

DECORATING THE MISSOURI STATE CAPITOL

by Karen Grace
*Historic Preservation Program,
Missouri Department of Natural Resources*

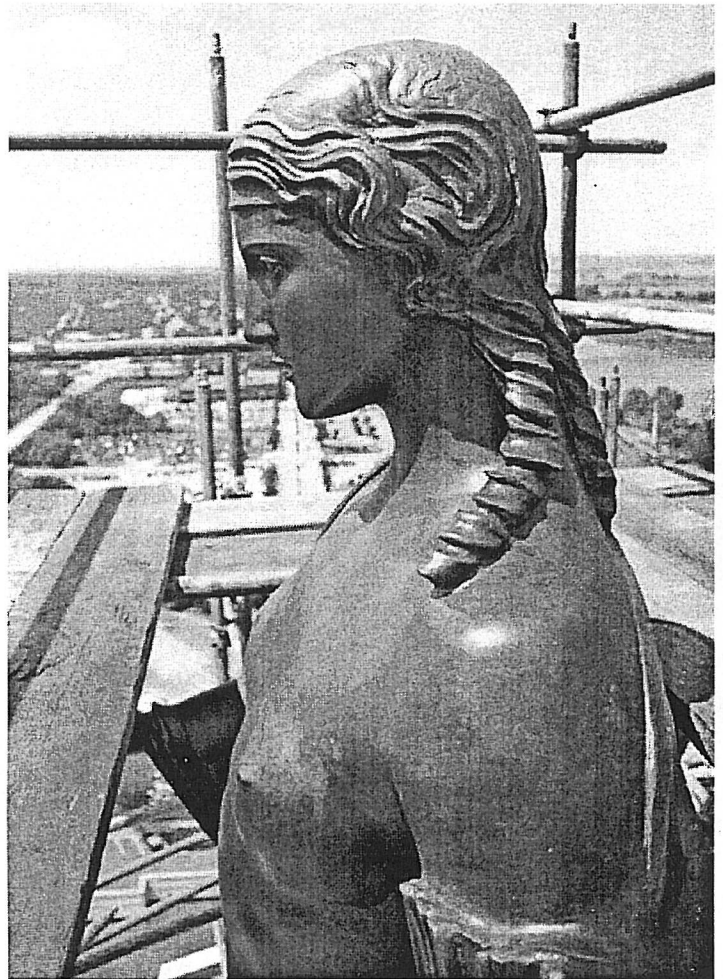
Many Missourians would be surprised to learn that their state capitol in Jefferson City contains the largest collection of fine and decorative arts in the state outside of the major museums in St. Louis and Kansas City. They would be even more surprised to learn that this world-class collection housed in more than 500,000 square feet of exhibit space came about quite by accident.

The present capitol building was constructed in 1913-17 following a fire that completely destroyed the 1840 capitol, which had been remodeled and enlarged in 1888.

Legislation was immediately introduced that authorized \$3,500,000 in bonds for the new capitol: \$3 million for the building; \$300,000 for furnishings, and \$200,000 to acquire additional grounds. The legislation also required that the architect for the building be selected by "contest." The American Institute of Architects, however, objected to the first draft of the contest rules because: 1) anonymity was not guaranteed to the contestants; 2) the state was not required to select the winner as the architect for the building; and 3) the architect selected would be paid only five percent of the cost of the building rather than the AIA standard of six percent. The AIA also informed the state that unless those problems were corrected, "no AIA member could enter the contest and remain a member."

Finally, the state was forced to back down and make, as a state board member later reported, "the selection of an architect wholly anonymous and render it impossible for the Board to give any preference to a Missouri architect." Sixty-nine firms entered plans in the contest. The winning plans, selected in October, 1912, were by Tracy and Swartwout of New York City.

In 1911, a bonding proposal to fund the construction was submitted to the people for a vote of approval. And, to pay off the bonds in the required 13 years, a special levy was passed that was earmarked for the "Capitol Building



Standing on the top of the capitol dome 260 feet above the ground is Ceres, the goddess of grain, by New York sculptor Sherry Fry. Although she is seldom seen close up, Ceres (shown here during a recent bath) is beautifully modeled her face bends slightly forward, her eyes look down to the earth below, she carries a sheaf of grain in her left arm, and her right hand extends downward in perpetual blessing.

