

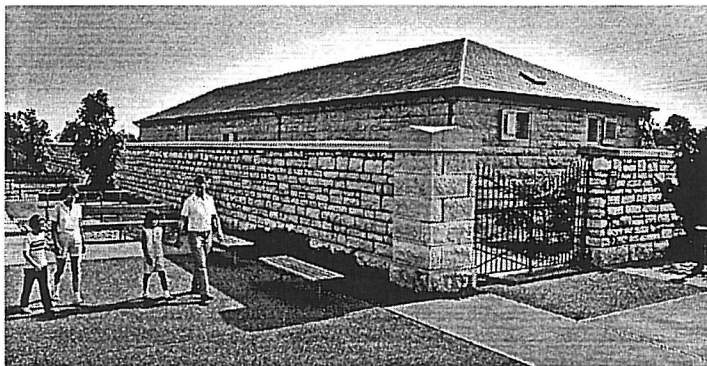
THE POWDER MAGAZINE MUSEUM AT JEFFERSON BARRACKS PARK

by Esley Hamilton

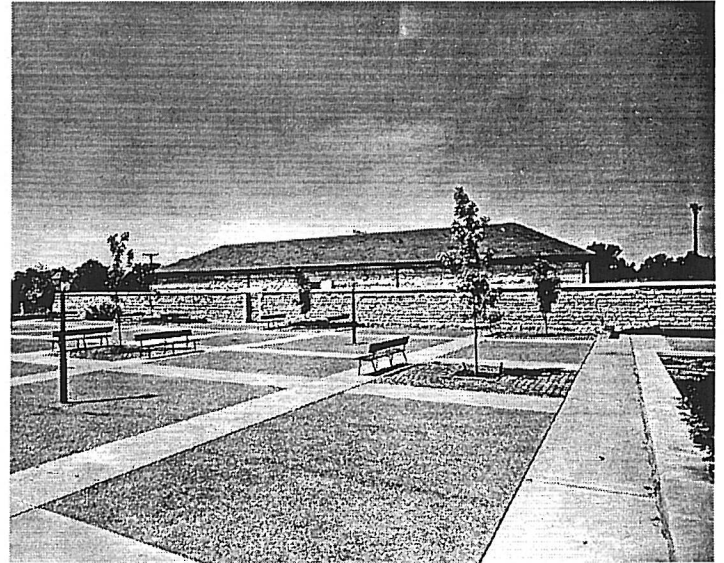
The historic buildings at Jefferson Barracks Park in St. Louis County have been in the news recently. The visitor's center will soon have its top story rebuilt. The present low stone building is actually the remaining ground floor of a nineteenth-century bank barn, the frame superstructure of which was demolished shortly before the Army left Jefferson Barracks in 1946. The reconstruction will have offices and educational spaces inside.

The Powder Magazine Museum has had a new door cut into its four-foot stone walls in order to provide handicap access and emergency egress without having to change the original front door. This alteration has been called vandalism by some, although a similar door was installed in the other powder magazine (now called the Old Ordnance Building) back in 1971 without any objections. The ironic thing about the controversy is that the original construction of the Powder Magazine in 1857 was so poor that the building had to be rebuilt. We can follow this story today through transcriptions at Jefferson Barracks Park of the correspondence that survives in the War Records Division of the National Archives.

The ordnance section of Jefferson Barracks was established in 1850 as a safety valve for the St. Louis Arsenal at Broadway and Arsenal Streets, a location which was rapidly being engulfed by the growing city. Major William H. Bell, the commanding officer there, reported that he had 4,000 barrels of powder in one building alone,



