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LANDMARK REPORT

OF BOWLING GREEN & WARREN COUNTY

A LOOK AT THE UNITED STATES FEDERAL BUILDING

By Terry Langford



(Photo: Courtesy Kentucky Library, WKU)

▼
A 1930's VIEW OF THE FEDERAL BUILDING AS BOWLING GREEN'S POST OFFICE.

There is little to indicate today what the rhythm of daily life was within the walls of Bowling Green's Federal Building (241 E. Main St.) The quiet offices and closed doors do not provide glimpses of its bustling past or of the community's growth which the Federal Building reflected.

The building was opened in 1913 and vacated by the United States Postal Service in 1962. Ray Cossey, who worked for the postal service from 1946 until 1979 recalls various uses of the building during those years.

The only evidence which remains of the postal service occupation is Edward Lanning's mural of Daniel Boone above the Center Street interior entrance and the loading dock at the rear of the building. Additional murals including one which depicted a river/flatboat scene were displayed on other walls, according to Cossey. The location of these murals is unknown. The post office lobby could be entered from either Center or Main Streets. The Center Street entrance opened directly into the lobby area while the Main Street entrance was reached by crossing a small foyer through which the upper floors were also accessed.

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ACTIVITIES & EVENTS:

Well-Known Architect is Bowling Green Native

While architect Frank P. Milburn, native of Bowling Green, Kentucky, designed over 250 major public buildings during his practice between 1889 and 1926 and is "said to have acquired the largest architectural business South of the Mason and Dixon line," little is actually known of his personal background and the various influences and other general aspects of his career. Although one of the most prolific builders in the New South era, little study has formally dissected him and his work.

A composite history of various sources shows that Milburn was born in Bowling Green, Kentucky, on December 12, 1868. He attended Arkansas University and Arkansas Industrial University, Fayetteville. In 1894, at age 15, he began working under his father, T.T. Milburn, in Louisville, Kentucky. City directories of the period indicate that there was a "Francis M. Milburn" listed in 1888, and a "Frank Milburn, carpenter" listed in 1889, 90, and 91.

Through Milburn's forty or so years of practice, courthouses occupied by far the largest percentage of his time and effort. Milburn's Kentucky courthouses include the edifices for Grayson, Knox, Trigg, Hickman, Fulton, Clay, Wayne, Bourbon, Maggoffin, Lincoln and Powell Counties. He also designed the Florida and South Carolina capitols, as well as 19 railroad stations. While his office was located in Washington, D.C., his firm designed over forty highrise commercial or office buildings including the Indepen-

dence Building in Charlotte, N.C., the Goff Building, Clarksburg, Virginia, and the majestic U.S. Department of Commerce Building in D.C.

Milburn died on September 21, 1926 in Asheville, N.C. while working on the Buncombe County courthouse. Stylistically, Milburn was "a classicist...but his practical nature made him do the job best suited to the need with consideration first of the funds available." Thus it seems that Milburn's work would almost have to be eclectic; and indeed, he operated well within the mindset of the eclectic. Rather than creating an altogether new style, the eclectic of the day chose to draw upon the entire spectrum of architectural forms. Dr. Barclay Jones, noted Professor of Planning at Cornell University has stated that "the period during which he was most active is one that is characterized by individuality. However, even among these individualists Frank Milburn is a giant."

Story by W. Ted Alexander

CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

AT THE HOME OF
MATT & MARGARET
BAKER
1224 COLLEGE ST.

SATURDAY, DEC. 10
4:30 - 8:00 P.M.

OUR NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING IS "OFF THE WALL"

Landmark's next general membership meeting will be held on November 3 at 7:00 p.m. in the Kentucky Library on the second floor of the Kentucky Building. Our program, "Off the Wall: Period/Historic Interior Wall Treatments," will be led by WKU graduate and licensed interior designer, Michael Moore of Nashville.

Moore is employed by Bradford Interiors of Nashville, a name familiar to many of our members. He will examine a variety of wall treatments available today and will present tips on the purchase and application of the same. Using slides and samples of his wares, Moore will help Landmark members most knowledgeable consumers in what can be an expensive home project.

Moore is a graduate of the Consumer and Family Sciences Department at Western and looks forward to returning to Bowling Green. Under Tennessee law, interior designers must be licensed, and Michael was one of the first to be licensed in the Volunteer state.

Our general membership meetings are open to all members and guests; you are encouraged to invite your friends and neighbors, particularly those anticipating a wall treatment project.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS:



Landmark Volunteers Survey Warren County Sculpture

This summer Landmark volunteers braved the heat to survey Warren County's frozen beauty, its outdoor sculpture. This survey was part of a national program known as Save Outdoor Sculpture or SOS. The purpose of SOS was to complete a national inventory and basic condition assessment of outdoor sculpture and to encourage strategies to provide for continued maintenance of the surveyed pieces.

All of Warren County's thirteen pieces of public statuary are located within Bowling Green's city limits. "It's really surprising how few pieces of public sculpture we have in Bowling Green, considering the age and prominence of our community and county in Kentucky's history," said Jonathan Jeffrey, Warren County's SOS coordinator.

Volunteers quickly identified Warren County's thirteen pieces of outdoor sculpture: the Four Seasons and Hebe Fountain in Fountain Square, the Four Seasons near Snell Hall on Western's campus, the Cherry Statue at the top of College Street, the base of the original Fountain Square fountain now located behind Riverview at Hobson Grove, and two pieces by local contemporary sculptor Donnie Firkins. "Our oldest piece is the base of the original fountain carved in the early 1870s from local limestone and the most recent is a lovely contemporary by Donnie Firkins owned by a local bank," reported Jeffrey.

