

SKYLINES



JANUARY
1956

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(1956)

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18 East Eleventh Street
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4127 Locust

CIRCULATION

Skylines

Volume Six, Number One

January 1956

The annual polling of the Chapter has been completed, and our new officers are taking over the reins. They will formally accept their duties at the coming Inaugural Meeting, Tuesday, January 17, in the Junior Ballroom of the President Hotel. Plan to attend to give the new Board a real send-off.

Wives are cordially invited to this meeting. Dinner will be preceded by cocktails. After dinner, the Chapter will hear Eugene J. Mackey, A.I.A., of St. Louis.

Mr. Mackey formerly taught at Kansas State College and Washington University at St. Louis. He still serves as visiting lecturer at Washington University. With his partner, Joseph D. Murphy, he has designed many buildings in the St. Louis Area, and throughout Missouri. The Murphy & Mackey project best known to Kansas Citians, perhaps, is the Resurrection Church, in St. Louis.

Many of you already know Mr. Mackey and will probably be on hand to greet him. Those who have not met him, should come to the meeting and do so.

Remember, Tuesday evening, January 17
... Junior Ballroom, President Hotel ...

.....In The News

Civic Doings:

Six local architects were very much in evidence at Mayor Bartle's meeting to discuss the report of the Mayor's Municipal Services Commission, January 5 in the Little Theater. Angus McCallum and Ernest Brostrom are serving as members of the Commission.

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COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS FOR 1956

DUTIES

CHAPTER AFFAIRS

Mark Sharp, Chairman
Ralph Myers
John Murphy
Bob Baker
John Daw

To unify the efforts and objectives of all Chapter activities. To determine effectiveness of present Chapter functions by polling the membership. To evaluate new activities, participation with other groups, etc. Report regularly to Executive Committee.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

John Murphy, Chairman
Ralph Myers
Dave Miller
Bill Conrad

To work closely with Regional Committee on problem of public relations of the architectural profession. To promote local public relation activities.

PROGRAM

Jim Mantel, Chairman
David Mackie
Eugene Pryor
Don Fairhurst

To plan programs for chapter meetings. Overall control of arrangements and operations necessary for conducting chapter meetings.

ADVANCEMENT OF PROFESSION

Edward Tanner, Chairman
Arthur Keene
Homer Neville
Alonzo Gentry
Martin Mofitt
Ward Haylett

To determine means of assuring that the preparation for practice, the actual practice of architecture and the impact of the profession on society is at the highest plane possible. To guard against the encroachment of governmental agencies and other groups on the practice of architecture.

ASSOCIATES & JUNIOR ASSOCIATES

Don Palmer, Chairman
Robert Ervin
Gordon Hunt
Earl McCamis
E. H. Waddington

To investigate problems affecting associates and junior associates. Report periodically to the Executive Committee. Work as service group for other committees needing assistance.

OFFICE PRACTICE

Ray L. Voskamp, Chairman
Clarence Kivett
Gene Lefebvre
William Linscott
Bob Jarvis

To explore the possibility of assisting the Architect to perfect himself in his profession through technical improvement in his office organization and techniques and develop office aids to accomplish this purpose. Revise fee schedule when required.

GRIEVANCE

Albert Fuller, Chairman
Leslie B. Simpson
Ramon Schumacher

To receive and consider charges of unprofessional conduct filed against any member. To act as advisory group only.

CHAPTER PUBLICATIONS

Betty Brooker, Chairman
Bob Baker
James Northern
John Jameson
Ethel Sklar
Kenneth McCall

To edit and distribute all chapter publications.

MEMBERSHIP

L. B. Simpson, Chairman
Herb Pennington
Luther Willis

To develop a program of membership to maintain a strong chapter. To review applications submitted to Executive Committee.

HONOR AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS & ALLIED ARTS

Conrad Curtis, Chairman
Herman Scharhag
Clarence Kivett
Richard D. Stahl
Eugene Pryor

To foster and direct a program of Honor Awards for current architectural work. To investigate possibilities of Honor Awards for outstanding examples of work done in allied arts. To investigate possibilities of Honor Awards to craftsmen.

BY-LAWS

Herbert Anset, Chairman
Ed Lawhon
Earl Wilson
Ralph Kiene

To prepare the text of all amendments of the By-laws and obtain the opinion of counsel as to the legality and form thereof. To perform other duties consistent with the general duties stated above which are assigned to the committee by the Executive Committee.