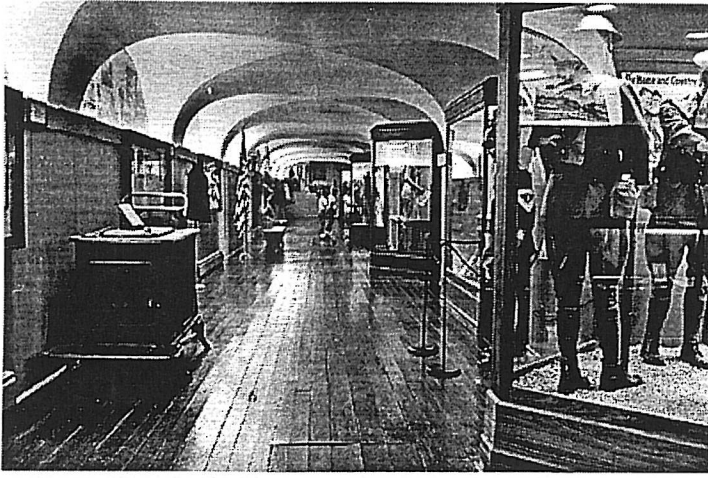
Powder Magazine at Jefferson Barracks



Powder Magazine at Jefferson Barracks

and an explosion would have been a catastrophe. Bell forwarded his plans for two identical "magazines" or buildings for storing gunpowder early in 1851. Brevet Brigadier General G. Talcott, chief of Ordnance in Washington, responded with an alternative design "of the most recent construction; far preferable to the old method of two cylindrical arches with a middle wall." His plan, the one we see today, called for parallel rows of linked cross or groin vaults. The use of stone vaulting in public buildings had been pioneered by the architect Robert Mills in 1822 with his state records building in Charleston, South Carolina, appropriately known as the Fireproof Building.

The cost of the two new buildings at Jefferson Barracks was feared to be considerably more than the appropriation. Stone walls were intended to surround both magazines, not to keep out thieves but to contain the force of any accidental explosion. General Talcott suggested economizing by substituting wooden stockades. Bell thought that a better plan would be to start with one magazine and wall. Another reason to build one new building first, he wrote, was so that "any failure in the construction or workmanship in the first magazine, could be corrected in the second... This view I think is important, especially as regards the workmanship of the arches, which is not at all understood by mechanics in this country."



Displays in Powder Magazine Museum

When the work was advertised in May, “a great number of experienced Master Builders examined the Specifications and Drawings,” Bell reported, “but only five proposals were received.” They ranged from a high bid of \$25,563 to a low of \$15,922, a difference of almost forty per cent. Francis A. Quinette was the low bidder. “Mr. Quinette is supposed by Master Builders to have taken the work extremely low,” Bell wrote, “but he appears to be a responsible man.” Quinette’s price also included “one small laborers’ house; and one small stable; one road leading through the tract and one wharf or landing.”

Francis A. Quinette, born in 1812, had come to St. Louis from New Orleans about 1832 with his brothers Anthony, Henry, and Oliver. Their parents were natives of France who had settled in Pennsylvania during the Napoleonic wars. The 1849 city directory lists Quinette & Bros., carpenters and builders, at 111 Olive. Oliver was also listed as an architect, and he was the only brother who continued to be listed regularly in city directories. In 1859, Oliver laid out a new town of Quinette on the hills above Meramec Station, now Valley Park. The road that connected this unsuccessful development with Kirkwood was called Quinette Road, and parts of it still exist. Francis Quinette had a plantation near New Orleans, said to have been part of Chalmette Battlefield, and he traveled back and forth between the two states for many years before finally settling in New Orleans. He died there in 1895. Some of his nine children settled in St. Louis, and one of his descendants is the singer John Hartford.

Major Bell’s concerns about Francis Quinette’s ability to do a good job at such a low price were confirmed in 1858 when James W. Ripley made an inspection. “The magazine completed some years ago on the magazine tract near Jefferson Barracks is in a most unsatisfactory condition,” he wrote. “The mortar of the enclosing wall is scarcely better than mud, both faces require pointing, while

the coping is made in two courses, with a joint directly over the middle of the wall. The yard is not paved and is badly drained. The interior finish of the magazine is very indifferent — particularly the wood work, which was made of rough, unseasoned stuff, while all the work is of a cheap description and bears mark of having been slighted in every particular; in fine it is a most disgraceful affair and one alike discreditable to all who were in any way concerned with it.”

