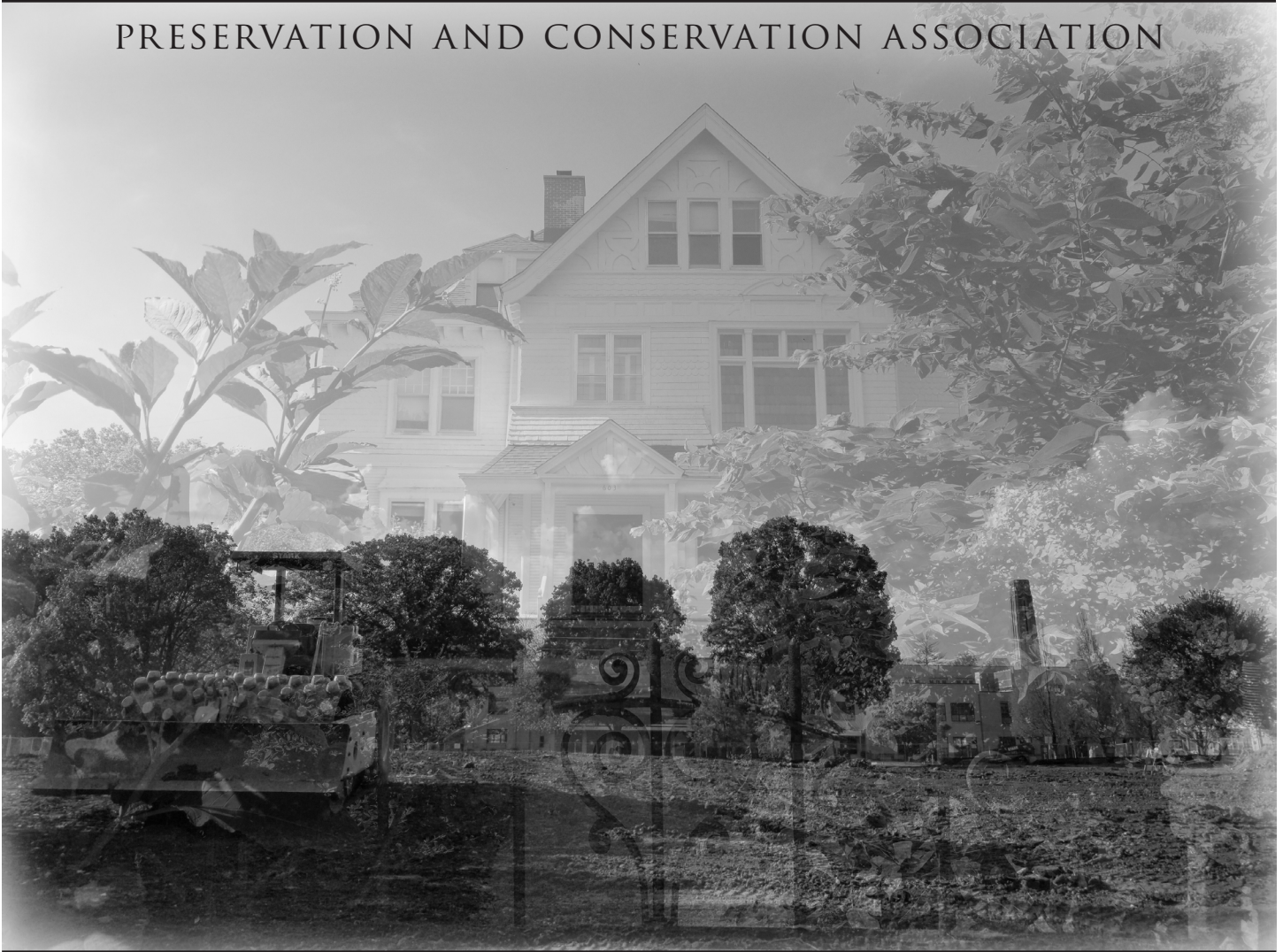


PRESERVATION MATTERS

Fall 2018
Volume 38 Number 2

PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION



Burnham house, then and now

By Thomas Garza

There seem to me to be two types of childhood memories that really stick with you, those that are the result of some life changing or traumatic event, and those that become important over time simply because they somehow remain bright in your mind despite the passage of years.

