

A PAUPER'S PALACE AND THE POOR HOUSE ODYSSEY

by David J. Simmons

As the county governing authority, the St. Louis County Administrative Court developed a reputation for extravagant spending on the construction of large scale institutional projects. Completed in 1862, the Courthouse cost more than a million dollars to build. The insane asylum (Arsenal Street Hospital) finished in 1868 cost \$780,000, while the Four Courts/Jail complex of 1871 cost \$760,000. Scandal touched the last of these projects, damaging the integrity of the court judges and their architect, Thomas Waryng Walsh. County taxpayers became increasingly agitated over the court's constant demand for tax funds to meet these obligations.

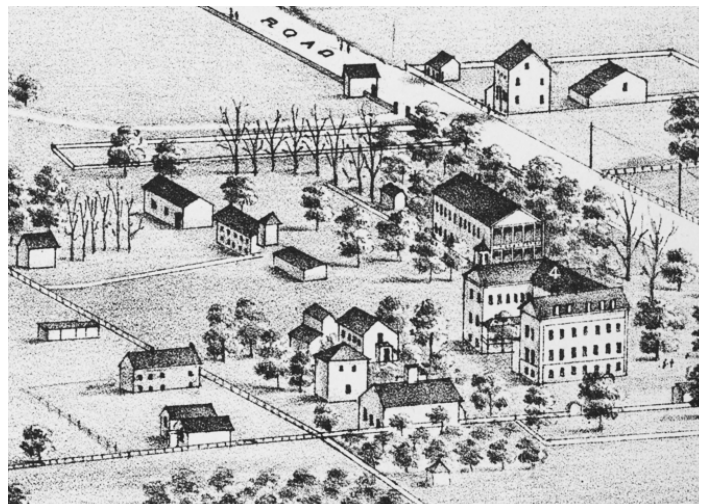
Seeking to improve the living conditions of local indigents, the court in 1870 decided to build a new poorhouse at Allenton, still within St. Louis County but 31 miles southwest of the city on the Missouri Pacific Railroad. This location proved to be a serious mistake, resulting in the abandonment of the unfinished poor house at a substantial loss of taxpayer funds. Eventually, common sense governed for a season, and the court justices selected a new architect for this project. He erected a new poorhouse on Arsenal next to the insane asylum. Finished in 1873, it was built for a modest sum and on a timely basis. Enraged by the scandal extravagance, and wastefulness surrounding the court's poorhouse odyssey, the citizens of St. Louis demanded the city be separated from the county and given its own county status. This was accomplished in 1876.

Concern for the welfare of the community's poor by county government started in the mid 1830s. On March 15, 1835, the Missouri State Legislature authorized the establishment of poorhouse facilities in Missouri counties. At the beginning the county housed the poor under a financial arrangement at the Good Samaritan Hospital. Upon the recommendation of Thornton Grimsley, St. Louis donated Block 80 (38.8 acres) of the city commons to the county for the site of the new poor facility. (Today this would be east of Marine Ave and north of Winnebago.) Furthermore, the city raised money for the project by selling part of the city commons.

In November of 1836, the county approved the erection of the House of Employment and Poorhouse to be located on Block 80. William Carr Lane and Henry King were placed in charge of the project. The county paid King \$150 to design the buildings. By 1840 the initial phase of construction had ended with an expenditure of \$3,000 for buildings and \$350 for fence. During the next five years, the complex expanded to include two permanent buildings and five temporary ones representing

an investment of \$14,283. With 20 acres under crop cultivation, the county designated the site as the "county farm." As of 1845, 68 people resided at the farm, 41 being destitute and the rest paying at least some part of their maintenance.

Further poorhouse expansion at the current site being limited, the county purchased the bankrupt Kemper College tract (120 acres) located south of Arsenal and west of Kingshighway, for the poorhouse relocation. Spending \$13,250 to acquire the property, the county court allocated an additional \$3,600 to convert the school building into poorhouse accommodations. Meanwhile the county sold the county farm in the spring of 1846 to the United States government for \$7,000. The buildings were transformed into St. Louis' first marine hospital.



The Poorhouse buildings on the old Kemper College site, the south side of Arsenal just west of Kingshighway, later part of the Southwest High School property. From Pictorial St. Louis, the great metropolis of the Mississippi Valley: a topographical survey drawn in perspective A.D. 1875 by Camille N. Dry, designed & edited by Richard J. Compton.

Organized and chartered in the spring of 1837, Kemper College, an Episcopal theological seminary financed mostly by New England money, bought a 120-acre campus for \$7,000 on April 22 of the same year. Architects Wright & Liggett completed a two-story school costing \$7,300 in the summer of the following year. Later the college added two wings for \$11,194 and a third floor for \$962. Lack of local church support eventually caused the college to sink into debt, resulting in bankruptcy.

For 23 years the poorhouse occupied the Kemper campus. Then in 1870 the court became concerned about the living conditions at Kemper and asked county architect Thomas Walsh to investigate. A year earlier the court had appointed Walsh as architect for the Four Courts Building and Jail complex. In his investigation report to the court on May 13, 1870, Walsh called

the Kemper complex dilapidated with large cracks in both exterior and interior walls, sagging floors, and extensive areas of fallen plaster. Repairs would be very costly. So advised, the justices decided to build a new poorhouse with increased capacity to meet current needs at another site appropriate to its purpose.

