

RAMSEY COUNTY

History

A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society

*From Streetcars
to Buses to Soccer*
**Creative Destruction
in the Midway**

John W. Diers
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Winter 2016

Volume 50, Number 4

Build Up, Build Down, or Relocate

The West Publishing Company Buildings and Ramsey County's Adult Detention Center

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This is how the south side of Third Street (now Kellogg Boulevard) west of the Wabasha Bridge looked between 1908 and 1910. Prominently visible are the buildings of the Booth Company (left foreground) and West Publishing Company. By then West had been publishing law books for over thirty years and had a national clientele. Soon these buildings and the former Ramsey County Adult Detention Center (not built until 1979; located just to the east of the Booth Company) will all be gone from the bluff along the Mississippi River in St. Paul. Charles P. Gibson photo. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

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RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 50, Number 4

Winter 2016

THE MISSION STATEMENT OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON JANUARY 25, 2016:

Preserving our past, informing our present, inspiring our future

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A Message from the Editorial Board

Change is a constant in history. For decades, the Mississippi River bluffs in downtown St. Paul supported the massive infrastructure of West Publishing Company as it edited, assembled, and shipped law books throughout the country. And the bluffs later housed prisoners waiting for trial in a modern jail. Paul Nelson tells both of these stories, as well as how changing needs pushed those entities to new locations. Similarly, John Diers recounts the history of the Twin City Rapid Transit System shops and garages on Snelling and University, which once served as a base for 800 workers. Happily, that site will have another chapter in its history when the new Major League Soccer stadium is built.

William Beyer shares the professional evolution of Herbert Sullwold, the architect who designed the compelling chapel at the University of St. Catherine, along with its state-of-the-art 1926 science building, before he moved to California to finish his career.

Finally, on a more sober note of change, it is unsettling to realize that some early prominent St. Paul settlers used funds from their slaveholding families to help develop the city. Christopher Lehman reminds us that, although slavery was illegal in Minnesota, in practice, St. Paul hotels welcomed southern tourists traveling with their slaves until the Civil War. We can be grateful that today such events are only a distant memory.

Anne Cowie Chair, Editorial Board

The Architect of Our Lady of Victory Chapel

The Sullwold Saga

William Beyer, FAIA

My formal education as an architect included travel to Europe, where I not only discovered the usual treasures of historic architecture, but first understood and appreciated the study of history. My third-year studies in 1971 included examining more than a few churches, including the high-gothic cathedrals of Notre Dame, Beauvais, Amiens and Chartres, as well as the Duomo in Florence, St. Mark's in Venice and a touch of the modern with Gaudi's Sagrada Familia in Barcelona and Le Corbusier's Chapel at Ronchamp.

As a practicing architect, I became involved with Minnesota's historic buildings, serving as architect for two projects at the University of Minnesota—the historic rehabilitations of Walter Library and Jones Hall. Both projects took me into the lives of their original architects, Clarence H. Johnston for Walter and Charles Aldrich for Jones. Learning about Johnston was easy due to the comprehensive biography written by Paul Clifford Larson. Aldrich was much more elusive; his trail went cold after he left for Seattle around 1910.

Lately, I've been involved with St. Catherine University, investigating their original 1927 science building, Mendel Hall, which was designed by the same architect who had designed their historic Our Lady of Victory Chapel in 1924. Curiously, neither I nor any of my colleagues who specialize in Minnesota's historic architecture had ever heard of that architect, Herbert A. Sullwold. I was hooked, and did some digging.

The Sullwolds in the 1880s

In 1882, the Sullwold clan numbered just three listings in the *St. Paul City Directory*; William and Herman were first-generation-German farmers and Herman's son, John L. Sullwold, was a clerk with Wilson & Rogers Company, a purveyor of hot air furnaces located at 316–318 Robert Street. At the time, this firm also employed Lucius P. Ordway, a young man from Rhode Island who had recently

come to St. Paul. Ordway would later become the financial backer of the fledgling Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company. All three Sullwolds lived near the corner of Hall Avenue and Winifred Street on the West Side.

