



Exceptional Places

Merchants' National Bank NHL, Grinnell, Iowa

Beyond Chicago: Louis H. Sullivan's Late Masterpieces

Jessica Berglin

Louis H. Sullivan was one of the most influential architects in Chicago at the turn of the 20th century and one of the most prolific figures in America's architectural legacy. He and his partner, Dankmar Adler, were leaders in the Chicago School of Architecture, an architectural trend that transformed the city with new steel-frame, high-rise office buildings in the decades following the Great Fire of 1871. They also worked in other cities such as St. Louis and Buffalo, but the majority of their works were in Chicago. Buildings designed by the duo were marked by Sullivan's inventive ornamentation. Rather than using traditional classical columns, decorative capitals, and pediments, Sullivan recognized the inherent beauty in natural and organic forms and brought them to life in his schemes. Sullivan's designs marked a new progression in architectural ornamentation, as they did not rely on historical precedents. According to Claude Bragdon, who wrote the foreword to Sullivan's autobiography, "... He wove a web of beautiful ornament—flowers and frost, delicate as lace and strong as steel."¹

Despite his artistic acuity, Sullivan's progressive design philosophy did not bode well in the architectural climate that rose in response to Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893. Overall, the architecture of the fair was reminiscent of a Roman city, with monumental white temples echoing the grandeur of classical antiquity. The fair brought a resurgence of interest in the classical architecture Sullivan abhorred; he regarded it as mimicry and outdated historicism. In his final memoirs, he reflected on his aversion to the fair's White City, writing, "the damage brought by the World's Fair will last for half a century from its date, if not longer."²

Because of his distaste for this growing stylistic trend, Sullivan was left without many major commissions after the fair. Furthermore, his surly disposition left him without his leading draftsman, Frank Lloyd Wright, and his partner, Dankmar Adler. Injurious disagreements dissolved both relationships—Wright left the studio in 1893 and Adler left in 1895. David Van Zanten, a Sullivan

historian, wrote of the architect, "Sullivan became a strange, great, solitary figure . . . the subject of distant admiration and recrimination, but not of employment."³

Van Zanten continued about Sullivan's dry spell, commenting, "In 1913 a room in the annual Chicago Architectural Club exhibition at the Art Institute was given over to a retrospective exhibition of his work as if, at fifty-seven, he was already a figure from the past."⁴ Sullivan was not a figure from the past, however. After years of having few commissions throughout Chicago, he received a new calling—one that took him to the reaches of the Midwest prairie at the behest of small-town bankers and businessmen. From 1906 to 1919 he designed banks, commercial buildings, and residences that transformed the architecture of rural downtowns and forged a new trend in Midwestern architecture in the early 20th century.

Carl Bennett was the first banker to commission Sullivan to design a new building for National Farmers' Bank in Owatonna, Minnesota, a farming town on the state's southeastern prairie. Bennett had read Sullivan's essays on architecture and found that

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Sullivan often incorporated his clients' initials into decorative ornamentation. On the left, John D. Van Allen's initials on his department store in Clinton, Iowa. On the right, a brick inscribed with the initials PSB for People's Savings Bank in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Photos by Jessica Berglin

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The History and National Register Programs at the Midwest Regional Office of the National Park Service offer this newsletter as a forum of information for NHL owners and the public we serve. We hope you find our articles helpful and informative, and we welcome your suggestions for future issues.

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SPLINTERS FROM THE DUSTY NEWEL POST



Terra Cotta Repair

Mark Chavez

This edition of “Splinters” addresses the history of terra cotta and repairs recently performed on the Hoyt Sherman Place in Des Moines, Iowa.

Preservation Brief No. 7: The Preservation of Historic Glazed Architectural Terra Cotta, by de Teel Patterson Tiller (www.nps.gov/history/hps/TPS/briefs/brief07.htm), provides the following definition of the material:

“Generically, the broadest definition of terra cotta refers to a high grade of weathered or aged clay, which when mixed with sand or with pulverized fired clay, can be molded and fired at high temperatures to a hardness and compactness not obtainable with brick. Simply put, terra cotta is an enriched molded clay brick or block. The word terra cotta is derived from the Latin word terra cotta — literally, “cooked earth.” Terra cotta clays vary widely in color according to geography and types, ranging from red and brown to white.

Terra cotta was usually hollow cast in blocks which were open to the back, like boxes, with internal compartment-like stiffeners called webbing. Webbing substantially strengthened the load-bearing capacity of the hollow terra cotta block without greatly increasing its weight.

Terra cotta blocks were often finished with a glaze; that is, a slip glaze (clay wash) or an aqueous solution of metal salts was brushed or sprayed on the air-dried block before firing. Glazing changed the color, imitated different finishes, and produced a relatively impervious surface on the weather face of the final product. The glaze on the terra cotta unit possessed excellent weathering properties when properly maintained. It had rich color and provided a hard surface that was not easily chipped off. Glazing offered unlimited and fade-resistant colors to the designer. Even today, few building materials can match the glazes on terra cotta for the range and, most importantly, the durability of colors.”



Left: Glazed architectural terra cotta is used as a highly decorative building material. Right: Spalling is a common condition caused by water infiltration and freezing temperatures. Photos from *Preservation Brief No. 7*.

Hoyt Sherman Place

Hoyt Sherman Place, a grand entertainment and education facility in Des Moines, Iowa, was originally built in 1877, and is a nationally significant National Register of Historic Places property. Its name sake was integral in the development of Iowa’s political system in the mid-19th century. Hoyt Sherman was born in 1827 in Lancaster, Ohio, to a prominent family within the state’s political forum. His father was Charles R. Sherman,

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Avoid Potential Fire Hazards At Your National Historic Landmark

Michele Curran

In the past several years, two of the National Park Service Midwest Region's National Historic Landmarks (NHLs) have been severely damaged by fire as a result of using heat-producing tools during renovation projects.

