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News Letter

NEW RESEARCH ON ST. JOSEPH ARCHITECTS: ANGELO POWELL

by Robert Myers

Thanks to the wonderful research of Carol Almanza, St. Joseph now has available a new wealth of building construction information. The city's Historic Preservation Division has building permit records dating back to about 1888, but Carol's work is especially helpful because it covers earlier years. She has combed many decades of St. Joseph newspapers on microfilm and found that local newspapers published annual lists of properties built during each year. I have just begun the (after hours) task of typing these articles into word processing.

I have just begun researching one of St. Joseph's more important early architects, Angelo Powell, who arrived in St. Joseph just after the Civil War. By that time he was a veteran architect and civil engineer by formal training, something that was then extremely rare. He began by studying architecture with Minard Lafevre (1798-1854) in New York, working on his staff for five years. He later went to Baltimore and designed, among other things, a

segment of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Powell then moved to Washington, D.C., where he was affiliated with Robert Mills, the chief Federal architect. Mills (1781-1855) is considered this country's first American-born, trained architect. Mills and Powell worked together from 1847 to 1853, during which time the firm prepared designs for the Washington Monument, the U. S. Treasury Building, and expansion of the U.S. Capitol. Powell himself is credited with designing the National Theater (which caught fire and burned). Eventually Angelo Powell went west to Cincinnati where he organized a large practice employing twenty draftsmen.

The Civil War ruined his business, but during the War he served as chief engineer of the 8th Army Corps. His maps and plans are considered some of the best produced for the war effort. Following the war, Powell worked as an engineer for various railroads before settling in St. Joseph in September 1866. He thrived as an architect in St. Joseph until at least 1906. Powell once told a biographer that when he began his career, there were only eleven formally-trained architects in the country, and he knew all of them personally. He designed a large number of buildings in St. Joseph, but until now we have been able to



1423 Francis Avenue,
St. Joseph, Missouri,
an example of the work
of Angelo Powell

identify only 25 of them with only three still standing. These newspaper articles will undoubtedly help us identify many more.

We can thank Toni Prawl for the research she has turned up on Powell. Prawl notes that outside St. Joseph, Powell also designed "Ravenswood" near Tipton, Missouri; the Harrison County Courthouse in Bethany, Missouri; and many other buildings out east such as the Peabody Institute in Baltimore. Through the newspaper articles, I am beginning to find more and more buildings Powell designed all over northwest Missouri, as well as in Colorado and Nebraska. Please contact me if you know of others: rmyers@ci.st-joseph.mo.us

Here's a sample of the articles Carol Almanza has found, including the list of Powell's work for that year:

St. Joseph Morning Daily Herald, January 1, 1868

OUR CITY. — Building Improvements for 1867.

Wonderful Growth of St. Joseph List of the Principal Buildings Erected Buildings to the Value of Over \$2,000,000 Erected.

One year ago we published a list whereby it was made evident that over one thousand buildings had been erected within the city limits during the year 1866. It was then supposed that the building enterprise of our citizens was about checked, and that but few buildings could be erected during the year 1867 in comparison with the large number of the preceding year. Again has returned the season for our annual review of building operations, and we are satisfied the exhibit will astonish the majority of our readers."

The report shows that a most commendable spirit of emulation has been excited among the owners of real estate in all parts of the city. On all our principal streets edifices have been erected that would do credit to the largest cities of the East. By our wealthy citizens the ornamental as well as the useful has been considered, and money has been freely expended in the adornment of their private dwellings and business places. Nor has this spirit been confined to our citizens of comfortable means; in every section of the city and particularly where lots are offered reasonable figures, have a very large number of small but neat dwelling houses been erected by people who had by strict economy saved enough money to buy a lot and erect under their own supervision a comfortable home.

During the year just past not less than six hundred buildings, one third of them first class dwellings and business houses, have been erected within the city limits. The total cost of these buildings will reach two millions of dollars.

These figures are not mere guess work; we have received reports from and held conversation with almost all of our architects and builders and base this estimate thereupon. The work of these builders far exceeds one million of dollars and there can be no question that the value of the work done by the builders whom we failed to see and of houses put up by their owners without the assistance of professional builders will swell the figures to at least two millions of dollars.

