

ABOUT ARTSPARTNERS

Founded in 1999, ArtsPartners of Central Illinois, Inc. is a 501c3 tax-exempt, not-for-profit organization that is dedicated to building awareness and economic viability of Peoria area Arts.

ArtsPartners realizes its mission by developing and implementing community-wide arts marketing activities; by facilitating collaborations among the arts organizations; and by creating and nurturing partnerships with the business community, the media, local agencies, and educational institutions.

The City of Peoria and the Peoria Civic Center Authority have committed 2.5% of the collected restaurant tax to ArtsPartners as an economic investment, recognizing that a rich cultural environment is an economic benefit to the entire Peoria area.

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ArtsPartners
of Central Illinois Inc.

PEORIA CITY HALL:

A VISITOR'S GUIDE OF PEORIA'S GREATEST TREASURE



"The new building stands today a model of what Peoria contractors, Peoria architects, and Peoria artisans can do. It is said by those who have visited similar buildings in various parts of the United States, that while there are larger and more expensive buildings in the country, there are none more complete or substantial."

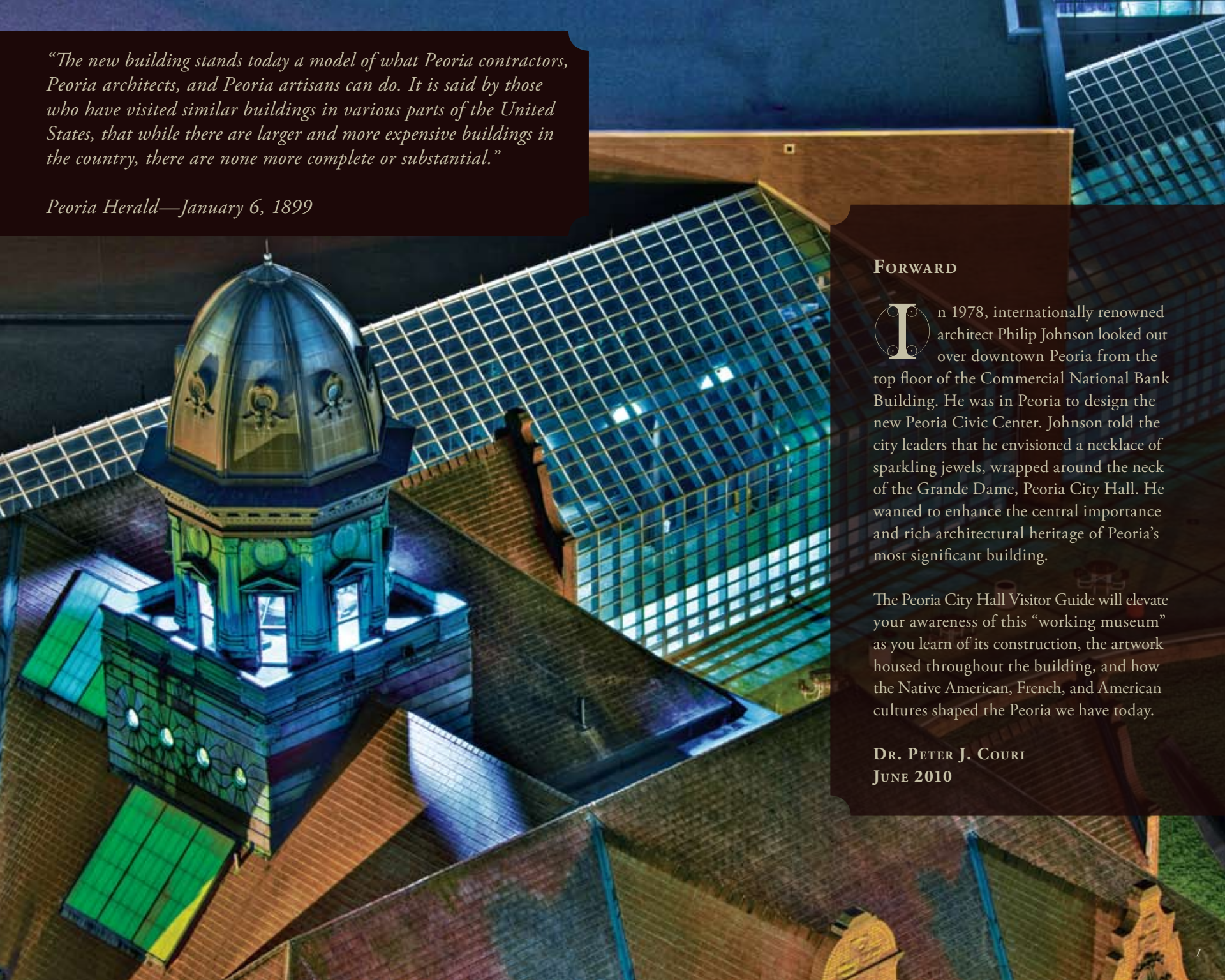
Peoria Herald—January 6, 1899

FORWARD

In 1978, internationally renowned architect Philip Johnson looked out over downtown Peoria from the top floor of the Commercial National Bank Building. He was in Peoria to design the new Peoria Civic Center. Johnson told the city leaders that he envisioned a necklace of sparkling jewels, wrapped around the neck of the Grande Dame, Peoria City Hall. He wanted to enhance the central importance and rich architectural heritage of Peoria's most significant building.

The Peoria City Hall Visitor Guide will elevate your awareness of this "working museum" as you learn of its construction, the artwork housed throughout the building, and how the Native American, French, and American cultures shaped the Peoria we have today.

