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The Louisiana Architect
Volume IX Number 3

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JOHN L. WEBB—Nominated for AIA Vice Presidency

Editorial

The LAA Board of Governors has by acclamation endorsed the nomination of John L. Webb, AIA of Baton Rouge, for the office of national AIA Vice President. Official nomination petitions were signed by the New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Shreveport chapters.

John is a former LAA Secretary/Treasurer and President. He has held virtually every office in his chapter, has served as Chairman of the Institute's Building Construction Committee and is currently a member of the Documents Review Committee.

He is a graduate of Louisiana State University, holds a N.C.A.R.B. certificate and is also licensed as a professional engineer.

John has been a speaker at various colleges and seminars on specifications and contracts and on architecture and the law. He has served for the past four years as Editorial Advisor to the Louisiana Architect Magazine and is the author of several published articles on architecture.

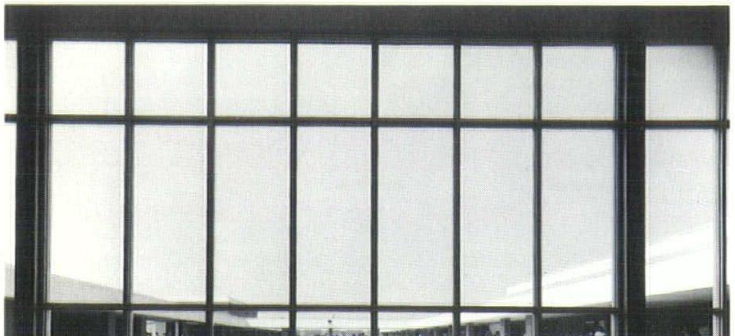
John is vitally interested in the practical day-to-day problems of architectural practice as well as increasing the ability of architects to produce good architecture, provide comprehensive services, head the construction industry team and improve the environment. John knows that the AIA will not be able to effectively offer professional services to the disadvantaged, fight for adequate housing, or expect total environmental planning unless its architect members are operating from a strong base of good business management and highly developed, primary, professional skills. "Who will follow a leader who cannot rule his own house?"

He has voiced particular concern with the problems and practice of small architectural firms and believes that the AIA should give strong priority to programs of assistance in this area.

The time for bitching and moaning, for talking and studying must end with action. Not a park bench philosopher, John Webb is known as a clear thinker and a man of action. We believe he will be a great asset both as an innovator and implementor of vital programs.

The LAA would appreciate the support of all its members for the candidacy of John Webb. We hope too that you'll write personal letters to fellow AIA Architects around the country soliciting their support.

IN THIS ISSUE



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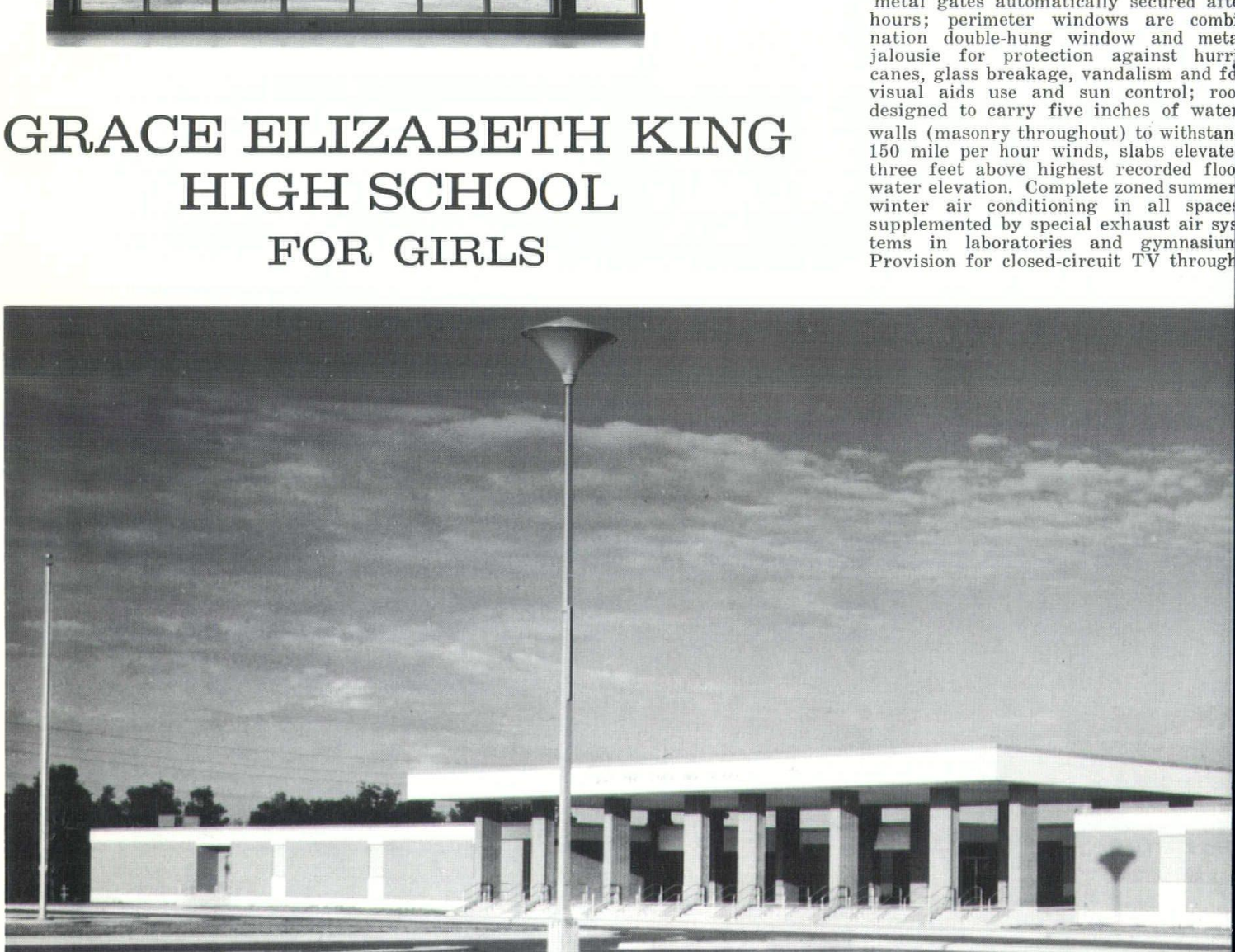