At all the shops which we visited we found indications that city improvements will be very large during the present year. Plans have been drawn for a very large number of the most substantial business houses and the most comfortable and handsome private residences. We [three words obscured] of several public buildings, and in all probability these will be erected during the coming season. We are badly in need of a City Hall, and we doubt not that it will soon be given us with the most ample and comfortable accommodations. We also stand greatly in need of cheaper tenement houses, and the tide of population so rapidly flowing in upon us, will necessitate the immediate erection of very many of these cheap houses. Everything indicates that the sound of the hammer and trowel will be a very familiar one in the city of St. Joseph during the year 1868.

We give below a list of the principal houses erected during the year just passed, with the cost in round figures. There are others equally prominent whose figures we were unable to obtain.

UNDER CHARGE OF W. ANGELO POWELL, ARCHITECT

- Residence for J.C. Bender, northwest corner of Isadore and Fourth streets;
- Residence for Mr. Horrigan, corner of Twelfth and Edmond streets;
- Residence for Charles H. Shultz, southeast of Frederick Avenue;
- First Presbyterian Church, northeast corner of Jule and Seventh streets;
- Cottage residence for Mr. Wells, northeast from St. Joseph;
- Residence for Capt. Chas. West, Frederick Avenue;
- Residence for Mr. Forrey, on Ninth street, near Locust;
- Residence for Mr. McGee, East St. Joseph;

- Four tenement houses for Mr. Alden, on Ninth Street;
- Rescue Hook and Ladder Buildings, on Francis street, near Sixth;
- Two stores for Judge Chas. Schreiber, corner of Edmond and Second streets;
- Three stores on Felix street, near Third, for Edwards Bros. And Willis & Co.;
- Store for Mrs. E. Bradley, corner of Third and Charles streets;
- Two stores and bank building, southeast corner of Third and Francis, opposite Pacific House, for Messrs. Tootle & McLaughlin.

The total cost of these improvements is over \$250,000.”

[Others included in this list are the architects L. S. Stigers and John Declue, builders Ford & Boyle, R. K. Allen, Applegate & Elliot, Seldon & Lusk, M. Mahan & Cole, and John A. Evans, plus eleven other miscellaneous projects.]

Robert Myers, AICP, is Historic Preservation Planner for the City of St. Joseph.

PORTRAITS OF ARCHITECTS

Washington University is looking for a good photograph or other portrait of James P. Jamieson and can't seem to locate one in St. Louis. One the other hand, portraits of two other architects have recently come our way, thanks to the inquiries of descendants.



James Smith was born in Nottingham, England in 1820 and was in St. Louis by December 1847, when he married Mary Ann Peake here. They had two surviving children. He lost her to cholera in 1855, but a few months later married Emily Walker, and they had five children, three of whom survived childhood.

By 1856, Smith was working for Thomas Warying Walsh, who was then supervising the construction of the old Custom House at Third and Olive. Walsh and Smith became partners in 1860. In 1870, the firm became Walsh, Smith & Jungenfeld. Smith died from cholera on August 22, 1873.



Photo of James Smith

Smith's descendant Leta Sheaffer has one of the Walsh & Smith business cards. They described themselves as architects and superintendents of buildings, with offices at 330½ North Third Street. On the back of the card is a list of their works:

Lindell Hotel
 U.S Customs House
 U.S. Post Office
 Polytechnic Institute
 Mechanics, Southern, Merchants
 Exchange, St. Louis and Second
 National Banking Houses

Are now the

County Architects
 Public School Architects

And engaged building

New County Jail and Courts
 All The Public Schools,
 Altering The Court House

And

U. S. Architects for this district for 13 years

John Roth was an associate of E. G. Lewis in the founding and early development of University City; he married Flora Breyman, a niece of Mabel Lewis, in 1912, and they lived at 27 (now 6951) Amherst Avenue in Lewis's University Heights Number One. Roth was born in St. Louis in 1884. Bruce Carvell, the registrar at the Washington University School of Architecture, has kindly provided the information that John Jacob Roth was enrolled in the University College from the spring of 1904 through the spring of 1906, when he earned the two-year certificate in architecture. He then traveled in the orient for two years and performed architectural services for the U. S. War Department in Manila in 1908-1909. Roth's 1909 design for the Hinchey House at 784 Yale in University Heights Number One is taken straight from Frank Lloyd Wright, but his other houses (about a dozen are known, but there must be more) draw from a wider range of sources, especially from the English Arts & Crafts. This influence may have come from Guy Study, another Washington U. student, who became Roth's partner in 1911. By 1912 Roth was respected enough to be elected president of the St. Louis Architectural Club, but three years later he followed Lewis to California to participate in the Atascadero development. Study continued to use the Roth & Study name into 1916 but in 1917 formed a new partnership with Benedict Farrar.