I sometimes think that the latter might simply be the result of some random mental alignment. For a moment things just happen to slide into place and create a bit of cognitive clarity in the midst of the ongoing chaos that

is your brain teaching itself how to think. This must have been the case for me anyway, since many of the earliest things I can recall are really quite mundane, and there is no reason at all that I can think of why I should remember them so specifically, since I surely must have experienced similar moments on other occasions. For example, I can still clearly recall one particular summer afternoon when I was sitting in the grass in the

back yard of my parents house basking in sunshine and the heavy scent of lilacs, watching my mother hang white sheets on a clothesline.

Every so often the sheets would all fill with air and billow, and I had the thought that maybe they were trying to fly up and join the clouds sailing by overhead, but after reaching out and stretching up as far as they could go, they would all suddenly relax together with an inaudible sigh and drift slowly back down, as if the effort to escape had been too great, and they were all

tired out now and needed to rest.

It is a peaceful even poetic memory for me, especially since it is now suffused with the warm glow of nostalgia, but that's all there is to it, and I certainly didn't have the ability to appreciate any of its nuances at the time the event took place. At that age -- when 'right now' is pretty much all you know -- there is no reason to mark anything as special since every other moment that passes brings you some other new thing to consider.

But there is so much more to the memory than just that single moment, even though I don't actually recall a thing about what followed or preceded it, because whenever I bring it to mind, along comes a whole host of other related recollections . . . the era generally (the 1950s), the little white post-war tract house we lived in, the pets we had (a dog and three box turtles -- Rex, Rosebud, Mars, and Jupiter respectively), the hairstyles and kinds of clothes people wore then, the fact that there was an old country road and cornfield at the end of our block, and even the horse drawn milk wagon with rubber tires that came down our street in the morning.

All of those (and many more) general and open-ended memories are inextricably linked to that one very specific and limited one, and thinking of the one effortlessly pulls along all of the others even though at any other time I would likely struggle to recall much from those days, or simply draw a blank if someone named a year and wanted to know what I could tell them about it.

For some reason at that moment I became aware of myself and the world

around me in a way that put a frame around what I was doing, looking at, thinking, and feeling, linking all of those things securely to whatever impressions I had at the time of my life and the world generally, and then capturing it all in a multi-sensory snapshot that is both a keepsake in itself, and a door leading to a lot of pieces of my past that would otherwise be difficult for me to find and put back together again in any coherent way.

The reason I wanted to talk about memories here was because Champaign recently lost one of its most precious repositories of memory, and we are on the verge of losing several others as well, and even though the fight to preserve these places is mostly over, the need for us to think and talk about what this loss means for the future of our community continues.

Places both make and contain memories. Like old photos and other sorts of tangible memorabilia, places are actually objective and material pieces of the past that persist, things whose continuing existence physically bridges that ineffable distance between 'then' and 'now', allowing us to interact with them from any point along that spectrum we are drawn to.

In a book called *Historic Preservation: Collective Memory and Historic Identity*, author Diane Barthel wrote: ". . . structures play a specially significant part in the collective memory as places where moments in personal history become part of the flow of collective history." And for this reason, just like the random memory I referenced above, an old place doesn't necessarily have to have importance in the usual sense of the

word -- on account of its design, or as the home of famous people, or as a place where historic events occurred -- to be important to us, because old buildings are tangible links to a past where personal and public memories meet, intertwine, and branch into a vast web of connections that bind us to one another in ways we aren't even aware of.

