

Newsletter of the Preservation Association of Lincoln † Lincoln, Nebraska † Spring 2010  
Volume XVIII Issue 1 † † † † † † † † † † † † [www.preservelincoln.org](http://www.preservelincoln.org)

## ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST???

The following excerpts are from a report furnished to the University Board of Regents. A full copy of the report is available if you are interested. You may obtain it by emailing a request to [preservelincoln@hotmail.com](mailto:preservelincoln@hotmail.com).

**Rehabilitation Feasibility Investigation for the Industrial Arts Building (Ag Hall) Located at the Nebraska State Fair Park, Lincoln, NE. Prepared by: Stephen J. Kelley AIA, SE, FAPT, FICOMOS; Jerry Berggren, AIA; and Dan Worth, AIA**

**Introduction** - At the request of Heritage Nebraska and the Preservation Association of Lincoln, a preliminary investigation was conducted on the Industrial Arts Building on the campus of the Nebraska State Park in Lincoln, NE. The State Fair Park is to be transferred to the University of Nebraska who is currently developing a Master plan to transform the site into the Nebraska Innovation Campus (NIC). The preliminary recommendation by the planning consultant in September 2009 was to remove the Industrial Arts Building due to its condition and its inability to be adapted to a new use compatible with the programmed uses at the NIC.

The Industrial Arts Building was constructed in 1913 as Agricultural Hall and known commonly as "Ag Hall" through much of its history. The goals of this investigation were to conduct a visual inspection of the structure, record its architectural and structural conditions, note any deficiencies and develop an opinion on the feasibility of its rehabilitation.

**Historical Background of Industrial Arts Building (Ag Hall)** - The Nebraska State Fair was permanently located in Lincoln, Nebraska in 1901. During an early period of fair expansion and due to the great need for agricultural exhibits including horticulture and floriculture, a new Agricultural Hall (Ag Hall) was constructed in 1913 at a cost of \$100,000—complete with a green space and fountain at the interior.

The building whose dimensions are 300 feet on the north, 300 feet on the west, 366 feet on the south and 90 feet on the east was designed to exhibit and display agricultural products from the state of Nebraska. After World War II, the building was used to exhibit agricultural and industrial technology produced in the state. The 93,500 SF trapezoidal building, approximately two stories in height at the exterior, rises to height of nearly four stories at the interior and contains a 36' wide mezzanine around the perimeter at the interior.

On January, 16, 1913 a Bill for \$108,000, of which \$100,000 was for the erection of an agriculture-horticulture building on the State Fair Grounds and \$8,000 for the purchase of land was introduced to the Legislature by Hon.

**PRESERVATION  
ASSOCIATION  
OF  
LINCOLN**

**Annual Meeting  
Wednesday, 3 March 2010  
7:30 p.m.  
Elliott Elementary School  
Cafeteria  
25<sup>th</sup> and N Streets**

**Please come for a  
business meeting including  
consideration of by-laws revisions,  
award presentations with  
Ed Zimmer  
and refreshments**

Michael Lee of Omaha and Hon. George Jackson of Nelson. This Bill passed on April 16, 1913 and was signed by Governor John H. Morehead.

Burd F. Miller, a prominent architect from Omaha, NE, contracted with the Nebraska State Board of Agriculture and prepared the design of the new Ag Hall. Mr. Miller was also responsible for the design of the historic Arsenal Building, now a military museum on the State Fair Park, and many other historically significant structures in Omaha and Lincoln. These structures include those located in Omaha's Gold Coast Historic District (607 S. 38<sup>th</sup> Street), the Field Club Historic District (3515 and 3507 Woolworth Ave), and in the Dundee Happy Hollow Historical District (106 N 53<sup>rd</sup> Street, 5605 Harney Street, and 101 S. 54<sup>th</sup> Street). Another example of Miller's architecture also exists at 2310 Sheridan Blvd in Lincoln, NE.

According to the Secretary's Report contained in the *1914 Annual Report of the Nebraska State Board of Agriculture* ... "we (the state) now have erected one of the best agriculture-horticulture buildings to be found on any state fairgrounds in the United States." The Secretary's Report in the *1915 Annual Report* also cites that.... "This building caused wonderment and delight from not only the citizen's of Nebraska but from those of other states as well. The unique display furnished...was something new in State Fair showing nationwide." Exhibits contained not only agricultural products from a wide range of climatic conditions around the state, but were also instructive and educational in nature providing "information of such a varied character as would take a month of travel to gather from local growing sources." Besides exhibits of Nebraska agriculture, Ag Hall also contained foreign displays and a popular wellness program called "Better Babies". The *1916 Annual Report* noted that the. "...babies' health department has grown to be one of the standard departments of the Fair....and interest manifested by the mothers in the welfare of their children gives great pleasure to the members of the Board." The report also notes that "during the last two years we have conducted a children's nursery under the north balcony...where children were cared for under the direction of competent nurses during the days of the fair. It is a source of great convenience and help to mothers attending the Fair."

