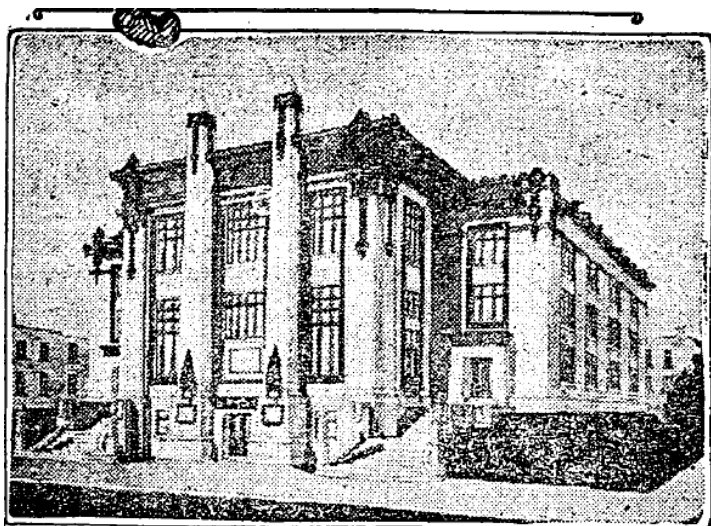


MOUNT MORIAH TEMPLE IN LINDELL PARK

by Ruth Keenoy

On Saturday, December 20, 1913, an afternoon ceremony was held at the corner of Natural Bridge and North Garrison Avenues in north St. Louis City to dedicate Mount Moriah Lodge No. 40. This unique building, though no longer used as a freemasonry hall, remains as imposing a presence as it was in 1913 – a striking “Egyptian model, and a conspicuous ornament to its section of the city.”¹ The group calling the lodge its own was organized in the 1840s. Until 1913, however, lodge members met in various buildings and halls in and around the city. Today, Mount Moriah Temple is part of the Lindell Park Historic District (placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2012). The building’s design is an exceptional example of the Egyptian Revival style and one of the finest in St. Louis.



MOUNT MORIAH TEMPLE

Figure 1. Rendering illustrated in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and the *St. Louis Republican* (12 November 1911) for the proposed north side temple designed for Mt. Moriah Lodge No. 40.

St. Louis’ earliest freemasonry lodge, No. 111, was established in 1808 when Missouri remained part of the Louisiana Territory. The group, under the auspices of Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Fiveash Riddick, and Rufus Easton, met in “an old French house of upright timbers of twenty by forty feet, one of the first in the village, built in 1765 by Jacques Denis, a joiner . . . situated at the east side

of Second Street, next to the corner of Walnut Street.”² The organization was short-lived and no longer in existence by 1812, demonstrating the temporary nature of freemasonry groups organized in Missouri prior to statehood.³ Territorial freemasons relied on Grand Lodges incorporated in other states for temporary charters. For example, St. Louis’ Lodge 111 received its charter from the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, where many members had business connections, while St. Charles Lodge No. 28 was chartered in 1819 by the Grand Lodge of Tennessee, possibly through similar relationships.⁴ Once Missouri became a state in 1821, a Grand Lodge (of Missouri) was established and from this organization, Mount Moriah Lodge No. 40 received its charter in 1841.⁵

The years 1870 to 1930 have been described as the “golden age” of freemasonry – a time when memberships increased exponentially and rituals became more uniform.⁶ Prior to 1870, freemasons infrequently constructed buildings for their own use. Most groups rented an upper floor or single room for meetings – churches, banks and theaters were among the most popular choices for Masonic lodge meetings.⁷ By the late nineteenth century, however, rituals had become “both increasingly standardized and solemn” and freemasons began to design special “lodge rooms” that were strictly reserved for such activities.⁸ In contrast to earlier times, fraternal orders increasingly built their own lodges, reserving upper floors and leasing lower floors to commercial tenants.⁹



Figure 2. The building at 398 Main Street in downtown Troy, Missouri, was constructed by the town’s Masons in 1906-07. The lower floor held a bank and the upper floor served as the lodge.