A year later, John, who remained a salesman for Wilson & Rogers, had moved a mile east to 470 Greenwood Avenue, presumably because he had welcomed his first child, Herbert Arthur, to the family. By 1889, John was in business for himself as president of the Western Supply Company, jobbers of plumbing and heating supplies. He was now living across the river at more upscale 666 Portland Avenue.¹

John's new business prospered as St. Paul experienced a building boom, and in 1900 he moved his family to an elegant new white clapboard house at 807 Holly Avenue.² Herbert first appears in the *St. Paul City Directory* as a student in 1906, boarding at home. The 1910 U.S. Census also lists John's wife, Clementine, sons George and Harold and daughter, Ada, plus a servant, Sophie Skjod, living there.

John was a Scottish Rite Mason, a Shriner, an Elk, a member of the Junior Pioneers of St. Paul, vice president of the St. Paul Automobile Association, and a member of the White Bear Yacht Club; a regular whirlwind of civic engagement. He also belonged to an organization called the United Commercial Travelers of America, founded in 1888 by eight

traveling salesmen, and which survives today.³ A copy of Western Supply Company correspondence from 1906 shows that they sold products as far west as Kalispell, Montana, suggesting that John was often on the road.⁴

The *City Directory* for 1923 has John living in Los Angeles; local records show that he had sold the family home at 807 Holly and in 1921 had spun-off part of his Western Supply Company as the Cochran-Sargeant Co.⁵ He does not appear in the *Los Angeles City Directory* for 1923, but could have been bunking with son George, who had moved his own young family to California sometime after 1920. In 1924, John was back in St. Paul, living with Herbert's family at 1773 Summit and maintaining an office with his architect-son at 107 East Third Street.⁶

Herbert's Early Career

Herbert A. Sullwold shows up as a freshman studying Mechanical Engineering at the University of Minnesota in the 1905 *Gopher* yearbook. Herbert's younger brother, Harold, was enrolled in the same program in 1907. Designing plumbing and heating systems apparently failed to light Herbert's fires, so he went east to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to study architecture, graduating in 1907 with a Bachelor of Science degree.⁷

Herbert was married in Boston to Bertha Hale on November 16, 1908; daughter Gretchen was born there in 1909.⁸ At the time of his marriage, he was working for the federal government's Supervising Architect in Washington, D.C.—James Knox Taylor—who was an M.I.T. grad himself and a former St. Paul partner of Cass Gilbert.⁹ A college-educated architect was somewhat of a rarity for that era; most Minnesota architects had learned their craft by apprenticing as draftsmen with local firms.

AT THE GARGOYLE CLUB DINNER



In January 1922, the Saint Paul Daily News published this caricature of members of the Gargoyle Club who attended a dinner at the St. Paul Athletic Club. Herbert Sullwold is prominently positioned in the center. Newspaper clipping from the Gargoyle Club records at the Northwest Architectural Archives at the University of Minnesota.

Herbert reappeared in the *St. Paul City Directory* in 1910 working as a draftsman for Reed & Stem Architects and living at 1052 Ashland, a couple of blocks west of his boyhood home. A year later, he remained at Reed & Stem, but was living at 1773 Summit Avenue, in a new \$7,000 house he had designed for himself and his family.¹⁰ The property owner on the building permit was his father John, not surprising considering that a draftsman's wage was then around \$20 a week.¹¹ John was not the first parent to give his architect-son a plum commission to boost his career. Apparently the plumbing business in St. Paul was doing well for both John Sullwold and Lucius Ordway.

In 1912, H. A. Sullwold had his own spot in the *City Directory* as an architect with offices at 1011 Commerce Building.¹² The

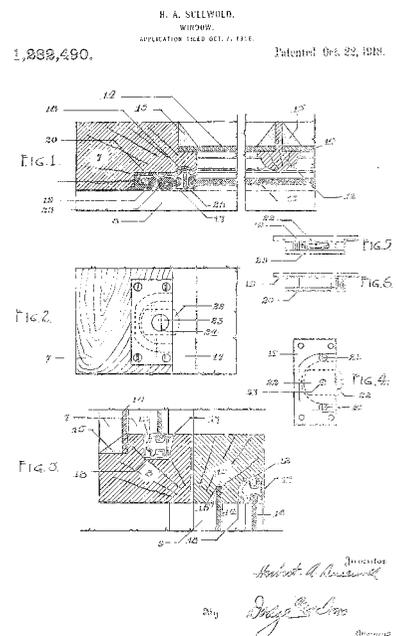
Improvement Bulletin for May 11, 1913 noted that he was embarking with "several good commissions," and that he had gained experience working for architects in New York and Boston, and for E.L. Masqueray, Reed & Stem and Thomas G. Holyoke, in St. Paul.¹³ Masqueray was the architect for the Cathedral of St. Paul, which was under construction from 1906 until after 1917, and the Basilica of St. Mary in Minneapolis (construction began in 1914).¹⁴

