



Schaeffer Hall

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Schaeffer Hall on The University of Iowa campus was more than another beautiful new campus building when it was completed in 1902. It was the first building of a newly conceived campus. Beginning in 1898 the University decided to do nothing less than completely reconstruct the central campus (what we call the Pentacrest today), along more modern lines. The new campus was planned to be a composition of classically styled, symmetrically placed buildings with the Old Capitol as the centerpiece.

The central campus of The University of Iowa was originally the site of the third Capitol of the Territory of Iowa, and the first Capitol of the State of Iowa. On this prominent four square block area on a hill overlooking the Iowa River with the town gathered closely around it the early campus developed. It grew haphazardly as a collection of mismatched red brick buildings arranged in a line extending north and south of the Old Capitol.

The purpose of the new campus was not only to improve campus facilities but also to provide a new image for the University and to reflect a new philosophy. The style of the new campus followed the French Academy of Fine Arts (École des Beaux-Arts) concept of total planning, and the philosophy reflected the ideals of the "American Renaissance."

The plan for the Pentacrest followed the French Beaux-Arts approach to planning made popular in America, especially in the Midwest, by the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, the Columbian Exposition, where its principles were predominant. The Beaux-Arts ideals proposed an orderly and monumental ap-



Early Photograph of East Facade

proach to planning.¹ The overall plan of any project had priority over individual elements like building styles and focal points. The plan was to provide a geometric clarity of design often employing symmetry and axuality. The “American Renaissance” was an American version of an attitude toward the past developed by the French *École des Beaux-Arts*. That attitude promoted the idea that the Renaissance provided more than an example to be emulated in the present; it was a living idea which would ennoble the modern age.

The construction of Schaeffer Hall (originally called the Hall of Liberal Arts or the Collegiate Building), brought the American Renaissance to The University of Iowa. This Beaux-Arts style building served as a model in its style, plan and size for all subsequent buildings on the Pentacrest, and gave a preview of

¹Paul Venable Turner, *Campus, An American Planning Tradition* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985), pp. 196-204.

what the entire campus would be like. Its placement in the southeast quadrant of the Pentacrest revealed in part the total campus plan—four classically inspired buildings off the corners of the Old Capitol. What this building looked like and where it was placed determined the style, the location and even the number of the other buildings which would finally surround the Old Capitol. Henry Van Brunt, who helped plan the Pentacrest and who judged the architectural competition, and Proudfoot and Bird, the architects who won the competition, were the people who ultimately determined the appearance of the Pentacrest.

The placement of Schaeffer Hall seems to indicate that from the start a plan of four buildings radiating off the corners of the Old Capitol was intended. A campus plan which dates around 1901 shows what must have been in mind three years earlier.² This plan allowed the Old Capitol to be viewed from a distance along the streets that approached it. The architectural style of Schaeffer Hall set the pattern for the buildings to follow as well. It employed a mixture of American and French Beaux-Arts details, and a great porticoed entrance which faced the town, not the center of the campus.

The Regents were concerned with the placement of Schaeffer Hall from the very beginning. As early as June 11, 1896, the Regents addressed the problem of the location of the building. They chose to place it within the southeast quarter of the campus but envisioned two wings, one “on the east and another on the south.” This must have been an “L” shaped building. On October 6, 1897, they voted again to place the building in the southeast quarter of the campus.³ This indicates that there was a lot of discussion of this point and that not everyone was in agreement.

What followed is clear only in outline. The architect Henry Van Brunt of Boston and Kansas City, one of the architects of the Columbian Exposition, was hired by the University to do

²This plan exists as a copy. University of Iowa Archives.