Troy, Missouri provides a good example of such activities in Missouri. The town's earliest fraternal orders used churches, banks and the Lincoln County Courthouse for meetings. In 1837, construction began on a Universalist Church at 530 Main Street (extant, completed c. 1850) that shared space with the town's Temperance Union and Masonic order. In 1907, local Masons constructed their own lodge at 398 Main Street (**Figure 2**). The upper floor was used for fraternal activities and the lower floor held Troy's Farmers and Mechanics Bank.¹⁰

Such practices were common in St. Louis as well, demonstrated by the Masonic lodge proposed at the intersection of 15th and Olive in 1896 (**Figure 3**). Designed by Barnett, Haynes and Barnett, the lower level of the property was intended for commercial use and the two upper floors provided space for "a number of the Masonic and Knight Templar lodges of the city."¹¹ The purpose of split-use space was purely for financial reasons. "By the final decade of the nineteenth century, the population [in most cities] . . . was vast enough and commanded sufficient financial resources that [many fraternal orders erected] new buildings designed specifically" for their own needs.¹²

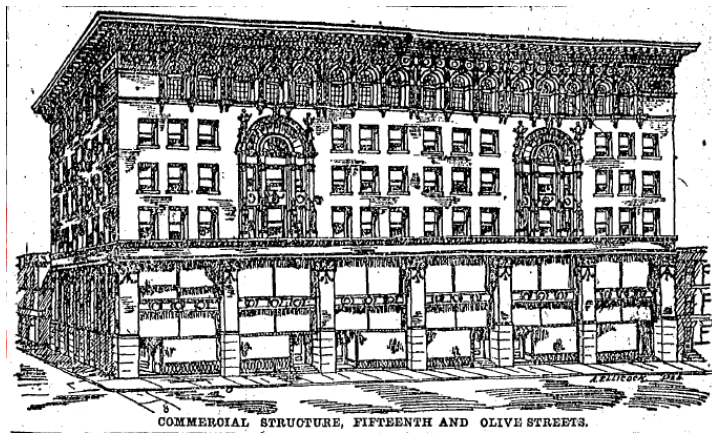


Figure 3. Commercial building at 15th and Olive, designed by Barnett, Haynes and Barnett in 1896. The property was planned with space (upper two floors) for fraternal lodge meetings (St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 8 March 1996, p. 25). It is unclear whether this building was ever constructed. If so, it was used for "light manufacturing" by 1909.¹³

In the case of Mt. Moriah Lodge No. 40, city directories and newspapers published in the mid-to-late nineteenth century indicate that the group met regularly in a "hall" at "Broadway and Salisbury" and at the corner of Broadway and Mallinckrodt each "Saturday before the full moon."¹⁴ It is likely that these sources reference a single building based on the fact that Salisbury Avenue is merely one block north of Mallinckrodt in the Hyde Park neighborhood (**Figure 4**). At some point, the lodge moved its meetings south to Union Hall (not extant) at Broadway and Benton in Old North St. Louis. Although a new lodge was planned as early as 1895, it was nearly two more decades before the building was constructed.¹⁵

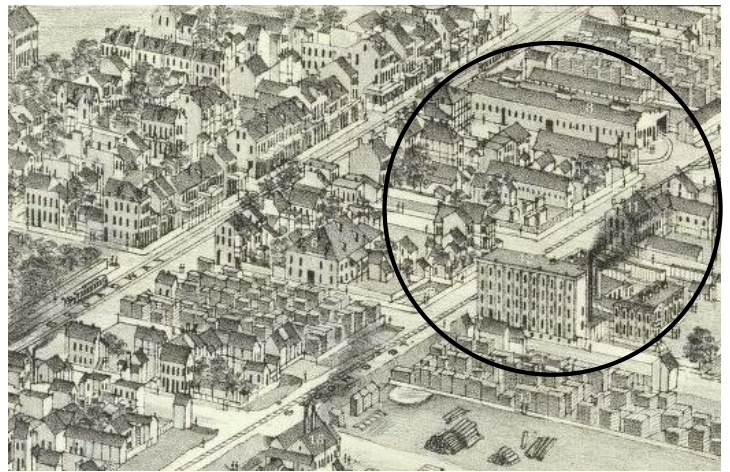


Figure 4. Vicinity of the original meeting hall for Mount Moriah Lodge No. 40 was likely within the group of buildings circled (not extant). Plate 47, Dry & Compton, Pictorial St. Louis, 1875.