Fund."

In 1917, while the capitol was still under construction, it became obvious that the special levy would raise a large amount of money over and above what was needed to pay for construction costs. Since the funds generated by the levy could only be used on the capitol, the legislature passed legislation that created the Capitol Decoration Commission.

For nearly 12 years, 1917-1928, the Commission

planned, contracted, and supervised the decoration of the capitol, spending more than one million dollars, one-third of the amount of the construction costs. The best artists and sculptors of the era were commissioned and the results were magnificent.

The subject of all the capitol decorations is Missouri – history, legends, men and women, cities, towns, and country, landscapes, ideals and achievements – all rendered in sculptures, reliefs, paintings, murals, stained glass, etc., by accomplished artists.

It would be impossible to do justice to the hundreds of individual works of art commissioned for the capitol in a newsletter format, but some notable works should be mentioned. The large relief commemorating the signing of the Louisiana Purchase Treaty was designed and executed in plaster staff by the prominent sculptor, Karl Bitter. The Signing of the Treaty was created for the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis and cast in bronze for installation on the north grounds of the capitol at the edge of the Missouri River bluff. The north frieze beneath the portico overlooks the Missouri River, which was represented as the great highway that brought many different civilizations to Missouri. A series of panels comprising the frieze represents an allegory of these civilizations from primitive to modern. High on top of the capitol's massive dome, 260 feet above the ground, stands Ceres, the goddess of grain. Barely recognizable at this great height, the bronze figure by New York sculptor Sherry Fry is exquisitely modeled and worthy of a closer look – binoculars are helpful.

An English painter, Frank Brangwyn, widely believed to be the world's best muralist, was chosen to decorate the inside of the dome. Brangwyn did all of the work in his London studio, painting on canvas panels that were shipped to Missouri when completed. A student of Brangwyn's, Allen Tupper True, supervised the installation of the murals and completed 16 paintings of his own for the pendentives of the four smaller domes on the third floor.

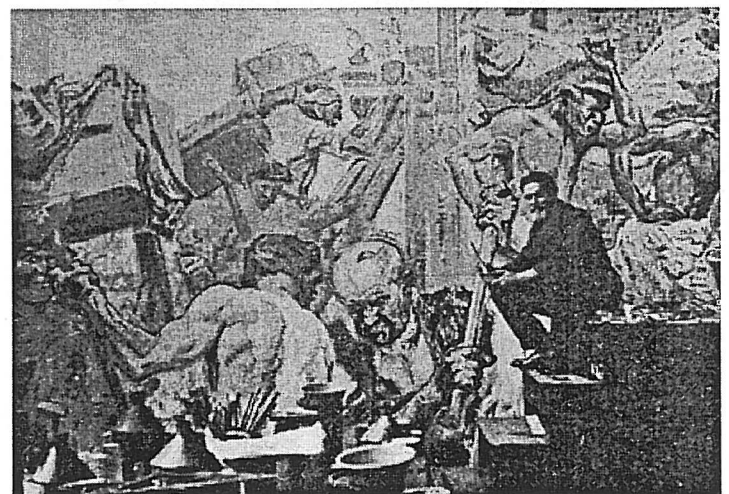
John Pickard, then head of the art department at the University of Missouri and a member of the Capitol Decoration Commission, was determined to ensure that the artists selected to depict American Indians in a number of the planned murals be familiar with the various tribes that inhabited Missouri and be able to portray them accurately and sensitively. Pickard asked his friend, well known St. Louis artist Oscar Berninghaus, for advice. Berninghaus, one of the founders of the Taos Society of Artists, sent Pickard to Taos to see the society's work first hand. With Pickard's glowing recommendation, Missouri con-

tracted with seven Taos artists (including Berninghaus) to complete two portraits and 23 murals in the new capitol. This led to a situation in which, between 1918 and 1924, according to western art historian George Schriever, "the creation of Missouri history murals in Taos became a cottage industry that rivaled the production there of santos, rugs and pottery." In addition to paintings and statuary, the carved stone in the capitol rates a special mention. For example, there are 134 carved columns and capitals that make up one-fourth of the 240,000 cubic feet of stone used in construction; there are 24,000 cubic feet in other carvings, including 300 feet of sculptural frieze work and hundreds of medallions and smaller ornaments.