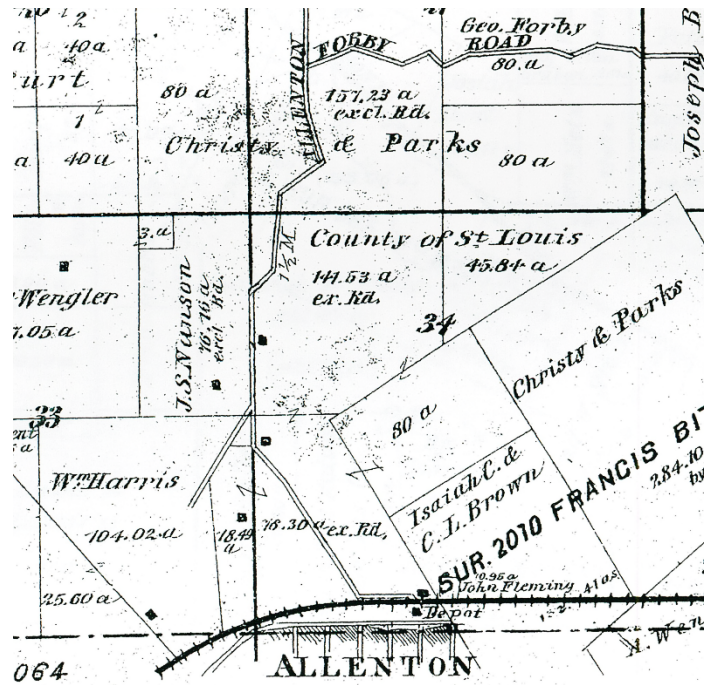
During the four-year poorhouse odyssey, the seven justices of the county court often made decisions reflecting poor judgment and a lack of common sense. On numerous occasions, city residents, the local media, and the St. Louis Taxpayers League condemned their extravagance and wastefulness as being either negligence, incompetence, or corruption. At the heart of their problem was a slavish devotion and obedience to the wishes and wants of their architect Mr. Walsh, who led them astray. By what power did he shape the court's destiny? Was it his eloquent speech, brilliant designs, or simply a matter of hidden recompense for the justices?

Surprisingly the justices selected Allenton, Missouri, located 32 miles southwest of the city on the Pacific Railroad rather than St. Louis for the site of the new poorhouse. To improve the value of his own Allenton real estate, county court Justice Robert C. Allen recommended this move and convinced his fellow justices to support it. Far from the eyes of city life, the area offered fresh air, clean water, rustic charm, and land for crop cultivation. The poor farm concept required the able-bodied poor residents to cultivate crops. Farm hands could be hired if needed and money available. The crops they raised were to be used to feed the poorhouse residents. Any leftover surplus food could be sold for profit. Where implemented, the system failed to live up to expectations usually resulting in a large financial loss.

On September 8, 1870, the court purchased for \$40,000 a 390-acre tract from Adolph and Hermine Elkert. It was located 2080 yards from the Pacific Railroad train station in Allenton. The Elkerts had bought the farm in 1869 from William McPherson for \$25,000. The farm featured a gentle sloping hill rising to a height of 200 feet. A week after the land purchase, the Court asked Walsh to prepare plans for the new poorhouse minimum capacity of 500 residents. Financial limitations were not specified. Three months later, on December 13, Walsh presented to the Court his plan for the new Pauper's Palace. Its beauty and ingenuity captivated the justices, who rushed to approve the project without knowing its cost. Of course, Walsh wanted to keep secret the project's \$800,000 price tag, thinking that if the judges knew its cost, they likely would cancel the project. He kept his secret until its exposure eight months later, in August 1871. By that time, the complex was in the middle of construction.

Walsh's lucrative compensation for the plans, specifications, and construction contract management of the poorhouse project fixed his payment at 5% of the project's construction costs. It made his financial package potentially worth \$40,000 when he completed the project. In May of 1871 the judges voted to pay Walsh \$7,500 as compensation for supervising the project's construction. By the standards of the period, Walsh's compensation appeared to be very excessive. He received \$16,000 for his work on the Four Courts Building, which cost

\$760,000. George I. Barnett earned \$12,000 for building the St. Louis Mutual Life Insurance Building, costing \$650,000. Compensation to the architectural firm of Lee and Annan for the million-dollar second Merchants Exchange Building amounted to \$15,000 in 1875.



No pictures have been found to show the Allenton poorhouse, but the location is identified on page 33 of Pitzman's New Atlas of the City and County of Saint Louis, published in 1878. It clearly shows the Allenton depot and the land to the north along Allenton Road still owned by the County of St. Louis. The Z-shaped marks indicate different tracts of land in the same ownership. Today Interstate 44 runs just north of the railroad tracks, the county property is Six Flags amusement park, and the property to the north marked "Christy & Parks" is the county's Greensfelder Park.