In November 1911, a formal announcement and architectural rendering for the new Masonic temple for Mt. Moriah Lodge were published in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (**Figure 1**).

The building will be . . . brick, with a heavy outer coat of cement mortar. Plain white surfaces and dark green terra cotta ornamentation will form the external color scheme . . . The basement will be finished in rathskeller style for banquet purposes. Wide stairways will lead to a reception hall and ballroom on the first floor . . . and the mezzanine floor [will have] a large clubroom or recital hall. The second floor will contain the lodgeroom, with a large organ loft. There will be special facilities for Knights Templar.¹⁶

A similar article bearing an identical architectural rendering was also published in *The St. Louis Republican* on November 12, 1911. This article provided additional information, including the architectural firm credited with designing the building – Mauran, Russell and Crowell. The article further stated that construction was due to begin in Spring 1912.¹⁷ Construction was delayed by nearly a year however, possibly due to lack of sufficient funds to cover estimated construction costs of \$60,000. A building permit for construction was finally filed on March 21, 1913 but the permit bears no mention of the architect.¹⁸ Likewise there is no mention of an architect in the City's business newspaper, *The St. Louis Daily Record*, though the contractor is identified as Charles O. A. Brunk. Even more interesting is that a weekly trade journal, *Construction News*, identified the building's architect in February 1913 as "F.J.H. Rusch."¹⁹ Rusch was not employed by Mauran, Russell and Crowell, but he was a member of Mt. Moriah Lodge No. 40.

Henri Rusch (1874-1959) was born in South Africa and immigrated to the United States (Cleveland, Ohio) in

1901.²⁰ He moved to St. Louis in 1903 to work for the Missouri Pacific Railroad Company. Rusch designed the Airdome and several buildings for the Boer Exhibit at the 1904 World's Fair. Afterward, he landed a job as engineer for the City of St. Louis. During these years, he was also senior partner of Rush, Lee and Rush (note the Americanized spelling of Rusch) with architect James Sidney Lee (1871-1946) and his own son, Henry Rush, Jr. (1908-1974).

Rush, Lee and Rush primarily designed institutional and public buildings. Some of their best known work was completed for the St. Louis Archdiocese, including St. Roch's School (1912) and Church (1921) in the Skinker-DeBaliviere Historic District. The firm also designed Pope St. Pius V Church, constructed in 1916, located in Tower Grove Heights Historic District (**Figure 5**).²¹



Figure 5. This photo of Pope Pius V Church, taken in 1917 by Frank M. White, notes the architect as J. Sidney Lee. Rusch's obituary credits him as architect. Photo courtesy of St. Louis Mercantile Library Association. Copy at Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc.

Henri Rusch's name appears infrequently in relation to his work in St. Louis, possibly due to his status as a silent partner (while employed by the City of St. Louis) at Rush, Lee and Rush. The association of Rusch as the sole designer of Mt. Moriah Lodge cannot be fully established based on available sources but we do know a number of things for certain. One is that the building's rendering was tagged as a Mauran, Russell and Crowell design in 1911 by a local newspaper. By 1913 when the building was constructed, Rusch was identified as the sole architect by a

professional trade journal. The lodge's anniversary booklet issued in 1941 alludes to Rusch as the designer, but not by any direct statement. Rusch himself, who is quoted in the booklet, indicates "We went much further into the dark past for the origin of the style of architecture used by *your* architect, but it would be no loss of time to point to the great idea underlying the motive of erecting such marvelous buildings in times when mankind was not favored as we are today."²²

Despite the elusive references as to who, exactly, designed Mt. Moriah, it is safe to assume that Rusch was the project's supervising architect when the building was constructed in 1913. Additionally, there are sufficient changes to the 1911 architectural rendering and *Post-Dispatch's* description to support the postulation that the building in Lindell Park was designed by Henri Rusch. Another consideration is that the original design presented by Mauran, Russell and Crowell may have proved too costly to build – this would explain the delay in construction and provide a reason to engage another architect to oversee the final plans.