REGISTRATION

George Davidson, Chairman
Dave Clark
Bob Everitt
John Monroe

Investigate possible revisions to strengthen existing registration laws. Co-operate with other groups with similar interest.

EDUCATION & RESEARCH

Angus McCallum, Chairman
Everett Peterson
Max Sandford
Robert Cowling
Roger Blessing

The development of long range educational objectives, including education for practice and relations with the NAAB, NCARB and the ACSA. Co-operation with the vocational guidance programs of high schools in the region.

A.I.A. - A.G.C.

Herb Pennington, Chairman
Edgar Voskamp
Evans Folger

To co-operate in matters of mutual interest to both organizations.

A.I.A. - PRODUCERS' COUNCIL

John Monroe, Chairman
Bob Earnheart
Arthur Pearson

To co-operate in matters of mutual interest to both organizations.

URBAN DESIGN & HOUSING

Mark Sharp, Chairman
Raymond Meyn
Guy Sumner
Bob Jarvis

To foster and encourage re-planning and redevelopment of existing cities as well as the planning and development of new areas. To demonstrate the interest and ability of the architectural profession to assume the leadership in this field.

HOME BUILDING INDUSTRY

Louis Geis, Chairman
Edwin Kratz
Evans Folger
Bill Cory

To promote utilization of architectural services by merchant builders and to collaborate with associations in the home building field.

HOSPITALS & HEALTH

John Hewitt, Chairman

COLLABORATION WITH DESIGN PROFESSION

Edgar Voskamp, Chairman

SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Dwight Brown, Chairman

PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Ernest Brostrom, Chairman

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The Producers' Council ushered in the 1955 Christmas Season in grand style . . . the grandest ever.

They invited members of the Kansas City Chapter, A.I.A., and their wives to join them in the annual compotation. The party was held in the Junior and Grand Ballrooms of the Town House Hotel, in Kansas City, Kansas. Members of the Producers' Council provided a well-stocked bar and an excellent dinner.

After the dinner, the Producers' Council presented their yearly "Top Banana" award . . . the 1955 Top Banana—John T. Murphy.

Officers of both organizations were introduced. The table centerpieces were awarded to the ladies, and then, the rest of the evening entertainment got under way. The Producers' Council provided a real "live" band for dancing and the festive time continued.

Yes, this year's party was the grandest ever . . . Thank you, Producers' Council . . .



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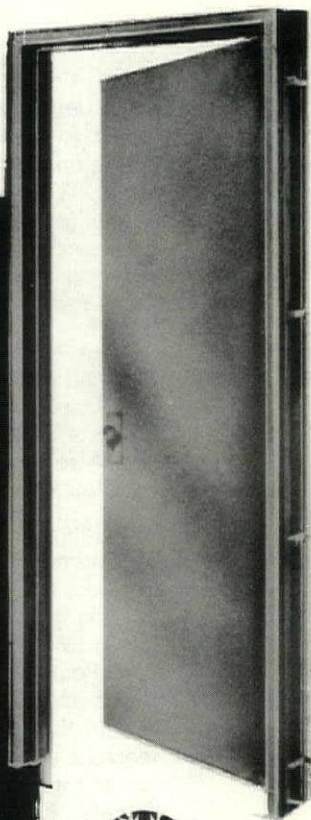
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ARCHITECURAL LORE

by Ernest O. Brostrom

SIXTY Years ago, January, 1896, there appeared a small delightful periodical entitled POSTER LORE, published in Kansas City, Missouri, by Frederic Thoreau Singleton, at the Red-Pale, Number One Hundred Ninth Street, West. It was pocket size, 4½" by 6", and was "done into types and printed" in black and red on deckle-edged stock, with cuts and plates mounted in—a typographer's gem. The first issue was in "Two Thousand" copies.

Issue Number 1, Book 1, among other artists of fame like Will H. Bradley, contained an ornamental initial and a full decorative page by Bertram G. Goodhue, Architect; the page had a border in black and the type was red. Also, there were several quotations from an article by Claude Fayette Bragdon, Architect.