Gordon Hastings of Anaheim, California has sent several pictures of his grandfather John Jacob Roth to Sue Rehkopf of the Historical Society of University City. The one here shows Roth in a group of men who seem to be roughly contemporary architects. Knowing Roth's association with Washington University, it tempting to see

the goateed older gentleman as Gabriel Ferrand, but Ferrand didn't come to St. Louis until 1914. Roth might have met Ferrand, however, at the Architectural Club, where night classes and informal competitions were often held. In either case, the view is evocative of the aspiring artist-architect of that era.

Hastings also sent two undated newspaper clippings that suggest an answer to the question of why Roth left Washington University with a two-year degree rather than a four-year one. It seems that Roth was one of a group of students who were competing for a prize from the Beaux Arts Society of New York for a competitive problem. He was working at the school one Sunday afternoon when he was discovered by the watchman, one Brewster, who attempted to eject him. Brewster was himself ejected. Chancellor W. S. Chaplin suspended Roth pending action of the faculty, but with the deadline for the competition fast approaching, the Architectural Society of the University, a group of 25 students in the Architectural Department, went on strike demanding Roth's reinstatement.

WHITE HAVEN WINS NATIONAL PRESERVATION AWARD

The Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site, 7400 Grant Road has won the 2002 John Wesley Powell Prize for the restoration of "White Haven," the 1818 house that is the centerpiece of the park, to its 1875 appearance. The prize is awarded by an organization called the Society for History in the Federal Government to honor achievements in interpretive displays or historic preservation. The

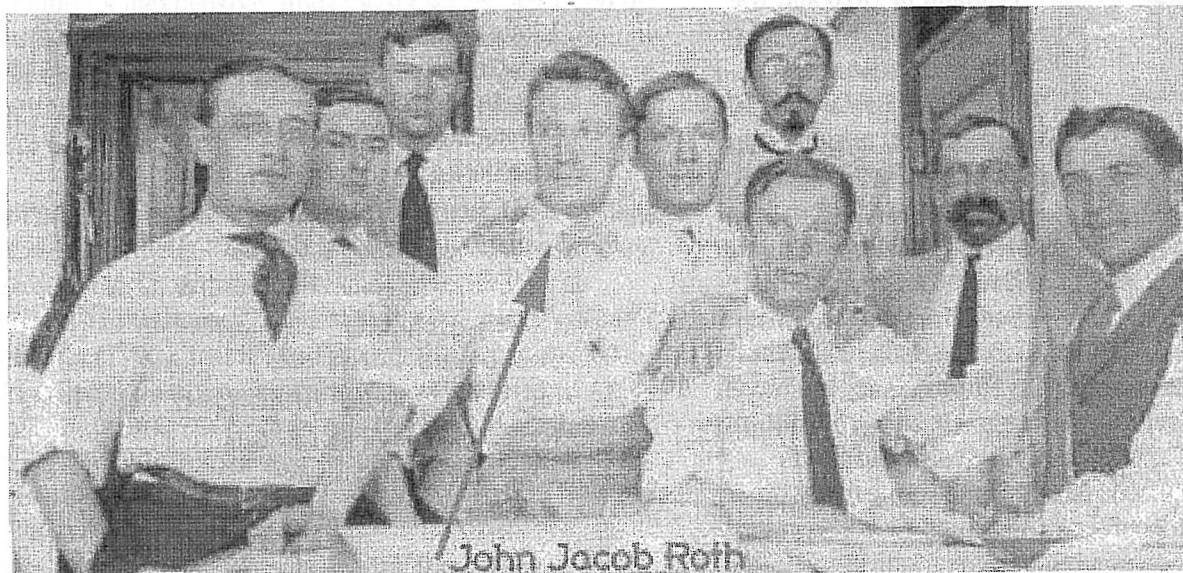


Photo including John Roth

Society, which was founded in 1979, also awards prizes for historical publications and service to the profession and has an active program of conferences and publications to promote good historic practices within the national government.