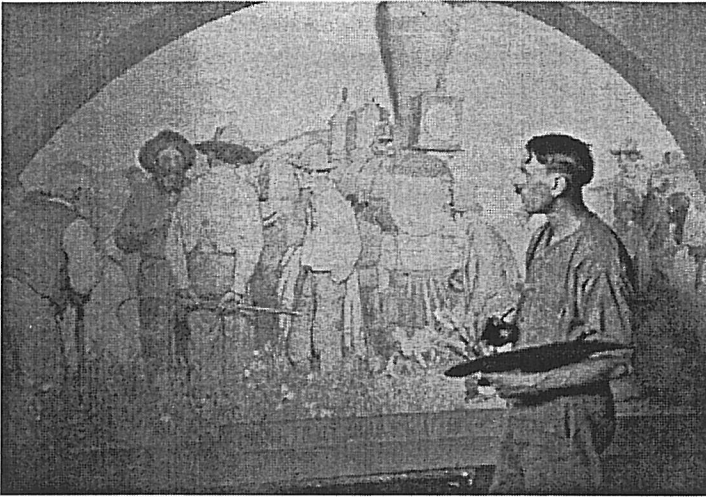
The Missouri capitol was formally dedicated on October 6, 1924. Speaking at the ceremony, Gov. Arthur M. Hyde said: "Here today are the persons who conceived the idea . . . of adorning this capitol with noble works of art, thus making it a memorial of the history, the achievements, and the aspirations of a great people, and creating here, not alone a building which is the seat of government, but a shrine for the lovers of history and art."

Historian Karen Grace is the preservation education coordinator for the state historic preservation office in Jefferson City.

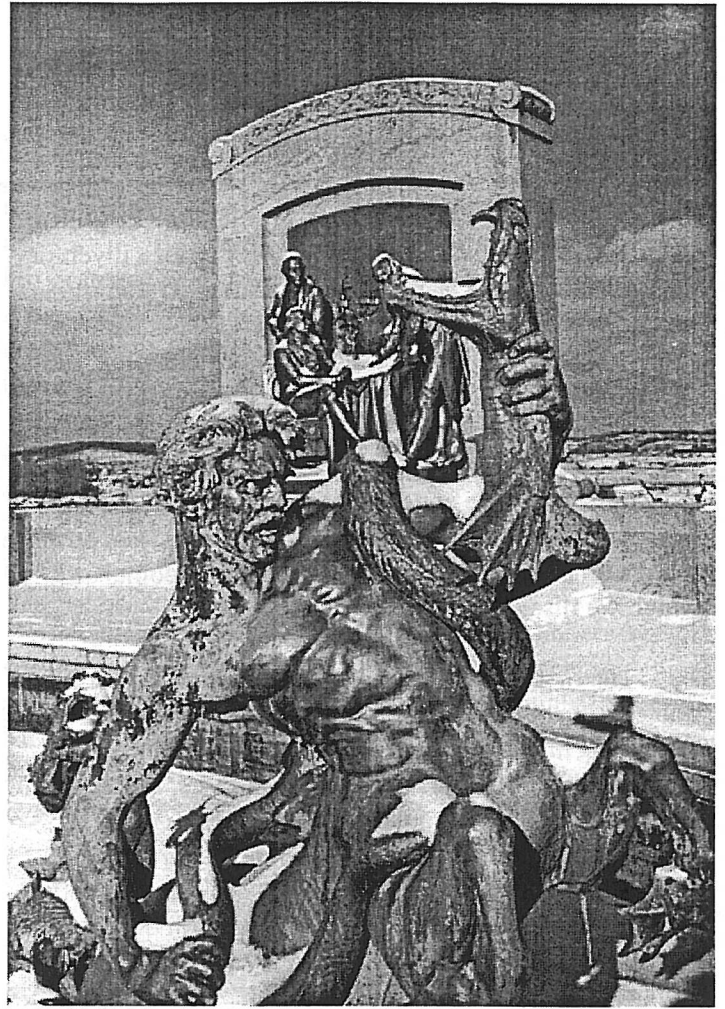
Editor's note: Among the dozen non-Taos artists who contributed murals to the capitol's corridors was Tom P. Barnett (1870-1929), son of George I. Barnett, architect of the Governor's mansion, and an unusually talented architect in his own right. He did "Riches from the Mines" for the Resources Museum area of the capitol.