Mt. Moriah's facade bears a striking resemblance to Theodore Link's Palace of Mines and Metallurgy at the World's Fair (**Figures 6 and 7**). In contrast to Link's example, however, Rusch's facade obelisks were not merely decorative – they housed a "ventilation scheme, insuring the circulation of pure air when windows [were] closed."²³ In both examples, the obelisks visually dominate the structure they adorn, rising well above the roofline.



Figure 6. Mount Moriah Temple, view is southwest.

This idea of utilizing oversized, imposing Egyptian Revival obelisks to frame a recessed, tomb-like entrance was pure Egyptian Revival but to do so in a manner where they rose dramatically above the structure itself appears to be an American twist. An early example, dating to the 1830s, was submitted by Robert Cary Long, Jr. (1810 – 1849) for the entrance gate at Baltimore's Green Mount Cemetery. Long's original Egyptian Revival design was never

executed; the cemetery opted to construct the architect's "mediaeval" [Gothic] gate that stands today. The oversized obelisks, however, remained part of Long's accepted design constructed in the 1840s.²⁴



Figure 7. Entrance to the Palace of Mines and Metallurgy (Source: Artists' Edition, *The World's Fair in Colorypes and Monotones* (Milwaukee, WI: Germanic Publ. Company, 1904, pages not numbered). Copy at Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc.

Another excellent example perpetrated in 1848 – this time in Egyptian Revival tradition – is attributed to William Strickland (c. 1787 – 1854) who designed Nashville's First Presbyterian Church (**Figure 8**).²⁵ Though the Egyptian Revival style was frequently used in freemasonry buildings, particularly after 1900, "no single architectural style dominated the design of Masonic temples."²⁶

Egyptian Revivalism became relatively popular in the United States following Napoleon's military campaigns into Egypt, during which time "engineers, botanists, mathematicians, and artists" documented "nearly every aspect of Egyptian culture."²⁷ The findings were published as a 21-volume series (beginning in 1809), which sparked worldwide interest in all things Egyptian.²⁸ In America, architecture was the foremost medium through which Egyptian motifs were expressed. The style remained popular through the 1920s due to the "discovery of King Tut's tomb" in 1922.²⁹ No other building in St. Louis expresses architectural fascination with Egyptian Revivalism quite as clearly and innovatively as Henri Rusch's imperial temple in Lindell Park.

NOTES

1. "Mount Moriah Masonic Temple is Dedicated," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Dec. 21, 1913, p. 13B.
2. J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Saint Louis City and County* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts & Co., 1883), pp. 1774-1776.
3. Ibid.
4. The Grand Lodge of Missouri, "Missouri Masonry," website: www.momason.org/node/23 (Accessed Feb. 10, 2014).



Figure 8. First Presbyterian Church, Nashville, Tennessee, designed by William Strickland, constructed in 1848.

NOTES (continued)

5. *Mount Moriah Lodge No. 40, 100th Anniversary, 1841-1941* (St. Louis: self-published, 1941), p. 5; Scharf, p. 1785.
6. Ibid, p. xv.
7. William D. Moore, *Masonic Temples: Freemasonry, Ritual Architecture, and Masculine Archetypes* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2006, pp. xv, 15, 121.
8. Moore, p. 15.
9. Ibid, pp. 121-122.
10. George Giles, Interview with Ruth Keenoy, Nov. 17, 2014.
11. "Lodge for the Masons," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, May 20, 1896, p. 6. It is unclear whether the building depicted in Figure 2 was ever constructed. Microfilmed building permits for that city block are missing. Sanborn maps and city directories dating to the early 1900s document a five-story industrial building on the parcel at the northeast corner of Olive and Fifteenth. No additional large building (or vacant lot) is noted at the intersection.
12. Moore, p. 132.
13. Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, St. Louis, Volume Two, Sheet 35, 1909.
14. "North St. Louis Locals," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Oct. 9, 1880, p. 6; Henry Tanner and John B. Lee, comp., *St. Louis City Guide and Business Directory* (St. Louis: St. Louis Book and News Co., 1868), p. 46.
15. *Mt. Moriah Lodge No. 40, 100th Anniversary* (1941), pp. 12,
16. "Plans Complete for North Side Masonic Temple," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Nov. 12, 1911, p. 10.

