The Society of Architectural Historians
Missouri Valley Chapter
News Letter
Volume VII Number 4 Winter 2001

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE OF ST. LOUIS UNIVERSITY

by David J. Simmons

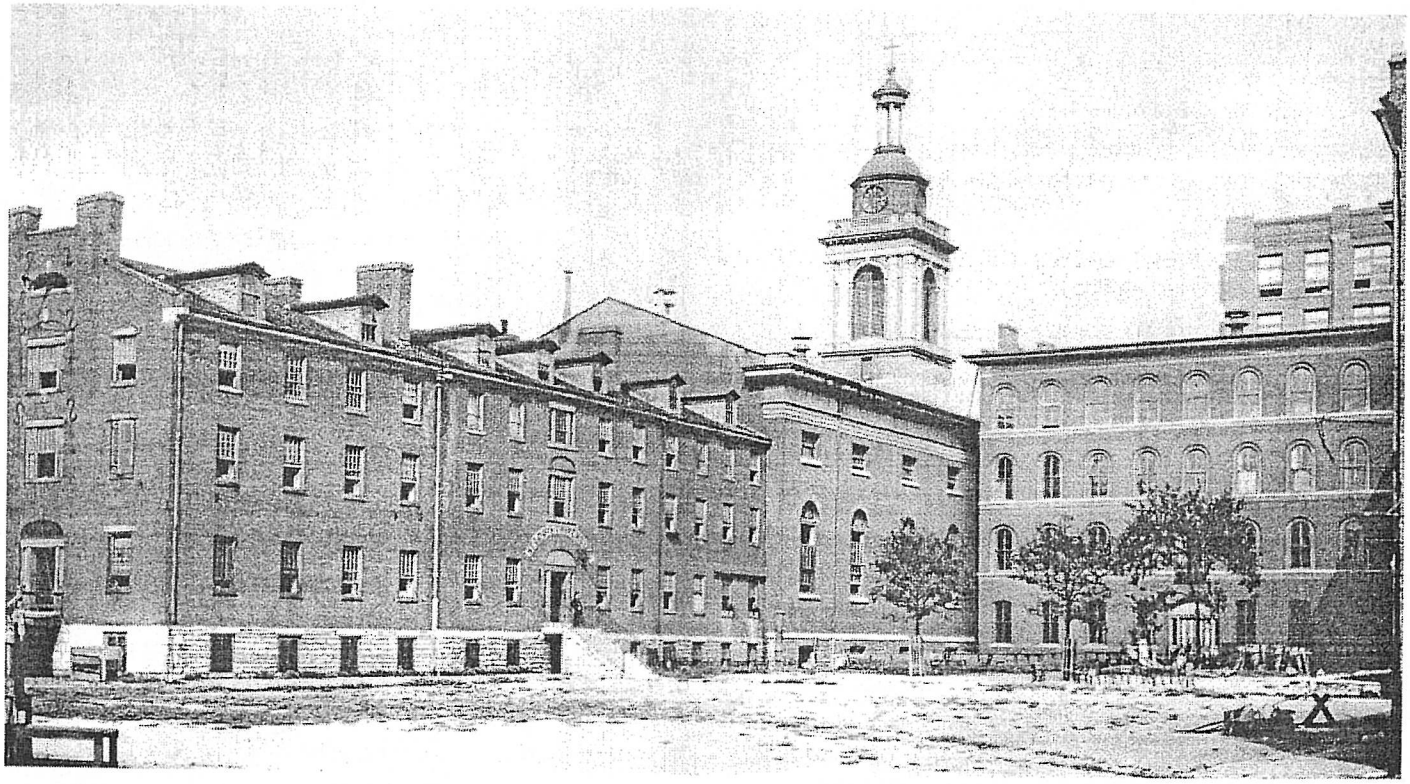
As the first university west of the Mississippi River, St. Louis University contributed much to the development of education in St. Louis and the surrounding region. Serving as a catalyst, this institution encouraged by its presence the creation of the St. Louis public school system, the founding of Washington University, and the start of other educational undertakings. It provided both classical and practical training in seeking to raise the standards of its students and the community. In the course of time, this university, under the watchful eye of the Jesuits who operated it, became the mother institution and model school for other Midwestern Jesuit education centers, including Xavier University in Cincinnati, Marquette University in Milwaukee, Loyola University in Chicago, and Creighton University in Omaha.

