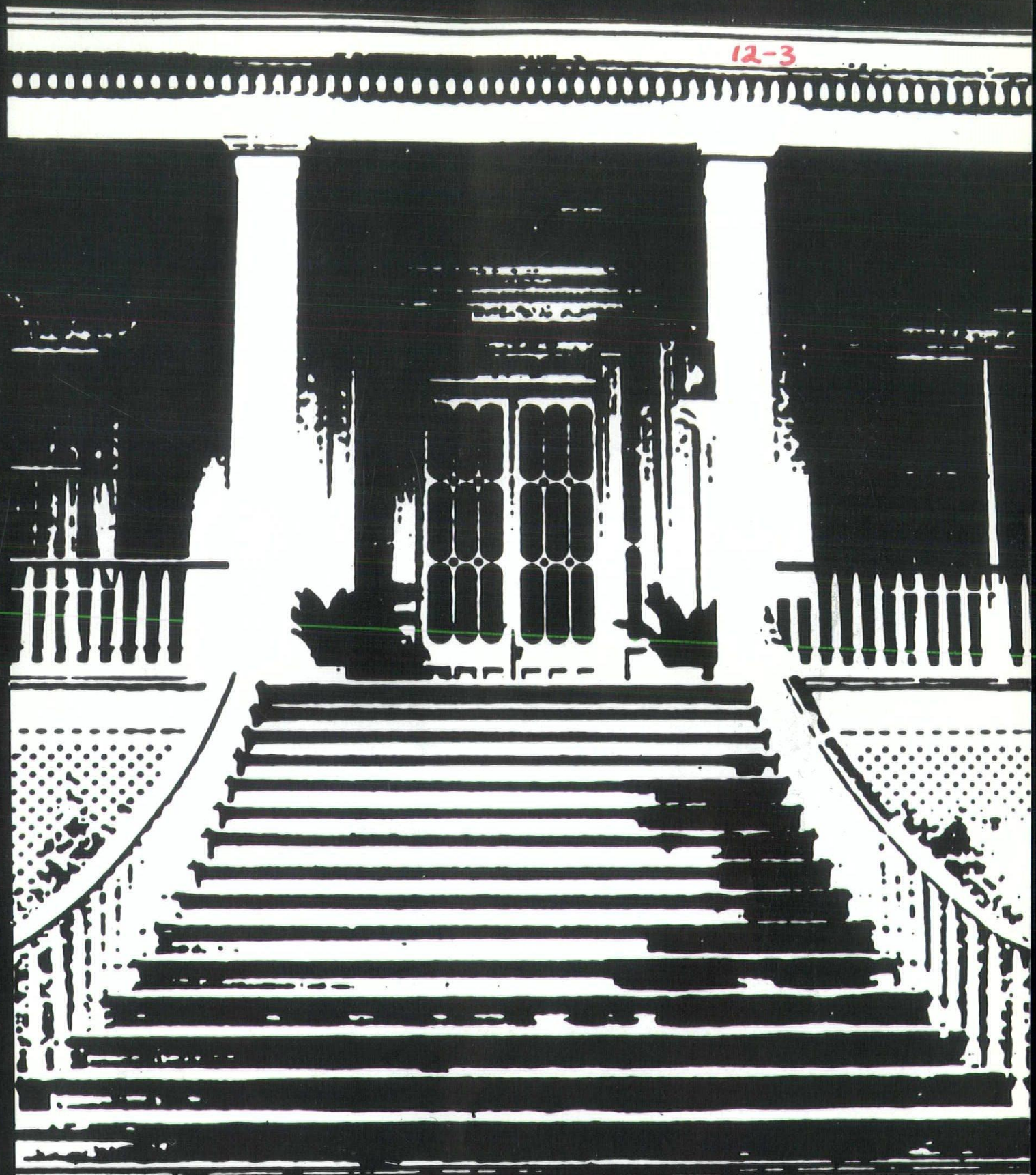
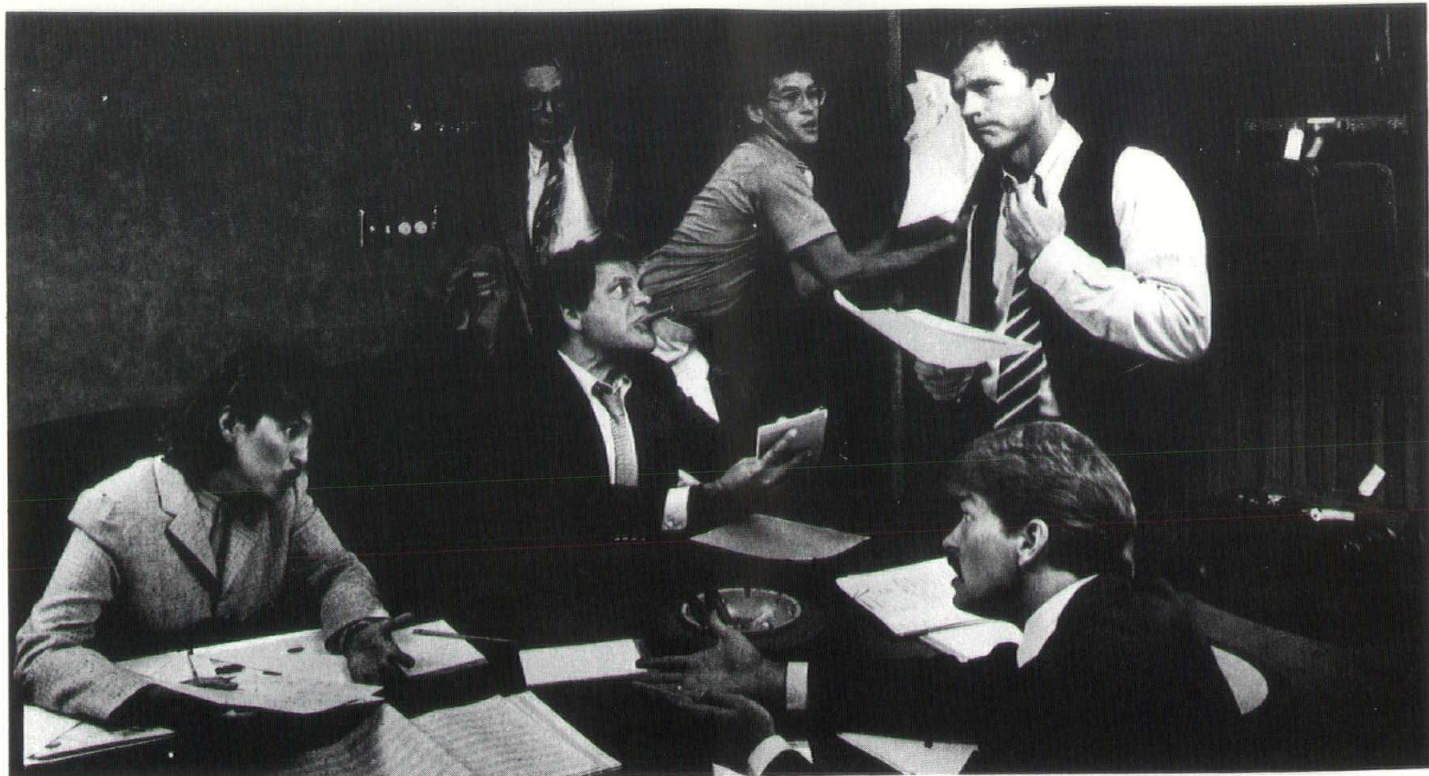
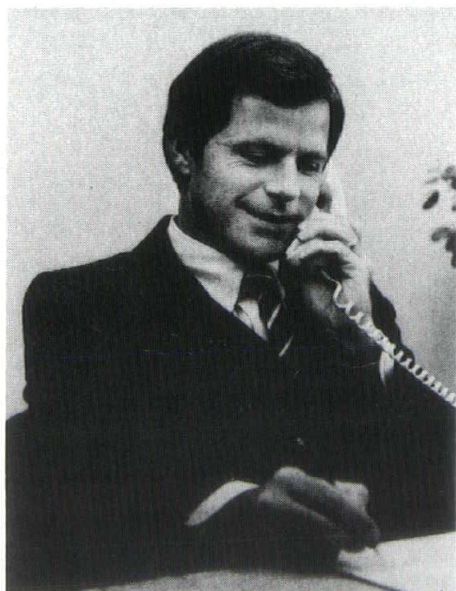