³University of Iowa Board of Regents Minutes, June 11, 1896, and October 6, 1897, University of Iowa Archives.

two things, choose a building (from designs submitted in an architectural competition) of an appropriate architectural character which could be built for \$150,000 and establish the location of the building.⁴ Van Brunt met only once with the Board of Regents, on March 29, 1898. At that meeting the “competing architects each appeared before the Board and exhibited and explained their several plans and papers and the expert architect was heard in all matters connected therewith.”⁵ Sizemore has deduced that Van Brunt suggested the formal arrangement of the entire Pentacrest by presumably locating Schaeffer Hall where it stands today.⁶ This plan, called the “Five Spot Plan,” is attributed to Van Brunt in the Olmsted Brothers report of 1905 as well.⁷

The Pentacrest plan required a commitment on the part of the University administration from the beginning. The Red Brick Campus extant in 1898 was to be completely removed with the exception of the Old Capitol, and a new one built in its place, but the Old Capitol would be the focus of the new campus just as it had been of the old. Schaeffer Hall was only the first step in the execution of the plan, but its importance was understood and publicly debated in the local newspapers.

Those who opposed the plan wanted to “Save the Campus.” They cherished the green park-like campus, and the new building, located in front of the original row of buildings, would remove some of the beloved lawn and trees. The plan required that one particular tree, “Old Oak,” be removed to allow the construction of the building.⁸ This faction felt the old and unsightly buildings (the Medical Building and South Hall),

⁴W.J. Haddock to Henry Van Brunt, March 11, 1898, Schaeffer Hall Folder, University of Iowa Archives.

⁵University of Iowa Board of Regents Minutes, March 29, 1898, University of Iowa Archives.

⁶Jean Sizemore, “An Iowa Renaissance: Campus Planning at the University of Iowa”, A Paper presented at the 15th Annual Graduate Student Seminar, Art Institute of Chicago, April 19, 1980, University of Iowa Archives, pp. 5-7.

⁷Olmsted Brothers, Landscape Architects, Brookline, Massachusetts. *Report Outlining Plans for the Future Arrangement of the Grounds and Buildings of the State University of Iowa*. Iowa City: University of Iowa, 1905.

⁸John C. Gerber, *A Pictorial History of the University of Iowa* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1988), p. 63.

rather than the trees, should be removed to make room for the new building, and it should take its place in the line. Of course, this was impossible, for the University needed all available facilities even with the additional space the new building would provide. Schaeffer Hall was located close to the walkway which ran east of the line of buildings, taking up very little of the precious green. In fact, the plan compresses the buildings into the central north-south strip of the square leaving broad lawns on the east and west sides.

Those who favored the plan and the new building wanted “a building of beauty to point to.” Some even said the new building would improve the view of the campus from the business district by blocking from the view the unsightly old buildings. They seemed to understand that there would be other buildings and looked forward to a second new building which would hide the ugly old library building (North Hall on the north side of the Old Capitol).⁹

In order to construct its sister building, Macbride Hall, Old Science, now named Calvin Hall, had to be moved. Surely, this expensive move was anticipated when the plan was undertaken, and it is another indication of the commitment of the Regents to the new campus plan. The remaining two buildings of the “Five Spot Plan” were added in the appropriate positions on the west side of Old Capitol, MacLean in 1911 and Jessup in 1924, but while they blend in style, they do not match the two facing town. Since its completion, the Beaux-Arts Pentacrest plan has never been disturbed, although other buildings were proposed in the 1960s. Rather than disturb it in any way, The University of Iowa has expanded to the west across the Iowa River.

The University proposed an architectural contest for the design of the new Collegiate Building (Schaeffer Hall). Architectural competitions were a common method for choosing designs for universities in the late nineteenth century, and they were a reflection of the *École des Beaux-Arts* emphasis on

⁹Sizemore, “An Iowa Renaissance...,” p. 6.

design competitions, such as the Prix de Rome and others.¹⁰ The Collegiate Building contest was the earliest for a university building in Iowa, but both Iowa State University and Iowa State Normal School (University of Northern Iowa) sponsored contests for buildings in 1900.

