



The Doorknob Collector

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THE LAND TITLE & TRUST BUILDINGS IN THE CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE

By PAUL WOODFIN

After the construction of 1893 Chicago World's Fair was complete, Daniel Burnham began the process of rebuilding an architectural practice that had become partly dormant after the death of partner John Wellborn Root and his focus on the Fair. Architects and draftsmen again focused on completing buildings that were in process and the new projects that had been awarded to Burnham. The Panic of 1893 was a major economic recession that lasted until 1897, and the construction industry slowed significantly during this period. Fortunately by 1897 the economy was recovering and so was the market for new buildings.

Burnham's reputation as a result of the World's Fair was greatly expanded across the country. The Land Title & Trust Company of Philadelphia was the oldest title insurance company in the world, and their expanding business required more space. Land Title decided to construct a new headquarters a block south of the new City Hall on Broad Street. The company acquired the land from Peter Widener and William Elkins in exchange for company stock, and their new stockholders encouraged the use of new architectural ideas for the building. So D. H. Burnham & Co. was selected to design the building.

The resulting fifteen story building, completed in 1898 (at right) was a steel frame building, faced with light gray granite on the first two stories with gray brick and decorative terra cotta above. The basic affect is similar to the other Burnham buildings of this era: Chicago (Fisher building and Marshall Field building at Wabash & Washington streets), Columbus (Wyandotte building), Buffalo (Ellicott Square building), and Detroit (Mabley/Majestic building). For the building's interior,



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the Philadelphia Times described as “richly fitted up with colored marbles, bronzed and ornamental iron, and woodwork throughout is of East India mahogany” (see interior photo at left).

The interior finishes for the building were partly the work of noted interior designer George Herzog, whose work in the mansions of Widener and Elkins, along with much of the Union League Club south of the Land Title Building, the Masonic Temple northeast of City Hall, and parts of City Hall itself, made him a very popular craftsman in Philadelphia (and later in New York City).

The hardware for the building (L-11700, below) is seemingly out of character for a Burnham building, but no doubt Her-

zog
and
Phila-

delphia tastes led to one of the most elegant custom knob designs produced by P & F Corbin. This attribution is confirmed by both the listing in the Corbin special designs ledger as S 429 described as “Head” for the “Land Title & Trust Bldg”. Corbin also published advertisements in 1898 that they had furnished the hardware for the this Philadelphia building.

The 1898 building was a hit with businesses and professionals seeking high-quality offices near the new center of city business around the new City Hall. By 1901 the Land Title & Trust was needing additional space for operations, and so they contracted with Burnham in partnership with local architect Horace Trumbauer to design a second building just south of the first. Trumbauer had located his office in the Land Title building and had just completed Lynnewood Hall for Peter Widener. The new building, (top of next



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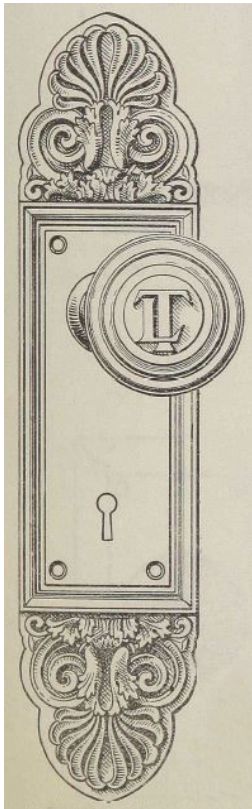
page), called the Annex, was 22 stories in height and is beaux arts in style, while complementing the style and materials of the original. With an exterior entirely of light gray granite, the interior of this building was larger and more classical in style. The main hall on the first floor featured marble-clad columns with classical capitals, along with marble floors, dark mahogany woodwork, white ceilings and metal service windows for customers (photo below). Marble wainscoting and iron stair balusters again ornamented the office floors of this new building, along with different door hardware.



The hardware is again by P & F Corbin and listed as S 2201 in the Corbin S catalog and ledger.

The Bower-Barff iron

knob (P-49240, below with plate) has an LT monogram which matches the knob design for Burnham's Heyworth building in Chicago of the following year.