# the mississippi architect





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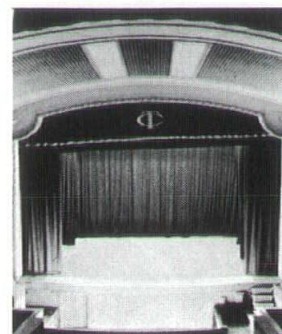
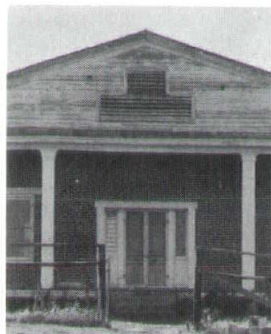
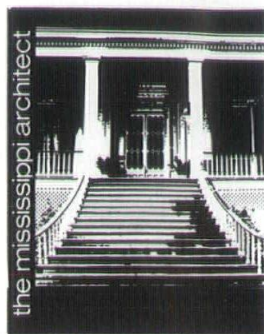
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## Cover:

Enter the past and see the future. The dramatic sweep of Beauvoir's front steps seems to beckon preservation-minded architects to enter and explore the limitless possibilities of historic restoration.

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Then Design We Must!: Editor Ivy stresses the importance of good design in the on-going efforts of architects to enhance and enrich our landscape.

Art Godfrey, AIA, pays tribute to the life and work of the late Bill Gill, AIA.

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Governor William Winter salutes AIA's 125th Anniversary and preservation-conscious Mississippi architects.

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Alabama Architects host Gulf States Region Convention.

# FROM THE EDITOR

In 1857, when the American Institute of Architects was born, "Architect" translated roughly into "Large scale." Architects designed only the largest, most refined buildings: churches, libraries, government houses, the greatest mansions. Their rational solutions and flights of fancy stand today in Washington, Rhinebeck-on-the-Hudson, Natchez, Charlottesville. Our predecessors efforts stand to remind us that well ordered designs endure and increase in value, enriching those who see or use them, while countless quick, cheap solutions lie disintegrating into the mulch for tomorrow's lumber.

In 1982, architects still design state capitols and millionaire's hideaways, but they also organize small apartments for the elderly, they consult with young couples who will build their own earth-sheltered structures, they analyze Main Street, Mississippi and suggest realistic, economical ways of revitalization. As a group, we are looking hard to see where our talents can best be used. Our work is therefore more broadly ranging than our forebears, and that is good.

For our talents are agents of positive change. Wherever our hands are employed, value accrues. In a world apparently hell-bent on consuming itself, in a world where appearance counts more than underlying truth, the real value we can achieve through design must be offered with an evangelistic fervor. We cannot afford to litter our state's communities with ill considered, disorganized individual buildings. While Mississippi's growth is inevitable and welcomed, that growth must be channeled into a better, not a lesser state.

One hundred and twenty-five years later, members of the Mississippi Chapter, AIA can stand tall with pride when we consider the enrichment of society that has resulted from our concerted efforts. As we consider where we are going, one fact is certain: every line we draw, every program we write, every B.T.U. of human energy we expend offers the possibility of an improved homeland. The responsibility of stewardship is immense; the challenge, a joy.

*Robert Jay*

## GUEST EDITORIAL

*by Art Godfrey, AIA*

Our friend and fellow architect, Billy Gill, as he was known to all of his many friends, passed away on April 4th, Palm Sunday, at the age of 70. Billy is survived by his wife, Dr. Catherine Geotz Gill, a long time member of the Medical Center Staff and his sister, Fay.

Bill was born on April 15, 1912 in Magnolia, Miss. He received his high school diploma in Weaverville, N.C. and his advanced education from City College of New York, Tulane and the University of Mississippi. Billy was especially proud of his training while a young man under a master craftsman carpenter. He maintained a shop in his home where he built furniture and carried on his many undertakings such as making wood block symbols for the nave of the Fondren Presbyterian Church and writing a handbook on wood block symbols. Billy's artistic ability was not limited to woodcraft, however, for his paintings were exhibited by the Southern States Art League, the Mississippi Art Association and the

University of Mississippi Dental School.

It was Billy's nature to work quietly and without fanfare, therefore, most of us were not aware of the nature of his many contributions to the world of art and architecture. One of his most significant accomplishments was the first Mississippi Chapter AIA's record vote in favor of a school of architecture during his term as Chapter President in 1967. Prior to this time, there was vehement opposition to establishing a school of architecture from many influential members of the Chapter. Under Billy's leadership, evaluation as to the need for an architectural school and recommendations for the location were made to the Board of Trustees of Institutions of Higher Learning. This led eventually to the establishment of the School of Architecture at Mississippi State University in 1974.

Billy wrote articles for **The Mississippi Architect** on such subjects as "Influence of Gothic

Cathedrals on Western Art," "The Importance of The Mississippi Art Association to the State and Community," "Historic Preservation" and "The Influence of the Tax Structure on the Inner-City Deterioration."

During his 21 years as a corporate member of AIA, Billy's contribution included several terms on National AIA committees. In 1980, the Mississippi Chapter AIA nominated Billy for Fellowship in the AIA.

Billy was president of the State Historical Society in 1977-78 and served on the State Professional Review Board for Historic Preservation for eight years. During the eight years that he served on the Review Board, he developed the forms and process for the application to the National Register. In the field of historic preservation Billy succeeded in encouraging the State Preservation Officer to insist on the use of architects as well as

*Continued on pg. 16*

# FROM THE GOVERNOR

To the Members of the  
Mississippi Chapter,  
American Institute of Architects

Dear Friends:

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the 1982 Annual State Convention of the Mississippi Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, which will be held in Biloxi on August 5. I know that this meeting will celebrate the One Hundred and Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the American Institute of Architects, with special emphasis on the preservation and restoration of the architectural heritage of Mississippi.

As you know, the preservation and restoration of our state's beautiful historical buildings is of special interest to me, and I am delighted that your association has chosen to stress the importance of this particular field of architecture.

Let me wish for all of you a successful and productive meeting.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,



**William F. Winter**  
Governor

## 1982 ANNUAL STATE CONVENTION MISSISSIPPI CHAPTER, AIA

The first 125 years of the American Institute of Architects will be celebrated next month at the annual state convention of the Mississippi Chapter in Biloxi. The convention's theme for this "backward look" will be preservation and restoration of the architectural heritage of Mississippi.

The Chapter will conduct a one day symposium Thursday, August 5th at the Broadwater Beach Hotel for individuals and groups interested in architectural preservation. The Thursday sessions will feature MSU professor of the history of architecture, Michael W. Fazio, AIA, presenting "The Architecture of Mississippi, a Historical Overview," Kenneth P'Pool, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, architectural historian, speaking on "Restoration and Preservation Legislation, Regulations and Programs," and Judy Rash, past director of arts and history for Biloxi, speaking on "Historical Examples in the City of Biloxi."

Mrs. Rash's session will be conducted at the Biloxi Library and will be followed by a guided tour of historical examples in the city.

The convention proper begins Friday morning at 9 a.m. at the Broadwater Beach with sessions on restoration and preservation technology by Joseph Herndon, AIA, principal, Building Construction Technology, Nashville, Tenn., restoration and wood preservation by MSU Forest Products Lab professor, Dr. Terry L. Amburgey.

Following sponsor's luncheon in the Coronet Room and a free afternoon there will be a cocktail party and Dixieland jazz band party sponsored by the Mississippi Concrete Products Association and dinner at Mary Mahoney's.