The second powder magazine was originally supposed to be erected closer to the Mississippi River than the first. In 1853, however, the St. Louis and Iron Mountain Railroad began staking out a right-of-way along the river, almost adjacent to the magazine site. The inspector that spring noted that “it would, of course, be unwise to erect it on that place under such circumstances.” Sparks from the notoriously inefficient steam engines of the time could easily cause a fire or even an explosion in so close a storage building. The inspector, R. S. Baker, Lt. Col. Ord., suggested that a better location for the second magazine would be “on the gentle inner slope of one of the large ‘sink holes’ on this lot.” It should be “placed so low as to be altogether covered by the elevation between it and the other magazine and be protected thereby from the effects of an explosion of the other.” After the Civil War, several brick powder magazines were in fact built in these locations.

Major George D. Ramsey, who took over the Arsenal from Bell in 1854, wanted a more elevated location, however, rather than a lower one, and he suggested that the part of Jefferson Barracks set aside for ordnance be extended southward to take in higher ground. Ramsey also decided to select a builder without competitive bidding. If he hired Charles H. Peck, who had already been responsible for many new buildings at the Arsenal, Ramsey wrote in September, 1856, “no hired superintendent would be necessary and an expense of some \$2,000 thus saved.” Army regulations, then as now, required public advertising for work of this sort, and that, together with the change of administrations from Pierce to Buchanan, held up approval until 1857. Peck charged \$17,740.89 for the building plus \$4,615.32 for the enclosing wall, but another \$1,500 had to be authorized to compensate him for the delay in approving his contract.

In his 1858 report, inspector James W. Ripley complemented Peck’s workmanship, “particularly the masonry.” By 1860, however, his observations were different: “The new magazine, the one recently constructed by Mr. Peck, contractor, I find in a very bad, not to say unsafe condition. The arches have settled at the crowns to the extent of between four and five inches, and extensive cracks,

resulting from this settling, have made their appearance, at the intersection of the groins, extending throughout the entire length of the interior of the building. The effect on the exterior is only shown by an irregular crack in the north wall, extending from the foundation to the roof. As the arches are apparently still settling, it may become necessary ultimately to take them down and reconstruct entirely this portion of the building." Major Bell, who had resumed command of the Arsenal, had to remove all the supplies except a small amount of artillery ammunition, and take them to the older magazine. By June, he was describing the new building as "now in a ruined state." It had to be closed and partly reconstructed, while Quinette's cheaper building, with all its faults, has continued to serve for nearly a century and a half.

This embarrassment seems to have had no effect on Charles Henry Peck's career. Born in New York City in 1817, he came to St. Louis in 1838 as a "master builder," the contracting profession in which he had apprenticed. To get better materials, he built his own planing mills, the first on South Second Street, and a second on Park Avenue. Branching out into architecture, he served from 1846 to 1852 as the partner of George I. Barnett, who was then



Charles Henry Peck

establishing a reputation as the leading St. Louis architect of his generation. In the 1870s, it was said that from the intersection of Olive and 5th (now Broadway) one could count a dozen buildings that Peck had erected. The most monumental of these was the six-story St. Louis Life Insurance Building, at 6th and Locust. It was designed in 1869 by Barnett in classical style, with statues crowning a rooftop balustrade.

Peck had founded and was president of St. Louis Life, just one of many enterprises that grew out of his contacts as a builder. He started the Peck Door, Sash and Blind Factory. He built the first iron furnace in Missouri, the Vulcan Iron Works in Carondelet, and later served as president of the Pilot Knob Iron Works. He participated in the development of the Lindell Hotel and was vice president of the St. Louis Gas Company. As an incorporator and director of the Missouri Pacific Railroad, he was aboard the disastrous inaugural run on November 1, 1855, when the bridge over the Gasconade River collapsed. The *Inland Monthly* wrote of Peck in 1873, "it seems as if success attended every enterprise with which this gentleman was connected. Whatever he touches, he transmutes to gold."

With Joseph McCune and Napoleon Mullikin, his partners in the Vulcan Iron Works, Peck incorporated Vandeventer Place in 1870. It became the most prestigious and exclusive of the city's fashionable private streets. Peck built the first house there in 1872, one of only two erected before the Panic of 1873 brought construction to a halt for nearly a decade. In 1893, as the other lots were at last filling up, Peck supervised the construction of the curving east and west gates to the street, one of which survives near the Jewel Box in Forest Park. Peck died in 1899, at the age of 82. He and his wife Rebecca had seven sons and two daughters, but five of the sons died before him. He was buried in the family plot at Bellefontaine Cemetery, where the monument he had already erected can still to be seen at the corner of Woodbine and Laburnum Avenues.