The John Wesley Powell Prize is named for the geologist and ethnologist who lived from 1834 to 1902 and is best known for his 1869 exploration of the Colorado River, traversing the Grand Canyon with one arm (having lost the other one at Shiloh). Less well remembered is Powell's career as an outstanding government official; he helped to organize the U. S. Geological Survey and headed the agency from 1881 to 1894.

The Powell Prize has been given since 1985 but only twice before to preservation projects: in 1986 for the Visiting Officer Quarters at Francis E. Warren Air Force Base, Cheyenne, Wyoming; and in 2000 for the U. S. Post Office at Calle Recento Sur, San Juan, Puerto Rico. Both of those were buildings remaining in active use and not restored to a specific point in time, so the award to White Haven is really a unique honor.

The nomination was prepared by park historian Pam Sanfilippo and preservation architect Al O'Bright. Pam notes that one of the requirements was especially challenging: to limit the number of slides submitted to a maximum of 20, when Al had accumulated more than 5,000 slides over the 12-year course of the project.

Pam Sanfilippo has recently been honored by the National Park Service by being invited to serve as guest editor of CRM, the services magazine of cultural resource management. Pam collected 13 articles and wrote two more on the theme "America's Civil War – Challenges, Perspectives, Opportunities." The full text is available online at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/crm>.

TALES FROM THE CORAL COURT NAMED BOOK OF THE YEAR BY ROUTE 66 MAGAZINE

The readers of *Route 66 Magazine* have selected, through popular vote, Shellee Graham's *Tales From the Coral Court* as the Book of the Year. Shellee was awarded a trophy at the First International Roadie Gathering in Vega, Texas on August 17, 2002.

Route 66 Magazine is a slick stock, four-color publication devoted to the world of Route 66. It has international

distribution, with a circulation in excess of 50,000 copies. Eligibility for the first Book of the Year Award was open to all books published about Route 66. The next award will be limited to books published between January 2002 and April of 2003.

Bob Moore, managing editor of *Route 66 Magazine*, said "We are very pleased with Shellee's winning of this award, as selected by our readers. Her book is an excellent example of true dedication to preserving through words and photographs one of the icons of the Mother Road."

Shellee reports, "It was like winning the Academy Award, and an honor to have my book chosen by the readers – a people's choice award. The trophy itself is very attractive, blue glass. The important 'Preservation Project of the Year' award went to the Meramec Cavern barn project in Hamel, Illinois. Emily Priddy of Belleville accepted the award for John Weiss. That worked out quite well, because both Emily and I worked on the Hamel barn project."

Apart from the book, Shellee is working on a 30-minute video documentary about the Coral Court and is looking for your home movies or vintage photographs. An article about that project appeared in the August 7 *West County Journal*. If that weren't enough, she has started a Coral Court historic marker program. To donate to the marker, please contact her at shellee66@earthlink.net. Shellee has photography and information about Route 66 and the Coral Court Motel on at least three websites: <http://home.earthlink.net/~shellee66/sg.html>
<http://homepage.mac.com/dougoutg/PhotoAlbum1.html>
<http://www.coralcourt.com>

HELP WANTED: ARCHITECTURE COLLECTIONS AT THE MISSOURI HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Archives of the Missouri Historical Society hold approximately 95 collections related to architecture and the built environment. Of these, about 55 contain architectural drawings. Several are the records of architects and/or architectural firms who practiced in St. Louis.

A great deal of access can be given to researchers if simple box, folder, and project lists are created for each of these collections. However, working with large drawings that are in varying degrees of fragility takes much time. This is where you can help!

The Archives are looking for a few good people who can assist in unrolling or unfolding drawings, entering project data into a database or onto a worksheet, and then re-housing the drawings and/or files into acid-free storage. Accomplishing these tasks not only increases researchers' access to the collections but it also makes more efficient use of the Society's storage space so that we have room for more collections.