Organized as the St. Louis College in 1818, the university established its first permanent campus under Jesuit control in 1829 and obtained its charter from the Missouri legislature in 1832. In the course of the nineteenth century, the Jesuits planned four different campuses for their institution. Two of these projects were actually constructed – the downtown Ninth Street campus and the Midtown Grand Avenue campus. The unrealized projects were located at "College Hill" farm in north St. Louis just south of O'Fallon Park and "College View" farm in St. Louis County on the Northern Missouri Railroad between Jennings and Ferguson.

This article examines all plans and buildings associated with the university during this period. We will observe the evolution of a college campus with its various manifestations of purpose, arrangement, and style. We will discover the Jesuit ability to erect magnificent architecture using limited means. On the way, we will learn about the architects who designed the buildings.

THE DOWNTOWN CAMPUS

On November 16, 1818, four local parish priests under Bishop Valentine DuBourg of Louisiana and Florida



The University Quadrangle, 1888, facing Lucas and Ninth Streets. The original building is at center left. At the corner is the College Church. *From St. Louis University, 150 Years, p. 27.*

opened the St. Louis College in a one-story stone structure owned by Madame Alvarez. It was located at Third and Market. In 1820, the school moved to church property. It continued to struggle for its existence. Fearing for its survival, the bishop decided to enlist the aid of the Jesuits to either take over this school or to establish a successor educational institution here.

After bringing the Belgian Jesuits from the Maryland Jesuit mission to the St. Louis area to open an Indian Jesuit mission in Florissant, Missouri, Bishop DuBourg eventually convinced Father Charles F. Van Quickenborne, superior of the Florissant Jesuit Mission, to undertake the St. Louis educational project. He promised Father Van Quickenborne that he would provide a site for the new school and transfer the students from the current institution to the new Jesuit school. Furthermore, he assured him that local citizens would help finance the construction of the school.

On September 1, 1828, Father Van Quickenborne informed Bishop Rosati, DuBourg's successor over the St. Louis area, that he would commit himself to this task. The next day, a notice of this commitment appeared in the Missouri Republican newspaper. There followed a series of local fundraisers yielding four thousand dollars. The balance of the needed funds came from the patrimonies of Father Van Quickenborne and Father Peter DeSmet.

LOCATION

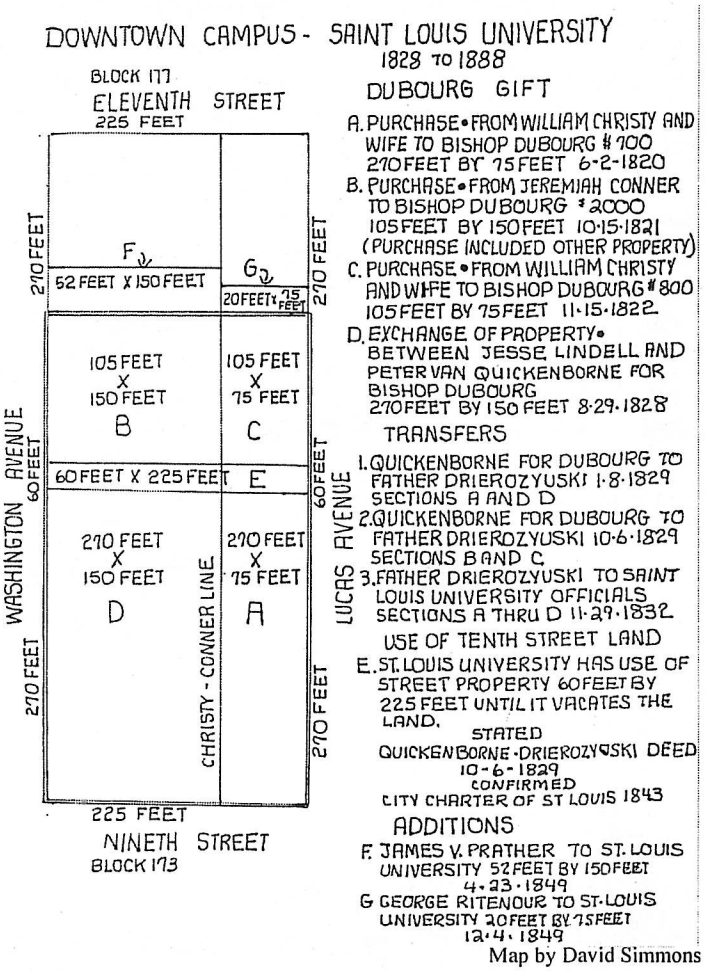
Jeremiah Conner's donation would determine the location of the new college campus, although its terms of agreement would never be carried out. On March 8, 1820, Conner agreed to give the Bishop two city blocks of his new addition to St. Louis if the church would erect a school on this property within seven years. One block or square was located west of Ninth Street and north of Washington Avenue and the other ran parallel south of Washington Avenue. Each measured 270 feet by 150 feet.