On Saturday, Auburn associate professor of architecture, William Gwin, will speak on "Restoration and Preservation - A Case History." This will be followed by a presentation on restoration and preservation economics by Forest Germany,

developer of the Eola Hotel in Natchez and Jimmy Clark, contractor for this job.

The Chapter's annual business meeting will be at 11 o'clock on Saturday, with Chapter president Fred Frank presiding.

The Honor Awards Dinner will be held in the Coronet Room of the Broadwater Beach Hotel on Saturday evening beginning at 8 p.m. with National Trust for Historic Preservation senior vice president Russell Keune as the key note speaker. Awards will include the annual Honor Awards presentation with Dan Bennett, AIA, as chairman. Special Honor Awards, with Mike Fazio, AIA, as chairman and non architect awards with Fred Frank as chairman.

1857 \* 1982 The First 125 Years



# 125

THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE  
OF ARCHITECTS

# AGENDA

## THURSDAY, AUGUST 5

12:00

Registration:

**Preservation and Restoration of The Architectural Heritage of Mississippi**  
Coronet Room A

1:00-1:50

Session I

**The Architecture of Mississippi, An Historical Overview**

Michael W. Fazio

Coronet Room A

2:00-2:50

Session II

**Restoration & Preservation - Legislation, Regulations and Programs**

Kenneth P'Pool

Coronet Room A

3:00-3:30

Session III

**Historical Examples in the City of Biloxi**

Judy Rash

Biloxi Library

3:30-5:30

Tour

**A Guided Tour of Historical Examples in the City of Biloxi**

Judy Rash

City of Biloxi

6:00-9:00

Registration:

**AIA 1982 State Convention**

Imperial Room

6:00

Reception:

**Cocktails & Hors D'oeuvres - Architectural Honors Awards and Special Preservation, Restoration and Adaptive Reuse Exhibits**

Crown Room A

## FRIDAY, AUGUST 6

9:00-9:10

Introduction & Welcome

Esquire Room

9:15-10:15

Session I

**Restoration and Preservation Technology**

Esquire Room

10:30-11:30

Session II

**Restoration and Wood Preservation**

Esquire Room

11:30-3:00

Sponsors Lunch \* Displays

Coronet Room

3:00-5:00

Tour

Ocean Springs

6:00

Buses Leave Hotel

6:30-7:30

Cocktail Party

**Dixieland Jazz Band**

7:30

Dinner

Mary Mahoneys

## SATURDAY, AUGUST 7

7:30

Executive Committee Meeting

Esquire Room

9:00-9:50

Session III

**Restoration and Preservation - A Case History**

William Gwin, Associate Professor of Architecture, Auburn University  
Vogue Room

10:00-10:50

Session IV

**Restoration and Preservation Economics**

Forest Germany, Developer Eola Hotel in Natchez and Jimmy Clark, Eola Hotel Contractor  
Vogue Room

11:00-12:00 Noon

Annual Business Meeting

Fred Frank, President

**All Afternoon**

Free Time

7:00-8:00

Cocktail Party

Coronet Room

8:00

Honor Awards Dinner

**Keynote Address**

Russell Keune, Senior Vice-President, National Trust for Historic Preservation

**Annual Honor Awards**

Dan Bennett, AIA

**Special Honor Awards**

Mike Fazio, AIA

**Non Architect Awards**

Fred Frank, AIA

Coronet Room

**After**

Dance

\*Hospitality Room during the convention will be sponsored by Tri-State Brick and Tile\*

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The north side with added porch, originally the back which had a kitchen wing on the right side.

# THE RESTORATION OF THE HAMER HOUSE

by Mary Frances Jones Fitts

*This article is excerpted from the thesis, The Restoration of the Hamer House, presented by Mary Frances Jones Fitts to the University of Texas at Arlington as a requirement for a Master of Arts in Environmental Design degree in November, 1980. Her committee members were Dr. Kenneth W. Schaar, archeological architects, chairman, Robert Yingling, interior designer, and Todd Hamilton, architect.*

*Mrs. Fitts discovered the deteriorating one story brick house and recognized its classical details beneath a rusty tin roof and interior remodeling while searching for the site of Salem and family cemeteries. Having a personal interest in the area and in restoration, she chose the project for her thesis at the time that the house was purchased by Victor and Bobbie Parker who planned to restore it for their residence. The house has had basic repairs, but restoration has only begun, and it is not open to visitors.*

Bypassed by progress and prosperity, a classical brick house sits near the site of the extinct nineteenth century town of Salem, Mississippi. Barely recognizable as the significant house it once was and

still is, it is evidence that Salem, to which no historical marker stands, was an important social center. Maps printed before 1870 show Salem on the old road from Holly Springs to Ripley. The Hamer house faced south (slightly southeast) toward this road, traces of which remain in the forest.

This article is a condensed version of a thesis which was a report of intensive research and field work to ascertain the history, condition, style, and date of construction of the small one-story hipped-roof house which previously was undocumented. The thesis proposed a rehabilitation by restoring the extant structure to its period of construction, 1857-1859, and adding a compatible contemporary wing containing a kitchen, a den (or bedroom or studio), a laundry, a double garage, two bathrooms, storage, and central heat and air conditioning. It proved the architectural and historical significance of the house, justified rehabilitation, and recommended restoration procedures. The proposed plan was illustrated with photographs of the existing house, documents, and 23 architectural drawings.

## Research Resources

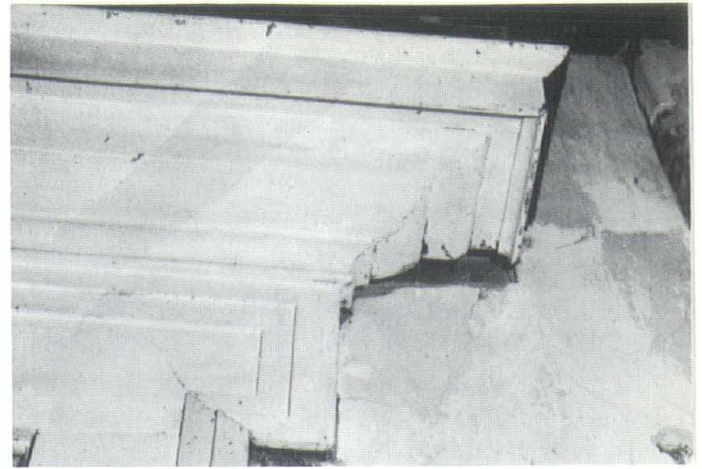
As a start, restoration and conservation procedure books, such as *The Restoration Manual* and *Preservation and Conservation Principles and Practices*, pointed the way to all other resources.

Detailed measurements and photographs were made of every elevation inside and outside for reference throughout the research and drawing. Geodesic survey maps of different years which identified the range, township, and section location revealed changes in the number of structures on the property and served as data for finding land deeds and wills pertaining to the subject property. Deeds, tax and census records, and wills were found at Benton and Tippah county courthouses and at the Department of Archives and History in Jackson in the form of microfilm. These records were photocopied and kept in the researcher's files.

Books and magazine articles on architectural history provided analysis data, and books and articles on restoration projects suggested methods of researching and writing. The United States Department of the Interior provided technical leaflets and the indispensable *Standards for* (over)



The northwest corner of the house.



Closeup of the cornice of the south doorway.

#### Historic Preservation Projects.

The Hamer House research began to snowball after the first interview with the Benton County historian, Sally Fisher of Michigan City, who introduced local Hamer descendants and elderly persons. These persons seemed pleased to contribute what information they had and to be involved in the project. They responded graciously to a questionnaire which asked for any memories or documents, especially photographs, pertaining to the house. A granddaughter of the original owner sent her letter and questionnaire to her nephew who provided much information including the most pertinent fact: the date of construction. Restoration architects, contractors, engineers, and other technical persons contributed solutions to restoration problems. An excursion was made into Tennessee, Kentucky, and Mississippi to search for prototype houses and local guide books to help establish style and date of

Notes on cards and zeroxed information were kept in appropriate files. After about a year of library and field research, the material was assimilated to create an outline and many rough drafts.