out. Equipped with centrally located dial access equipment, with a computerized library of audio and kinescope tapes which can be "dialed" from student carrels and stations in all departments. Several large court areas designed for future conversion into team-teaching spaces supplementing those provided in English and social studies departments. Separate entries provided for field house, resource center and dining facilities to permit nightime use by students or community. Cafeteria, designed to feed 2,000 meals in 90 minutes is a unique experimental unit (now proven successful) in Louisiana; students are offered choice of four different main dishes, with high-speed counter and conveyor systems, infra-red equipment, automated dishwashing. Dining area is carpeted. Automatically controlled protective lighting to discourage vandalism, at perimeter and all inner courts. Stage lighting solid state controlled rectifier dimmers, portable console. Extensive intercom system, with special provision for after-hours monitoring and alarm to remote location. Field house seats 2,000, using motorized seating units.

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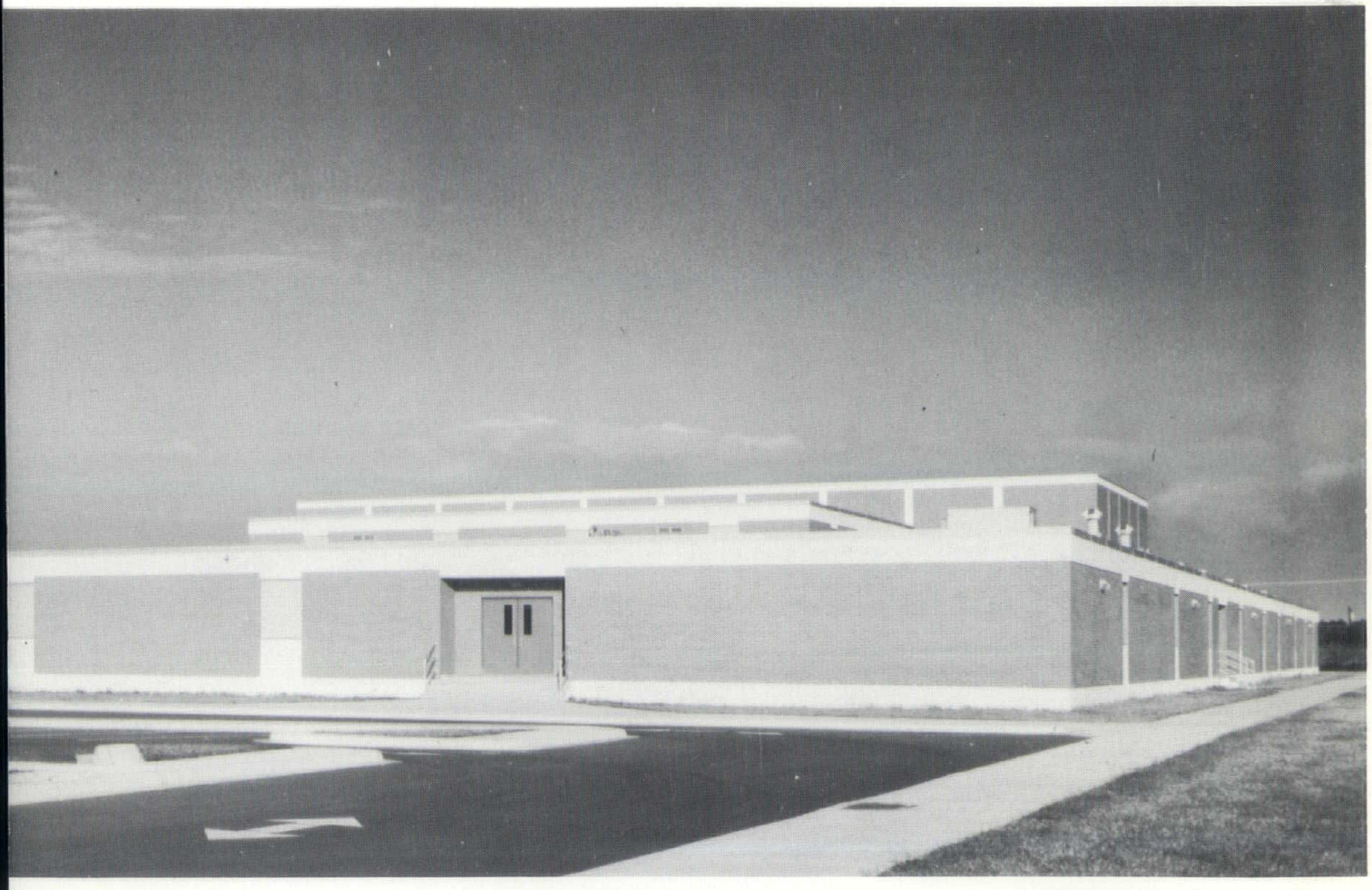
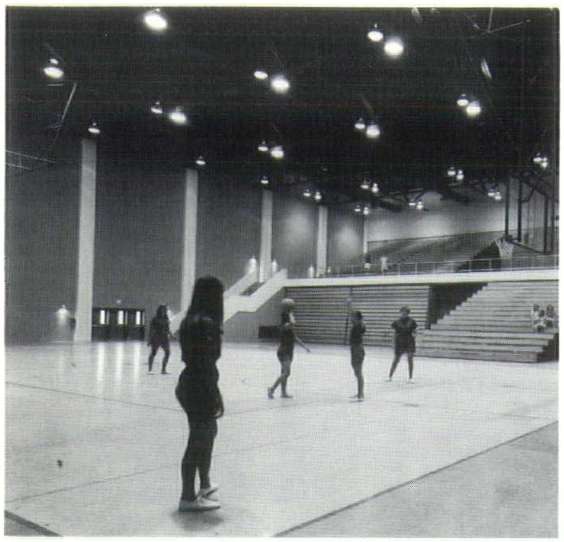
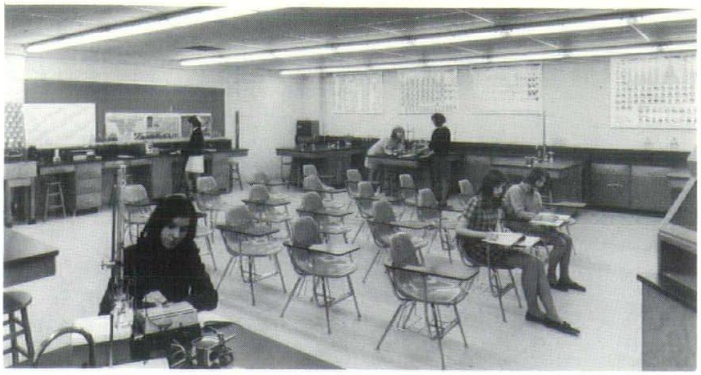
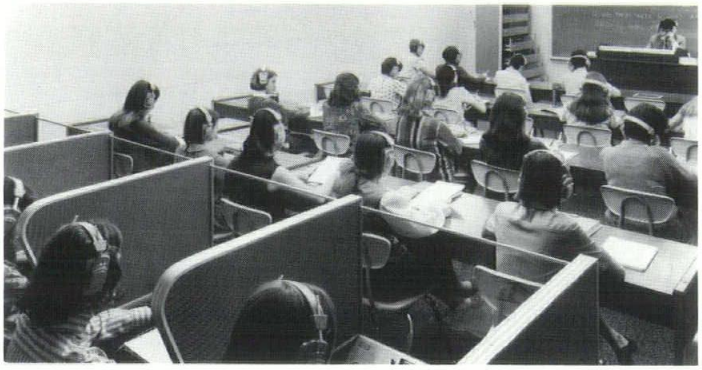
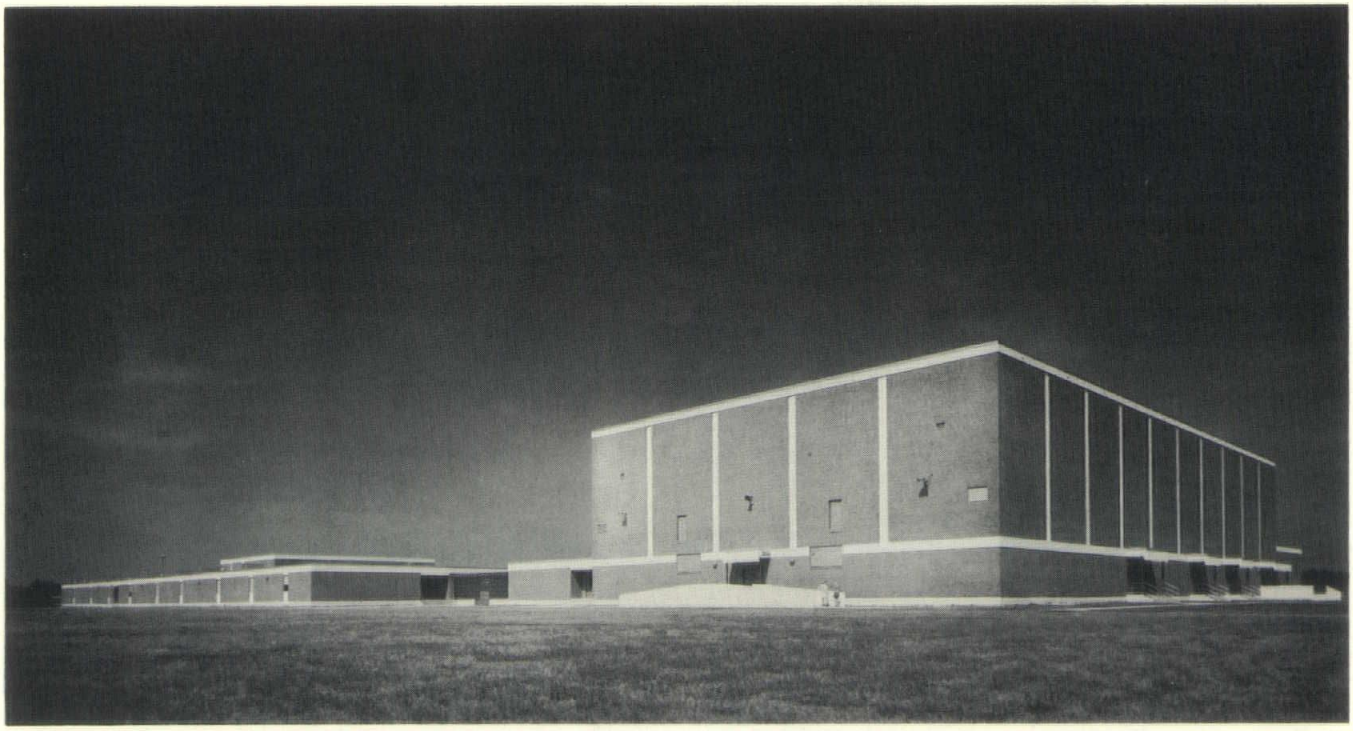