HARRY WEESE: 1915-1998

Harry Weese designed one of the most important St. Louis landmarks of the 1960s, the Forest Park campus of St. Louis Community College, but the *Post-Dispatch* failed to note his passing, which occurred last October 29 at Manteno, Illinois. He was 83. The *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, however, both included respectful tributes to the architect, focusing on his design for the Washington



Harry M. Weese

Metro system with its vaulted stations, which Herbert Muschamp called “some of the most powerful public spaces of our time.”

Born in Evanston, Illinois, Weese grew up in Chicago. He graduated from MIT in 1938 and then studied at the Cranbrook Academy of Art outside Detroit. There he was part of a remarkable group of students and faculty under the great Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen. They included St. Louisan Charles Eames, Harry Bertolia, and Florence Knoll, as well as Saarinen’s own son Eero. Swedish sculptor Carl Milles was also there, soon to undertake the “Meeting of the Waters” fountain for Aloe Plaza in St. Louis. Weese’s first partnership, with Benjamin Baldwin, was terminated by World War II, during which he served in the Navy. He opened his own office in Chicago in 1947.

Weese’s early friendship with Nathan Cummings helped to launch Columbus, Indiana as a treasure trove of designs by architects from around the world, and his First Baptist Church, completed in 1965, remains one of the finest there. Another noted and influential work is the 1962 Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., a theater “in the round” (actually square) in which the lighting equipment and other theatrical elements are exposed as part of the design.

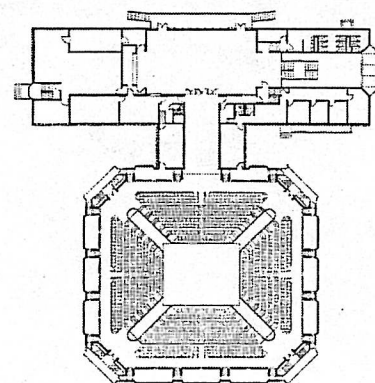
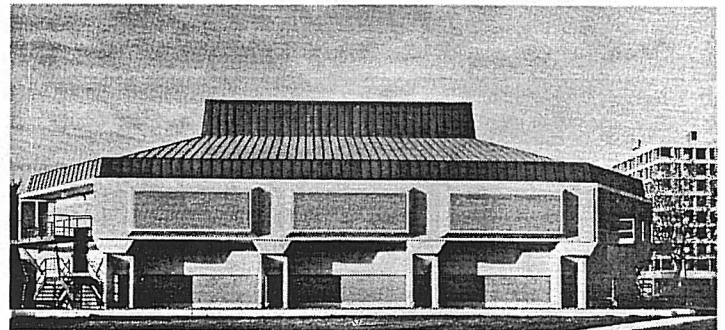
The Washington Post’s architecture critic Benjamin Forgey has faulted the Arena’s design for being too plain for its prominent civic location. At the Forest Park campus in St. Louis, by contrast, Weese went out of his way to make a civic statement as well as a functional campus, compactly aligning the buildings in relation to U.S. 40 and selecting a brick that would match the adjacent St. Louis Arena, which unfortunately was subsequently painted white. The school’s theater, the Mildred Bastian Center, is a cousin of Washington’s Arena Stage, with spacious

corridors and an unexpected courtyard that give it a satisfying feeling even without any ornamentation or expensive materials. The St. Louis Chapter of the American Institute of Architects recently gave the Forest Park College its 25-Year Award.

Weese was unusual among his contemporaries in his appreciation for the architecture of the past, which informed his new designs and motivated his early preservation activism. He was largely responsible for saving the Auditorium Theater, the 1889 masterpiece by Adler and Sullivan, which he renovated in 1967. He advocated retention of the Navy Pier and the elevated trains in the Loop. His firm pioneered loft conversion in the late 1960s. Other major restorations included the Field Museum in Chicago and Daniel Burnham’s Union Station in Washington, D. C.