This shared identity is what helps to make a town a community. Just as some houses are homes, and others are only buildings where people live, some towns are more than just collections of structures, they are communities, with all of the commonality of character and interest that name suggests, but our town is growing so rapidly that we are increasingly faced with difficult choices about how we proceed into our future.

Do we settle for quick returns or hold out for long term value? How can we limit development only to healthy growth? Are our current regulations adequate to protect us from those who want to prioritize personal gain over the interests of the community generally?

These and many other questions like them need answers, and it is important for us to have these conversations now because the clock is ticking louder and louder every day, and each time someone manages to convince people that some old house isn't *really* worth saving, it raises the bar the next time someone says a place should be saved, and you can only remove so many pieces of a mosaic before its pattern is destroyed beyond recognition.



A Cenotaph Instead of a House

Lieutenant Charles Bowen Busey, Architect Joseph William Royer and How World War I Influenced Urbana's Architectural History

Nearly 100 years ago, on November 1, 1918, just 10 days before the signing of the armistice signaling the end of World War I, Second Lieutenant Charles Bowen Busey was killed in battle at Bois-des-Loges, near the Argonne Forest in eastern France. Leading a patrol of four soldiers, Busey was attempting to take out a German machine gun nest when he was killed by a hand grenade. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the Verdun Medal for his sacrifice. Originally buried in the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery and Memorial in France, Bowen's remains were returned to Urbana in September, 1921 and he was buried in Woodlawn Cemetery on Sunday, September 4, 1921.



Colonel Busey

By Brian Adams



SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0" RESIDENCE FOR MR. BOWEN BUSEY IN URBANA - FRONT ELEVATION JOSEPH W. ROYER ARCHT. URBANA, ILL. 5

Busey was one of three children born to Colonel Samuel T. Busey and Mary E. (nee Bowen) Busey. "Bowen", as he was known, was born in Urbana in 1887. He attended the University of Illinois, graduating in 1908 and was a member of the Phi Delta Theta fraternity. After the U. of I., Bowen attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to study mining engineering but quit after a year due to his father's tragic drowning in 1909. Afterwards, he moved to Texas where he worked in the automobile business. In June 1911, he married Louise McCormick Carter of Dallas, Texas, and the couple settled in Urbana, where Bowen managed his mother's properties and Woodlawn Cemetery, established on property

donated by the Busey family. Louise M. Carter was "...a member of a well-known Dallas family..." and "...was a popular and attractive member of Dallas society". By 1913 Bowen was working at Busey State Bank in Urbana, where he was employed until the outbreak of war. While conducting research for my biography of Urbana architect Joseph William Royer, I discovered that Royer had prepared plans for a residence for Bowen Busey in 1913. As city directories from 1914 and 1918 indicated he resided at 604 West Green Street in Urbana, I wrongly assumed that this house, which was demolished in the early 1960s to make way for the current First Presbyterian Church, was the house designed by Royer. However, a few years later I

learned from Barb Oehlschlaeger-Garvey, director of the Museum of the Grand Prairie in Mahomet, that the museum had the Royer plans for the Busey house in their collections. Upon inspection of these plans, it was immediately clear that the house at 604 West Green Street was not the house designed by Royer. To the best of my knowledge this house was never



Colonel Busey

built. The Urbana Daily Courier announced on June 27, 1912, that Bowen Busey intended to build an eight-thousand-dollar fireproof house on West Elm Street, and it is likely this was the house to be designed by Royer. Having lived on West Elm Street for several years, I'm certain this house was never built. Enlisting in the army the day after war was declared, it appears Busey delayed construction of the house, and his widow Louise and son Charles Bowen Jr. continued to reside at the Green Street residence until 1930, when she remarried and moved to Chicago. The plans prepared by Royer depict

a two-story house with large attic designed in the Tudor Revival Style. The first floor featured a library, living room, living porch, sun parlor, main hall, dining room, kitchen, cook and butler pantries, and vaulted ceilings. The second floor included four chamber rooms, a dressing room, a bathroom with wainscoting and tile floor, a balcony, and a sleeping porch with canvas floor, plaster walls and ceilings, and removable screens. The spacious attic had a large billiard room, a maid's room and a bathroom. Interior details included a built-in wardrobe, a fireplace with "tile grotesques" decoration, and French doors. Exterior details included a slate roof with copper ridge rolls, hanging copper gutters, flower boxes, and Flemish bond brickwork. The planned basement featured a coal room, heater room, fruit cellar, laundry room, and drying room.