As with any office building in a prime location in a large American city, the Land Title & Trust buildings have been renovated significantly over more than a century of use since they were built. Their National Register of Historic Places application in 1978. Most interior finishes have changed several times, including the complete gutting of the first floor spaces. But the buildings remain as active, in demand office spaces as much in 2019 as in 1898 and 1902. Different technologies, different firms, and demands from different workforce demographics reflect how much America has transformed in a century, but a great office building stands the test of time.

References:

- Thomas, George. Nomination Form for the National Register of Historic Places, Land Title Building, Philadelphia, PA. June 20, 1978.
- Luellen, Mark. *The Decorative Work of George Herzog*, University of Pennsylvania Masters Thesis, 1992.
- Interior building photos from public domain architectural magazines.
- Building photos from HABS survey, Library of Congress.

In Memorium Cathy Galbraith

Catherine Mary Galbraith (#494) died November 23, 2018 at the age of 68. She is best remembered for the creation and growth to adulthood of the Bosco-Milligan Foundation and the Architectural Heritage Center (“AHC”) of Portland, Oregon.

The opening of the Bosco-Milligan Foundation’s AHC was the subject to TDC Issue 128 in 2004. In it, Maude Eastwood wrote of “Three Who Made a Museum”. The first two, of course, were the collectors who gathered all the stuff, in this case Ben Milligan and Jerry Bosco. The “stuff” was rated by the National Park Service as among the five largest collections of architectural artifacts in the United States (including some 12,000 pieces of architectural hardware). But a museum requires, beyond a collection, an energetic and successful organizer to make it all work. That was Cathy, the third of the trio.

Cathy met Ben and Jerry and they became good friends when she was President of the Historic Preservation League of Oregon. They left their collection (and a run-down building to house it) to the Foundation they created, originally part of the League. After a few years, the Foundation became independent and Cathy was selected as its Executive Director (out of a field of some 100 applicants). The years that followed involved organizing, preserving and inventorying the “stuff” – and turning the old building into a suitable venue for a Museum. This also involved fund raising on a serious scale and expanding the preservation community of Portland. The AHC became the sponsor of a stream of programs on local history and architecture and tours of Portland – just take a look at its website to see the things it offers the public. (Would that the rest of us had such a resource where we live!) It received a National Trust Honor Award in 2005, and Cathy was the second recipient of the University of Oregon’s McMath Award in Historic Preservation in 2010. She also won national recognition for her leadership in documenting places associated with Portland’s African American community, and for much else. Cathy was married to Portland’s jazz and blues icon, “Sweet Baby James”, who predeceased her in 2016 (TDC #197).

So if and when you have the good fortune to visit the AHC, give a little thanks to Ben, Jerry and Cathy.



2019 ADCA CONVENTION

JULY 23-26, 2019

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

Mike and Carolyn Smith will be our hosts for the 2019 ADCA Convention in North Little Rock, Arkansas. Our venue will be at the Wyndham Waterfront in North Little Rock, AR, which is literally just across the river from the Old State Capitol (right) in downtown Little Rock. Dates will be July 23-26, 2019, with tour day on the 24th, buy/sell/trade on the 25th and morning of the 26th, followed by the auction and banquet that evening. **Convention packets will be mailed in early April.**



The **hotel** has setup a direct link to make reservations (below), or can be made by calling (866) 657-4458 and asking for the “Antique Doorknob Collectors of America” block of rooms, or calling the hotel direct at (501) 371-9000. The hotel will extend the convention rates for 3 days before and after the expected nights (July 23,24,26,26) if you call the hotel directly.

<https://www.wyndhamhotels.com/groups/hr/adca-39th-annual-convention>

The Little Rock **airport** is served by America, United, Delta, Southwest, Allegiant, Frontier, and ViaAir, so if you are flying, get your tickets now. The hotel does offer complimentary airport shuttle service.



Pricing this year for the convention will be slightly different. The hotel room rates will be \$99.00 per night plus taxes (\$113.86 total). The room rates are \$40.00 per night cheaper than last year, and includes a daily breakfast buffet. Convention registration rates paid to the ADCA will be \$40.00 per person higher this year than last year which will provide lunch on Friday, as well as snacks, coffee, tea, soft drinks, etc. during the day (in the hospitality room just down the hall from the display room) on Thursday and Friday.

See everybody in Arkansas!