DR. PETER J. COURI
JUNE 2010





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Peoria City Hall Facts



Plans for construction: June 4, 1894

Construction: 1895-1898

Location: 419 Fulton Street, on the site of the Market House, Peoria's covered outdoor produce marketplace

Cornerstone Dedication: November 2, 1897

Opening Dedication: January 5, 1899

Cost: Building—\$234,592 Furnishings—\$36,918

Contractor: William Allen, mayor of Peoria. Payment for contract—\$123,275

Architects: Reeves & Baillie of Peoria. Payment for plans and superintendent—\$8,845

Architectural Style: Flemish Renaissance

Exterior Features: Lake Superior red sandstone (quarried by inmates), copper cupola bell tower, ornamented stepped gables, banded orbs above the arched entrances

Interior Features: Open atrium rotunda topped with "Tiffany-style" stained glass skylight, hanging staircases with decorative cast iron "egg & dart" molding, custom-designed PCH doorknobs, barrel-vaulted ceiling with coffered squares, central atrium leaded glass windows, red oak trim, Italian marble wainscoting

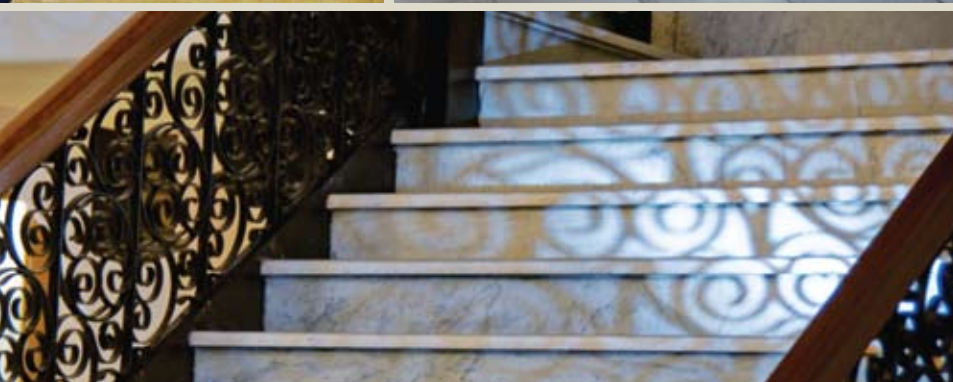
Historic Art: City council chamber mural of the 3 Muses—Peaco, 1912
"Henri de Tonti, Founder of Peoria, at Pimiteoui, 1691-93"—Lonnie Stewart, 1991

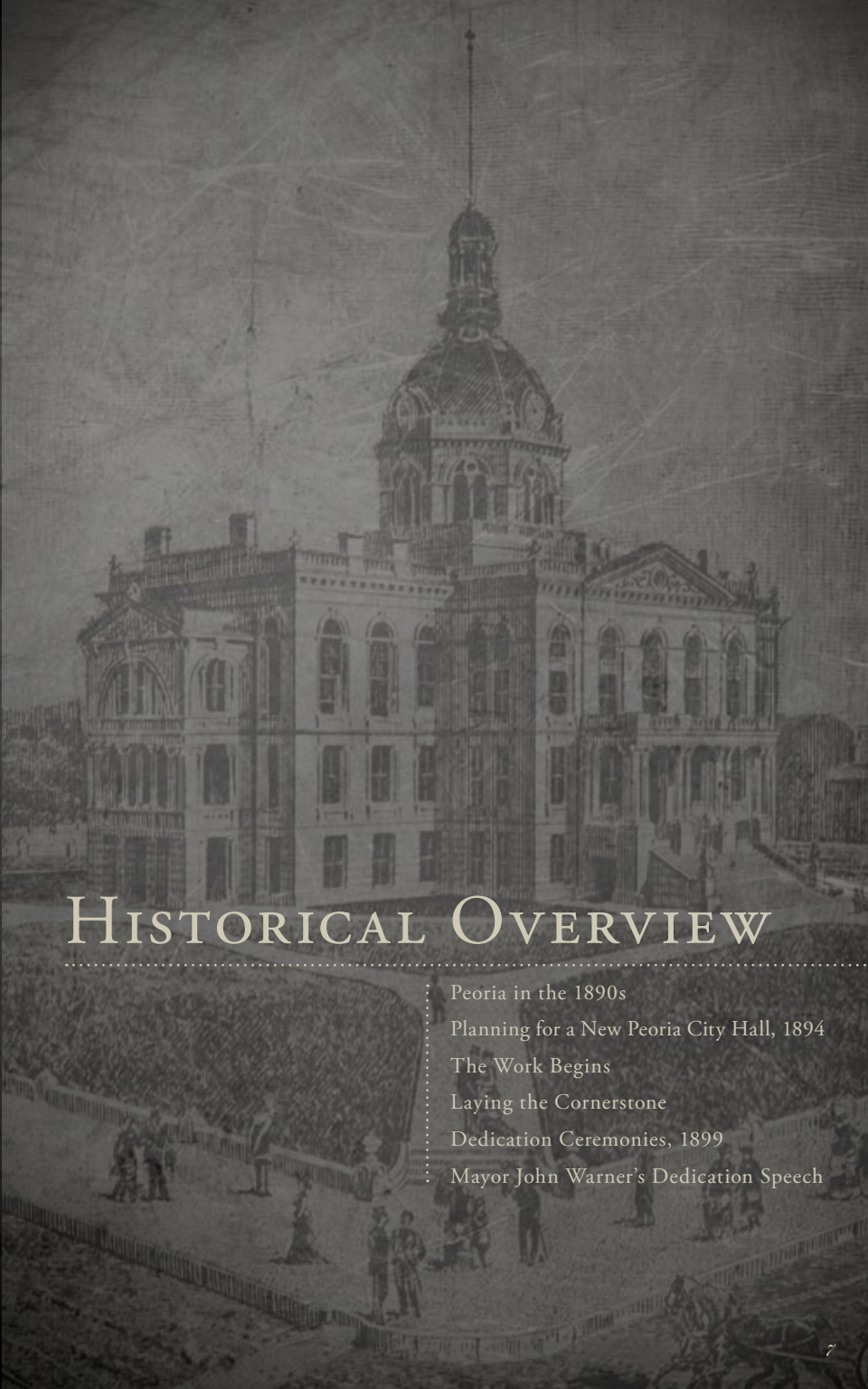
"Peoria, August 29, 1831"—J.M. Roberts, 1831