Sullwold distinguished himself early on by winning a national competition for the design of two semi-detached cottages, sponsored by *The Brickbuilder* magazine in 1913. It came with a \$500 first prize, half-a-year's salary for a draftsman.¹⁵ His other early commissions are not thoroughly documented, but they seem to

consist of a few single-family homes and some modest commercial buildings.

Herbert became fully engaged in the fellowship of the local architectural profession, helping found St. Paul's Gargoyle Club on January 13, 1913 along with Clarence H. Johnston and E. L. Masqueray.¹⁶ He served as its director of finance, apparently possessing some actual knowledge of finance, and guided the club's purchase and management of an 1890-vintage Cass Gilbert and James Knox Taylor-designed church which served as the Gargoyles' clubhouse and which still stands as the Ramsey Professional Building (and the former German Presbyterian Bethlehem Church at 311 Ramsey Street, just west of I-35W). The Gargoyle Club was the main professional organization for architects in St. Paul until the establishment of the local AIA chapter in 1921. According to *The Western Architect*:

The purpose of the club is to insure co-operation of the architects in civic improvements and to further civic movements along architectural lines. The club will also aid draftsmen in their work and help them to establish themselves as architects.



These drawings accompanied patent number 1,282,490 that Herbert Sullwold received in 1918 for an insulated storm window system that he invented and called the "Sull-Sash."

In letters to *Popular Mechanics* magazine in 1913, Herbert showed an inventive, scientific side, proposing new solutions for linen closet shelf-drawers (eat your heart out, IKEA) and improvised pen nib holders.¹⁷ In 1918, he was awarded U.S. Patent No. 1,282,490 for the design of an insulated storm window system, which he dubbed the “Sull-Sash.” He was awarded a Canadian patent for the window in 1921 and one for fiber-faced concrete in 1924. His brother Harold received U.S. Patent No. 1,486,614 for a window fastener in 1921.

The Club had endured a membership loss during World War I (Sullwold was too old for the first draft), and from the initiation of the St. Paul Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

The Club’s financial burdens led the Gargoyles to sell the church’s bell for \$250 in 1920, and 24 of its pews in 1921. Ultimately it offered to sublet the Clubhouse space for a rent of \$95/month, helping to pay off the bonds and offset the cost of coal for heating which was listed as \$286.71 for 1921–22. Club dues were reduced from \$10 to \$8/year in 1922; several members cited the new AIA dues as the reason for dropping their Gargoyle memberships. Gargoyle Club documents suggest that Sullwold attempted to resign as its finance director in 1920, but he continued serving in that role until 1928, when the Club chose his close friend, Beaver Wade Day, to replace him.¹⁸

Work for the College of St. Catherine

Sullwold continued his modest architectural practice until his selection as architect for a new chapel at the College of St. Catherine (today known as the University of St. Catherine) around 1922 or 1923. A copy of a letter from the College Dean (presumably Sister Antonia McHugh) to noted Boston architect Ralph Adams Cram dated February 26, 1922 stated: “We have some tentative plans for a chapel by a local architect in whom we have a great deal of confidence, but there are some members of the Community Council who think it would be well to have the plans checked by a consulting architect.” There is no evidence in the University Archives



Herbert Sullwold's passport application from January 1921, which included his photo.

that Cram responded to this letter or that he reviewed the plans.¹⁹

According to *More Than a Dream: Eighty-five Years at the College of St. Catherine*, Sister Antonia had visited Europe in 1922 and sent Sullwold to

France to examine the Romanesque Cathedral of St. Trophime at Arles as her model for the new chapel. The authors admitted they could find no specific evidence that Sister Antonia had actually visited Arles or that Sullwold had made a subsequent trip.²⁰