Photos by Frank Lotz Miller









Grace Elizabeth King High School for Girls

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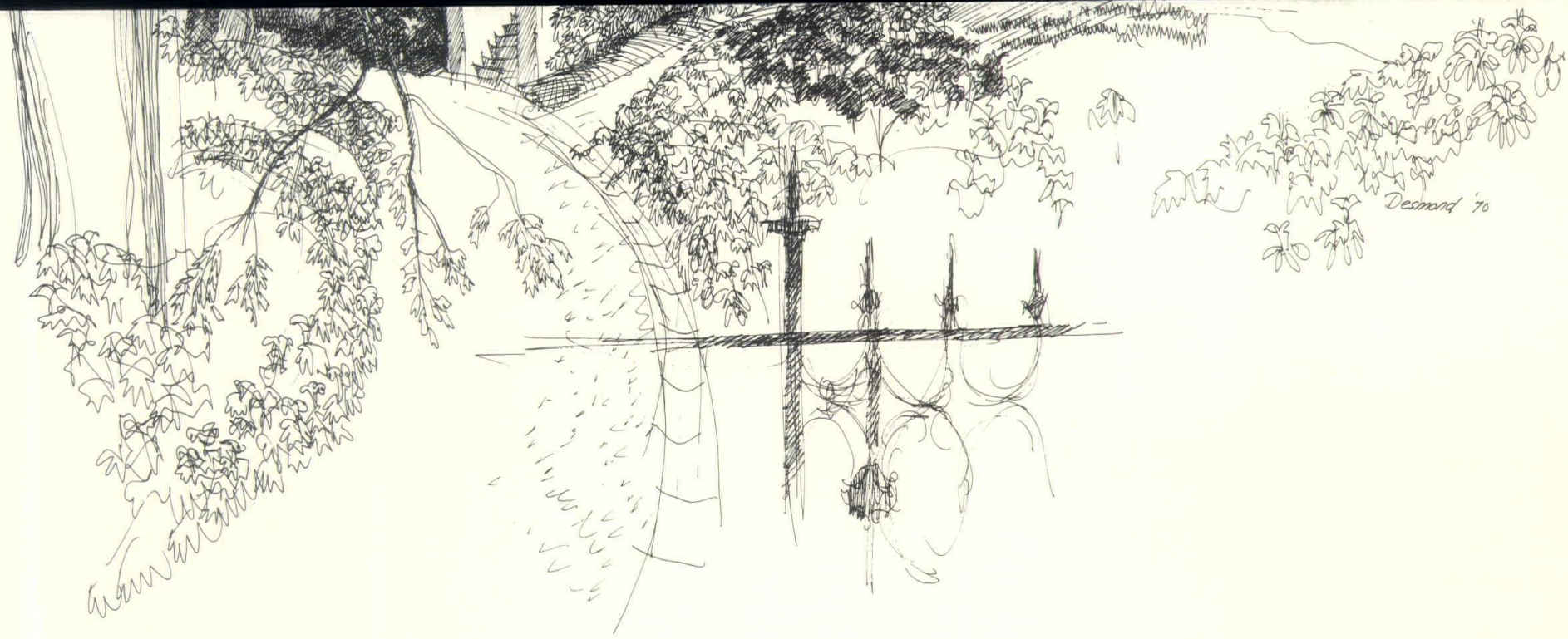


Stanton Hall

NATCHEZ, MISSISSIPPI

Immediately across the Mississippi River from the once fertile lowlands of Concordia Parish, on high bluffs formed by the wind borne soil, loess, stands the City of Natchez, Mississippi. Once an important link on the chain of river ports from St. Louis to New Orleans, it now is of interest to architects because of the amazing collection of 18th and early 19th century residential architecture preserved here.

It is ironic that these remnants of a bygone culture built on a faulted social structure stand now to remind our disposable minded society of their ideals of permanence and continuity.

Of all the opulent architectural expressions of prosperity preserved in Natchez, none is more impressive for size, completeness and grandeur than the building, STANTON HALL, pictured here. It was built by Frederick Stanton in 1851 with Thomas Rose as Architect.

In 1940, after some decline in fortunes, it was purchased and subsequently restored by the Pilgrimage Garden Club of Natchez. Annually during the quiet explosion of spring, garlanded by flowering shrubs and encompassed by century old oaks, it is presented by the club to the public along with almost thirty other well preserved homes. The great effort that makes these places accessible during the Natchez Pilgrimage is one of America's finest examples of historic preservation.

JOHN DESMOND, FAIA

(EDITOR'S NOTE: *Examining the nature of America's existing pollution problems, the following article is the first installment of a three-part series centering on water pollution and air contamination. The second installment, planned for April's edition, will revolve around current conditions in Louisiana, and the final segment in May will focus on what is being done and what should be done about the spiraling problem.*)

First Installment

America the "Beautiful" is dying.

The opulent nation, known to the world as the land of the affluent, is crumbling in an age of effluence, choking itself with its own contaminated air, drowning itself with its own befouled waters.

Dying are the bubbling, pure streams; the lush, green forests; the free, untamed wildlife; the fresh, life-preserving atmosphere. And once man's environment deteriorates, man will die too.

The problem has become such a serious one that President Richard Nixon has decided that it is time to stop soft-peddling the issue and has declared that a state of war exists between man and pollution.