On November 21, 2001, the Old Capitol Building NHL in Iowa City, Iowa, suffered a fire that destroyed the building's 160 year old cupola, dome, and bell. The State Fire Marshal ruled that the fire was started accidentally by workers using hand torches or heat guns to remove asbestos. Visit www.uowa.edu/~oldcap/history_p7.shtml for further details on the fire, the aftermath, and the successful renovation.



Left: Old Capitol Building on fire, Iowa City, Iowa. Photograph courtesy of Old Capitol Museum.
Right: Jefferson County Courthouse on fire, Madison, Indiana. Photo by Robert Maile.

On May 20, 2009, John Stacier, Executive Director of Historic Madison, Inc./Historic Madison Foundation, Inc., wrote the NPS, "As I write this, the Jefferson County Courthouse, built 1854-55, is suffering a devastating fire. The entire roof is gone, though as I last saw it the barrel and dome were still partly standing - the lantern at the top was destroyed earlier this evening." Several weeks later, Mr. Stacier reported that officials determined the cause as a "propane torch used in soldering the new copper downspout to the box gutter had ignited [the] underlying wood structure." The Jefferson County Courthouse in Madison, Indiana, is a contributing building in the Madison Historic District NHL.

The NPS' Technical Preservation Services (TPS) provides excellent advice on a variety of preservation issues, and may be found on-line as "Preservation Briefs" at www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps, and as "Preservation Tech Notes" at www.nps.gov/history/tps/technotes. Regarding paint removal, the use of heat (blow) torches is specifically **not** recommended. Along with a discussion on the treatment of paint problems in historic buildings, *Preservation Brief No. 10: Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork*, includes information on the justification for paint removal, paint removal precautions, re-painting historic buildings for cosmetic reasons, and identification of exterior paint surface conditions and recommended treatments.

The TPS also provides information on paint removal from wood siding in *Tech Note No. 18: Paint Removal From Wood Siding*, using the Truman Home at the Harry S. Truman National Historic Site, in Independence, Missouri, as an example:

"Thermally removing paint using a heat gun does carry certain fire risks that require precautions both in the planning as well as in the execution of the work. With an ignition

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An Update from the Chief

Donald L. Stevens, Jr.

We present our 2009 edition of *Exceptional Places* with a New Year resolution from the Chief that my column will be on time in 2010. My tardiness, though, gives me the opportunity to wish you all a peaceful and more prosperous New Year. In the past year, I spent four months as acting Superintendent of Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. My absence and the catching up on our National Historic Landmark work after my return contributed to the delayed edition.

I am proud to report that the Midwest National Historic Landmark staff and partners had a productive 2009. There are ten NHL documentation projects waiting for review by the Secretary of the Interior's Advisory Board this spring. They include new NHL nominations for Split Rock Light Station, Minnesota; Wright Field, Ohio; the Northwestern Branch National Home for Disabled Soldiers (NHDVS), Wisconsin; Western Branch NHDVS, Kansas; Mountain Branch NHDVS, Tennessee; Battle Mountain Sanitarium, NHDVS, South Dakota; Dennison Train Depot, Ohio; Stratobowl, South Dakota; Lynch Quarry, North Dakota; and a boundary revision for Harry S Truman Historic District NHL, Missouri. There also are three projects on review in our Washington office: new nominations for Dayton Veterans Administration Center, Ohio; Pinsiwa House, Indiana, and a boundary revision for Riverside NHL, Illinois.

The Secretary designated three new NHLs in the Midwest Region in 2009. The Christ Church Lutheran, Minnesota, and the Aldo Leopold Farm and Shack, Wisconsin, authored by Rebecca Kumar, are highlighted here. The New Philadelphia Town site, Illinois, is the third new NHL. In the 2009 appropriation to the National Park Service, Congress funded \$1 million for Japanese American Confinement Sites preservation program. Three Midwest organizations received grants: Japanese American Citizens League, Twin Cities Chapter, Minnesota; Japanese American Service Committee, Illinois; and United Tribes Technical College, North Dakota.

New Philadelphia Townsite Provides Clues to the Past

Vergil E. Noble

Earlier this year, Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne approved the designation of nine new National Historic Landmark (NHL) properties. Among those recognized were three archeological sites, including the New Philadelphia Townsite in Pike County, Illinois. Its designation was the culmination of collaborative efforts among academic researchers, descendants of the town's founder, and members of the neighboring community over many years.

New Philadelphia, founded in 1836, is believed to be the first town in the United States legally registered and platted by an African American. Frank McWorter, a slave in Kentucky, bought his own freedom and that of immediate family with surplus funds earned from mining niter and processing saltpeter. He subsequently moved to Illinois and purchased the acreage that would become New Philadelphia, selling lots to both African Americans and European Americans. With proceeds from those sales and other sources, McWorter eventually bought the freedom of a dozen more family members.

The rural community flourished at first, situated near major crossroads at the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. But New Philadelphia fell into decline when the railroad bypassed it in 1869. Dissolved under an official order of 1885, over time the abandoned town reverted to open fields. Today no trace of New Philadelphia is visible above ground, but archeological integrity of the site is exceptional.



