

To Raise the Standard of Architecture:
The Work and Vision of Charles Henry and Charles Frederick Owsley
in Youngstown, Ohio

by

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ABSTRACT

To Raise the Standard of Architecture:
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The thesis will focus on the twenty-five year period when the lives and work of two of Youngstown's most prolific architects, Charles Henry Owsley and his son Charles Frederick Owsley, juxtaposed to create some of Youngstown's most significant and lasting architecture. The study period begins in 1895, with Charles Henry's architectural firm of Owsley & Boucherle well established and Charles Frederick's coming of age as a gifted apprentice. The study period ends in 1920 with the forty-year old Charles Frederick's portfolio that includes three major downtown buildings as well as the YWCA, the Reuben McMillan Public Library, two schools, and several residences.

Discussion of contemporary architectural influences such as the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, the City Beautiful Movement, and city planning philosophies, will provide understanding of both architects' visions and the benefit to Youngstown's public image.

The intent of the thesis is to synthesize the architecture the Owsleys created, articulate their contribution during the study period and show its significance to Youngstown's built environment. The Youngstown building stock, therefore, is a critical source for context. Through an examination of the surviving buildings and those lost but documented, as well as the Owsley buildings in the surrounding area, the thesis will provide a focused and concise study of Youngstown's architectural character and texture.

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INTRODUCTION

The New Class, a New Order, a Beautiful City, and the Death of Architecture .

A Historiography of the Study Period

The period between the United States' Centennial celebration and the end of The Great War was a time of great change. It was a era when the country's population shifted from rural to urban; when the country's government evolved from a disconnected, isolated and independent view to a world view. This period began when there was no established upper-class, as author Walter Nugent postulates, and concluded with a new middle-class of socially conscious professionals that were progressive reformers, as Robert H. Weibe contends. It was a time of great increase in the diversity of the country's ethnicity with a corresponding increase in the "native-born English stock," American's expression of class and race superiority.¹ When juxtaposed with the great disparity between rich and poor, white and non-white, industrialist and laborer, the haves and have-nots, a picture of a tumultuous period emerges that gives credence to the popularity of the fictional utopian novel *Looking Backward* by Edward Bellamy.

This was the period of architectural practice for Charles Henry Owsley and

¹ Author Walter T.K. Nugent utilizes this phrase to define the dominate white Anglo-Saxon Protestant American.

his son Charles Frederick Owsley. Both men were influenced by the social and economic conditions of their time as well as constrained by the technological advances in building construction and inspired by the nation's architectural material culture. Important to an understanding of each architect--one trained through apprenticeship, the other through the institutional educational system--is the work of the historian and the biographer. Their work is the cornerstone to this thesis that provided an insight to the broader sphere of the contemporary architectural practice.

The works drawn upon for this thesis were those that painted a larger canvas of the period. Three authors, Ray Ginger in 1965, Robert H. Wiebe in 1967, and Walter T.K. Nugent in 1977, presented three distinct but intertwining interpretations of this very mercurial time period. Ginger, in *Age of Excess: The United States From 1877-1914*, proposes the thesis that an era of overproduction fueled the nation's attitudes and behavior.² The author traces the growth of the railroads and the great wealth acquired by the railroad barons such as J. Pierpoint Morgan, Jay Gould, John Murray Forbes, and Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt to support his belief that the railroads were a major force behind the period's progression. Chapter One of the thesis will echo this importance as the railroads brought building materials, wealth, and people to Youngstown that played an

² Ray Ginger, *Age of Excess: The United States from 1877-1914*, (New York: The MacMillian Company, 1965), p.54-55.

important role in the city's building evolution.

Ginger also connects rural development and farm market access as well as urban and industrial growth to the railroads. Furthermore, the author concludes the growth of a market economy and a reliance on the rail system caused the economic and political events that precipitated the Panics of 1873 and 1893 and the consequential impact on the railroads. Ginger believes the growth of cities with their overpopulation from European immigrants and rural transplants, the excess movement of population, class conflict between rich and poor, and rapid technological changes, characterized this period as an "Age of Excess."

Wiebe's thesis asserts that a new middle class of "...urban professional men and women--who developed new values of 'continuity and regularity, functionality and rationality, administration and management,'" and whose need created an "executive administrat[ed]" government that triumphed as the Progressive movement, emerged to establish a new order.³ This new middle class instituted new values that replaced many outmoded traditional values. The author delineates the economic, social and political landscape that caused the "...breakdown ...and emergence of a new system."⁴ Thesis Chapter Two, "The Foundation and Cornerstone," shows the sweeping influence of this new middle class of professionals, Charles Henry included, on Youngstown's architecture in the late

³ Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order: 1877-1920*, (New York; Hill and Wang, 1967), p.viii.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

nineteenth century.

Wiebe, like Ginger, discusses the impact of the railroads, improving technology, and urban population increases, coupled with a changing work force of size and ethnicity, as contributing to the social disharmony of the growing industrial nation. The author believes further that an obsessive interest in “class” developed a two part middle class of those with “strong professional aspirations” and “specialists in business, in labor, in agriculture “ who discovered that a commonality of location (urban dwellers) and professional skills created a skilled worker’s class.⁵ As labor unions developed, so also did craft unions, trade and professional organizations, and farming cooperatives that empowered a class to initiate change. Wiebe theorizes that this new middle class manifested itself in the profession of law, medicine, and education as well as journalism, social work, and architecture.

As the new middle class increased in power, position, and riches, they pursued progressive reform at the urban, state and national levels. Reform materialized in government and business as well as in religion, social, and health improvements. Movements such as the Social Gospel sought to reform morality. Programs for settlement housing and improved public health with food and drug regulations and modern sanitation systems helped to raise the standard of living for

⁵ Wiebe, *The Search for Order*, p.112.

the many heretofore ignored urban dwellers. The conservation of land through national legislation, the City Beautiful movement with city planning improvements that included parks and playgrounds, and building industry improvements in technology and materials not only changed the urban landscape but also illuminated the broadness of this reform era. Charles Frederick's reform philosophy shows in his service on several progressive reform committees that sought to improve the city's purpose.

In his 1977 book on American society, Walter T.K. Nugent envisioned the period from the 1870s to 1917 as an era of modernization. The author portrays the evolution and growth of American society as it dealt with urbanism and industrialism.⁶ Most of Nugent's work supports and advances the studies of Wiebe and Ginger of social reform and class. Perhaps his articulation of the urban building texture as well as the background material on many of the major participants of the period best defines his contribution.

Robert W. Rydell, in his monograph *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American Expositions, 1876-1916*, provides a unique as well as a disturbing study of racism, social Darwinism, and social culture as exposed through the midways and displays of the world's fairs. The author's research broadens the work of Wiebe, Ginger, and Nugent, writing that the native-stock Anglo-Americans

⁶ Walter T.K. Nugent, *From Centennial to World War: American Society 1876-1917*, (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc.), p.xiv.

responded to class and ethnicity, immigration and imperialism with racism.

The strength of the author's thesis matures with each individual study. From the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia to the Expositions in San Francisco and San Diego in 1915 and 1916 respectively, Rydell reveals the objective behind each fair. That object was to reaffirm national identity, to show American progress as well as to justify American imperialism, and to legitimize the supremacy of the ruling white class.⁷ The author further documents the manipulation of these fairs by the scientific community into a forum for the "education" of the American people to a racial and cultural hierarchy supported by Darwinian theories. Using archival material such as newspapers, guidebooks, and oral histories, Rydell exposes the nature of American society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—a character that saturated the political, legal, and educational systems, as well as the urban professional middle class.

Not all of the new middle class, however, embraced these attitudes. Many of the discontented hoped for a society of reform, equality, and goodwill. The popular utopian fictional work of Edward Bellamy titled *Looking Backward*, "...won its huge audience not as a fiction but as a simple, logical essay combining so much that the discontented already accepted as gospel."⁸ Bellamy provides an

⁷ Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 4.

⁸ Wiebe, *A Search for Order*, p. 69.

unconventional social history of the disparity of the classes, industrialization and mechanization, the labor unrest of the era, and the pending fear of social catastrophe. Bellamy's book is "...measured more by its influence than by its prophetic accuracy, and that influence in awakening American hopes for a better social order has been incalculable."⁹

The author transported his character, Julian West, from 1887 Boston to that city's future in the year 2000. West is the genteel representative of the nineteenth century's upper-class who lived their lives and made their fortunes on the backs of the working class. Exposed to the utopian future world, West overcomes his own indifference to class inequality and in a Dickensian dream fails to convert his contemporaries to social reform. Resigned to the future world, Bellamy leaves his character in the future with newfound contentment. Bellamy's story becomes richer when juxtaposed with the works of Wiebe, Ginger, and Nugent, as its portrayal of the social landscape parallels their conclusions. Furthermore, *Looking Backward* suggests through its popularity that the aspirations of the new middle class for reform were prevalent and developed when the subsequent Progressive Movement arrived in the early twentieth century.

An additional publication that lends a fuller understanding of the social changes that permeated the period of 1876-1920 is Sam Bass Warner's *Street Car*

⁹ Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backwards: 2000-1887*, (New York: Random House, 1917), p.iii.

Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900. Warner provides a concise study of the development of the suburbs of Boston with a focus on three of Boston's southwestern suburbs: Dorchester, Roxbury, and West Roxbury. The author connects the settlement and subsequent construction of these Boston suburbs with the advance of the street rail system. Furthermore, Warner reiterates Wiebe's, Ginger's, and Nugent's arguments regarding the rise of the middle class and their desire to improve their social standing. His work further studies the juxtaposition of an urban life with rural desires. Warner calls this "...a sympathy for the rural ideal."¹⁰ The change brought about by the streetcar in the suburbs was a microcosm of a broader and contemporary changes of the national rail system.

Two assertions by Warner distinguish his research. One, he finds an absence of a separation by ethnicity in the development of these suburbs and that outside of the direct impact of the streetcar, only income influenced the settlement patterns and building styles--primarily variations of the vernacular. The second proposition is that the continuity of building construction, architectural styles, and land use were defined by the available new technology, stock plans and ornament, as well as economic factors and not through zoning controls. With no zoning laws existing, the statistics of 9,000 non-professional builders who constructed 22,500 dwellings

¹⁰ Sam Bass Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press and MIT Press), p.33.

for 167,000 suburbanites makes Warner's thesis incomparable.¹¹

Warner's work as a comparative study of suburban development provides a broader understanding for Youngstown's development. When brought in line with the works on Youngstown by William Brenner and Mark Peyko as well as the historical works of Joseph G. Butler, Thomas W. Sanderson, and H.Z. Williams, the similarities in city development give contextual support for an understanding of Youngstown's development and the Owsleys' participation.

Warner's claim of a suburban (and urban) sympathy for a rural ideal and the romantic landscape was first demonstrated in the development of the rural cemetery. Rural cemeteries provided urban and suburban dwellers a quiet and pastoral park-like setting, away from the dirt and din of the city, that became a place of respite and family relaxation on a Sunday afternoon. Ultimately this idea evolved into the municipal park as exemplified in Frederick Law Olmsted's Central Park design in New York City.

In his book *The City Beautiful Movement*, William H. Wilson contends that the movement had its birth in Central Park, and was fostered and advanced by its rightful father, Frederick Law Olmsted. His thesis supports an earlier beginning than most historians have traditionally accepted. Their belief was that the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, with its merging of the landscaped park to

¹¹ Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs*, p. 35 & 37.

the ordered plan and uniform design in the classical style of architecture represented in the "White City," gave birth to the City Beautiful movement of the early twentieth century.

One of Wilson's arguments is that the time lapse between the closing of the fair (1893) and the application of the term "City Beautiful" (1899) "...dooms the argument that the City Beautiful movement sprang from the world's fair."¹² The author's position, however, failed to consider the book *Two Little Pilgrims' Progress: A Story of the City Beautiful* by Frances Hodgson Burnett, published in 1895. Albeit a minor issue, to Wilson's credit, is his ability to document the many independent reform and planning movements, pre- and post-world's fair, that synthesized into the City Beautiful movement.

Wilson provides an important monograph for the student of city planning as his study concentrates on the lesser known city plans such as Kansas City, Missouri, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Seattle, Denver, and Dallas, Texas and ignores the well studied and equally well-known plans of Washington, D.C. and Chicago. Significant to the study are the planners who generated these designs during the heyday of the City Beautiful movement (1900-1910). They reflected the progressive reform of the professional middle class. Men such as George E. Kessler, Warren H. Manning, John C. Olmsted, and Frederick L. Olmsted Jr., proponents of what

¹² William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement*, (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), p. 64.

Wilson calls Olmstedian theories, worked intimately with city government, city beautiful advocates of the elite as well as engineers and architects to "...create a future city of order, system, and beauty."¹³

Unfortunately, Wilson asserts, these grand and monumental plans cost large amounts of money, spanned many years to bring to fruition and failed to keep pace with the increasing demands of the automobile. With the advent of what the author calls the "city practical" movement, many plans were viewed as grandiose and impractical. Furthermore, as citizen interest waned, the public became indifferent to fulfilling the initial intent of the planner. Finally, with the growing negative image of classical architecture, the City Beautiful movement ceased to represent society's desires for aggrandizement. Wilson concludes that "[t]he City Beautiful movement attempted too much....was too naive and hopeful, socially and architecturally."¹⁴

A national driving force behind the City Beautiful movement and city planning was the architect Daniel Hudson Burnham. Burnham, who was more of a contemporary of Charles Henry, was a representative of the new urban professional middle-class that Wiebe and others document. Men such as Burnham and the architect Louis Sullivan expressed the tastes of American society in their architecture during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter

¹³ Wilson, *City Beautiful*, p. 303.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 301.

of the twentieth century. Thesis Chapters Two and Four explain the significance of the Owsleys' work in expressing these same desires in Youngstown.

Burnham and Sullivan, vanguards of architectural style and a growing technology, operated within their associated partnerships and later solo careers to contribute to the architectural texture of the Chicago built environment following the devastating fire of 1871. Burnham, also noted for his contribution as the Director of Works of the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, defined city planning during the opening decade of the twentieth century. Biographies of notable contemporary architects, such as Burnham and Sullivan, give insight into the inner working of an architect's office and profession. Large architectural projects required large architect's offices. The firm of Owsley, Boucherle & Owsley mirrored many aspects of the larger Burnham & Root and Adler & Sullivan architectural offices. Thesis Chapter Four will formulate, through the Owsley's work load and completed projects, a sense of grandness in profession similar to the architectural headquarters of many Chicago and Pittsburgh architects.

In his book *Burnham of Chicago: Architect and Planner*, Thomas S. Hines sought to reestablish Burnham's standing and influence in architecture--an image, he believes was tarnished by Louis Sullivan's book *An Autobiography of an Idea*, published in 1924. Additionally, modern architecture, and its subsequent disparagement of Neo-Classical architecture (as the White City and Burnham's civic government buildings and city plans epitomized) further clouded the architect's

significance. Hines presents a sympathetic and favorable biography that documents Burnham's life, contributions, and struggles. The author blends Burnham's diaries and letters, the contemporary writings of John Root, Burnham's business partner, and Charles Moore's book *Daniel H. Burnham, Architect, Planner of Cities*. Through the architect's buildings and city planning designs Hines offers a concise impression of Burnham, the historic architect, administrator, and planner. The author provides an excellent study of the practice of architecture in the late nineteenth century as well as the politics behind the implementation of grand urban plans and the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition. Hines believes that the 1893 World's Fair "...climaxed Burnham's efforts as a city planner."¹⁵ Burnham himself saw the fair as a turning point in his career.¹⁶

One man who maligned the architecture of the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition was Burnham's contemporary, architect Louis H. Sullivan. In his *Autobiography of an Idea*, Sullivan proclaimed the death of architecture induced by Burnham's Neo-Classical White City and the public's affinity for its imagery.¹⁷ Furthermore, Sullivan regretted its regression to a style of architecture no longer appropriate for America; architecture counter to the modern style he developed and

¹⁵ Thomas S. Hines, *Burnham of Chicago: Architect and Planner*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. xviii.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 359.

¹⁷ Louis H. Sullivan, *The Autobiography of an Idea*, (New York: Dover Publishing Co., 1956), p. 325.

promoted.

Sullivan's 1924 autobiography, enjoyably poetic but periodically too philosophical for comprehension, relates the development of an idea from Sullivan's early childhood into his career as an architect. The idea that he proclaims as his is that "form follows function...that every problem contains and suggests its own solution," that architecture is a living art.¹⁸ Sullivan, the author, writes in the third person to document his life experiences and achievements. The author's arrogance, however, is magnified in the writing style, which detracts from the valuable historical documentation of the Chicago building period of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Sullivan's account of his pursuit of training (apprenticeship with Frank Furness) and education (M.I.T. & the Ecole) provides a representative study of the preparatory atelier and entrance exam for the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, France. His final two chapters articulate contemporary events, technological advances in architecture and materials as well as the social history that Wiebe, Ginger, and Nugent support in their work, making Sullivan's book an important primary source for the study of the 1876-1920 period.

Louis Sullivan as well as other notable American architects including Richard Morris Hunt, Henry Hobson Richardson, and Charles Follen McKim, attended the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, France. Their use of the French atelier or studio to

¹⁸ Sullivan, *Autobiography*, p. 258 & 299.

train young men in the fine art of design and drawing established a precedent in America during Charles Frederick's education phase. The Ecole philosophy of architecture created several styles in American architecture that saw its apex at Chicago's Columbian Exposition in 1893. Chapter Three will investigate the atelier system and its influence on Charles Frederick. Thesis Chapter Four will show the end product of the influence that permeated Owsley's approach to design and to architecture.

Nothing reveals more of the architect than his work – the material culture of his trade. In order to articulate the story of the Owsleys as well as evaluate their contribution to Youngstown's built environment, the buildings need to be a primary source of information. These buildings were evaluated for their architectural style, their grandness in plan as well as their ability to survive changing city needs and tastes. Furthermore, the interaction between the public and architecture verbalizes not only the architect's mastery but also articulates a social history. Buildings identify a period of history, the client's affluence, and a level of technology and quality of material. Their survival and condition narrates how they are valued by the community that uses or misuses them. This aspect of building history completes the story. Several books provide a fresh look at building's lives that broaden an appreciation not only for architecture but also for the broader story of historic context.

