

REGIONAL NEWS

NOUVELLES RÉGIONALES

SASKATCHEWAN

The Department of Culture and Youth has designated Government House, Regina as a Provincial Heritage Property. Designed by Thomas Fuller and constructed between 1889 and 1891, Government House was the official residence of the Lieutenant Governor of the North West Territories from 1891 to 1905 and of Saskatchewan from 1905 to 1945. The building has recently been restored by Saskatchewan Culture and Youth and Saskatchewan Government Services.

ONTARIO

"Saving Rural Ontario: Planning for the Preservation of Ontario's Countryside Landscape". Ron Brown. Occasional Paper No. 6, June 1981. Available free from: Dept. of Urban & Regional Planning, Ryerson P.I., 50 Gould Street, Toronto M5R 1E8.

Hortulus Books has published a new catalogue of new and used books on architecture, horticulture, etc. Write 101 Scollard Street, Toronto M5R 1G4 (416)960-1775.

ALBERTA

walking tour is now available (free) for the city of Lethbridge. Contact: Susan Algie, Alberta Culture, Historic Sites Service, 8820-112 Street, Edmonton T6G 2P8 (403)427-2022.

Post-Graduate education in conservation of the built environment is a 2-volume, 588 page Master's degree dissertation, which examines the state of architectural conservation education today. Vol. 1 provides a survey, analysis, and comparison of conservation education programmes around the world. Covering some 20 nations, the primary emphasis is on Great Britain, the U.S. and Western Europe. Vol. 11 is a detailed case study of the programme in architectural conservation at the Edinburgh College of Art/Heriot-Watt Univ. in Edinburgh, Scotland. Volumes may be ordered individually. For copies of the dissertation's abstract, contents, and ordering info write: Richard Kilstrom, #317, 10160-114 St. Edmonton, T5K 2L2

MANITOBA

The Historic Resources Branch, Dept. of Cultural Affairs and Historical Research, Province of Manitoba, is publishing an architectural walking tour of the City of Brandon. This will be followed in 1982 by a publication on the histories of selected Brandon buildings. Contact: The Brandon Survey, H.R.B., Dept. of Cultural Affairs & Historical Research, 200 Vaughn St., Winnipeg R3C 1T5 (204)944-4390.

Dr. W. P. Thomas, Faculty of Architecture, Univ. of Manitoba, is preparing for publication in 1982, "A Guide to Manitoba Architecture". This will be a companion volume to his "Winnipeg Architecture: 100 years".

Dr. Marilyn Baker of the School of Art, Univ. of Manitoba is completing a history of the Manitoba Legislative Building with emphasis on its art and the politics of its construction. Anyone with info is asked to write to Dr. M. Baker, Rm. 343, University College, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg.

Le Centre d'étude Franco-Canadiens de l'Ouest (CEFCO) a complété un inventaire photographique intitulé "l'Heritage Architecturale du Manitoba Français". Ce projet a pu être réalisé grâce à un octroi sous le program "Explorations" du Conseil des Arts au Canada. Vous pouvez vous renseigner davantage un communicant avec Johanne Raimbault, directrice du projet, au CEFCO, 200 avenue de la Cathédral, St. Boniface, Manitoba R2H 0H7.

The City of Winnipeg Historical Buildings Committee is offering several publications for sale. "Monuments to Finance: 3 Banks", David Spector, \$7.50; "1979: The Year Past", \$3.50; "1980: The Year Past", at publishers; Historical Buildings Bylaw 1474/77, free. Library, City of Winnipeg, Dept. of Environmental Planning, 2nd Fl., 100 Main St., Winnipeg R3C 1A5.