"The 1970s absolutely must be the years when America pays its debt to the past by reclaiming the purity of its air, its waters and our living environment," Nixon said January 1. "It is literally now or never."

The issue has now been thrust into the national arena as a political football. The Democrats contend they initiated the fight long before Nixon had any inclinations of doing so. The Republicans, on the other hand, claim that they were the first to bring the problem to light and launch attempts to terminate it.

Pollution, both of air and water, has existed in the United States ever since man set foot on this golden land of opportunity, but it was not until the age of prosperity, ushered in by the industrial revolution, that the problem began to spiral to heights that are now causing great alarm.

With industrialization came urbanization — the two go hand in hand. And with this seemingly happy couple came waste and sewage disposal problems and air contamination. The price the atmosphere is paying as a result of man's abuse is exhorbitant— maybe too exhorbitant. Industrialization, with no regard to the limited self-purification capabilities of nature, is taking a heavy toll, with the chief victims being our water and air.

Water is industry's No. 1 raw material, but even with this in mind, U.S. plants discard 165 million tons of solid wastes into rivers, streams and lakes annually. This astounding figure, when added to the 172 million tons of smoke and fumes spewed into the air by American factories, gives the United States the unbelievable distinction of producing almost 50 per cent of the world's industrial pollution. But the fault of water pollution does not lie with industry alone, because both individual and agricultural use of the precious liquid is increasing and with it so does the prospect of added pollution.

U. S. water use per individual is up four times since 1900 and current estimates have it that in 70 years of life the average American uses 26 million gallons of water. This fact, combined with the threat of overpopulation, throws a dim light on the prospect of pollution being completely halted.

"The larger the number of people living in an area, the greater will be the problems of the contamination of the environment," said Robert Nunley, a population biologist at the University of Kansas. "If we don't take more stringent measures, our increasing numbers could change the atmosphere."

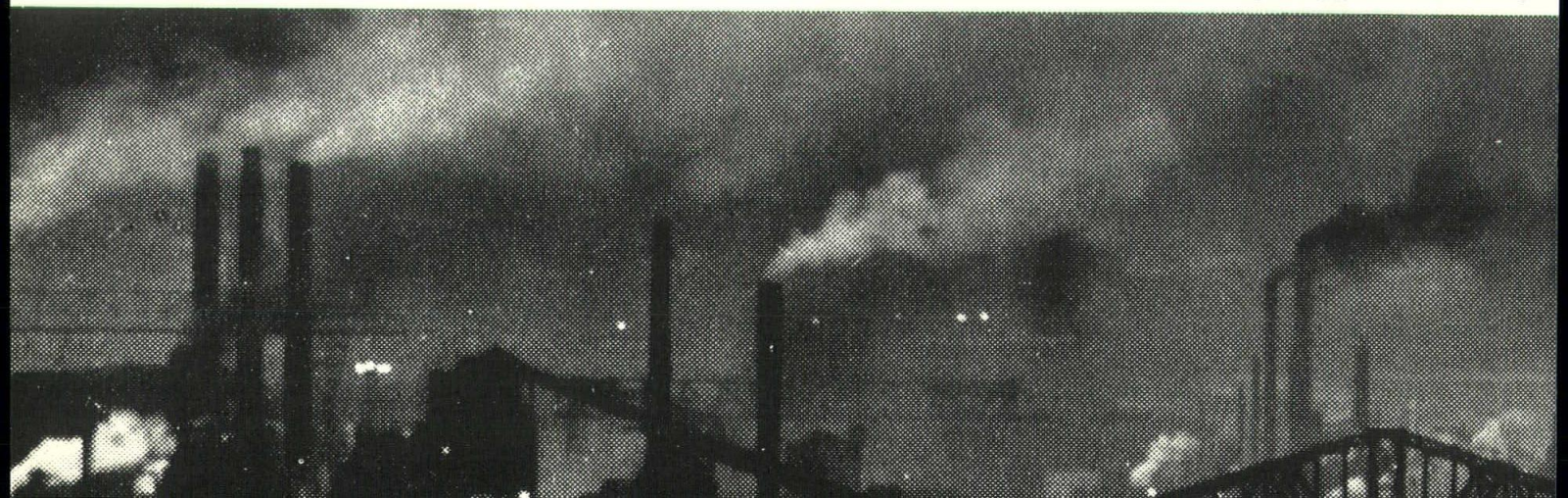
World population has risen from about 5,000,000 people 8,000 years ago to 1 billion in 1850, 2 billion by 1930 and 3.5 billion today. In the United States the population count has exploded from an estimated 4 million in 1790 to more than 200 million in 1969. By 1980 the U. S. census is projected to hit above 260 million, and by the year 2000 the world population count is expected to boom beyond 7 billion. One noted ecologist, Barry Commoner, forecasts a grim future, stating that the earth can only support between 6 and 8 billion people.

Along with overpopulation, agriculture is playing a major role in pollution. The farming industry uses almost seven times as much water for irrigation now as it did in 1900. About 60 per cent of this water is lost in the fields, and that percentage which is recovered returns contaminated with salts, minerals, pesticides and other chemicals.

U. S. agriculture uses more than 145 billion gallons of water daily as compared to more than 160 billion gallons per day for industry and 50 billion gallons for municipalities. The incredible sum of the three above figures exceeds 355 billion gallons daily, and it is estimated that by 1980 water use will surpass 600 billion gallons per 24-hour period. Factories use about 1,400 gallons of water to produce $1 worth of steel and nearly 200 gallons for $1 worth of paper.

Industry, agriculture and overpopulated municipalities are knocking sizeable dents in the nation's water supply, and combined, the three are responsible for adding eight types of pollutants to our water environment.