The monograph, *The Power of Place* by Dolores Hayden, proposes a new

synthesis for the urban cultural landscape in public history. Hayden raises the concern for the incongruities in recorded histories between the well documented Anglo-American contribution and the oft forgotten minority histories: African-Americans, women and Latinos as well as issues of class. Furthermore, the author questions the traditional disassociation of social history to the built environment.

Hayden proposes a new ways to interpret social history. Her emphasis is on a broader vision and definition that includes the vernacular, the everyday, and the common. Hayden's contention is that preservation of the high-style in buildings and emphasis on the contributions of only the dominant individuals tells an incomplete history. In support of her thesis, the author combines actual applications with creative options and discusses successes and failures. The power of place, Hayden advances, is its ability to be interactive. Hayden believes an alternative, when buildings have not survived or neighborhoods prevent adaptive reuse, is art and other interpretive methods that contribute to a sense of place and record an identifiable and personal history.

In *Building Lives: Constructing Rites and Passages*, Neil Harris seeks to write "...the history of buildings as artistic subjects, real estate ventures and aging entities with life stories that are as revealing as human biographies."¹⁹ The author associates human "rights of passage" with building's "lives" to provide a fresh look at

¹⁹ Neil Harris, *Building Lives: Construction Rites and Passages*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999, p.2.

society's interactive relationship with structures of architecture. The book's body of three essays asks: "...how [are] buildings...introduced and presented, maintained, celebrated, disposed of, and remembered?"²⁰ Harris' first chapter begins the evaluation of the cultural role of buildings through their conception and birth. The author correlates these events such as the architect's planning, the laying of the cornerstone as well as the opening of the building as a cultural history of ceremonies and practices toward buildings in much the same way as parents announce the birth of a new child. Other events that tell a story of the community's association to a structure are the mottos and plaques and the names affixed to buildings.

In chapter two, Harris relates the human aging process to building aging. Here the building image, its maintenance program as well as its usage reveal a story of interaction with the community. Finally in chapter three, the author provides a preservation view of building aging. The final stage of life for a building tells the story of the community's outgrowth, desire for aggrandizement and how this outgrowth of old buildings usually was interpreted as "...a source of pride not shame" for a community. Harris offers insights into the building replacement criteria that was based on the building's economic insufficiency and questions adaptive reuse that "...save[d] the shell at the cost of the spirit."²¹ The author

²⁰ Harris, *Building Lives*, p.5.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.131-132.

mirrors Hayden's approach to how we should view buildings with his proposition that building's lives record a broader history than the narrow study of architectural style or the architect's choices those styles represent. Neil Harris' and Delores Hayden's work provided an analytical approach to building evaluation that renders the Owsley's work as a primary source of information as well as a representation of the architect's thoughts and the community's interaction with the Youngstown building landscape.

In order to articulate the story of Youngstown's building environment, its evolution, and the contribution of Charles Henry and Charles Frederick Owsley, I have organized the thesis into five chapters. Chapter One, "In the Beginning," will portray the evolution and development of Youngstown prior to Charles Henry Owsley's arrival. An understanding of Youngstown's architectural landscape at Owsley's emergence will foster a richer appreciation of the Owsleys' contribution as well as their unrivaled quality of design. Chapter Two, "The Foundation and Cornerstone," will provide a brief look at CHO's contribution to the built environment. This will hint at the architectural dominance of Charles Henry and his legacy to Charles Frederick.

Chapter Three, "The Education of Charles Frederick: 1895-1905," will articulate the atelier system and the French training ground of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and their influence on Charles Frederick's architectural philosophy and practice. Furthermore, the difference between the father's and son's training--one

through the apprenticeship process, the other through the institutional system—will set the stage for the main body of the thesis: their joint practice. Chapter Four, “Together: 1905-1915,” will juxtapose the Owsleys’ two forms of architectural practice: as a craft and as a profession. This chapter will document their work load, the depth of their practice as well as the broad range of building types. Here also the influence of young Charles Frederick’s training will show in the style of architecture now being designed and built as well as the ascension of Charles Frederick to the rank of progressive architect and harbinger of taste. Finally, Chapter Five, “Looking Backward, with apologies to Edward Bellamy,” will be the epilog, a brief evaluation of Charles Frederick’s career after Charles Henry retired. This chapter will reveal that Charles Frederick implemented the Beaux-Arts approach in all his architecture and established a consistency that met, if not exceeded his father’s standard of architecture.

CHAPTER ONE

In the Beginning...

1796-1850

John Young's town, founded in 1796 or 1797, served as Young's home until 1803 when he returned with his wife and four children to Whitestown, New York. Township two, Range two, of the Connecticut Western Reserve began to attract settlers in earnest with ten families building homesteads by 1798. After several visits, Young traveled to his town for the last time in 1814, returning to Whitestown, where he died in 1825 at the age of sixty-two.¹

Young, at the age of thirty-three, explored and surveyed the township with surveyor Alfred Wolcott and Daniel Shehy in the summer of 1796, maintaining an encampment on the ground that became known as Spring Commons. Their shelter, a temporary lean-to structure that they replaced with a more permanent log house a month later, became the first recorded European-built structure on the land that eventually became the village of Youngstown.² This log structure, constructed by Young, James Hillman, and others, became Hillman's when he agreed to remove to Young's settlement from Beavertown on the Ohio. Hillman, a frontiersman and

¹ *History of Trumbull and Mahoning Counties: Illustrations and Biographical Sketches*, Vol. I. (Cleveland: H.Z. Williams & Bro., 1882), p.424.

² *Ibid.*, p. 360.

trader, became the village's first permanent settler, living in the building he helped Young to construct. Tradition places this shelter east of Spring Commons on South Street, today Front Street. Additionally, this location was the first meeting place of the Methodist Episcopal followers in 1805 who later organized as the Methodist Church of Youngstown.³ In 1803, Hillman moved to the west side of the Mahoning River on sixty acres of farm land where he constructed the first frame house in the township.⁴

Following the purchase of 15,560 acres for \$16,085, Young returned from Connecticut in 1797 or 1798 and commenced the planning of Youngstown with the help of Turhand Kirtland.⁵ Kirtland, a surveyor, selling agent for the Connecticut Land Company, and a Western Reserve landholder, invested considerable effort in the establishment of the villages of Youngstown and Poland. He eventually settled in Poland village where he died in 1844. Young and Kirtland used a traditional New England gridiron with the axis oriented northeast to southwest. Federal Street as the east/west thoroughfare and Market Street as the north/south avenue became the principal streets. A public square or commons, 250'x400' and located at their intersection, functioned as a village meeting place. Federal Street was 100' wide and

³ *History of Trumbull and Mahoning Counties*, p.361.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.425.

⁵ Joseph G. Butler, *History of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley Ohio*, Vol. I (Chicago and New York: American Historical Society, 1921), p.103.

1,752' in length. Young's town used North Street, presently Wood Street, as its northernmost street and South (Front) Street as the southernmost road.

In 1802, a Presbyterian congregation constructed a 30'x40' meeting house of hewn logs at the corner of North (Wood) Street and North Market Street (now Wick Avenue). By the 1820s, with a township population of 1,035, village habitation was largely confined to Federal Street from Spring Common to Crab Creek.⁶ The building types recorded along Federal Street in 1823 included fifteen log and nine frame structures, one partial frame and one shingled house, two buildings constructed of brick, and one structure of an unrecorded type. The Federal Street building stock also included the Methodist Church, and a log school house. Front Street had two log houses and one frame house.⁷ Early schools included The Academy, a two-story frame construction, built in 1823 by Ammi R. Bissell at the southwest corner of Public Square, with a second school constructed in 1826 on East Federal Street.

Before the canal era, pre-1839, the settlement of Young's town mirrored other frontier settlements with prosaic one-story to one-and-a-half-story, single-pen, end gabled log structures. The frame buildings were vernacular in style reflecting not only the New England architectural expression but also the designs used in

⁶ City Planning Associates, *Historical Development of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley* (Mishawaka: Youngstown Ohio, 1968), p.6.

⁷ Wiggins and McKillor, ed. *Youngstown Past and Present* (Youngstown: Wiggins and McKillor, 1875), p.12-13.

Pennsylvania and the Tidewater states (fig.1). Those building styles and the construction methods that accompanied the settlers as well as their resourcefulness in using the available building materials, determined the growing settlement's building character. Unique to the building environment of this period was the Caleb B. Wick house on West Federal Street. Recorded in a John Claude Crawford painting, the Federal style two-story building was constructed in brick with stepped gabled end-walls and double chimneys. Its primary facade was three-bays wide with a full front one-story porch. Its style and materials denoted the owner's wealth and expressed an early directive for Youngstown's architectural future. Other buildings along Federal Street that were used for commercial enterprises or governmental concerns, also functioned as the proprietor's dwelling, retaining a provincial spirit for this burgeoning village.

By 1839, the completion of the Pennsylvania and Ohio Canal through the Mahoning Valley opened a broader market for exports, as well as increased the availability of imported goods that included building materials from Pittsburgh and Cleveland. Subsequent population growth--the 1840 census recorded 21,712 people living in Trumbull County--encouraged new building construction. In 1921, Joseph G. Butler wrote of the canal: "It was the first step toward transforming this district from an agricultural into a manufacturing region..."⁸ Village factories, however,

⁸ Butler, Vol. I, *History of Youngstown*, p.180.

grew from the discovery of Brier Hill black coal on Judge David Tod's family farmstead in 1842. Brier Hill coal proved to be a superior fuel and replaced the use of charcoal and coke in the growing valley's blast furnaces. Following in 1844, the Wilkes, Wilkenson and Company of Pittsburgh erected a blast furnace in Lowellville for the manufacture of pig iron.⁹ With the building of the Eagle furnace in 1846, located at the northwestern limits of the village, the iron industry took hold in the area, heralding Youngstown's future in ferrous metals.

1850-1870

The decade of the 1850s began with the establishment of the first village government and the election of John Heiner as mayor.¹⁰ This followed the formation of Mahoning County in 1846 and the incorporation of Youngstown in 1848 with a city populace of more than 1000. In 1850 the recorded population of Mahoning County was 23,735. Northward expansion of the city was geographically natural because of the hills and the Mahoning River that enclosed the southern end of the city in an arc southwest to southeast. Growth began to define the river area as industrial, while the central village slowly began to commercialize.

With scattering of commercial ventures that included a carriage factory and

⁹ Butler, *History of Youngstown*, Vol. I, p.181.

¹⁰ *Youngstown Grows with Ohio* (Youngstown: Youngstown Sesquicentennial Committee, 1953), p.3.

livery, hotels and boarding houses as well as the initial business blocks, the commercial building stock began to interrupt the residential character of the central area. About 1850, a newly constructed Town Hall provided a place to administer town business heretofore conducted in sundry public buildings. Moreover, residential development, especially of the wealthy, moved northward "...where the hill's commanding position over the business district attracted some of the town's finer houses and more important institutional buildings."¹¹ A growing stock of religious and educational buildings added to the village character.

When the Cleveland and Mahoning Railroad arrived in 1856, not only did it diminish canal usage but it also provided a new catalyst for industrial growth and subsequent jobs for the ever increasing population. Several churches constructed during this decade began to change the building complexion of the growing incorporated village. In 1841, the Methodist Protestant Church, known as the Brown Church, was one of three congregations worshiping in their own church building, having "resident ministers."¹² By the approach of the 1860s, however, five additional religious organizations conducted services within the village. Among the five was St. Columba's Church, the first Catholic congregation, which conducted mass in their newly constructed building at the southwest corner of

¹¹ William A. Brenner, *Downtown and the University: Youngstown, Ohio* (Youngstown: Brenner, 1976), p. 2.

¹² Butler, Vol. I, *History of Youngstown*, p. 302.

Wood and Hazel Streets.

In 1850, city progress and a growing need compelled the formation of Youngstown's first banking institution, the Mahoning County Bank. A second enterprise, the Wick Brothers and Company, organized in 1857 with offices located at 38 Federal Street. In 1851, Youngstown formed its first board of education and elected Henry Manning as president of the board. Manning, Youngstown's second physician, arrived in 1811 at the age of twenty-four, and practiced medicine for fifty-eight years. He also served the Youngstown community in a diversified capacities of government and banking endeavors. The creation of an educational board followed the institution of the Union School System by the Ohio legislature in 1849. This new system allowed for the establishment of public funds to operate the schools, eliminating the old tuition fee program.¹³ At the beginning of the decade, with 386 students, three school buildings provided the needed education for the young village scholars.

By the 1850s, the Academy on Public Square, the school on East Federal Street near Basin Street, and a two-room school of frame construction built in 1840 on the southeast corner of Front and Phelps Streets, proved insufficient. A fourth school, therefore, was erected at Wood and Champion Streets by the end of the decade. This was the Union School. Further preparations for the betterment of the

¹³ Butler, Vol. I, *History of Youngstown*, p. 286.

Youngstown school system materialized with the bequest of Judge William Rayen who died in 1854. Judge Rayen, a leading education proponent, endowed the city a considerable amount of money for the erection of a new public school building. The product of these efforts materialized in the high-style Greek Revival building on North Market Street, today Wick Avenue. Designed by architect Simeon Porter and constructed between 1864 and 1865 by several master tradesmen including P. Ross Berry, "...[it] was Youngstown's most important structure of the Civil War period."¹⁴ Berry, an African-American, emigrated to Youngstown from New Castle in 1861 to apply the masonry trade he so aptly mastered. His dominance in Youngstown's building environment lasted into the next century.¹⁵

Construction activities of the 1860s in Youngstown was purposeful. Its populace shared a determination to carry forward in spite of the Civil War. Advancements in government as well as finance continued; its achievements paralleled many burgeoning industrial villages of the Midwest (fig.2). Although the war took many Youngstown men, it also increased productivity in the mills. Prosperity in the mills produced an era of growth as manifested in persistent in building construction. During the war iron production surged, affluence of the industrialists increased, and the growing resource of manpower fueled the fires of

¹⁴ Brenner, *Downtown and the University*, p.3.

¹⁵ Frederick J. Blue, [et.al], *Mahoning Memories: A History of Youngstown and Mahoning County*, (Virginia Beach: The Donning company, Publishers, 1995), p.70.

production. Between 1860 and 1865, the influx of new people who made Youngstown their home increased population totals by 1,300. Sadly, 110 men of the Youngstown village and township did not return from the war. On July 4, 1868, a dedication ceremony for the setting of the cornerstone for the eventual Civil War Soldiers' Monument memorialized their sacrifice. The monument committee, formed in 1864, commissioned James Blattersby of Hartford, Connecticut to design the memorial in which he used Westerly marble for the shaft and statue. By 1870, the completed monument became the focal point of Central Square.¹⁶

Most significant for 1867 was Youngstown's population growth to more than 5,000 people; necessitating the village certification to a "city of the second class."¹⁷ The building period following the war began an era that faltered slightly with the Panic of 1873, but continued well into the twentieth century. Joseph G. Butler called the period following the war as a prosperous time and that "...the two years between 1868 and 1870 were years of progress."¹⁸ In 1867, the city council created an improvement program that included the second extension of city limits, creating new streets and plats. An \$80,000 appropriation fund for city improvements included the paving of Federal Street, although this aspect of the plan did not reach fruition until 1882. Construction of the Youngstown gas works began in 1866 with

¹⁶ Blue, et. al., *Mahoning Memories*, p.41.

¹⁷ *History of Trumbull and Mahoning Counties*, p.365.

¹⁸ Butler, Vol. I, *History of Youngstown*, p.202.

completion in 1867; an enlargement followed in 1872.

One of the most spectacular events of 1867 was the fire that destroyed the David Tod mansion on Fifth Avenue north of Federal Street.¹⁹ This event hastened the establishment of the Youngstown Fire Department, previously a volunteer system, and the allocation of \$20,000 as well as authorization to purchase fire equipment. This serendipitous event brought a new era of construction to the city that enriched the extant building complex. The new Tod mansion, constructed in 1867 by P. Ross Berry on Holmes Street, "one block north of Federal Street, was the finest mansion in the city."²⁰ In 1868, however, a disastrous fire caused its rebuilding. Constructed in the Second Empire style, the three-story structure was Youngstown's first example utilizing a mansard roof with arched pediment dormer windows.²¹ Moreover, the newly erected Governor Tod Engine House Number One incorporated a distinctive arched cornice with decorative paired brackets in the Italianate style.

Additional postwar construction initiated the commercial era of Federal Street (fig.3). In 1865 alone, six commercial buildings on Federal Street completed construction and opened their doors to commerce. Joining the Excelsior Block were, among others, the Arthur Grant Building and the Porter, Ritter, and Gerstle Blocks.

¹⁹ *Youngstown Vindicator*, February 27, 1987, p.4.

²⁰ Blue et. al., *Mahoning Memories*, p.38.

²¹ Brenner, *Downtown and the University*, p.49.

All drew upon the Italianate style that dominated this period of architecture. "Italianate was the practical style of the day. It was not an ecclesiastical or a governmental style but a domestic and (above all) a commercial one."²² These commercial blocks, typically two or three-stories in height included a heavy crowning cornice and an ornate bracketed entablature. Some were simple in design while others incorporated arches or closed triangular pediments with brackets. The design intent was toward verticality articulated with tall windows that evoked ten and twelve foot high interior ceilings.

The Mahoning County Bank, first established in 1850, became the First National Bank of Youngstown in 1863, following its reorganization as a nationally chartered bank under the newly instituted National Banking Act of 1863. By 1868, the establishment of the Youngstown Savings and Loan Bank beckoned a new age of finance for Youngstown. The banking institution's contribution to the city's architectural monuments of strength and financial importance, however, did not appear until the 1870s and 1880s.

Several religious congregations that organized in the 1850s built sacred edifices during the 1860s. Ten new church buildings constructed by 1870 helped to define the changing skyline and articulate the aspirations of the citizenry toward spiritual concerns. Architectural styles ranged from the First Presbyterian's brick

²² Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780: A guide to the Styles* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1996), p.99.