The thesis was typed on an IBM computer remote terminal at The University of Texas at Arlington using Wylbur, a text editing system, to write, modify, store, retrieve, and print.

#### History of the Family and Structure

Little documentation was found on Salem, the earliest settlement in Tippah County, established in 1836. Dunbar Roland (1907, page 591), the

Mississippi historian, wrote that Salem had 200 persons, a dozen businesses, two hotels, and a female school in 1837, but in 1900 it had only 32 persons. Local legend explains that some structures were burned during The War Between the States, and that most of the persons who survived the war moved away. Some moved to Ashland, the seat of Benton County which was formed in 1870 from the east part of Marshall County and the west part of Tippah County. This new division left Salem in Benton County with its records (some records burned in a courthouse fire) in Tippah County.

The refinement of the Hamer house seems to verify the claims that Salem was settled by a group of wealthy Virginians and North Carolinians who lived well and were the ancestors of prominent Southerners. Tax records attest to the Hamer wealth in cash, slaves, and other assets before and after the war.

The Hamer family came from Hamer, South Carolina. In 1840, Thomas Cochran Hamer and his wife, Sarah Cheairs Hamer, from Anson County, North Carolina, moved their eight children to Salem. William Thomas Hamer, born in North Carolina in 1830, married Sallie Mask, his stepsister, March 4, 1857. Hamer's slaves built the subject house when they were not in the fields between 1857 and 1859. W.T. and Sallie raised eight children without adding to the four-room-plus-hall house and its two-room kitchen.

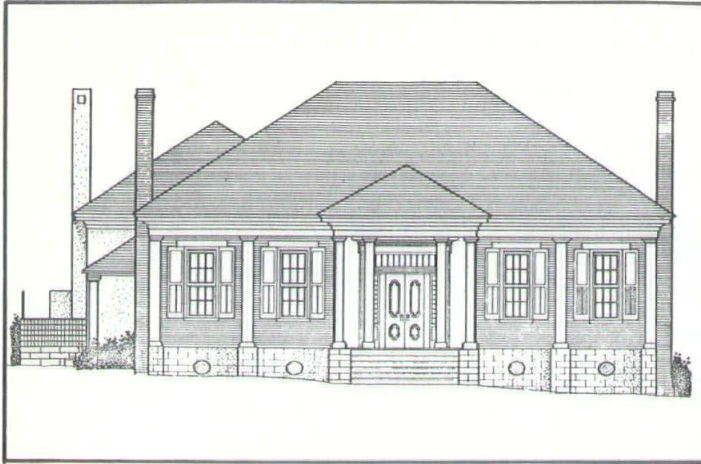
A Hamer descendant sold the property to Dutch Roland after 1924.

Roland made the major changes in the house, changing the front from south to north. He, probably because the road to Ashland had been built north of it, built a gabled porch across the north facade where the kitchen had been attached. Presumably, at this time he converted the southwest room into a kitchen. He built a partition of glass panes with French doors across the twelve-foot wide hall. The actual disposition of the original kitchen was not determined.

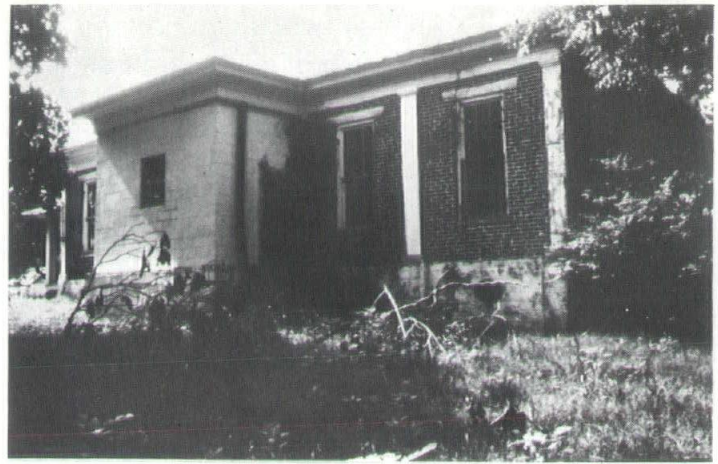
#### Analysis of Style

The salient features of the Hamer house were compared to known, accepted, and dated buildings. This comparison led to the determination that the structure is eclectic. Although built at the end of the Greek Revival period, it appears to be transitional between Federal style (Roman Revival influence) and Greek Revival. Its one-story hipped-roof configuration, Tuscan pilasters, simulated (stucco) ashlar water table, and oval vent grills are Federal but are seen in conventional Greek Revival period buildings. The Thomas Jefferson's villa style designs apparently influenced the Hamers, although which house is unknown. Its central hall plan is common to both periods.

The most conspicuous features of the Hamer house are its straight, wide wooden lintels and door and window trims derived from the Greek post and lintel concept. The wood lintels appear to be hand hewn and are less refined than the eight-inch wide trim, crossetted on the windows and doors of the south rooms which are taller than those of



South elevation drawing.



The south facade (front) in 1979.

the north rooms. Each of the four rooms has a simple wooden mantel derived from traditional post and lintel design.

Set in the Greek Revival door surround are double doors decorated with heavy Italianate style moulding, a half-circle design not found before the 1850s in the South. The fourth style seen in the house are the folk architecture of the shed west porch. Although apparently original according to an old painting of the house, this porch violates the symmetry and formality of the front elevation. Two large windows with a fireplace between are over scaled for the interior elevations (18 feet and 15 feet wide).

The designer of the house was not determined. However, he, directly or indirectly, was influenced by Asher Benjamin who published carpenters' instruction manuals between 1797 and 1851. The four-panel doors were shown in his first and subsequent books, and the six-over-six large pane windows with narrow mullions appeared in the 1833, 1836, and 1840 editions.

The walls of the house are structural solid brick about one foot thick with plaster on the interior and on the exterior wall of the south portico, the center bay, and on the fronts of the pilasters and watertable. The north-to-south partitions defining the hall are solid brick while the east-to-west partitions were plaster on lath. The solid brick construction begins as a reverse corbeled foundation under ground and is continuous to the beaded wood ceiling. The attic is framed with two-by-eight joists

dovetailed into an eight-by-eight inch summer beam. The original cypress shingles and a fragment of the original kitchen wing roof remain under the north gable addition.

Although the Hamer house was very conventional and conservative in its design for the period, today it is unique in Benton county where other extant ante-bellum houses are of the pioneer dog-trot or Virginia cottage types. Elegant ante-bellum houses exist in the plantation area west of Salem including Holly Springs and elsewhere. No exact prototypes were found during extensive research.

The durable construction of the house shows integrity which is lacking in the planning for the needs of a growing family and its comforts. For example, it has no bath rooms, closets, or built-in cabinets which were in the most sophisticated and expensive houses of 1857. The brick walls and high ceiling kept the interior cool in the summers, but, typically, fireplaces were inadequate for heating. Solon Hamer, grandson of William Thomas, recalled that when he visited there as a child that a bucket of water near the fire froze in winter. The house, now with electricity and gas space heaters, had a gaslight fixture in each room fed through a pipeline from a carbide plant on the plantation to the attic.

#### Recommendations

The extant house should be restored to its authentic appearance as far as it is known inside and out with the inconspicuous addition of central heat and air conditioning, and the egregious additions such as the north porch, the south portico enclosure, and the kitchen cabinets

should be removed. Features of uncertain origin should be preserved as part of the continuing history of the house. Specific recommendations (in the thesis) strictly follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation, essential advice for anyone hoping to restore or rehabilitate a building for listing on the National Register of Historical Places.

Instead of a conjectured kitchen to replace the missing one, architectural drawings illustrate a contemporary but compatible wing on the site of the first kitchen. This wing is a complete house in itself and can be used without opening the old house. Air conditioning equipment is hidden in a room behind the garage and in the attics. The condensers are in a ventilated space under the new terrace.