Heading the list of waste materials are those classed as "oxygen-demanding." Under this category are sewage and industrial pollutants of plant and animal origin. Bacteria in lakes and rivers will readily decompose such wastes if enough oxygen is available,



By KEITH KAISER
Associate Editor

but the amount of dissolved oxygen in the water is dictated by the degree of pollutance. For example, bacteria will absorb more oxygen to decompose larger amounts of sewage. A situation causing low oxygen content could be harmful to water inhabitants — especially fish, which many times die by the thousands in what is termed a fish kill.

Fish kills, however, are not solely attributed to oxygen-demanding wastes; two other types of pollutants — heat and synthetic organic chemicals — may be just as harmful.

Heat reduces the capacity of water to absorb oxygen while many synthetic organic chemicals have high toxicities. One such organic compound is the highly poisonous dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane or DDT, which is a killer of both insects and fish. Used as a pesticide by agriculture, this colorless, odorless chemical also kills insect-eating birds, and even more alarming is the fact that ecologists say the compound is found in the milk of nursing mothers in amounts two to six times that allowed for commercial sale.

The five additional categories of water pollutants are "disease-causing agents" including various types of infectious organisms and microbes; "plant nutrients," such as nitrogen and phosphorous which stimulate the growth of algae and water weeds; "inorganic chemicals and mineral substances" embracing metal salts, acids, solid matter and other chemical compounds; "sediments," such as particles of soils, sands and minerals, and "radioactive substances" resulting from the mining and processing of radioactive ores.

The thrust against pollution is not one that solely involves water. Our air is just as rapidly becoming contaminated and the nation's 83 million automobiles are seeing to that by causing 60 per cent of the air pollution in cities — industry has a major hand in producing the other 40 per cent.

"If transportation continues to grow in the direction its going, it's possible that the next generation will never see the sun," contends Alfred Hulstrunck, assistant director of the Atmospheric Sciences Center at State University of New York in Albany. One example is Chicago which has lost about 40 per cent of its sunlight because of an impure atmosphere.

"We now have 50 per cent more nitrogen oxides in the air in California," ecologist Kenneth E.M.F. Watt told a national magazine recently. 'This has a direct bearing on the quality of light hitting the surface of the earth. At the present rate of nitrogen buildup, it's only a matter of time before light will be filtered out of the atmosphere and none of our land will be usable."

Air becomes contaminated primarily from burning, man's most basic power source. Smoke and gas are belched into the air from engines, incinerators, steel mills, refineries and trash piles. Our atmosphere is laden with a conglomeration of carbon monoxide, a toxic gas emitted into the biosphere by automobiles; sulphur oxides, poisonous gases from factories and power plants burning coal or oil containing sulphur; nitrogen oxides, gases from industries burning wastes containing nitrogen; hydrocarbons, unburned chemicals from car exhausts which produce smog, and petrochemical smog, a mixture of gases and particles produced from oxidation of gasoline and other fuel products.

These five air pollutants, along with a wide assortment of smoke, fly ash and dust, are major factors in causing disease and sometimes death. Ecologist Watt contends that pollutants are to blame for the spiraling number of deaths from emphysema in Southern California and argues that by 1975 mass deaths will occur from pollution. Emphysema, a disease which causes a breakdown of air sacs in lungs, killed 12,000 Americans in 1962, permanently disabling 12,000 others.

Many contend that air contamination is also a major factor in bronchitis and lung cancer. The former, which is responsible for 10 per cent of all deaths and 10 per cent of industrial absences in Britain, affects about 1 out of 5 men between 40 and 60. Lung cancer reportedly is found twice as often in air polluted cities as in rural areas. Statistics show that Norway, with low pollution, has about half the lung cancer as that of the United States.

Air contamination is also blamed with contributing to common colds, pneumonia and bronchial asthma. Besides menacing human health, such atmospheric pollution kills plant and animal life, rusts metals, damages clothing and peels paint. The effects are countless.

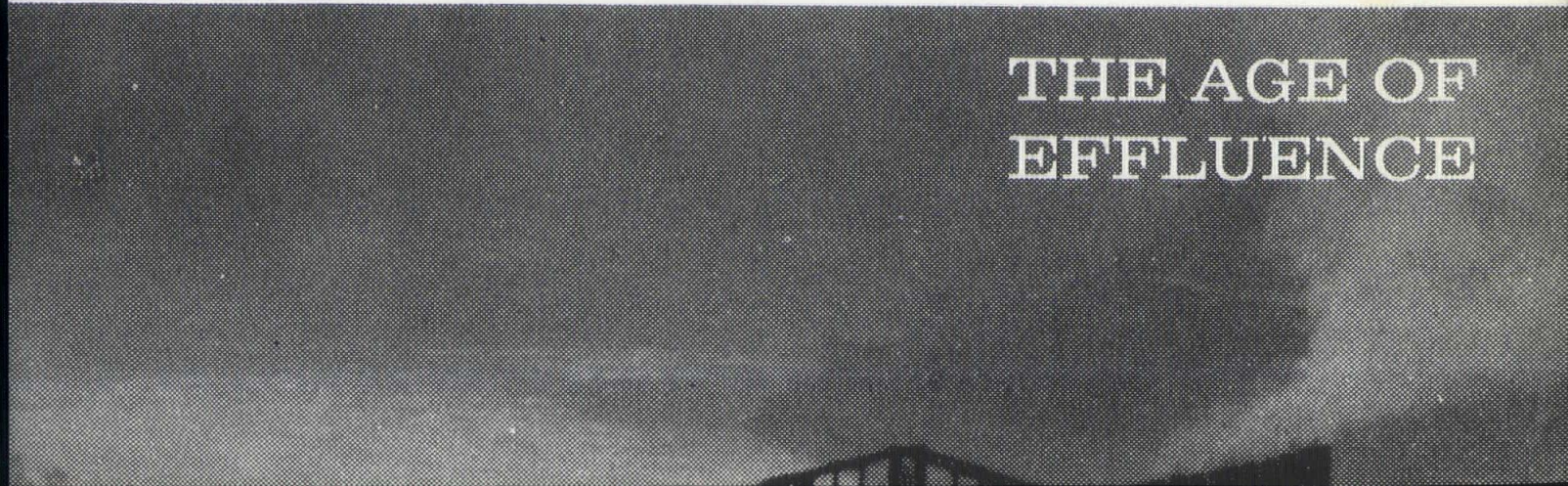
The problems of water pollution and air contamination are coming to a head now. With immediate and deliberate action man might save his environment and himself with it. Many experts, however, say it is already too late and mankind is doomed. Others contend there is still a slim chance.

