

Preservation Matters

PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

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Focus On: The Eli Halberstadt House

The unfortunate demolition of the World War I Armory at Main Street and Central Avenue, Urbana has "revealed" a gem of local architecture. The Eli Halberstadt House, 104 North Central Avenue, has stood for decades almost hidden by the Armory, known only to those who ventured round the corner to the quiet neighborhood tucked between the railroad tracks, the Boneyard Creek and the bustle of Main Street. Built in 1875, the Halberstadt House is a charming example of the Italianate and Eastlake subset of the Stick



Styles as applied to a small-scale cottage. Its tall steep roof shelters an asymmetrical cross-wing plan with a lower kitchen wing at the rear. But its real glory is a magnificent front porch, a true confection of spindles, pierced panels and carved arches that dominates the front facade. The house also boasts elaborate window and door trim with molded ears at the top and sides and bracketed window sills. Adding to the house's interest are two large bay windows and numerous small diamond shaped accent windows.

Eli Halberstadt was a prominent grain miller and four-term mayor of Urbana. Born in Maryland in 1820 and orphaned at an early age, Eli was apprenticed to a

tailor. He married Rebecca Legore of Hanover, Pennsylvania in 1842 and they had five children. In 1855 the family moved to Urbana. At first, Halberstadt went into the grocery business as a partner in Bradshaw, Williams and Co., but soon bought out both his partners. He sold his interest in 1865. At the same time, Halberstadt and Edward Ater began construction of a new grain warehouse, mill, and elevator along the Boneyard Creek, north of Main Street and in 1867, they expanded the operation and opened a new flour mill (The Union Mills) according to the Union and Gazette, Friday, March 1, 1867. However by 1871, the business had outgrown the original mill works and Halberstadt was busy expanding and putting in new machinery and larger boilers and engines. His business continued to grow and by 1884, Halberstadt had built yet another new modern mill, "known far and wide as the Union Mills...(was)...not excelled in Central Illinois..." Eli Halberstadt was a democrat. He was elected Mayor of Urbana in 1867 and served four terms as mayor (1867-68:1871-1874).

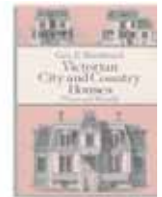
In 1875, Halberstadt built his new residence at 104 North Central Avenue. According to the Champaign County Gazette (Aug 18,1875)

The beautiful new residence of Mr. E. Halberstadt on Central Avenue, near the Griggs House is receiving its final touches and will soon be ready for occupancy. It is an imposing building and its conspicuous location will be an ornament to the architectural beauty of the city.

Eli Halberstadt died at age 82 on August 30,1902.

There is no architect of record for the Halberstadt House, but it seems likely that Halberstadt may have taken his design in whole or in part from one of the popular design books of the era. The house is definitely in the picturesque style long advocated by the prominent American architects, Alexander Jackson Davis or

Alexander Downing and their popular books had long circulated in rural areas. The Halberstadt House, particularly in its details, is highly reminiscent of designs published by Samuel Sloan, A.J. Bricknell and Palliser & Co. all through the 1870s and 1880s.



The Halberstadt House is of balloon-framed construction set on a high brick foundation with a well-lighted basement that was intended for various domestic uses, probably a laundry and secondary kitchen, judging by remaining evidence. The main floor has three comfortably sized rooms, two of them brightly lit by wide bay windows. The second floor of the main house has three large bedrooms, all of them with dressing closets lit by diamond windows under the generous eaves. At the rear of the house is a lower wing for the kitchen, pantries and a back stairway that services a single large upstairs room with an over-sized dormer on the south side. Mr. Halberstadt spared no expense when it came to window glass and the house is filled with tall two-over-two-light double-hung windows and is remarkably bright inside. The remaining fireplace is in the front parlor, but there is evidence that the other rooms were heated by stoves. Two large brick chimneys pierce the roof, both with elaborate corbelled chimney tops, although the eastern chimney has obviously been rebuilt in recent years. But it is the front porch that gives the Halberstadt house its real style and whimsy. The porch is an elaborate confection, a testament to the wood turner and carvers art.

The front porch is on the south end of the

main façade and is constructed on a high brick foundation with

four steps up from the walk. This porch shelters a square entrance vestibule that occupies about two-thirds of its area.