In later numbers Mr. Bragdon is quoted several times, and some of his work is illustrated. From an article entitled, "Hereafter Followeth the Nature and Tenor of This Said Book and the First Part is the Importance of Design With a Note on the Absence of Humor in American Posters," I quote: "It is a significant fact that such men as Grasset, Beardsley and Goodhue received their training in architect's offices, where if one learns anything at all, it is design . . ." And further, in commenting upon a Louis Rhead poster, illustrating a female, Bragdon writes, "My quarrel with her is not that her legs are wooden, but that she evidently prefers them that way."

In another place mention is made of Harvey Ellis, that skilled architect and artist with pen and ink who worked on drafting tables of Kansas City, St. Joseph and St. Louis, Missouri, and Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. In commenting about two tests for good design—one being that it shall be intelligible at a distance—Mr. Ellis said, "I claim that a picture is no good unless it looks just as well upside down."

Using a Roger Cunningham quote from POSTER LURE, "Bad handwriting may pass for genius—or a sign of it, but bad drawing never can masquerade as inspiration." As a prop . . . I would like to jot for our own consumption, 'nor indifferent typography reflect our abilities as creators of lasting architecture.'

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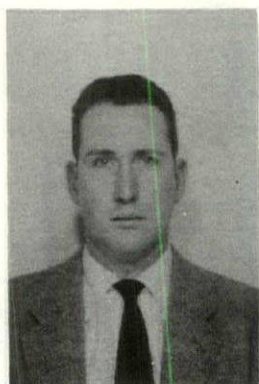
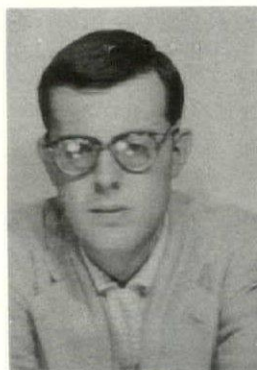
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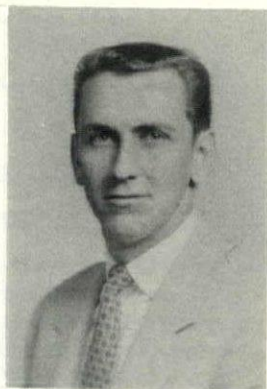
William M. Linscott has been advanced to Associate membership. Bill is a graduate of Benson High School, Omaha, Nebraska and received his B.S. in Architecture from Kansas University in 1949. He was associated with M. H. Linscott until early 1953 when he became a partner in the firm of Linscott, Kienig & Haylett.

Richard N. Bills, Junior Associate, graduated from Southwest High School, Kansas City, Missouri, and in 1953 graduated from Kansas University with a B.S. in Architecture. He has been with Edward W. Tanner & Associates since August, 1953.



Gordon Clayton Jarchow, Junior Associate, is a graduate of Paseo High School, Kansas City, Missouri, and Kansas University. He received his B.S. in Architecture in 1953. He has been with Edward W. Tanner & Associates since December, 1953.

Robert J. Koppes, Junior Associate, is a graduate of St. Joseph High School, Bellevue, Iowa. He attended Iowa State College and received his B.S. in Architecture from Kansas University in 1954. He has been with Mackie & Roark since April, 1954.



James Russell Smith, Junior Associate, graduated from Fredonia High School, Fredonia, Kansas, and from Kansas University with a B.S. in Architecture in 1952. He has been with Edward W. Tanner & Associates since 1954.

Paul Stanley Staats, Junior Associate, is a graduate of Southwest High School, Kansas City, Missouri, and Kansas University. He received his B.S. in Architecture in 1952. He has been with Edward W. Tanner & Associates since August, 1954.



Donald Winston White, Junior Associate, graduated from Rosedale High School, Kansas City, Kansas. He was with Bloomgarten & Frohwerk for several years, and since July, 1955, has been with Samuel W. Bihr.

ADDRESS

by Henry S. Churchill, F. A. I. A.

October 13, 1955

TENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE — CENTRAL STATES REGION — A.I.A.
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

During the last ten years there has been a quite remarkable growth of interest in the general well-being of our cities. The previous decade, between the Depression and the War, was mostly concerned with slums and the evil social conditions they bred and the economic losses they caused. But we now know that the slum is not the cause of urban deterioration, but an effect of it. The slum is not the reason for the spread of blight, of the flight of families to the suburbs, of the decline of center city but quite contrariwise—the slum fills in the vacuum left by economic and physical decay.