Park Building Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



Steel and Pittsburgh have long been synonymous, but before the *bessemer* process created structural steel and made Andrew Carnegie wealthy, the *crucible* process created high-strength tools that were able to withstand high heat. Goods manufactured included locomotive fire boxes and tools for the bessemer steel industry. Crucible steel also provided scissors, knives, and other high-quality steel products for every American.

The Park family (brothers and sons) of Pittsburgh owned and managed Black Diamond Steel Works very successfully over more than thirty years. By 1895 David Park decided to build an office building in Pittsburgh that would carry their name, in similar fashion to the one An-

drew Carnegie was building a block away. Park hired legendary New York architect George B. Post to design a new office tower, based on the beaux arts style which was becoming popular after the Worlds Columbian Exposition in Chicago (Post designed the Manufactures and Liberal Arts building, the largest at the Fair).

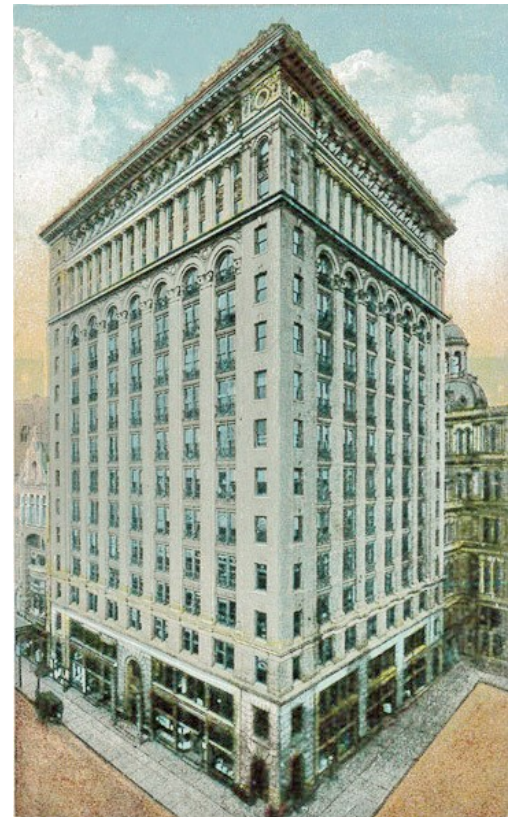
Post designed a 15 story building (two floors taller than Carnegie's building), which was completed in 1896. The building's design included a façade by Perth Amboy Terra Cotta, featuring statues of Atlas between the windows of the top floor, seeming to support the roof. Hardware was by P & F Corbin, featuring doorknobs (P-48360) with "Park" spelled out in fancy capital letters, and included in the Corbin S catalog and ledger as S 218.

The Park Building remains today as one of the oldest skyscrapers in Pittsburgh. While her interiors have been modernized over the years, she still has a roof for Atlas to support.



Reference: Houser, Mark. *Pittsburgh MultiStories: Pittsburgh's Oldest Surviving Skyscraper*, Pittsburgh Magazine, 2018. <https://www.pittsburghmagazine.com/>

Article by Paul Woodfin

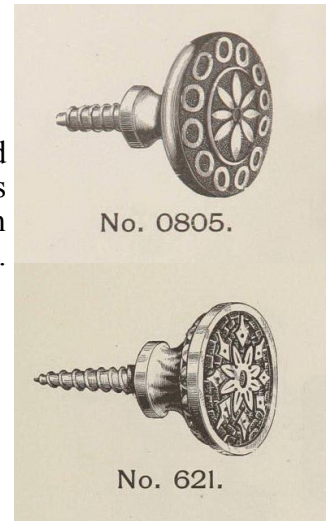


The Doorknob Exchange

Members are reminded that your dues entitle you to advertise items for sale, trade, or wanted at no charge. ADCA is not responsible for any transaction or the condition of the items advertised.

Wanted:

Brad Schwartz (#944) is working to restore their period Wisconsin home, and is seeking bronze Norwalk shutter knobs, 1 1/4" in size, in one of the designs at right. He has located much of the missing hardware for his home through the ADCA Facebook page, but needs our help to find these shutter knobs. Contact Brad at mkebrad@gmail.com or (414) 915-9193.



Steve Rowe (287) is seeking one of the Hopkins & Dickinson knobs shown at right to go with the matching plate he recently acquired. Contact Steve at 4narowe@sbcglobal.net or (559) 593-3567.



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