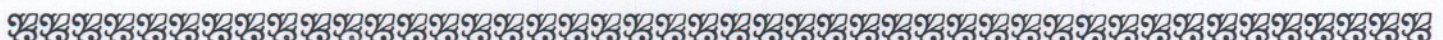
☐ RENEWAL

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### PACA Newsletter

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