The unfolding of this paradox has stirred citizens and officials to seek more comprehensive action than the old slum-clearance program permitted, and federal legislation embodying the broader outlook was included as Title 1 of the Housing Act of 1949. The purpose of this title was termed Urban Redevelopment. It was prayerfully hoped that under its provisions cities would be rebuilt, the tide to the suburbs stayed, downtown would spout new skyscrapers and blight would die upon the vine. Redevelopment, by a smashing attack on blighted areas would quickly bring a rush of speculators seeking to make enormous profits. To control this, the planners set up rigid controls in Washington to govern the expenditures of the vast sums to be unleashed, and sought to assure thoroughness of redevelopment and safety of capital by insisting that the process be based on a comprehensive physical, economic and social outlook. This was in line with the sound theory that no physical solution was possible without an economic one, that no solution could be sound without a sound underlying social philosophy, and that the sound source of all soundness was in Washington, D.C.

In truth, the comprehensive approach is the only possible one, it is the essence of contemporary city-planning and calls for the highest degree of collaboration between many skills and disciplines—the paper planner, the economist, the architect, the realtor, the traffic engineer, the administrator and politician. All these and more besides must work together in an effort to achieve a city for the citizens. It is no mean task.

I am here addressing an audience of professional people, mostly architects, and some officials of this old and historic city. It would be easy to talk to you in an inspirational vein, about how you all should collaborate and how you should produce a beautiful and noble city. But I would in effect be only saying less well what Albert Mayer said so powerfully and Willem Dudok said so beautifully at Minneapolis. I shall rather assume that you, as architects and officials with responsibility to and pride in your city, that you indeed wish to remold it nearer to the heart's desire and the eye's delight.

Can you?

The urban scene today is one of disorganization. I believe I have already mentioned the principal ills, but it does no harm to repeat: Arterial sclerosis of the streets, decline of the business district, loss of population to the suburbs, prolapsus of the budget. These are separate symptoms of one illness and must be treated as one illness. Piecemeal remedies will fail, or worse, aggravate other ills.

We look at the congested traffic in our streets and are appalled. The delays pile up; the losses in time, in temper, and goodwill are enormous. We turn in desperation to the Highway Engineers and oddly enough they prescribe bigger and better highways, highways that are now costing upwards of a million dollars a mile. A section of the Delaware Expressway through Philadelphia, if it is ever built, will cost seventeen million dollars a mile. I don't know what your proposed expressways here are going to cost, but I am sure you are going to build them, and I am also sure they will do nothing essential towards solving your local traffic problems.

Every city in the country is building expressways like mad, splitting good residential areas into pieces, wrecking priceless park lands, climbing up, over and through cities already hacked into bits by railroad yards and trackage. Someday we will wake up to the obvious fact that a Highway Engineer has no more sense of civic or social responsibility than had the railroad engineer. It will then be too late.

Go to Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Detroit, Jacksonville—you can go through or around them at fifty miles an hour and happily never know you've been there. Get off the expressway, though, and you're in the same old constipated duodenums.

Mass transit? Perhaps, but not if it remains a conversation piece. Recent reports from nine cities showed a) that the number of private cars entering the central business district has increased and b) that the number of people entering has decreased. Mass transit as an alleviation of traffic congestion is certainly sound in theory, but it still needs to be proved in practice.

Nowhere have I yet heard, in any serious discussion at an effective administrative level, of any proposal to limit the height and bulk of structures, particularly downtown commercial structures, to a rational relation to the capacity of the street system. Until that is done expressways, parking garages underground, and all the other palliatives will continue to be quite ineffectual.

Expressways, besides adding to downtown congestion, add to residential depletion. They provide the means and often the cause of the flight to the suburbs. The huge growth of suburbia is too well-known to need any comment on the fact, but I do want to make a sort of marginal note about the phenomenon. I point out that people settle in the suburbs not necessarily because they like it but because they have no other choice. All, or very nearly all, the building of low and medium priced homes has been through FHA guaranteed financing. The only volume of low-income construction—and not much volume, at that—in the cities has been public housing. FHA financial policies have been so discriminatory against in-city building that there has been none to speak

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of. Low down-payments, guaranteed cheap money, disregard of neighborhood quality and community standards have all aided the exploitation of cheap suburban land while every form of obstructionism and harassment has been thrown at the city builder. Consequently, private enterprise, even in those instances where it wanted to, has not been able to play a part in urban rebuilding.