"Love Knows No Caste"—Fritz Triebel, 1889

Ceiling mural—Trapp & Hocking, 1898

National Register of Historic Places: February 6, 1973





HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Peoria in the 1890s

Planning for a New Peoria City Hall, 1894

The Work Begins

Laying the Cornerstone

Dedication Ceremonies, 1899

Mayor John Warner's Dedication Speech

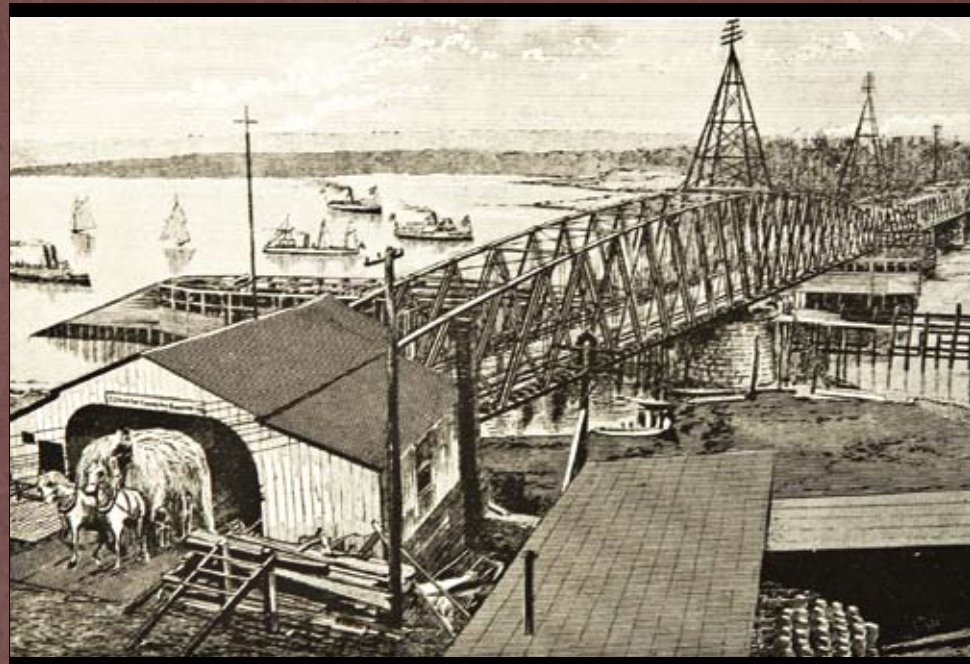
Peoria in the 1890s



Peoria had grown to be Illinois' second-largest city with a population on the verge of exceeding 100,000. • Peoria was the 16th largest manufacturing center in America. • Peoria had 554 manufacturing establishments representing 90 different industries. Some major ones were distillery products, bicycles, agricultural implements, threshers, hardware, cooperage, flour, building materials and bricks. • Peoria had the lowest unemployment in the nation. • With 18 distilleries using 35,000 bushels of grain to make 167,000 gallons of spirits per day, Peoria produced more distilled spirits and liquors than any other city in the world. • Peoria was called the "hub of the internal revenue world" and contributed more internal revenue tax on alcohol to the federal government than any other city in the United States. Her contributions exceeded those of New York, Philadelphia and Boston by 50 percent. • Peoria had 13 railroads with two under construction. There were over 100 daily passenger trains. • Peoria had 12 banks with combined capital topped by only a few cities in the nation. • The entire city had a complete sewage and drainage system. Almost all streets were broadened and paved. • The water works system was rated the best in the nation. • Peoria had 15 schools considered models for the nation and looked with pride at the newly opened Bradley Polytechnic Institute. • Peoria created Illinois' first park district in 1894. By 1899, there were 286 acres of developed parks, including Glen Oak Park (92 acres), Laura Bradley Park (140 acres), South Park (10 acres) and Madison Park (88 acres). • Peoria's public library had over 60,000 volumes and was considered more complete than cities many times Peoria's size.



VIEW OF SOUTH ADAMS STREET



FREE BRIDGE AT FOOT OF LAKE



Planning for a New Peoria City Hall, 1894



With so much wealth and prosperity, Peorians roundly agreed that a city structure be built that would fit the growing needs of the city.

On June 4, 1894, Mayor Philo Miles announced plans for a new Peoria City Hall. The building was not to exceed \$100,000. The façade was to be designed and finished on all four sides. There were to be no towers or domes. The windows were required to be large and up to the ceiling. The four-story structure was to house the mayor's office and departments of the legislature, finance, public works, law, health, police, fire, boiler inspector, building and harbormaster.

The city's covered outdoor produce market on the corner of Madison and Fulton was chosen as the site. The existing small, two-story city hall (built in 1859) was next door on Fulton. The city paid \$43 to have the Market House torn down. For many years, people lamented the loss of what had become Peoria's meeting and gossip center. (The horseradish sauce that was sold at the market was also sorely missed.)

The Work Begins



William Allen was mayor of Peoria in 1895, but that did not stop city officials from choosing him to be the contractor for the new City Hall. He had never built a building before. Erection of the building would take 15 months.



Laying the Cornerstone



In October 1897, the autumn leaves had fallen, and the brisk, cold weather was starting to settle in. Peoria Mayor John Warner was worried about winter delaying the city's biggest project in its history, the construction of a new City Hall, so he quickly announced that on November 2, 1897, the cornerstone of the building would be laid without the grand, majestic ceremonies so fitting such a historic event. The formal dedication would come when the new City Hall was finished.

Peorians were invited to come down and place mementos they wanted to leave for the future generations. Hundreds of people waded through mountains of sand and dodged the tangle of metal construction materials and red sandstone that stretched across Madison and Fulton streets to reach the 12" x 12" x 6" copper box.

City officials deposited copies of all the city newspapers, a copy of the city ordinances and photographs of all city officials into the cornerstone box. Major Henry Wells had visited Egyptian pyramids and copied one of their ideas by submitting an electrotype of the conjunction of the planets on November 2, 1897, a conjunction that will not occur again for 30,000 years. Former mayors donated their farewell addresses. People threw in their business cards and family photographs, railroad tickets, a plumber's bill, greetings from the mayor of Kraewinkel, and a Horsten rivet. Even a handful of buckeyes found their way into the cornerstone box.

The Peoria Evening Star satirized, "The powers to be might have added a bottle of aroma from the West Bluff sewer system, a can of oysters which caused so much disturbance at the Columbus junket, and a chart of air currents as recorded by the city engineer's anemometer when Alderman Carroll is making a speech."

