

Preservation Matters

Newsletter of the Preservation and Conservation Association

To foster & encourage preservation & conservation, focusing on the built environment of Champaign County & East Central Illinois

Winter 2024-25 Newsletter



Currently occupied by Hopscotch Bakery + Market, the unique brick building at the corner of W. John and Pine streets has a long, varied association with the food industry.

INSIDE:

— How the 100-year history of 802 W. John St., Champaign, demonstrates the value of preserving our community's buildings. P/7

— Two homes owned by grocer Arthur Bireley in 1907 and 1910 recently found to have been designed by Joseph W. Royer, Urbana's architect. P/2



A portrait of Richard Arthur Bireley
(Souvenir, 1910)

A Repeat Customer: Richard Arthur Bireley and his Royer residences

By Brian Adams

In the Spring 2023 issue of *Preservation Matters*, I had an article published about three newly identified Urbana residences designed by local architect Joseph William Royer (Adams 2023). Among these was a house for (Richard) Arthur Bireley, co-owner of the Champaign County Grocery Company in Urbana. Royer designed a house for Bireley in 1910 at 510 W. High St.

Recently an Urbana resident contacted me about

blueprints found in another Urbana house also for Arthur Bireley and also prepared by Joseph Royer. Though the plans for a house at 701 W. Oregon St. are not dated, preliminary research indicates it was built between 1907 and 1909, shortly before the High Street residence.

Starting with investigations with city directories, Arthur Bireley was recorded as residing at 208 W. Oregon St. in 1906 and was employed as a clerk at the

Champaign County Grocery Company in Urbana. The July 15, 1907, edition of the *Urbana Courier* records the following real estate transaction:

Trs. T.S. Hubbard Est to Arthur Bireley, wd, lt 13 blk 2 Hubbard's Elmwood ad, Urbana, \$1,200. (Urbana Courier, July 15, 1907)

This is the lot upon which the house at 701 W. Oregon St. was to be built. The 1908/09 city directory indicates Richard and his wife

A New Cash Grocery

The undersigned have taken over the stock and business of the Champaign County Grocery and will conduct a live, up-to-date cash grocery at the old location.

A cordial invitation is extended to the people of this vicinity, whether customers or not, to call at the store, get acquainted with the goods we carry and the low prices asked.

Goods delivered to any part of the twin cities without extra charge.

Birely, Conaway & Co.

101 Main Street, Urbana

Advertisement from *Urbana Courier-Herald*, May 11, 1911.

Gertrude were residing at 701 W. Oregon St. by this time. While no accounts of the construction of the house have been found, Bireley was residing here by 1909:

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Bireley took dinner with Mr. Bireley's brother, Arthur Bireley and wife, 701 West Oregon Street. (Urbana Courier-Herald, April 27, 1909)

Based on this information, the construction date for the house can be narrowed down to 1907–08.

The Bireley house at 701 W. Oregon St. still stands today, though many of its original architectural elements are gone. The City of Urbana Historic Resources Form describes the building as a “great example of American Foursquare vernacular building type,” but no architect is identified on the form (Raiche 2008).

Major alterations to the original design include the removal of a one-story porch that spanned the en-



Above and below are two views of 510 W. High St., designed for Arthur Bireley by Joseph Royer in 1910.