Gothic Revival structure, at the corner of Wick Avenue and Wood Street, designed by architect J.M. Blackburn of Cleveland, to the Greek Revival styled frame structure of the Welsh Congregational Church on Elm Street. The United German Church constructed an appropriate building on Wood Street between Elm and North Phelps Streets. St. Columba erected a new cathedral on the southwest corner of West Wood and Hazel Streets in 1863-1864. This brick Gothic Revival structure along with the Greek Revival Rayen School, the First Presbyterian's Gothic edifice, and the Tod Mansion, all constructed by master brick mason P. Ross Berry, contributed to his growing list of major building projects as well as prepared the Youngstown built environment for the architecture of the 1870s and 1880s.²³

When Charles Henry Owsley arrived in Youngstown from England in 1869 or 1870, the city building stock exhibited a mix of styles from the vernacular residential and commercial to the high-style Tod Mansion. The commercial district of Federal Street, strongly Italianate in style and changed by postwar construction, had yet to experience a complete metamorphosis. The industrial sector continued to grow along the river. Religious edifices designed in the Gothic Revival style had their biggest impact on the building texture following the war, with their numbers

²³ Plympton Ross Berry and Lemuel Stewart, both African-Americans, dominated the brick mason trade in Youngstown from 1861 well into the early 20th century. Many *Youngstown Vindicator* newspaper accounts use the same quote that Berry "was the contractor for the brickwork of virtually every major building erected...." Evidence supports this as they were the only brick masons in Youngstown following the Civil War. Furthermore, several 1860s newspaper accounts, from the *Mahoning Courier* and *Mahoning County Register*, acclaim Berry's mastery as well as document the building construction he supervised. The Mahoning Valley Historical Society archives also provided supportive evidence of Berry's contribution.

reflecting a growing culture of diverse faith. In 1870, the city of Youngstown reached a population of 8,075, with the county census recording 31,001 people. At decade's end the city population had increased by 7,360 to 15,435, or a growth rate of more than 90 percent.²⁴

In spite of a six-year depression that began with the Panic of 1873, the population increased, major construction projects came to fruition, and city improvements pronounced the decade as a period of endurance. The period was a precursor to the prolific 1880s when high style architecture and its architects defined municipal ambitions. Moreover, the city's institutional and cultural concerns began to redefine Youngstown's grandeur. The new Opera House was considered by county historian H.Z. Williams as "one of the finest in the country."²⁵ The new second Mahoning County Courthouse became the harbinger of a new era in county law and politics with the transfer of the county seat from Canfield to Youngstown. The new Mahoning National Bank established a precedent as the first of several banks to locate on the Diamond, the city's public commons, where Federal Street and Wick Avenue (today Market Street) converged. New and affluent housing moved north to the "hill" on Wood Street, then further north to Rayen and Lincoln Avenues, and finally advancing northward up Wick Avenue in preparation for the next industrial boom's "Millionaire's Row." The Tod House

²⁴ Butler, Vol. I, *History of Youngstown*, p.212.

²⁵ *History of Trumbull and Mahoning Counties*, p.367.

defined a new era in lodging amenities.

The Tod House Hotel (fig.4), constructed from 1867-1869, welcomed the new decade with modern accommodations that made the previous tavern-inn system antiquated.²⁶ Constructed in brick with a stone foundation by P. Ross Berry, the Tod House sat at the southeast corner of the Diamond at Market Street. Its four-story facade reflected the Second Empire style with a mansard roof at the top story. Its north facade had a projecting four-story tower capped with an unusual convex-curved mansard roof incorporating iron cresting along the roof-line. This tower design was repeated at the northwest and southwest corners of the building along Market Street. The hotel accommodations included suites of parlors with connecting rooms, forty-eight bedrooms, a reception room, several reading rooms, and a billiard room.²⁷

The Opera House, one of the most significant architectural contributions to Youngstown's building stock, opened its doors in 1874 at the southwest corner of the Diamond after two years of construction. Its description in *The History of Trumbull and Mahoning Counties, Ohio* best articulates its grandness:

The walls rest on solid stone foundations...The front is iron and the exterior appearance is very tasty and attractive, and as well as the interior arrangements, reflects great credit upon its architect. The

²⁶ Brenner, *Downtown and the University*, p.43.

²⁷ *History of Trumbull and Mahoning Counties*, p.377-378.

auditorium is...admirably arranged, having a capacity of about fourteen hundred, with room for six hundred more...The frescoing is elaborate and beautiful; the ceiling of the dome is decorated with allegorical figures...The stage...is well supplied with scenery...and everything there, as elsewhere, is marked with a degree of perfectness.²⁸

Prior to the Opera House, in 1873, the Mahoning National Bank opened at the same southeast corner of the Diamond. The four-story structure added to the building stock representing the Second Empire style. Its raised corner entry welcomed patrons who were assured of the solidity of the bank through its grandness of architectural scale and articulation of materials. This was the city building stock that existed when Charles Henry Owsley arrived to initiate his architectural practice.

²⁸ *History of Trumbull and Mahoning Counties*, p.378.

CHAPTER TWO

The Foundation and Cornerstone

1870-1895

Charles Henry Owsley was born at Blaston Hall, the family manor, in Leicestershire, England in December 1846. Following a general education at Allesley Park College in Coventry, England, the sixteen year old Owsley showed an interest in a career with the Royal Navy. As the cost of such a commission was one hundred pounds, his parents arranged for a trial voyage on a small sailing vessel. When the ship's captain ordered the young, inexperienced Owsley to ascend the mast and unfurl the sail during a raging storm, Owsley refused. The captain had him flogged whereupon Owsley deserted when the ship docked at a port in Wales. Finally returning home, he abandoned all hope for a commission.¹ By December 1864, Owsley began a three year apprenticeship under the architect James Hoskins of Abergavenny, Monmouthshire, Wales. The indenture cost his father, William Poyntz Mason Owsley, twenty-nine pounds with an additional twenty pounds paid twelve months after the institution of the indenture agreement. Owsley, with Hoskins' signature, completed his apprenticeship and concluded the indenture

¹ Katherine (McKelvey) Owsley to grandchildren, December 1953. Private collection of Richard O. Bray, Bethesda, Maryland.

contract in January of 1868.²

The December 1915 issue of *The Ohio Architect, Engineer, and Builder* journal, as well as additional sources, connect Owsley's apprenticeship and training period with the renowned English architects, Sir Gilbert Scott and Sir Digby Wyatt. Information is unavailable that would clarify whether this was a subsequent apprenticeship or an affiliation through the Hoskins' indenture. Nevertheless, Owsley's early work gives testimony to his experience in the restoration of cathedrals in Abergavenny, Wales--work in which Scott excelled. Scott, an early proponent of preservation, as early as 1865 stressed conservation and the promotion of faithful restorations. He proposed this practice to the Royal Institute of British Architects, preceding their adoption.³ During the period of Owsley's apprenticeship, Scott's office conducted eighty church restorations as well as twenty-one new ecclesiastical designs.⁴

In 1868, following his marriage to Mary Jane Williams in Abergavenny, Wales and the death of his father, Owsley, with brothers John Cumming Owsley and Stephen Poyntz Owsley emigrated to America, reaching Toronto, Canada that same year. He practiced as an architect and builder in Toronto until his migration

² Information from a quote of the Indenture Paper in Katherine Owsley's letter, 1953. Bray Collection.

³ David Cole, *The Works of Sir Gilbert Scott*, (London: Architectural Press, 1980), p.113.

⁴ Ibid.

to Weathersfield Township, Trumbull County, Ohio. By November 1869, Owsley obtained a parcel of land located near the villages of Mineral Ridge and Niles, Ohio where he maintained a residence until 1886, when he moved to 19 S. Fruit Street, Youngstown.⁵

Owsley's emergence as an influence on the style and direction of Youngstown's building stock began about 1870. City directories first recorded an office establishment at 19 South Fruit Street. By 1886, the directory recorded this location as his residence, as he had removed to a separate office in Room T of the Wick Block located on the corner of West Federal and North Phelps Street. Here he remained until 1908. Owsley's decision to secure office space within the city was predicated on his next major commission: the second Mahoning County Courthouse.

As the battle with Canfield over the location of the county seat ensued (Youngstown emerged as the victor by 1879), a new era of government, law, and politics waited on the horizon. The issue of removal of the county seat to Youngstown from Canfield began with the formation of Mahoning County in 1846. Within the ensuing thirty years, Youngstown evolved from a village to a city with one-third of the county population paying nearly half of the county taxes.⁶ Unfortunately for Canfield, its population and village remained provincial, though

⁵ From copy of Trumbull County Record Book 102, page 130. Bray Collection.

⁶ Butler, Vol .I, *History of Youngstown*, p.207.

their Greek Revival courthouse, built in 1846, represented greater ambitions. In 1876, the State Supreme Court upheld the lower court ruling deciding in Youngstown's favor. Canfield, however, appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States, finally losing its case in 1879. An 1874 contingency ruling required the erection, within two years, of "...suitable buildings for court-house, jail, and all other offices and rooms necessary for the transaction of all public business...."⁷ With confidence in a favorable ruling, Youngstown city government awarded the commission to Owsley in 1873 or 1874.

The Mahoning County Courthouse (fig.7), constructed on the southeast corner of Wood Street and Wick Avenue, represented a major commission in the city for Owsley. For the young twenty-eight year old architect, its monumental scale in the High Victorian Gothic style represented not only the center of county government but its architect's international education. The scale and massing of the building, the articulation of the brick and limestone, and the detailing of the limestone window lintels suggested English antecedents rather than American roots. The first-story buttresses and north facade four-story tower, including a steeply-pitched mansard roof, attest to Owsley's training in English church architecture. The modified mansard roof, however, suggests an attempt to Americanize his style as well as his awareness of contemporary design expressions.

⁷ Butler, *History of Youngstown*, p.209.

Monumental architecture again appeared with Owsley's 1889 Second National Bank at the northeast corner of the Diamond, and when Charles Henry and son Charles Frederick collaborated on the 1910 Mahoning County Courthouse. Additionally, the engaging of P. Ross Berry for the masonry work on the second county courthouse guaranteed the building's distinctive facade.

Owsley had other commissions during this decade that included the Richardsonian Romanesque Strouss-Hirshberg Enterprise Store (fig.8), constructed in 1875, on West Federal Street near Hazel Street. This three-story commercial facade was tripartite in design, using round engaged columns of stone. Incorporated at the third-story are arched window openings. Its use of rock-faced limestone was unequaled along Federal Street. The middle bay had a projecting balcony at the second-story and an inset balcony alcove at the third-story. Its cornice was corbeled stone with the center bay extending above the cornice line with rounded stone column ends capped with an exotic finial. The round stone column design appeared again when Owsley redesigned the Pollock Mansion on Wick Avenue in 1890.

On the eve of a new decade, Youngstown emerged from the depression that began with the Panic of 1873. The city endured and prosperity returned. The gas works that the city began in the latter half of the 1860s with service for street lighting, was enlarged and improved in 1872. City water improvements materialized in the 1870s, financed with a \$10,000 bond in 1871. By 1882, the

general city sewer system plan included the construction of a main sewer line to drain the problematic river area west of Crab Creek. The paving of streets progressed, with Federal Street finally covered with cobblestones in 1882. In 1880, the Youngstown Telephone Company formed, servicing seventy-five customers within two years of business. By the mid-1880s, the Mahoning Electric Light Company began operation and "was supplying 175 city lights and 70 commercial outlets by 1888, the year in which incandescent lighting made its appearance."⁸ The first city street car line, the Youngstown Street Railway Company, was a horse-powered system pioneered in 1874-1875 and lasting until conversion to electrical power in the 1880s beckoned a new era of intercity travel with the Mahoning Valley Electric Railway Company.

The 1870s began with the completion of Mayor George McKee's service in 1872 and closed with Matthew Logan's term, the decade having four mayors. Youngstown's population grew to 15,431, which necessitated a division of the city into seven wards, an increase of two. This decade's significant city government achievement became the relocation of the county seat to Youngstown and the erection of the second Mahoning County Courthouse.

The city building stock (fig.9) began to reflect the cosmopolitan attitude the city desired following the war. By 1880, the texture of Federal Street was

⁸ *Youngstown Grows with Ohio*, p.28.

completely commercial (figs.10) and the Diamond appeared destined to be the epicenter of civic, cultural, and financial undertakings. The newest industrial boom increased the personal wealth of the city's industrialists, embodied in their mansions along Wick Avenue. The enduring tenacity of Youngstown in the 1870s would be replaced with building activities and growth unimaginable to the citizens of the time.

The decade of the 1880s heralded a return to prosperity with new construction in the commercial as well as the residential building sectors. Along West Federal Street, eight commercial buildings and building blocks (fig.11) emerged. The 1882-1883 Business Directory for Youngstown listed four architectural firms based in the city. Owsley shared office space on the second floor of the McGillin Block with a Sharon, Pennsylvania architect, Adolfus Kanengeiser. Kanengeiser, by the close of the decade, included in his portfolio the Romanesque Revival Helen Chapel, located on Wood Street at Champion just east of the First Presbyterian Church. The two additional architects, Rufus F. Thompson and William B. Ellis, maintained an equally full schedule. Ellis, called the "...oldest resident architect of this city," in an 1893 *Youngstown Vindicator* business article, was registered as early as 1872 in the city's directories.⁹ Thompson arrived in Youngstown in 1879 or 1880 to supervise the construction of the C.H. Andrews

⁹ *Youngstown Vindicator*, April 30, 1893, p.6.

residence and the Commercial National Bank; he remained in the city until his death in 1917. The architect had a reputation for carefully drawn contracts and strict adherence to specifications as well as cost estimates.¹⁰ Architect Herman Kling also participated in the orchestration of the city's religious, business and private structures—an increasing building stock produced by these new middle-class professionals.

Charles Henry Owsley's portfolio for the decade consisted of several commissions in nearby Warren. The Park Hotel, several fine residences such as the Dr. Julian Harmon house on High Street, and the classic Stick Style edifice for Henry Richards on Mahoning Avenue firmly established Owsley as a lasting contributor to the city's architectural landscape. In Youngstown, a number of distinctive architectural commissions of the decade included the 1886 Moorish Rodef Sholom Temple at the corner of Holmes and Lincoln Avenues that incorporated a corner tower crowned with an onion dome. The High Victorian Gothic Second National Bank located on the northeast corner of Public Square was Owsley's paragon.

The Second National Bank (fig.12) presented its polychromatic corner tower with raised arched entry surround of stone to the southwest. The building's four-and-a-half-story facade used an architectural texture of rusticated rough faced stone at the ground level and a darker brick face for the second through the fourth stories.

¹⁰ *Youngstown Vindicator*, April 30,1893, p.23.

Carved stone spandrel panels, limestone sills and lintels, and a bracketed cornice provided a balanced interruption of the building's verticality. Owsley crowned his building with a modified mansard roof using projected parapet dormers. The building embodied a grandeur and strength through its variegation of material and carved ornamentation. No other commercial structure within the city of the 1880s or the 1890s matched the artistry of the Second National Bank.

In 1887, Owsley formed a partnership with Louis Boucherle (fig.13). Boucherle, born in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1857, immigrated to the United States and settled in Youngstown by 1884. The architectural firm of Owsley & Boucherle retained a practice in Youngstown until Owsley's retirement in 1912 and the subsequent dissolution of the firm. Throughout the 1890s, the firm of Owsley & Boucherle maintained a respectable workload as well as a continuous influence on Youngstown's evolving architectural landscape.

Youngstown's building activities continued in the 1890s, although restrained. Numerous iron worker strikes and the Panic of 1893 brought a six year standstill to the local economy aggravated by two railroad strikes in 1894.¹¹ By 1890, the city population reached 33, 220; a 115% increase over the 1880 figure.¹² The firm of Owsley & Boucherle, located in the Wick Block and then the Wick Bank Building at 30 West Federal Street from 1886 to 1889 and 1889-1908 respectively, continued

¹¹ Butler, *History of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley, Ohio*, p.222.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.217.

to design and build architectural edifices that were distinctive and well planned. In 1892, the new YMCA building at the corner of East Federal and Champion Streets opened. Its corner tower was more subdued than previous buildings, while the four-story structure used a complex pitched roof with gables and dormers. The building's unique East Federal Street doorway employed an opening of rough faced stone at the base and a Sullivanesque incised stone arch--lace work more intricate than the craftsmanship on the Second National Bank.

The Gallagher Block on West Federal Street also in 1892 and the public school buildings on Mahoning Avenue, the Third Ward School in Ashtabula, Ohio (fig.14) as well as Market Street (fig.15) represented the firm's work in the first half of the decade. The rebuilding of the Plymouth Congregational Church on West Rayen Avenue, the United Presbyterian Church on East Wood Street, and St. Joseph's school at West Rayen and North Phelps Street characterize the commercial, educational, and religious building undertaking in Youngstown during a difficult time of economic turmoil.

Despite limited monetary resources resulting from unemployment, the city pursued improvements to its public service buildings. Beginning in 1882, Youngstown's Central Fire Station was constructed with stations Numbers Two and Three built in 1888 and 1889 respectively. By 1896, three additional stations provided fire protection to a growing city population. Architects and architecture began to provide their own form of fire protection with better designed and

fireproofed buildings. Following the devastating fires of Chicago in 1871, Boston in 1872, and the Lynn, Massachusetts fire of 1889, architects designed in earnest to alleviate the catastrophic effects of fire.¹³

Not only did changes in the practice of architecture influence the firm of Owsley & Boucherle, but changes in the professionalism of architecture also defined the architect's stature in society. In 1884, the Midwestern faction of the architectural profession organized under the banner of the Western Association of Architects (WAA). By 1889, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and the Western Association of Architects merged, retaining the eastern contingent's name.¹⁴ Owsley, as well as 211 Midwestern architects, having been members of the WAA since its inception received the rank of "Fellow" (FAIA) at the organization's consolidation in 1889. Also listed as Fellow in 1889 was Youngstown architect Rufus F. Thompson. Louis Boucherle joined the AIA in 1891.¹⁵ By 1892 there were twenty-three chapters of the AIA with a membership of 465 Fellows and eighty-one Honorary Members.¹⁶

¹³ Additionally, the Galveston, Texas hurricane of 1900, the burning of Baltimore in 1904 as well as the 1906 San Francisco earthquake disaster presented architects with challenging opportunities to initiate new technology and apply new city planning theories that ultimately improved those city's architectural landscape.