Placed on the slope of a hill facing south, the poorhouse was designed to operate in four main buildings connected by a series of one-story enclosed corridors with a group of smaller support structures around the perimeter. Composed of limestone exterior walls quarried on site and interior walls of brick, the complex imitated the English Tudor style without the use of ornament. Three of the main structures ran parallel to each other 30 feet apart down the slope of a hill with two floors on the upper end and three floors at the lower end or south side. The one-story enclosed corridors connected the three parallel buildings at their north end. A single-story administration building in front of the complex was linked by a corridor to the south end of the center building. The larger center building, 211 feet long by 108 feet wide) housed an infirmary and hospital on the top floor; school rooms, chapel, parlor, and servant quarters on the second floor; and male and female dining rooms, kitchen, pantry, scullery, and storage on the bottom level. Measuring 174 feet by 45 feet, each wing accommodated the residential sleeping quarters. The wings divided into wards and apartments equipped with beds, toilets, wash facilities, and lounge, each ward served 20 people. Apartments were reserved for women with children and farm hands. Women occupied one wing and men the other. Administration offices and apartments for the institution's officials filled the front building (72 by 40 feet), called the

Superintendent Building. Around the main structures were a laundry, bath house, maintenance structure, and power-house.

Finding contractors to work on this project proved to be very difficult because of its remote location. Participating contractors were required to build a boarding house on site to lodge and feed their workers. Lack of interested parties resulted in Edward Augustine receiving three construction contracts for excavation, masonry, and brick work. Augustine and Thyme secured the stone contract. They set up the stone quarry and cutting operation. Fitzgibbon obtained the carpentry framing contract. Construction of the project commenced in February 1871.

The question of project cost lingered. Walsh reassured the court on numerous occasions that the cost would be reasonable. On pure speculation, the newspapers projected the cost of the poorhouse to be at least \$400,000. To raise funds for the construction of the new poorhouse, the court decided to sell the current poorhouse property. Comprising 41.6 acres, the eastern part of the Kemper tract was sold at auction on June 22, 1871 for \$87,457. At this sale Walsh purchased five lots containing the actual poorhouse buildings. He paid \$24,600 for them, money he obtained surreptitiously from a contractor under his control on another construction project. If the Allenton project failed, Walsh thought he could lease the current poorhouse property back to the court at a nice profit. Then the court could either remodel the current buildings or build new ones on-site. Under the terms of Walsh's sale agreement, the poorhouse could occupy its current premises until October 1872. At that time it would have to vacate or start paying rent.

Then in August 1871 the winds of change came to the court with the election of several new judges. Under pressure, Walsh revealed the total price for the Allenton project as \$800,000 or more. Several days later, by request Walsh offered a scaled-down version of the project, substituting brick for stone at a cost of \$531,000. The judges rejected both plans. Local newspapers reported the story with relish. Their headlines told the tale, "A Million-Dollar Home for St., Louis' Indigent" and "A Palace Fit for a King to House Local Down and Out." This report caught the attention of several eastern and southern newspaper syndicates, who circulated this story among the cities they served.

Meanwhile, the county court ordered its building committee (Judges Fisse, Hyatt, and Spech) to conduct an investigation of the poorhouse project at Allenton. On September 8, 1871, the building committee filed its report, responding to the question: Should we continue the construction of the Allenton Poorhouse? The report enumerated several problems plaguing this project. An inadequate water supply from a nearby spring necessitated the establishment of an elaborate and costly water delivery system from a creek located three quarters of a mile from the poorhouse site. The system needed dam apparatus, piping, steam engine, pumping device, and water storage tanks. The justices foresaw a breakdown in supervisory control between the court and the poorhouse because of its remote location. Materials for building and maintenance and supplies for day-to-day operation at Allenton were more expensive because of the travel issue. Since mostly old or sick people

inhabited the poorhouse, and the planners could not expect the poorhouse site to become a successful farming operation. If nothing else, the project's high cost dictated its abandonment, even though the court had spent \$75,000 on its construction through the end of August 1871. In summation, the report described the court's biggest project mistake. It should have built the new poorhouse on the current site rather than selling that property.

On September 19, the court voted to stop work on the project, and two months later they cancelled the project and abandoned the site. The unfinished limestone complex of three parallel buildings had a ghost-like appearance, its foundations completed, its first level walls erected, and part of its second story walls finished. The structure lacked window and door frames. A large stack of cut limestone blocks had been placed in front of the structure close by on the right was the wooden boarding house providing shelter for the construction labor. What would the court do with this property? Why not complete one of the buildings on site and make it a poorhouse? The county could deed the site to the state. They could complete the complex and use it as an insane asylum for eastern Missouri. After the division of the county and city in 1876, some locals pushed to make Allenton the county seat. One of the buildings on site could be finished as a courthouse and jail, and the remaining stone could be sold to help pay for the conversion.

None of these solutions worked. The county leased the property to local farmers at an annual rent of \$130. Over the years area builders plundered the stone on site until the remnants of the Paupers Palace vanished from the horizon. In 1900, the county sold the tract to Charles Crawley for \$10,500. A few years later the Lemp family bought the site and made a number of improvements, calling the place Deep Springs Farm.

