



RIPS NEWS

Advocates for Historic Architecture

Membership Meetings

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| February 17, 2015
Tuesday
7:00 PM | Home of Dylan Parker
Regular Business meeting with officer elections. | 817 22 nd Street, Rock Island
<i>See related article.</i> |
| March 17, 2015
Tuesday
7:00 PM | Gas & Electric Credit Union
Historic Preservation Awards review and selection. Doors will be locked shortly after 7 PM so please be prompt | Corner of 24 th St & 4 th Ave
<i>See related article</i> |
| April 21, 2015
Tuesday
7:00 PM | Home of Jan Welch
Regular business meeting with focus on presentation of Historic Preservation Awards at Mav City Council Meeting | 1217 21 st Street, Rock Island |

Remember to keep the third Tuesday of each month marked on your calendar for monthly RIPS meetings and activities

During the worst winter months, it is always possible that weather will cause a last minute meeting cancellation. If there are driving advisories due to snow or ice, we will try to send you an email by mid-afternoon to inform you of a cancellation. You may also call Diane, 309-788-1845, or Linda, 563-349-1312, if you are unsure of the meeting plans.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

Time is running out to suggest candidates for our annual historic preservation awards and certificates of recognition. Candidates will be reviewed at the March membership meeting. In May, we will host a presentation before the City Council. If you are not able to attend the February meeting, forward your suggestions (address and description of work completed) to Diane Oestreich, 788-1845 or blueskies78900@yahoo.com

Candidates can be an individual, group, or business that has made special efforts to preserve or restore historic structures or whose actions have served to support historic preservation in Rock Island. When awards are for buildings, they are given primarily for exterior work that can be enjoyed from the public right-of-way and usually are for projects that were completed during the previous year. Occasionally we do give awards for past projects were inadvertently overlooked. For a building to qualify for an award or recognition, it must be 50 years old or more and lie within the city limits of Rock Island.

When reviewing a project for an award, Rock Island Preservation Society uses the following definitions:

Restoration: An improvement project to an historic structure that endeavors to preserve, restore, and/or reconstruct historic architectural detail, building materials, and craftsmanship.

Renovation: An improvement project to an historic structure that is properly respectful of the historic detail but has had modifications made that were necessary to make the structure more useable, comply with building codes, or make the project economically feasible.

Remodeling: Alterations made to a structure that is not respectful of historic detail. This includes modifications that mimic restoration, when genuine renovations or restoration could have been done.

Only projects that meet the criteria of restoration or renovation will be eligible for consideration. Normal maintenance projects such as painting or reroofing alone will not be eligible.

ROCK ISLAND AFRICAN~AMERICAN HISTORY

Many of Rock Island's historic structures have a strong association with our African American community and several of these are designated Local Landmarks. Landmarks include the Schriver- Nettles House; the Mitchell House (Nicholson Funeral Home), and West End Settlement. It is notable that over the years under the stewardship of a series of owners, historic interiors and exteriors have been maintained. Inappropriate "modernization" did not occur. Among other buildings strongly associated with our African American history is the Prince Hall Masonic Home and the King Solomon Lodge.



*West End Settlement House,
Postcard photo c. 1910*

For many decades, the former West End Settlement House building at 427 7th Avenue has been the home of African American organizations. Today, it is shared by Elite Temple 1265, an Elks group, and Esquire Lodge 1648. These groups have continued to maintain the original appearance of this historic building that was named a Rock Island Landmark in 2011. The landmark application, with many more details, can be seen at www.rigov.org/WestEndSettlement . Click on the blue "landmark" link.



*Schriver-Nettles House, current
Photo from City of Rock Island*

city. Details of the home's history and architecture are included in the landmark application can be seen at www.rigov.org/Schriver-NettlesHouse

The Schriver-Nettles House at 1029 3rd Avenue was owned by Roosevelt and Annie Mae Nettles at the time it was designated a Local Landmark in 1993. The Nettles family, who had lived in the house for 20 years at the time, recognized its architectural and historic significance and supported the designation. They remained in the home for years afterwards.

The Schriver-Nettles House is one of the most ornate and intact Italianate homes in our



*Philemon Mitchell House
(Nicholson Funeral Home).
Current view from Google*

The Philemon Mitchell House at 1131 Second Avenue is still known to many as the Nicholson Funeral Home although it ceased that function some years ago. This landmark, built between 1856 and 1858, is a massive Italianate house with a central front tower that the Mitchell family added a decade or two after the home was built. The home was purchased in 1961 by George and Alysine Nicholson who converted it into a funeral home. www.rigov.org/PhilemonMitchell-Nicholson

The Prince Hall Masonic Home was a major contributor to Rock Island's African American architectural and social heritage and indeed to the heritage of the state. The history of the Black Masons in Rock Island goes back to 1904 when they built a wood frame home for seniors on four rural acres on the outskirts of town. Located on 37th Avenue near the Rock River, it was surrounded by farm fields. As Rock Island's Henry Burris, Illinois Grand Master from 1898 – 1905, said of the site during the cornerstone ceremony, "White Masons have an elegant and more pretentious home in Chicago, but the inmates are cooped up like prisoners. Colored people (in Rock Island), on the other hand, will have a nice large playground." Mr. Burris was featured in Epitaphs Brought to Life at Chippiannock Cemetery in the 1990s.