A passport application for Herbert Arthur Sullwold dated January 25, 1921 suggests an alternate story. He planned to sail aboard the S.S. *Laplant* on February 22nd from New York to the British Isles, with France, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Algiers, and Gibraltar also on the agenda. His stated purpose on the six-month trip was, “travel, education and the study of architecture.” His “Grand Tour” had been delayed by marriage, three children, starting his own architectural practice, World War I, and the Great Flu Pandemic in 1918–1919. After returning from Europe, he also incorporated the Sull Sash Window Company, Inc. with his brother Harold as its president on September 23, 1921.²¹

Herbert almost certainly regaled his Gargoyle Club colleagues with stories, sketches, and pictures of his European travels. Sister Antonia might have caught wind of his recent trip abroad and attended a lecture at the Club, or had simply been impressed by Sullwold’s East-coast educational pedigree. However it transpired, by late 1922 the architect had prepared initial sketches for the Chapel and was under contract in February 1923 to complete the design.²²

Two building permits were issued by the City of St. Paul in 1923; the structure and exterior shell was valued at \$160,467 and the tile and other interior finishes at \$150,000.²³ The overall cost was about \$400,000 according to College records. Our Lady of Victory Chapel opened to great acclaim in September 1924.

The traditional basilican plan and west façade stone carvings were indeed mimics of St. Trophime in Arles, but the peculiar exterior stonework and even more unusual interior finishes are what make the church an architectural gem. In his *AIA Guide to the Twin Cities*, Larry Millett calls the Chapel “A stunning church, full of novel and elegant touches.”²⁴

The *Catholic Bulletin* for October 4, 1924 ran a fourteen-page spread describing every aspect of the new church, including

Our Lady of Victory Chapel

Before my recent projects at St. Catherine's, I'd had no occasion to visit either Mendel Hall or the OLV Chapel, but the more I looked, the more interested I became. The Chapel exterior appears modest and traditional, but on closer inspection the brick-bordered ashlar blocks of shot-cut travertine are almost shocking in their inventiveness. Architectural historian Larry Millet calls the effect a kind of "visual jazz." The polychrome ceramic tile side entrance at the campanile/bell tower and the tile belt course around the building hint at interior finishes. The elaborate, hand-crafted door hinges and other hardware elements were designed by architect Sullwold and are exuberant in their detail.

Inside those doors, interior walls, columns and arches are clad in warm, earth-hued ceramic tiles with flashes of blue and green manufactured by the Batchelder Wilson Company of Los Angeles. Illustrated and decorative tiles abound, with the Stations of the Cross tiles designed by two of the Sisters in the College's Art Department. The perforated-tile organ screen above the choir loft could earn a "stunning" classification all by itself.

Ernest Batchelder has been described as "the greatest American tile craftsman of his era," and this Chapel was reportedly his largest commission. The Depression would also kill his business less than ten years later. The intense level of coordination required for such



A close up of the exterior stonework of Our Lady of Victory Chapel shows how Sullwold's design incorporated an unusual pattern of ashlar blocks and polychrome ceramic tile. His plans also featured elaborate, hand-crafted door hinges. Photo courtesy of William Beyer.



Warm, earth-hued ceramic tiles characterize the clean lines of the interior of the Chapel. Photo courtesy of William Beyer.

an intricate tile installation strongly suggests that Sullwold spent a lot of time with the artist at his Los Angeles studio and factory.

The floor tiles, bordered with Mantorville stone, are deeper red and brown earth tones manufactured by

Nemadji Tileworks of Moose Lake, Minn., which had only opened for business the year Chapel construction began. The ceilings are tiled with self-supporting arches of Akoustalith, an acoustic, terra cotta tile manufactured by the Gustavino Company of New York and used in some of the most significant public buildings of that era, including the Boston Public Library, New York City's Grand Central Station, and the Minnesota State Capitol.

Ninety years later, Our Lady of Victory Chapel continues to serve St. Kate's and the broader community, as described in *SCAN* magazine:

She opens her arms to those who wish to celebrate in ways both secular and religious—as well as to those who need to grieve, to weep and to heal ... a touchstone for graduates who have come before and the graduates who are yet to come. . . .