The Industrial Arts Building played an important role in the early years of aviation in Nebraska and for the United States. In 1919, the Lincoln Standard Aircraft Company (originally the Nebraska Aircraft Corporation) bought the entire stock of World War I surplus Standard airplanes as well as surplus 150 hp Hispano-Suiza engines. The company proceeded to replace the Standard Hall-Scott engine, which was underpowered and prone to catch fire when the engine backfired, with the Hispano-Suiza in order to make a more powerful and reliable airplane. Nearly 200 planes were assembled in Lincoln, the first of which were assembled at the State Fairgrounds in Agriculture Hall. During his formative years while in Lincoln, Charles Lindbergh learned to pilot one of these Lincoln Standard Planes. I.O. Biffle, who was Lindbergh's flight instructor, assisted in the assembly of the Lincoln Standard Aircraft in Agricultural Hall as well. Biffle and Lindbergh were also two of the first pilots to transport airmail across the country. Barnstorming became the rage with the Lincoln Standard Aircraft because they were highly maneuverable and relatively inexpensive. Many pilots purchased these planes in Lincoln and some of them gave rides to visitors at the Nebraska State Fair.

Later in its history, Agriculture Hall would continue to play a key role in our nation's transportation history with the assembly of the famous Cushman Scooter at Agricultural Hall.

After World War II and with the construction of a new agriculture building, Ag Hall was converted for exhibiting industrial and technological products developed in the state. One reference from the *1948 Annual Report* cited that...."prior to opening of the fair all available space for industrial space was sold out." That year the Burlington Railroad exhibited the newest and most advanced refrigerated (railroad) car equipment. "This exhibit was highly educational....in how perishable products are transported."

**Summary** - The Industrial Arts Building (Ag Hall) was designed by a prominent Nebraska architect whose work has achieved some recognition in that many of his structures are included in historic districts within Omaha and Lincoln. The structure also appears to have been unique within the context of State Fairs nationwide for its design and concept of agricultural exhibiting. It is also interesting and significant that the building may have contained one of Nebraska's earliest day care programs as well as an advanced health/ wellness program for rural mothers and babies. And finally, the role that the Industrial Arts Building played in the early history of aviation in Nebraska and the U.S. is very important by its connections with the development of the Lincoln Standard Aircraft and Charles Lindbergh.

Architecturally, the building retains integrity. Perhaps of most significance is the interior spatial character. The large multi-story space is reminiscent of many historic and grand train sheds of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in cities such as London or New York. Its unique plan and immense skylight space imparted a sense of grandeur to visitors at the State Fair and reinforced the importance of agriculture to the State of Nebraska. It also gave exhibitors a special space to promote the best agricultural products and technology of the time.

We find that the Industrial Arts building is structurally sound and it is technically feasible to rehabilitate the structure. The building and its context presents a viable opportunity for a creative and exciting place to work at the proposed Nebraska Innovation Campus. The cost of rehabilitation would be less or equal to constructing a new building of equal space. Several other recent similar rehabilitation projects completed by prominent corporations and universities have shown that adaptive reuse is viable and makes good business sense while promoting a culture of innovation *and* sustainability *and* heritage conservation.

We strongly urge that University of Nebraska community, with the assistance of Heritage Nebraska and the Preservation Association of Lincoln, carefully study and promote rehabilitation options for the structure. Options for rehabilitation should be included in the final NIC Master Plan to allow developers the opportunity to plan and rehabilitate the building. By rehabilitating both the Industrial Arts building and the 4-H building, a richer and more meaningful campus plan will be created for the Nebraska Innovation Campus.

## NOTES FROM YOUR PRESIDENT



This month the focus of the newsletter is the Industrial Arts Building at the Fairgrounds. Originally this was Agricultural Hall. As you can see by the article it is a rare, special building.

The University of Nebraska's plan for an innovation park is not so innovative after all. The country is moving toward sustainability, renewable energy, retrofitting and reusing. If innovation is to be the watchword at the park, then why is this building slated for demolition by the consultant? Simply put, because it sits on ground that is not in the flood plain. Most of the land at State Fair Park is in the flood plain and therefore more costly on which to build. The 4-H Building also is above the flood plain. It is being saved and it is not nearly as unique as the Industrial Arts Building. There is nothing innovative or green about demolition.