In 1927, after adjacent land was purchased, the frame home was replaced with a much grander building. As many as five thousand people, including dignitaries from across the state, attended the dedication of this \$75,000 three-story brick building that was 29 by 151 feet and could house 73 people. This was truly a statewide accomplishment. There are more details and a photo of both the "old" and "new" Masonic home in a RIPS "Postcards from Home" article at www.rockislandpreservation.org/PrinceHallMasonicHome

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Explore the City of Rock Island website www.RIGov.org to learn more about these and other Landmarks. Go to the "Community & Recreation" tab and link to "Historic Preservation"

ROCK ISLAND AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY

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Left, Both the “old” frame home before demolition and the “new” Masonic Home. Postcard courtesy of Postcards from Home. Right, interior view of parlor. Identities of the people are unknown. Postcard courtesy of Shannon Hall

The Prince Hall building was later converted to apartments but Black Masonry is still represented by the King Solomon Lodge No. 20 at 500 11th Street. That group, which meets at 7 pm every first Monday, occupies a frame building that was first occupied in January of 1855 as an Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. A 1908 church history described it at the opening: *“The pulpit furniture was not upholstered, for thepulpit sofa was a nail keg with a board across it, while the pulpit itself was a dry goods box. The pews were planks laid across nail kegs or boxes. The lights were plain tallow candles. Most of the work on the building was done by the members..... By degrees the pews were made, and grained high, and were anything but comfortable.”*

When the Presbyterians built a new building on the site in 1873 – the southwest corner of 14th Street and Third Avenue -- the original church was moved a few blocks to its current 11th Street location, where it first served as the home for the German Presbyterians and, later, the Swedish Free Evangelical Church. More recently, the King Solomon Lodge has been the owner. About 25 years ago, the exterior was unveiled and restored by volunteers. Since that time, new windows have been installed, although the ornate upper ornament and sashes are still present.

As for the “new” 1873 Presbyterian Church – it still stands on Third Avenue where, beginning in 1947, and for about 50 years, it was the home of Wayman AME Church, another building associated with Rock Island’s African American heritage.



Wayman AME Church (formerly United Presbyterian Church). Postcard view courtesy of Postcards from Home

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

This is the time to renew your RIPS membership since our membership year ends in February. We are a 501c3 organization, your dues are tax deductible. Please use the enclosed renewal form. Of course additional donations are always welcomed. Your newsletter label tells you when your membership expires or has expired. Due to the cost of postage, we are unable to keep non-members on our mailing list. We will gladly send you a membership card if you request one. Each month, we email meeting agendas and minutes. We do need your email address for this.

This year we are also offering a new option for our quarterly newsletter – if you prefer not to receive a hard copy, we will email you the direct link for each new newsletter as it is posted on our website. The digital posting should be available on or before you would have received your printed newsletter.

If you have any questions, call Diane Oestreich at 309-788-1845 or email blueskies78900@yahoo.com

FREDRICH AND ANNA JAHNS HOME

The home at 817 22nd Street, the site of our February meeting, was built for Fredrich and Anna Jahns circa 1890. Mr. Jahns operated Jahns & Bertelsen, Stoves, Tinware, & Plumbers downtown at 1612 2nd Avenue. They had four children and one, their daughter, Harriet, would remain living with her parents even after she was married to Charles M. Robinson, who worked as a machinist at a metal factory, probably the one belonging to Mr. Jahns. The Jahns family remained here through the mid-1920s. They even created a separate apartment for Harriet and Charles, and that apartment use remained until several years ago. During the 1930s and early 1940s, William and Katherine Pender lived here. Mr. Pender was an engineer with the CRI & P Railroad, also known as The Rock Island Line.

The house "footprint," as depicted on an 1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance map, shows a large front porch, a small stoop on the south side, and a larger rear porch at the rear of the south side. This is the same as today, although the current front porch may be a bit narrower than the original, and, it has been enclosed. The modern-looking wood shingle siding is at least 50 years old and perhaps much older. The original house likely had medium width clapboard siding, fancy shingles in the gables, and more detailed window trim, very likely in a buttermold design. The enclosed front porch hides a pair of spectacular main entry doors that hold brilliant stained glass in a geometric design.

Renew Your Membership Today

Membership expires 2/20XX

Your Name
Address
Rock Island, IL

The address label on your newsletter shows the *expiration* date of your membership.
Most memberships expired this month.
Please use the enclosed membership renewal form to keep your membership current.



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