Cynthia Weese, the dean of Washington University’s School of Architecture, is the wife of Harry’s younger brother Ben, who is also an architect. “Ben and I learned much from him , as did many others,” she wrote to the faculty after Harry’s death. “In the family in his generation and that immediately following there are nine architects, one landscape architect, four graphic designers and one sculptor!

“We all celebrate him and wish him peace.”



Arena Stage, Washington D.C.

READING THE MAIL: SAH-L

The listserv sponsored by the Society of Architectural Historians has had some lively discussions in the past few months. Loretta Lorange asked about what she called “**self-creation myths**” among architects; people who have created their own biographies with details at variance with the facts. Among the responses: Philip Johnson’s magazine interviews changed from decade to decade. Frank Lloyd Wright’s said he was born in 1869 when it was actually 1867. John Russell Pope adjusted his birth date by only one year. Cass Gilbert took credit for single-handedly founding the Architectural League of New York, which Steven Bedford says was far from the truth. Craig Ellwood, the California modernist, was actually named John Burke. Meredith Clausen’s article on Ellwood’s self-creation myth is in the February *Casabella*. Roxanne Kuter Williamson’s book, *American Architects and the Mechanics of Fame* (University of Texas Press, 1991) was also cited as relevant to this subject.

Among the many conferences planned for the coming months, one stands out for its title: Diagnosing the “**Sir Walter Disease**”: Medievalism in American Culture. It will be held by the American Studies Association in Montreal, October 28-31, 1999. Mark Twain called the 19th-century revival of interest in the Middle Ages the “Sir Walter Disease” after Sir Walter Scott, whose poems, novels and antiquarian collections did so much to foster it. This may have made sense in Scotland, but in this country, according to Nathaniel Hawthorne, “there is no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong.”

Who was **Neander M. Woods, Jr.**? He designed a number of remarkable houses in Memphis in the first decade of the century.

Looking for hard-to-find book titles? A great new service on the Internet is www.bookfinder.com. It not only searches Amazon but also many independent bookstores in this country and Great Britain.

A directory of research materials for architecture and the built environment located in metropolitan Washington, D.C. is now available thanks to the Latrobe Chapter of the SAH and the University of Maryland Libraries:

<http://www.lib.umd.edu/Guests/DCARCHres>

Several other local chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians have internet sites. Most are linked to the main SAH site: www.sah.org. That site also includes a list

of publications, mainly architectural guides, available to members at a 10% discount.

The Southern California Chapter posted Barbara Lamprecht’s informative appreciation of **Albert Frey** when the “uncompromising Modernist” died November 14, 1998 at the age of 95. Swiss-born Frey worked in Le Corbusier’s office next to Jose Luis Sert before coming to the U.S., where he designed the Aluminaire House for a New York exhibition in 1931. His later work centered on the Palm Springs area. He was a modernist who loved color, especially yellow, which he often wore.

John Gaw Meem was the greatest of the architects working in the Pueblo Revival and related Spanish-American styles in the Southwest in this century. He designed 30 buildings for the University of New Mexico campus in Albuquerque, but many of them have been demolished. Now campus architects are planning another large parking structure to replace several more, and even the Jonson Gallery, one of his best works, does not appear safe.

Many medieval churches have a nave and aisles, but a few have **two equal naves**. A query produced the information that both Walter Leedy of Cleveland State and Richard Sundt of the University of Oregon have published on this subject.

What is a TIB? The CRS Center, which is related to the distinguished Texas architectural firm, Caudill Rowlett Scott, has set up a TIBs Listserv. **William Caudill**, one of the small group of AIA Gold Medal winners, wrote between 1964 and 1983 about 1,500 “This I Believe” statements, which were circulated throughout the firm on a weekly basis. The listserv will revive this practice, sending out one TIB every Monday. To get on the list, e-mail your first and last names to crscenter@archone.tamu.edu.