On Tuesday, November 2, a large crowd gathered as Spenser's Band played patriotic songs. Mayor Warner apologized for the construction mess. Alderman William Carroll spoke of how proud he was that City Hall was being designed by Peorians and that mechanical and manual labor would be done completely by Peorians.

Bishop John Spalding remarked, "We have a population of intelligent, moral, sober, enlightened men and women. I do not believe we can find a better population anywhere. Let us now be an example to all other cities of the kind of government that should prevail in cities." He also praised Mrs. Lydia Bradley, who just a few weeks before, had dedicated a school of the highest value for the good of the people.

The mayor of North Peoria, Oliver J. Bailey, noted that the new City Hall should put to rest Peoria's reputation as "a slow-going, foggy old town...who believe that tallow candle light, mule cars, the river bank for parks, and mud roads are good enough."

Judge Nicolas E. Worthington hoped people would gather around the cornerstone in 50 years with a Peoria population that had reached 200,000.

While the band played, Mayor Warner placed the copper memento box into the cornerstone and slopped some mortar on it. Samuel Woolner was the next speaker and joked, "I hope the laboring men will not object, because Mayor Warner, who just laid the cornerstone, is not a union man."

M.C. Quinn spoke last and gave a historic account of Peoria's 53 years of city government, with amusing tales of early mayors and alderman. He noted that in 1845 we paid the mayor only \$1 for each council meeting attended and the city attorney \$100 a year.

The ceremony ended and construction began in earnest. For the next 15 months, Peorians labored with pride to build what was called the finest city hall built in its time.



Dedication Ceremonies, 1899



Colonel John Warner has the distinction of being not only Peoria's most celebrated Civil War hero but also the city's second-longest-serving mayor. Elected eight times, he had incessantly advocated and agitated for the idea of a new Peoria City Hall to meet the city's growing needs. Thus it was with great honor that John Warner became mayor one last time and the reward of dedicating the new building would be his.

The dedication celebration started on Monday night, January 4, 1899, with an elaborate banquet at the Hotel Prochazka, just down the street from City Hall. The *Peoria Journal* wrote, "There were no fewer than 12 courses, and everything was of the finest description. The tables looked very handsome in profuse decorations of roses, carnations, and verdure, interspersed with candelabra; and the dining hall was adorned with wreaths and festoons of evergreen. Young ladies dressed in white served the repast, and the Italian orchestra played national airs, two-steps, cake walks, Travatore, waltzes, and other inspiring music during its progress. The banquet was only for city officials, aldermen, those who were connected with the building of the City Hall and their ladies, and they bore the expense of it out of their own pockets."

On January 5, 1899, the new building was grandly dedicated as part of a three-day celebration. At two o'clock, the police and fire departments assembled in front of Central Station on Jackson Street with Spenser's Band. Accompanied by all the fire apparatus, they marched down Jefferson to Main and up to Fulton in front of the new City Hall. Bunting and flags handsomely decorated the shined and sparkling wagons of the fire company. All the men wore white gloves and full uniforms as they marched and counter-marched in front of the building.

Spenser's Band went up to the second floor where they played all afternoon and evening. The hall was thrown open to the public for the first time, and everyone was invited to inspect the building from 1:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. for the next three days.

Many praises were heaped upon the contractor, William Allen. No one seemed to care that when he was awarded the lucrative construction contract in 1895, he was mayor of Peoria.

The final cost well exceeded the original estimates of \$100,000. Such amenities as Italian marble wainscoting, American marble floor tiles, quarter-sawn red oak trim throughout the building and copper gutters instead of tin all helped to more than double the price. Final costs were \$234,592.00 for the building and \$36,918.00 for the furnishings.

John Whalen, commissioner of public works, reported that the building was debt-free when it was finished and "although costing more than originally intended, it was considered by those who are best able to judge, to be the cheapest building of its kind in the State." National publications were in agreement that for a city of Peoria's size, their new City Hall was the finest in the nation.

City officials proudly boasted, "the entire work of construction from the first drawings of the plans to the laying of the last brick on the chimney was done entirely by Peorians."

Mayor John Warner's Dedication Speech



It was standing room only in the city council chambers as Mayor Warner called a meeting to order and gave the following dedication speech.

"Today, fellow citizens, circumstances require that I should say something on the most trying occasion of my life. I have to look backward and forward. I have to look at Peoria in a limited degree and see it, as, in some respects, it was 50 years ago, see it as it is today, and contemplate what it will be 50 years hence.

With the thoughts thus suggested, I can truthfully say that this is the most serious, and at the same time the most pleasing, occasion that I have ever been called upon to address the people of this city.

Forty years ago, the building we vacated was erected. It was an improvement on the quarters used by the officials up to that time, and while now unsuitable, it was when erected and for years thereafter, well-suited to the public wants. Having left the old building, we part with it with regret, for the many pleasant associations connected with it.

But in entering this magnificent building, so complete for all public purposes, we have cause to rejoice, and we do rejoice. This is a hall superior to any in the state. Chicago has one larger and far more expansive, but gloomy and dark within; while this is lightsome, bright, and cheerful in every department. The plan, I believe, cannot be improved on; the workmanship in all respects, as far as we can now observe, has been well, faithfully, and honestly done. Whatever changes from the original plan have been made are in the nature of betterments.

The furnishings of the departments of the various officers is of a substantial and suitable character, and the other officials acting with the committee, I deem worthy of public thanks.

The relationship between the representatives of the city and Mr. Allen, the chief contractor, and the other contractors, have been pleasant, satisfactory, and void of friction.

The entire expense of the building and its furnishings in all departments will soon be paid for, and the public will not seriously feel the expense.

To the old hall, with all its pleasant associations, we say good-bye! The hall we now meet in, we greet and dedicate for the present and future.

We, who were in the old and are now in the new, will soon pass to our final accounting, but this building will stand as a monument to the zeal and energy of the present, and be enjoyed by those who may not remember that we ever existed. Such is human life!

It is my hope that those who in the future occupy the places of the present occupants will do as well for the public as we and our predecessors have done; that they will profit from our mistakes by avoiding them and emulate us in whatever good we have done to improve upon our work.

In behalf of the citizens of Peoria, whose building this is, I accept it and to their use I declare it dedicated. May this occasion be a red-letter day in the history of our beautiful city."