As a result of this promised donation, DuBourg made four purchases of land adjacent to the proposed gift from June 2, 1820 to November 15, 1822 at a total cost of $4,500. Two were from Conner himself and the others involved Major William Christy and his wife Martha.

Because the Conner donation was not filed with the appropriate authorities before Conner's death in 1823, the gift became void. John O'Fallon bought Conner's estate on April 16, 1827. Two weeks later he sold the north part of the Conner donation to Jesse Lindell. This was needed to complete a contiguous campus site. Father Van Quickenborne, acting for DuBourg, secured it through a land exchange with Jesse Lindell on August 29, 1828.

Final transfer of all the tracts to the school did not occur until November 29, 1832. One of the deeds allowed St. Louis University to use the land designated for the opening of Tenth Street as long as the campus occupied this space. This lot measured 60 feet by 225 feet. The City Charter of 1843 confirmed this privilege.

The bishop's gift and the Tenth Street agreement put together a campus whose boundaries ran 225 feet north of Ninth Street and 435 feet west on Washington and Lucas Avenues, a total of 2.246 acres. In 1849, the university enlarged the campus with the purchase of the Prather lot (52 feet by 150 feet) on Washington Avenue and the Ritenhour lot (20 feet by 75 feet) on Lucas Avenue.



Map by David Simmons

CAMPUS ARRANGEMENT

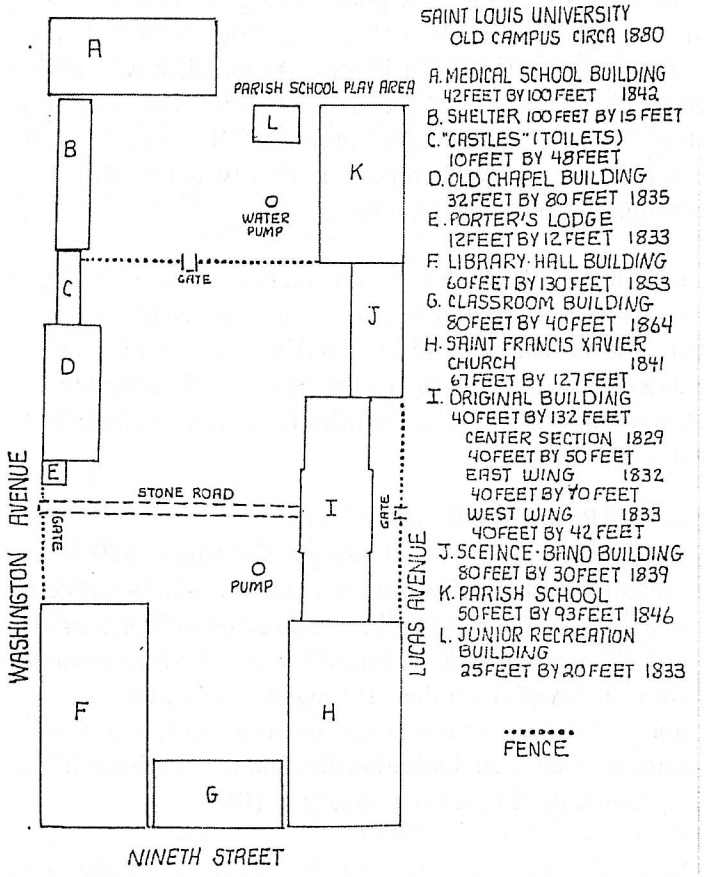
Planning the arrangement of a small campus is at best a difficult task. Crowding and congestion are its natural enemies. Since green space is at a premium, building placement requires careful attention and great skill. Unfortunately, mistakes can spell disaster.

Drifting in confusion and uncertainty, building placement on this campus site became an anomaly. Three concepts of building arrangement developed during its construction either by default or accident. The original concept dictated a north-south mall placed in the center of the eastern part

of the campus. The main building was placed at the north end of the mall and the other buildings were placed on either side of it. The south end at Washington Avenue was open. This concept existed from 1829 to 1839.