The word "unique" is much overused, but if there is another church interior, or exterior, anything like this one, I haven't seen or heard of it. The Our Lady of Victory Chapel is the significant artistic work of a mature and confident architect, one unafraid to experiment with beautiful modern materials in a traditional context while reaching for "soul-deep fun."

Sources: Herbert A. Sullwold, "An Architectural Description of 'Our Lady of Victory Chapel,'" *Catholic Bulletin*, October 4, 1924; J. Spayde, "The Spirit of Our Lady," *SCAN: The Magazine of St. Catherine University*, October 2009.

“An Architectural Description,” written by Sullwold. He noted that, “. . . if the chapel must have a style, it would be Modern-Byzantine-Romanesque.” He does not mention St. Trophime as a specific inspiration, and the primacy of “modern” gives a hint of his design sentiments. H.A. Sullwold’s architectural star appeared to be on-the-rise.²⁵

The Chapel and the Science Building

A person could not find two buildings more different in appearance and purpose than the Our Lady of Victory Chapel and the science building, Mendel Hall, and the history of the five years that saw the creation of both is more than partly cloudy.

On March 24, 1922, John H. Wheeler, the architect for the College’s first two buildings, Derham Hall and College (Whitby) Hall, sent preliminary plans to Sister Antonia for a new science hall. Perhaps it was the excitement of his Chapel plans that advanced Sullwold as architect for the Science Building. Or perhaps it was that Wheeler’s correspondence was often addressed to Sister Antonio, many years after he should have known better.²⁶

The original architectural and structural engineering drawings for the science building (Sullwold’s firm prepared both) describe a fairly regular, five-story concrete-framed structure, clad in brick and limestone, featuring unusually large eight-foot tall by sixteen-foot wide windows occupying over 40% of the north and south facades. The relatively tall floor-to-floor height of 14 feet suggested what we would now call an industrial loft.²⁷

Sister Antonius Kennelly joined the College as an assistant in 1924, becoming one of the first chemistry teachers in Mendel when it opened in 1927 and eventually president of the College in 1943. She left a short handwritten history of Mendel which included some items worth noting:

Ground was broken on March 19, 1927. The building was scheduled to be ready by the opening of the fall term! Classes actually did move in in September, but laboratories were not entirely finished until November. This was accomplished in spite of the fact that, following a disagreement between the archi-

tect and the construction people, the architect withdrew from the project. . . . The total cost of the building was \$364,000²⁸

The construction dispute had already turned a bit unfriendly before the architect withdrew on May 17, 1927. In an unsigned copy of a letter dated May 4, 1927 to the Kewaunee Manufacturing Company (the subcontractor for laboratory benches), the head of the Department of Chemistry (presumably Dr. Spencer Stoltz) protested the services being provided by the company’s representative, Mr. Langley, and noted that locations for plumbing and electrical hookups were urgently needed because the first floor of the building was being poured and they anticipated pouring one floor every ten days. He went on to note that, “I am also instructed to say that the Sisters feel that Mr. Langley is not working for the best interests of the College of St. Catherine, but rather favors the Architect [*sic*] and Engineer, whose interests it has developed are inimical to the College of St. Catherine.”²⁹

It is possible that the aggressive schedule for construction of a five-story, 77,000-square-foot, concrete-framed building with high-tech plumbing, electrical,

and ventilating systems in a scant 24 weeks took its toll on all participants. St. Kate’s lore has it that the building was put up in a great hurry to block the City of Saint Paul’s proposed extension of Prior Avenue; the building’s not-quite-central tower is directly on axis for the location of this roadway.

Or, perhaps the dispute was due to the removal of some of the interesting exterior architectural details shown on Sullwold’s 1926 drawings, such as the copper-clad, steel-sash windows, shot-sawn and bronze-pinned Kettle River Stone parapets, or the Dutch-bond patterned brick spandrels. The selected contractor, Walter Butler Company, had been advertising in-house architectural and engineering services at least since 1911 and possibly tried to strip too much out of the design.³⁰

Another possible explanation is that Sullwold was growing weary of not being paid in a timely way for his services. A week after his May 17, 1927 letter of resignation to Sister Antonia, he reconsidered, sending another letter reporting on a meeting with contractor Robert Butler where he learned that Sister Antonia was, “waiting for money from the East, which held up your payments to me, but which



An aerial photo of the campus of the College of St. Catherine taken in late 1927. Derham Hall sits at the center of the campus facing Cleveland Avenue to the west. Nearby to the south is Our Lady of Victory Chapel, which Sullwold designed. To the north of Derham Hall is first College (now Whitby) Hall and then Caecilian Hall. At the top right is Mendel Hall, the new science building, which Sullwold also designed. Mendel Hall faces the college’s interior Quad with the rear of the building abutting Randolph Avenue. Prior Avenue is the diagonal street running from the top left that ends at Randolph.