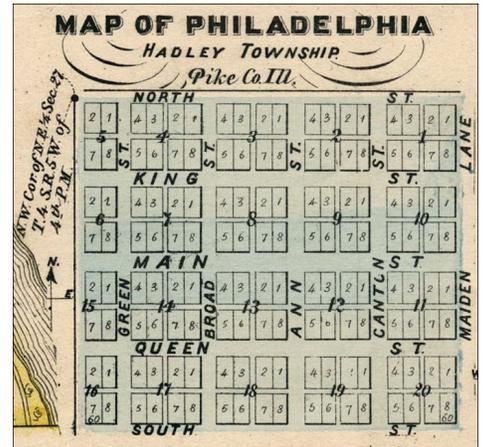
Students recording archeological data at New Philadelphia Townsite. Photo by Christopher Fennell, University of Illinois.

Since 2002, a multidisciplinary team of researchers from several institutions has conducted archeological field investigations at the New Philadelphia Townsite. Students from all over the country have excavated at the site, and a new grant will continue to support this important research for several more years.

Archeological investigations to date show how the town was integrated into a system of local and national commerce, and the site offers an ideal opportunity to compare regional and ethnic patterns of consumption in the 19th-century economy. New Philadelphia Townsite NHL thus has the potential to yield nationally significant information advancing archeological theory related to race, ethnicity, culture change, commodity exchange, and other areas of study.

Many properties identify archeological research as an area of national significance under NHL Criterion 6, but New Philadelphia Townsite NHL is unusual for being a Historic period archeological site without direct connections to major historical events (Criterion 1) or personages (Criterion 2). The newly designated Ludlow Tent Colony Site in Colorado is more typical of historic archeological NHLs. That site was recognized both for its research potential and for its association with a 1914 coal miners' strike that led to the so-called Ludlow Massacre, a pivotal event in U.S. labor history.

Only two Historic period properties of the nearly 2,500 NHLs have been recognized solely under Criterion 6. The African Burial Ground, an early cemetery hidden beneath the urban landscape of New York City until its discovery during construction of a federal office building, received landmark status in 1993 for its ability to reveal important information related to 350 years of African culture (President George W. Bush proclaimed it a National Monument under authority of the Antiquities Act of 1906). The New Philadelphia Townsite, however,



Plat of New Philadelphia (D. W. Ensign, *Atlas Map of Pike County*, Illinois, Andreas, Lyter & Co., Davenport, Iowa, 1872, p. 84. Illinois Historical Survey Collections, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign).

has the distinction of being the only occupation site of the Historic period to achieve NHL status for archeological significance alone.

Frank McWorter's compelling story is an inspiration to many, and particularly to his living descendants. His achievements would have been remarkable at any time in history, but especially so in the Antebellum Era. Although the town he founded in west-central Illinois failed to survive the challenge of changing times, archeological research at the New Philadelphia Townsite NHL can do much to explain those times to us today.

The Archaeological Conservancy, a national non-profit organization dedicated to acquiring and preserving archeological sites throughout the U.S., purchased a major portion of the site soon after its designation. New Philadelphia at some future date may also be proposed as the subject of a Special Resources Study to determine its suitability and feasibility for inclusion in the National Park System.

Learn more about this NHL at www.anthro.illinois.edu/faculty/cfennell/NP/ or <http://www.heritage.umd.edu/chrsweb/New%20Philadelphia/NewPhiladelphia.htm>. ♦

Saarinen Masterpiece Is Minnesota's Newest National Historic Landmark

In January, the Christ Church Lutheran in Minneapolis became Minnesota's newest National Historic Landmark (NHL). The church is located at 3244 34th Avenue South in a quiet residential area roughly four miles southeast of the downtown business district. Christ Church Lutheran is nationally significant as the work of master architect Eliel Saarinen, who was one of the most important architects and educators of the 20th century. Saarinen was on the leading edge of the modernist movement and played a pivotal role in the emergence of modernist religious architecture in the United States.

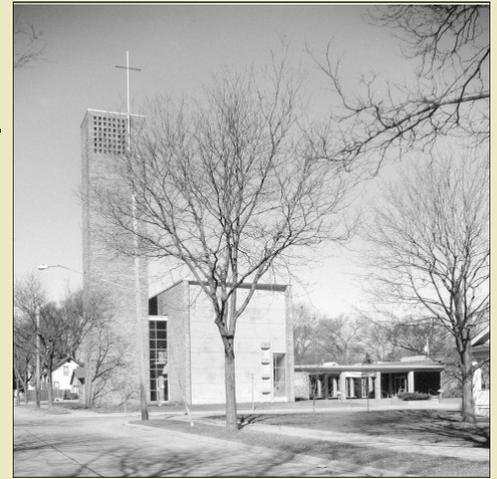
Built in 1948-1949, Christ Church Lutheran is considered by many to be Eliel Saarinen's masterwork, without precedent in ecclesiastical architecture because of its focused design, lighting, and acoustics. Through the use of materials, proportion, scale, and light, Saarinen created an exceptional building with great dramatic effect and architectural impact, and yet retained a very human scale and possessed a feeling of serenity and repose -- qualities which distinguish Saarinen's work from that of many of his fellow modernists.

Christ Church Lutheran served as an affordable modernist prototype that was

emulated by congregations throughout the United States. It is essentially a large rectangular volume with one-story projections extending the length of the building along both of the long sidewalls. None of the principal walls are exactly parallel and the rear wall curves gently to enclose the chancel. This was done deliberately to enhance the building's acoustics. A tower is positioned to the south, and is connected to the church by a passageway.

The NHL nomination includes the 1962 Education Wing, which was designed by Eliel's son, Eero, who also was one of the most acclaimed architects of the twentieth century. With the Education Wing, Eero fulfilled Saarinen Sr.'s original commission concept. The sensitive design of the Education Wing respects the earlier portions of the assemblage.

