



RIPS NEWS

Advocates for Historic Architecture

www.RockIslandPreservation.org

Membership Meetings

November 20, 2007
Tuesday
7:00 PM

Home of Diana and Brian Alm
4601 14th Street, Rock Island
General business meeting

December 18, 2007
Tuesday
7:00 PM

Home of Linda Anderson and Bruce Ohrlund
1718 21st Street, Rock Island, The Ardo Mitchell House
Our annual holiday social will be at the home of Linda Anderson and Bruce Ohrlund. Please come to this festive social meeting. There will be a potluck of sweets and snacks but don't let it keep you from joining us if you are unable to bring a dish to share – there is always plenty!

January 15, 2008
Tuesday
6:00 PM Tour
7:00 PM Meeting and Tour

Hosted by Jack Haberman and Marion McGinnis
Meet at 730 Gaines Street
6:00 Tour of 822 Gaines Street, Davenport, IA
7:00 RIPS Meeting, 730 Gaines Street, Davenport, IA
8:00 Tour of Jipp House and Grocery, 730 Gaines Street, Davenport,
This will be an evening of learning of active preservation projects in Davenport Gold Coast, also known as the Hamburg Historic District.

Comments and suggestions for Society activities are always welcome, now and in the future!
Remember to keep the third Tuesday of each month marked on your calendar for monthly RIPS meetings and activities.

GROWING NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY

Rock Island's Neighborhood Partners organization has created some information about how to organize your neighborhood. At the city website, <http://www.liveri.com/files/Neighborhoods.pdf> there is a map showing some neighborhood names for the area of RI south of 18th Avenue. The areas are very large and most don't reflect neighborhood identities because they are too big. These arbitrary divisions can be changed if a group of people get together and identify the boundaries of their particular neighborhood. Once done, this new neighborhood can become part of Neighborhood Partners, the city organization that provides a communication link between city departments and citizens.

The neighborhoods north of 18th Avenue were all formed around some geographic identity and often for some purpose. Broadway was organized around architectural and historical reasons in the hope of saving a

deteriorating neighborhood. And what a wonderful job they have done! Keystone's name is historical: the area was originally viewed as a keystone between Rock Island and Moline. This architectural term refers to the central supporting element that holds two parts of a building together.

As you become familiar with Rock Island, you become aware of various neighborhoods that seem to have an identity but are not known by any particular name. By giving a name to a neighborhood you "brand" it. Your neighborhood has more value because of that brand name. The City of Rock Island will also benefit from the added value given to neighborhoods that show their identity. It's a great thing for Rock Island residents to do. Contact Jill Doak (doak.jill@rigov.org) for more information on how to do this. You can also get a free copy of the Neighborhood Partners Newsletter by contacting Jill.

ELECTION SEASON

Election season will soon be upon us. And while the Iowa caucuses are getting all the national attention, in February RIPS will be electing officers and appointing committee chairs for our own organization. Elected officer positions are: President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer.

Committee chairs include (but are not limited to): Membership, Newsletter, Webmaster(s), Preservation

Awards, Neighborhood Walking Tour, Winter Educational Project/Event, Landmarks, and Neighborhood Partners Representative.

And we have ongoing and planned projects including Postcards from Home, Recent Past Survey, Neighborhood Identification (with Neighborhood Partners) and adaptation of brochures on inspired spaces (churches), and, potentially, historic landscapes (Hauberg).

Thanks to all who served as officers

and committee chairs this year. But this election season is all about the future. In January we will be forming a nominating committee. If you have interest in serving as an officer, chairing or serving on a committee or have an idea for a new project or committee, please contact Linda Anderson at LWick-erRPh@aol.com.

Remember, as in every election season,
*IT IS TIME
FOR A CHANGE!*

DO YOU LIVE IN A MAIL ORDER OR A KIT HOUSE?

On October 16, 2007 approximately 80 people from across the Quad Cities came together to learn about the mail order house industry from historic architectural researcher Rebecca Hunter. They brought pictures, bills of sale, cancelled checks, questions and memories that helped bring the story of kit homes in the Quad Cities to life. See Rebecca's website at www.kithouse.org.

Kit homes were well designed, practical homes made of top quality materials. Lumber and hardware were packed up with nails, shingles, paint, plumbing fixtures, flooring, blueprints and instructions and shipped off to the new homeowner. These homes were usually not distinctive architectural designs, but copies of the most popular styles of the day. They were standardized to reduce waste in materials, but varied in presentation by moving windows or doors, adding porches, fireplaces or sunrooms. A pre-cut kit home had all the lumber cut to size. In the days before power tools, pre-cut homes could offer a savings of as much as 30% over standard building methods.