#### Conclusion

A proper investment of effort and money can restore a relic to an authentic representation of a nineteenth century plantation house. Hopefully, the Hamer house will be an example to others who rehabilitate Mississippi's remaining architectural treasures, too many of which have been lost to ill advised remodeling or destruction, and join those which have been lovingly and tastefully preserved for the delight and education of present and future generations. Hopefully, this article can be helpful to those undertaking similar projects and remind them to resist all temptation and bad advice to glorify or "early up" their structures.

# CHAUTAUQUA '82



by Joan Embree

The vital signs of small town America were checked and found improving at the third annual Chautauqua in Mississippi. "Research and Design in the American Small Town" was the unifying concern for organizers, speakers, and participants in the event conducted by the School of Architecture at Mississippi State University.

The Mississippi Chautauqua is the annual showpiece production of the Center for Small Town Research and Design, a program created by the School of Architecture to meet both the needs of students and the needs of the region the school serves. More than 90 percent of the state's towns fill the national definition of "small" and neighboring Southern states have similar demographics.

By focusing their graduate curriculum, the projects of their Center, and their Chautauqua on the problems and possibilities of small towns, School of Architecture faculty members are able to use Mississippi State's neighborhood as a working laboratory for teaching about and learning about small towns.

Mississippi's Chautauqua, although narrower in scope than its famous New York antecedent, fulfills the original's tradition for the exchange and creation of ideas. One of the original purposes of the New York Chautauqua was to train Sunday School teachers. Although its Mississippi counterpart is secular in nature, its participants generally share an appropriate zeal for their subject. This year participants came from several states and several national organizations to exchange ideas and report on current projects.

Thirty-three papers were presented by and for Chautauqua participants.

They ranged from a philosophical discussion about the possibilities of considering a small town as a work of art to concise reports on charrette workshops in three Indiana towns. Common subjects to many papers were planning perspectives, historical preservation, social and political attitudes, economic realities, and the challenge for practitioners and students of architecture.

Two keynote speakers established the tone for the May 29 through April 1 meeting. Allen Greenberg, internationally recognized architect, lectured on the development and the demise of good architecture and planning in the city of New Haven, Connecticut. "Architecture and Urbanism in New Haven: 1638-1978" introduced the practical side of the Chautauqua. "The Small Town as Dwelling and as Work of Art," a paper by philosophy professor Michael Mitias of Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi, introduced the theoretical and visionary treatment of the quality of small town life and small town folk.

Greenberg illustrated New Haven's growth with slides showing changing urban patterns and architectural images. The Vitruvian division of the original town site into a grid of nine equal squares has long since lost its identity. As the town developed, businesses concentrated not around the central square but around transportation facilities — docks, then railroads, and finally, highways. Greenberg was among activists who prevented the complete dissection of the city by highways and connecting loop roads. An ardent classicist, Greenberg gave Chautauqua participants a practical view of how gradually and continually a good

plan can be lost in "improvements."

In his more rhetorical keynote address, Michael Mitias argued the question of whether a town can be conceived as "a handprint of the nation's spirit, an art object fashioned collectively by its people."

"As an art object, a small town is not merely a meaningful form, a form pleasing to the imagination," Mitias said, "it is also a medium in which a group of people actualize themselves as a human community, as a community of individuals: it is, in other words, a dwelling."

"The essence of a small town as architecture, i.e., as art, does not consist in the fact that it is a mere complex of buildings, streets, or parks, nor of the fact that it is a defined, distinguishable place in the extensivity of space, but in its being an organic unity, a complex unity of spatial relationships intended consciously as a dwelling, as a place for **human** living and for the continued possibility of such living," Mitias said. "Only when we view the town from this standpoint can we understand what it means for it to be an artifact, an artistic object conceived purposefully and with a sense of value."

Chautauqua sessions which followed the introductory talks were divided into two topics for each morning and afternoon sessions. Four to five papers were delivered on each topic. Topics included "Small Town History and Typology," "Planning and Planning Strategies," "Design Elements in the Small Town," "Graduate Level Research and Education," "Economics and Management," "Case Studies," and to introduce a variety of small town experts, "Special Contributors." Brief summaries of papers on a



Model used for Chautauqua poster.

variety of Chautauqua topics follow.

Among "Special Contributors" to the Chautauqua was Mary Means, director of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street program.

Means told Chautauquans that preservation advocates are redefining the term "Preservation" as "a value system or format within which we can manage change in the built environment." The redefinition came from the realization that strict preservation is not the best course for all old buildings. "Change is desirable," she said, but it must be "carefully studied for its impact. We must deal contextually with the built environment," she said.

The two "Main Streets" at Disneyland and Disney World and the increased participation in community events by the nation's utility companies were cited by Means as partial explanations for renewed national interest in small towns. She said the widespread interest in restoring Main Streets everywhere

and the more frequent participation of private concerns like the utilities were factors that both led to the development of the Trust's Main Street program and provided impetus for its success.

The Main Street program provided Means's very definition of preservation help — architectural assistance, technical assistance, a small monetary incentive to encourage downtown businessmen and preservation advocates to undertake improvements, and most importantly, project managers to help develop the program and the town's own preservation leaders. Some pre-packaged materials were also made available.

The current program operates through state governments because the Trust believes "technical assistance is best delivered closer to home." The national program encompasses five towns each in six states. Main Street is providing training and technical assistance to all the towns within a framework that "elicits response" from the private sector. Utility companies and phone companies are encouraged to help with special events — banks are urged to provide low interest loans for downtown revitalization efforts. A Main Street book and related materials that can be used by other communities are being produced as part of the program.

At Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, the College of Architecture and Planning makes a major contribution to the state's citizens and communities through a Community Based Projects program, Anthony J. Costello, Ball State architecture professor, told Chautauqua participants.

The projects of the CBP are

multi-disciplinary, involving architects, landscape architects, urban studies and planning students. Programs in research and historic preservation are also involved. Projects presented for the small-town gathering were "charrette workshops" produced in three Indiana towns. Costello described the basic workshop as "an intense, highly organized, short (2 or 3 days), public workshop that takes place in a community and provides an initial response to a locally generated set of issues/problems/potentials."

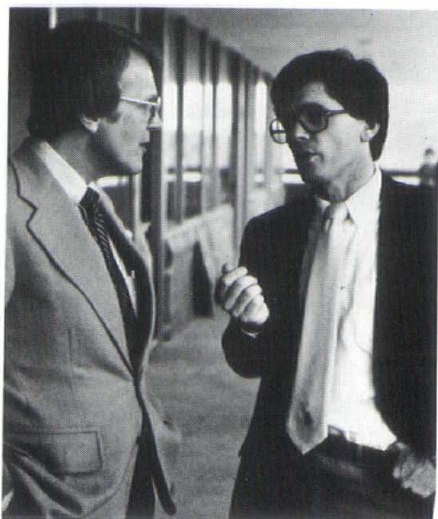
The charrette workshop has proved to be an excellent tool with which Ball State students and faculty can help initiate a "plan for planning" and, in doing so, reach the University's goal of public education and service, Costello said.

In "Small Town Economic Systems for Research," Joseph A. Ziegler of the University of Arkansas explored the surprising growth of small towns in America and in other industrialized countries.

Ziegler described three basic types of small towns — retirement communities, bedroom communities, and market communities — and concluded that while they could be characterized by their varied economic bases, they could only be understood when studied with their interrelated towns, cities, and regions.

He listed multiple reasons for the rural renaissance, among them growth in energy-producing and recreation industries, demographic changes, and changes in production, transportation, and communications technologies which allow the "deconcentration" (from urban areas) of both people and jobs. Further research will be needed before all of

*Continued on pg. 14*



# MISSISSIPPI'S OFFICIAL HISTORICAL AGENCY

The Department of Archives and History is the official historical agency for Mississippi. The Department is responsible for administering the federally-mandated preservation program, which includes a tax benefit program, ongoing restoration projects, protection of culturally-significant properties threatened by federally-funded projects or owned by the state of Mississippi, preservation ordinances, survey of historic resources, and nominations to the National Register of Historic Places.