On October 29, 1897, The University of Iowa published its “Circular to Architects,” which outlined the contest specifications.¹¹ Plans were to be delivered no later than January 5, 1898, according to the circular. By March 1898, after receiving twenty-three proposals, the Regents decided to seek expert help in selecting the winner, and Henry Van Brunt of the firm of Van Brunt and Howe of Boston and Kansas City was asked to assist. University Secretary Haddock wrote the following to Van Brunt: “The twenty-three samples of architecture examined by the Board were very miscellaneous. Some with high peaked roofs and steeples and they were called French Renaissance—others had no visible roof at all and that was pure Greek Renaissance. Others were called after other nations but all were renaissant. I think in fixing on the central building as a model what the Board wanted was a good square turn of Iowa Renaissance for a change.”¹²

Even before Van Brunt arrived, and apparently without his assistance, the Regents decided to thin out the crowd and chose eight of the twenty-three to participate in a second contest. A second circular named the eight finalists and gave them until March 10, 1898, to submit their plans.¹³

Less controversial than the location of Schaeffer Hall, but still important to the Regents, was the building’s style—what it would look like—and how the campus would look as a whole. They did not want this to be left to chance. They specified in the second circular that the design was to “harmonize with the

¹⁰Turner, pp. 177-180.

¹¹University of Iowa Board of Regents, “Circular to Architects”, October 19, 1897, in box with Executive Committee Minutes, University of Iowa Archives.

¹²Haddock to Van Brunt, March 11, 1898.

¹³University of Iowa Board of Regents, “Further Rules by the Board of Regents for Architects now competing on the New Collegiate Building”, June 24, 1898, Folder for Schaeffer Hall, University of Iowa Archives.

Central Building" (Old Capitol), and a photo of that building was attached to the instructions to the architects.¹⁴ There was really no alternative to the classical style for this project if the new building was to harmonize with the Greek Revival Old Capitol, but this style was associated with the American Renaissance and was the style used for the Columbian Exposition. A classically inspired building design was thought to match the aesthetics of a symmetrical, balanced and axial plan for the campus. It also carried associations with democracy, colonial America, tradition and stability. It was the style used for United States governmental buildings in Washington, D.C., and other places.

The instructions in the Second Circular appealed to the public. The design of the building was discussed in the press just as the building placement and the campus plan had been. The *Iowa City Republican* wanted a building that would impress visitors, a building of beauty to point to. The winning architects, Proudfoot and Bird, assured the public that the building would be elegant and dignified, classic and beautiful.¹⁵ After the building design had been chosen and its plans had been revealed, the *Iowa State Press* wrote of the new building as being in the "Classic-ionic" style."¹⁶ Proudfoot and Bird called the building "Colonial."

Proudfoot and Bird's "Outline Specifications", which accompanied their competition design, mentioned specifically their intention to use the same "solution" used by the architects of the Court of Honor at the Columbian Exposition to achieve harmony. They undoubtedly believed this solution would achieve harmony, but making the following statement was certainly politic since Henry Van Brunt, an architect of the Electricity Building on the Court of Honor, was the contest judge:

¹⁴Board of Regents, "Further Rules...."

¹⁵Quoted in William Lang, "History of the University of Iowa: The Collegiate Department from 1879-1900," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1941), pp. 187-190.

¹⁶Lang, pp. 187-90.

To make the new building harmonize with the Central Building we have designed it to the same style, the Colonial; have kept the principal horizontal lines of the two buildings on the same level and have selected materials that will blend in color with the old.

As a successful example of the value of the continuation of principal horizontal lines through a group of buildings we cite the buildings forming the Court of Honor at the World's Fair. The eight distinguished architects who designed those buildings agreed that a common height for the principal cornice line was essential to harmony; above and below that line the individual architect was permitted to vary at pleasure the parts and detail of the building assigned to him.¹⁷

Proudfoot and Bird's efforts to achieve harmony between their building and Old Capitol required several adjustments. They not only placed the cornice line on Schaeffer Hall at the same height as that of Old Capitol, but they used an entablature of similar width as the one on Old Capitol. The Old Capitol has two stories, Schaeffer Hall was to have three. If the cornice lines were to be the same height the third floor would have to be on top of the cornice in the form of an "attic" story.

Other devices were used as well. The architects designed the entrance portico to follow the size and proportions of the portico on Old Capitol and placed pilasters on the ends of the side wings matching those on Old Capitol. They also made an attempt to match the light colored stone of the Capitol while careful to keep within the \$150,000 cost requirement.¹⁸

Proudfoot and Bird's competition prize was the contract to construct the Collegiate Building. This contract began their association with The University of Iowa and the Iowa Board of

¹⁷Proudfoot and Bird, Architects, "Outline Specifications of Materials for the Proposed Collegiate Building, State University of Iowa," Des Moines, Iowa, 1898, p. 1, original at Brooks Borg and Skiles, Des Moines, Iowa.