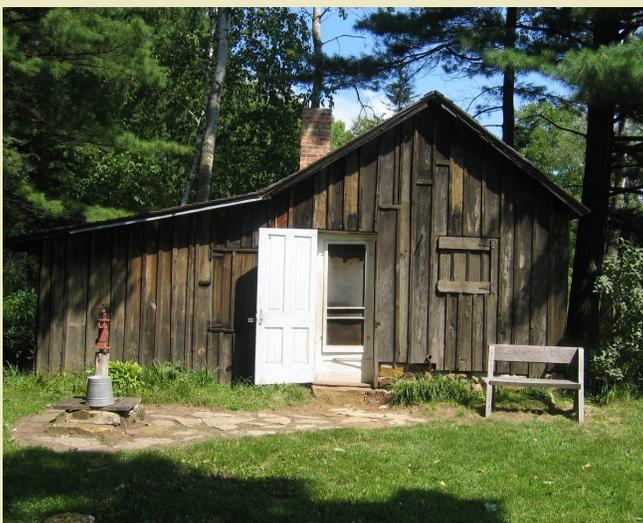
Christ Church Lutheran retains an exceptional level of integrity, clearly conveying its character-defining form and function. Few changes have been made, and those that have occurred have been limited to minor modifications such as remodeling the church basement and subtle changes to the metal flashing. Minor



West façade and arcade of Eliel Saarinen's Christ Church Lutheran, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Photo by Rolf Anderson.

changes to the Education Wing include an addition of a handicap accessible restroom. In 1977, Christ Church Lutheran received a Twenty-Five Year Award from the American Institute of Architects, an award that recognizes architectural design of enduring significance. The building complex remains a remarkable tribute to both Eliel and Eero Saarinen. Fifty years after its construction, the church building continues to serve its congregation and it remains admired for its unique modernist qualities. It is unusual for the product of a relatively low-profile project, such as this was, to receive such acclaim and to exert so much influence on a national scale. ◇

Baraboo, Wisconsin, Home to new Aldo Leopold Farm and Shack NHL



South façade of the Aldo Leopold Shack. Photo by Rebecca Kumar

In the early 1930s, Aldo Leopold, a forester, writer, professor, and influential conservationist, purchased a small farm and rehabilitated a chicken coop in Baraboo, Wisconsin. It functioned as a place in which his conservation principles and environmental philosophies could be put into practice. Leopold and his wife and children rehabilitated the Shack, as it was lovingly referred, as a weekend retreat requiring only the bare essentials needed to live off the land and enjoy the natural environment. Modern necessities ignored, the Shack and the surrounding landscape provided the Leopolds an educational experience that could not be duplicated in an urban environment. The setting of the Shack provided inspiration for Leopold's writings on conservation, the environment, and wildlife. After Leopold's death in 1948, *A Sand County Almanac* was published as a collection of personal essays and sketches composed by Leopold predominately at the farm and the Shack. *A Sand County Almanac* is an influential book that covers a broad range of conservation philosophies that remain widely used and respected by professionals in the field and others interested in conservation, the environment, and wildlife management. ◇

Sullivan's Late-Career Landmarks Throughout the Midwest Region

These remarkable properties represent the greatest works in Sullivan's portfolio from the period 1906-1919. Locations of his other late-career works are indicated below as well. Though not NHLs, they are significant properties that helped Sullivan create a distinctly Midwestern architectural trend in the early 20th century. For more information on Louis Sullivan's work, contact the appropriate State Historic Preservation Offices or search the National Register of Historic Places online at <http://nrhp.focus.nps.gov/>.

Bradley Residence
Madison, Wisconsin
Designated 1976

Farmers' & Merchants' Union Bank
Columbus, Wisconsin
Designated 1976

National Farmers' Bank
Owatonna, Minnesota
Designated 1976

Peoples' Savings and Loan Association
Sidney, Ohio
Designated 1977

Van Allen Department Store
Clinton, Iowa
Designated 1976

Merchants' National Bank
Grinnell, Iowa
Designated 1976

Map Photo Credits:
Bradley Residence and Farmers and Merchants Union Bank by Michele Curran; Peoples' Savings and Loan Association and National Farmers' Bank taken from NPS files; Van Allen Department Store taken from Historic American Building Survey, courtesy of American Memory Online Collection, Library of Congress; Merchants' National Bank by Jessica Berglin.

(Sullivan, continued from page 1)

Sullivan's design philosophy mirrored his own desires for the bank's new building. As Larry Millett described in his history of the bank, Bennett wanted a new building that did not hearken "back to some lost age of imperial splendor."⁵ Sullivan started initial plans for the bank in the fall of 1906. It was the first of what would become known as his "jewel box" banks—a series of eight banks in rural Midwest communities. With a massive sandstone base and large stained glass-filled arched windows, Sullivan transformed the streetscape of downtown Owatonna with his two-story cubical bank. Natural light floods the interior, accentuating ornate stencil work that glistens with prismatic luster. Four ornate electric chandeliers covered in tendrils of terra cotta and gold leaf detailing drop from the ceiling. Sullivan scholar, Hugh Morrison praised the bank's interior, exclaiming it was "rich in decorative detail and glowing in color," with a "curious quality to the light—a greenish tinge, like sunlight passed through sea-water."⁶

Articles about the bank circulated in financial and design journals alike, each applauding Bennett and Sullivan for their collaboration and innovation. Acclaim spread among local businessmen and bank presidents as well. After Sullivan designed the Peoples' Savings Bank in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, the bank's vice president sent a letter to businessman John D. Van Allen, recommending Sullivan to design his new department store in nearby Clinton, Iowa.

The Van Allen Department Store was begun in 1913. Sullivan utilized tapestry brick for the building, which had become a staple in his designs. Broad windows line each of the building's four stories on the western and southern elevations. On the facade, three pairs of elongated terra cotta columns extend through the upper three stories, with bursts of ornamentation at the upper and lower terminations. The lower termini feature crests bearing the initials V.A. in Delft blue and white, highlighting Van Allen's Dutch heritage.