Various aldermen, city officials and religious leaders then spoke with the *Peoria Herald* commenting, "All of them treating the opening of the new city hall from different standpoints, and not one of the addresses were of such length as to weary the audience."

Reverend Samuel H. Morse gave the closing words: "Let this city hall be a place where righteousness shall be done as you see fit, answering to God for your acts."





PEORIA CITY HALL ARTWORK

First Floor

Lithographs of 1890s Peoria
Victorian Ceiling Mural
Decorative Ornate Ironwork
“Love Knows No Caste” Sculpture

Second Floor

Second Floor Mayor’s Office Fireplace, 1880s

Fourth Floor

Peoria City Council Chamber
Peoria City Council Chamber Mural
“Henri de Tonti, Founder of Peoria, at Pimiteoui 1691-93” Painting
“Peoria, August 29, 1831” Mural
Downtown Peoria Aerial View Photographic Mural

OUTSIDE FEATURES

The Peoria City Hall Bell
The Story of the Banded Orbs

HISTORIC 1890S LITHOGRAPHS HANGING ON THE CITY HALL FIRST FLOOR WALLS



SOUTH ADAMS STREET, UNION PASSENGER DEPOT



FREE BRIDGE, PEORIA HIGH SCHOOL, GIPPS BREWERY



GRAND OPERA HOUSE, PEORIA COUNTY COURTHOUSE

The historic 1886 lithographs hanging on the City Hall first floor walls were enhanced by Converse Marketing and framed by Bibb Gallery with old door frames and window sills from City Hall herself.

- South Adams Street in 1886
- Union Passenger Depot (1882-1961)
- Gipps Brewery (1864-1950s)
- Free Bridge at Foot of Lower Peoria Lake (1849-1912)
- Peoria High School (1885-1916)
- The New Peoria House Hotel (1886-1896)
- Grand Opera House (1882-1909)
- Peoria County Courthouse (1876-1964)
- Mansions: 317 Perry (Wheeler/Woolner Mansion 1877),
1125 Main Street (Edward Easton Mansion 1881)
143 High (Joseph Greenhut Mansion 1884),
210 Randolph (Walter Reyburn Mansion 1886)
- Hospitals: St. Francis Hospital (1876)
Cottage Hospital (1883)
Bradley Home for Aged Women (1967)
Home of the Friendless (1875-1902)
- Churches: St. Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral (1889)
Universalist Church (1869-1902),
Congregational Church (1883-1936).
- Great Western Distillery (1882)



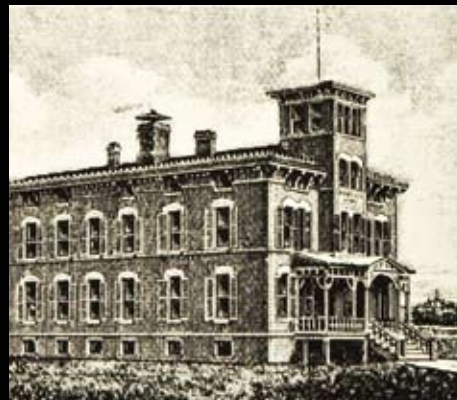
317 PERRY STREET, GREAT WESTERN DISTILLERY



ST. FRANCIS HOSPITAL, COTTAGE HOSPITAL



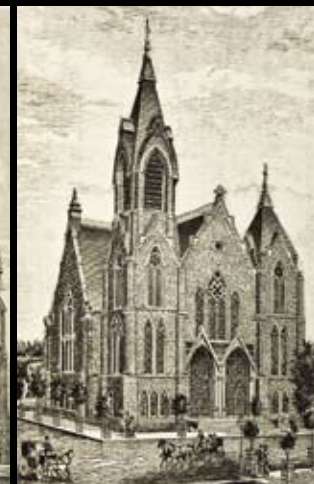
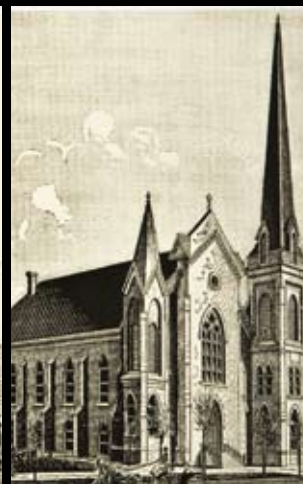
143 HIGH STREET, 210 RANDOLPH AVENUE



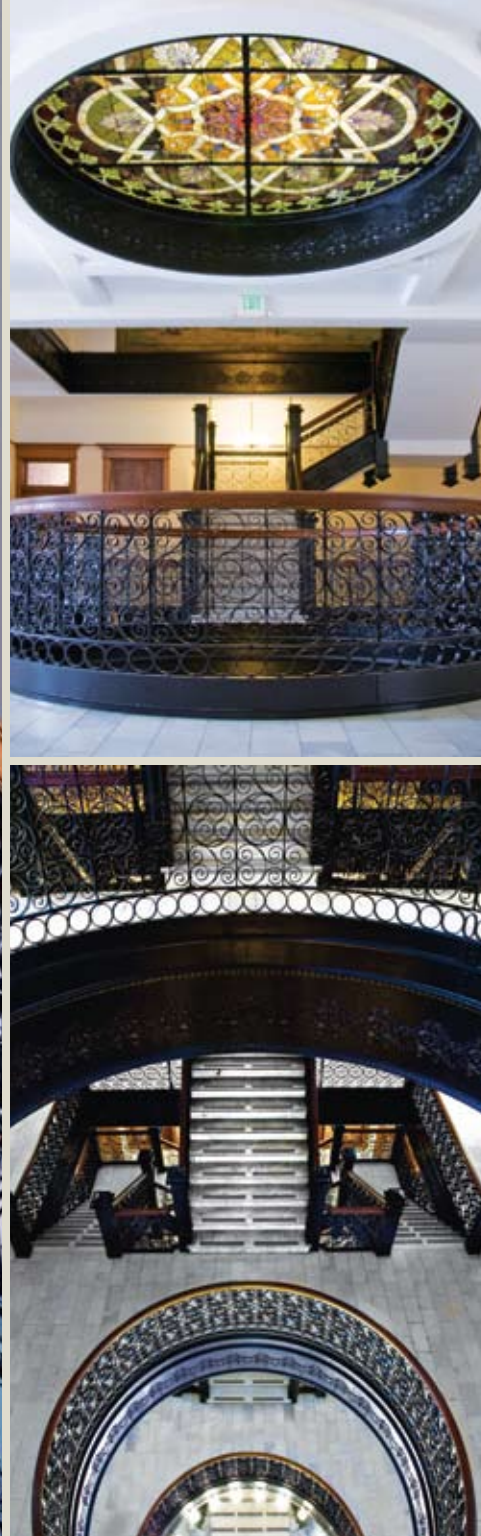
BRADLEY HOME FOR AGED WOMEN, HOME OF THE FRIENDLESS



1125 MAIN STREET



THE CATHEDRAL, UNIVERSALIST CHURCH, CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