A second concept, covering the period from 1840 to 1863, prescribed an east-west mall with buildings being constructed along Washington and Lucas Avenues. The ninth street area was open to serve as mall entrance.

The third scheme, a loosely arranged quadrangle, resulted from the construction of the classroom building on Ninth Street, eliminating the mall entrance of the previous plan. By 1880, most people viewed the campus as a hodge-podge of randomly placed buildings intermingled with green spaces.



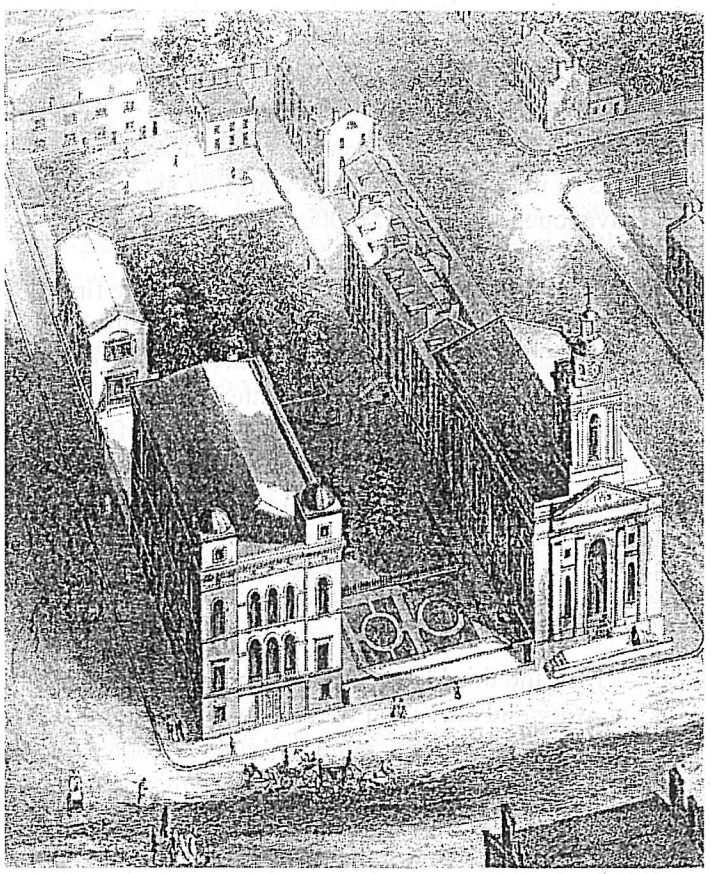
Map by David Simmons

FIRST BUILDINGS 1829-1846

During the eighteen-year period from 1829 to 1846 the University erected four large buildings and five small ones. Most of the large ones reflected the Federal style of architecture popular both locally and in Maryland, where the Jesuits had been stationed prior to their arrival in St. Louis. Most of these buildings employed brick superstructures and limestone basements. They exhibited simple architectural details usually confined to openings – doors and windows. The small brick buildings were utilitarian in design with few stylistic features.

The earliest building on the campus was designed by the architectural firm of Morton and Laveille. It was placed 20 feet south of the north property line and 130 feet west of Ninth Street, with its front facing south and connected to Washington Avenue by a paved drive. It consisted of three floors, attic, and basement and was constructed in three sections over seven years. School officials built at a cost of $6,000 the center section, (50 feet by 40 feet) between November 1828 and August 1829. It was five bays wide, with four tiers of windows, three dormer windows on the pitched roof, and a limestone staircase and porch leading to the main entrance. Under the porch was a basement entrance. Ornamental elements were confined to the fan light and sidelights of the main entrance, the three-part windows on floors above it, and the cast-iron railings for porch and staircase. Evidence exists to suggest that some of the windows were at one time shuttered.

The interior arrangement consisted of a north-south hall entrance on each end of the first floor and basement, a small east-west corridor, two staircases, and four rooms per floor except the attic. A single room in the attic provided dormitory space for the boarding students. Refectory and kitchen were installed in the basement. On the second floor two rooms were used for the study hall (120 desks).



Etching of Downtown Campus from the cover of *The Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the St. Louis University, 1862-83.* by Th. Auders, Etched by R. Conner

The school opened on November 2, 1829. Father Peter J. Verhaegen S.J. and four Jesuit instructors operated the institution. By the spring of 1830, enrollment had reached 151 students. Thirty lived on campus. Two years later school officials built the east wing (40 feet square). It followed the same basic design as the central section, but with no separate entrance.