It is an awesome responsibility, made even more difficult by recent cutbacks in federal funding which resulted in reduction in the state historic preservation staff, travel restraints, and increased workloads. Statistically, the 1982 federal allocation for the nation's historic preservation program was roughly \$25 million. This was divided among the states, territories, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Mississippi's share was \$274,388.

While many state historic preservation offices have been forced to close or drastically reduce staff, Mississippi has been able to retain a relatively adequate staff and live up to its federally-mandated responsibility. In brief, the survey and identification of resources continues, but at a slower pace. In the past year, the cities of Woodville, Indianola, Magnolia, Philadelphia, Gallman and West Point were surveyed, and significant sites were determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

The National Register, the nation's official list of significant historic resources, reopened in early 1982, after a year-long moratorium for privately-owned buildings nominations. Although the National Register is not a preservation tool *per se*, many buildings owners realize that the prestige of being listed on the National Register often aids them in receiving loans and donations for restoration. The rate of application for individual nominations to the National Register has increased accordingly. The staff of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History is unable to process these individual nominations, and instead, has been

directed to concentrate efforts on systematic and extensive survey work, including National Register nominations involving large numbers of properties. Owners are encouraged to write nominations themselves, (with the promise of an editorial touch by the state historic preservation office staff) or to hire a private consultant to prepare the nomination for them. In the best interest of the state historic preservation office, staff members cannot serve as private consultants.

The best incentive for privately undertaken restoration projects in the past year has been the historic preservation benefits of the Economic Recovery Act of 1981. The new act, which replaces the Tax Reform Act of 1976, offers tax benefits for specific restoration projects. Basically, the Economic Recovery Act offers tax investment credits to owners of substantially-rehabilitated, income-producing historic properties. The maximum benefit of a 25 percent investment tax credit is given for restoration of buildings listed individually on the National Register, or in a National Register or otherwise-certified historic district. The second benefit, a 20 percent tax investment credit, is given for buildings at least 40 years old, and the last benefit, a 15 percent tax investment credit, is provided for buildings at least 30 years old.

To qualify for the 20 and 15 percent tax investment credits, buildings do not have to be listed in the National Register, but do have to be non-residential, income-producing properties. In addition, all buildings must be rehabilitated according to the guidelines set forth in the **Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation**.

Finally, as a "disincentive" for owners who demolish certified historic structures, the cost of demolition cannot be deducted as a loss, but instead, must be capitalized as a gain. The restoration benefits of the Economic Recovery Act are many and complicated. For more information, a tax lawyer, certified public accountant, or the state historic preservation office should be consulted.

Under state and federal statutes, the Department of Archives and

History is directly involved in the protection of historic properties. Under the state antiquities law, no alteration to public buildings of historic or architectural significance can take place without a permit from the Board of Trustees of the Department of Archives and History, and each month approximately 200 public projects are evaluated for their impact on historic properties. For the second year in a row, efforts to clarify and strengthen the law have failed in the Mississippi Legislature. The Department has additional responsibilities under federal law and procedures.

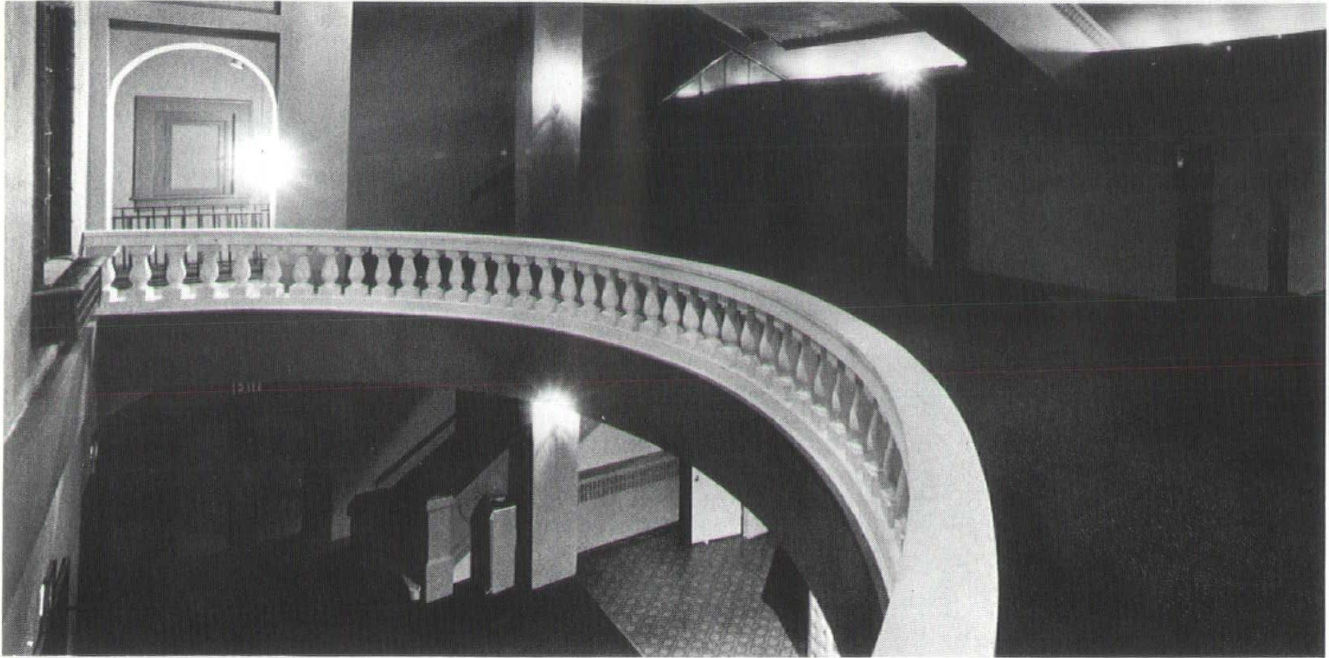
During the 1981 fiscal year, there has been a substantial decline in the number of federal and federally-assisted projects. Cutbacks in federal funding have slowed the number of subdivision, and industrial park developments which are normally evaluated for their efforts on historic properties. Other types of projects have not declined, and bridge replacements, weatherization of buildings, and oil and gas wells are continuing at about the same pace. Anyone with information about threatened properties should contact Paul Newsom, interagency coordinator for the Department of Archives and History.

On a final positive preservation note, one of the brightest recent achievements of the Department was the restoration of the Manship House in Jackson. The Manship House is an 1857 Gothic Revival cottage built by craftsman and one-time mayor of Jackson, Charles Manship.

The house was purchased in the mid 1970s by the state, and, with major funding from the federal government and private sources, restoration began with an archaeological investigation in 1975. On Feb. 12, 1982, the house formally opened, with Governor William F. Winter, the Department's Board of Trustees, visiting dignitaries, and Manship descendants in attendance. The Manship House is one of the most important restorations in the state, because it preserves and interprets the lifestyle of an artisan family and offers a unique contrast to Mississippi's opulent antebellum Greek Revival mansions. Tours of the house are available Tuesday through Sunday.

# TOWARD A SHINING EXAMPLE

## Ledbetter Associates Architects and Corinth's Coliseum



by Deborah P. Brunt

Ledbetter Associates Architects in Corinth have proven themselves able to combine "something old" with "something new" to create a success. Not long ago, they remodeled the second floor of an old downtown building into spacious new office quarters for the firm. Now firm architects Ben Ledbetter, Jr., and L. Coleman Coker have designed themselves into the middle of another old/new project — the restoration-renovation of Corinth's 58-year-old Coliseum Theatre.

Owned by the people of Alcorn County, the 999-seat theatre — with its plaster molding, its mosaic-tiled outer lobby, its white marble staircase leading from inner lobby to mezzanine level, its stained glass light domes in the auditorium ceiling, its 316-seat gallery level above the mezzanine, and its New York stage — recently hosted the Washington Ballet.