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17. "Mt. Moriah Lodge to Build New Temple," *St. Louis Republic*, Nov. 12, 1911.
City of St. Louis, City Block 5216: March 21, 1913, A8259.
19. "Clubs and Society Buildings," *Construction News*, Vol. 35, Feb. 23, 1913, p. 25.
20. United States Census, 1910.
21. Walter Barlow Stevens, *Centennial History of Missouri*, Vol. V (St. Louis: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1921, p. 122;
"Henri Rush, Former City Engineer, Dies," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, March 20, 1959, p. 3E.
22. *Mount Moriah Lodge No. 40* (1941), p. 16.
23. Ibid.
24. Claire Wittler Eckels, "The Egyptian Revival in America," *Archaeology*, Vol. 3, No. 3, Sept. 1950, pp. 166-167; Green Mount Cemetery, "Art and Architecture," Available at <http://greenmountcemetery.com/greenmount-cemetery-features-architecture.htm> (accessed Nov. 7, 2014. Long's design for the Egyptian Revival gate at Green Mount remains in the cemetery's archival collections.
25. Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects* (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1970), p. 579.
26. Moore, p. 139.
27. Cynthia A Fuener, "Out of Egypt. . . Into Illinois," *Historic Illinois*, August, 2010, p. 3.
28. Spiro Kostof, *A History of Architecture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 572.
29. Metropolitan Museum of Art, "Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History," website:
http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/erev/hd_erev.htm (accessed Nov. 18, 2014); Fuener, p. 4.

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ENCOUNTERING PALMYRA: HISTORY AND IMAGINATION

by David R. Hanlon

Once a thriving caravan city of the Roman frontier during the 1st to 3rd centuries C.E., Palmyra contained an array of temples, colonnaded streets, theatres and commercial areas that reflected the building order of the period, while also displaying the city's social and artistic independence. Reclaimed by the Syrian desert and forgotten for centuries, the wonderfully intact remains of these structures – and the impressive tower tombs of citizens – were rediscovered by Western travelers in the 18th century, sparking a renewed interest in the site.

Part of Palmyra's allure is its remoteness, a magical city across a sea of arid steppe in central Syria. Its features correspond to other cities in the region from the Roman era, but something is different here. Perhaps it is the wide layout of its thoroughfares and remains, hemmed loosely by a large

oasis of palms on its southern edge and low hills to its north and west. Maybe its aura emanates from the people of varied backgrounds who managed to create a cosmopolitan city so long ago. Here they devised their own artistic and linguistic styles from the traditions of both East and West and strove to exert independence from the predominating empires on either side of it.



Johann Sebastian Müller after Giovanni Battista Borra. Engraving of the Temple of Baal Shamin. from Robert Wood, *The Ruins of Palmyra, otherwise Tedmor, in the desert* (London, 1753)

Other features that made Palmyra enticing were the surprising scale and grandeur of its main temple to the Semitic god Bel, the distinctive triple archway that led into the city, and a group of unique tower tombs that overlook all the ruins like sentinels. That the city fell out of the consciousness of most people for several hundred years only increased the sense of wonderment when visitors returned in the eighteenth century. Although the city was arduous to get to, the subsequent work created by artists, and then photographers, brought pieces of Palmyra's physical (and spiritual) elements to a wider audience. The ruins would prove an enticing – but elusive – prey to visually represent, like fragments of a song whose primary melody is but softly discernable.