At the same time Clinton was celebrating its new department store, the town of Grinnell, Iowa, celebrated its new jewel box, Merchants' National Bank. Again, Sullivan designed a two-story cube featuring tapestry brick, giving the building a polychromatic effect. On the southern façade, elaborate terra cotta surrounds a stained glass rose window designed by Louis Millet, a long-time Sullivan collaborator. The rose window, along with the richly colored stained glass windows lining the east wall, creates a cathedral-like feeling inside the lobby. Jewel-tone light saturates the banking offices, giving life to Sullivan's intricate golden terra cotta ornament and rich woodwork.

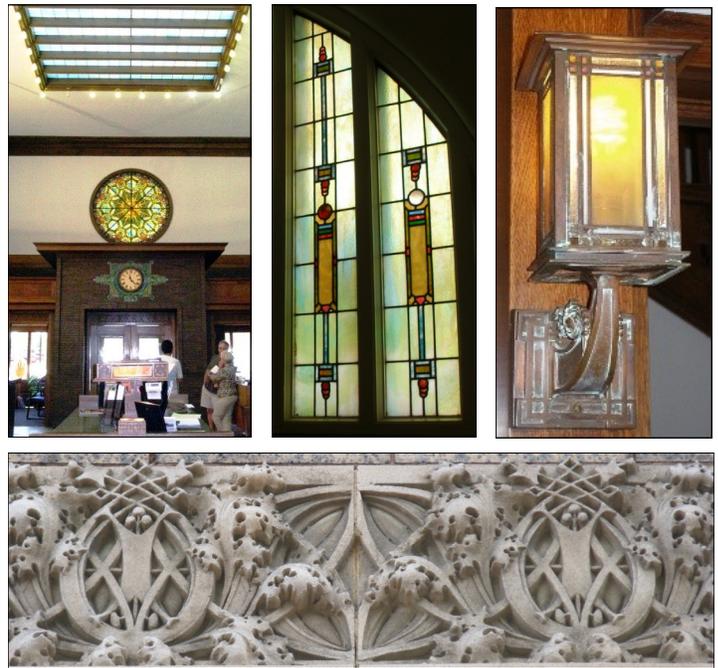
Sullivan's acclaim spread beyond the prairies of Minnesota and Iowa as well. In 1917, he designed the new building for Peoples' Federal Savings & Loan Association in Sidney, Ohio. Hugh Morrison poetically commended the building's ornamentation, praising its rich colors and luminous harmonization, exclaiming the "... brilliant glass mosaic and terra cotta ornament are relieved, like the melodic passages of solo instruments against the sustained full harmonies of an orchestral accompaniment." The most distinguishing feature of the bank is a glass mosaic by Millet that glistens in shades of blue, green, gold, and purple with the word "Thrift" inscribed, to impart the humble virtue of the Savings & Loan Association.⁷

The last of Sullivan's jewel box banks was the Farmers' and Merchants' Union Bank in Columbus, Wisconsin, which was begun in 1919. John Russell Wheeler, the bank's president, was hesitant to commission such a progressive architect to design a bank for Columbus, but he abandoned this notion when his wife convinced him to hire Sullivan. In John Szarkowski's *The Idea of Louis Sullivan*, Wheeler remarked, "I was scared to death by those first drawings. . . . I was almost ready to call the whole thing off and run for cover. It was Mrs. Wheeler who soothed my feathers and talked me into going ahead." Wheeler had no reason to fear, though. The bank was received with great success among the townspeople. With a series of five arches accentuated with ornate terra cotta and stained glass windows, it is located on a prominent square within downtown Columbus.⁸

The Columbus bank was not Sullivan's first architectural departure to Wisconsin. In 1908, Richard T. Crane, a wealthy

businessman who had previously worked with Sullivan, commissioned him to design a house as a wedding gift for his daughter. Josephine Crane married Harold C. Bradley, a professor at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. The Bradley residence was one of two houses Sullivan executed late in his career. More importantly, it is the only one remaining; the other was demolished in the 1960s. The house features design elements typical of the Prairie School—low-pitched roof lines with wide, over-hanging eaves and projecting cantilevered porches. Sullivan designed the interior in a holistic fashion, with careful detail to furniture, lighting features, drapery, and woodwork, also typical of Prairie School architecture.

These six properties represent the pinnacle of Sullivan's late career from 1906-1919. They were designated NHLs for their significance in transforming Midwestern architecture in the early 20th century. Other works from this period include four additional jewel box banks, a church, and a residence, most of which have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places: Henry Babson Residence, Riverside, Illinois, 1907 (demolished, 1960s); Peoples' Savings Bank, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1909; St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1910; Land and Loan Office, Algona, Iowa, 1913; Home Building Association, Newark, Ohio, 1914; Purdue State Bank, West Lafayette, Indiana, 1914. ◇



Defining features of a Sullivan design include stained glass windows and mosaics, specially designed lanterns to complement interior spaces, and intricate terra cotta ornamentation. Upper right photos by Michele Curran; upper left and bottom photo by Jessica Berglin.

1 Claude Bragdon, foreword to *The Autobiography of an Idea*, by Louis Sullivan (New York: Press of the American Institute of Architects, Inc., 1924), 6.

2 Louis Sullivan, *The Autobiography of an Idea* (New York: Press of the American Institute of Architects, Inc., 1924), 325.