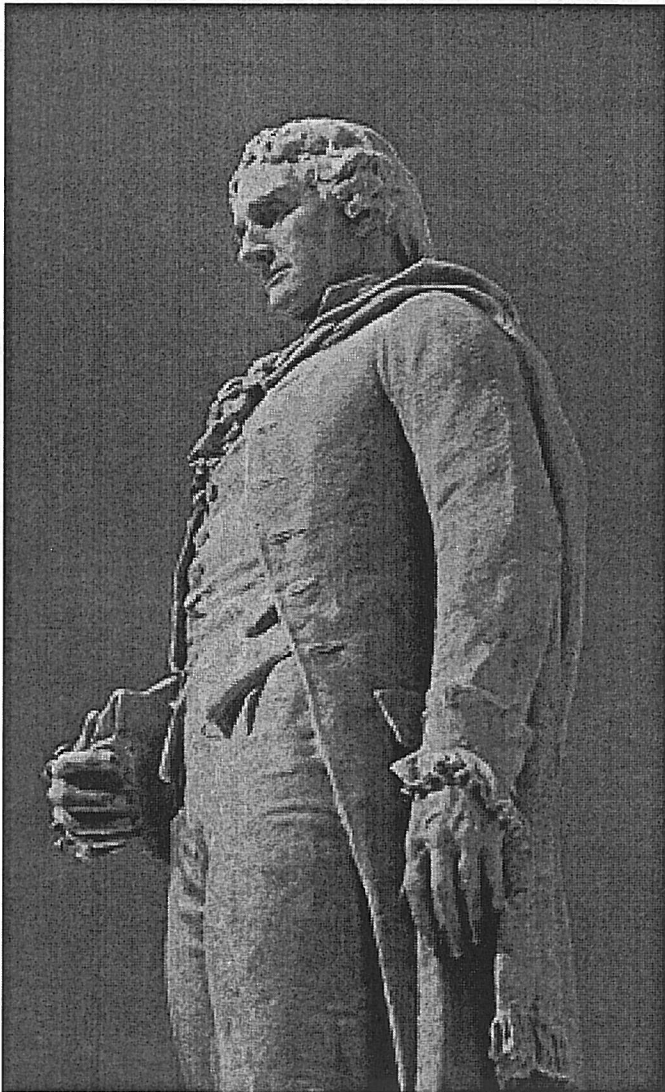
Frank Brangwyn completes "The Builders" in his London studio. One of four murals representing the development of the state for the upper dome of the capitol, it represents the epitome of "modern" Missouri – the bustling St. Louis riverfront with Eads Bridge in the background.



Taos artist W. Herbert Duncan completes "First Train Arriving at Tipton, 1858", one of 22 lunettes located on the second floor corridor. The painting depicts the inhabitants of Tipton turning out in force to inspect this new marvel.



The Fountain of the Centaurs (foreground) by Adolf Alexander Weinman of New York is located on the river front of the capitol. The figures represent a mythical time before history when barbaric forces contended with primitive nature. The great relief (background), "The Signing of the Treaty" by Karl Bitter, was executed in staff for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis and cast in bronze for the capitol. The work depicts Robert Livingston and James Monroe signing the treaty for the purchase of Louisiana in 1803.



This commanding bronze statue of Thomas Jefferson by James Earle Fraser of New York is positioned at the main entrance to the capitol overlooking the town that is named for Jefferson.

SURVEYING BRIDGES: A RESPONSE TO LEE GILLEARD'S WINTER 1997 ARTICLE

by Clayton Fraser

I read with great interest the article that Lee Gilleard wrote on the Missouri Historic Highway Bridge Inventory for the Winter 1997 issue of the News Letter. As principal investigator for this project, I am largely responsible for its content, and I have a vested interest in its outcome. In the article, Mr. Gilleard kindly states that the inventory is the "largest, most comprehensive and best organized survey ever conducted covering a type of cultural resource over the entire state." He concerns himself in large part with describing Missouri's most significant bridges, and on these we agree. There are, however, a number of points on which we disagree.