In the end, Bowen Busey's life was not to be memorialized by a palatial Royer-designed house occupied by the Busey family, but by a monumental cenotaph in Woodlawn Cemetery, Urbana commemorating his death. The monument, designed by the C.N. Clark Company of Urbana and completed on March 30, 1924, consists of an exedra built of Vermont granite. Six 14-foot Doric columns surround half the monument supporting an architrave with the inscription "In Memory of Lieutenant Charles Bowen Busey". Bowen's mother Mary Busey erected the monument not only to the memory of her son, but to all from Champaign County who were killed during the war. For years, Memorial Day

remembrances were held at the monument.

Thanks to Barb Oehlschlaeger-Garvey of the Museum of the Grand Prairie for sharing the Royer plans of the Busey home and photographs of Bowen Busey, and to Susan Appel and Alice Novak for advice on the architectural style of the house.



Dear PACA members, this is just a reminder that memberships now run from November to November.

If you just joined or renewed in the last month or so, there's nothing to do and you are up-to-date, but everyone else will need to send in their dues by the 30th of this month to stay current.

If you're not sure whether you are current or not you can call us at 217-359-7222 and we'll keep a list handy and try to sort things out together.

Remember, PACA exists because of its members, and everything we do is a joint effort regardless of whether you are a regular volunteer or you just support from the sidelines.

Huber's: Celebrating A Century of Success

By Susan Appel

Facing Eisner Park on West Church Street is a simple white frame building that has a long and colorful history.

Huber's Tavern, also known as Huber's West End Store, has been a beloved part of its neighborhood for one hundred years. Established by Royal C. Huber in 1918, the store has functioned as a confectionery, grocery store, and local watering hole. Royal C., Jr took over the tavern on his father's death in 1957, overseeing it until his own passing in 1989. It closed briefly during Roy's final illness, and then Huber's reopened in 1989 under new ownership when Jim and Linda Cross bought the business. The Crosses had no intention of changing the name and it remains a busy and popular place.

Huber's didn't have an easy road however. Beginning with 1965's new zoning ordinance, the City of Champaign was intent on closing down this long-standing business as a non-conforming use in an older residential neighborhood. By 1978 and through the 1980s officials became increasingly serious about enforcing the change in zoning and the threats did not stop until 1997 when the City Council finally agreed to allow for neighborhood commercial districts, and Huber's was deemed fully "legal."

Huber's was part of the western extension of the city of Champaign that started near the end of the 19th century. In the mid-1890s the West



Church streetcar line was extended to what is now Eisner Park, then known as West End Park. The streetcar system's owner developed the park as a kind of amusement center that drew crowds with music, entertainment and rides, including a kind of simple roller coaster. The park still operated in the mid-1910s, when the building known as Huber's was constructed across the street at 1312 West Church Street.

Royal C. Huber's 1957 obituary states firmly that he had owned and operated Huber's since 1918. Research into city directories shows, however, that Royal Huber was not the original owner of this business. The building at 1312 West Church did not exist in 1914, when the only buildings on the north side of this block were houses at 1304 and 1306. In 1916, 1312 appears as the site of the "West End Grocery," but the 1918 directory lists Charles Miller as its occupant. Sometime in that year ownership changed and the 1919 directory lists R. C. Huber as the operator of

the store.

The year 1918 was not an especially auspicious one. It was the final year of World War I, in which millions perished, and it was the year of the worldwide influenza pandemic, which killed even more. Both had strong impact locally, especially through the University of Illinois. In spite of the darkness of the time, Royal Huber

took the positive step of beginning his life as a business owner who provided provisions of various kinds to his neighbors.