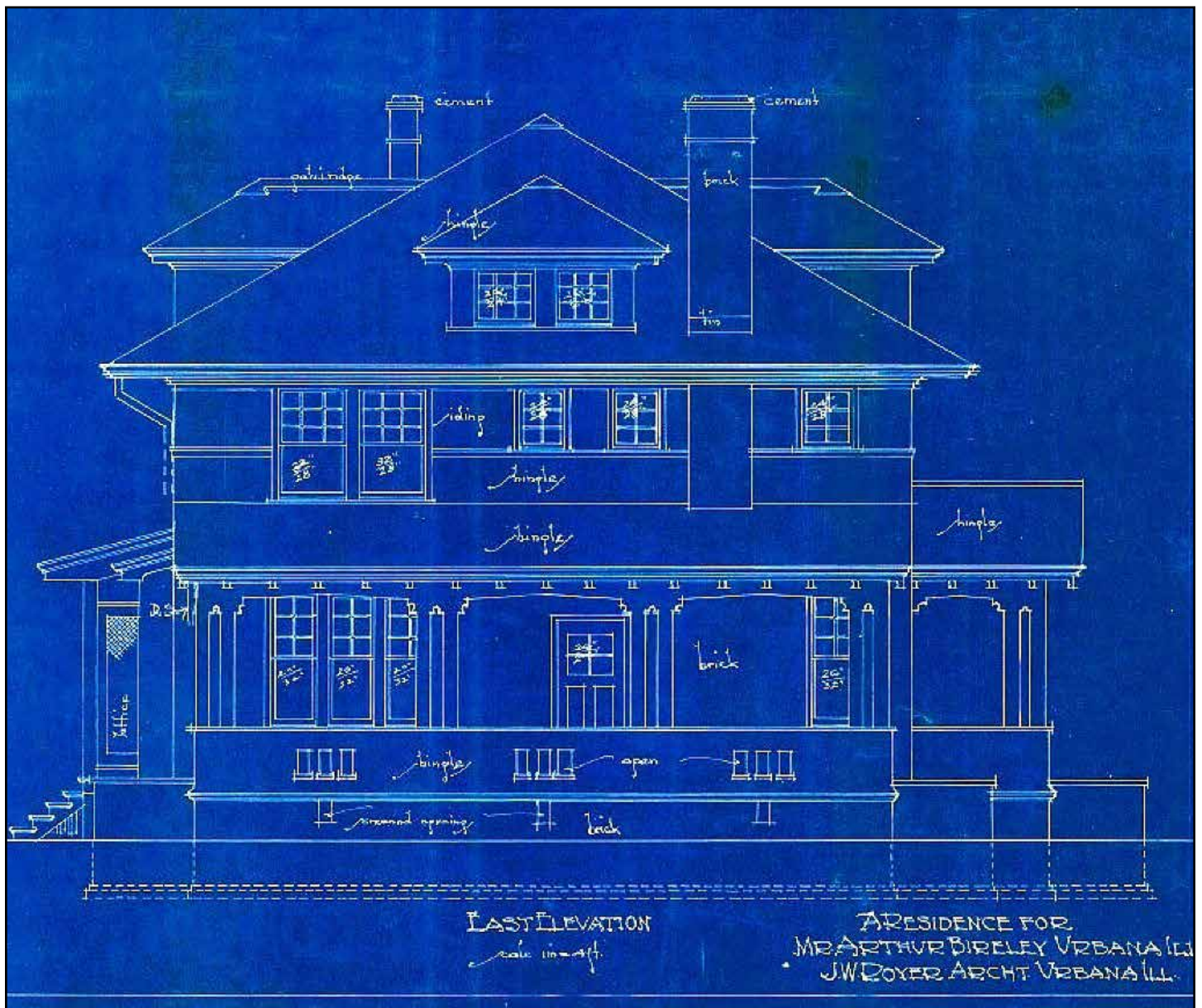
tire east elevation and an end-gabled, pedimented porch roof from the main entrance on the façade, which was replaced with a flat, low-pitched roof.

In addition, the Royer blueprints indicate the house was clad in shingles, which since have been replaced by vinyl siding. The front and side porches had decorative barge boards.

Bireley would not reside long on West Oregon Street. By May 1910, he was resid-

ing at another house designed by Royer at 508 (now 510) W. High St. in Urbana; the story of that house has been presented elsewhere (Adams 2023).

Bireley may have had his new house built on West High Street to be closer to the Champaign County Grocery Company at 101 W. Main St., which he and his father assumed ownership of in 1910, when the original owner, Allan R. Conaway retired (*Urbana Courier-Herald* 1910, 1911).



Above, this Royer blueprint shows 701 W. Oregon St., east elevation. The view depicts the porch originally located on this side of the house but now missing. Below, shown is a detail of the title block from the blueprints.

The grocery was renamed Bireley, Conaway & Co. and eventually would specialize in baked goods in partnership with George A. Kyle. Bireley would sell the store in 1917. *The Champaign Sunday News* reported the following:

Mr. Bireley is undecided as to what he will do in the future. (Champaign Sunday News 1917; Urbana Daily Courier 1917)

Arthur Bireley eventual-



ly would move to St. Louis, Mo., in 1927 and worked in administration at the newly established Principia College in Elsah, Ill. He passed away in St. Louis in October 1952.