As a result of these FHA policies, two things: We have now more slums in our cities than we ever had before and, also, we have thousands of acres of potential suburban slums that menace our future.

I have now briefly mentioned traffic and flight to the suburbs; to these I would add a comment on real-estate taxes, for they too are a paradox relevant to the total problem. The paradox consists in slum land being so highly priced that it must be continued in its use as slum land. The high prices generally do not reflect a real or even potential use-value; they only reflect a valuation for tax purposes which the city must, by all means, maintain in order to maintain its borrowing power. Consequently urban rebuilding is too costly for the customers, and cannot be undertaken except in very limited instances, without subsidy. And the subsidy, in our curious way of going about these things, usually takes the form of an abatement of the very taxes that prevented action in the first place. On careful consideration this, somehow, seems silly.

Well, those are some of the problems, greatly simplified, that underlie the planning of our cities for the future. We refused to face them resolutely when Urban Redevelopment was hailed as a panacea in 1949, and so in 1954 we called it Urban Renewal—our old trick of putting new labels on the old hog-wash.

For the December 1950 issue of the Architectural Forum I wrote a piece which said then what has since proven correct, and so I say it again now: That Urban Redevelopment or Renewal or what-you-call-it will

not work until there is something in it for the private investor and builder. I said then, and I was right, that the only construction under the Act would be public construction: public housing, court houses, civic buildings, public authority garages and parking. As a matter of fact hardly anything at all has been built as a direct result of the Act—an apartment house in Jersey City, the Colosseum in New York, a few public buildings here and there. The much-publicized big developments were all started before 1949 and would have gone ahead anyway because they were economically attractive to private capital. The Penn Center development in Philadelphia has no truck with Redevelopment with a capital R.

In order for something to be attractive to private capital it must be something that is attractive to the public. Someone must want to live or work there, or both, and the investor must be able to finance the deal so the consumer can pay, or else the investor cannot make a profit. No one will build something because some bureaucrat or planner thinks he ought to. Official Urban Renewal attitudes do not coincide with the simple facts of life.

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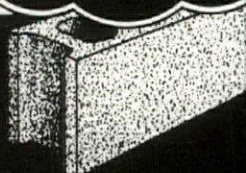
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Urban Renewal is a failure, and will continue to be a failure until you people who are responsible for your cities take stock of what is wrong besides the red tape. I have sat in on discussion after discussion of these things and have invariably noted that the following points are sedulously avoided: One, no one is willing or able to talk about the basic relation of subsidy to private enterprise or to face the real-estate quandaries so ably discussed by Miles Colean in recent articles in the Architectural Forum; two, that no one is really willing to face a program of reduction of center-city density, or the necessity, in the face of vast technological changes, for new living patterns; three, no one will look the ad valorem tax squarely in the eye; and fourth, all eyes close when some one says that in fifty years there will be **at least** fifty million more people in the United States, most of them in the cities.

Admittedly these things have perfectly enormous economic consequences. It is about time that thought was given to equating the consequences of facing the facts with the consequences of continued thoughtless shoveling of hundreds of millions into expedient expressways, futile subsidies, and the continued deterioration of the city, physical and spiritual, for lack of any real action or intelligent planning.

What, if anything, can be done about so involved a set of circumstances? Something can, and has to be done, all right, because cities are here to stay. So are the automobile, the airplane, television, electronic computers, atomic power and automatism. We have to make these things part of our lives and part of our cities, and we will have to do that by way of local understanding and local adaptation. That means the livable city of tomorrow will come through the collaboration of the people sitting in this room and not by way of an unworkable Federal Program.

We must, it seems to me, make every effort to do less but to do it more quickly. By which I mean that rather than accomplish none of our grandiose schemes in six years it might be better to actually build something in two.

So I would like to suggest, for your thoughtfulness, a few points for future collaboration, to the end that gradually our cities become again livable and our countryside less devastated.

1. City planning and urban problems are not separable from regional planning and suburban sprawl. This truism must have more than lip service. For one thing, there is less water than you think.
2. Traffic congestion is not solved by highway engineers.
3. Zoning has degenerated into a device to "stabilize" land values. It must shortly be returned to some more useful purpose or else abandoned.
4. In rebuilding the city, new patterns must be devised suitable to our new technological devices. But in doing this inspiration can be found, if you will look for it, in the older parts of your city. There you will often discover quiet and beauty in the way land is used, the way buildings are sited, the way streets are laid out.