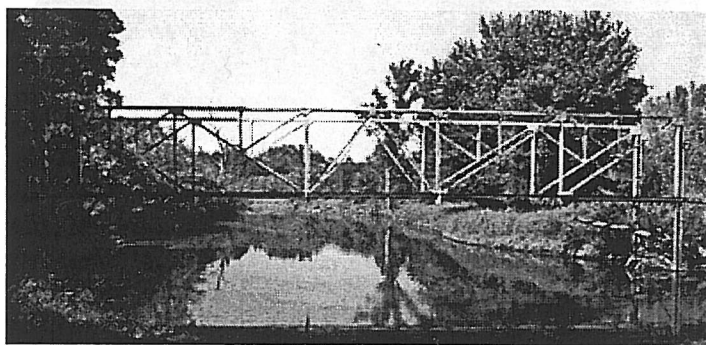
The first concerns attribution. Although Mr. Gilleard quotes from our inventory report in several places, properly attributing his source, he fails to make this distinction in many other places. He appropriates phrases, sentences, and even whole paragraphs from the inventory report without giving proper attribution for their source. His description of the inventory process is lifted almost entirely from our report, as are many of the structural descriptions for the bridges. Placing one's name over another author's work is plagiarism, and it is inexcusable.

Mr. Gilleard and I disagree on some of the factual information as. He writes, for instance, that the Hargrove Bridge "utilizes its designer/manufacturer's own patented truss, which we will call a Pratt/Warren," implying both that Miller & Borcharding of St. Louis obtained a U.S. patent for this truss type and that Gilleard coined the name for its structural configuration. Neither is true. Elsewhere in the article, Mr. Gilleard states that the Little Niangua River Bridge is the only true suspension bridge in Missouri. In fact, dozens of such bridges have been built in the state, and the inventory identified ten other suspension bridges as still standing.

Mr. Gilleard lists Missouri's covered bridges, bow-string arch-trusses and Whipple trusses and then states, "The last of the 19th-century truss types, and certainly the most common, is the Pratt truss." This leads the reader to believe that these are the only truss configurations developed during the 19th century. Other truss types, such as the Warren, Parker, kingpost, and camelback were also built in 19th-century Missouri, and significant examples of each remain in the state today. The Henkin's Ford Bridge in Caldwell County, for example, is a pin-connected Warren

truss built in 1887 by the King Bridge Company of Cleveland. Its score, 72, was almost as high as many of the bridges listed in the article.

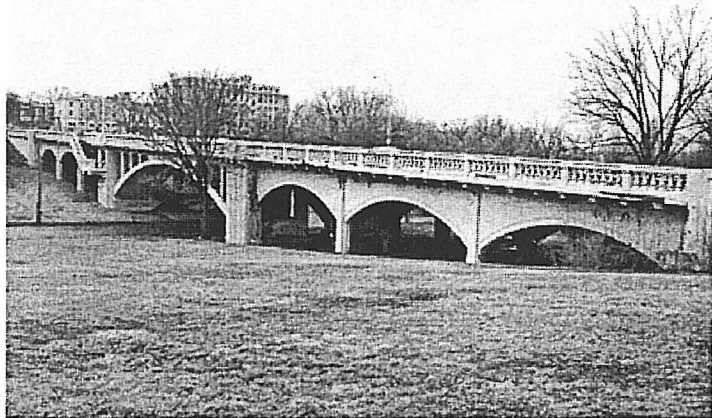
As an illustration of how far afield from fact the article could get, consider Gilleard's discussion of the Little Platte River Bridge in Clinton County. He first states that "it is a Baltimore bedstead truss, a type normally utilized on long spans." Actually, with its upright end posts acting as both super- and substructure, the bedstead is inherently a short-span bridge. "In this case, it is only 90 feet long and is in a pony configuration," he continues. In truth, the bridge's 90-foot length distinguished it as Missouri's longest bedstead. Further, a bedstead by definition cannot have a pony truss configuration. Mr. Gilleard asserts that bedsteads were particularly difficult to move. They were not. Bedstead trusses could be easily cut from their legs and transported to other crossing sites; many in Missouri have been moved in this way. And Mr. Gilleard's statement that bedsteads could be assembled by riveting or welding ignores the fact that structural welding on bridges did not become commonplace until decades after bedsteads were no longer fabricated. Finally, Mr. Gilleard included a photograph of the Little Platte River Bridge. The problem is, the structure pictured is not the Little Platte River Bridge.