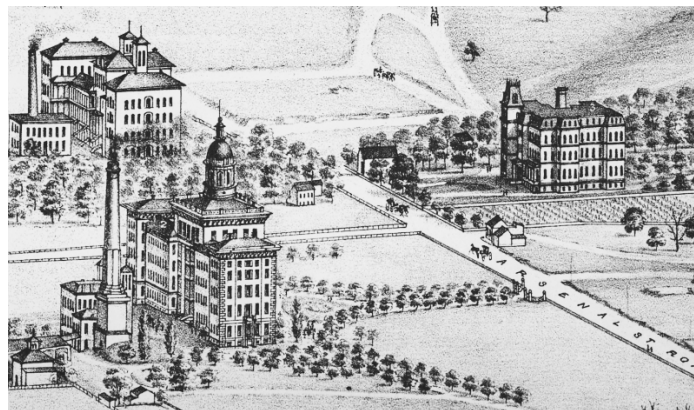
After the Allenton poorhouse shut down, project contractors and the architect applied to the court for compensation covering work done, material supplied, and losses sustained. Walsh claimed \$40,000 for his fee but considered a compromise of \$26,000. Claims for Edward Augustine and Augustine & Thyme tallied \$80,000 and \$75,000 respectively. Because the claims appeared to be inflated, the court refused to honor them, and legal action ensued. After a prolonged period of litigation, all parties agreed to arbitration, and the lawsuits were withdrawn.

During January 1873 the court appointed an arbitration committee to settle the claims rising from the Allenton poorhouse project. Its membership encompassed three architects – Thomas Brady, Joseph Edgar, and James McGrath – plus two contractors – Ferdinand Bischoff and James Bigelow. Three months later they announced the settlements for the parties involved. The approved settlements were \$40,627 for Edward Augustine (all contracts), \$22,004 for Augustine & Thyme, \$2,228 for Henry Fitzgibbon, and \$7,330 for architect Thomas Walsh. Total compensation for the project equaled \$102,490 for Ed Augustine, \$38,576 for Augustine & Thyme, \$3,000 for Fitzgibbon, and \$11,830 for Walsh. Remuneration for the committee members themselves amounted to \$3,000. Another \$1,000 covered the measurement of work completed at the building site.

At the same time, the court ordered the formation of a committee to investigate Walsh's response to the Allenton poorhouse project. Committee members were architects John Johnston and John Maurice, along with contractor Patrick Kelly. They reported on March 6, 1873. When measuring the work done at the job site, Walsh committed fraud by inflating the measurement figures in the amount to \$28,000. In stone measurement for Augustine & Thyme, Walsh certified 6,955 perches, but the committee found only 5,270 perches, resulting in a cost difference of \$9,020. A second example dealt with the Ed Augustine excavation contract. Walsh certified 21,245 yards of material against 15,254 yards calculated by the committee, representing a difference of \$11,400. A second area of perplexity involved the cash books for the project's construction under the supervision of Mr. Walsh. Once work stopped on the Allenton project, the court asked Walsh to supply the project cash books, but he delayed their surrender until January 1872. Upon examination of the books by the judges and auditors, many entries appeared to be of a suspicious nature. Some listings had been removed, others altered, and several cost computations were undecipherable. The text suggested the possibility of criminal activity, but nothing could be proven. To protect the reputation of the court and its judges, they decided not to pursue criminal charges against Mr. Walsh for his indiscretions. While it is likely that a trial would have exposed the wrongdoing of Walsh and his contractors, it could also have implicated one or more current and past court justices. Local newspapers called the court's action a "white-wash."

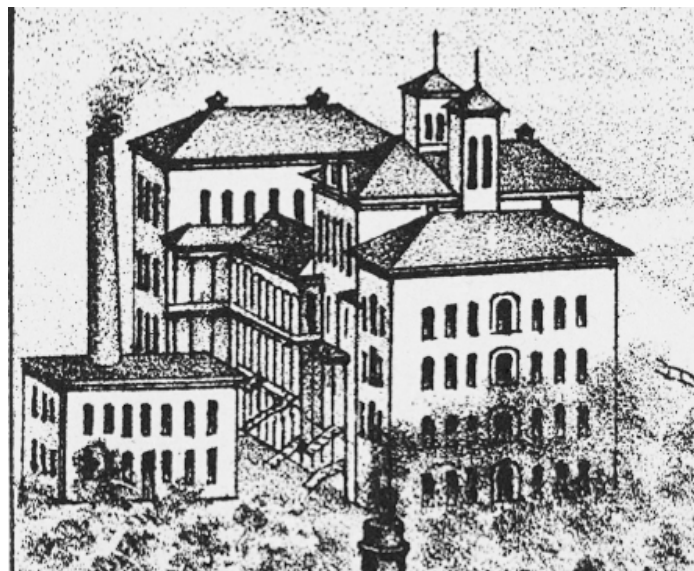
With the death of the Allenton project, the court moved quickly to find a new location, plan, and architect for the poorhouse. Walsh offered the court a ten-year lease on the existing poorhouse property at an annual rent of \$1,800, but the court declined the proposal. The building committee report to the court, dated December 18, 1871, focused on a forty-acre section of the Kemper tract west of the insane asylum and Blue Ridge Road as the site for a new poorhouse. The committee fixed the cost of the new building at \$200,000. Upon their rejection of Walsh's proposal to furnish plans for the new building at no charge, the judges ordered an architectural competition to find a suitable design. A first prize of \$1,000 attracted 16 architectural firms, most of them being local. On the sixth ballot the committee chose Frederick Raeder over George I. Barnett by a vote of 4 to 3. The firm of Desbonne and McNamara received the second place award of \$500, and Cameron & Mortimer a third place prize of \$200. After examining the winning entries, however, the county court declared all of them to be unacceptable.