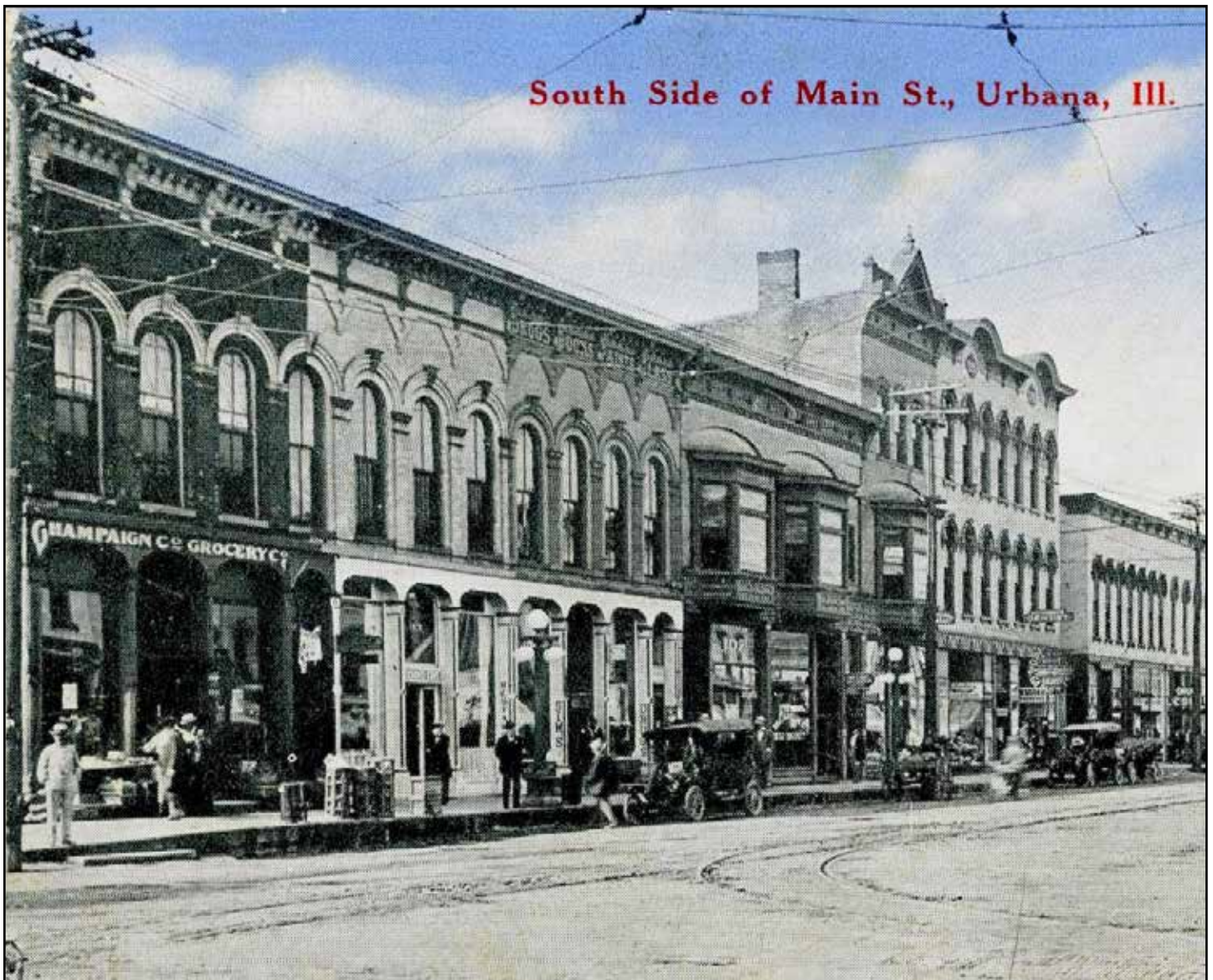
Arthur Bireley's hiring of Joseph W. Royer on two

occasions to design a residence demonstrates his confidence in the architect's skill and ability. Like many others in the city and throughout the Midwest, he knew he could expect a quality product that reflected the desired aesthetic of the time.