The corner of the porch is supported by a single square post with a plain molded capital and matching pilasters against the house. Curved side brackets with trefoil pierced spandrels and a single acorn spindle form an elliptical arch, which in turn supports a frieze with five inset panels. Each panel is pierced with a motif of elongated quatrefoils. A king's post truss of squared timbers with chamfered ends supports the porch roof. The webs of the truss have pierced inset panels with a motif of elongated trefoils and berries; the truss is capped with an elaborate eave molding. This gable projects beyond the face of the house and is supported on brackets of the same pattern as those that form the elliptical arch. The gable roof of the porch continues back about one-



Westside Park Bandstand
Original Bandstad shown above, top.
Recreated bandstad above, bottom

third the length of the porch to permit a diamond window on the second floor of the south facade. Beyond this point and roughly corresponding to the front wall of the vestibule, the roof becomes a steep shed roof with a cricket at the end to mask the transition from the front gable roof. The front porch shelters a relatively simple front door with triple eared and molded trim similar to the windows. This door has a single three-quarter length light with two lower inset panels. There is a single light transom over the door.

The Eli Halberstadt House, built in 1875, is unique in its combination of Italianate, Stick, and Eastlake styles and is a fine example of what would soon blossom into the grander and more elaborate Queen Anne mansions of its richer neighbors on West Main Street. Its elaborate detail raises it above the vernacular houses of the period and it is obviously derived from the popular architectural design books of its day. As the home of a successful businessman and local politician, it deserves our admiration and respect.

Eligible for local landmark status and listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the Eli Halberstadt House should be preserved.

This article was written by Mark Chenail with historic research on Halberstadt and his career provided by Brian Adams.

Volunteer Spotlight

Mike Miller was born and raised in Montana and North Dakota. He went to high school in Fargo, ND, but received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of North Dakota, Mike then taught at the University of Northern Iowa for five years before returning to school at the University of Illinois where he earned a PhD in 1984. All of his degrees are in Physical Geography with minors in Geology and Soil Science. In 1979, Mike went to work for the Illinois Water Survey and transferred to the Illinois Geological Survey in 1984. He retired from the ISGS in 2005! Upon retiring, Mike intended to pursue a life-long interest in woodworking, but travel with his wife Scottie and volunteer activities have successfully competed for equal time. Woodworking projects that he has completed include many built-ins in his former Urbana residence; one especially challenging project was an entry bench that he rebuilt from salvage parts to fit into their entry. The Millers changed houses in 2006 and landscaping and house renovations have dominated his free time since then. Scottie and Mike have one son, who is a retired Army Sgt. Major and lives in Texas. Their two grandchildren are both in college

Long time PACA member Rich Cahill introduced Mike to PACA sometime in the 1990s when PACA was still in the building at First and University streets. Mike's original interest was in recycling and keeping materials out of landfills. That is still his major interest, but he has acquired

an appreciation for the historical aspects of the built environment from the dedicated energy of the PACA salvage volunteers over the years. A back injury a few years ago has required that he cut back on active salvaging, but Mike still pulls nails and does other less "strenuous" tasks. His main activity at present is helping with the warehouse reorganization and helping to showcase the varied materials constantly brought into the warehouse. According to Mike (and others!), PACA has a very dedicated core of volunteers who give much of their time and effort to PACA and he is inspired and interested in working with them and benefiting from their expertise in solving problems around his own home.



Mike joined the Master Naturalists Program, housed in U of I Extension, attended the required classes, and became a Certified Master Naturalist in 2007. Most of his free time is split between volunteer activities for the East Central Illinois Master Naturalist Chapter and the PACA warehouse.

Gothic Stone Update

The Gothic stone that PACA has acquired and recently moved from the basement of Lincoln Hall has generated interest from our members and the general public. Since the article in the last "Preservation Matters" was published, the PACA Board of Directors has discussed how to appropriately dispose of the stone. At the September Board meeting the following was approved.



The Gothic stone (200+ pieces) will be sold as one lot, with the reserve that one or two pieces may be withheld for donation to a museum. Currently there are pieces for three tracery window frames and two interior doorways all stored together. However, PACA cannot guarantee that the stone for all of these units is extant.



PACA will spend a month doing further research on the provenance and history of the stone. An inquiry into the type/ durability of the stone to see if it can withstand outdoor installation will be undertaken. At the same time, a fair selling price will be investigated.

After the above is completed, PACA will spend a month marketing the stone locally and nationally. Information will be made available to individuals, museums, and universities. PACA members will directly receive the marketing information.

A sealed bid auction will be held, with a set reserve. Bids will be opened at the December 9 PACA board meeting.

It is hoped that PACA will be divested of the stone by the end of the year.