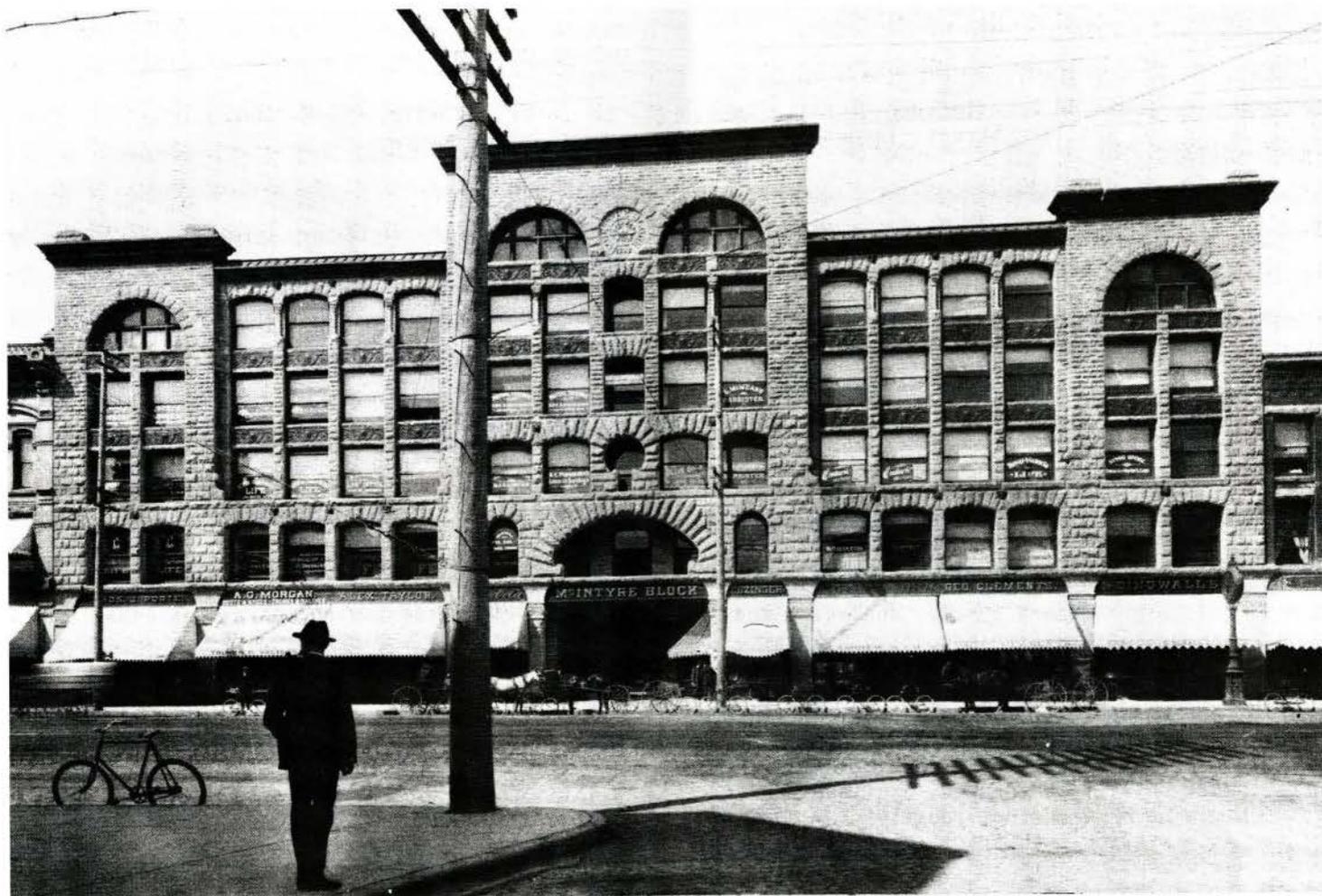
Neil Einarson, who has completed a M. Phil, Univ. of Essex, on the life and work of architect William Thomas (1799-1860) of Birmingham, Leamington Spa, and Toronto is continuing research on Thomas for publication. Any info. is welcome. Neil Einarson, #53-40 Osborne St., Winnipeg R3L 1X9.

However, this does not excuse things like the McIntyre Block, or the Benson and Bawlf Blocks (1882) where the side bearing wall was that of a neighbouring structure! It is quite possible that Barber, then, the founder of Winnipeg's prestigious architectural firm of the 'eighties was little more than a master builder who used component catalogues to ornament his buildings.