I knew nothing about, or the unfortunate circumstances surrounding the job would not have come up.”³¹

There is some indication that he had waited for payment of his invoices for the Chapel project as well, with Sister Antonia somewhat shrewdly sending partial payment of \$500 (toward a \$2,000 balance owed) to his home address just before Christmas 1925 with a note, “Sorry I am unable to make it larger at this time . . .” and expressing hope this would tide him over.³²

After withdrawing from Mendel, Sullwold was forced to initiate a formal arbitration process to get paid for his design work to that point, and appointed his friend and fellow-Gargoyler, Beaver Wade Day to represent him on the three-person panel. The arbitrators awarded him the full amount requested, about \$1,600, with the exact total to be resolved when final construction costs had been fully calculated. In December 1927, attorneys for the College determined that Sullwold had been overpaid in the amount of \$12.45 and demanded a refund.³³

Despite the construction disagreements, Mendel was successfully completed in November 1927. *The Alumnae News* for June 1928 reported that, “Spacious and well-lighted, it seems the answer to a scientist’s prayer.”

Sullwold’s Years in Los Angeles

The two projects at the College of St. Catherine appear to be the largest and most complex that Sullwold ever designed, easily dwarfing his early commissions. Based on those experiences, he might have finally realized that he’d never earn enough as an architect to come close to the wealth his father had amassed selling plumbing supplies. Low pay was old news in the profession, as noted by the editors of *American Architect and Building News* magazine, September 23, 1876:

We are often asked what advice we should give to a young man or lad who would like to become an architect. Our first impulse is commonly to say, ‘Don’t do it;’ . . . Architecture, then, is not to be considered a lucrative profession. . . . Those who practice

it must do so for the satisfaction they can find in doing it well, and be content with a moderate compensation in money. . . . For one architect who acquires competence, half a dozen builders make fortunes.



Sullwold’s architectural rendering of Mendel Hall

Maybe the architect just hated the St. Paul winters. His youngest brother George had moved his own family to Los Angeles around 1920, and his father John had spent a year there as well.³⁴ Whatever the case, as Mendel Hall was being occupied, Herbert A. Sullwold was in the process of disappearing from St. Paul, leaving his elegant home at 1773 Summit Avenue and transplanting his life, his extended family, and his architectural practice to Los Angeles.

In 1928, Herbert and family were absent from the *St. Paul City Directory*. Brother Harold and his wife, Emma, were living at 1486 Goodrich Avenue with Harold still president of the Sull-Sash Window Company. In the 1929 *Directory*, it was noted that Harold and Emma had also left for Los Angeles.

In a letter to his fellow “Gargoylers” dated December 1, 1928, Herbert related that he had applied for California licensure but had not yet heard whether he was an architect or just an ordinary builder. He reported that construction of his first house out there was almost complete, and, “Am having lots of fun doing the thing.”³⁵

His letter included a plug for his “Sull-Sash” window system, and he was reusing letterhead from his St. Paul architectural office with the 107 East Third Street address crossed out, replaced by 5761 Country Club Drive, Los Angeles. He casually mentioned that he planned to meet a Mr. Fred Anderson [*sic*] of Bayport, Minn. on the following Monday to show him around. A certain Mr. Fred

Andersen of Bayport had become president of his family’s lumber and nascent window manufacturing operation in 1913 (Andersen Frames) and would serve in that role until 1960.³⁶

In a letter to the Club in January of 1930, Herbert noted that his office had moved to his home at 519 Ocampo Drive, Pacific Palisades. He said a couple of local projects had been “passed up,” and that building activity was slow, but promising. He was considering making a proposal for the design of the new City Hall, but thought he’d still be considered a “local product” and have no chance at the commission. He was apparently still subscribing to the *St. Paul Daily News*, remarking on changes to his old Third Street office neighborhood.³⁷ In the 1930 Census, his brother Harold was no longer listed as president of the Sull-Sash Window Company but was now the secretary of the family estate.