Whether it was referred to as a confectionery or a grocery, Huber's seems always to have served beer, although that practice was heavily restricted when National Prohibition hit just a couple of years after Huber's opened. In an interview published in November 1987, Roy Huber noted that, during Prohibition, his father served "near-beer," the only legal form at that time. In that period, Huber's may have been better known for selling bread and milk, candy, school supplies, and what Roy later called the best selection of hand-packed ice cream in town. Linda Cross recalls finding a Huber's cardboard ice-cream box in the store's attic. When Prohibition was repealed in 1933, Huber's received what some say was the first liquor license (#3732) in the city of Champaign. Even with the legalization of beer in 1933 and his new license, Royal Huber's occupation continued to

be described in city directories as confectioner or grocer through the rest of the 1930s and on into the 50s. Perhaps the elder Mr. Huber did not want to overstate his serving of alcoholic beverages. It was only in 1958, the year following Royal C.'s death, that the directory listed the business as "Huber's West End Store (Roy C. Huber), Tavern." From that point on, for a number of years, Huber's directory listings would often refer to beer, sometimes wine, or retail liquor. Then again, as late as 1971, it was listed as a grocery.

The variety of references to what was sold at Huber's somewhat reflects a range of products that still more or less characterizes the place. Today, it serves food (if not bread and milk), along with beer, wine, and spirits, and it retains one of its long-standing traditions, the kids' candy window, that ties back to the store's roots as a confectionery. Since 1984, when the City began forbidding children to enter bars on their own, Huber's has taken care of neighborhood kids via a narrow sliding window next to the main entrance. Kids can knock on the window to buy what once was penny candy, candy bars, and other goodies. Often regulars at the bar tend to the candy window when the staff are busy. A recent addition is providing free doggie treats for the many dogs whose owners pass by. These charming details also hark back to the long history of the store's involvement in its neighborhood.

The original patriarch of Huber's, Royal C., was born in 1891, the son of Gottfried J. and Mary C. Huber of Belleville, IL, a town with a rich German heritage. They came to

Champaign as early as 1906, when they resided at 308 West White Street with their son, Royal Jr. who clerked for the Ceylon Tea Company (located in the basement of 48-50 Main Street). Royal Sr. held the same job in 1910, but in 1908/9 had been listed as a grocer at 607 West Springfield. Gottfried turned to real estate by 1912, by which time Royal was clerking for the Illinois Central, later becoming a foreman at the IC freight station. The family moved frequently – five times between 1906 and 1918. The son remained with his parents until his marriage to Sabina Gaul of Belleville in 1917, only shortly before Royal acquired what became Huber's. His mother must have died about this time, since in the 1918 directory only Gottfried appears, without Mary, and as retired and living with his son and daughter-in-law at 1615 West Church.

The elder Hubers had two children. The first, Royal C. Jr. (later known as Roy), was born in 1918, his sister Mary Catherine not until 1930. Their frequent changes of address ended about 1934, when the Hubers moved into what must have

been a fairly new house at 1308 West Church, next door to the store; they lived there for the rest of the Royal's and Sabina's lives. By 1937, Roy, Jr. was clerking for his father at Huber's, which he did into the 1940s. During World War II, Roy served in the U.S. Navy 1943-45, returning for a couple more years clerking at Huber's.

With Roy, Jr. less available to help with the store, his father apparently shifted some of that responsibility to others. Thus, the business listing for Huber's Confectionery carried the name Glenn W. Meyers, rather than Royal C. Huber, in 1943-44, when Roy was in the Navy. Similarly, Ray F. Smith appeared as a confectioner at 1312 West Church from 1948 to 1951. Immediately after, however, the listing was for Huber's West End Store confectionery. Employing a manager may well have been a way to ease things for an aging Royal Huber.