Ronn M. Daniel at the University of Chicago is working on a publication about the Chicago architect **Henry Ives Cobb**, probably best known as the designer of the Newberry Library, the University of Chicago Campus, and the Fisheries Building at the Chicago World’s Fair. His later career, when he moved to Washington, D.C. and then New York, is less well known. Respondents noted that outside Chicago he did the Garfield Building in Cleveland, the Liberty Tower in Syracuse, the Albany Savings Bank (demolished) and the New York State National Bank in Albany, and the **Chemical Building** right here in St. Louis. Cobb built a temporary state capitol in Harrisburg that remains encased in the opulent Joseph Huston building of 1902-1906. Cobb’s Heidelberg Building for Times Square was designed in 1909 as a 30-story tower but built as a 7-

story building with an 11-story "advertising tower" above that. The tower was not successful but remained standing until 1982.

◆
Mitchell/Giurgola of Philadelphia were the architects of the competition-winning design for the Wainwright State Office Building, which wraps around Louis Sullivan's Wainwright Building at 7th and Chestnut. The firm was perhaps best known in the United States for its adherence to the design principles of Louis Kahn. In response to a query, SAH-L readers learned that the firm has now divided into three parts. The original office in Philadelphia is now MGA Partners, Architects. In New York, the firm is Mitchell/Giurgola Architects. Romaldo Giurgola (sometimes called Aldo, born 1920) moved to Australia in 1988 as his Parliament House was being completed in Canberra, and his new firm there, Mitchell Giurgola Thorp apparently has offices in Canberra and Sydney. The archives of the Philadelphia office from 1958 to about 1985 have been donated to the Architectural Archives of the University of Pennsylvania, where Julia Moore Converse is the director. She reports that Ehrman B. Mitchell (born 1924), called Mitch by his friends, and his wife Hermine, also an architect, are still active in Philadelphia. Records of the Wainwright project are apparently in the New York office.

THE 1912 COMPETITION FOR THE MISSOURI STATE CAPITOL

Jeff Ball is doing PhD research on the Missouri State Capitol (1912-1918) and is looking for the competition drawings produced in 1912. The competition for the capitol was held in two phases. Ball has been unable to locate an exact list of all the firms who submitted competing plans, but he has found some related lists: 109 firms requested a program; 50 received a topographical map of the site; and 64 responded to a request to nominate qualified jurors for the first round of the competition. This last list probably corresponds closest to those who actually participated and is indicated by an asterisk on the following list. Surprisingly few Missouri architects are represented:

Frederick C. Bonsack, St. Louis
 G. F. A. Brueggeman, St. Louis
 Wm. Anderson Caldwell, St. Louis
 Clymer & Drischler, St. Louis*
 Cyrus F. Dean, St. Louis*
 Eames & Young, St. Louis
 Eckel & Aldrich, St. Joseph*
 Lawrence Ewald & John A. Lange, St. Louis
 Hellmuth & Hellmuth, St. Louis*
 J. W. Herthel, St. Louis
 Hohenschild & Green, St. Louis
 Henry F. Hoit, Kansas City*
 Fritz Hueppner, St. Louis
 Huff & Smith, St. Louis

Joseph Irwin, St. Louis*
 Keene & Simpson, Kansas City
 Klipstein & Rathmann, St. Louis
 Louis LaBeaume, St. Louis
 Theo. C. Link & Son, St. Louis*
 J. Hal Lynch, St. Louis
 Guy C. Mariner, St. Louis*
 Milligan & Wray, St. Louis
 L. Patterson, St. Louis*
 P. S. Rabbitt, St. Louis*
 Isaac S. Taylor, St. Louis
 Wilder & Wight, Kansas City*
 E. G. Witter, St. Louis

In the second round, ten finalists submitted new sets of drawings which were judged by a different jury of three architects. Only two of the Missouri firms made the cut:

Eckel and Aldrich, St. Joseph, Mo
 Theodore Link and Son, St. Louis.

New York City firms dominated the competition:

Arnold Brunner, NYC
 Freedlander and Seymour, NYC
 Cass Gilbert, NYC
 Peck, Cook, Winthrop, and Welsh, NYC
 Rankin, Kellogg, and Crane, Philadelphia
 James Gamble Rogers, NYC
 Tracy and Swartwout, NYC
 Trowbridge and Livingston, NYC

Tracy and Swartwout eventually got the commission and built the present building, (as Karen Grace wrote in our Spring 1998 Newsletter) but do their records or those of any of the other firms still exist? Cass Gilbert records are at the Avery and at the NY Historical Society. Even more obscure are submissions from the other competitors in the first round of the competition. Anyone having information about these firms is encouraged to contact the editor or Jeff Ball at c449794@showme.missouri.edu.