"Science and technology brought the advances which have resulted in pollution," asserts Dr. Robert M. White, administrator of the Environmental Science Services Administration. "The people of America and the world will look to science and technology to rectify their mistakes and we shall be judged harshly if we fail to do so."

He adds, "Man has been a miserable tenant on this earth, and earth can be an unforgiving landlord. We enter upon our second century with a sense of urgency, which bears on the ultimate question of survival itself."

Concluding, he emphasizes, "We have vital contributions to make and NOT MUCH TIME IN WHICH TO MAKE THEM."

America the "Beautiful" is not dead yet, but Father Time is closing in.



By Ed Freedman
Executive Secretary Northeast
Louisiana Contractors Association, AGC, Inc.

THE COST OF LABOR

"The cost of building a home or an apartment house has become exhorbitant." This is how President Nixon began his statement of September 4, 1969, in which he ordered a cutback in federal construction and urged state and municipal governments, along with private industry, to curtail their building plans in an effort to combat inflation.

The president also noted, "Low income groups, and a large share of Americans who are better off as well, face the danger of being priced out of the housing market."

While the President pointed no finger in his anti-inflation decree, much of the industry's inflationary spiral was laid by others at labor's doorstep.

In announcing the formation of a Construction Users Anti-Inflation Roundtable, consisting of many of the nation's blue-chip companies, Roger Blough, former chairman of U. S. Steel and head of the roundtable, declared last August:

"Construction costs are now rising at the alarming rate of about one per cent a month, more than double the recent rate of increase in the cost of living. Wages in construction are rising much faster than wages in industry generally. Settlements reported this year (1969) have averaged about double those for the rest of the American industry. So large and important is the construction industry in our entire economy that these trends, if continued, could well destroy our nation's efforts to control inflation."

In April, 1969, the National Association of Manufacturers issued a report called "Chaos in the Construction Industry," which began as follows:

"Labor conditions in the $90 billion construction industry have reached proportions which demand the urgent attention of both the private and public sectors. Aggravated by highly inflationary contract settlements, excessive work stoppages and stifling work practices, the labor problems in this industry present a dramatic threat to the national economy as well as industry in general."

A July, 1969, report from a U. S. Chamber of Commerce task force examining the industry recognized construction labor's "grim record of strikes, irrational and inflationary wage increases, decline in output per man hour, jurisdictional strikes and restrictive work practices."

Thomas O'Hanlon, writing on "The Unchecked Power of the Building Trades," in the December, 1968, issue of **Fortune,** put the monkey of zooming construction costs on the back of not "labor" in general, but "organized labor" in particular.

Here's what O'Hanlon said: "The most powerful oligopoly in the American economy today is the loose confederation of craft unions known as the building trades. It comprises almost three million workers, who are organized by 18 separate crafts in 10,000-odd locals. . . . Their collective economic power, wielded with surprising immunity from both Washington and state capitals, is perhaps the single most important contribution to the current wage-price spiral."

Three-quarters of the building craftsmen in the country are union members. What they do — wages, hours and working conditions — sets the pattern for the remaining 25 per cent of the builders.

In most instances a raise for a construction union is translated into a wage hike for the "open shop" workers. This is the economics of the marketplace.

Some labor unions have been able to turn the wildest dreams of their leaders — $10 an hour wages, a full day's pay for flipping a switch once in the morning and again in the afternoon — into black-and-white reality, spelled out in collective bargaining agreements.
But a stiffening of the backs of the big industrial purchasers of construction, which is in the making because building costs have galloped away from budget allocations, and the president's urging to curtail building may end the union dream world.

Just like a buyer needs a seller, a high wage scale is valueless if no one is willing to pay it. (How much milk would the dairy industry market at $25 a quart?)

In most businesses, a wage increase is a reward for good work. Or, it may be granted to offset hikes in the cost of living, thus allowing workers to retain their standard of living.

However, in construction, there has been no correlation between wages, productivity and the cost of living.

The Department of Labor said the cost of living rose 6.1 per cent in 1969. The Labor Department also reported median first-year wage increases in 1969 construction settlements were 14 per cent. Construction wage boosts doubled the cost of living!

Taking a wider glance at construction wages and the cost of living: Using the 1957-59 period as a base of 100, the cost of living rose 31.3 per cent by the end of 1969; construction wages increased 72.1 per cent in this period.

In actual money, the Bureau of National Affairs (BNA) listed construction settlements last year at a median increase of 70.2 cents per hour. Contrast this with a median of 22.1 cents per hour for all industries.

Last year was not unusual. In 1968, construction's median increase was 49.6 cents per hour (the all-industry median was 18.5 cents, and in 1967 construction's boost was 34.9 cents (all-industry: 14.3 cents) BNA said.