Darst and Matthews finished the west wing (40 feet by 42 feet) in 1834. Its south front duplicated the east wing, but the west façade departed from the plan. New decorative elements adorn its façade, including stone lintels for most windows, a demi-lune window on the attic level, and stone keystones and imposts for the windows of the central bay. The main entrance on the west front replicated the principal entrance on the south wall. As completed, the entire structure measured 40 feet by 132 feet and cost about $16,000.

Arrangement of the entire building in 1840 consisted of a kitchen, two refectories and student recreation area in the basement. A parlor, library, sitting room, staff recreation room, and four private rooms were on the main floor, apartments for staff on the second floor, and student dormitories on the third floor. The attic was used for storage.

Erected in 1835, the second building fronted on Washington Avenue about 30 feet west of the paved road leading to the main building. Measuring 32 feet by 80 feet, it had two stories and a basement, complete with a pitched roof, three tiers of windows, entrances on all four sides, but few decorative touches. It cost $6,000.

Its interior contained a large exhibition hall on the first floor. St. Aloysius chapel occupied this space until local Irish Catholics completed St. Francis Xavier Church on campus in 1843 and local German Catholics erected St. Joseph's Church nearby in 1845. On the second floor, four rooms provided space for a chemical laboratory, museum art room, and a large room called the Philalethic Hall. The basement furnished staff bathing and toilet facilities. Later the Law School used the building for a brief period. Next it served as an infirmary.

Built in 1839 the third large building (80 feet by 30 feet) with one story and attic used frame construction. Located a short distance west of the main building, it fronted on Lucas Avenue. Its features were similar to those of the preceding structures. Four classrooms on the first floor furnished training in science and music. Attic space was committed to student living. Later the university moved the band into this building.

The last of the large buildings faced Lucas Avenue at the western end of the campus. This 1846 structure with three floors occupied a rectangular space of 50 feet by 93 feet. A unique feature of its arrangement was the carriage causeway running through the center of its first floor, giving vehicle access from the street to the enclosed mall behind it.

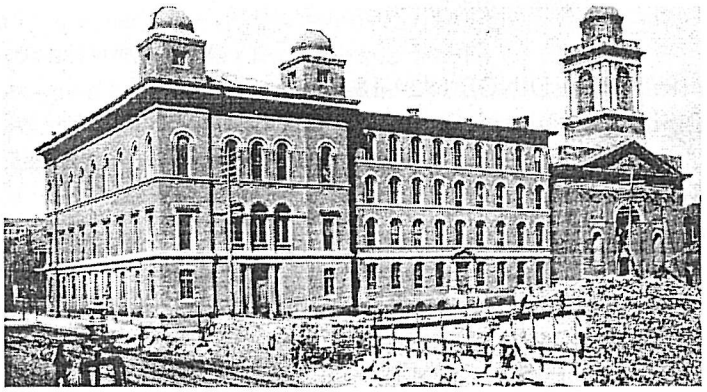
The university and the church parish shared the use of this building. The free boys parish school of St. Francis Xavier Church was conducted in the second-floor classrooms. Their coats and personal property received storage in the wardrobe room on the first floor. A dispensary was also on the first floor. Another top-floor student residential center rounded out the arrangement.

Two small structures – the porter's lodge and the first dispensary – were built in 1833. The brick porter's lodge (12 feet square) faced Washington Avenue just west of the entrance road leading to the main building. The brick two-story dispensary and hospital building (20 feet by 25 feet) was placed at the west property line halfway between Washington and Lucas Avenues.

Two other small structures, construction dates unknown, fronted on Washington Avenue west of the chapel area. One was a brick shed (15 by 100 feet). East of the shed was a one-story building (10 feet by 48 feet) called the "Castle" providing toilet facilities for school students and church parishioners.

SIDEBAR: MORTON & LAVEILLE

George Morton, born at Edinburgh, Scotland in 1790, eventually settled in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. After being trained as a builder and architect, he came to St. Louis in 1818. Five years later, he formed an architectural partnership with Joseph Laveille. Throughout his career he remained politically active, serving as a member of the Board of Aldermen, harbormaster, and the president of the City Council. He died on January 9, 1865.