Above, a Joseph Royer blueprint of 701 W. Oregon St., façade. Note the end-gabled front porch roof with decorative barge boards and the side porch on the east elevation.

At left, a recent view of 701 W. Oregon St., Urbana, Ill.



Above, a postcard view of West Main Street, Urbana, Ill., early 20th century. The Champaign County Grocery Company is visible at left. Today, this area is occupied by a parking lot.

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Hopscotch Bakery + Market today. (Photo by Brian Adams)

A Cozy Corner Market: The history of 802 W. John St., Champaign

By Brian Adams

At 802 W. John St. in Champaign is a brick building that seems out of place in this almost exclusively residential neighborhood. Currently occupied by Hopscotch Bakery + Market, this building at the northwest corner of West John and Pine streets has a long history associated with the food industry — beginning in 1927 when Gallion's Grocery opened on the corner.

Gallion's Grocery

William Gallion entered the grocery business in 1905 when he opened a store in the city of Mounds located in Pulaski County in far southern Illinois (*Champaign-Urbana Courier*, Aug. 22, 1948, p. 3). He ran this store until 1918, when he moved to Indianapolis, Ind., to run another grocery store. From Indianapolis, Gallion moved to Champaign in 1920 and

bought a store at 301 S. Neil St. In 1927 he bought the lot at 802 W. John St. and built his own store.

Shortly after opening, the store was robbed (*Daily Illini* 1928). Twenty dollars' worth of merchandise was stolen consisting of the shop's entire supply of cigarettes, cheese, bacon, candy and several cans of fruit.

The Champaign City Council granted Charles Gallion permission to build a fill-



William Gallion Jr., left, with father William Gallion Sr. (*Champaign-Urbana Courier*, Sept. 1, 1948)

ing station at John and Pine streets in January 1933, but his relationship to William has yet to be determined (*Daily Illini* 1933). The question of a filling station at this location is discussed in more detail below.

In 1947, William Gallion applied to the Champaign board of zoning appeals to expand his grocery store with an addition of 12 feet on the West John Street side of the building (*Champaign-Urbana Courier*, May 16, 1947). The board approved the application.

William Gallion retired on Sept. 1, 1948, and the business was taken over by his son, William Gallion Jr. (*Champaign-Urbana Courier*, Sept. 1, 1948).

Kelsey Brothers Grocery

Consultation of city directories at the Champaign County Historical Archives at the Urbana Free Library



Winifred Sanders, proprietor, is photographed inside the Dietary Food Store. (See exterior photos on Page 9.) (Helmick 2013)

indicates William Gallion Jr. ran the store until 1963, the last year Gallion Grocery is listed. The 1964 directory does not list the address. By 1965, a grocery is listed here run by brothers John E. and Earl Kelsey, who would operate the store until 1970.

They were born in Louisville, Clay County, Ill., John on Dec. 29, 1913, and Earl on April 24, 1917 (*News Gazette*, Nov. 7, 1972; Oct. 7, 1990, p. B-6). John served in the Army in World War II, as did Earl, who saw action in North Africa and Italy. Earl was a meat cutter by trade and retired from Kroger's Grocery in 1982. According to his obituary, he was fond of oil painting.

Dietary Food Store

City directories indicate

the building was vacant in 1971, and no address is listed in 1972. The 1973 directory lists the Dietary Food Store as the next business to occupy the building. However, the store's proprietor, Winifred Sanders, stated the store opened in 1970 (Helmick 2013).

Sanders said that prior to her shop, the building was a service station and that the previous owner built the upstairs and widened the building. To date, the author has found meager and ambiguous information about a service station at this address. As related previously, a permit was granted to Charles Gallion in 1933 to build a filling station here, but no evidence from that time has yet been found to support claims that such a business ever was opened.



The Dietary Food Store was painted a distinctive maroon red and had a shingled canopy over an angled entrance. (Helmick 2013)

City directories from 1964 and 1965 indicate a “gas & oil additive distr.” business was located at 607 S. Pine St. Currently this is the Pine Street address of Hopscotch Bakery (in addition to the 802 W. John St. address), and the directories also identify this as the residence of William C. Gallion, former proprietor of Gallion’s Grocery.