Palmyra's original growth and grandeur as a city that at one time claimed as many as 200,000 residents was built upon its position along east-west trade routes. Beginning in the first century, its merchants purchased silk, cotton and spices from Arab, Indian and Chinese traders, brought the goods up the Euphrates River and then across land to sell at great profit to the Roman Empire. The servicing, taxation and protection of caravans from (or heading to) the Persian Gulf and to Sassanian Persia also brought wealth and influence to Palmyra's citizens. They made this oasis city distinctly their own, but its days of fruitful independence would soon end. Following the rise of their Queen Zenobia at the end of the third century, Rome crushed and subjugated Palmyra. Then trade routes changed, and after earthquakes and a Mongol invasion occurred in the Middle Ages, the remains of a once-great urban center would lie in heaps in quiet isolation.



Félix Bonfils (1831-1885), *Palmyra. Triumphal Arch*. (ca. 1870) Albumen print from glass negative, Russell Sturgis Photograph Collection, Washington University Archives

When Robert Wood published his lavishly illustrated folio *The Ruins of Palmyra* in 1753, though, the imagination of the Western public was kindled. The city's history – and its distinctive architectural and sculptural styles – became fodder for a growing orientalist movement in Europe, and its rebellious heroine Zenobia began to appear in contemporary plays, literature, and art. Photographers traveled to the site in the nineteenth century to respond to this interest and were soon followed by archaeologists who sought to make sense of the pieces.

Creating a worthwhile visual record at the site of Palmyra is a humbling experience. Unlike many historic places where one or two notable and accepted vantage points come to define a location, this place can only be gathered by its ingredients. Distinctive arrangements of columns or building remains can be made to play against one another in the same composition, but the notable spatial separation between the elements and the undeterred stretch to an endless horizon usually predominates. You feel the weight of time and the fleeting character of wealth, yet also the persistence of light and spirit.



Tower tombs at the edge of Palmyra, Getty Images

It was my great fortune to have been able to visit and photograph at Palmyra on ten occasions between 1990 and 2001. Having learned from the early images of Félix Bonfils, Frank Mason Good (Fig. 2), John Henry Haynes

and Howard Crosby Butler, it was surprising how little had physically changed at the site in the succeeding century. The stage of exploration remained nearly identical to the one which they had traversed.

Sadly, the twenty-first century has brought terrible loss to the people of Syria and the remains of Palmyra. It is somehow fitting, however, that some of the last insightful studies of the temples and arches before they were destroyed by Islamic State militants in 2015 were taken by Don McCullin, one of photography's great storytellers, for his "Southern Frontiers" portfolio (published in 2010). As a journalist who has spent a lifetime being a witness to history and important events, McCullin then felt compelled to return to Palmyra in 2017 to re-photograph the remains. His images are indeed a noble bookend to a chapter in the tale of a magical city of both the past and future.



Don McCullin (born 1935), ruins of the Triumphal Arch after ISIS demolition, seen from the right side of the Bonfils photo above, CNN

Editor's note: David R. Hanlon, the curator of the Sheldon's exhibit on Palmyra, is a Missouri native and has been a practicing photographer for 25 years. He has taught at St. Louis Community College at Meramec since 1990 and was chief photographer of the archaeological excavation at Tell Tuneinir in Syria from 1990 to 2001. His photos have been displayed and published throughout the United States and the Middle East. He will be conducting a special tour of the Sheldon's Palmyra exhibit for the St. Louis Chapter on Saturday, April 14 at 10 a.m.



David R. Hanlon, Diocletian's Camp at Palmyra, detail of 1996 photo

EVENTS CALENDAR

Exhibit: "Bride of the Desert: An Exploration of Palmyra"

Friday, March 2 through Saturday, April 21, 2018
Sheldon Art Galleries, 3648 Washington Blvd.