On the other hand, however, quite a number of his buildings possess an originality not present in the highly-ornamented commercial edifices with which he ornamented Winnipeg's streets. Surely, his City Hall and Manitoba College (1881, Plate 7) were buildings one was not apt to find repeated in other places. His plans for the largely unexecuted St. John's College (1883, Plate 8) indicate that he was at least the equal of English architects of the period, and Wright's unbuilt Italianate office block (Plate 9) showed that Barber could have made a place for himself in Toronto. In short, though Barber designs ranged between copies of things to spectacular

originals, this architect gave Winnipeg its first substantial buildings that would have found acceptance and approval in the centres that the city sought to emulate. Until the arrival of the second real estate boom of the early twentieth century, the sheer numbers of Barber's designs and their presence throughout Winnipeg's commercial and residential districts gave the "Gateway City" its characteristic look.

Like his early life, there is little known of the social or personal aspects of his existence. Though he was of considerable monetary worth in terms of his practice and because of land speculation, this did not earn his family a place in the structured Winnipeg society that emerged after the Boom of 1881-82. Indeed, the term "black sheep" is probably most appropriate when one considers the contempt that Barber met with from the "establishment" of the time. This disfavour probably stemmed from the fact that Barber preferred to "cut corners" in official dealings as well as being rowdy to the extent that



it saw him in jail a number of times. Also, being removed from such a notable project as the City Hall did not enhance his reputation among his already jealous and outraged fellow architects.

After leaving Winnipeg, Barber was no longer an architect. A number of patents helped him to set up a Montreal fire-proof safe Company in 1901. Incredibly, Winnipeg's architect of the 'eighties wound up in jail, convicted of serious offences. It would seem that Barber and his wife, Sarah Allison, a Winnipeg hairdresser and clairvoyant, had made a profitable side-line of an old extortion racket known as the "Badger Game". Unfortunately, their Westmount home turned out to be the end-point of that business, the semi-naked victim forsaking Mrs. Barber's sexual allures for the safety of the Montreal Police Station. The ailing Barber received seven years and his wife three years for extortion with violence.

It is fairly certain that Barber emerged from the penitentiary in 1910. After this, however, he disappeared for good. His wife and younger daughters moved to Athabasca Landing, Alberta where they lived with his oldest son, Captain Charles Dufferin Allison Barber (1879-1918). Prior to his death, they became the belles of Athabasca society - a well-heeled Montreal widow and her daughters. Clearly, nothing was known of the family's past in an area where they drew status from "Duff's" considerable genuine local importance as a riverboat captain and entrepreneur.

By 1916, architect Charles Barber had died - the place and date being still unknown. The death of "Duff" ended the Barber family's Athabasca sojourn. From there, they went to Calgary and finally Vancouver to live near the second son, Horace Greeley Barber (1881-1955), an eminent West Coast engineer. Mrs. Barber, the clairvoyant and femme fatale died there about 1929 after operating a boarding house.

Ironically, Barber and Barber survived the death of its founder as a Superior, Wisconsin based architectural firm. The Company was in existence under the guidance of Earle's son, Gordon until at least 1920 and possibly later. The firm was quite respectable, having executed many buildings, including the Superior Federal Building and the Hammond Avenue Presbyterian Church at that place.

Though Charles Arnold Barber ended his career on a miserable note, the products of that career rank him as one of the founders of Winnipeg's architectural community. For all purposes, the city's appearance became much of his doing - and

his City Hall was Winnipeg's well known trademark until its unfortunate demolition in the 1960s. Winnipeg also became a major centre because of the business transacted within the walls of these structures. Sadly, only a handful of Barber's designs (8) remain to tantalize the viewer with an idea of Winnipeg at a by-gone time. Because of a psychological stigma that attached itself to "Black Sheep" Barber, little has been known until lately about his life and works aside from the City Hall. Even the firm name has been corrupted by well-meaning historians to become Barber, Bones and Barber, clearly very sad when such a wealth of primary information exists on the firm. It is the intention of the author to eventually document fully the life and times of C.A. Barber in order to better understand the workings of a boom-town architect who built a city's first substantial structures.

The author is presently continuing research on the firm of Barber and Barber.

R.R. Rostecki
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