¹⁸Proudfoot and Bird, "Outline Specifications." These called for the walls to be constructed with hard burned brick laid in Milwaukee cement with the walls faced with gray Roman brick trimmed with terra cotta to match. These materials were abandoned at some time before the plans were finalized and the specifications for brick and terra cotta were scratched out and a substitution of "stone to be selected by the Board" was written by hand above.

Regents which lasted until Proudfoot's death in 1928. Their winning design was published in *Inland Architect and News Record*.¹⁹

The influences which caused The University of Iowa to create a new campus are complex. They include the popular planning philosophy of the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, the concept, then not named, of the American Renaissance, the Columbian Exposition, and the influence of individuals like President Schaeffer and the architects Van Brunt and Proudfoot and Bird.

By the late nineteenth century the Beaux-Arts system of architectural planning was a major force in American design. It was thought especially appropriate for college campuses. Many articles appeared in support of the Beaux-Arts approach as a way to correct the collection of unrelated buildings that comprised most American campuses and give them "art" and "unity".²⁰ The early red brick campus of The University of Iowa was certainly one of these collections.

The Columbian Exposition reflected the overwhelming international influence of French ideas in planning and architecture. The Chicago fair itself was inspired by the Paris exposition of 1889.²¹ The architecture of the fair inspired many a state capitol, county courthouse and college building, and its impact on urban planning was equally important.

People who were in place to influence the development of a Beaux-Arts type campus at The University of Iowa experienced the fair directly. University President Schaeffer spent two weeks at the fair as a delegate to the Congress on Education that was held there.²² Henry Van Brunt, the architect selected to judge the architectural competition for Schaeffer Hall at

¹⁹"The Collegiate Building, I.S.U.", *Inland Architect and News Record*, 31 (June, 1898).

²⁰Turner, pp. 167-69, 186.

²¹Stanley Applebaum, *The Chicago World's Fair of 1893, A Photographic Record* (New York: Dover, 1980), pp. 15-52 illustrates the Court of Honor.

²²Jean Sizemore, "The Planning of the Pentacrest 1898-1905" unpublished term paper for Modern Architecture class, November 27, 1979, University of Iowa Archives, p. 11.

Iowa, was one of the designers of the Court of Honor.²³ The architects of Schaeffer Hall, Proudfoot and Bird, were well informed also about the planning and architecture of the fair.

The Columbian Exposition today is also considered a manifestation of the phenomenon called the "American Renaissance," which was first identified in an exhibit of that name at the Brooklyn Museum in 1979.²⁴ There are several components to this period style in architecture and the national attitude which it reflects. It was first a reaction against an America which appeared to have lost the spirit of an earlier golden age.²⁵ It was believed that the golden age could be revived by looking back to reclaim the best of the past and make it part of the present. It was a renunciation of the revival styles like Greek, Gothic, Romanesque and Queen Anne. In wanting to reinstate a development that ended about 1840 (the Georgian or so called "colonial"), architects were rejecting the Victorian period. One contradiction in this development was that the Victorians considered themselves modern; therefore, the conscious attempt to reinstate the architecture prior to the Victorian period was an anti-Victorian or an anti-modern view.

Americans wanted an American architecture, but realized the legitimacy in being part of the grand tradition of the Renaissance. They believed, as did architects throughout Europe, that the Italian Renaissance provided a living style, one which had progressed for 400 years and one which they thought would continue on into the future. They proposed not the copying of Renaissance style as another revival, but to continue it as a living development. They wanted to reinstate the Renaissance in their time and in America.

For discipline and inspiration, many American architects looked to France and its prestigious École des Beaux-Arts with its "scientific" approach to design and architecture as the

²³Applebaum, p. 44.

²⁴*The American Renaissance* (New York: The Brooklyn Museum, 1979).