Victorian Ceiling Mural



Uncovered by painters during a previous restoration, the mural once had a brilliant gold frame painted around it. Historians guess that it was created by a mural artist who traveled from town to town decorating public buildings.



Decorative Ornate Ironwork



Several Peoria ironworks companies and their craftsmen contributed to the building of City Hall, including A. Lucas & Sons Steel which was founded in 1857 and is still in existence today.

“Love Knows No Caste” Sculpture ✧

Frederick (Fritz) Triebel, 1865-1944, was Peoria sculptor of international fame. He sculpted “Love Knows No Caste” in 1889 from carrara marble while working and studying in Florence, Italy. Mr. Triebel was inspired by an 1850 poem from India in which Lallu, a servant boy, drops his water jug and clasps his hands over his heart. He feels love at first sight for Dosse, the daughter of a high-caste Brahmin. Dosse draws back, very much aware of the caste that separates them.

EXHIBITED:

- 1889: Florence, Italy
- 1893: World Columbian Exposition, Chicago
- 1894: Joseph B. Greenhut mansion, High Street and Sheridan Road, Peoria
- 1906: Joseph B. Greenhut summer residence in Long Branch, New Jersey
- 1925: Peoria Art Institute, Hamilton Boulevard, Peoria
- 1932: Peoria Park District storage shed, Peoria
- 1952: Glen Oak Park Conservatory, Peoria
- 1976: Peoria City Hall, Peoria

TRIEBEL’S OTHER WORKS IN PEORIA:

- Soldiers’ & Sailors’ War Monument in the Courthouse Square
- Ingersoll bronze figure in Glen Oak Park
- Donmeyer memorial statues in the Cornerstone Building
- Block family memorial bronze figure “Peace” in Springdale Cemetery
- General John Logan bust in the GAR Hall
- Lydia Bradley bust at Bradley University
- John Lee bust in Peoria Public Library
- Dante bronze bas-relief at Lakeview Museum
- Walter Barker bronze bas-relief at National City Bank

Fritz Triebel’s masterwork stands today, as it did over 100 years ago, as a symbol for racial and class equality.



SECOND FLOOR MAYOR'S OFFICE FIREPLACE, 1880S



This fireplace came from a historic mansion that was being razed for the construction of Interstate 74 in the early 1960s. The fireplace is older than City Hall itself. The ornate carving includes two griffins atop the mantle. The protective cast iron fireplace panel depicts an allegorical scene of Pan mesmerizing the woodland animals.



FIREPLACE DETAIL



City Hall Council Chamber



The Mayor's podium and the council desks are original to the chamber. Off to the left wall are photos of all of Peoria's mayors since 1845 and a framed copy of the City of Peoria Charter.



City Council Chamber Mural



When City Hall was dedicated in 1899, the wall behind the mayor's dais was plain and ringed with heavy, swagged drapes. There was an elaborate "P" stenciled high above his chair, though, and a bunting of flags was stenciled on the side walls.

In the early 1900s, struggling artists would travel from town to town soliciting work where they could. One such artist came from St. Louis up to Peoria in 1912. His name was Will Peaco and he was hired to paint over the original gold stencils with a symbolic mural of a booming Peoria. Peaco's mural is full of symbols of what he experienced in Peoria.

- The three women represent the classic Muses:
 - Muse of Learning with her staff of knowledge
 - Muse of Peace with an olive branch
 - Muse of Medicine with a medical caduceus
- Venetian dome—1876 Peoria County Courthouse
- Church spires—Bishop Spalding's St. Mary's Cathedral
- Books—Bradley Polytechnic Institute
- Laurel wreath—Peoria's many theaters and fine arts
- Shield—year of Peoria's incorporation as a city in 1845
- Ears of corn—farming and marketing
- Plow—strong harvesting industries, such as Avery Plow Works
- Machine cog—Peoria's heavy industries, such as Lucas Iron Works
- Smokestacks—Peoria's dominant distilling industry
- Double bridge— "old toothpick"
- Medical caduceus—Peoria's three growing hospitals
- American flag—It is a 48-star flag; Arizona was admitted as a state while Peaco was painting the mural.



THE CATHEDRAL, COURTHOUSE, DISTILLERY ROW, WOODEN BRIDGE

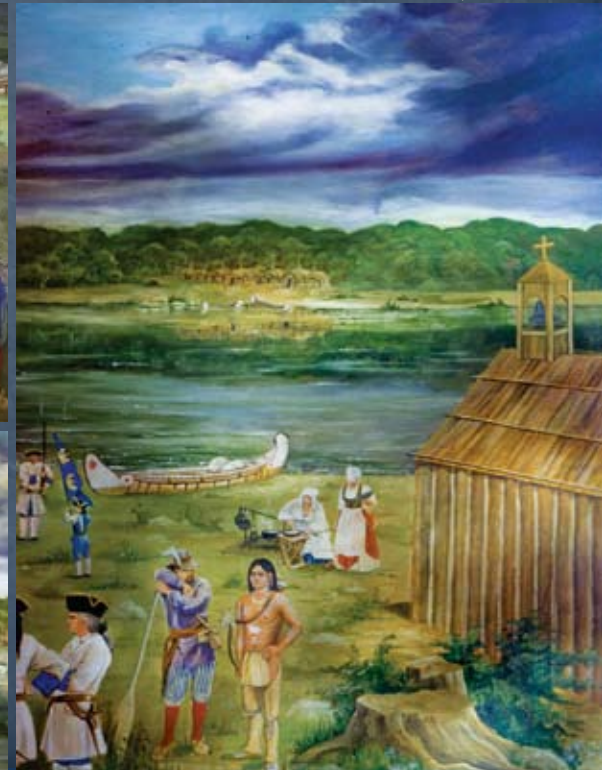


MUSE OF LEARNING, MUSE OF PEACE



MUSE OF MEDICINE, MACHINE COG AND PLOW

“Henri de Tonti, Founder of Peoria, at Pimiteoui, 1691-93” Painting



This painting was done by Galesburg artist Lonnie Stewart and dedicated in September 1991. The Peoria 1691 Foundation commissioned the painting to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the first European settlement by the French along the Peoria riverfront among the Native American villages here.