Original Competition Rendering

□□□ ■ **Events Calendar** ■ □□□

**"A City by Design: 95 Years of Planning
in University City"**

Sunday, April 11, 1999, 2 p.m.

University City Public Library, 6701 Delmar

Al Goldman, director of planning for University City from 1966 to 1997, will discuss how design and planning have created a city of distinctive character from its beginnings at the turn of the century.

**"Coming in from the Cold: the Evolution of
the Orangery, Prototype of the Palm House"**

Sunday, April 11, 5 p.m.

Piper Palm House, Tower Grove Park

The 1999 Tower Grove Park Lecture Series concludes with a talk by Billie S. Britz, the first to be held in the newly restored Palm House. Britz has taught at Columbia, Harvard, and at the New York Botanical Garden, where she consulted on the restoration of the great conservatories. Her article *The American Orangery* appeared in the April 1996 issue of Antiques.

EXHIBITION

"Off-Site: The Pleasure of Drawing"

April 23 to June 27

11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday
Cupples House, St. Louis University

Pamela Ambrose, the director of Samuel Cupples House at Saint Louis University, has organized an exhibition of drawings by 20 St. Louis architects. It focuses on free-thinking, gestural non-project related work, including drawings, watercolors, collage, travel sketches and notebooks that come spontaneously from the architect's hand. Hoping to prove that CAD hasn't yet taken over the creative impulse, Ambrose has featured newly emerging architects as well as such established figures as Dunn, Hellmuth, Mackey, Murphy, Shank and Torno. For more information, call 977-3022.

**"Living Architecture:
The Life and Work of H. H. Richardson"**

Saturday, April 24, 2 p.m.

Cupples House, St. Louis University

Admission: \$5

James F. O'Gorman, professor of art history at Wellesley College, is the leading authority on Henry Hobson Richardson and a distinguished alumnus of the Washington University School of Architecture. He has kindly agreed to take time from a private visit to St. Louis for this unusual talk.

James O'Gorman began his association with Richardson, who was the nation's leading architect in the 1870s and 1880s, in a trailblazing exhibition and catalogue in 1974. Since then, he has produced three more books on this rich subject: H. H. Richardson: architectural forms for an American society (1987); Three American Architects: Richardson, Sullivan, and Wright, 1865-1915 (1991), and most recently Living Architecture: a Biography of H. H. Richardson (1997).

Painted Lady House Tour

Thursday, May 13, 6 to 8 p.m.

Cost \$10.00 per person

The Historical Society of St. Louis County is sponsoring a tour of two Victorian homes in Lafayette Square, winners of the 1998 Painted Lady Better Homes and Gardens Award. The tour will begin promptly at 6:15 p.m. at the former police station in Lafayette Park, at the corner of Mississippi Lafayette Avenues. Checks should be made payable to the Historical Society of St. Louis County and must be received no later than Monday, May 10, 1999 by the Society at the St. Louis County Law Library, 7900 Carondelet Avenue, Clayton, MO 63105.

"Art Nouveau"