²⁵Kenneth L. Ames, "Introduction," in Alan Axelrod, ed., *The Colonial Revival in America* (New York: Norton, 1985), pp. 10-14.

model to follow to develop a national style.²⁶ France was seen as the inheritor of the Renaissance tradition, but France looked to its own Renaissance past as well as to that of Italy. Following the École des Beaux-Arts lead, all architecture, past and present, was available for inspiration, except Victorian, of course.

Inseparably related to this development is the growth of the Colonial Revival style in America. The Colonial Revival reflects the desire to recreate America's own golden age in the present, and it was thought that America's colonial past was an early American reflection of the Renaissance tradition. The American Renaissance was American in spite of its grounding in conservative, European-oriented art.

However, the Iowa campus plan was not molded completely by national events like the Columbian Exposition and the ideals of the American Renaissance, although they were in place in time to inspire the style and form of the campus. Local developments made a campus of this type possible. The University needed more adequate facilities and a new image, and the funding was finally to be available for construction, thanks to President Schaeffer's efforts with the state legislature. The arrangement of the original campus with the Old Capitol at its center contributed to its development as well.

One last and most important consideration must be acknowledged. The Iowa campus is located on land originally proposed for a seat of government, a state capitol. It has been at the focus of the town from the very beginning. This makes the central campus of The University of Iowa different from most American campuses. It is more like the urban campuses of universities in France or Germany. The usual American campus is rural in nature or suburban at best. In this rural aesthetic most American campuses followed the cloistered or rural ideals of the English universities.

²⁶Madges Bacon, "Toward a National Style of Architecture: the Beaux-Arts Interpretation of the Colonial Revival," in Alan Axelrod, ed., *The Colonial Revival in America* (New York: Norton, 1985), p. 91.

The development of The University of Iowa's American Renaissance campus coincided with the culmination of the partnership of W.T. Proudfoot and George W. Bird, the architects of the Iowa Campus. After early success their firm suffered bankruptcy in Wichita, Kansas, during the financial panic of the late 1880s. There followed a relatively unproductive period spent in Utah in the early 1890s. Proudfoot and Bird came to Des Moines in 1896 to begin what one might call their second career. They arrived mature, accomplished, and experienced. In Iowa between 1896 and 1910 they produced 135 buildings, many of them major civic or educational buildings in the American Renaissance style. Their exclusive partnership ended when a new partner, H. D. Rawson, joined the firm in 1910. In 1912 G. W. Bird retired and moved to California while Proudfoot continued to direct the firm until his death in 1928.

Proudfoot and Bird was one of Iowa's most influential and prolific architectural firms during the early years of the twentieth century. They specialized in educational buildings, but they designed all types of buildings ranging from simple houses to multi-story hotels, from churches to courthouses, and from banks to warehouses. They designed laundries, factories, commercial blocks, hospitals and even a cemetery receiving vault.²⁷

The two partners, W. T. Proudfoot and George W. Bird, were successful because of the combination of their talents. Their competence in design was coupled with their success in getting contracts and working with clients, and their reputation for staying within budgets made them appreciated and popular. They always listened to their clients and provided what was needed to satisfy them in number and arrangement of rooms and in type of facilities.

Proudfoot and Bird's Beaux-Arts or American Renaissance buildings cluster in or around Des Moines and at the campuses

²⁷A list of buildings by Proudfoot and Bird in the Proudfoot and Bird file, Bureau of Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of Iowa, and plans and specifications of most buildings at Brooks Borg and Skiles, Architects and Engineers, Des Moines, Iowa.

of The University of Iowa and Iowa State University. Their buildings on the Pentacrest and for the professional colleges of The University of Iowa are sturdy, functional and finely finished. The buildings project a sense of confidence and calm produced by architects at the height of their abilities. They reflect the attributes that Iowans still find most attractive: quiet professionalism, practicality, and style without ostentation.

Only the barest of facts are known about W. T. Proudfoot and George W. Bird. First hand information from either man about their personal or professional lives or any from contemporary family members or personal friends has not been found. Proudfoot and Bird wrote no essays, gave no speeches, as did Louis Sullivan for instance, and had no students or colleagues who explained them. Next to nothing is known about their educations, their friends, their travels, or other architects who might have influenced them.