The committee then decided to hire a new county architect to be paid \$250 a month. Eleven architects applied for the position, including George I. Barnett and Edmund Jungenfeld, surrogate for Mr. Walsh. On the third ballot, Barnett defeated Jungenfeld, Walsh's partner, by a vote of 4 to 3. As a result, Barnett became county architect on March 22, 1872. Aware of his difficult situation, Barnett knew Walsh wanted his job and would do anything to get it. Likewise, the justices could not be trusted. At any moment they could reverse his election and replace him with either Walsh or Jungenfeld. As a result, Barnett moved quickly to get the poorhouse project started.



The new Poorhouse on Arsenal, showing the County Insane Asylum (present State Hospital) left foreground and the Poorhouse behind. Sublette Avenue runs between them. The St. Louis Female Hospital (originally Social Evil Hospital) on right right is now the site of Sublette Park. From Pictorial St. Louis (1875).

Barnett's design was in brick with a limestone foundation. A five-part front 385 feet wide faced north. Devoid of most ornamentation except stone stringcourses, the building was vaguely Romanesque, with a pair of circular towers framing the center section. Both the center and the wings had three floors over the basement, while the recessed areas had two floors. The building's maximum depth in the wings was 108 feet. A wooden porch extended across the entire length of the southern exposure.

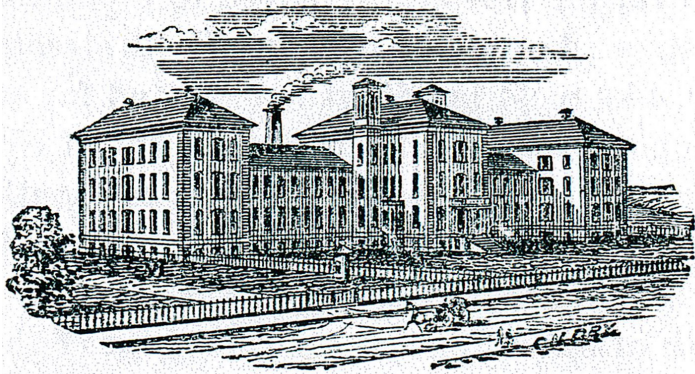


A detail from the previous illustration, with Camille N. Dry's depiction of George I. Barnett's poorhouse building, showing the rear elevation seen from the southeast. The building behind was later the laundry.

With a capacity of 600 residents, the interior had public areas in the center and recessed sections and the private spaces in the wings. Wide corridors linked all areas together. A large kitchen (20 by 60 feet), male and female dining areas, each 27 by 113 feet, storerooms, and servant quarters occupied the basement level. On the first floor was a large entrance hall with staircase, offices, reception room, parlor, and employee dining area. A chapel, school rooms, and a dispensary or hospital filled the second floor. Equipped with bath, wash, and toilet facilities, each floor in the wing area contained several wards. Each ward had a lounge. Barnett installed a sprinkler system in the

building to help fight fires. It consisted of a central pipe system with hoses attached on each floor and fed by water-storage tanks on the roof, containing 18,000 gallons of water. Artificial lighting at the poorhouse depended on gas lighting produced by a gasoline gasification plant.

Milburn and Rich contracted the new poorhouse at \$159,980, and architect John Cairnes served as superintendent of construction. After clearing the site, construction began in April, 1872. Toward the end of February 1873 the project had reached the mid point, but Barnett's contract as county architect was up for renewal. Meanwhile, Walsh had been soliciting the judges to help him regain the position of county architect. Walsh believed that after a year the public and the press would have forgotten his many indiscretions. The court gave Walsh the victory he sought on February 24. His return caught the press by surprise. The *St. Louis Democrat* condemned the court's decision and launched a vicious attack against the judges, reminding the public of their past extravagance, negligence, and incompetence. Soon other newspapers and the Tax Payers League joined in denouncing Walsh's county-related corrupt activities. An outraged public demanded that the justices resign from the court or that the court be abolished. Fearing job loss and frightened by these threats, the judges rescinded Walsh's appointment on March 3. The court vote was three in favor, none opposed, two abstentions, and two absences.



CITY POOR HOUSE AND FARM.