PACA would like to thank all of our strong volunteers who helped move the stone from the basement of Lincoln Hall into a semi-tractor trailer in about six hours! They were phenomenal: Hank Kaczmariski, Brian Duffield, Bob Swisher, Lee Stoops, Patrick Rietz, Tom Garza,



David Barre, Dan Leasure, Ed Willhite, Jerry Schmidt, Anne Schmidt, Dannie Otto, Nick Schmonsees, Mark Replogle, Elisabeth Jenicek, Joe Chapman, Jim Takantjas, and Karen Kummer.

PACA especially thanks Tom Gillespie, for the use of his fork lift, and Mark Bush, for moving and storing the last three large stone pieces.

Volunteer and Membership Recognition Party

It's that time again when we try to do a little extra to show how much we cherish our dedicated group of fantastic volunteers. So on **Sunday, October 18, from 3pm** - whenever we get tired, please come help us say a great big thank you to these generous people! The party is held at our salvage warehouse, 44 E Washington St., Champaign. There will be lots of food from local restaurants and it's a wonderful



chance to meet and talk to other great people who are interested in preservation in our community. Everyone is welcome so come out to show your support, and have a good time in the process.

Paver "Party"

Speaking of parties...

Paca is asking all of it's members for a lot of help at a party of a slightly different type. This isn't exactly a barn raising, but we are hoping to accomplish almost as much. PACA has partnered with the City of Champaign to re-stack several pallets of Street pavers as a fund raiser to support PACA projects throughout the year. PACA will be allowed to sell a large quantity of these pavers just as we have been selling the Urbana sidewalk pavers for the last few years. This has proven to be a very successful program for PACA but we need help to continue. Our deadline for the Champaign pavers is fast approaching so on **Saturday, Oct 17 from 9-3**, please meet us at the Champaign Public Works Yard. It is located on Hagan Street north of Bloomington Road, directly east of Home Depot. Feel free to come for part of the day or stay the whole time. Every little bit helps. We will have lunch provided, and it's a great chance to socialize with your fellow PACA members. The work isn't very difficult so it's the perfect opportunity for people of all abilities to pitch in. Then finish the weekend by celebrating at the volunteer recognition party the next day!

Special item for sale:

Occasionally we have a unique item at the salvage warehouse that sits there long enough to be spotlighted here in the newsletter.

This is one of these items.

P.A.C.A. Membership Application

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY

- Adult \$15
- Student \$10
- Senior Citizen \$10
- Family \$20
- Corporate \$75

Additional Contribution _____

Make checks payable to PACA

TYPE

- New _____
- Renewal _____

PACA

Box 2575, Station A
Champaign, IL 61825

www.pacacc.org
217 359 7222

INFORMATION:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.



Back in 2006, Robert Nemeth had the opportunity to purchase the salvage rights to this wonderful entryway from the Newman Foundation on the U of I campus. After sitting for some time, Robert has donated it to PACA to sell at the warehouse. It is currently stored in the side yard at the warehouse, and while much of the paint has peeled and a few parts are deteriorated, it is for the most part complete. Just imagine this as the new entry on your home, garage or even the most spectacular storage shed you've ever seen. Come take a look! Saturdays 9am-Noon and Wednesdays 4-7pm.

Don't forget that unique items come and go quite often. Consider making the warehouse a regular stop so you don't miss out on something you didn't even know you needed. We even still offer free coffee on Saturday mornings, which we buy from a local Roastery, to help start your day!

New & Renewing Memberships
(received since the last newsletter)

Fantastic Supporters
(Over Twenty Year Members)
Elizabeth Rogers
Steve and Kathy Roemmell
Lianne Anderson
Michael and Bonnie Irwin
Mark Netter
Harold & Pat Jensen

Eleven to Twenty Year Members
Kristin Solberg and David Seyler
November and Anthony Bamert
Colleen Brodie
Dusty Cory
Charlotte and Ronald Hampton
Cheryl Kennedy
Michael Markstahler
Susanne Massell
Robert and Sarah Nemeth
Joe & Phyllis Williams

Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Brighton
Andrew B. White Family

Five to Ten Year Members
Doug Anderson
Stephen Campbell & Heather Munson
Mary Ellen Fleichli
Susan Frobish
Nanette Koerner
Robert Selby
Maureen Reagan
Smith/Burgett Architects (Corporate)
Russ Arnold
Bill and Joan Price

One to Four Year Members
Felice Kaufmann and Harry Buerkett
Robert Craft
Robert Epperson
Vince & Wanda Hock
Chris Enck

New Members
Ken Salo
Dustin Kelly
David Stauffacher

OR CURRENT RESIDENT



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