William (Willis) Thomas Proudfoot was born in 1860 in Indianola, Iowa, second child and second son of Elias and Martha (Ann Barnett) Proudfoot. He had three brothers and two sisters.²⁸ His father, Elias B. Proudfoot, was a carpenter and joiner and later a contractor in Indianola.²⁹

²⁸United States Census, Warren County, Iowa, 1870 and 1880.

²⁹*Warren County Platt Directory, 1872*, Elias Proudfoot is listed under Coopers and Carpenters; and Thomas Wright, "A Historical Perspective on the Buildings of Simpson College," History Honors Program, Dr. Joseph Walt (unpublished, Indianola, Iowa, Simpson College, May 1986). This paper names Elias Proudfoot as the contractor for Science Hall (Wallace Hall), 1888, on the Simpson College campus. Most professional information about Proudfoot comes from obituary notices and articles written at the time of his death. By that time he was very well known and respected in Iowa, and his death was noted in local newspapers with long articles outlining the events of his life and listing buildings he designed. "W.T. Proudfoot is Dead After Short Illness," *Des Moines Register*, June 9, 1928; "Rites Planned for Proudfoot," *Des Moines Tribune*, June 9, 1928; "Prominent Iowa Architect Dies" (Source unknown—found in Iowa American Institute of Architects Scrapbook); "William T. Proudfoot," *Annals of Iowa*, 3rd Series, 16 (1927-9): 474-5; Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (deceased)*, (Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Co., 1956), p. 492. The information in these articles is similar and seems to come from one source. That source was probably his firm, entitled Proudfoot Rawson and Souers at the time of his death. Craig Souers is mentioned by name in the *Des Moines Register* article. Another source could have been his daughter, who lived with him at the time of his death. His wife had died six years earlier.

According to Barbara Beving Long, Proudfoot worked for the architectural firm of Foster and Liebke (probably called William Foster at the time) in Des Moines from October 1880 until April 1881 and again from October 1881 to April 1882.³⁰ Proudfoot's presence in Des Moines cannot be documented during these two periods. Proudfoot gave 1882 as the year in which he began architectural practice on his application to the Iowa Board of Architectural Examiners in 1927, and this same document places him in Huron, South Dakota, in 1882 and moving to Pierre the next year.³¹ A church in Huron was built in 1883 and was probably Proudfoot's first commission. It is not known when Proudfoot met George W. Bird. Long believes that the two men met at Foster and Liebke in Des Moines.

No doubt, starting an architectural practice was difficult for Proudfoot (and Bird?). Only four commissions were known to have been completed by 1885, and these were in South Dakota. Proudfoot must have realized that education would be beneficial, and so he entered the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the fall of 1884 as a special student. He attended for only one semester in the school year 1884-85.³²

Early in 1885, probably directly from MIT, Proudfoot went to Wichita, Kansas, and placed his first advertisement in the April 1, 1885, *Wichita Eagle*. He was also listed as an architect in the 1885 *Wichita City Directory*. Bird's name was added to the advertisements in 1886. These advertisements appeared in the city directory through 1890.³³

³⁰Barbara Beving Long, "Iowa's Pre-Eminent Architectural Firm: The Architectural Legacy of Proudfoot and Bird, et al, in Iowa" (unpublished research report, for the Bureau of Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines, Iowa, 1987), p. 3.

³¹Long, p. 4.

³²Warren A. Seamans, Director, Historical Collections, MIT, letter to Sondra Van Meter, Wichita Public Schools, Wichita, Kansas, February 26, 1976 (copy in the Proudfoot and Bird file at the Bureau of Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines).

³³Elizabeth Harlenske Macauley, "The Works of Proudfoot and Bird and the Riverside Cottage," a Paper Submitted for Historical Preservation Law and School of Law Writing Requirement, presented to Professor Paul Wilson, (unpublished, University of Kansas, Lawrence, May 7, 1981), pp. 2-3. This is an excellent account of the boom and bust in Wichita.