From Jones & Orear, *Commercial and Architectural St. Louis (1888)*, p. 154, showing the Arsenal Street frontage of the Barnett building from the northeast. This is a more accurate depiction of the building than Camille Dry's radically foreshortened view.

Now the court faced another dilemma, a half-finished poorhouse, incomplete plans, and no architect. Adding to the upheaval on March 9, the committee investigating Walsh's Allenton poorhouse activities reported its findings. Lacking direction and in disarray, the court two days later abolished the position of county architect. Disgusted by this turn of events, Barnett sent a written proposal to the court on March 12. He offered to take control of the poorhouse project and to complete it:

Gentlemen

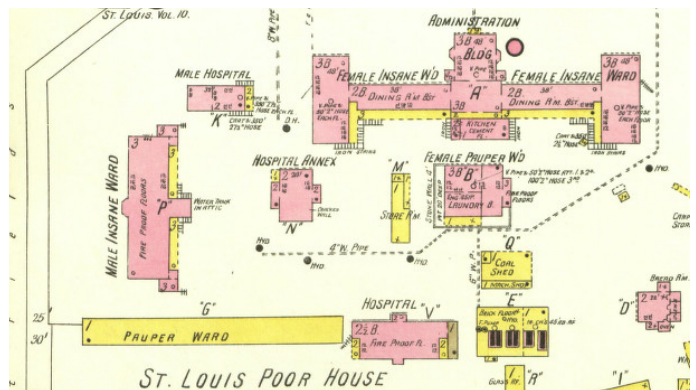
As it appears in your records that you have abolished the office of County Architect, heretofore held by me, therefore I desire to say that it will be necessary for you

to employ an architect to complete the new poorhouse. The drawings for the working departments are unfinished. . . If I am not misinformed, I believe that the election of another architect did not indicate upon your Honorable body any want of confidence, in either my ability or my integrity; and therefore as a matter of professional pride; as well as justice, that I should be allowed to complete the new poorhouse, in the success of which I take great interest.

Wisely, the court accepted Barnett's proposition, reappointing him as the project architect at the same scale of remuneration. With Barnett in charge, the storm of public protest subsided.

A few days later, Walsh wrote to Alfred B. Mullett, Supervising Architect for the United States Treasury, describing the events of this episode with his characteristic bluster. Mullett was Walsh's boss at this time on the second St. Louis Customs House project (the Old Post Office). Walsh wrote that he had wanted the appointment in order to prove that the judges still had confidence in his ability and methods of operation. Once he had obtained the position, he resigned immediately, he wrote. Parts of his story were not true; Walsh never had resigned. After his appointment, public pressure had forced the court to rescind his designation.

On December 19, 1873, Barnett completed the new poorhouse, ending his association with the county court. Under his original contract, Barnett had intended to erect several minor buildings surrounding the poorhouse. The court subsequently assigned this construction to another architect, James McGrath. To compensate Barnett for this loss of work, the court paid him \$750. Total cost of the new complex was a quarter million dollars. In the spring of 1874, the poorhouse opened for business.



A detail from the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps of 1903, showing the layout of the St. Louis Poor House, with Barnett's building at the top facing the 5800 block of Arsenal Street. The large building to the left, marked Male Insane Ward, was added about 1900. It survives as part of Campbell Plaza.

Walsh initiated the poorhouse odyssey with his Allenton Pauper's Palace. He made a mess of this project. Leaving a trail of deception, fraud, and scandal, his efforts resulted in an unfinished and abandoned institution with a loss of \$200,000 tax dollars. The court rewarded Walsh's efforts with a payment of \$11,830. Barnett brought the odyssey to a close by completing the Arsenal Street building on a timely basis, at a modest cost, and without scandal. His court reward tallied \$6,100. Does corruption pay?

An important aspect of this story is the contrast of its two famous architects and their treatment at the hands of the county court. Motivated by selfishness and greed, Walsh and most of the judges strongly identified with each other. They shared means and goals. The judges saw Walsh as one of their own. Whatever he wanted, they gave him without question. They continued to support his actions regardless of the circumstances until public pressure threatened to remove them from office. Then they temporarily abandoned their advocacy until the storm passed. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the judges treated Barnett on several occasions with disrespect and sometimes disdain. Moral conscience, professional dedication, and genius at architectural design made Barnett the most celebrated 19th-century architect of St. Louis. As county architect, his integrity and achievement served to remind the public and the judges of the difference between his approach and the court's long history of poor decision-making. While the judges could not condemn Barnett's court-related achievements without cause, they could ignore them, and they did.

Three years after the completion of the Poorhouse, city residents got their revenge by voting to separate themselves from county control in a disputed election. This separation meant the end of the St. Louis County administrative court and its reign of financial extravagance and political corruption. Transformed by new boundaries, the new St. Louis County had to erect a new county courthouse without the city revenues they had depended on. County politicians wisely chose to build a modest \$31,000 courthouse, designed by architect Frank Renick. Meanwhile city taxpayers enjoyed a rest from politically motivated government boondoggles for a decade or more. The need for a new city hall arose in the late 1880s, however, and nine years of construction passed before the new city hall could be occupied. A total of 15 years passed before the project was completed in 1904 at a cost of 1.8 million dollars.