This building should be reused. It should be the centerpiece of the development. What a wonderful arboretum it would make if re-roofed with skylights as it once was. Certainly somewhere in this country is a business, which is truly interested in green development, and would find this building to be exactly the kind of space for which they are looking. It costs less or about the same to renovate the shell of the building as to build new; the interior cost would be the same whether retrofitting or building new and nothing would be going to the landfill! And we would be saving a small but important part of Nebraska's history.

Put out a nationwide RFP on this building alone and see what bubbles up.

**PLEASE MAKE YOUR VOICES HEARD.**  
**Notify your Regent that you want this building saved, renovated and reused.**

In Joni Mitchell's words:

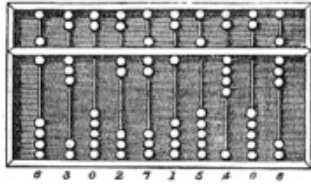
They paved paradise  
And put up a parking lot . . .  
With a pink hotel, a boutique  
And a swinging hot spot  
Don't it always seem to go  
That you don't know what you've got  
Till it's gone  
They paved paradise and put up a parking lot

They took all the trees  
Put 'em in a tree museum  
And they charged the people  
A dollar and a half just to see 'em  
Don't it always seem to go  
That you don't know what you've got  
Till it's gone  
They paved paradise and put up a parking lot

I say don't it always seem to go  
That you don't know what you've got  
Till its gone  
They paved paradise  
And put up a parking lot  
  
Don't it always seem to go  
That you don't know what you've got  
Till it's gone  
They paved paradise and put up a parking lot



# FINANCIAL SUMMARY



## December 2009

Checking Account:		
Beginning Balance (12/01/09)	\$285.60	
Income	\$0.00	
Expenses:		
Photocopies	21.27	<u>21.27</u>
Ending Balance (12/31/09)		<u><b>\$5,264.33</b></u>

St. Francis Chapel Foundation Educational Fund:	
Savings and CDs	\$2,158.98
Interest earned	\$.03

List of balances for savings and CDs	
Savings	\$143.61
15 month CD	504.29
15 month CD	504.29
9 month CD	503.41
9 month CD	503.41
Ending Balance (12/31/09)	<u><b>\$2,159.01</b></u>

## BROWN BAG SERIES



The Preservation Association of Lincoln (PAL) Brown Bag Lecture Series is free and open to the public. These are held on the second Tuesday of each month, beginning at noon. The Nebraska State Historical Society (NSHC) Brown Bag Lecture Series is also free and open to the public. They are held at noon on the third Thursday of each month. Both are at the Museum of Nebraska History, 15<sup>th</sup> & P Streets. Please bring your lunch and join us for these delightfully educational and entertaining lectures. Both Brown Bag Series are aired on Time Warner Cable's government channel 5. For times, please check the website at <http://www.lincoln.ne.gov/city/mayor/cic/5citytv/guide>.

**March 9** - "Industrial Arts Building Reuse Feasibility on the Nebraska Innovation Campus" by Dan Worth (BVH, Lincoln) and Steve Kelly (WJE, Chicago) (PAL)

**March 18** - "Conservation of Grant Wood's Corn Room Murals at the Gerald Ford Conservation Center" by Kenneth Be (NSHS)

**April 14** - TBA (PAL)

**April 15** - "Make-work Projects of the New Deal in Nebraska" by Jill Dolberg (NSHS)

**May 12** - "And the Winner Is... XVIII: A Summary of the 2010 PAL Annual Awards" by Ed Zimmer (PAL)

**May 20** - "How to Take Care of Your Family Photographs" by Karen Keehr (NSHS)

**June 17** - "What Remains?: Historic Salvage at the Beaver Creek Trail Crossing Site" by Nolan Johnson (NSHS)

**July 15** - "Wearing the Hempen Neck-Tie: Lynching in Nineteenth Century Nebraska" by Jim Potter (NSHS)

**August 19** - "Marie Sandoz - a Personal Reminiscence" by Ron Hull (NSHS)

**September 16** - "Presenting Frightmares Since 1958 - A History of Nebraska's Creature Feature Hosts: by Dale Bacon (NSHS)

**October 21** - "Memory Quilts" by Shirley Chaffin and Sheila Green (NSHS)

**November 18** - "Fifty Years of Nebraska History" by Ron Hull (NSHS)

**December 16** - "Background and Dedication of Abraham Lincoln Statute" by Gayla Koerting (NSHS)

The Newsletter of the Preservation Association of Lincoln is published quarterly. For further information contact Kay Davis at 479.595.0797 or by email at [lkdavis08@livecom](mailto:lkdavis08@livecom). Snail mail may be sent to: Preservation Association of Lincoln, % Rogers House, 2145 B Street, Lincoln, NE 68502.