¹⁴ *A History and Directory of the College*, (Washington: American Institute of Architects, College of Fellows, 1984), p.2&3.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

The intent of this burgeoning professional organization was to promote an accepted code of practice, to regulate building standards and insure public safety through architect licensing, and to standardize the architect's fee. The advertising of architectural work to promote the architect was strongly discouraged. In 1894, the organization adopted a fee schedule, but not until 1909 did the AIA agree on a detailed code of practice which was advisory only.¹⁷ The changes represented the concluding steps in the transition from architecture as a craft to architecture as a profession.

The educational aspect of architecture, however, evolved much slower. In 1870, four-fifths of all AIA members were office trained and by 1912, "when there were thirty-two university programs, two-thirds of all AIA members still received some instruction in a practitioner's office."¹⁸ Throughout the 1890s change in the education of architects brought the American university architectural curriculum in line with the French system of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Those prominent American architects who attended the school and then applied the French philosophy of architecture as art in their American practices helped to establish the institutional system that Charles Frederick Owsley embraced and implemented throughout his life.

¹⁷ Mary N. Wood, *From Craft to Profession: The Practice of Architecture in Nineteenth-Century America*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1999), p.50.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.36.

CHAPTER THREE

The Education of Charles Frederick: 1895-1905

“Poets may be born and not made,
but two conditions of the architect’s profession is
that he be born and made.”

Charles Frederick Owsley, 1921¹

Born on 10 January 1880 in Weathersfield Township, Trumbull County, Ohio, Charles Frederick Owsley was the fourth of five children. In a 1926 *Youngstown Vindicator* article, he told how at an early age his father recognized his drawing and sketching abilities and directed him into the study of architecture. During his freshman year of high school, Owsley studied in New York at the Atelier Masqueray. The young Owsley’s exposure to the atelier system was two fold, first in 1896 at the Atelier Masqueray of New York, then in Paris, France in 1904-1905. An atelier, defined as a studio or an architectural drafting room, was an integral part of the French system taught at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and when copied in America, trained many future architects.

At the age of sixteen, Owsley (fig.16) studied under E. L. Masqueray, a French designer, who worked for the well-respected architect Richard Morris Hunt, as well as conducted an atelier. Hunt, the first American architect trained

¹ *Youngstown Vindicator* 6 July 1921, p.3.

at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris and the Atelier Hector Lefuel, practiced in New York City from 1855 until his death, a period of forty years. Hunt supervised the first American atelier, an Americanized model of the Parisian school, and trained many who later became prominent American architects.² Masqueray worked as Hunt's draftsman, delineating plans and elevations for Hunt during the 1890s. During one major commission, the Vanderbilt's *Breakers* at Newport, Masqueray prepared over a dozen floor plans and two elevation studies between December 1892 and March 1893 for the approval of Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt II.³ The rendering of these two elevation drawings (fig.17) is expressive and exemplary of Masqueray's artistic abilities. Masqueray's drawing skill probably inspired Owsley to emulate his instructor's craft, for several existing renderings by Owsley reveal a similar expressiveness.

In 1895, Masqueray worked on the plans for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Hunt's last and most famous public building, designed in the Beaux-Arts style. By 1896, Owsley entered the atelier and studied under Masqueray. Their education was the common thread that connected these architects--Hunt, Masqueray, and Owsley--and was important to their design approach as well as

² Susan R. Stein, Ed., *The Architecture of Richard Morris Hunt* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), p.5.

³ Ibid., p.166.

their drawings of Beaux-Arts architecture. Furthermore, the younger Owsley's atelier training followed in many respects the apprenticeship of his father, Charles Henry. The second stage of his education, however, represented the maturing university training method.

After graduating from Rayen high school in 1899, Owsley enrolled in the University of Pennsylvania's architectural program. Established in 1890, the University of Pennsylvania became one of the few American universities to offer a program in architecture. MIT (1868), Cornell University (1871), the University of Illinois (1873), Columbia University (1881), and Tuskegee Institute (1892), offered a diverse education in architecture. University curriculum evolved during the late nineteenth century from general liberal arts to a more specialized field of study. When architectural offices demanded quality draftsmen over "gentlemen-scholars," universities began to adopt the Parisian philosophy of educating architects.⁴ Prior to the 1890s, "[u]niversity programs had a limited impact ...[as] many of the most influential architects--H.H. Richardson, Charles McKim, John Root, Dankmar Adler, and Stanford White--[had] attended the Ecole des Beaux-Arts or studied engineering or graduated from the drawing boards."⁵ Schools such as Columbia, Harvard, and the University of

⁴ Wood, *From Craft to Profession*, p.80.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.80.

Pennsylvania developed their programs to emulate the French school, using a curriculum of studio projects and design competitions. "These programs shaped the future of American architectural education, offering a design methodology and a focus on architecture as a fine art but pragmatically produced facile draftsmen for the large architectural offices."⁶

The University of Pennsylvania's School of Architecture's instructors--T.P. Chandler, Jr., Warren Powers Laird, as well as the noted watercolorist Charles E. Dana--conducted the basic curriculum. Special instructors in design, ornament, and freehand drawing, added in 1893 to strengthen ..."the aesthetic quality of the school's influence," included Columbia University's Architectural School graduates Herbert E. Everett and Frank E. Perkins, *Architecte Diplome' par la Gouvernement Francais*.⁷ Perkins may have influenced Owsley to eventually journey to Paris to attend the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Architectural specific studies incorporated instruction in Pen and Ink and Modeling, with the Architectural Construction and Practice course as well as the Architectural History class conducted by Columbia University graduates Perkins and Everett.

⁶ Wood, *From Craft to Profession*, p.81.

⁷ "Architectural Schools in the United States: University of Pennsylvania--No. 2," *The Architectural Record*, Vol. X, No. 3, (February, 1901), p.315.

After earning his Bachelor of Science in Architecture from the University of Pennsylvania in 1903, Owsley traveled to Holland where he received painting instruction from William Merritt Chase. Chase, an American painter and instructor, highly influenced early twentieth-century painting styles of color and boldness. His influence on Owsley was such that in a 1926 article Owsley stated: "As a result of this contact there was some question which I would follow, painting or architecture, as a life's work."⁸ His study under Chase, however, made a major contribution to his professional views and abilities. Owsley often used his painting ability to provide context to his building design presentations, emulating Masqueray and Hunt, successfully uniting art and architecture.

Deciding to follow architecture, Owsley arrived in Paris in 1903 and entered the Atelier of Godefroy and Freynet. This was an *atelier preparatoires*, that is, an atelier that prepared students for the entrance exam to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Between the years 1846 and 1968, when the Ecole des Beaux-Arts was reorganized by decree of France's President Charles de Gaulle, a total of 500 Americans attended the school. According to Edmund Vincent Gillon, "In the 1890s, Americans made up the largest foreign contingent in the Ecole studying architecture."⁹ Hundreds more, however, attended ateliers in Paris, but never

⁸ *Youngstown Vindicator* 23 April 1926, p.5.

⁹ Edmund Vincent Gillon, *Beaux-Arts Architecture in New York* (New York: Dover Publishing Company, 1988), p.viii.

enrolled at the Ecole. These ateliers helped shape and develop many of America's architects of the early twentieth century, including Owsley. For unknown reasons, Owsley never matriculated in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, but studied once more under the atelier system.

It is necessary to examine the structure of the atelier system to understand better this significant force in Owsley's development. The majority of ateliers did not operate under the control of the French school but were independent, privately controlled, and located away from the Ecole. These were known as *atelier libre*, while the official or Ecole controlled ateliers were called *atelier officiel*. Each *atelier libre* was student governed and each student paid a modest dues to the *massier*, a student elected by the others to collect the dues. With the dues, the *massier* paid the rent, purchased coal for heat, oil for lamps or candles for light, a few necessary books, and paid the fee to the architect selected as *patron*.

Each atelier consisted of older, experienced students or *anciens*, newer students or *nouveaux*, and a *patron* or master architect. *Anciens* were students of five to ten years association with the atelier. They offered their experience to the younger, newer students, giving suggestions and criticisms, sharing their learning as the *nouveaux* worked. The *nouveaux* assisted the *anciens* in completing projects and acquired experience much the same as in an architect's

office. Richard Chafee writes about the atmosphere of the atelier in his chapter titled "The Teaching of Architecture at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts" by stating: "...[with] the endless exchange of ideas about architecture, [this] was the intellectual life of the atelier."¹⁰ A typical atelier had 30-80 students. The following quote from an architect who graduated in 1903 further describes the atmosphere:

The ateliers...occupy quarters in old buildings where cheapness and dirt keep company. A crowd of students is not a desirable neighbor: they sing much, often through the night. The walls of the rooms are decorated with caricatures and pictures until a dark somber tone is attained that accords well with the dirt, dishevelment, and confusion of the place. The lighting is by candle, each man furnishing his one or two candles that are stuck to the board on which he is working. The air of the room is close, for there is no ventilation. Silence never prevails. Jokes fly back and forth, snatches of songs, excerpts from operas, at times even a mass may be sung, yet amid the confusion and the babble--strange as it may seem--work proceeds.¹¹

¹⁰ Arthur Drexler, ed., *The Architecture of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1977), p.92.

¹¹ Walter D. Blair, "Student Life at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts," *The Brickbuilder*, vol. 18 (March 1909), p.52-54. As quoted in Arthur Drexler, ed., *The Architecture of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1977).

In *Quatz Arts--My Experience as a Student at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris 1924-1928*, T. Merrill Prentice also lends an additional view of the atelier: "The ateliers were very competitive among each other and the members of the ateliers were very close knit, similar to a fraternity in a U.S. college....Work done in the atelier was architectural rather than scholastic. Scholastic courses were given in the school and were rarely attended by the students."¹²

Each atelier had a *patron*, an experienced master offering guidance. He visited his atelier two to three times a week. A lookout would be posted to warn students when the *patron* arrived to insure good behavior. The *patron* would go from drawing board to drawing board, reviewing and critiquing the work of each student by offering ways to develop their idea more fully, or gave comments on proportions. He would express his ideas and theories on architecture as well as guide each student toward his own development. Each *patron's* personality impacted their teaching, but most of them were loyal, personable, and encouraged camaraderie.

Owsley, as a *nouveaux*, (fig.18) provided help to the older students of the Atelier Godefroy and Freynet. A study of the project structure and teaching at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts will afford a fuller appreciation of Owsley's experience. The Ecole des Beaux-Arts was a state school requiring no tuition, open to all

¹² T. Merrill Prentice, "Quatz Arts-My Experience as a Student at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris 1924-1928," *Journal for Society of Architectural Historians*, 44:4. (December 1985), p.385.

males between the ages of fifteen to thirty. Upon arrival in Paris, an American student sought an atelier, usually one with a majority of Americans. The school gave those students preparing for the entrance exam the title of *aspirant*. Once the *aspirant* passed the entrance exam, the only prerequisite, his standing became that of *seconde classe*. In the atelier structure, they were the *nouveaux* students. Lectures on theory, history, and construction, as well as drawing preparation, trained each *seconde classe* student at the Ecole for his competitions. Each *seconde classe* student went through a series of competitions or *concours* to accumulate enough credits to enter the *premiere classe*--these were the *anciens* in the atelier.

With a *programme* posted, the student that chose to compete had twelve hours to develop his *parti* or basic ideas in a rough sketch or *esquisse*. The classroom competition isolated each competitor *en loge*, that is in cubicles isolated from one another. Furthermore, each competitor remained in his cubicle until finished, as anyone leaving could not return. The standard approach was to delineate your solutions with adequate latitude to work out the details later during the second phase. With the sketch completed, the student submitted it to the guard, left the classroom and returned to the atelier to work on the second phase of the competition. During this time, the *ancien* procured the assistance of the atelier's *nouveaux*.

The second phase required the student to articulate his solutions and fully develop his ideas which he first presented in his sketch. This accomplishment appeared in a large scale drawing called a *rendu*. The *rendu*, developed within a one to three month period, was submitted to a jury of twenty *patrons*. These *patrons*, elected to the position for life, compared the *rendu* with the *esquisse* to determine the success of the student's developed ideas. Points were awarded according to the design approach, the problems solved and the student's drawing skill. The purpose of the *concours* was to train the student to think for himself and to approach each project in a grand, monumental way. Required to enter a minimum of two of the six *concours* offered each year, a student usually took two to four years to accumulate the necessary points to enter the *premiere classe* of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Once in the *premiere classe*, the *concours* continued with less emphasis on scholastic studies. Here the student accumulated, usually within a two to three year period, the prerequisite points to qualify for the *Grand Prix de Rome* competition. This was a five-year study program in Rome, open only to French citizens.

Before ending this discussion of the Ecole and the atelier, the purpose for the *concours* and the accepted applied methodology will be discussed. These competitions were the core of the Ecole education system and the life of the atelier, as well as the foundation for any future architectural practice. Each

student experienced mental and dexterous development through these continual competitions. T. Merrill Prentice states: "In the early part of the twentieth-century, most students presented their *projet* in what was derisively known as the *style pompier*. This consisted of columns, pilasters, arches, cornices, pediments, cartouches, finials, and cupolas."¹³ Students were encouraged to work in a monumental, grand palatial style. All projects were large, both in the scope of plan and in the size of the drawing. Because the drawings were large, they required help from other *anciens* as well as from the *nouveaux*. All worked toward a common goal, each taking pride in the finished *rendu*, camaraderie dominated. This approach to design and drawing was the foundation to Owsley's life-long vocation.

Vincent Gillon states: "Beaux-Arts...conveys a large outlook, a willingness to see the world embellished, a range of knowledge in the arts embodied in the respect for our past, a certain sophistication to make use of the best."¹⁴ Each design began with a plan and the plan controlled the process. The plan had to articulate function utilizing a hierarchical system of major and minor axes and cross axes.¹⁵ To further explain, a rectangular building plan, bisected through the

¹³ Prentice, "Quartz Arts." p.385.

¹⁴ Gillon, p:vii.

¹⁵ Marcus Wiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1969, revised 1992), p.151.

longest distance to define space and passageways, was bisected again through the shortest distance to further delineate the symmetrical, ordered plan. These horizontal and vertical lines converged at the center of the rectangle, at a 90 degree angle. Designated main corridor and secondary passageways followed these major and minor axes with the intersecting point becoming the primary space, such as a central court area.

With the plan established, students learned that the expression of the exterior walls reflected the plan's internal organization and never develop independently. American architects Louis Sullivan, an Ecole student, and Frank Lloyd Wright, Sullivan's apprentice, articulated this theory in their well known statement, "form follows function." (Wright, however, developed theories based only on the plan relationship.) Each monumental plan expressed symmetry, order, massing, axial planning, and a heritage of Roman and Greek classicism. Students learned that classic architecture lent security through established style and proven construction and detailing methods. Second in importance to the plan was the building section, which articulated interior space in a vertical expression of mass and volume. The goal was beauty through classical elements, not originality. It was believed originality would take care of itself.¹⁶

¹⁶ Gillon p.ix.

When consideration of the elevations occurred, the emphasis was on symmetry, eclecticism of classical styles and elements, and embellishment. Quoting Gillon, "embellishment...is the key element in bringing visual delight...."¹⁷ The method used by the student to articulate these visual delights, and the method that embodied the Ecole and atelier student work, was the drawing. Emphasis was placed on drawing as art. The student who achieved high scores in the *concours* was usually a skilled delineator, a gifted draftsman. Because most *projets* were exercises in design and delineation and never on actual construction of a building, drawings became the end product. The beauty of the drawing--that is the plan and rendering--represented the culmination of the students' abilities. The dominant technique was the India ink wash. This technique and mastered skill is evident in Masqueray (fig.17), Hunt (fig.19), and Owsley (fig.20).

When students left the Ecole and the atelier for their architectural practices, they took with them a grand and monumental approach to architecture, one that relied on the classical form and ornamentation. They learned a method for their office structure and a belief in camaraderie, exemplary of the atelier. The atelier was the archetype for success in working together toward a common goal that fostered pride in the completed work, whether a

¹⁷ Gillon, p.ix

drawing or a building. Architects sought to produce drawings that equaled art and buildings that championed the Beaux-Arts theories. Each architect's office required a sizable support staff to execute the large number of grand drawings required for the monumental buildings. In the architectural field, monumentality meant the inclusion of other artisans, such as sculptors, muralists, stone carvers and other craftsmen. Each building became a celebration of the arts. From the first pencil line drawn to the final stone laid in place, everything was on a grand scale. Every detail received the architect's attention, including the doorplate and knob.

The following chapter will demonstrate the significant influence, beginning in 1905, that Charles Frederick brought to his father's architectural firm of Owsley & Boucherle. His experience in Paris, his exposure to Roman and Greek architecture, as well as his Beaux-Arts training, will be embodied in all of the firm's architectural projects in the first decade of the twentieth-century. Furthermore, the Mahoning County Courthouse of 1910 will prove to be the apex of their eighty-three years of architectural practice. Their period of collaboration, 1905-1915, produced an aggregate of enduring and significant architecture that contributes a distinctive character for Youngstown's built environment.

CHAPTER FOUR

Together: 1905-1915

"Each honest calling,
each walk of life, has its own elite, its own aristocracy
based upon excellence of performance."