SOURCES

Dexter Tiffany Papers, Box 33, Folder 7; Box 36, Folder 13, Missouri History Museum.

Missouri Republican, Oct. 23, 1865; April 20, 1847; Sept. 19, 1871; Nov. 14, 1871; Nov. 23, 1871; Feb. 14, 1872; Sept. 25, 1872; April 8, 1873; April 9, 1873; May 2, 1873; June 6, 1873; July 1, 1873; Feb. 2, 1873.

St. Louis County Court Proceedings: Book 2/Vol. 3 (Feb. 1836 to April 1841); Book 3/Vol. 4 (April 1841 to April 1844); Book 4/Vol. 6 (April 1844 to April 1847); Book 15/Vol. 17 (Jan. 1869 to June 1870); Book 16/Vol. 18 (June 1870 to Aug. 1871); Book 17/Vol. 19 (Aug. 1871 to May 1872); Book 18/Vol. 20 (May 1872 to April 1873); Book 19/Vol. 21 (April 1873 to May 1874). Missouri History Museum.

St. Louis Democrat, Aug. 30, 1871; Sept. 2, 1871; Nov. 24, 1871; Jan. 9, 1872; Feb. 14, 1872; Feb. 17, 1872; March 22, 1872; March 1, 1873; March 2, 1873; March 6, 1873; May 2, 1873; June 21, 1873.

St. Louis New Era, Jan. 7, 1845.

St. Louis People's Organ, Nov. 15, 1845.

St. Louis Times, May 30, 1870; April 19, 1871; Sept. 9, 1871; Nov. 14, 1871; Feb. 14, 1872; Feb. 17, 1872; May 17, 1872; Oct. 24, 1872; Jan. 24, 1873; Feb. 25, 1873; March 4, 1873; March 6, 1873; March 11, 1873; March 13,

1873; March 29, 1873; April 8, 1873; May 2, 1873; June 6, 1873; Oct. 30, 1873; Dec. 14, 1873; Oct. 5, 1877.

St. Louis Globe, May 2, 1873.



An aerial view of the only surviving parts of the Poor House complex looking northwest toward the intersection of Hampton (left) and Arsenal (right). The building at left appears on the 1903 Sanborn map while the one to the right is later, perhaps c. 1920. The two buildings were adapted as offices by the educational research laboratory CEMREL between 1970 and 1972. The Campbell Design Group bought the complex in 1985 and named it Campbell Plaza. This photo from CDGEngineers.com. shows the setting before the rest of the site was cut into a series of poorly planned residential developments.

Events Calendar

**Exhibit: "Walking Grand Center:
Four Streetscape Designs"**
Friday, March 7 to Saturday, May 17
Bernoudy Gallery of Architecture
Sheldon Galleries, 3648 Washington Avenue

This exhibition documents two current projects intended to reinforce Grand Center's image as a nationally recognized arts, cultural and entertainment community. ArtWalk™ will create a lively and engaging pedestrian pathway from Lindell Boulevard, alongside the St. Louis University Museum of Art, across the Scottish Rite parking lot, through Public Media Commons between The Nine Network and St. Louis Public Radio, alongside the western side of The Sheldon to Washington Avenue, then west to the Pulitzer and Contemporary Art Museum, and then north along Spring to the "Burnt Church." The Sheldon has engaged Benjamin Gilmartin and his team, also designers of Public Media Commons, to create its "Sheldon Plaza," and Grand Center, Inc. has engaged AxiOme, who designed the new St. Louis Public Radio building, to design the public areas of Art Walk. The "Great Streets" project is being undertaken by Grand Center with the East-West Gateway Council of Governments to upgrade streetscapes and improve lighting, making the district an even more inviting destination. Christner is the architectural firm involved in the Great Streets project, with Hoerrshaudt Landscape Architects. The exhibition will include drawings, plans, photographs and a large model of Grand Center designed by AxiOme as part of the ArtWalk plans.

Exhibit: “Suburban Modernism: The Architecture & Interior Design of Ralph & Mary Jane Fournier”

Continuing to Saturday, February 22
Morton J. May Foundation Gallery,
Maryville University Library

Ralph Fournier had the rare fortune to work for some developers who thought that houses designed in contemporary style would sell, and he became virtually the only St. Louis architect responsible for entire subdivisions of modern homes, among them Craig Woods (a Kirkwood historic district), Sunswept in Creve Coeur, and the upscale Arrowhead in Creve Coeur. Open Mon-Thurs 7 a.m. to midnight; Friday 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Sunday 11 a.m. to midnight.

Exhibit: “On the Thresholds of Space-Making: Shinohara Kazuo and His Legacy”

Continuing to Sunday, April 20
Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, Washington U.

Kazuo Shinohara, as he is usually known in the West, was one of the most important Mid-Century architects in Japan. This exhibit includes work both by him and by his followers. More on page 8. The Kemper is open Wednesday through Monday 11 to 5. Metered visitor parking is in the lot between the Museum and Skinker.