3 David Van Zanten, *Sullivan's City* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2000), 7.

4 Ibid.

5 Larry Millett, *The Curve of the Arch* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1985), 1.

6 Hugh Morrison, *Louis Sullivan: Prophet of Modern Architecture* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1935), 208-210; quoted in National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form, *National Farmers' Bank*, National Historic Landmark vertical files, Cultural Resources, National Park Service Midwest Regional Office, Omaha, Nebraska, 9 July 2009.

7 Morrison, 220-222; quoted in National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form, *Peoples' Federal Savings & Loan Association*, National Historic Landmark vertical files, Cultural Resources, National Park Service Midwest Regional Office, Omaha, Nebraska.

8 John Russell Wheeler, quoted in John Szarkowski, *The Idea of Louis Sullivan* (Boston: Bullfinch Press/Little, Brown and Co., 2000), 4.

Customer Service

Rebecca Kumar

One of the many aspects of working for the National Park Service is the great contacts we create while working in our fields of expertise. Networking, as it is called by many; building alliances and getting to understand how each other works. As professionals in the regional office, we often build our daily duties around our networks. Most of our job description focuses on National Historic Landmarks. Technical assistance, reviewing documents, writing documents, providing guidance on historic preservation, searching for possible funding... these are all some of the things that keep us busy. To be successful, we need networks!

The Midwest Regional Office of the NPS differs greatly from other regional offices around the country in that our workload has been broken down by state. Each historian, architectural historian, landscape architect, and architect on the NHL team is knowledgeable with the properties located

in their geographic area and have developed some strong relationships with the stewards. It is through these bonds that we are able to provide valuable experience and guidance.

We want the NHL stewards to be successful in the preservation of their site. One of the tools that we provide upon request is a list of potential grant sources. This list is generated from a database of corporations, foundation and organizations that offer assistance (financial, in-kind, etc.). Searches for grant sources include topics other than "brick and mortar" type preservation assistance, such as landscape repair; recreation; museum collections; technology; and education, to name a few.

Owning and/or managing an NHL is an honor to many. These exemplary properties sometimes need a little boost for a little more public attention. Nine years ago, the NPS began a photo contest of NHLs across the country to showcase our many varied properties that created our nation's vast history. This contest is open to all NHL properties in the nation. All photographs submitted are voted upon by NPS employees. One national winner is selected

to be featured in a yearly calendar. The top two from each region are also included in the calendar. The Midwest Regional Office purchases about 600 calendars to mail out each year to NHL stewards.

Most of the staff members from this office actively submit articles to different state and local publications. Much like the creation of this newsletter, it is important to us that problems are made aware, if not resolved, and good deeds are recognized. Many times it is the simple act of acknowledgement that makes such a difference. If you are interested in writing an article for this publication, please feel free to submit your 250-500 word articles to Rebecca Kumar.

Every three to five years we host a conference or workshop to bring NHL stewards together. Our last conference was held at the Mill City Museum in Minneapolis, Minnesota. If you are interested in a topic for a workshop or have a great location you would like to recommend for a conference, please contact us. We look forward to making our networks stronger. ◇

Mackinac Island Adopts Local Historic District Ordinance

Dena Sanford

The Mackinac Island City Council voted on October 21 to accept a local historic district ordinance. By this action, the community has the option to create local historic districts and thereby establish additional preservation tools for this National Historic Landmark. Establishment of such districts allows for creation of historic district commissions with design review authority intended to protect designated historic resources.

For several years the city has been searching for ways to preserve its historic resources, some of which face extreme commercial development pressure in this popular resort community. Mayor Margaret Doud has noted the need to strike a balance in the downtown area between preservation and development, and to maintain the historic significance of the island's unique community.

Accepting the ordinance will facilitate work already undertaken by the Hubbard's Annex Local Historic District Committee. A local historic district designation study has been completed for this residential neighborhood on the island. Property owners in the Annex hope to designate the area as a local historic district, and a public hearing will be held later this year.

Additional information on Michigan local historic districts is available at www.michigan.gov/hal.



View towards residential and commercial buildings at Mackinac Island, Michigan. Now an idyllic summer resort from which cars are banned, this small island in the straits between Lakes Huron and Michigan was once the most important fur trading post and military center in the entire Great Lakes region. The British began Fort Mackinac in 1780. Mackinac Island boasts an impressive number of both high style and modest 19th century buildings, both residential and commercial. Photo by Susan Vincent.

Exploring America: Online Travel Itineraries and the Scotts Bluff Region

Cody Hackett and Mark Fluehr

In 1995, the National Register of Historic Places, a division of the National Park Service, launched the *Discover Our Shared Heritage Travel Itinerary Series*. It is an ambitious program to highlight the thousands of National Register sites throughout via online travel itineraries. The National Park Service (NPS) works in conjunction with the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers and various state and local organizations. Each self-guided itinerary explores a specific geographic region or historical theme and allows users to experience and explore National Register sites as never before. From tracing the footsteps of Lewis and Clark through a tour of the Louisiana Purchase, to exploring the National Register sites of Baltimore, to diving into a virtual ocean to explore shipwrecks off the coast of Florida, the online travel itineraries provide limitless opportunities to explore America's rich heritage.

Currently, the *Discover Our Shared Heritage Series* boasts more than 45 diverse itineraries, with new ones added frequently. Most itineraries consist of conceptual essays and site descriptions that explain the importance of the historic sites in American history. Additionally, the itineraries provide maps, historic and modern photographs of sites, and tourism information. The series is easy to access and navigate, well researched, and is an indispensable tool for anyone wishing to learn more about a National Register site. From school projects to family vacations, anyone can log on and spend hours reading about a particular theme, place or region.