Facade of the University on Ninth Street, with Washington Boulevard to the left. Photo 1888. *From St. Louis University, 150 Years, p. 26.*

The University Quadrangle, 1888, facing Lucas Street. The small building is the faculty residence. Beyond the fence was the playground for younger boys. *From St. Louis University, 150 Years, p. 27.*

Joseph Laveille started life in 1789 as a resident of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where he received his training in building and architecture. He arrived in St. Louis during 1819 and commenced the practice of architecture shortly after establishing himself locally in 1820. Like his partner, he was politically active. He served as street commissioner for four years and an alderman for ten years. His death occurred on September 19, 1842.

The partnership of Morton & Laveille lasted from 1823 to 1834 and encompassed most of the major construction projects during that period, including these:

Episcopal church at 3rd and Chestnut	1825
County Courthouse at 4th and Market	1826
United States Arsenal buildings	1827
Original Buildings at Jefferson Barracks	1828
Market Building & City Hall in Block Seven	1829
Pierre Chouteau, Jr. res., Main & Vine	1829
City Waterworks	1830
St. Louis Catholic Cathedral	1832-34

After the partnership dissolved, Joseph Laveille continued in practice. He helped Meriwether Lewis Clark to design the St. Louis Theatre in 1836 and created the plan for Kemper College in 1837.

ADDITIONS TO OUR DICTIONARY OF MISSOURI BIOGRAPHY

The list published in this summer's Newsletter, "Our Own Dictionary of Missouri Architects," elicited several suggestions for additions.

Francis Gilmore Avis (1898-1987) was primarily a designer of residential and apartment buildings. Nini Harris suggested him because he was one of the first St. Louis architects to work extensively in the Art Deco style, with a special interest in terra cotta and glazed tiles.

Ernest O. Brostrom was suggested by David Sachs. Brostrom's Newbern Apartment Hotel at 525 East Armour in Kansas City has a remarkable terra cotta entrance from 1925, inspired by Sullivan and Wright.

Robert Elkington began his own practice in 1947 and produced several notable modern houses of elegant simplicity. He was made FAIA (a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects) in 1965 and died in 1994. Jamie Cannon suggested him. See the article in this issue about Elkington's papers, currently being processed by the Missouri Historical Society.

Bruce Goff (1904-1982) had a brief but interesting stay in Missouri, according to David Sachs. Best known for his original, even eccentric houses in the Midwest, Goff also designed a wing of the Los Angeles County Art Museum.

Victor J. Klutho (1863-1943) is best known for a building he finished but didn't initiate: the Church of St. Francis de Sales. Nini Harris suggested him. Klutho also designed many other Catholic institutions in Missouri, Illinois and Indiana.

Bernard McMahon was proposed by Jamie Cannon. McMahon was one of three architect sons of William P. McMahon, who opened an architectural practice in 1907. Bernard designed one of the region's first Streamline Moderne houses at 7 Warson Terrace and the first ranch houses in the Webster Gardens neighborhood, for instance at 1534 Gardenia and 1629 Holly. Later, he acted as his

own developer for a series of high-rises in Clayton, beginning with the Clayton Inn in 1961. He died in 1999.

Louis Miller, Jr. was the architect son of Louis Miller, who worked mainly in southeast Missouri and is already included in the *Dictionary of Missouri Biography*, thanks to Lynn Morrow. He was also the father of Eva Kirkpatick, who notes that he was the fifth generation of architects in the family, tracing back to Germany, and that her granddaughter is also an architect, the seventh generation.

Ernst Preisler (1855-1934) had a long career and designed many buildings, including 12 houses in Compton Heights, but his surviving masterpiece may be the Carondelet Branch Library of 1907, according to Nini Harris.

Frederick Raeder was one of the most prominent architects in St. Louis after his arrival in 1867, but most of his works have been demolished. Nini Harris points out, however, that his tobacco warehouse for Christian Peper has been restored as Raeder Place.

Walter C. Root, suggested by David Sachs, was the brother of John Wellborn Root. He came to Kansas City to supervise work by Burnham & Root and stayed to form his own firm, Root & Siemens. The Scarritt Building of 1906 is a notable work.

Isadore Shank, the early St. Louis modernist best known for the DeBaliviere Building at Delmar and DeBaliviere, which is decorated with tiles influenced by the work of Frank Lloyd Wright. He died in 1992 at the age of 90. Kyrle Boldt suggested Shank.

Edward H. A. Volkmann formed the Victor Architectural and Building Company in 1907 with Charles F. Hall, a carpenter. They built many residences and apartments, especially around Tower Grove Park, Nini Harris notes.