James Bryant Conant¹

Returning to Youngstown after an absence of nearly six years, Charles Frederick Owsley (fig.21) joined his father's firm of Owsley & Boucherle at the apex of a city-wide building boom. In 1896, St Paul's English Reform Church had been erected on West Boardman Street. The stone Gothic Revival St. John's Episcopal Church on Wick Avenue, designed by New Jersey architect William Halsey, opened its arched double-doors to worshipers in 1898. The new city Post Office Building at the northeast corner of Market Street and Boardman Street opened in 1898, as did the four-story Federal Building on West Federal Street, the first Youngstown building by nationally known Chicago architect Daniel H. Burnham. Owsley and Boucherle designed the Yale School in 1897, a small private school on Yale Avenue, and the Mahoning County Infirmary on Herbert Road in nearby Canfield,. The following year, their Parmalee School on Belmont Avenue opened. Finally, in 1899, the new Market Street viaduct afforded city access from the

¹ Dr. Laurence J. Peter, *Peter's Quotations*, (Toronto, New York, et.al: Bantam Books & William Morrow & Co., Inc.,1980), p.512.

outlying heretofore isolated southern area of the city. The viaduct also opened the south side to new development, increased population, and the formation of a streetcar suburb by the increased business of the Park and Falls Street Railway Company. Youngstown historian Joseph G. Butler described the southward expansion:

[F]rom 1899...the growth was phenomenal. Instead of being the home of the few and isolated from the rest of the city, it [the southern suburb] began to rival the district north of the river in importance and Market Street was gradually transformed from a country road to a busy business thoroughfare.²

In 1900, the population of the city reached 44,885. Youngstown's prosperity, opportunity, and enthusiasm for improvement of its building stock now began to attract national architects such as Detroit's Albert Kahn in 1906. Kahn introduced to the rising city skyline, the Commercial Style Stambaugh Building on Central Square and in 1910, the Mahoning National Bank. Daniel Burnham, in 1907, contributed his second edifice to the Youngstown building stock, the thirteen-story Wick Building at 34 West Federal Street. By 1919 New York's McKim, Mead & White enlarged the national contingent with their Neo-Classical Revival Butler Institute of American Art building on Wick Avenue.

² Butler, *History of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley, Ohio*, p.231.

By the time Charles Frederick joined Owsley & Boucherle in 1905, the firm's architectural practice in the city of Youngstown spanned twenty-eight years, with Charles Henry Owsley's prominence covering nearly thirty-five years. Charles Henry was fifty-nine years old and Charles Frederick was just twenty-five. Since the turn of the century, Owsley & Boucherle's architectural portfolio steadily enlarged to include a number of local and regional commissions. In 1902, they added the Elks Club Building on Wick Avenue and Wood Street. Two years later, they designed and supervised a \$40,000 five-story brick bank building for the Potter's Building and Savings Company in East Liverpool, Ohio. They were awarded a \$10,000 commission to design and build a mausoleum for C.N. Wildman in Pittsburgh.

In 1904, they also supervised the construction of their design for the Newton Falls Methodist Episcopal Church, expected to cost between \$6,000 and \$7,000. Additional work included the Baldwin Memorial Kindergarten at Front and Champion Streets (fig.22) and two building blocks costing \$30,000 each for John Renner and James Mackey. In Youngstown as well, a \$15,000 residence for C.N. Crandall added to their project supervision concerns. The George J. Renner and John Gallagher Buildings, as well as the 1905 stone Gothic Revival Richard Brown Memorial Church near Wick Park and the similarly designed Hungarian Evangelical Reform Church on Mahoning Avenue, became part of their expansive portfolio. In Pennsylvania, the firm's work included the 1903 Buhl Club in Sharon

and the Trinity Episcopal Church in New Castle.

Additionally, plans were prepared for a four-story brick block on the east side of Central Square and a two-story brick stable on Boardman Street projected to cost \$5,000. Before the erection of the current Mahoning County Courthouse on Market Street between Boardman and Front Streets, Owsley & Boucherle designed a ten-story granite, brick, and terra-cotta skyscraper for the northwest corner of that block (fig.23). Planned as the new Masonic Temple, it would be "...the largest, most costly, and imposing [structure] in the city." Its design mirrored Owsley & Boucherle's work for two additional skyscrapers planned for the downtown.

As the perfection of Central Square as the city's financial center continued--it had begun nearly fifteen years earlier--Owsley & Boucherle incorporated the new archetype for urban architecture. Their 1903 design for the Dollar Bank Building (fig.24), located on the northwest corner of Central Square, was the city's first true skyscraper. Conceived in 1901 with a three-bay wide south facade, the construction took two years to complete. It was the first Youngstown business sector structure of steel frame construction with fireproofing and modern equipment, the "...first of the real skyscrapers."³

The new skyscraper had a rusticated first story that supported the main body of red brick and terra-cotta. Reaching eight stories in height, the building was

³ *Youngstown Vindicator*, December 12, 1909, p.21.

Youngstown's tallest for 1903. The crowning top-story featured a variegated parapet with a decorative garland motif in terra-cotta. Below the entablature and above each eighth-story window, Owsley integrated a decorative pediment using an oculus cartouche that incorporated a round window. The window pediments were set against a pressed terra-cotta brick. Contemporary writings proclaimed that "the Dollar Bank building gave [Youngstown] its first pretentious new business block."⁴ The initial building, however, proved inadequate, as an additional eight-story, forty-foot wide bay (fig.25) was added to the west side after 1905.

Introduced in the same month as the Dollar Bank Building, was Owsley & Boucherle's design for a ten-story edifice. The design (fig.26), for Upton A. Andrews, was intended to be erected on the opposite block of the Dollar Savings and Trust Company's building at Wick Avenue and Commerce Street. Using a steel skeleton faced with brick and terra-cotta, Owsley's Andrews Building would have complimented his Dollar Bank design, albeit restrained in ornamentation. Unfortunately, Andrews intended to spend just \$100,000 for his building. With the lowest bid at \$125,000, Andrews abandoned the project and lessened Owsley & Boucherle's significance as Youngstown's harbingers of the new urban architecture.

Though Youngstown's building environment began to articulate a new skyline with eight and ten-story structures, cities such as Pittsburgh, Chicago, and

⁴ *Ohio Architect and Builder*, July 1903, (Cleveland: Cleveland Engineering Society), p.11.

New York were constructing edifices of superior height. As early as 1882, the architectural firm of Burnham & Root designed Chicago's ten-story Montauk Block. By 1902, Daniel Burnham added to his skyscraper portfolio Pittsburgh's twelve-story Union Station, followed in 1903 with the seventeen-story Railway Exchange and the eighteen-story Heyworth Buildings, both in Chicago. Finally, in 1903 Burnham's standard-bearer for urban architecture, the Flatiron Building in New York, could seize the mercurial title "world's tallest building" with twenty stories.⁵

Youngstown's skyscraper history typified a scaled down interpretation of a national building narrative articulated by the larger cities. Beginning with the Dollar Bank Building, each new building (fig.27) achieved a significant elevation that forced the city skyline upward. In 1907, Burnham's thirteen-story Commercial Style Wick Building became the designated "tallest city building." Those that followed, nudged at but never exceeded, Burnham's thirteen stories until Albert Kahn's 1910 Mahoning Bank Building, designed as a thirteen-story edifice. The 1913 Stambaugh Building, also by Kahn and originally constructed with eight stories in 1906, extended its cornice another four floors to a total of twelve stories. Constructed between 1916 and 1919 (fig.28) was Charles Frederick Owsley's Home Savings and Loan Building. The building's main body rose ten stories above the street but extended an additional five stories with its neo-Baroque clock tower. By

⁵ Thomas S. Hines, *Burnham of Chicago: Architect and Planner*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p.289.

1924, the Realty Building, designed by Youngstown architect Morris Scheibel, raised the number of twelve-story buildings on the Square to three. When the 1925 Neo-Classical Revival First National Bank Building (fig.29), erected at West Federal and Central Square, rose to thirteen stories, the city flaunted three "tallest buildings." (fig.30) Finally, in 1929, Scheibel's Art Deco Central Tower with eighteen stories remained Youngstown's tallest skyscraper through the twentieth century.

The architecture of tall buildings inevitably kindled controversy. As early as 1891, Boston instituted a 125-foot height limit on their urban architecture that restricted buildings to ten-stories. One objective argued that "tall buildings...stole light and air from their neighbors and the street" that created an unhealthy environment.⁶ The position of primary concern, however, was the issue of fire safety that had its antecedents in the Great Chicago fire of 1871, as well as Boston's own 1872 city business district fire. The subsequent building code revisions that correlated fireproofing needs to building heights were predicated on a belief that "[t]all buildings were a terrifying addition to the flammable landscape."⁷

Financial and other economic factors also presented fodder for debate between the architect, the financier and investor, and city government officials concerned with revenues and a changing tax base. In 1922, Charles Frederick

⁶ Michael Holleran, "Boston's 'Sacred Skyline:' from Prohibiting to Sculpting Skyscrapers, 1891-1928," *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 22, No. 5, July 1996, p.555.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.557.

expressed an economic perspective of the state of urban architecture as well as the economics behind building height restrictions in a newspaper article:

The skyscraper is the outward manifestation of the expanding commercial ego. It is a symbol of power.... Youngstown's city planning commission should restrict future buildings here to 12 stories. Anything above that upsets economic advantages by robbing the tax duplicate of a spread in value. The skyscraper makes unhealthful canyons out of our streets by shutting sunlight off from the city. An 8-story building is suitable to Youngstown needs.⁸

Returning to 1905, the city's General Improvement Committee and the Board of Public Service approved Owsley & Boucherle's plans for a new "pesthouse." Youngstown made further improvements by adding fire escapes to the City Hall Building, predicated on a new interest in fire safety following the 1904 Baltimore, Maryland fire. That disaster consumed 1500 buildings worth \$13,000,000, covered a 140 acre area of the city, at an estimated cost of \$40,000,000 for reconstruction.⁹

Concurrent local activities transpired that involved Youngstown's other architects. The city discussed with the Erie and PL&E railroad plans for a new \$50,000, three-story passenger station on West Commerce Street. Rufus F.

⁸ *Youngstown Vindicator*, July 6, 1921, p.3.

⁹ *Ohio Architect and Builder*, Jan. & Apr. 1905, (Cleveland: Cleveland Engineering Society), p.67 & p.49.

Thompson and son Edward designed and supervised an extensive remodel of the Opera House. During this period, the competition for local commissions between architects William B. Ellis, Augustus F. Judd, Kling & Zenk as well as Markus J. Miller and George Vaughan produced the many business blocks and school buildings that gave variety and texture to the Youngstown building fabric.

Youngstown in 1905 had seven architectural firms with ten principal architects practicing in the city. By 1910 the number of firms competing for commissions increased to eleven with four established partnerships of at least two principal architects each. Eventually, twenty-two architects listed their practices in the city directory for 1915 and 1920. During this period the firm's 1908 name of Owsley & Boucherle changed to Owsley, Boucherle & Company, then Owsley, Boucherle & Owsley by 1910 as Charles Frederick became a partner. Their offices were in rooms 522-526 of the Dollar Bank Building until 1912 when Charles Henry retired.

By 1905, many American cities embraced the doctrine of the City Beautiful movement with its classical styled monumental government buildings, city parks, and beautification programs that restricted the clutter of commercial district advertising. In 1904, Youngstown enacted a ban that ordered all show cases, signs, and barber poles removed from the sidewalks. The 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition's "White City" inspired many cities and their people, including Youngstown. This planned city of uniformity and monumental

architecture, expressed through Neo-Classicism, represented the French training of those architects involved. Richard Morris Hunt, Charles F. McKim, and Louis Sullivan as well as the sculptor Augustus St. Gaudens were all former students of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and all but Sullivan promoted Beaux-Arts classicism. Daniel Burnham, however, as the Director of Works for the Exposition was an office trained architect. Never having attended the Ecole, Burnham's development with formal and monumental architecture was through his own fascination with grandiose plans and designs. Furthermore, Burnham's managerial skills and gift of persuasion galvanized the eastern contingent of architects with the Chicago ranks, making possible the final grand plan. The Chicago World's Columbian Exposition became the "...stimulus to the American Beaux-Arts neoclassical revival and the 'City Beautiful' movement that was to dominate American urban planning for the next quarter century."¹⁰

Charles Frederick implemented his Beaux-Arts training and City Beautiful theories immediately with his first significant commission under his father's firm of Owsley and Boucherle: the Mahoning County Courthouse. This was to be a grand and monumental building in the Beaux-Arts method. There are three styles that best represent this method. Beaux-Arts Classicism (1890-1920) with its coupled columns expressed in the Greek and Roman orders, monumental entry stairs, a

¹⁰ Susan R. Stein, ed., *The Architecture of Richard Morris Hunt*, (Chicago & London: The University Press, 1986), p. 145.

grandness in design, and a use of figured sculpture, is the first. The second style, Neo-Classical Revival (1900-1920), emphasized a simpler design than Beaux-Arts Classicism and used the Greek order over the Roman with single columns utilized over double columns. The third and last style, Second Renaissance Revival (1900-1940), sought simplicity and order.¹¹ Using rectangular massing, facade symmetry that incorporated the arch, smooth cut stone, and a rusticated ground story, Second Renaissance Revival emphasized the horizontal plane.¹²

Between 1890 and 1940, these became the styles used for many private and governmental buildings such as libraries, train stations, museums, and courthouses. Furthermore, these styles relied on a classical Roman and Greek idioms with classical motifs. They used an axial or bi-axial plan and a hierarchy of plan approach that designated the largest space as the most important. A grand and monumental entrance, therefore, incorporated paired or single columns, round-arched openings, and a grand stairway as the "hallmark of the Beaux-Arts style."¹³ Figured sculpture, a grandness in scale, balance and symmetry, precision in formalistic design expressed the fundamental Beaux-Arts building. Owsley, fresh from his Paris experience, applied his acquired theories from the beginning.

¹¹ Whiffen, *American Architecture*, 1996.

¹² Stephen C. Gordon, *How to Complete the Ohio Historic Inventory* (Columbus: Ohio Historical Society, 1992), p.98.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

Consequently, those theories appeared in all of his buildings, though the style be far removed from Beaux-Arts Classicism. The Mahoning County Courthouse in 1910, the 1919 Home Savings and Loan Building as well as the Isaly Dairy Building of 1940, an Art Moderne building that utilized its placement to create a vista to the city from the west, all embodied Beaux-Arts methodology.

The Beaux-Arts Classicism Mahoning County Courthouse (fig.31) has a grandness in plan. The building's symmetry of facade, its material and color, as well as the sculptured figures when joined with its imposing size and detail proclaimed the architect's Beaux-Arts training and its antecedents to classical architecture. Following the opening of the Market Street viaduct in 1899, the Mahoning County Courthouse was the first monumental building to greet city travelers from the south. Its grand entrance features a tripartite arcaded opening approached by a stairway ascending from the street. The rusticated¹⁴ first-story with its horizontal pronunciation, established the classical building base, typical of many contemporary public buildings. Above the entry, six granite columns in the Ionic order, three-stories in height, support a carved relief frieze and dentil banded cornice which form the entablature.¹⁵ Resting on the entablature, the hipped roof

¹⁴ *Rustication.* Stone blocks with edges that create deep grooves between the blocks that emphasize the horizontal joint pattern.

¹⁵ *Entablature.* The entire band of horizontal elements above the column capitals. The architrave, frieze, and cornice.

attic has roof line cartouches¹⁶ and sculptured allegorical figures of Justice, Strength and Authority, and Law that complete the building's portico. The building fenestration feature arched window openings on the first-story and triangular pedimented windows on the second-story. The third-story window openings use a plain entablature while the fourth-story openings are capped with a stone lintel and keystone. Finally, featured at the roof line, above the entablature, is a stone balustrade.

The interior of the Mahoning County Courthouse carried Owsley's Beaux-Arts theories further. After entering the main five-story lobby from the grand exterior stairs, the central interior court becomes the primary and largest interior space where all passageways converge--the Beaux-Arts hierarchy of plan. Around the grand court are the secondary spaces that include six courtrooms and numerous public and private offices. Flanked by two imposing marble staircases north and south of the five-story grand court, the architect capped the space with a domed ceiling of Tiffany stained glass. The skylighted arches over the fourth floor balcony and the murals of the four ages of law support Owsley's intention for a grand and noble design.

Owsley commissioned Edwin Howland Blashfield , a New York muralist, to paint four murals. Titled: Law of the Bible, Law of Classical Antiquity, Law of the

¹⁶ *Cartouche*. An ornamental frame, frequently decorated with elaborate scrolling and bearing an inscription or device in the central tablet.

Middle Ages and Modern Law, they communicated a Beaux-Arts tradition that involved other artisans in the celebration of the project. In addition to the Mahoning County Courthouse, Blashfield's national reputation included numerous commissions such as the St. Paul, Minnesota capitol building and the Baltimore, Maryland courthouse. Additional artists involved in the project were C.Y. Turner, Vincent Aderente, and A.P. Willet. Their association represented the theories Owsley embraced in Paris. Specifically, the design depended on a formal plan and classical details as well as materials that expressed strength. With the inclusion of artists and craftsmen, the edifice became monumental, formal and academic--it became Beaux-Arts.

During the Mahoning County Courthouse project, Owsley and Boucherle began designing the 1912 Mercer County Courthouse in Pennsylvania. This courthouse repeated the Greek Revival character of the original 1867 Mercer County courthouse. The absence of Beaux-Arts Classicism suggests Charles Henry's role as the principal architect. The courthouse in Youngstown, however, as well as the Rueben McMillan Public Library main building and South High School represent Beaux-Arts classicism and confirm Charles Frederick's influence. These three commissions signal a significant change in style for Owsley & Boucherle's architecture. Most notable is a comparison of the Mahoning County Courthouse, Charles Frederick's first commission, and the Dollar Bank Building, Charles Henry's final singular achievement. A study of the use of Beaux-Arts methodology for the

courthouse commission when juxtaposed with the Dollar Bank project, as well as all previous designs from the hand of Charles Henry, supports the contention that Charles Frederick assumed a commanding role as the firm's principal designer from 1905 onward.

Believing, as all Beaux-Arts architects did, that architecture is an art, Charles Frederick used each new opportunity to bring classical architecture to Youngstown.¹⁷ The design of the 1911 South High School (fig.32), today Eagle Heights Academy, erected south of the city on Market Street, represents the second commission under Charles Frederick (fig.33). The school is more expressive than the Reuben McMillan Public Library with its variegated texture of material and detail. Its antecedents are eclectic, with engaged columns using Corinthian capitals and Doric pilasters to express verticality. The three-story limestone building has a symmetrical facade with a rusticated first story and uses an opened stone balustrade parapet to crown the design. A one-story arcaded tripartite portico follows a Roman arch design as the focal point to the building's main passageway. Similarity in design to the courthouse, South High School confirms not only Charles Frederick's control of the firm's designs, but suggests Charles Henry relegated his role in the firm to a more advisory position that allowed his son to master his craft.