*The real Little Platte River Bridge
Photo: Lon Johnson*

These can be dismissed as minor errors, I suppose. What concerns me more with Mr. Gilleard's article are inaccuracies in his criticisms of the historic bridge inventory. He states, for example, that "several types, sizes, and ages of bridges were eliminated from consideration of the survey by agreement between the FHWA, MODOT, and the HPP." In truth, the only limitation placed on the inventory at the outset was a 1951 cutoff date. Mr. Gilleard also states that the inventory evaluated only technological significance, saying that "a bridge's association with a historically significant highway such as Route 66 or Highway 40 was not factored into the scores." In truth, historical significance accounted for a considerable part of the numerical scoring system, and a structure such as the Chain of Rocks Bridge in St. Louis was cited as much for

its association with Route 66 as it was for its technological significance. Mr. Gilleard further states that the inventory did not take into account bridges' role in urban parkways and boulevards. In truth, we discussed the three Missouri cities — St. Louis, St. Joseph, and Kansas City — in which bridges were tied integrally with urban park systems. Several bridges such as the 27th Street Viaduct in Kansas City were cited for their historical significance under this context.



27th Street Viaduct
Photo: Lon Johnson

Mr. Gilleard correctly states that “of the selected bridges, only a minority were field inspected by the surveyor,” although his numbers are inaccurate. During the early stages of the inventory, we proposed a methodology to MODOT, FHWA, and HPP stating that this would be the case. We would rely instead on the photographs in MODOT files to identify which bridges deserved field inspection as potentially eligible for the National Register. The rationale for this was simple enough: MODOT could not afford the cost of field inventorying thousands of marginal bridges. With the agreement of all parties, including HPP, we proceeded with the inventory under these terms. Mr. Gilleard’s complaint at the end of the inventory that “this is far from acceptable” comes a little late in the process to be very constructive.

The most disturbing aspect about the article, from MODOT’s point of view, is not its content, but its timing. Mr. Gilleard elected to publish his critique of the inventory even before his office had sent a formal response on the bridge inventory to MODOT. Written, as stated by Mr. Gilleard, during business hours, the article can only be construed as representative of HPP’s standards. This, I think, is unfortunate.

SAVE OUR SCENERY (SOS)

by Karl Kruse
Director, Scenic Missouri

Did you know that Missouri has nearly three times as many billboards per mile as our eight neighboring states? A drive up I-170 or down I-44 leaves no doubt that Missouri has become saturated with billboards. In fact, Scenic America has listed Missouri as one of America’s top five most visually blighted states. There are two reasons for this:

- 1) Missouri’s state billboard law permits huge billboards adjacent to interstate and primary highways practically anywhere;
- 2) Missouri is one of only two states where state law preempts most local billboard regulations.

A citizens initiative petition campaign is underway, spearheaded by Columbia-based Scenic Missouri, an affiliate of Scenic America. The initiative would amend Missouri’s constitution to permit all local governments to fully regulate billboards, including the right to remove nonconforming signs. The Save Our Scenery (SOS) Campaign has been endorsed by scores of civic, conservation and environmental organizations, including the Missouri Municipal League, AIA Missouri, Missouri Alliance for Historic Preservation, and many others.

Valid signatures of about 120,000 registered voters must be obtained by mid-June to qualify the proposed amendment for the November 1998 general election. About 45,000 signatures have been secured to date. It is crucial that volunteers who care about protecting Missouri’s scenic heritage help with this campaign.

The SOS Campaign Committee is sending petitions and brochures to members of supportive organizations, including the Society of Architectural Historians. You may already have received your petitions and have already started gathering signatures. If so, thank you! If you have questions about the SOS Campaign or about the petition process, call 573-446-3120 or e-mail SOSMO@tranquility.net.

Please help with this important and historic effort to reclaim Missouri’s disappearing scenic heritage.

READING THE MAIL: SAH-1

Bad news at the library and archives of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in Washington. The librarian resigned last fall, the archivist is retiring this spring, and no replacements are planned. Roberta Moudry reports from Cornell that a study now under way includes sale or other dispersal of the collections as options. Pending a decision, the facility may be closed. Concerns or inquiries may be addressed to the acting CEO, Fred DeLuca, AIA, 1735 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 10006, phone 202-626-7322, e-mail delucaf@aiaemail.aia.org.