When his father died in 1957, Roy Huber took over the store. Mary Catherine, his sister, a nurse at Christie Clinic, continued to live in the family home next door with their mother, Sabina, who died in



1961. Mary Catherine herself died there in 1994. Roy and Mary Jane continued to live on Daniel Street until Roy's death in May of 1989. By that time, father and son had had responsibility for Huber's for 77 years.

Prior to Roy's passing, the zoning problems noted above had dogged Huber's for a number of years. It became clear that the City was concerned that, should Huber's be sold, it might become a more raucous element in a quiet neighborhood than it had always been. The legal complications of the zoning issue actually made it difficult for Roy to sell, and as he grew older, he was interested in doing that. When Roy died, his widow, Mary Jane, applied for an extension of time for the non-conforming business, in an effort to make the property more attractive to buyers, since none of the Huber's sons was interested in carrying on the family tradition. The emotional circumstances helped convince the Zoning Board of Appeals to grant the extension. In the wake of

that action, Jim and Linda Cross purchased Huber's in 1989 and reopened it near the end of that year.

As Linda says, Jim had always wanted to own a bar, and he was really happy with this decision, even if they took it on in addition to multiple other jobs. And it took a lot of work, after being closed for a year. At the end of Roy Huber's time here, the business still had only a half-dozen formica-topped tables and a few bar stools in the front room with its pale-green walls and bright lighting. It served largely older men. Beer was only sold in bottles from a cold-water cooler, and the place had closed by 8 pm, 7 pm on Saturdays.

Jim and Linda remodeled, adding more decorative lighting and gradually transforming the place into more of what a bar was now expected to be like. They found a vintage back bar, installed a brass-topped wooden front bar, adapted the back room for darts, and remade the place into a cozier, comfortable place to mingle. Their

success eventually encouraged expansion, so that, after the death of Mary Catherine Huber next door, the old family home was demolished, and a new addition to Huber's extended the interior eastward. Their customer base expanded as well, in both age and gender.

Regardless of the changes, Huber's is still Huber's, and a photograph of Roy Huber standing behind his bar is among the mementos hanging in the place today. Another is the framed 2002 PACA Heritage Award presented to Huber's as a "Neighborhood Landmark," and to Jim and Linda Cross for preserving it to that point and for years after. While Jim died in 2015, Linda continues as owner, and her staff keep Huber's running smoothly. It continues as a significant gathering place for the neighborhood, as it was from the start. We congratulate all involved in helping this century-old business operate successfully all these years later.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION PACA BOX 2575, Champaign, IL 61825

MEMBERSHIP STATUS

- New Renewal

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY

- Adult \$25
 Student \$15
 Senior Citizen \$15
 Family \$40
 Corporate
 Bronze \$250
 Silver \$500
 Gold \$1000
 Platinum \$2000

I wish to make an additional contribution: \$ _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

Note: Please make your check payable to PACA. Your contribution is tax-deductable to the extent allowed by law.

PACA is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of our natural and built environment. Offices are located at our salvage warehouse:

44 E. Washington St, Champaign, IL 61825

217-359-7222 * www.pacacc.org

PRESERVATION MATTERS

The newsletter of the



PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 2575
Champaign, IL 61825

NON-PROFIT
ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
CHAMPAIGN, IL
PERMIT NO. 133

**Fall 2018, Volume 38
Number 2**

OR CURRENT RESIDENT

President: Susan Appel

Vice President: Barb Oehlschlaeger-Garvey

Secretary: Lisa Kidd

Treasurer: Brian Adams

Executive Director: Thomas Garza

Newsletter Editor: Tom Garza

*If you would like to contribute
to the PACA newsletter, email
pacaexdir@gmail.com*

Warehouse: 44 E. Washington St., Champaign, IL

Hours: Tuesday – Saturday from 10am – 4pm

Telephone: 217-359-PACA

Web: <http://www.pacacc.org>

E-mail: pacaexdir@gmail.com