The Reuben McMillan Public Library (fig.34), constructed at the corner of

¹⁷ Spiro Kostof, ed., *The Architect: Chapters in the History of the Profession*, (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p.210.

Wick and Rayen Avenues, is Owsley & Boucherle's third project under Charles Frederick as principal designer. Using a dressed limestone building material, the Neo-Classical Revival facade incorporates pilasters in the Ionic order, paired at the middle bay to define the raised entry. Above the door, an enclosed pediment with brackets further announces the building's main doorway as well as articulating its Greek origins.

Strongly believing in the French training method of architecture, Charles Frederick established an atelier in 1908 for Youngstown draftsmen who were unable to afford university tuition. Under the direction of the National Society of Beaux-Arts Architects, Owsley as *patron*, sought to "raise the standard of architecture" in Youngstown by sharing his knowledge and "giving without cost" his guidance and instruction—the basic premise of the society.¹⁸ The Society of Beaux-Arts Architects, established in 1894 by architect and former Ecole student Ernest Flagg, fostered architectural training in ateliers across the country. Similar to Paris, competitions were held between the ateliers, judged by a panel in New York, with monetary awards given to the winners. With a core group of five, students of Atelier Owsley received personal instruction and camaraderie.¹⁹ Charles Frederick joined a notable

¹⁸ *Youngstown Vindicator*, May 3, 1908, p.2.

¹⁹ There are no records known to exist that confirm the names of the original five, their length of association, or the location of their atelier. Speculation, however, allows some understanding. Youngstown architect Walter J. Canfield joined the firm in 1908 as an apprentice before attending the Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh in 1911. Canfield may have acquired his desire for further education from his association with "Atelier Owsley." In 1900, Robert John Keich, at age eighteen, joined Owsley & Boucherle and remained with the

and select group of American architects such as Richard Morris Hunt, William LeBaron Jenney, and Charles Follen McKim. These men, through their atelier or office, promoted the French school's methodology. Furthermore, Youngstown's selection for an atelier by the society testifies to Owsley's achievement as other studios originated in larger cities such as Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and New York.

The period of 1910-1920 was a prolific era in Youngstown's building history and part of a broader period that author William Brenner calls Youngstown's golden age of construction, 1900-1929.²⁰ In ten years, Youngstown's population grew from 79,066 in 1910 to 132,358 in 1920. The decade not only included the 1913 flood that provided the impetus for the Milton dam project but also the East Youngstown riot of 1916. World War I brought increased work from iron and steel demands in the European theater but increased work without a corresponding wage increase aggravated worker unrest. The city's burgeoning outlying neighborhoods of new residential construction fostered an accumulated total of "...fifty-nine miles of trolley line, with most of them leading downtown."²¹

Youngstown's building stock increased not only in height and grandness but also yielded monetary rewards. During the first six years, 1910-1916, Owsley,

firm until the 1912 dissolution. Keich, who was office trained, supervised the construction of many of the firm's projects. The atelier would have afforded Keich an ideal opportunity for improvement.

²⁰ William A. Brenner, *Downtown and the University: Youngstown, Ohio* (Youngstown: Brenner, 1976), p.12.

²¹ Blue, (et. al.), *Mahoning Memories*, p.114.

Boucherle & Owsley singularly commanded a total of nearly \$3,000,000 worth of reported major projects. This figure does not include numerous residential commissions or the Western Reserve National Bank in Warren or the Salem High School, completed in 1915 and 1916 respectively. Using the established AIA architect's fee of five-percent, the firm's six year commissions for those projects alone total \$150,000.²²

Owsley, Boucherle & Owsley's major projects during this period included the construction of the 1912 Mercer County Courthouse in Sharon, the eight-story Youngstown City Hall at the corner of Boardman and Phelps Street that opened in 1914 as well as the 1915 Neo-Classical Revival Western Reserve National Bank (fig.35), a ten-story polychrome structure of limestone, brick and terra-cotta. On the completion of construction, the bank building became "...the largest business block in Warren."²³ The G.M. McKelvey Building and Ernest Salow Building, both on West Federal Street, also opened in 1915. Additionally, in East Youngstown (now Campbell) construction on the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company Hospital concluded following the early January 1916 striking steel worker's riot which devastated entire city blocks at a cost that approached \$1,500,000.

²² The AIA, in 1894, in an attempt to professionalize the practice of architecture, instituted a standard fee schedule. A charge of 3% to 5% was the acceptable range with 5% the standard. The fee included project supervision by the architect, also an AIA standard to insure quality as well as safety.

²³ Butler, Vol. I, *History of Youngstown*, p.439.

Other city and regional architects capitalized on the building boom as well. New Castle architects, C.C. & A.L. Thayer designed the Beaux-Arts Masonic Temple on Wick Avenue, erected in 1909-1910. Mentioned earlier, Detroit architect Albert Kahn as well as Morris Scheibel further articulated the building landscape of the downtown central financial district. In 1909 the Commercial National Bank opened on West Federal Street, just west of Central Square. Moreover, the Ohio Hotel, erected on West Boardman Street, began offering genteel accommodations in 1913 as did the new Tod House, erected in 1916 at the same location it had occupied for forty-six years.

In March of 1910 Charles Henry Owsley's wife Mary Jane Owsley died. The following year Owsley arranged to dissolve the architectural firm of Owsley, Boucherle & Owsley, ending a twenty-five year partnership with Louis Boucherle. Limited knowledge of Boucherle's role in the firm suggests he either functioned as the engineer on each project or simply held an ancillary position that designated Owsley as the firm's principal architect. Furthermore, public recordings of commissions and buildings always mentioned the firm's full name, never alluding to an inequality in their partnership. Boucherle's association with Owsley reached beyond the professional arena, as both men were members of the Elk's Club of Youngstown and shared interests in community undertakings. Their partnership was both professional and amicable.

Charles Henry, however, remained involved in architecture until his death

in 1935 at the age of eighty-eight. From the time Charles Frederick (fig.36) established The Owsley Company in 1915, with offices in rooms 1301-1305 of the Mahoning Bank Building, Charles Henry retained a close association with his son. Until 1926, Charles Henry was listed in city directories as the vice-president of the company except in 1920 when both father and son were listed singularly as architects. In early retirement, he collaborated with Charles Frederick as well as "...engaged in the supervision of several important buildings."²⁴ A master of his craft, the younger Owsley used his commissions to further the reputation his father began .

During the period of unprecedented city progress and building activity various business blocks along West Federal Street emerged. Furthermore, cultural edifices multiplied with the erection of the Dome Theater, constructed between 1912-1915, and the 1918 Liberty (Paramount) Theater, the latter designed by architect C. Howard Crane of Detroit. Both competed with the "Grand Lady," the Opera House. Beginning in 1874, the Opera House entertained Youngstown patrons with many of the best nationally known performers and shows. In 1905, architects Rufus and son Edward Thompson supervised an extensive remodeling. The building eventually succumbed, however, to the encroaching demands of Central Square's financial landscape, when it was razed for the westward expansion

²⁴ *Ohio Architect & Builder*, December, 1915, p.14.

of the Mahoning National Bank.

In 1919, the Butler Art Institute welcomed art aficionados through its tripartite arched portico to view its American art collection. Constructed in Georgian marble, the New York architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White included statuary niches on either side of the main entry to announce the building's cultural affiliation. The building and grounds, as well as its art collection, represented a \$700,000 investment in city culture that included a \$200,000 endowment left by its benefactor Joseph G. Butler Jr.²⁵ Finally, Stambaugh Auditorium, dedicated December 6, 1926, became Youngstown's crowning cultural and civic center. Erected on Fifth Avenue across from Wick Park, the building incorporated Park Avenue, at the southern end of the park, as a vista to its main facade. Designed by Henry Wiley Corbett, American architect and former student of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Stambaugh Auditorium used classical forms and elements to articulate its grandness and civic importance.

Owsley's final major commission within the city before 1920 was the Home Saving and Loan Building (fig.37), a Beaux-Arts structure constructed between 1916 and 1919. It became downtown Youngstown's westernmost bank when located at the intersection of West Federal Street and Chestnut Street. The building's neo-Baroque clock tower continues to illuminate the nighttime, downtown skyline. In

²⁵ Butler, Vol. I, *History of Youngstown*, p. 382.

1939, the Home Savings and Loan Company claimed “(t)he building (was) recognized...as one of the best constructed and most commodious office buildings in the city.”²⁶

Designed in the Neo-Classical Revival style, the building has a domed cupola and clock tower with arched attic facade positioned on a bracketed cornice over a two-story structure of polychrome terra cotta banding that incorporates full height arched windows. The crown is highly ornamental and reflects the criteria for a Beaux-Arts design. A plain limestone entablature at the tenth-story beltline defines the buff colored brick main nine-story body. Fenestration²⁷ symmetry gives order to the design.

The design of the two-story street level facade was ashlar²⁸ limestone and used a dentiled entablature between the second and third stories. The primary north facade incorporated a monumental, classically inspired entry with four engaged Ionic columns. Above these columns occurred an entablature with the bank’s name the “Home Savings and Loan” carved in relief. Finally, the two-story centered arched opening used an embellished iron hood canopy over the double entry doors to encourage patronage. The current ground level facade, however,

²⁶ *Through the Years: 1889-1939, the 50th Anniversary of The Home Saving and Loan Company* (Home Savings and Loan Company, 1939).

²⁷ *Fenestration.* The arrangement of windows in a building facade.

²⁸ *Ashlar.* A wall constructed of quarried stone building blocks that have been squared and finished with a smooth surface.

reflects a mid-twentieth century modernization attempt that completely obscures the original Neo-Classical design.

The interior design utilized classical elements of the Beaux-Arts formula to suggest order and stability, both desirable representations for a banking institution. A mural, painted by A.E. Foreinger, depicted the meeting of John Young and John Hillman, the area's first permanent settler. The inclusion of the mural fulfilled the Beaux-Arts methodology and advanced the classicism Owsley intended to bring to the project.

After 1920

The 1920s were a transitional period for architecture as it moved from Classicism to Modernism. Art Deco, albeit a modern style movement, shared Beaux-Arts Classicism's use of embellishment. Author Edmund V. Gillon, Jr. attributes the "...powerful drive for embellishment" as the key identification of a Beaux-Arts architect.²⁹ Owsley (fig.38) moved naturally toward modernism--as best represented by his 1940 Streamlined Art Moderne Isaly Dairy Building (fig.39) on Mahoning Avenue. Furthermore, he applied his Beaux-Arts training to every commission regardless of style. His crusade to raise the standard of architecture in Youngstown maintained its Paris antecedents throughout his career.

Although the Owsleys' practice of architecture emerged outside of Youngstown, they remained regional architects at best. Charles Henry's Third

²⁹ Gillon, *Beaux-Arts Architecture*, p.ix.

Ward School in Ashtabula and his Potters Bank in East Liverpool defined the north and south perimeters while Butler, Pennsylvania and the Warren-Niles area established the east-west limits. Research shows that Charles Frederick designed two residences for his children outside his area of registration: one in Princeton, New Jersey and the other in San Antonio, Texas. Owsley only functioned as a consultant, assigning the actual project supervision to a state licensed architect.

The Owsleys never extended their practice nationally because Youngstown provided sufficient commissions, particularly during the 1900 to 1930 period. The strongest evidence suggests that their involvement in a significant number of major projects within the city and region sustained a manageable and satisfying profession. It is possible, however, that future research may reveal a national reputation. After all, until this work, no significant research or writing of their lives and work is known to exist. Documentation of buildings came from a variety of sources such as newspapers articles, the architects obituaries, the Mahoning Valley Historical Society archives, as well as previous Youngstown building histories.

National architects such as Daniel Burnham, and Louis Sullivan enjoyed a reputation that attracted benefactors and the social elite. Youngstown, it could be argued, presented its own microcosm of a national story. The Owsleys' clientele included many of Youngstown's elite. Therefore, an absence of a national reputation does not diminish their significant role in the history of Youngstown's architectural landscape.

CHAPTER FIVE

"Looking Backward" - with apologies to Edward Bellamy

"Charles Frederic Owsley, 73, a registered architect of Youngstown, died in his country home on Warner Rd., Youngstown at 6:30 P.M. on Tuesday, March 17 [1953]. He had a stroke after the Christmas holidays..."¹

2000-1920

"Dada"² loved his city. I call him Dada because that is the name his grandchildren continue to use and one that seems fitting for this gentleman of architecture--a title perhaps--signifying a mastery of his craft. Dada last saw Youngstown in 1953. Experiencing similar emotions as Edward Bellamy's main character, Julian West, when transported from his 1887 Boston to that city's future, Dada marveled at Youngstown's change. As we walked downtown in this year 2000, he began to remember the buildings he and his father contributed to Youngstown's changing skyline. Dada always enjoyed driving around town with friends to acknowledge his buildings and to talk of architecture. From the beginning, a love for his art made this an exciting city for him to practice architecture. Several commissions came to mind on which he collaborated with

¹ *The Ohio Architect*, April 1953, (Cleveland: E.B. Stapleford), p.12.

² All of Charles Frederick Owsley's grandchildren knew him as Dada. This chapter is dedicated to them in appreciation for their help as well as shared memories and material.

his father, Charles Henry. For almost sixty-five years, his father played a significant role in the early development of this city's building stock. Dada tried to raise that same standard of architecture throughout his forty-eight years of architectural practice.

When we traveled down Market Street, the old courthouse came into view. The sight of the Mahoning County Courthouse transported his thoughts back to when it all began. This was his paragon. A million dollar restoration, conducted between 1985 and 1991, now preserved the building for future generations. Dada expressed his pleasure that the courthouse continued to exemplify the methodology he learned from the Paris school and brought to this city in northeast Ohio. Becoming quite enthusiastic, he told how he embraced Beaux-Arts Classicism and used its classical form and elements as the archetype for the courthouse project.

His thoughts traveled through that period when everything to him was Beaux-Arts: the Reuben McMillan Public Library design, the South High School commission, even his atelier--all had their antecedents in Paris. Dada always believed in Beaux-Arts theories. He used them in 1913 when he proposed a grade crossing elimination design for East Federal Street. He recalled that he incorporated an elevated plaza with a Neo-Classical Revival rail station as the solution (fig.40). Unfortunately, in spite of his persuasive arguments for the

involvement of an architect in a city planning project and the approval of city officials, the proposal never came to fruition.

Smiling, he began to articulate his implementation of those theories in a most paradoxical project, the 1940 Isaly Dairy Company Building (fig.39), but then decided to discuss those later. My curiosity heightened because this Streamlined Art Moderne building, clad in cream, tan, and aqua glazed terracotta tile appeared unrelated to the Beaux-Arts architecture of the courthouse. Thoughts of Paris recalled his faithfulness to classical architecture and his several ventures abroad to sketch in Paris, Greece, and Egypt. Dada believed those times to be significant in his architectural maturity.

Heading north on Market Street, we walked toward Central Square. In 1974, the city altered the square with a landscaped brick pedestrian mall in an attempt to mirror the suburban shopping mall experience.³ Although altered by Federal Plaza, the central district continued to reflect the financial and business image that had its genesis in 1873 with the Second Empire Mahoning National Bank on the southwest corner of the Diamond. Remembering the other architects who orchestrated the erection of Youngstown's skyscrapers, Daniel Burnham, Albert Kahn, and Morris Scheibel came to mind. That period of 1900 to 1930 helped to secure Central Square as Youngstown's epicenter of urban architecture.

³ Blue, et.al., *Mahoning Memories*, p.166.

Many of these Commercial Style structures continue to represent the grandness and purpose of that period. Dada's mind turned back the pages of his memory to when his father designed the city's first true skyscraper in 1903; the Dollar Bank Building, now forever masked under an uncomfortable skin of modern granite veneer. Dada thought it was ironic that his Western Reserve National Bank Building in Warren fell victim to the same refacing attempt in the name of modernity.

On our approach, he failed to recognize the city east of Federal Plaza and in particular, East Federal Street. East Federal Street never equaled the development of its sister street, West Federal. Its fabric and texture lagged in architectural importance. Its business directory included "pawn shops, second-hand clothing stores, bars, and other similar low quality establishments" while West Federal contained the "specialty shops, banks, office buildings, [and] professional buildings."⁴ What he remembered were the shops and businesses, the ethnic storekeepers, and the trolley lines. This section of the city fell victim to the urban renewal programs of the 1960s and 1970s. Today, the architecture that consumes large city blocks, appeared to Dada more severe than those modern buildings of the 1950s. They illustrate, however, the continuous evolution of the city's building landscape. Sadly, only a few historic structures

⁴ City Planning Associates, *Historical Development of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley*, (Youngstown: Mishawaka, IN, 1968), p.30.

remain. Although none represented Dada's work, he identified the 1915 YMCA, the Commercial style Century Building, constructed in 1908, the 1929 Art Deco Ohio Edison building on East Boardman Street, and the 1930s Art Moderne East Ohio Gas Company edifice as those that existed during his day.

The one building missing and most fondly remembered was 211 Champion Street. This was Dada's last architectural office from 1935 to 1953. He expressed that this was where he worked on his first commission alone. Charles Henry (fig.41) died in August of 1935. Dada remembered how strange it was to work without the watchful eye of his lifelong mentor. Here on his own, he recalled, he designed Youngstown's Buechner Hall, today located on the campus of Youngstown State University, Buhl Hospital in Sharon, and the Titusville Hospital as well as Salem's Municipal Building. It was where he also designed the Streamline Art Moderne Isaly Dairy Company plant on Mahoning Avenue. Once again his eyes twinkled as his thoughts juxtaposed Art Moderne and Beaux-Arts into one building, but as before he suppressed that thought for later when we would visit the building.