The Department of Commerce, tracing construction costs, construction wages and material prices, from 1964 through mid-1969, came up with these statistics:

Wages, up 45 per cent; wholesale prices, up 16 per cent; overall construction costs, up 27 per cent.

Productivity is another story. If you pay a bricklayer twice as much as he makes, does he lay twice as many bricks?

Professor Peter J. Cassimatis, in his "Economics of the Construction Industry," published by the National Industrial Conference Board in 1969, said from 1947 to 1967 studies indicated productivity had increased 3 per cent a year. "This rate is well below that of most other industries and of the national economy," he added.

President Johnson's Council of Economic Advisors re-

(Continued on page 14)

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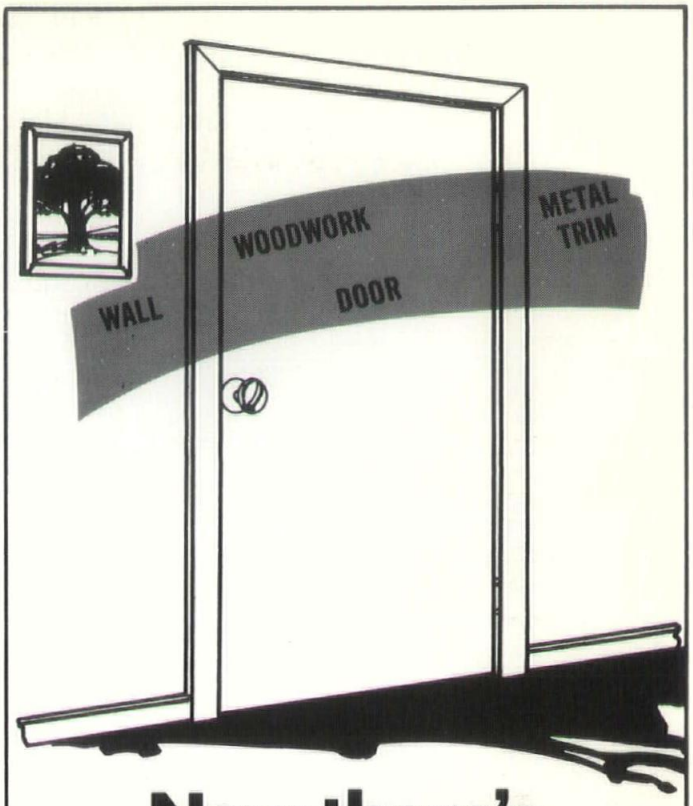

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The Cost of Labor Cont.

ported output per man hour in the field of contract construction declined three-tenths of a per cent during the 1959-66 period. The council pointed out no other industry showed a productivity drop.

In short, construction workers got paid more to do less. Whose fault is it? Unions have been able to out-muscle management at the bargaining table. Construction management was able to pass most of the increased costs to construction buyers. The buyers didn't complain too much. In fact, many large industrial customers urged contractors "to settle for anything;" don't let a strike shut down a construction job. On commercial and institutional hard-money contracts, architects and owners insisted their work progress on schedule; unreasonable settlements were the contractors' worry, not theirs.

The "peace at any price" sentiment is rapidly fading.

"Project owners and developers should facilitate a favorable contract settlement by not insisting that work at a struck facility be recompensed at the cost of meeting unreasonable union demands." (National Association of Manufacturers).

Roundtable leader Blough said "work on a project in a struck area should be authorized only if consonant with local negotiations."

"A purchaser whose contractor is operating under a 'national agreement' should not permit or encourage that contractor to employ men in a particular craft while the local union of that craft is on strike against local contractors." (Task Force Report, U. S. Chamber of Commerce).

As a sign of the times, the AFL-CIO Building Trades Department, at its 1970 winter huddle in Bal Harbour, Florida, created a "summit committee" of nine union presidents to develop what it called a "positive action program" to halt inroads being made by non-union labor in industrial construction.

Big business has been starting to feel the dollar pinch of construction wages. Factory workers, envying the building scales, are anxious to match them and are looking to business to pay the bill.

Government is learning that taxpayers are becoming more reluctant to approve bond issues to pay for high-priced buildings.

Commercial establishments may find it harder to stay competitive with an increased overhead that stems from trying to pay off a costly new building.

The public is becoming aware that bloated building trades wage scales are converted into increased construction costs, which, in turn, become higher prices and higher taxes.

Construction — the goose that lays the golden eggs for millions of construction workers and millions more in manufacturing, transportation, marketing and design — is in hot water.

Yielding to continued irresponsible labor demands, it can turn into a dead duck.

frank lotz miller

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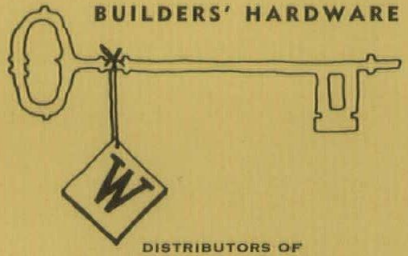

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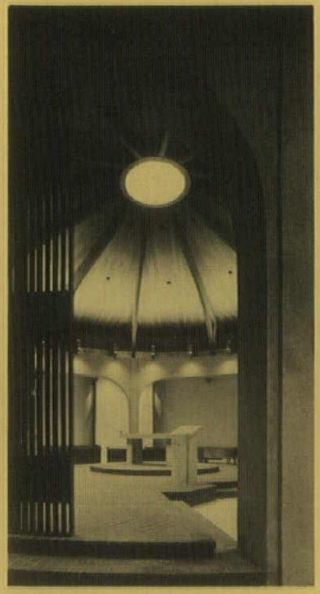

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