Once a thriving caravan city of the Roman frontier, Palmyra contained an array of temples, colonnaded streets, theatres and commercial areas. Today the city, now in war-torn Syria, has been almost completely destroyed. Curated by photo historian David R. Hanlon, the exhibit presents 19th-century and recent photographs of Palmyra from local public and private collections. Augmenting the exhibition will be motion graphic and virtual reality pieces created by designers at St. Louis Community College. The Galleries are open Tuesdays noon to 8 p.m., Wednesdays through Fridays noon to 5, Saturdays 10 to 2, and one hour before Sheldon concerts.

Gallery Tour: David R. Hanlon

Saturday, April 14, 10 a.m.

The exhibition curator will give a tour of the Palmyra exhibit especially for SAH members and friends.

Exhibit: Gene Mackey: In Tribute

Friday, March 2 through Saturday, April 21
Bernoudy Gallery of Architecture
Sheldon Art Galleries, 3648 Washington Blvd.

The exhibit reviews the life and work of St. Louis architect Eugene J. Mackey III, founder of the firm Mackey Mitchell Architects. Among the firm's achievements are the Alberici Headquarters at Page & I-170, the Central Institute for the Deaf at Euclid & I-64, Christian Brothers College High School off I-64 in Town & Country, the Shapleigh Fountain at the Missouri Botanical Garden, and the current renovation of the Soldiers Memorial and Court of Honor on Chestnut at 13th, the last of which was originally designed by Gene's father, Eugene Mackey, Jr. Gene was well known for his incisive line drawings, primarily of scenes from his travels, and he was the go-to board member for many civic and charitable organizations.



*Alberici Headquarters, courtesy of Mackey Mitchell Architects
Photo by Debbie Franke Photography, Inc.*

Gallery Talk: John Burse, FAIA

Saturday, April 21, 11:00 a.m.

Talk: “The Restoration of Unity Temple”

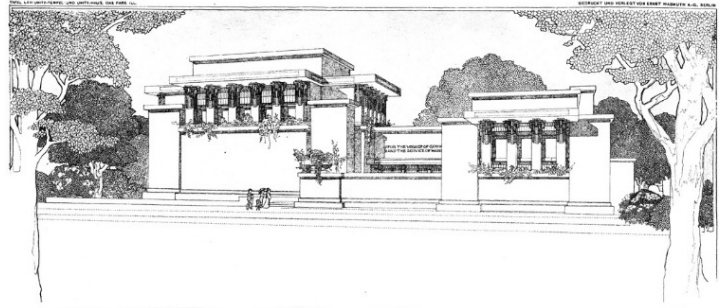
Friday, April 6, 2018, 7 p.m.

Farrell Auditorium, St. Louis Art Museum

The Frank Lloyd Wright House in Ebsworth Park is featuring Gunny Haboe, FAIA, of Harboe Architects at this year’s annual lecture. He will speak about the transformative effort that has returned the Unitarian church in Oak Park, Illinois, one of Frank Lloyd Wright’s most important works, to its original 1908 appearance. The effort took more than two years and cost \$25 million.

Harboe has been involved in renovating some of the most important historic buildings in the Chicago area, including the Marquette and Rookery Buildings in the Loop, the Humboldt Park Stable, Wrigley Field, and the Chicago Board of Trade. His experience with Wright’s work includes the Robie House in Chicago and Taliesin West in Scottsdale, Arizona.

The lecture is free, but tickets are required, and are likely to sell out before the event. Advance tickets are available in person at the Art Museum’s information centers, or (with a service charge) through Metrotix.com on line or by phone at 314-523-1111. Same-day tickets, if available, can be obtained on-site only.



Frank Lloyd Wright, Unity Temple, Oak Park,

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St. Louis Public Library – Central Library

1301 Olive St, St. Louis, MO 63103

Training Room, fourth Tuesday of the month, 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm

2018 Spring

Michael Allen – A Few Stones Left Upon One Another: Historic Preservation

Preservation Research Office: Founder, Director, Architectural Historian and Author

April 24, 2018

The Society of Architectural Historians

St. Louis and Missouri Valley Chapters

Post Office Box 23110

St. Louis, MO 63108

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St. Louis and Missouri Valley Chapters

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Winter Issue	15 November

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