Exhibit: “Imagining the Founding of St. Louis”

Continuing to Saturday, August 23
Sheldon Galleries, 3648 Washington Avenue

Marking the 250th anniversary of the founding of the French settlement of St. Louis, this exhibition brings together paintings, drawings, prints and sculpture by Oscar E. Berninghaus, Karl Bodmer, Charles Bird King, Louis Leopold Boilly, Charles Ferdinand Wimar and others. It also pays tribute to Native Missourians with an array of Mississippian, Osage, Missouri and Illiniwek regalia, art and artifacts. Early maps from the 18th and 19th centuries, a print depicting the Chouteau family mansion, and, for the first month of the exhibit, a handwritten page from Auguste Chouteau’s narrative of the settlement will also be on view. A resource room provides books, as well as contemporary works in photography and painting by David Hanlon, Michael Haynes, Sean Standing Bear, Philip Slein and James M. Smith that consider the area’s complex histories. A fully illustrated catalogue accompanies the exhibition, with essays by co-curators Daven Anderson and Olivia Lahs-Gonzales and by historian J. Frederick Fausz, with contributions by Caitlin Donald, Julie Dunn Morton, Kerrie Mohahan, Kathryn Red Corn and Jill Ahlberg Yohe.

Gallery Talk: Shinohara Kazuo

Wednesday, February 19, 5 p.m.
Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, Washington U.

Seng Kuan, assistant professor of architectural history in the Sam Fox School and curator of the exhibit about this important Japanese architect, will discuss some of the highlights of the show.

Talk: “George Steedman and Architecture”

Thursday, February 27, 7 p.m.
Schlafly Branch Library, Lindell & Euclid

Esley Hamilton continues the lecture series St. Louis Chapter of the SAH with a discussion of the impact of St. Louis businessman George Steedman on St. Louis architecture. Steedman (1871-1940) gave the endowed architecture library to the St. Louis Public Library, created an annual traveling fellowship for architects, and built a winter house in California that set the standard for the Spanish Revival style and is now a National Historic Landmark. This talk, originally presented to the St. Louis Chapter of the AIA, reviews those accomplishments, which are still benefitting us today.



George Fox Steedman’s crest was a rebus on his name. The mythical centaur is, of course, a steed-man. Surprisingly given this, the family pronounced the name “Sted-man”.

Talk: “Grant And Shaw: St. Louis and Beyond”

Tower Grove Park Lecture Series
Sunday, March 2, 3:00 pm
Stupp Center, Tower Grove Park

Pamela Sanfilippo, park historian at Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site, will share her insights into the antebellum world of Grant and Henry Shaw and will examine their impact in St. Louis and beyond. For more than forty years, Grant interacted with St. Louis through the White Haven estate in south St. Louis County. He last visited here in 1883 but lost the property shortly before his death in 1885. The Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site commemorates Grant’s ties to St. Louis.

NEW KEMPER EXHIBIT ON SHINOHARA KAZUO

The Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum at Washington University is showing the work of an important Japanese architect through Sunday, April 20: "On the Thresholds of Space-Making: Shinohara Kazuo and His Legacy." (The exhibition follows the Japanese practice of putting an individual's family name first, rather than Westernizing the name as has been done previously in this country. Following this model, we would say Tange Kenzo or Maki Fumihiko.) Shinohara (1925-2006) was one of Japan's most influential architects of the postwar generation. A mathematician turned architect, Shinohara achieved cult-figure status with his series of sublimely beautiful, purist houses designed over a thirty-year period, from the mid-1950s to the 1980s. Shinohara was also a rigorous polemicist, and through both writings and architecture he scrutinized and reframed fundamental architectural conventions, such as public/private, body/space, and openness/enclosure. His dictum "A house is a work of art" summarizes his belief in the potential of everyday design. His resistance to a technological approach to architectural design, one that had dominated Japan's architectural profession since the 1920s, caused him to break away from the conventional formulas for single-family houses that dominated Japan's postwar suburbia.

The exhibition includes original drawings and sketches rarely seen outside Japan, as well as period photos and reproductions of select models. A featured work is Shinohara's House in White (1964-66), one of his most iconic, in which he rearranges a familiar design palette – a square plan, a pointed roof, white walls, and a symbolic pillar – to give the main room spaciousness through abstraction. The architect's formalism – his basic explorations of geometry and color – lend his work a poetic quality that fuses simplicity and surprise, the ordered and the unexpected.

The enduring legacy of Shinohara's work is seen in projects by younger and more widely acclaimed Japanese architects he influenced: Ito Toyo (born 1941; Pritzker Prize 2013), Nishizawa Ryue of the firm SANAA (born 1966; Pritzker Prize 2010), and Ishigami Junya (born 1974). By juxtaposing Shinohara's work with that of subsequent generations, we see a clear lineage. These architects have pushed the frontiers of architectural design, perhaps unrivaled in their intellectual rigor and stylistic coherence in contemporary global practice.

The show is curated by Seng Kuan, assistant professor of architectural history in the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts. He will speak on February 19. Support has been provided by the Sam Fox School, the Japan Foundation, and the Graham Foundation.

News Letter

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