Collections to inventory and re-house include:

1. Alfred Majers (including drawings of Study & Farrar)
2. Frederick Sternberg Architecture Collection
3. Verner Burks Architectural Records
4. Architectural Design Associates Records
5. Mauran, Russell & Crowell specifications in the Kuhlmann Collection

If you are interested in assisting the Society with its commitment to document the built environment of St. Louis, please contact Kristina Gray Perez, Assoc. Curator of Architecture Collections, Missouri Historical Society, (314) 746-4518, kperez@mohistory.org.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES: BEVIS HILLIER

The British journalist and editor Bevis Hillier has a special place in art history as the coiner of the term, "Art Deco." The style first made itself known at the 1925 *Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs Industriels et Modernes* in Paris, but for many years it tended to be called "Moderne" or "Modernistic." Hillier's 1968 book for Dutton's inexpensive Studio Vista series, *Art Deco of the 20s and 30s*, brought the name to the public, although Hillier himself recalled seeing an article by Hilary Gelson headlined "Art Deco" in the November 2, 1966 issue of the *London Times*.

Born in 1940, Hillier was barely out of Magdalen College, Oxford, when he published his first book, *Master Potters of the Industrial Revolution* in 1965. His interest in ceramics has continued, most recently in *Early English Porcelain* (1997), and it was through the decorative arts rather than architecture that Hillier was attracted to Art Deco. Gradually his work in this field has expanded to encompass the whole century, with *Austerity Binge: The Decorative Arts of the Forties and Fifties* (1975), *The New Antiques* (1977), and *The Style of the Century* (1983 & 1998). Meanwhile, however, Hillier had a distinguished career as an editor of *The Connoisseur*, *The Times Satur-*

day Magazine, *The Daily Telegraph Sunday Magazine*, and the *Los Angeles Times Magazine*. In recent years, his work has moved in a more literary direction, one scarcely foreshadowed by his 1974 (and now scarce) anthology, *Punorama: or, the Best of the Worst: Victorian Puns*. As authorized biographer of the late British Poet Laureate Sir John Betjeman, Hillier has produced two volumes so far, the most recent just released this fall, *John Betjeman, New Fame, New Love*.

In 1999, Hillier became one of the 25 "brothers" (actually almoners) of the Hospital of St. Cross in Winchester, England, Britain's oldest almshouse. It was founded in about 1132 by Bishop Henry de Blois, a grandson of William the Conqueror, and the chapel dates from that period. The newer portion of the so-called hospital, where the brothers, who are not in religious orders, reside, dates from about 1450. "Some of my friends thought my entering St. Cross was wildly eccentric," he writes in *Country Life* (September 12, 2002). But he continues that he now feels something that art historians might have expected him to have felt for a long time, "slotted securely into history."

MISSOURI ARCHITECTURE ON THE WEB

Several new websites have been introduced in recent months that have materials relating to Missouri Architecture. All of them, along with many others, are accessible through the Virtually Missouri site, www.virtuallymissouri.org, which in turn is a project of the Missouri Library Network Corporation.

The University City Public Library www.ucpl.lib.mo.us has a new area called "History in Photographs" with early photographs of University City. The digital imaging necessary for this site was made possible by a grant from the Missouri State Library, using funds provided from the Library Services and Technology Act. One of the nice things about the site is that the pictures are displayed at small scale in groups of 16, so you can get some idea of what they are without having to click on each one. The site concentrates on the era of E. G. Lewis, with many views of his Beaux-Arts city planning and craftsman residential developments.

David V. Kromm, A.I.A., has been active with Dr. David Browman of Washington University and Professor Jerry Walters of Mineral Area College in documenting architec-

(Cont. on Pg 8)



Exhibit: The Great Italian Churches
Through December 23, 2002
McNamee Gallery, St. Louis University
Tues-Sat 11 to 4

There is still time to see John Nagel's stunning photographs of Italian Renaissance and Baroque churches on display in the lower level of the Samuel Cupples House. They are shown in conjunction with an exhibit of medieval and renaissance manuscripts from the collection of Pius XII Memorial Library. The photos were taken in 1991 for an earlier exhibition on the Jesuit influence on Baroque art and include overall views, interiors, and opulent details of Jesuit churches in Rome, Venice and Turin, as well as such other great churches as Palladio's San Giorgio Maggiore. Cupples House is located on the West Pine Campus near Spring. Curbside parking is available on Lindell, or the campus parking garage is on Laclede. For more information, call 314-977-3025.

**Exhibit: An Eye for the City:
Contemporary Italian Photography**
February 8 to May 24, 2003
Bernoudy Gallery of Architecture
Sheldon Galleries, 3648 Washington Blvd.