The scene depicts Henri de Tonti surveying the building of Fort St. Louis II (commonly called Fort Pimiteoui) along the shores of Peoria Lake near present-day Detweiller Marina. With him are his cousins, Francois Dauphin de la Forest and Pierre Delliette.

The chapel “Mission of the Immaculate Conception” is seen on the far right, along with Fr. Jacques Gravier intermingling with the native peoples and the French military. The French and Native American village that grew around Tonti’s fort became the first European settlement in the state of Illinois.

Native American tribes present in 1691:

Kaskaskia, Peoria, Moingwena, Coiracoenantanon, Maroa, and Tapouaro

Henri de Tonti, 1649-1704

- Family members were prominent Italian bankers
- Lost his right hand in a grenade accident and wore a metal replacement, thus his nickname “The Iron Hand.”
- Became LaSalle’s second in command in his exploration of the middle of America, including the building of Fort Crevecoeur in 1680.
- Took over LaSalle’s trading concessions in 1682 and maintained posts along the Illinois River, Mississippi River and the Great Lakes.
- Built Fort Pimiteoui in 1691 and is now called the founder of European Peoria.
- Died in Old Mobile of yellow fever in 1704.
- Recognized as the most traveled explorer in North American History.

Fr. Jacques Gravier, 1651-1708

- Born in Moulins, France, 1651.
- Ordained a Jesuit priest and became fluent in the Algonquin language.
- Missionary at Starved Rock post in 1689, where he finished his grammar and dictionary of the Illinois language.
- Consecrated the “Mission of the Immaculate Conception” in 1693 at Peoria.
- Wounded by a Peoria tribesman in 1705 and died as a result in 1708.

“Peoria, August 29, 1831” Mural

In 1819, seven young men arrived at the shores of Peoria Lake, where downtown Peoria now stands, and started the American settlement of our city. At the time, the small village was called Fort Clark. In 1825, when Peoria County was formed, the name was changed to Peoria.

On August 29, 1831, pioneer Morton farmer John Roberts drew a picture of Peoria, and it has been passed down as the earliest view we have of our city. On an interesting note, the John Roberts farmstead was an important place of hiding for the slaves traveling north on the Underground Railroad in the 1850s.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:

Old courthouse, Charles Ballance residence, ruins of Fort Clark, William Eads, John Hamlin’s store and dwelling, Seth Fulton’s hotel.

When the new Peoria City Hall was being constructed in 1898, the firm of Trapp & Hocking was paid \$50 to recreate the 1831 Roberts’ drawing. They painted a giant mural overlooking the fourth-floor stairway of City Hall. It is widely believed that renowned landscape artists Frank Charles Peyraud (1858-1948) and Hardesty G. Maratta (1864-1924) performed the actual work as they had recently completed the Peoria Public Library’s majestic second-floor murals.



• First Courthouse and Jail



• Lawyer Charles Ballance Residence



• Ruins of Fort Clark



• William Eads



• John Hamlin’s Store and Dwelling



• Seth Fulton’s Hotel

DOWNTOWN PEORIA AERIAL VIEW PHOTOGRAPHIC MURAL

Photographer: William J. Holling, late 1950s



AERIAL VIEW OF PEORIA, 1950S



PEORIA POST OFFICE



SACRED HEART CHURCH,
PEORIA CITY HALL



BLOCK & KUHL AND BERGNER'S
DEPARTMENT STORES



FIRST NATIONAL BANK BUILDING,
PEORIA COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Spalding Institute 1898
Academy of Our Lady 1863
Grand Army of the Republic Hall 1909
First National Bank 1920
Lehman Building 1916
Niagara Hotel 1893
Peoria County Courthouse 1876
Central National Bank Building 1914
Clarke Building 1928
Donmeyer Temple 1889
Peoria Post Office 1937
Madison Theater 1920
Palace Theater 1921
Hotel Pere Marquette 1927
Sacred Heart Church 1906
Peoria City Hall 1899
Jefferson Building 1910
Jefferson Hotel 1912
Rialto Theater 1913
Central Fire House 1922
Commercial National Bank 1925
Creve Coeur Club 1904
Block & Kuhl Department Store 1902
Bergner's Department Store 1890
Eckwood Park 1915
Rock Island Train Depot 1891

The Peoria City Hall Bell



Henry Bloemmer of St. Louis cast the Peoria City Hall bell in 1865. The city paid \$10,000 for the bell. The bell was first installed in the existing Peoria city hall, a two-story building built in 1859. With the construction of the new red-sandstone city hall, plans were made to move the 4,300 lb. bell. On June 27, 1898, workers skidded the cast bell across an improvised “air bridge” stretching from the old city hall to the new one. The cost for the move was \$418.

For years the bell tolled to herald fires and other disasters. It marked civic events, such as the new century, and honored funerals of city officials and other employees. The *Peoria Star* reported in 1920, “A feeling of deepest regret spread over the entire city early last evening when the tolling of the bell in the tower of the magnificent city hall, erected during one of his [Mayor John Warner] administration, solemnly announced that the distinguished and venerable citizen had answered the final summons and passed to the great beyond.”

The bell was last tolled in 1939 on a regular basis and was rung once in 1976 for a special occasion.

In 1994, a crack was discovered in the bell. Estimates were received for repairing the crack and installing an electric clapper. The bell was mended in time for the 100th anniversary of Peoria City Hall, January 5, 1999.