In May 1932 he wrote to the Gargoylers again, expressing appreciation to the Club for being made an honorary member. He had opened an office at 321 Willshire Blvd in downtown Santa Monica, and noted that the void left in him by the death of his dear friend, architect and Gargoyle Club colleague, Beaver Wade Day of Toltz King and Day, could never be filled (Day had died in 1931 at age 47).³⁸

He felt privileged to be living in “this age of transition” and was doing his best to determine any difference between modern architecture and “plain geometrical hokum,” unsure if “the cocoon will deliver a butterfly and not some noxious moth.” He hoped his friends could scrape together the gas money to come out to the 1934 Olympics the summer.³⁹ In the 1933 *Los Angeles City Directory*, his business was also serving other architects and builders at the Willshire address, listed as a “Blueprinter.”

Based on California voter registration records, Herbert was a staunch Republican. In 1934, he was still on Ocampo Drive with wife, Bertha, also a Republican, son John, a Democrat, and daughter Gretchen, a Socialist.⁴⁰ The Great Depression was in full swing, and that was the year renowned author and Socialist-turned-Democrat Upton Sinclair launched his *End Poverty in California* crusade for the governorship,

which turned into the most acrimonious political campaign in U.S. history. Dinner-table conversations at the Sullwold home must have been especially lively.

In another letter to his friends in St. Paul in December of 1935, he wrote that building in the Los Angeles area was about 40% of normal, but that good draftsmen were in great demand because so many had left the profession to find other work. He wished the fellows a Happy and Prosperous New Year, with “all the dread of where the next job is coming from removed.”⁴¹

Herbert was listed as a widower in the 1940 Census, living at 823 Bundy Drive, Pacific Palisades, with son Richard and niece Margaret. That Census included questions about work history for 1939; Herbert and son Richard indicated they had worked zero days and had zero income for the year, but both noted other sources of income. Perhaps he had sold a window patent or had already received some of his father’s very likely sizable fortune. Margaret reported that she

worked as a secretary for 52 weeks that year, earning an income of \$925.

Postscript

About 30 years ago, I heard author Kurt Vonnegut on Minnesota Public Radio telling the poignant story of his architect-father who had been devastated by the lack of work during the Great Depression and World War II. Vonnegut was reading from an essay he had written for *Architectural Digest* and his words of lament stuck with me:

In prosperous times, those would have been his best years, when his evident gifts, reputation and maturity might have caused some imaginative client to feel that Father was entitled to reach, even in Indianapolis, for something like greatness, or, if you will, soul-deep fun. . . . All architects I have known, in good times or bad, have felt like that—waiting forever for a generous, loving client who will let them become the elated artists they were born to be.⁴²

In his book, *Minnesota Architects, A Biographical Dictionary*, Alan Lathrop reports that Herbert A. Sullwold died

on November 25, 1969. From 1948 on, he had resided at 1501 Via Montemar, Palos Verdes Estates, one of the toniest addresses in the region, with his second wife, Alma Day Sullwold, who was in all likelihood the widow of his friend Beaver Wade Day.⁴³ Every house in that city was required to be designed by an architect; Sullwold’s house, dramatically sited high on a bluff overlooking the Pacific, had been designed and built in 1925 by someone else.

H. A. Sullwold weathered the Great Depression financially and lived to be 86, but left few professional traces in Los Angeles. Sadly, the great promise he had shown as architect and “elated artist” for his two projects at the College of St. Catherine was never realized.

William Beyer, FAIA, is an architect with the Opus AE Group, LLC, now in his fifth decade of architectural practice. He is a Past-President of AIA Minnesota, a long-time contributor to Architecture Minnesota magazine, and a lover of history.

Endnotes

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A recent aerial photo shows the site at the intersection of Snelling and University avenues where a proposed soccer stadium will be built for the use of the professional United Football Club. Construction of the stadium is expected to begin in 2016. For more on the history of this site and its potential for the development of that area, see John Diers's article on page 13. Photo courtesy of the City of Saint Paul.