Do you know of any water closet installations (indoor toilets with running water) in the United States prior to 1840? David Cornelius at Drexel has found that John Haviland of Philadelphia designed several, and others ranged from high to low: the Tremont House Hotel in Boston (1829) and the Virginia State Penitentiary in Richmond (1797 and 1823).

The fate of the huge, vacant Hudson's Department Store building in downtown Detroit has been an ongoing concern. Demolition was halted by court order on October 31 by court order but reauthorized on November 18. The city had begun demolition in the middle of the night, disregarding street protests and at least three realistic proposals for adaptive reuse. Subsequently the city has agreed to further study. The building is so large that it will require almost a year to remove. A web site has been created to coordinate efforts: http://wwnet.net/?big_d/=20.

Another web page of interest has Lara Day Kozak's 1996 photos of the architecture of Havana, Cuba: <http://www.tomco.net/?larak/cuba/cuba/htm>.

Did Walter Gropius make this statement? If so, when and where? "How can we expect our students to become bold and fearless in thought and action if we encase them in sentimental shrines feigning a culture which has long since disappeared?" Richard Kuhns at Washington University wants to know.

The firm founded by Ralph Adams Cram is still in business and still has his photos and drawings as well as much on his erstwhile partner Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue. Contact Ethan Anthony at HDB Architects, 38 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 01226, or e-mail eanthony@hdb.com. Cram did the Chartres-inspired chapel at St. Louis University Hospital.

Only 4 of the roughly 30 surviving London churches usually attributed to Sir Christopher Wren can definitely be documented as his work. This according to Simon Bradley, one of the authors of the new edition of the City of London volume in Nikolaus Pevsner's monumental Buildings of England series. Six are definitely not his work, while for many of the remainder no adequate documentation can be found. Of 100 surviving drawings of city churches, fewer than 20 are in Wren's hand. Bradley thinks St. Benet Paul's Wharf and St. Edmund the King are by Robert Hooke.

Historic houses for sale: (1) The home of Lewis Mumford in Amenia, New York is for sale. The influential author *The City In History* and *The Brown Decades* lived there for fifty years after giving up on New York City. (2) The Norman House, 124 East 70th Street in New York City, the only house by William Lescase that remains unaltered, with furniture designed especially for the house.

Ellen Weiss has completed "An Annotated Bibliography of African-American Architects and Builders," and it is available for \$5 from the SAH, 1365 North Astor Street, Chicago, IL 60610-2144.

This Old House Magazine, not to be confused with the Old House Journal, includes a column called "Save This Old House." It features a house in desperate need of renovation and tries to find a buyer. The price of these houses is usually relatively low because of the work needed. If you have a candidate, call Ben Kalin, Associate Editor, at 212-522-6870 or e-mail to bkalin@toh.timeine.com.



Events Calendar



**The Chinese Pavilion at Tower Grove Park:
Tracing its Roots**
Sunday, April 5, 1998, 2 p.m.

“The Chinese Pavilion at Tower Grove Park: Tracing its Roots,” at the Stupp Center in Tower Grove Park, near Grand and Arsenal, St. Louis. Juliana Yuan, a lecturer in Asian Art History at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, will focus on the 1873 pavilion, tracing its design elements to their origins in China and relating the pavilion to its European antecedents, such as the pagoda at Kew, which were known to Henry Shaw, the founder of the park.

St. Louis Architecture 1910 to 1940
Tuesday, April 7, 1998, 7 p.m.

“St. Louis Architecture 1910 to 1940” at the Lashley Branch Library, 4537 West Pine, St. Louis. Architect Eugene Mackey III, the founder of Mackey-Mitchell Associates, brings an architect’s perspective to St. Louis architectural history, highlighting the surviving buildings he finds most notable. The second in the series continues his look at notable St. Louis buildings, from the period after the Fair to the beginnings of Modernism.

Annual Meeting and Presentations
Saturday, April 25, 1998 2:45 & 5:30 p.m.

The Missouri Valley Chapter’s 1998 meeting is scheduled for 5:30n at historic St. Vincent’s Catholic Church on Main Street in Cape Girardeau as part of Missouri’s Statewide Historic Preservation Conference at Southeastern Missouri State University. The Missouri Valley Chapter also hosts a public session at 2:45, “Work in Progress: Architecture and Preservation in Eastern Missouri.” Esley Hamilton will highlight current preservation issues in St. Louis and St. Louis County and Bonnie Steppenoff will describe her current research on the Spanish Revival style in Cape Girardeau.