ANDO MEETS SERRA AND KELLY

a report by Joan Goodson

A major St. Louis event in art and architecture was presented Saturday, October 13 by the Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts to a large audience filling Powell Hall's first floor as part of the celebration of the official opening of the Pulitzer Foundation Building. The extraordinary trio of Pulitzer architect Tadao Ando, painter Ellsworth Kelly, and sculptor Richard Serra were crisply moderated in discussion by art historian Angelica Zander Rudenstine, a board member of the Foundation.

Opening remarks by Emily Rauh Pulitzer, founder and board president, briefly reviewed the Foundation's history. Upon seeing an exhibition drawn from their collection at the Fogg Museum in 1988, Joseph and Emily Pulitzer decided to build their own museum. A renovation of an existing building in Grand Center was first considered. Mrs. Pulitzer's late husband had been a board member of the St. Louis Symphony from his return home from college until the time of his death, and the Symphony was the first cultural entity in the Grand Center area.

It was quickly seen, however, that a new building was needed. Tadao Ando, unknown here in the late 1980s, was the architect suggested by Richard Serra. James Wood, director of the Chicago Art Institute, admired Ando's design of a gallery there; he confirmed Serra's opinion, as did Ellsworth Kelly.

Thus the arduous work began in 1990. Pulitzer said that the collaboration between art and architecture, as well as the other arts, as presented at this event, will continue at the Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts.

Meditation, spirituality and profundity are in the new building, said Rudenstine in introducing Ando. "He never learned to speak English; he was too busy with architecture studies." Ando said (through his interpreter) that he had a long and stimulating battle with Serra and Kelly, who were commissioned to create permanent installations in conjunction with the new building. Puzzled by Ando's description of a battle, Serra said it seemed more like a tension or anxiety in their relationship. Upon seeing the building today, Ando concludes that it was "a successful collaboration."

Serra went on to say that Ando harks back to the Renaissance with his use of axial and grid compositions. Serra's sculpture "Joe," he said, is decentered space, as in classical Baroque.

Further Serra remarks: The "sensible techtonics" of Ando are pure, sensible, parsimonious to trap light and hold the volume. This differs from the spectacular now being designed by others. Ando is framing sky and holding space. It is self-reassuring to be in Ando's buildings. They take time to see. Seeing is a way of thinking. Ando has an intuitive understanding of how to hold light.

Kelly said his own interaction with the architect was down to millimeters. Kelly could see if the hanging of his wall sculpture was off by even one-fourth inch.

Kelly and Serra's work were for Ando "a rare opportunity to reconsider architecture."

Events Calendar

Lecture: "Tropical Water Lilies, James Gurney Sr., and Tower Grove Park"
Stupp Center, Tower Grove Park
Sunday, February 3, 2 p.m.

The 2002 Tower Grove Park Lecture Series begins with a joint presentation by Joe Summers, a horticulturist whose expertise is water lilies and aquatic gardens, and Barb Jackson, horticulturist of Tower Grove Park. James Gurney came from England in 1866 to serve as chief gardener for the Missouri Botanical Garden. He eventually became director of Tower Grove Park. Through hybridization, he presented to St. Louis greatly improved tropical water lilies and inspired the tradition of water lily cultivation that has continued at both institutions to the present. This talk will explain and display his achievement.

Seventh Annual Gathering
Sunday, February 3, 2002, 6 p.m.

Groundhog Day means that our chapter's annual party can't be far behind. Melanie and Tony Fathman have generously agreed to host again, and this year's ethnic cuisine will be Balkan. Participants are invited to bring slides of one building or place for an eclectic slide show of architecture ranging from the familiar to the bizarre. Call Esley Hamilton at 615-0357 for reservations $10 and directions.

Lecture: "In Search of Spinous Beauty: George Engelmann, Henry Shaw, and the Cactus Connection"
Stupp Center, Tower Grove Park
Sunday, March 3, 2 p.m.

Michael Long, biographer of Dr. George Engelmann, will explain how the study of cactus brought Henry Shaw and his primary scientific advisor together. The talk will examine the Shaw-Engelmann friendship, sometimes as prickly as the cactus themselves, within the larger context of American westward expansion and the cactus craze in the mid-nineteenth century.

Lecture: "The Built St. Louis: The Second Generation, 1840-1870"
Stupp Center, Tower Grove Park
Sunday, April 7, 2002

James Neal Primm, emeritus professor of history at UM-St. Louis and author of Lion of the Valley, will discuss the energetic contemporaries of Henry Shaw who spurred St. Louis' transition from fur emporium to indutrial center. Gerard P. Allen, Thomas Allen, Hudson Bridge, Robert Campbell, Wayman Crow, James B. Eads, the Falley brothers, Carlos Greely, Derrick January, James Lucas, John O'Fallon, Daniel Page, and James Yeatman were among them.