Within the Midwest Region of the NPS, there are currently six itineraries that focus on national historical themes. They encompass a wide range of topics such as the lives of American Presidents and important sites within the modern Civil Rights movement. The Midwest Region has nine regional itineraries, of which Pierre and Fort Pierre in South Dakota and the Scotts Bluff Region in western Nebraska are the most recent additions.

The Scotts Bluff Region itinerary is the newest travel itinerary. Completed in the summer of 2009, it explores a broad segment of American history—the earliest days of emigrant travel to the West, cattle ranching and homesteading, the implementation of irrigated crop cultivation, and the growth of modern cities. Because the National Register sites highlighted in the itinerary are diverse, the Scotts Bluff selection offers users an exploration of sites urban and rural, geologic and manmade, historic and modern. The itinerary was created for the NPS Midwest Regional Office by National Council for Preservation Education (NCPE) interns Mark Fluehr and Cody Hackett.

Scotts Bluff is significant in the history of the American West. Throughout the 19th century, tens of thousands of American emigrants trekked west across the American continent in search of homesteads, gold, or religious freedom, and Scotts Bluff was an important geographic landmark on the trail. The first leg of the Overland Trail went across the Great Plains, following the Platte River Valley. Often a resting point for weary overland travelers,



Historic view of Main Street in Downtown Scottsbluff.
Photo courtesy of North Platte Valley Museum Archives.

the 800-foot-tall Scotts Bluff signaled the end of the first third of the emigrant journey and marked the beginning of more difficult travel through the unforgiving Rocky Mountain terrain.

During the latter half of the 19th century, as railroads replaced wagon trains, cattle ranchers and homesteaders began to populate the Scotts Bluff region. Pioneering in the Nebraska Panhandle was difficult. Harsh winters, sandy soils, and scarce water reserves could bankrupt even the most successful cattlemen or farmers. Because of these and other difficulties, it was not until farmers began implementing irrigated farming and scientific agriculture in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that the area's population began to grow substantially. As the region grew in population and farm production, railroad companies, eager to tap the budding passenger and freight market, began laying direct rail lines into the region. The first half of the 20th century was an economic boom period. The area's two major cities, Gering and Scottsbluff, grew from sleepy regional trading centers into a single, large urban center of trade and commerce, complete with a luxury hotel, opera house, and movie theater. Even today, Gering and Scottsbluff remain the economic hub of western Nebraska.

The History and National Register Programs staff at the NPS Midwest Regional Office invites you to visit Scotts Bluff (projected for completion in early 2010), or any of the online travel itineraries by visiting www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/. ♦

We would like to thank the following for their contributions to the Scotts Bluff Region Travel Itinerary:

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Judge of the Ohio Supreme Court. Sherman's older brothers also achieved great political recognition—Charles Taylor Sherman, a US Federal Judge, US Senator John Sherman of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, and Major General William T. Sherman of Civil War fame. Hoyt Sherman attained his own political recognition—he was appointed postmaster of Fort Des Moines shortly after his arrival to the frontier post in 1848.

According to the Hoyt Sherman Place website at www.hoytsherman.org, Sherman built the first post office and bank, served on the town council and was very involved in local and state politics. President Lincoln appointed him Army paymaster at the start of the Civil War with the rank of Major. Upon his return, Sherman teamed up with others and created Equitable of Iowa Insurance Company. During this time he also gave his counsel, time, and money to ensure that Des Moines had schools, a college, a waterworks system and many more facilities.



Brick pier, before and after restoration.

Sherman built a grand manor in 1877 on the then-western boundary of Des Moines, where he lived until his death in 1904. The mansion remained vacant until 1907, when the Des Moines Women's Club took charge of the facility, using it as their clubhouse. The women of the club were leading stewards in promoting cultural heritage throughout the city, sponsoring cultural events and speakers, including Amelia Earhart, Helen Keller, and Grant Wood. They subsequently added a gallery to the building, which became the first public art museum in Des Moines, as well as a beautiful 1,400-seat theater that was completed in 1923. The mansion still functions as an art museum, displaying collections of 19th- and 20th-century paintings and beautifully preserved interiors and artifacts from Sherman's era.



Door jamb, before and after restoration.

The theater was recently restored and continues to be used as a performance hall. Hoyt Sherman Place is the namesake for one of Des Moines' historic neighborhoods—Sherman Hill.

Repair Work at Hoyt Sherman Place

In 2005, Hoyt Sherman Place received a Save America's Treasures grant for a number of repairs. These included masonry repair and tuck pointing; roofing repair over the stage; replacement of gutters and downspouts; restoration of wood windows and wood trim; restoration of leaded glass windows at the theatre mezzanine; restoration of the main entry canopy; repair of dormer siding; base brick paving repairs; repair/replacement of clay tile parapet cap; repair/replacement of landscape features including the sidewalk, steps, wall south of the theater, and brick piers at southeast entrance; and repair/replacement of terra cotta features.

Included in this article are some photos of terra cotta repairs done at Hoyt Sherman Place. The process entailed removal of deteriorated material as determined by sounding gently with a small hammer; rinsing of surfaces to be patched and leaving damp; brush-coating surfaces with slurry coat of patching compound; and placement of patching compound in layers which had been roughened to provide a key for the next layer. Once the patching compound reached the surface or finished edge, it was troweled, scraped, or carved to match the texture, details, and surrounding surface plane or contour of the existing terra cotta.

The patch had to be kept damp for 72 hours or until the patching compound had set. After the final layer of patching compound had cured and was shaped, a special glaze was installed according to the manufacturer's written instructions. Two coats were needed to match the glaze of adjacent terra cotta units, and architectural stippling was performed using an artist's brush between glazing sequences. ◇



Column capital, before and after restoration.