The Story of the Banded Orbs



As reported in the *Peoriana* for February 7, 1898:

The new city hall at Madison and Fulton Streets was almost ready for business when someone discovered that above each entrance was perched a stone ball with a lopsided banner around it. They closely resembled the trademark of a certain beer that made Milwaukee famous (Schlitz).

One newspaper expressed the fear that the saloon keepers were going to take over the town and set up a bar in the city building now that the Democrats were in control, and that the granite balls were there as advertisements for Schlitz at the taxpayers' expense.

An inquiring reporter went after the truth. He asked Mayor Warner, Democrat, who declared that any real Democrat would prefer whisky.

He asked a Republican leader who said the balls symbolized the world with a stronghold around it in the possession of the Democrats.

He asked contractor William M. Allen who said he put the balls there because they were in the plans.

He asked Mr. Reeves of Reeves & Baillie Architects who said his draftsman, Jesse Watson, had drawn the balls on the plan...for why he didn't know.

Finally, Watson himself was cornered and slyly explained that he drew the balls on the plans because he had a vision of the completed building *in a dream* while working on a sketch *and the balls were just there*.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES FOR PEORIA COUNTY, ILLINOIS & THEIR DATES OF INDUCTION



- Central National Bank Building** – 103 S.W. Adams St. (1978)
Christ Church of Lower Kickapoo – Christ Church Rd., Norwood Park (1983)
Cumberland Presbyterian Church – 405 William Kumpf Blvd. (1980)
Judge Flanagan Residence – 942 N.E. Glen Oak Ave. (1975)
Judge Jacob Gale House – 403 N.E. Jefferson St. (1982)
Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Hall – 416 Hamilton Blvd. (1976)
Grand View Drive – roughly bounded by N. Prospect Rd., the Illinois River bluffs, Adams St., and the Grand View Drive west right-of-way (1996)
Illinois Waterway Project Office – 257 Grant St. (2004)
International Harvester Building – 1301-09 SW Washington St. (2005)
Jubilee College – Jubilee State Park, Kickapoo (1972)
Madison Theatre – 502 Main St. (1980)
North Side Historic District – roughly bounded by Perry, Caroline, Madison, and Fayette Sts. (1983)
***Peace and Harvest** by Mary Clark Anderson* – Jefferson and Hamilton Sts. (1994)
Peoria Automobile Club – 100 Park Blvd., Chillicothe (1995)
Peoria City Hall – 419 Fulton St. (1973)
Peoria Mineral Springs – 701 W. Seventh Ave. (1982)
Peoria State Hospital – Rickets Ave., Bartonville (1982)
Peoria Waterworks – (Pumping Station No. 1, Pumping Station No. 2, and Main Well House), Lorentz Ave. and Grand View Dr. (1980)
Pere Marquette Hotel – 501 Main St. (1982)
Pettingill-Morrison House – 1212 W. Moss Ave. (1976)
***The Pioneers** by Lorado Taft* – Central Park N., Elmwood
Pleasant Grove School – Pleasant Grove Rd., Eden (1994)
John C. Proctor Recreation Center – 300 S. Allen St. (1979)
Rock Island Depot and Freight House – 32 Liberty St. (1978)
Springdale Cemetery – 3014 N. Prospect (2004)
Washington C. Wear House – Rt.90/91 Princeville (1993)
West Bluff Historic District – Randolph Ave., High St., and Moss Ave. (1976)

To learn more about key architectural structures in Peoria's downtown area, visit www.artspartners.net where our *Art of Structure* architectural guide is posted under Publications.



PEORIA CITY HALL SAFE



100TH ANNIVERSARY TIME CAPSULE & CELEBRATION



On January 5, 1999, Mayor Bud Grieves led the city in a grand 100th anniversary celebration and rededication of Peoria City Hall. With Victorian music, historical impersonators and a new time capsule, the ceremonies ended with the tolling of City Hall's massive bell ringing in the next century for Peoria's "*Grande Dame*."

Served at the open house were authentic food and drink from the 1899 era. To see the recipes, please visit ArtsPartners.net.

Councilman Leonard Unes presented to the City of Peoria a time capsule to commemorate the 100th anniversary of City Hall. The contents included City of Peoria annual reports, Caterpillar belt buckles, Jim Thome & Joe Girardi baseball cards, a Richard Pryor movie poster, Betty Friedan and Philip Jose Farmer books, photographs from families all over the city, and some *HotWheels* toy cars.



Acknowledgments



TRUE ARTISTS PURSUE THEIR ART. They would do it without pay, without sales, and pretty much without choice. They must share their gift.

For most, the marketing side of their business is a necessary drudgery.

ArtsPartners contributes to the marketing efforts of individual artists and the arts community as a whole. It's part of our mission. In return, we rely on the generosity of the community's artists in many ways to support our mission with their talent.

Our latest collaboration of artistic contributions can be found in this volume. As it is in nature, this is a case where the astounding quality of the material overshadows the artistic compilation of the presentation.

The building featured in "Peoria City Hall: A Visitor's Guide of Peoria's Greatest Treasure" is not our work. We inherited it. The book itself is a work of artists. It is the work of the artists who designed and constructed the building in the 1890s as well as the artists who have now captured its beauty and greatness in these pages. And that work has also been given to us.

The artistic labor and resources that have gone into this marvelous piece has a fair market value of well over \$80,000, this amount exceeds the entire annual budget of ArtsPartners. This fine piece exists only because of the great generosity of the artists who created it.

Peter Couri's succinct writing and meticulous research tells the building's story.

Doug and Eileen Leunig's amazing photography captures the spirit of the building.

Nicole Blackburn's gifted layout and graphic design laces the photography to the writing. Numéro Publishing's extensive services helped make this idea a reality. ArtsPartners also acknowledges Converse Marketing, Peoria Historical Society, and Bradley University Library Collections for the engravings.

Many worked on this book: the Peoria City Council funds ArtsPartners, and The Community Foundation of Central Illinois funded the printing, and we are grateful for the wide support.

The artists make this book work, and we are supremely indebted to them.

ART WORKS IN PEORIA,

Suzette Boulais

SUZETTE BOULAIS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ARTSPARTNERS OF CENTRAL ILLINOIS, INC.

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