Members of the facility's managing board, the Corinth Area Arts Council, are working to transform the Coliseum from old abandoned movie house to bustling downtown civic center. Ledbetter and Coker have played a vital part in the transformation process.

Ledbetter's involvement began when he "rediscovered" the Coliseum Theatre upon moving

back to his home town of Corinth in 1976. At that time, the Coliseum, for all practical purposes, was closed. "I used to go sit in the back row of the top balcony," Ledbetter remembers. "Just sit and reflect. I enjoy that space (the auditorium). It's more than just a facility — it's a space unlike anything in north Mississippi."

The "space" Ledbetter so admires was designed and constructed in 1924 by another local architect named Ben — Benjamin Franklin Liddon. It boasts a stage designed and originally equipped by a New York studio, an orchestra pit, backstage dressing rooms, a "Box seat" area, two balconies, and two lobbies.

Its grandeur delighted generations of Corinthian audiences as they came, first to see vaudeville "road shows," then to watch silent pictures, and finally to view decades of "talkies." When it wasn't being used as a movie house, the Coliseum held live performers including Rose Marie, stars of the Grand Ole Opry, and Elvis Presley.

By the late 1960's, however, the place that had for years been "Corinth's movie house" no longer drew crowds. In the 1970's, the Liddon family closed the Coliseum and then sold it in 1977 to Herbert Welch, a Merrillville, Indiana, businessman originally from the

Corinth area.

Welch renovated the Coliseum and tried, unsuccessfully, to reopen it as a movie theatre. After only a few months, he closed the building again and put it up for sale. It sat, empty and decaying. Then, in 1980, community efforts to "save the Coliseum" revived. At this point, Ledbetter Architects entered the picture in an active role.

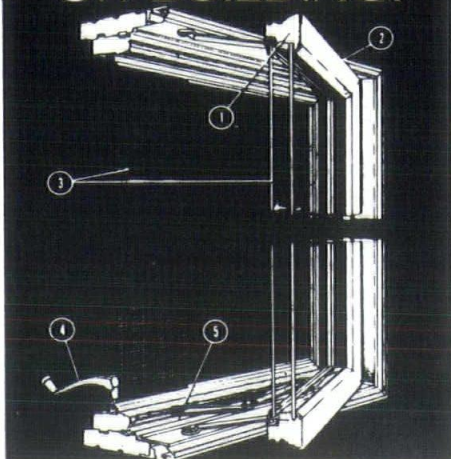
"Rosemary Williams (leader of a group of concerned citizens) came to us and began talking about it being sold to developers," remembers Ledbetter. Both he and Coker were horrified at the thought of the building's being turned into "apartments, a flea market, or — worst of all — a parking lot."

In an effort to have the Coliseum listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Ledbetter's firm did a preliminary feasibility study of the facility. According to Ledbetter, application forms supplied the architects by Mrs. Williams contained general questions about the building and required a detailed description of the structure.

In mid-1980, the firm's work paid off. The Coliseum received National Register status. Later the same year, Ledbetter and Coker did some preliminary sketches of possibilities for making the Coliseum auditorium more versatile. Their drawings

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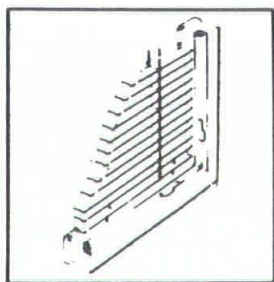
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included several ideas for incorporating a small auditorium within the larger facility.

By December of 1980, Welch had indicated his desire to give the building to the county. He did so February 27, 1981. In the intervening months, several Corinthians — including Mrs. Williams, Ledbetter, and Coker — kept busy readying the county to accept Welch's gift.

In January, 1981, the Corinth Area Arts Council was formed, both as an umbrella organization for local arts groups and as a potential managing board for the Coliseum. That same month the Arts Council received a \$5,000 Survey and Planning Grant for the Mississippi Historical Commission's Department of Archives and History. The grant, matched by local money, "got us off and running," says Coker.

"We did a layout of existing conditions. We did a lot of measuring. We talked to a good many groups — in town and out of town. We set up priorities."

Upgrading to Ledbetter and Coker included both restoration and renovation. Says Ledbetter, "We had to take the good that was old, create things that never were but are needed now, and make them all make sense."

Allocating space for differing arts groups demanded creating "ultimate possibilities of flexibility." It meant dealing, not only with the auditorium proper, but with its wealth of support facilities.

In order to complete their detailed study of the building and to make plans for its suggested use, Ledbetter and his associates gleaned ideas from people with previous experience. Coker comments, "We talked to the renovators of an old theatre in Hattiesburg, directors of small Memphis theatres, the manager of an old theatre-turned-civic-center in Jonesboro, Arkansas — anyone we could find — before doing our study."

Their research complete, the men made detailed schematic drawings and a scale model of the Coliseum. Their long-range plans took into consideration the auditorium's inherent problems with the performing arts. Having been built primarily for movies, its stage wing space is almost nonexistent. Persons seated in its first 20 rows have their eye level below stage level. Stage access at the time renovation began consisted solely of two narrow flights of stairs.

On paper, the architects created a small theatre-within-a-theatre by using a hydraulic system to lift the first several rows of seats. They put a rehearsal stage, costume storage area, and director's office in space that used to house a bus station adjacent to the auditorium. They converted parts of a beauty shop and an unused office next to the Coliseum outer lobby into public restrooms. They created a new lobby with restrooms in what is now an alley. They put a scenery workshop into basement space under the stage.

So far, most of what they "created" is still only accomplished on paper. But the firm's study has already proven valuable in a number of ways. It has motivated local residents to invest time, effort, and money in "their" Coliseum. It has provided a necessary first step toward seeking improvement grants. It has channeled Arts Council efforts in definite directions. And, says Ledbetter, "It's all still very feasible."

When actual restoration began, priorities had to be set. Some pressing needs — including plumbing and wiring repairs, roof work, plaster restoration, and mechanical-system overhauls — had to be met. However, one of the first major efforts was, "by intent," the "cosmetic restoration" of the inner lobby and concession stand area.

Because the inner lobby was, in the architects' estimation, the place where the "most undoing had been done" and because it was a "public area" toward the front of the building, it received the first really visual overhaul.

Through plasterers working to make repairs inside the auditorium, Ledbetter and Coker discovered what they believed to be the building's original interior colors — pinks and aquas. They then ran an article in Corinth's newspaper, trying to get people who could recall the original colors to come forward. Those persons who did respond verified what the plasterers had found.

In redoing the inner lobby, "we keyed off the pinks," says Coker, who admits, "What we came up with is probably more elaborate than the original." Worn-out carpeting was replaced with a black-and-white tile flooring, keyed off the smaller black-and-white tile pattern of the outer lobby. A concession stand Welch had placed in the inner lobby was removed and the original outer-lobby concession stand —

*Continued on next page*

## Alabama Architects to host Gulf States Region Convention

**"Buildings Reborn" is theme for meet in historic downtown**

Plans are proceeding on schedule for the five-state Architects Convention on Oct. 28-31st, reports Donald Morrison, convention chairman.

Friday's events include the Products Exhibits with architects who visit every display being eligible for a trip for two to the Caribbean. Programs include the Alabama Power competition plates, the Mobile Townhouse Competition, the Birmingham Library, the Sylacauga Library that became a Museum, the Sloss Furnace renovation, the Birmingham Church that became a jail, Huntsville's Townhouse Square, and others.

A photography and a building design competition is scheduled, and rules and entry forms are being mailed to members in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee.

which had been boarded up — was reopened and enlarged.

Additional upgrading of the structure is planned for the near future. Ledbetter Associates are working now on preliminary sketches and ideas for new restrooms and for restoration of the outer lobby and mezzanine areas.