Here also he recalled the architectural lean times of the Depression and World War II. Those were the years of greatest civic involvement for Dada. He supplemented those years with responsibilities in the Metropolitan Housing Authority and the State Board of Examiners of Architects. His memberships on Youngstown's housing committee, master plan committee, and the economic

development committee as well as his connections to Rotary Club, the Buckeye Art Club, and the Youngstown Playhouse, caused me to ask how he had arranged the time to support all his interests. I mentioned that I had read a byline in the *Town Talk* that said: "His duties as one of the country's finest architects are never so arduous as to prevent him from allying himself with movements for the city's betterment and its altruistic advancement."⁵ He only smiled.

During his time at 211 Champion Street, Dada became a "Fellow" with the American Institute of Architects in 1947; his membership began in 1911. It was in recognition of his "contributions to the profession of architecture, design, construction, literature [and] educational service to the institute...."⁶ Now 211 Champion Street was but a memory. I sensed this was a good opportunity to discuss the various preservation issues that were now a significant part of my life, as well as a part of architecture and a nexus for the history and future of the Youngstown building stock.

I devoted considerable effort in the explanation of the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act and how widespread interstate road and urban renewal programs devastated the urban fabric of many cities including Youngstown. When I mentioned the final insult with the destruction of McKim,

⁵ Mahoning Valley Historical Society: Owsley File, *Town Talk*, March 1931, p. 8.

⁶ *Youngstown Vindicator*, May 1, 1947.

Mead & White's Pennsylvania Station in New York, he applauded our effort to turn the tide of the wanton and thoughtless elimination of our architectural history.

My position was that the extant building landscape as well as those buildings that are but a memory reveal a narrative of continuous change and that the story is one of amelioration and survival; of prosperity and economic turmoil. I suggested that each period of change provided buildings which met the needs of the populace. Those who orchestrated that change--the city elite, the businessman, the entrepreneur, and architects such as himself--all performed within the context of history.

The edifices that resulted, I further proposed, tell us of a desire for buildings of purpose, that they were designed to mirror the building environments of other cities, but more importantly--designed to satisfy the needs of this burgeoning metropolis. Youngstown's buildings, I said, though similar in many ways to those in other American cities, actually articulated a personalized account. Dada agreed wholeheartedly, remembering his own participation and personal efforts to convey Youngstown's purpose. He added that his interests in archaeology and his observations of the ancient ruins of Greece and other cultures confirmed a similar story of culture. He reminded me of his good fortune to have entered King Tutenkhamun's tomb following the opening of the sarcophagus in 1924.

I forced the conversation back to preservation, hoping to learn of his position on saving buildings by mentioning the importance to preserve our cultural resources. Dada smiled and countered with his own efforts in 1939 to restore his beloved Newforest (fig.42), an early Western Reserve farm house on Warner Road. Newforest, he continued, required an extensive restoration and the addition of a new two-story ell to the rear. He described his efforts that not only preserved its Greek Revival character but also integrated the new architecture with the existing structure. Dada fondly remembered his wife Katherine's initial reaction when he showed her the building. She saw it as it was, Dada recalled, he already saw it in its completed and restored condition.

Dada discussed his education at the University of Pennsylvania and his training in Paris. He explained the difference between that education and his father's apprenticeship as well as how the atelier, though a similar environment to the apprentice's office, emphasized architecture as art. His articulation of the architectural program of his university revealed that an intensive and broad curriculum helped prepare him and other architects for a changing profession. A profession that he loved.

Our discussion seesawed between architecture and archaeology, preservation and antiquities before ending abruptly as Dada asserted that ancient ruins tell a story and reveal a history. Without our awareness, being deep in conversation, we had walked through Federal Plaza, past the tall buildings, past

Daniel Burnham's Federal Building and Wick Building, to the section of the city I was most apprehensive for him to see and even more curious as to his response. We stood in silence for what seemed a considerable length of time while Dada observed, looking along the north side and then the south side of Federal Street. This was not the downtown he remembered (fig.43). The vibrant city center of commerce and people with its flashing signs and lighted show windows now appeared desolate, uninviting.

He knew this street as well as any other in the city. This was the heartbeat of the city's commerce, business, and culture. The Kress Five and Dime store, Lustig's, the State Theater, the Warner and Liberty/Paramount theaters, McCrory's--all were establishments he enjoyed and frequented with his wife Kate, children and grandchildren. Dada's father-in-law's store, the G.M. McKelvey Department store, he knew intimately. In 1917, he designed a six-story terra-cotta veneer structure adjacent to the store's earlier four-story brick building. Dada also designed the street level Art Deco facade of polished black granite and glass added in the 1930s to unify both storefronts.

I explained the September 19, 1977 Sheet And Tube Company closing known as Black Monday, and the subsequent mill closings and layoffs that effected a serious turn in Youngstown's economy. Dada understood its significance and ramifications immediately. He knew how deeply rooted Youngstown's history was in iron and steel and recalled how that industry

sustained the wealth of many of his clients. With deep concern he felt that this could not promote a positive image for the city. He asked where were the benefactors, those who affixed their names to the buildings on Central Square and the streets throughout the city? Finally, he inquired which architects were preparing plans, designing solutions? With intensity he said that this was not raising the standard of architecture.

I realized that it wasn't the vacant and deteriorating buildings that disturbed him but that nothing was being done. His demeanor became one of enthusiasm as the architect in him began to appraise, analyze and devise remedies. Our pace quickened as we walked by each declining building, each boarded-up storefront. I sensed he had mentally rolled-up his sleeves and had he pencil and paper, would have begun a magnificent drawing of preservation, restoration, and construction--a master plan of a Beaux-Arts vision for his city. His final comment on the subject will forever stay with me. He said that this is what architects are born for, that parking lots do not require an architect--but buildings do.

Leaving Federal Street behind us as well as his 1919 Home Savings and Loan Building, I noticed that the bank continues to define the west end of the downtown's skyline. I suggested that we should now visit his Isaly Dairy Building on Mahoning Avenue as the day was nearing its end. That twinkle in his eye, the one I noticed earlier when I mentioned this streamlined glazed terra-

cotta edifice, reappeared. His face beamed as it must have many times in his life when the opportunity arose to discuss his architecture. Our pace also quickened. I hurried to keep up as he said: "Let me tell you how I merged Beaux-Arts theory with Art Moderne. You see, it starts with the plan...."

APPENDIX

Illustrations:
fig.1-43

Early Youngstown West Federal Street



fig.1
Looking west
Central Square to Spring Common
1830s

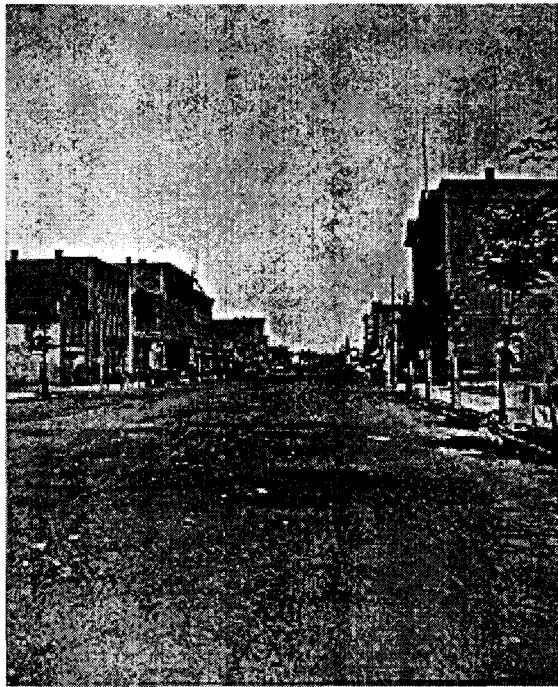


fig.2
Looking west 1860s

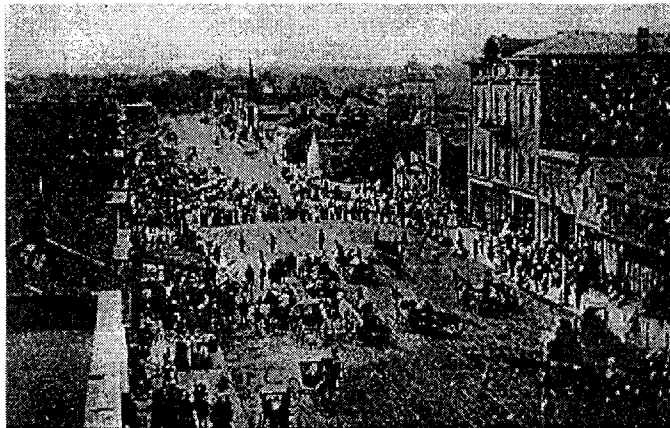


fig.3
Looking west 1869

The Diamond 1870s

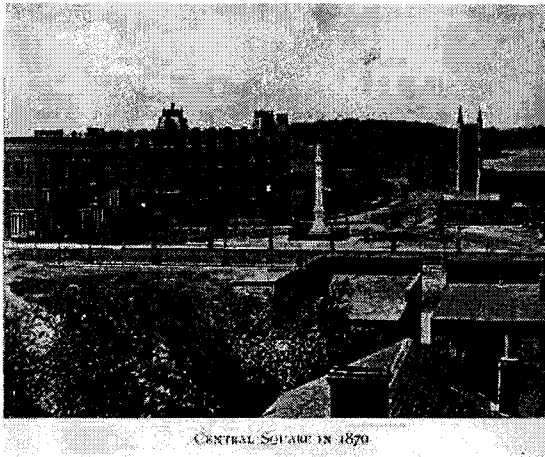


fig.4
Tod Hotel
southeast corner of Diamond



fig.5
Mahoning National Bank
southwest corner of the Diamond

In this 1874 photo, the south side of the Diamond has begun to develop. Four cannons, procured by President Garfield, surround the monument. The Mahoning Bank building is at the left. Next to it is the Opera House.



fig.6
northwest corner of Diamond

As the north side of the Diamond developed, it was beautified with this fountain. The several buildings in the background are where the Union Bank and Dollar Bank buildings stand today.



fig.7
1874-76
second Mahoning County
Courthouse (demolished)

Charles Henry Owsley
architect

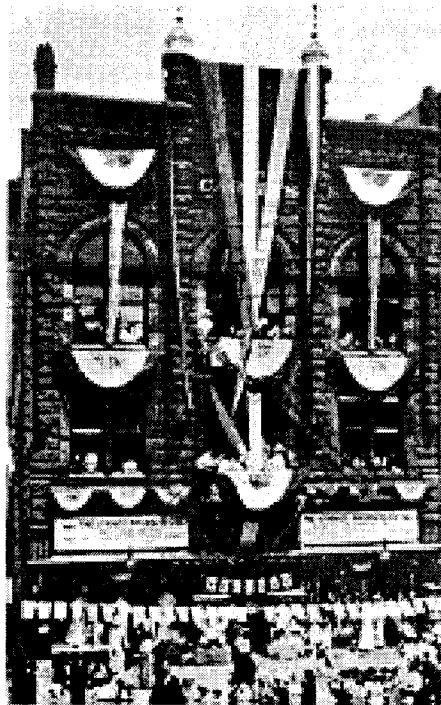


fig.8
1875
Strouss-Hirshberg
Enterprise Store
(demolished)

Charles Henry Owsley
architect

Youngstown 1889

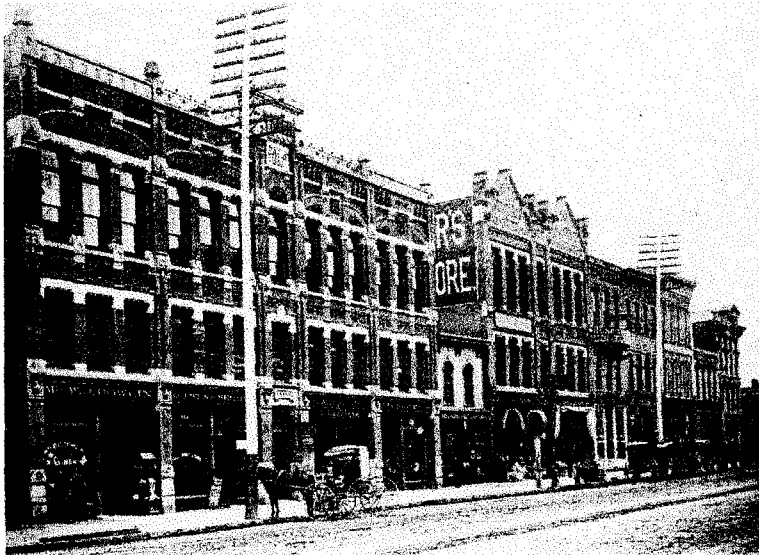


fig.9
West Federal Street

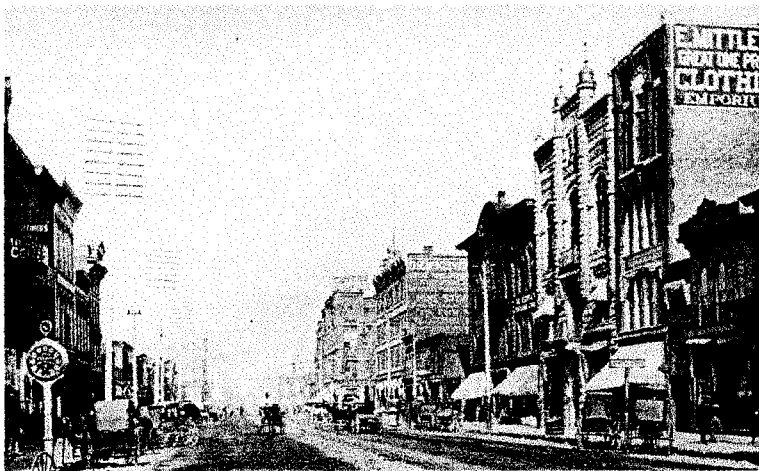


fig.10
West Federal Street
Looking west



fig.11
West Federal Street
Looking east



fig.12
1889
Second National Bank
(demolished)

Owsley & Boucherle
architects



Fig.13
Louis Boucherle c.1900

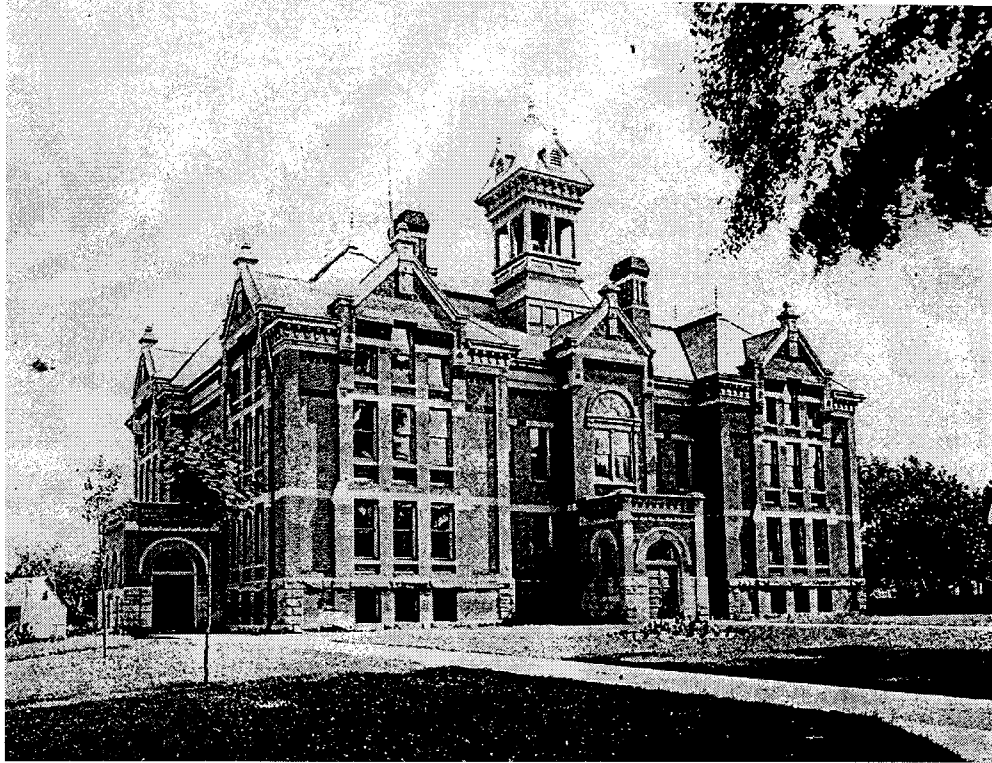


fig.14
c.1895 Third Ward School Ashtabula, Ohio
Owsley & Boucherle architects

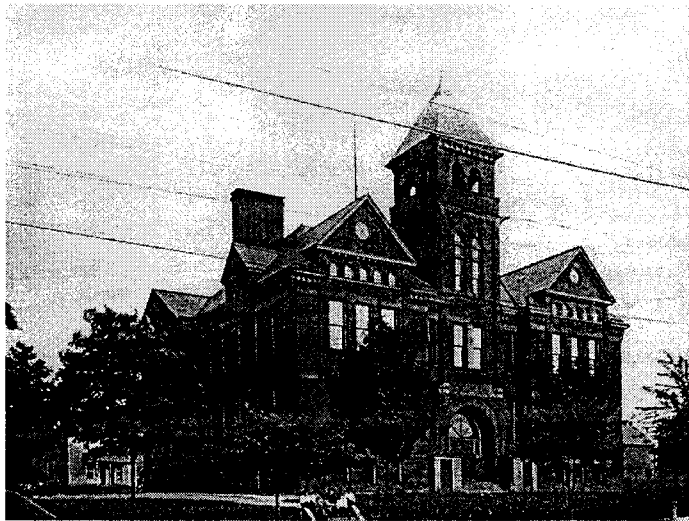


fig.15
1894 Market Street School (demolished)
Owsley & Boucherle architects



fig.16
Charles Frederick Owsley 1896

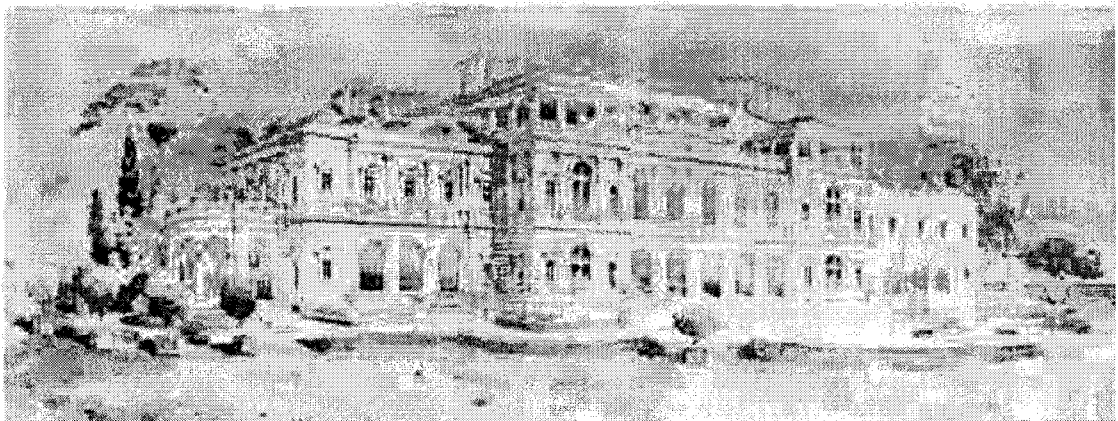
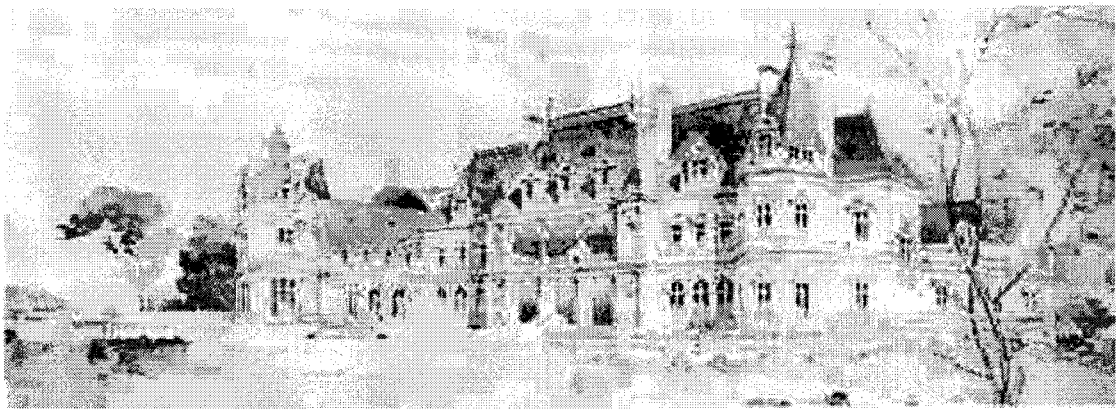