All photos courtesy of GE Wattier Architects, Inc., Des Moines, the local architectural firm in charge of construction documents for the project.

temperature of approximately 200-250°F, the wood itself can ignite from the hot air blast, leading to potentially serious fire damage to the historic building.

In assessing the risk of the wood igniting, a number of factors need to be taken into account. The moisture level of the wood definitely affects the temperature at which the wood ignites. Wall studs behind the siding that are adjacent to high temperature heating pipes would be very dry compared to the siding. If the heat from the gun did not dissipate fast enough within the wall cavity, studs or deadening boards could begin to smolder in particularly hot spots or areas of very dried wood, even though the siding is not immediately affected. And where there is insulation in the wall, heat build-up would be greater, thereby increasing the fire risks. Even the daytime temperature and prevailing breezes need to be considered, since cooler temperatures and a mild breeze will help cool the siding faster. On the other hand, strong winds will make it more difficult to remove the paint, increasing the fire risks in a variety of ways.

Another factor to be considered is the surface condition of the siding. Very rough edges are more susceptible to ignition than smooth surfaces. A more common problem that must be taken into account not only in planning but also throughout the work is the tendency of the laborers to get impatient or careless, directing the heat gun in one spot too long or adjusting the heat gun to a higher temperature.

In addition to the possibility of igniting the wood, there is the even greater risk of ignition of flammable debris commonly found in wall cavities and behind cornices. Debris such as bird and rat nests, builder's trash, accumulated dust and building material waste can all be more flammable than the wood siding. Examining selective areas of the wall cavity and cornices prior to selecting a paint removal method can establish the extent of potential fire risk from debris and building material.

Additional precautions need to be taken in the course of work. Both the work crew and park staff at the Truman home were thoroughly familiarized with the fire risks involved. Besides using scrapers or chemical strippers in the areas of highest risk, workers were instructed to avoid overheating the wood. This tends to occur at uneven wood surfaces, such as found in decorative trim or in cornices. Since workers tend to get overly confident and very casual as the job proceeds, someone on the crew should be assigned responsibility as the "fire-safety inspector."

Suitable fire-fighting equipment should be readily available. At the Truman home, carbon dioxide and water fire extinguishers were within immediate reach of every workstation where a heat gun was being used. The contractor added glycol to the water extinguishers during cold weather work to prevent freezing. In addition, a long garden hose was kept near the work site during warm weather.

Since debris and wood will tend to smolder for a number of hours before breaking out into flames, the building should be equipped, if possible, with a temporary fire detection system in the attic eaves and adjacent to exterior walls. Furthermore, paint removal using heat guns should stop at least several hours prior to the site being vacated each evening, to increase chances of early detection of any smoldering fire. The area of the day's work must be carefully inspected. And finally, if there is a night watchman, extra diligence should be demanded during the weeks when paint removal is occurring.

While it is important to understand the risk-factors involved in rehabilitation and/or restoration projects, it is also important to consider including restrictions in the specifications of the contract. Such restrictions could forbid the use of open-flame torches, heat guns or heat plates, or include specifications for the use of those tools. Another restriction could forbid smoking at the job site. The specifications could also require after-work hours monitoring of sites that could have been put at risk for fire caused by the use of heat tools. ◇



Workers on scaffolding carefully remove deteriorating paint with heat guns.

Photograph courtesy of Alan O'Bright, taken from NPS *Tech Note No. 18*.

Tech Note No. 18 and *Preservation Brief No. 18* as well as many other briefs and notes on pertinent preservation subjects are available at: [/www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/technotes/tnhome.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/technotes/tnhome.htm)

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READ ALL ABOUT IT: KUDOS TO YOU!

In recognition of the decade-long restoration work on the **Nebraska State Capitol**, in June the National Park Service presented the Nebraska Capitol Commission a certificate of appreciation. Governor Dave Heineman accepted the award on behalf of the commission. One of the most significant aspects of the project—restoring exterior masonry—is scheduled for completion this year.

The United States Forest Service received \$1.5 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for the rehabilitation work at the **Rabideau Civilian Conservation Corps Camp** in Minnesota. A nonprofit Rabideau Conservation Academy and Learning Center has brought teens from low-income households in Cass and Beltrami counties to Rabideau to participate in confidence-building projects and to learn pathways to jobs and higher education.

At **Stan Hywet Hall** in Akron, OH, the first of two major phases of a Stormwater

Management Program has been completed. Work to mitigate impacts on the Hall's foundation included substantial excavations, waterproofing, and restoration of downspout drains. Associated work addresses restoration of 3 of 8 the historic Warren Manning-designed gardens and infrastructure to the original 1916 appearance and function.

Duane Durst, site administrator at the **Hollenberg Pony Express Station** (a Kansas State Historic Site), received the Oregon-California Trails Association's "Outstanding Educator Award" for the Museum category.

The Kansas State Historical Society has developed an on-line exhibit on **Carry A. Nation**, at <http://www.kshs.org/exhibits/carry/carry1.htm>, in addition to a "Carry Nation Curriculum Packet," exploring the 19th century reformer's life and times.

The Kansas State Historical Society received a 2009 Johnson County Heritage

Trust Fund grant to develop a marketing plan for **Shawnee Mission**.

The SS Columbia Project has overseen asbestos abatement on the **Columbia Steamer**, currently docked in Detroit, MI. This work has been conducted in pursuit of the ultimate goal of moving the Columbia to a new home in New York.

Farbman Broup/NAI Farbman, owners of the **Fisher Building** in Detroit, received the title "The Office Building of the Year" from the Building Owners and Managers Association of Metropolitan Detroit.

Volunteers have been restoring the engines of the **Lightship No. 103, the Huron**. Parts, oil and equipment were donated by local businesses.

Thank you for your hard work, dedication, and stewardship. You make the difference.