Much work remains to be done, but the old/new Coliseum has surely come a long way in a short time. Thanks to the efforts of concerned Corinthians, including Ledbetter and Coker, Corinth's old movie house may someday be Alcorn County's Civic Center complex.

"I'd like the Coliseum to be a shining example of the errors of our past ways," says Ledbetter. "A lot of buildings have been torn down because they were old and had supposedly lost their usefulness. I hope people can one day point to it (the Coliseum) and say, 'That building was almost destroyed, and look what it's become.' Its success can hopefully save other buildings."

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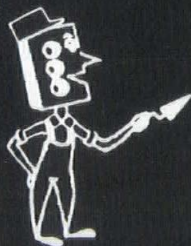
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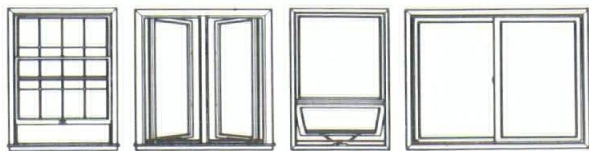
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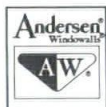
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*Continued from pg. 9*

the answers to all of the questions about small town growth can be answered, he said.

Ronald Schmitt, assistant professor of Architecture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, spoke on "Planning and Design Policies for Growth of the Small Town: Contain, Conserve, and Consolidate."

To substantiate his assertion that small towns need and can benefit from professional planning help, Schmitt detailed the recent growth and growing pains of small towns — strip developments, unplanned housing development, and "sprawl" that makes city services hard to deliver.

He offered possible solutions to the problem of overgrown towns. Among solutions proposed for containment were greenbelts to preserve farmland and define town growth areas, "transfer of development rights" agreements which compensate landowners for not developing property crucial to the town's open spaces, and land banking — the formation of agricultural districts which could purchase lands for agricultural purposes.

"Successful downtown businesses can be assumed to be operating within two possible retail climates: either they enjoy a virtual monopoly of retail activity in their town, or they meet satellite-retail competition 'heads-up' with an effective, well managed retailing effort of their own," Steven P. Turnipseed, assistant professor of environmental design at Texas A&M University told Chautauquans. "Ever since World War II, central business districts have been challenged by suburban shopping centers and enclosed shopping malls that were attracted by the economic potential of sprawling suburban development. As suburban residential growth continues to generate new shopping centers and malls, small town merchants must be prepared to meet this competition."

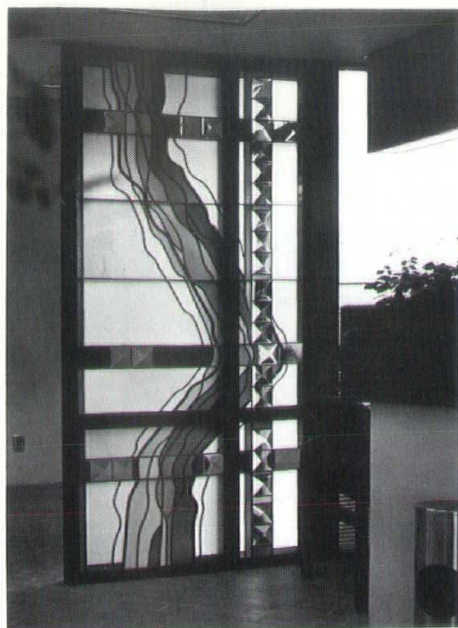
Turnipseed's paper, "Communal Control: Small Town Merchants Can Learn from Mall Lease Arrangements," examined the success of expensive and restricting mall lease agreements. "Retailing systems that rely on voluntary compliance to communal goals cannot compete with the authoritarian retailing concepts of

shopping centers and malls," he asserted.

The substance of the Chautauqua papers and the interest of the Center for Small Town Research and Design are the "raison d'etre" for the School of Architecture's commitment to small towns in the development of curriculum for its graduate program.

Beginning with MSU's fall semester, the school will offer two graduate degrees, a Master of Science in Architecture for architectural graduates with their first degree and a Master of Science in Small Town Studies for students in other disciplines.

The year-and-a-half long program "assumes as its mission the education of architectural and non-architectural students concerning the problems, theories, methodologies, strategies, and solutions involved in the design and management of small towns." Graduates are expected to have a wide variety of employment opportunities at the completion of the program. Information on the program is available from the School of Architecture, Mississippi State University, P.O. Drawer AQ, Mississippi State, MS 39762.

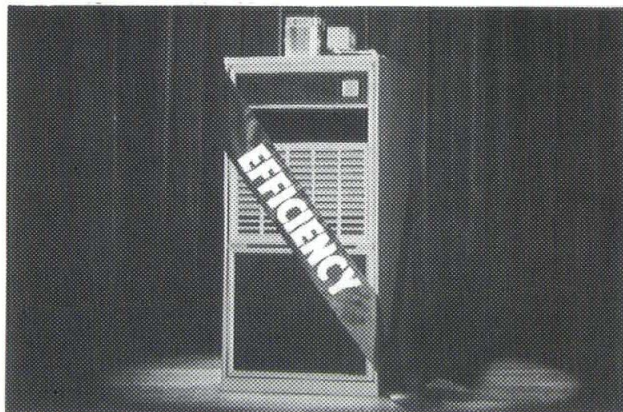


## Architectural Stained Glass

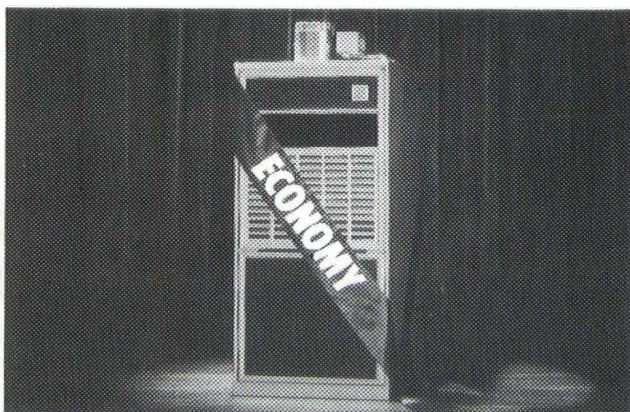
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preservationists in historical preservation and restoration. Billy also participated in the preparation of the amendment of the State Antiquities Act broadening its scope to cover all state owned or state occupied properties. Under this revision, any change of publicly owned property must be cleared through the State Department of Archives and History.

Billy served two terms as president of the Mississippi Art Association and established the fund which eventually led to the building of the present Mississippi Museum of Art and the Planetarium.

Billy was graciously available at any time, without compensation, to share his wealth of knowledge and to use his persuasive personality to win others to the architect's cause. He lectured to college students, civic groups, church groups and art students about historic preservation and the inter-relationship of architecture and art.

In addition to his professional organizational work, Billy served on the Board of the Easter Seal Society. During his tenure on the Board, he was instrumental in preparing the barrier free requirements for public buildings and in getting the legislation enacted for the requirements.

The private architectural practice of William Lampton Gill was principally in the field of preservation and restoration. The projects of which Billy was most proud were the grand village of the Natchez Indians, restoration of Monmouth, Glen Mary Plantation in Natchez and the Manship House restoration in Jackson.

I was fortunate to visit Billy at his home the week that he died. Katy, Billy and I had a glass of wine while Bill discussed the projects in which he was involved. Billy's final admonition was, "Art, we have got to save those fine old structures for posterity!"

It is rare to find a person like Billy Gill who was not only intelligent and creative but who also was a warm caring individual. Even unto death, Billy showed his caring for his fellowman by giving his body to science.

A memorial service was held in Fondren Presbyterian Church on April 6, 1982. The church was overflowing with Billy's many, many friends. It was a fitting tribute to a life well lived.

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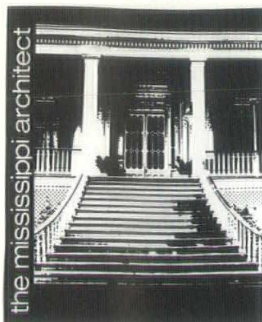
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