fig.17
Elevation study for Cornelius Vanderbilt III, "The Breakers" at Newport, R.I.
by E.L. Masqueray, 1892-93



fig.18
Charles Frederick Owsley
Paris 1903-04

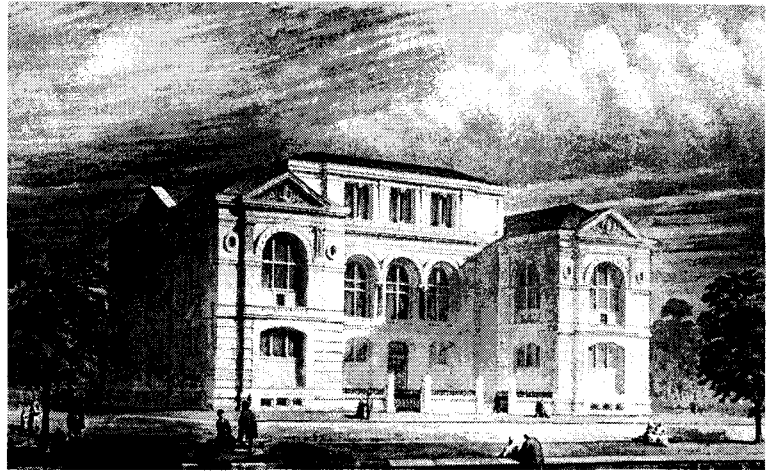


fig.19
Elevation study of the Lenox Library on Fifth Avenue, New York City
by Richard Morris Hunt, 1871

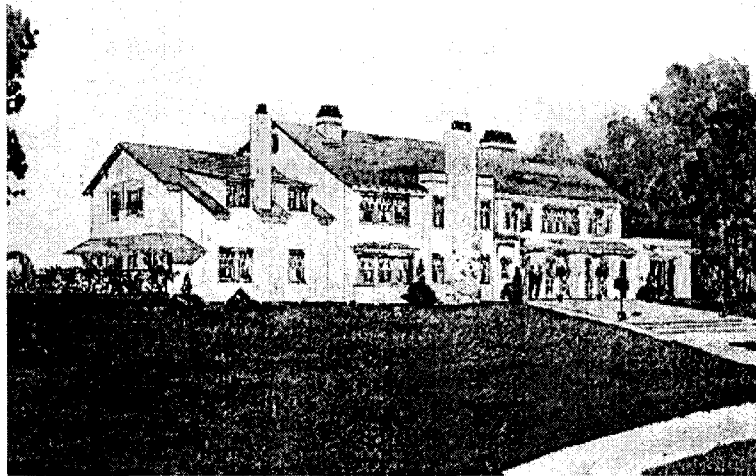


fig.20
Elevation study of the George E. Dudley residence in Boardman, Ohio
by Charles Frederick Owsley, c.1915



fig.21
Charles Frederick Owsley
Paris 1904-05



fig.22
1903 Baldwin Memorial Kindergarten (demolished)
Owsley & Boucherle architects

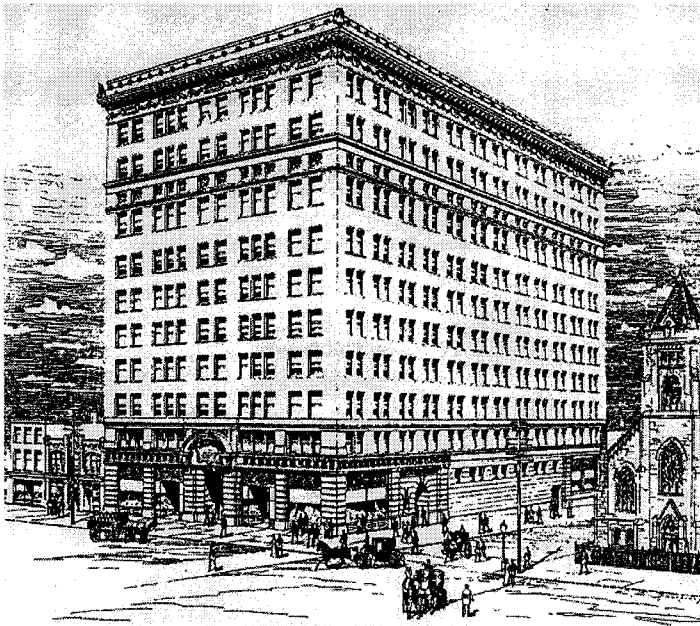


fig.23
Masonic Temple design
Owsley & Boucherle
architects



fig.24
1903
Dollar Bank original design

Owsley & Boucherle
architects



fig.25
1905 Dollar Bank
Owsley and Boucherle architects

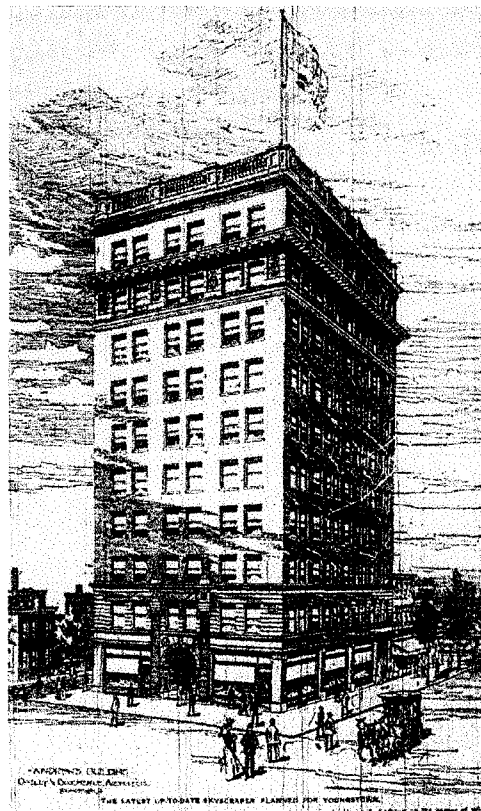


fig.26
Andrews Building design

Owsley & Boucherle
architects



fig.27
Central Square c.1924
Looking south



fig.28 Youngstown skyline c.1927 Looking north



fig.29
Central Square c.1930
Looking north



fig.30
Central Square c.1930
Looking north

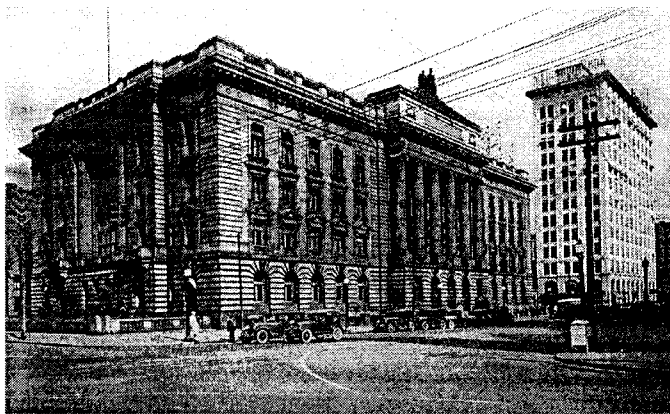


fig.31
1910
Mahoning County Courthouse

Owsley, Boucherle & Owsley
architects

c.1927 view



c.1970 view

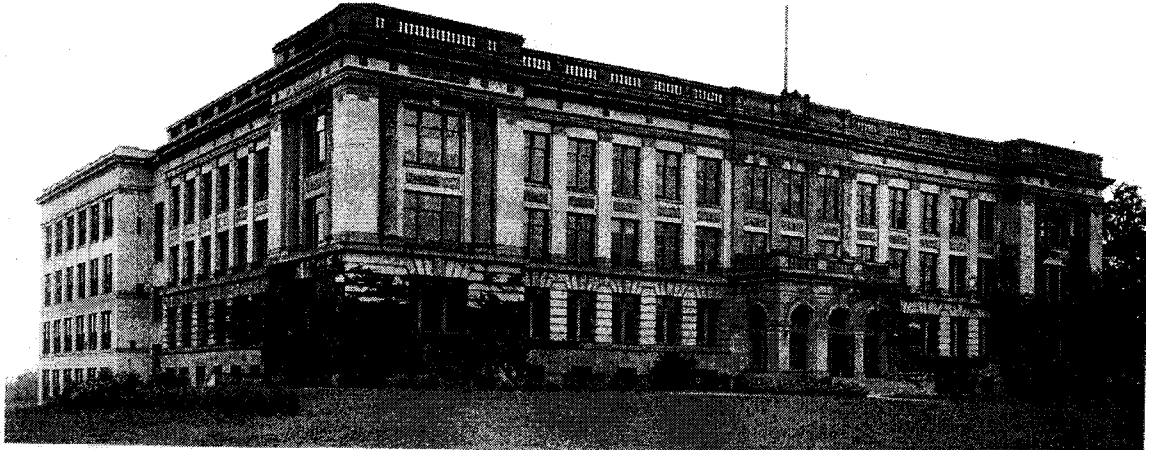


fig.32
1911 South High School
Owsley, Boucherle & Owsley architects



fig.33
Charles Frederick Owsley
c.1908

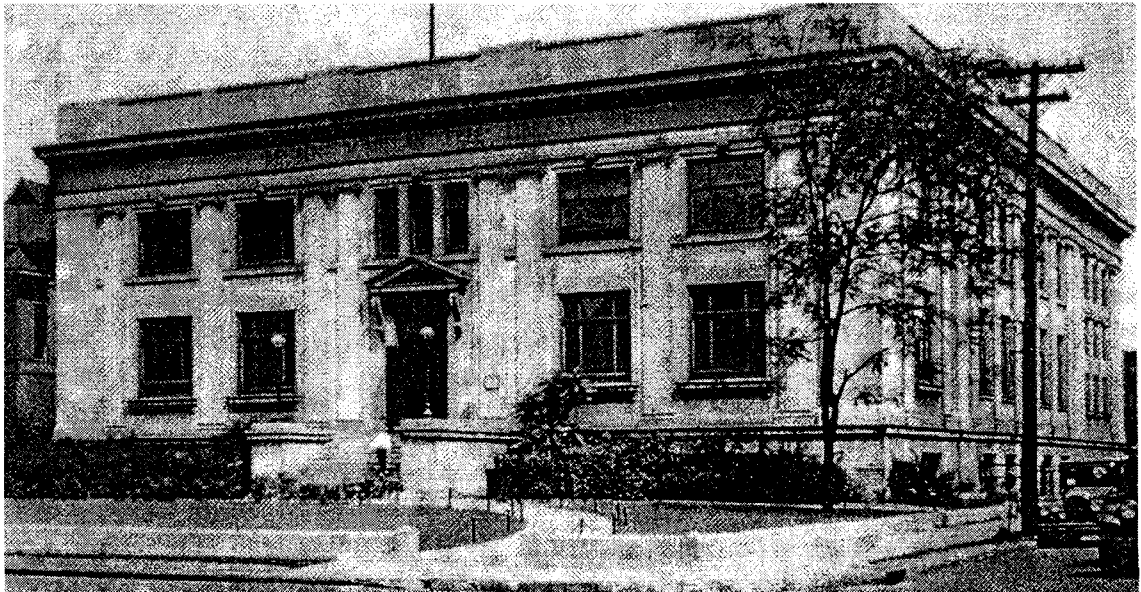


fig.34
1911 Reuben McMillian Public Library
Owsley, Boucherle & Owsley architects



fig.35
1915
Western Reserve National Bank

The Owsley Company
architects



fig.36
Charles Frederick Owsley c.1915



fig.37
1919 Home Savings & Loan Bank
The Owsley Company architects



fig.38
Charles Frederick Owsley c.1920

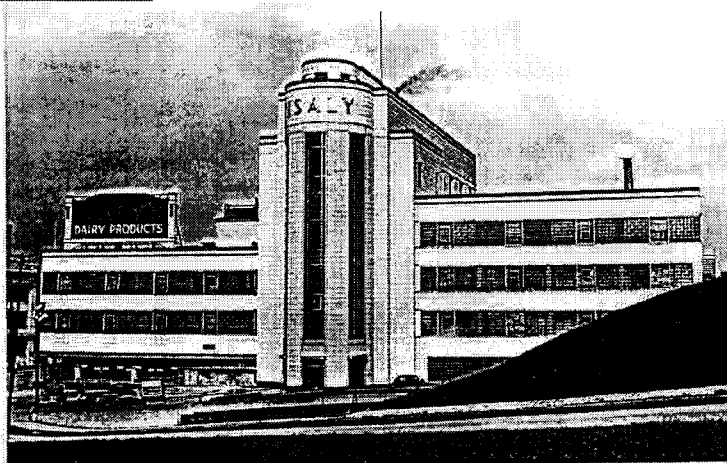


fig.39
1940 Isaly Dairy Company Charles Frederick Owsley architect

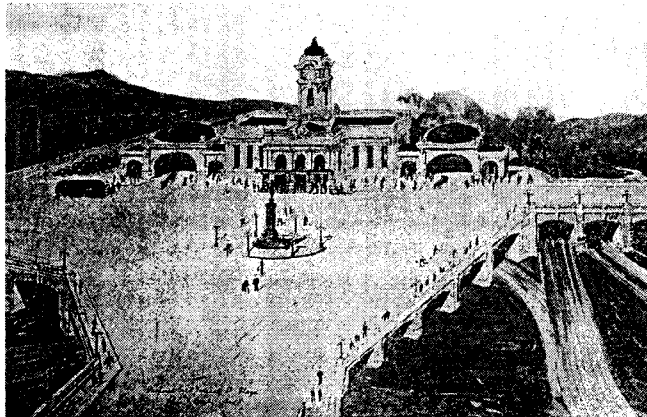


fig.40
Beaux-Arts Elevated Rail Station & Plaza drawing
Charles Frederick Owsley architect

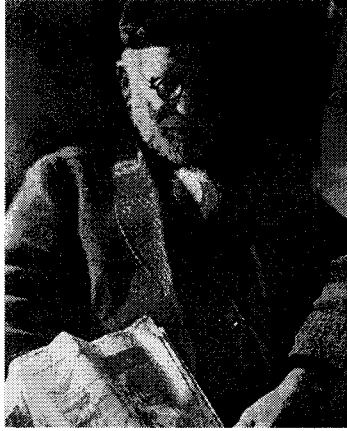


fig.41
Charles Henry Owsley c.1935

fig.42
1940 Newforest
Charles Frederick
Owsley architect

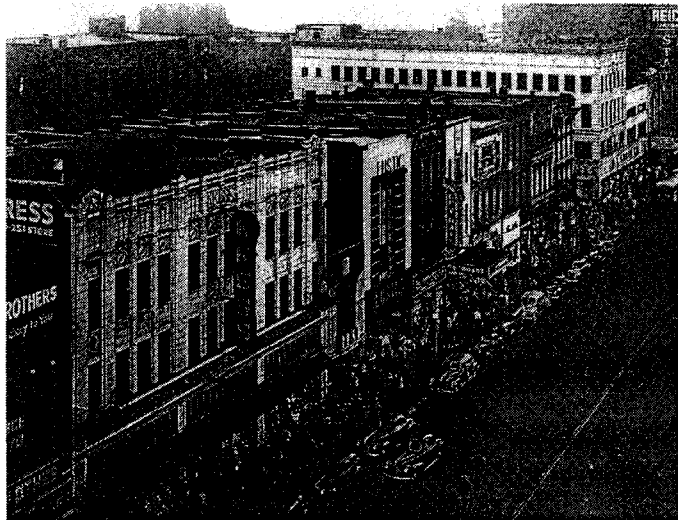


fig.43
West Federal Street c.1940
Looking southwest

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