# POSTCARD FROM LINCOLN

by William Wood



This picture is of the C.C. Burr House on the Northwest Corner of 16th and "L" Streets (1530 "L" Street). The picture appeared in *Lincoln Picturesque and Descriptive*, which was published in 1889. The house was built about 1882 and suffered a fire early in its existence. This view is seldom seen as around 1900 the conservatory was replaced by a large L shaped porch. C.C. Burr came to Lincoln from Illinois in 1868, was an attorney, and was involved in real estate investments. He was on the first city council and served as mayor at one time. His brother Lionel C. Burr was also an attorney. Lionel's home was just west of C.C.'s home, where the Scottish Rite Temple now stands. The Burr brothers owned the Burr Block on 12th and "O" Streets. C.C. Burr is believed to have suffered financial losses during the depression of the 1890's. His wife may also have died around this time.

From about the turn of the century until in the 1940's the

house was the home and office of George H. Rogers, also an attorney and dealer and investor in real estate. He owned, but never developed, Roger's Tract, which is now known as Woods Park. After the death of Mr. Rogers the house was used as a tea room and finally as the Shrine Bowl headquarters. In 1971 it was torn down to make way for the parking lot that now graces the site. The carriage house served as the Blacksmith Shop at the Folsom Childrens Zoo.

## CALENDAR

### March

- 3 PAL Annual Meeting, 7:30
- 9 PAL Brown Bag, noon
- 10 PAL Board Meeting, 7:30
- 18 NSHS Brown Bag, noon

### April

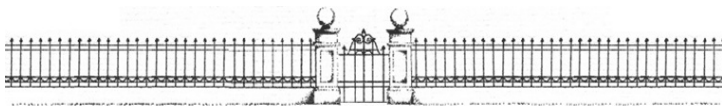
- 13 PAL Brown Bag, noon
- 14 PAL Board Meeting, 7:30
- 15 NSHS Brown Bag, noon

### May

- 11 PAL Brown Bag, noon
- 12 **NO** PAL Board Meeting
- 20 NSHS Brown Bag, Noon

## PAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2009-10

- Jo Gutgsell (President) (2012)
- Kay Logan Peters (Vice President) (2010)
- John Strobe (Secretary) (2010)
- Gordon Scholz (Treasurer) (2012)
- Doug Beals (2012)
- Barbara (Bobbie) Allen (2011)
- Eileen Bergt (2011)
- Cathy Beecham (2012)
- Lilly Blasé (2011)
- Peter Bleed (2011)
- Tom Hruza (2011)
- Dan Lutz (2010)
- Becky Martin (2012)
- Garry Martin (2012)
- Marleen Rickertsen (2011)
- Bob Ripley (2011)
- Dick Rumbolz (2011)
- Clark Springman (2010)
- William J. Wood (2011)
- Kay Davis (Newsletter Coordinator) (Ex-Officio)



PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION OF LINCOLN

% Rogers House  
2145 B Street  
Lincoln NE 68508

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U. S. POSTAGE PAID  
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LINCOLN, NE

**Preservation Association of Lincoln Membership Form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Clip this form and mail it to:  
Preservation Association of Lincoln  
c/o Rogers House  
2145 B Street  
Lincoln, NE 68502

- Do not list my name in the PAL directory of members
- Please send email notices for future events and email newsletters

Please check you volunteer interests:

- Brown Bag Speaker
- Research
- Newsletter Contributor
- Preservation Issues
- Finance/Fundraising
- Public Relations
- Preservation Education
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Historic Building & Site Survey
- Membership Recruitment
- Special Events

Membership Categories (Please Check One)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$2,500 Pinnacle
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$1,000 Spire
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$500 Keystone
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$250 Pillar
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$100 Pedestal
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$50 Family
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$30 Individual
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$20 Senior Citizen
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$5 Student

**Do You Have Questions**

Any questions on membership, activities or general questions on preservation in Lincoln and Lancaster County? Please contact us at [preservationassociationoflincoln@msn.com](mailto:preservationassociationoflincoln@msn.com)