Western's campus is the location of five pieces of the county's sculpture. The statue of Henry Hardin Cherry is the only bronze piece and according to Jeffrey "is probably our most significant sculpture in the county." He points out that the statue was erected by public subscription (actual cost \$10,000 in 1937) and was executed by famed Chicago sculptor, Lorado Taft. The Four Seasons on Western's campus were done in the Art Nouveau style by Italian artist Aristide Sartorio. The quartet was purchased by Bowling Green native, C. Perry Snell, who donated them to Western in the late 1920s. At one time they were the center of an Italianate garden designed by noted landscape architect, Henry Wright. The garden was dedicated in 1930



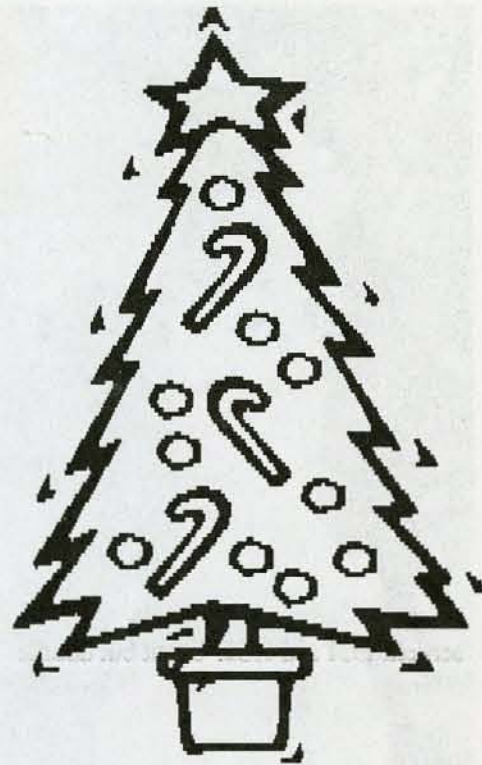
(Photos: Courtesy Kentucky Library, WKU)

and has fallen into disrepair. "Of all the statuary in town, Western's Four Seasons are in the worst condition. (Two are pictured above.) The marble has begun to sugar and they are badly stained from pollution, acid rain and vegetation growth," noted Jeffrey.

The Warren County survey forms and photographs are being sent to the Inventory of American Sculpture, administered by the National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C. A duplicate copy of the surveys was donated to the Manuscripts and Archives unit of the Kentucky Building.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

November 3	General Membership Meeting <i>Kentucky Library, 7:00 p.m.</i>
November 15- December 23	Christmas Tours of Hobson House <i>Regular House Hours (843-5565)</i>
November 30	Lighting of Fountain Square <i>Downtown Business Association, 6:30 p.m.</i>
December 10	Landmark Open House <i>At the home of Matt and Margaret Baker, 1224 College Street</i>
December 17-18	Carriage Rides Around Fountain Square <i>Downtown Business Association, 2:00 - 8:00 p.m.</i>
February 23, 1995	General Membership Meeting <i>Smith's Grove</i>
April, 1995	Flea Market



THE BOOK CORNER

The following books are available from the Landmark Association:

A Stroll Around Fountain Square

(\$3.75 plus mailing and handling charge of \$1.65)

Architecture of Warren County, Kentucky, 1790-1940

(\$6.00 plus mailing and handling charge of \$2.50)

An Album of Early Warren County Landmarks

(\$15.00 plus mailing and handling charge of \$3.65)

Mailing and handling charge for two or more books: \$3.75
Contact Cooper Smith at 781-1320 for information about ordering.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS:

Continued from page one-

The Department of Agriculture Extension Office occupied the building's basement and the second floor housed the federal court-rooms and chambers. A 1958 newspaper account lists the building's occupants as the post office, FBI, Veterans Administration, Alcohol Tax Unit and the Federal Housing Administration. After a renovation in the early 1960s, the IRS, Selective Service, and the Air Corp and Marine Corp recruiting stations moved into the building.

As the community's needs grew, so did the Federal Building. The two-story addition at the rear of the building was completed between 1931 and 1932. Subtle but distinct differences between the original edifice and the addition exist. The original building was constructed of limestone blocks with granite foundation blocks. These individual blocks are clearly visible, while the addition's granite base is a single strip used as ornamentation rather than as a foundation. The addition's foundation has been bricked over and is not visible. The limestone walls are not part of the supportive structure, as in the original, but are faced stone meant to serve as decoration. This style was carried over to the loading dock, which has a concrete foundation. Alone now on its Main Street block, this grand structure is an integral but aloof part of the community.

CONGRATULATIONS TO 1994 LANDMARK AWARDS WINNERS

HIXSON, DOWNEY & TRAVELSTED
(537 EAST 10TH ST.)



RUDLOFF, GOLDEN & EVANS
(553 MAIN ST.)



CAMPBELL, KERRICK & GRISE
(1025 STATE ST.)



440 MAIN RESTAURANT & BAR
(440 EAST MAIN ST.)

**AND TO
1994 HERITAGE AWARD WINNER
BILL MCKENZIE**



ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

MISS SARA TYLER
1349 STATE ST
BOWLING GREEN KY 42101-3461



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COMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER 3

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
KENTUCKY LIBRARY, 7:00 P.M.

DECEMBER 10

LANDMARK OPEN HOUSE
AT THE HOME OF MATT AND MARGARET BAKER,
1224 COLLEGE STREET

LANDMARK REPORT

Is a publication of the Landmark Association of Bowling Green and Warren County, Inc., a nonprofit corporation organized to promote historic preservation/ economic development. Landmark is supported by the membership of concerned citizens.

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LANDMARK REPORT

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