Eight internationally known and emerging photographers investigate the evolving landscape of Italian cities between the 1950s and today. The exhibition was organized for the University of New Mexico Art Museum and includes a catalogue. Hours: Tues. 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., Wed. 9 to 5, Sat. 10 to 2 and prior to Sheldon concerts.

Annual Gathering
Bissell Barn, General Daniel Bissell House
10125 Bellefontaine Rd near I-270
Sunday, February 9, 6 to 10 p.m.

The chapter will celebrate Ground Hog Day a week late and in a new location. We'll have candlelight tours of one of the county's most important landmarks, the recently refurbished General Daniel Bissell, dating from 1812 and then adjourn to the modern "barn" for our traditional dinner and slide show. You're encouraged to bring slides of any one building. (Watch for a return visit to Melanie and Tony Fathman's later in the year). For more information call 615-0357.

The 2003 Tower Grove Lecture Series 2003 is the 13th year for this series. The Stupp Center is located just inside the main gate of the park on Grand between Magnolia and Arsenal. The series is free and open to the public.

**Talk: "The Birth of a Perfect Neighborhood:
Tower Grove Heights, 1878-1929"**
Stupp Center, Tower Grove Park
Sunday, February 2, 2 p.m.

Mark Abbott, Professor of History, Harris-Stowe College, will tell the story of the Tower Grove Heights neighborhood, its beginnings, how and why the neighborhood expanded and thrived. The story includes an examination of the architecture of the neighborhood and its infrastructure, its early class structure, its institutions, and its business life.

Talk: "African Americans in Early St. Louis"
Stupp Center, Tower Grove Park
Sunday, March 2, 2 p.m.

John A. Wright, author of *Discovering African American St. Louis - A Guide to Historic Sites*, will focus on the history of pre- and post-Civil War St. Louis, introducing African-American landowners, authors, and abolitionists, exploring the roles played by slaves and free blacks in the city's history, and providing insights into what life was like for African Americans in St. Louis after the war.

Talk: "David R. Francis, a St. Louis Hero"
Stupp Center, Tower Grove Park
Sunday, April 6, 2 p.m.

Harper Barnes, longtime Post-Dispatch writer, will speak about his book, *Standing on a Volcano: The Life and Times of David Rowland Francis*. Francis, brash, plain-spoken politician and businessman, made his fortune quickly in the risky commodities markets of bustling post-Civil War St. Louis. He became the "Boy Mayor" of St. Louis and then the youngest governor in the nation. When Francis ran the St. Louis World's Fair of 1904, he was said to be the most photographed man in America. Mr. Barnes' lecture will examine the role played by this fascinating man in the development of this city.

MISSOURI ARCHITECTURE ON THE WEB (cont.)

ture in southeast Missouri in the Mississippi Valley Research Project. Buildings in Arcadia, Bonne Terre, Farmington, Ironton, and Pilot Knob can be seen at <http://www.msvonline.org/Mississippi%20Valley/mainframe.htm>.

The Space Planning and Management Office at the University of Missouri-Columbia (yes there is such an agency) recently completed a new website that has a wealth of information about campus buildings, including maps and even floorplans: <http://www.missouri.edu/%7Eumospace/main.htm>. The section called Building and Infrastructure Archives includes dates, architects and elevation drawings for eleven buildings.

“THE STEEL FRAME HAS TENDED TOWARD ELABORATE ORNAMENTA- TION” — 1912

The editorial writer of the St. Louis Republic was inspired on November 14, 1912 to speculate on the effect that the

steel frame was having on building design. His conclusions suggest a far different direction that architecture might have taken but for the rise of the International Style.

“The Railway Exchange Building, which is now mounting skyward story by story, is to be the largest structure in St. Louis and is destined to be, as it is, in fact, already, one of the show places of the city.

“It is remarkable what a wealth of ornament can be displayed upon a modern structure of this kind at a reasonable expense. In the days of stone construction every figure, every molding and every arabesque was the product of slow hand labor. A set of molds now shapes the terra cotta into endless pleasing forms, and the mold once made, these may be repeated as often as the architect requires.

“Steel construction encourages the use of terra cotta, which is light and indestructible. So the steel frame building has tended toward elaborate ornamentation by the operation of causes wholly natural, though far from the minds of the engineers who first lifted its skeletons high in air.”

News Letter

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

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