Ancient Technology
Wednesday, April 29, 1998, 12:15 p.m.

“Ancient Technology” at the Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri-Columbia. William R. Biers, professor of the Department of Art History and Archaeology speaks as part of the Midday Gallery series.

Save Our Scenery
Friday, May 15, 1998, 7 p.m.

“Save Our Scenery” at the University City Public Library, 6701 Delmar Boulevard. Karl Kruse, the director of Scenic Missouri, marks National Historic Preservation Week with a talk about how billboards are endangering Missouri’s scenic beauty and what we can do about it. Missouri’s highways have been nominated to the National Trust’s list of 11 most endangered historic sites.

NEW TIME! NEW SPELLING!
The Palace of Versailles
Tuesday, June 2, 1998, 7 p.m.

“The Palace of Versailles” at Givens Hall, near Skinker & Forsyth, Washington University, St. Louis. Jeanne Morgan Zarruchi, University of Missouri-St. Louis, returns with a follow-up to her well-received talk on European castles last year. She brings her background in 17th-century French studies to bear on the castle and gardens of Louis XIV, the Sun King.

The Missouri Valley Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians publishes this events Calendar as a service to our members and associates. If you would like to have your event included, please send advance notice to:

Esley Hamilton, Editor
Society of Architectural Historians
Missouri Valley Chapter
7346 Balson Avenue
University City, Missouri 63130
Telephone 314727-0428 or fax 314/889-3696

Further information regarding 1998 Calendar Events will be included in the Summer 98 NewsLetter.

Support our growing organization by mailing your 1998 dues today.

To renew your membership for 1998, or to join our organization, please fill out the coupon at the right and mail it with your check to the address below. Your contribution is essential to help defray printing, postage, and program costs.

The Missouri Valley Chapter of the SAH is a regional organization comprised of members in Missouri, eastern Kansas, and western Iowa with an interest in architecture – past, present, and future. Currently both Saint Louis and Kansas City have component organizations which sponsor lectures, tours, and hold meetings on a regular basis.

All memberships are for the calendar year. Membership privileges include:

- **NewsLetter** (quarterly)
- **Directory** (annually)
- Participation in annual meeting and tours, programs and special events

Membership Categories

| | |
|--------------|------------|
| Student | \$ 5.00 |
| Individual | \$ 10.00 |
| Joint | \$ 15.00 |
| Organization | \$ 25.00 |
| Supporting | \$ 25.00 + |

| | |
|---|--|
| _____ | |
| name | |
| _____ | |
| institution, affiliation, or special interest | |
| Mailing Address: | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> home | <input type="checkbox"/> office |
| _____ | |
| street | |
| _____ | |
| city | |
| _____ | |
| state | zip code |
| _____ | |
| telephone number | facsimile number |
| _____ | |
| List telephone number in Directory? | <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| Amount enclosed | _____ |
| Membership category | _____ |
| Are you a member of the national SAH? | _____ |

© 1998 The Society of Architectural Historians, Missouri Valley Chapter.

News Letter

NewsLetter is published quarterly by the Missouri Valley Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians. To contact the Chapter at Epperson House by telephone, call 816/235-1725 or by facsimile, dial 816/235-5191.

Please mail editorial correspondence and submissions for publication to "Esley Hamilton, Editor" at the address listed on page seven. Deadlines for submission of material for publication in **NewsLetter** are as follows:

| | |
|--------------|-------------|
| Spring issue | 15 February |
| Summer issue | 15 May |
| Fall issue | 15 August |
| Winter issue | 15 November |

Missouri Valley Chapter, SAH Board of Directors (1997-98)

| | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Greg Sheldon | President |
| Peter Wollenberg | Vice President |
| Mary Sayers | Secretary |
| Rebecca Freese | Treasurer |
| Beverly Fleming | Director |
| David Sachs | Director |
| Stacy Sone | Director |
| Mimi Stirtz | Director |
| Esley Hamilton | Newsletter Editor |

Society of Architectural Historians
 Missouri Valley Chapter
 University of Missouri – Kansas City
 5100 Rockhill Road
 204 Epperson House
 Kansas City, Missouri 64110-2499