Thursday, May 20, 1999, 7:30

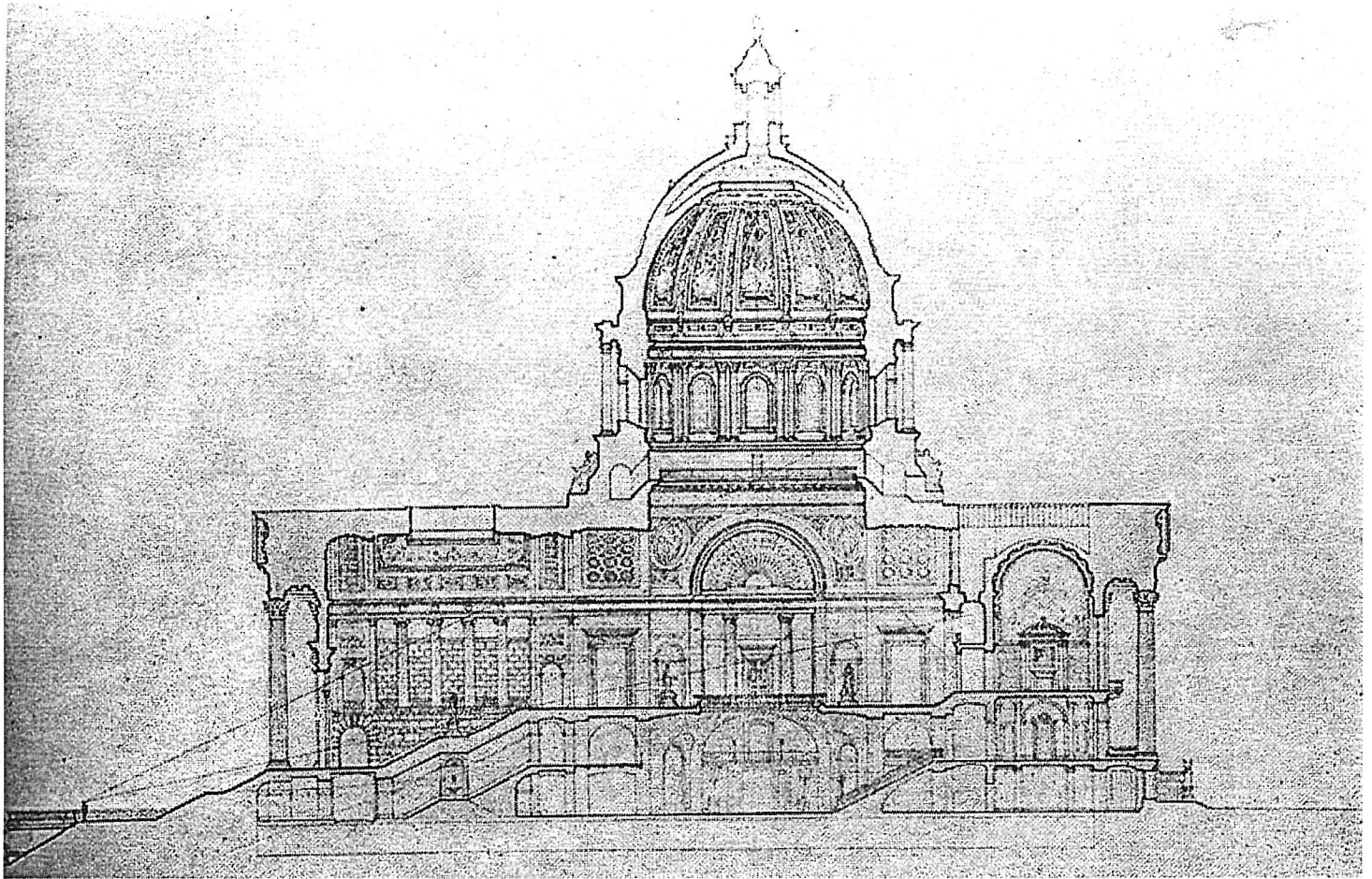
Lashly Branch Library, 4537 West Pine

Jeanne Morgan Zarucchi, associate professor of French and Art History at UM-St. Louis, who last year lectured on Versailles, returns to talk about the results of a seminar she has been offering this spring. Art Nouveau was an international style that sprang to life in the last decade of the 19th century and faded by the beginning of World War I. Often characterized by the whiplash S curve, it was a wide-ranging movement that found its way into all the arts. This talk is the second in the new SAH series on World Architecture.

La Fête Française Architectural Tour

Saturday, May 29, 11:15 a.m.

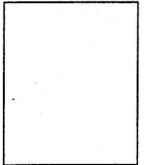
Carl Ekberg, an authority on French Colonial culture, will lead a bus tour of French Colonial architecture on both sides of the Mississippi as part of the annual celebration of our French heritage sponsored by Les Amis. Dr. Ekberg has just published French Roots in the Illinois Country: The Mississippi Frontier in Colonial Times. The tour will depart from the Old Courthouse following Dr. Ekberg's 10 a.m. talk. Phone 655-1600 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. for reservations and more information.



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News Letter

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Summer issue	15 May
Fall issue	15 August
Winter issue	15 November

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