ERIC SANDWEISS'S NEW BOOK

Eric Sandweiss, the director of research at the Missouri Historical Society, is the author of *St. Louis: The Evolution of an American Urban Landscape*, published in August by Temple University Press. The book is one of a series called "Critical Perspectives on the Past," which concerns itself with the ways in which historical ideas are formed. According to the publisher, the series is "as critical of traditional historical method as content."

Eric's book focuses on how St. Louis developed, not primarily through public interventions (especially since St. Louis had no official plan) but through the myriad smaller decisions of developers and other private decisionmakers. He shows how urban trends that in the 19th century seemed inevitable – concentration, growth, and general improvement – went into reverse after World War II. George Lipsitz, author of *Sidewalks of St. Louis*, writes that Sandweiss "shows how seemingly small decisions about ordinary aspects of urban life activate enduring and seemingly irresolvable tensions in urban life."

Eric Sandweiss holds a Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley. A founder of this SAH chapter, Eric suggested the pot luck slide show that has become a tradition at our annual gatherings.

ROUTE 66 EXHIBIT SEEKS SHELTER

Shellee Graham reports that she is looking for venues interested in displaying her travelling exhibition "Return to Route 66: Photographs from the Mother Road" for anytime between March 2003 and March 2005. All exhibit scheduling must be confirmed by June 30, 2002. The exhibition has sixty-six color and black/white images with accompanying text through the eight Mother Road states. For more information, contact Smith/Kramer Fine Art Services at 1-800-222-7522, Email: skexhibit@smithkramer.com Website: http://www.smithkramer.com/route66.html

ARCHITECTURAL DICTIONARIES: A NEW CHOICE

Since 1966, the book most people have gone to when looking for the definition of an architectural term has been *The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture* by John Fleming Hugh Honour, and Nikolaus Pevsner. Its 5th edition, published last year, is now called *The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture*. The paperback sells for $16.95, and there is also a 1999 hardback listing for $40. In addition to constructional terms, the book includes brief biographies of major architects and overviews of national schools of architecture. In 1975, Cyril M. Harris, the acoustical engineer who participated in the creation of Powell Hall, first published his *Dictionary of Architecture and Construction*. Now in its 3rd edition and completely redesigned, it includes 24,500 terms and is published by McGraw Hill at $69.95

Constance Greiff, the historian of Princeton architecture, has another suggestion: "A useful book, although it doesn't cover every bit of terminology is Francis D.K. Ching, *A Visual Dictionary of Architecture*, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1995. Instead of being organized alphabetically by word, it is organized and illustrated by category, i.e. "arch," "window," "wall," etc.

This book defines over 5,000 terms relating to architectural design, history, and technology and is illustrated with Mr. Ching's own detailed, hand-rendered drawings. It is now published by John Wiley in paperback at $34.95 and hardback at $44.95.

LEE ANN SANDWEISS'S NEW BOOK

Not to be outdone by her husband Eric, Lee Ann Sandweiss has just released *her* new book, *St. Louis Architecture for Kids*, illustrated with drawings by Phyllis Harris and photographs by Gen Obata, and published by the Missouri Historical Society Press. Arranged as an alphabet, from Arch to Zoo, the book explores our region's architectural treasures and and major attractions in rhymed text. Among the less familiar sites are Sumner High School and Turtle Park. Lee Ann told the *Post-Dispatch* that the five-year-old Sandweiss twins had played a role in shaping this book.

St. Louis Architecture for Kids is Lee Ann's second book in less than a year, following the 1,088-page anthology, *Seeking St. Louis: Voices from a River City, 1670-2000*, also published by the Missouri Historical Society Press and distributed by the University of Missouri Press. Lee Ann has directed the publications program at the Missouri Historical Society since 1993.

News Letter

NewsLetter is published quarterly by the St. Louis and Missouri Chapters of the Society of Architectural Historians.

Please mail editorial correspondence and submissions for publication to: Esley Hamilton, Editor 7346 Balson Avenue, University City, Missouri 63130 or contact him by telephone: (314) 615-0357, by facsimile: (314) 615-4696, or by email: Esley_Hamilton@stlouisco.com. 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

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