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5. Take a good long look at taxes, financing costs and the relation between the professions of the Government agencies and their practices. This is an economy of private enterprise for profit, and if the system is to continue profit cannot be defined in terms of a bureaucrat's salary.
6. If the city is slowly and steadily made better there will come a time, in fifteen or twenty years, when people will start to flee their suburban slums for the amenities and comforts of the city. Their mayors will rejoice at the wisdom of their predecessors, and cities that have gone in for extensive annexations will be sorry.

It will, I hope, be the pleasant task of the Architect to bring the better city of the future into being. The city-planners, the economists, the administrators, even the sociologists at the Wailing Wall, have a heavy responsibility, for theirs is that task of programming, preparing, financing, and administering without which nothing can come to pass. But on the Architect lies the burden of making what comes to pass worth the trouble of achieving. It is his job to make the city not only livable in terms of physical needs, but a place for spiritual rejoicing. A city is not suburbia, not a horrible place of little detached houses without privacy or mercy. In a city, the arts of man are uppermost, nature is but a foil to the artificial. Man is not humble in the city as he is in the fields, the hills or the sea, but properly prideful and vainglorious at his achievements. It is the architect who states this pride and vainglory in visible form. If he does so with understanding of man's need for pride in his own works, the city will again flourish as a city. If the architect fails in this, from whatever cause, ignorance or indifference, the city will fail and we will have merely "planned communities".

THE KANSAS CITY TIMES.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1955

FORTY YEARS AGO



From the Files of December 5, 1915.

Representative Wm. P. Borland left last night for Washington for the opening of Congress. He said he would urge the appointment of W. N. Collins as postmaster.

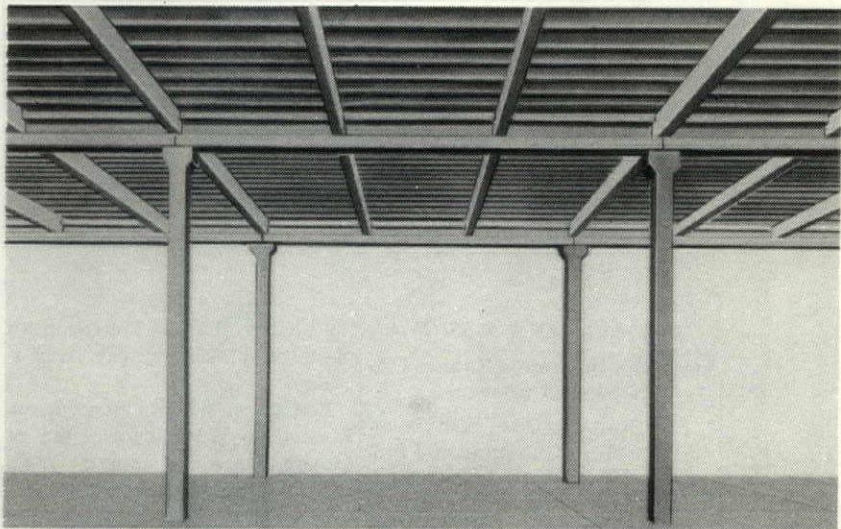
Ben J. Lubschez of Kansas City has been elected a director of the American Institute of Architects. He is president of the Kansas City chapter.

Jeffery Farnol's novel "The Broad Highway" is to begin serially in The Star tomorrow morning.

Richmond P. Hobson, former navy captain, former congress-

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THE KANSAS CITY STAR.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1955.

PLANNERS IN A SESSION.
American Institute's Kansas City
Section to Convene.

The Kansas City section of the American Institute of Planners will hold its first technical session of the winter season at 8 o'clock Wednesday night on the fifteenth floor of

the City hall. Metropolitan planning problems will be discussed.

The panel will include Mayor Robert P. Weatherford, jr.; of Independence, Dr. Martin Loeb of the University of Chicago, and Dr. W. D. Bryant of Community Studies, Inc.

It is our pleasure this month to say "welcome" to the newest member of our family of advertisers. With this issue our old friend Claude Cooke joins us. Be sure to greet him on page 3 and take time to by each month to see what's new with Claude and the other people of his organization.

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