Hopefully additional research in the future can clarify exactly where and what additional businesses and residences were located at this corner.

A nearly life-long resident of Champaign, Winifred Sanders was born in 1924 and spent much of her childhood assisting with chores on the family farm near Sadorus. A listing for this store in the *Daily Illini* of Aug. 6, 1982, indicates it specialized in “Natural Foods, specialty foods, vitamins and minerals.”

According to Sanders, the belief behind dietary supplement is concern that foods cultivated by

inorganic fertilizers and processes do not contain sufficient nutritional value for a healthy diet. This deficiency is offset by various capsules, tablets and powders which are organic, and not chemical... There is no danger of taking too many supplements since they are organic, according to Sanders... The people who buy dietary supplements are persons who are concerned about improper nourishment. There is no majority among young or old, according to Sanders. (Boughrum 1971)

The Dietary Food Store was painted a distinctive maroon red with a shingled canopy over the angled entrance way.

Hopscotch Bakery + Market

In spring 2017, Hopscotch Bakery + Market opened in the building (Singer 2016). In 2015, Hopscotch started as a bakery — called Hopscotch Cakes + Confections — which sold pastries at markets in Champaign and Urbana (Hammie 2015;

Macomber 2020).

Soon founder and owner Kaya Speagle was based in Art Mart in Champaign, but wanted to establish a brick and mortar venue. She gave this account of her reasons:

“We wanted an interesting space and location with a lot of potential for upgrade. Historical spaces make me giddy ... I wanted it to feel like a cozy corner market; a place to feel relaxed.” (Macomber 2020)

With assistance from design consultant and artist Kelly Hieronymus, the entire interior of the building was renovated and the exterior modified with removal and replacement of the shingled canopy over the entrance and opening of a previously bricked in window at the west end of the south elevation.

The exterior was repainted gray. Signage — including the name Hopscotch in red and white cursive letters — was added to the south and east elevations.



Above, interior renovations are shown in process in preparation for the opening of Hopscotch Bakery + Market. At the same time, below, modifications were made to the building's exterior. Photos by Justine Bursoni. (Singer 2016)

Tables, chairs and benches were placed outside the building, permitting open-air dining in good weather.

Murals, which are changed seasonally, are painted on the large plate glass windows along West John Street.

When it first opened, the shop sold cinnamon rolls, canelé, chocolate chip cookies, sandwiches, soups, a few dinner items, milk, cheese, flour, onions and yeast.

In August 2023, the bakery and market was put up

for sale when the owners decided to move to Boise, Idaho, to be closer to family and friends. In less than a year, the shop had a new owner, Jenny Kim, former general manager of Champaign's "bookbar," The Literary (Buckley 2024).

Kim, who has worked with Kaya Speagle in the past, intends to continue running the business with only minor changes, which include extended hours and increased involvement with the community.

The long and varied history of the building at 802 W. John St. demonstrates the value of retaining historic buildings in our community. The building has successfully served the surrounding neighborhood as well Champaign and Urbana in general for nearly 100 years and continues to be a popular destination.

The author wishes to thank staff at the Champaign County Historical Archives at the Urbana Free Library and Smile Politely for assistance with this article.

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IN BRIEF

Rare 1880-1927 Hayden pavers available at PACA

The PACA warehouse is selling Hayden sidewalk pavers while supplies last. — Antique salt-glazed and vitrified sidewalk brick

— Highly collectible; on-line price \$20+ each
— PACA price: \$10 each/full blocks; \$7 each/cut halves and triangles
— Bulk pricing available; contact pacaexdir@gmail.com

com or visit the warehouse during regular hours.

History museum hosting tour of four MCM homes

The Champaign County History Museum on May 31 will hold a Mid-Century Modern Homes Tour during National Historic Preservation Month.

A panel discussion at 10:30 a.m. will describe the history of MCM architects from Champaign-Urbana and their structures. Tours begin at noon and allow participants to explore four historic homes.

The panel is free. The tour is \$25 per person. To purchase tickets, visit <https://www.champaign-countyhistory.org/>.



PRESERVATION MATTERS

The newsletter of the



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MEMBERSHIP STATUS

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☐ Senior Citizen \$15
☐ Family \$40

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☐ Silver \$500
☐ Gold \$1000
☐ Platinum \$2000

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