There were several big players in the kit home industry: Aladdin, Harris Brothers, Montgomery Ward and the best known name, Sears. But in our area there are a vast number of kit or "ready-cut" homes that came from the Davenport company, Gordon-Van Tine.

The Gordon-Van Tine company got its start as a sawmill 1866. There is evidence that it provided building materials marketed by Sears and Montgomery Ward. In 1912 it is-

sued its first house plan book and introduced its first "ready-cut" home line in 1916. A reproduction of a 1923 catalog shows 117 house designs ranging from a two story, 3 bedroom stucco home complete with sun porches and a maid's room to an "attractive 4-room home - low in cost". Also included were summer cottages and garages. Sometimes, as a less expensive alternative, companies sold the kit plans with stock, rather than pre-cut, lumber.

According to Rebecca Hunter, the best way to positively identify a kit home is by unique numbering that should be visible on some of the structural members of the home. The wooden parts of a kit or pre-cut house were numbered in order to facilitate construction. To find the numbers, look on basement ceiling joists, attic rafters, basement stair risers and treads or exposed wall studs.

Sears numbers are stamped in dark ink. They are about one inch high and usually are a capital letter followed by one or more numerals e.g. A159, L23. The numbers are usually near the end of a board and on the wider surface. After 1933 the numbers may be stamped in red ink and may be two numbers separated by a hyphen or slash e.g. 17-21. Sears homes before 1915 included lumber, but the pieces were not pre-cut so were not numbered.

Aladdin company numbers are handwritten in grease pencil, usually in the middle of a board. They consist of numerals, usually hyphenated in groups of 2 or 3. Some of the numbers are fractions, e.g.

Take a Tour!

If you would like to check out some possible Gordon-Van Tine homes in Rock Island, Rebecca Hunter provided addresses she thinks may be Gordon-Van Tine homes based on their design. None have been authenticated. But it is a starting point for work on a mail order home identification project here in Rock Island.

2021 17th Street
2401 17th Street
1600 18th Avenue
1911 21st Street
1534 25th Street
1540 25th Street
1542 26th Street
1700 29th Street
1121 37th Street
2511 18th Avenue

42-18-11 $\frac{3}{4}$. Part names may be stamped in ink.

Harris Brothers numbers are stenciled in ink, usually in the middle of a board and may be numerals alone, or numerals and letters e.g. RI 54, 76.

Gordon-Van Tine numbers are handwritten in grease pencil in the middle of the board. They consist of numerals, hyphenated in groups of 3 or 5 e.g. 17-21-19. You might find part names stamped in ink in capital letters about one inch high e.g. CEILING JOIST or TOP RAIL.

For more information on mail order or kit homes there are some original Gordon-Van Tine catalogues at the Davenport Public Library. And Dover Publications has reprints of Gordon-Van Tine and Sears Roebuck catalog houses available for purchase at bookstores and on line.

WATCH HILL BROCHURE

Nearly 120 people joined RIPS for a successful guided walking tour along Watch Hill Road in September. An illustrated color booklet was prepared for distribution, but the fifty copies proved an inadequate number. We have reprinted the booklet and it is now available at the downtown library. It is also available from the RIPS website at <http://rockislandpreservation.org/tours/tours.html> Click on "Watch Hill 2007" and a new window will open. You can print or save the booklet from that window. Later we hope to have the homes featured in the booklet as downloadable audio files.

EMAIL MAINTENANCE

If you have previously received (or requested) to be on our email list for agendas and minutes and are not receiving them, please email Diane Oestreich, at blueskes78900@yahoo.com

Because of limits on the number of recipients for "bulk" emails at qconline, those emails are now sent out on yahoo. However some of the addresses may have been lost in that transition. We apologize and will restore you to the list if you let us know.

Typically you will receive two emails a month from us, one with an agenda and the second with the minutes. Both are small text files, so even if you use a dial-up connection, you'll get it quickly.

GATEWAY REDEVELOPMENT GROUP

The Gateway Redevelopment Group (GRG) is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization formed by a group of neighbors with the desire to save the abandoned historic structures in Davenport's Hamburg Historic District. The group was formed to address the issues of abandoned housing in our central city neighborhood. They have tackled the issues with a very hands-on approach!

Their first challenge was the Jipp home and grocery at the corner of 8th and Gaines. They are undergoing a restoration of the property to the original appearance and then will use it as their Architectural Rescue Shop and office.

The second big undertaking is the deteriorated 1870s Greek Revival home at 822 Gaines Street. The exterior will be returned to its 1870 original form by removing a collapsed rear addition and crumbling Victorian facade. The interior will become a room 3 bedroom, 2-1/2 bath, 2200 sq. ft. family home.

Jack Haberman of GRG will host our January meeting and will guide us through the two properties. He will explain the vision of the group and how they are overcoming the many challenges of their ambitious project.

Preview the evening by going to www.GRGDavenport.org