The firm was vastly successful during its first few years in Wichita. Complete financial ruin there probably was a devastating surprise to both Proudfoot and Bird. They had arrived at the very height of a boom period during which the value of property skyrocketed, the population of the area grew dramatically and the need for architects and developers seemed unsatiable. They designed more than seventy-five buildings in and around Wichita.³⁴ In 1893, after the bust, Proudfoot had to sell his own house, "Hillside Cottage," at a great loss at a sheriff's sale to pay his back taxes.³⁵

In 1890 Bird, and then Proudfoot about one year later, moved to Salt Lake City, Utah. Proudfoot and Bird may have moved to Salt Lake City because one or both of them knew the architect Henry Monheim. Even though their joint firm, Monheim, Bird and Proudfoot, won the contract for the City and County Building, they designed only twelve additional buildings during their stay in Salt Lake City. This small number of projects over four to five years was nothing like the hectic and exciting days in Wichita at the height of the boom. The two men left Salt Lake City sometime in 1895.³⁶ Their first advertisement in the Des Moines city directory appeared in 1896.

Little is known about George Washington Bird's life and activities other than his work with Proudfoot and Bird. The man who named his house in Wichita the "Aviary" must have been interesting. George Bird was born in New Jersey on September 1, 1854. His name is continually connected with Philadelphia, which is just across the river from New Jersey, and Bird may have been drawn to that city to work and study. William Wagner indicated that Bird came from Philadelphia

³⁴Daniel Kidd and others, *Celebrate Wichita Century-old Architecture, Proudfoot and Bird 1887-1987* (Wichita: Wichita Section of the Kansas Society of Architects, 1987), p. 5.

³⁵Craig Miner, "Hillside Cottage at 100," *East Wichita News*, October 1987, p. 18.

³⁶Allen D. Roberts, letter to Sondra Van Meter of Wichita, Kansas, of February 23, 1976. A list of building permits issued to Monheim Bird and Proudfoot and to Proudfoot and Bird (the name of the firm differs) is attached to the letter. A copy is at the Bureau of Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines.

and that Bird “developed his sense of detail by working for a woodworking mill in Philadelphia.”³⁷

Bird was very likely trained by William Foster of Des Moines if not by some other architect earlier. He is known to have been in Des Moines beginning in 1882. He is listed in the 1882 Des Moines city directory as an architect and in the 1884-85 Bushnell’s Des Moines City Directory as a “draughtsman” for Foster and Liebke. Bird published in 1882 a “Design for a House in Des Moines” in the *American Architect and Building News*; this indicates another early Des Moines connection.³⁸ It also seems to indicate that he considered himself an architect in 1882.

Bird probably received his architectural training at the T-Square Club in Philadelphia.³⁹ The exact nature of this organization is unclear. Gray refers to it as a Beaux-Arts styled academy of architecture, but to call it an academy might be misleading. Either it was an atelier, a place where architecture was learned by means of the apprentice system, or what its name implies, a club. The T-Square Club could have been a place where architects could discuss their craft and where there were lectures and possibly some classes taught in drawing or other subjects. It was founded by John Stewardson sometime after 1883.⁴⁰

If George Bird was associated with the T-Square Club, it could not have been before he came to Des Moines in 1882. When Proudfoot went to MIT late in 1884, Bird might have returned to Philadelphia for a time. If he was associated with the T-Square Club as rumored (and it seems likely that he was, so persistent are the rumors), it could have been at this time.

³⁷William J. Wagner, “George Bird Buildings Reflect Renaissance in Italian and French Styles,” *The Iowa Architect*, Jan.-Feb., 1958, p. 20. A sketch by Wagner of the Dallas County Courthouse accompanies the article.

³⁸“Design for a House at Des Moines Iowa - by Geo W. Bird” *American Architect and Building News* XII (Aug. 5, 1882), after p. 62.

³⁹Steve Gray, “Proudfoot and Bird,” submitted to Dr. Richard G. Wilson, Department of Architecture, Iowa State University, Ames, November 17, 1975 (unpublished), p. 2. Copy in University of Iowa Archives. Gray reports that John Woolson Brooks told him this.

⁴⁰George B. Tatum, *Penn’s Great Town, 250 Years of Philadelphia Architecture Illustrated in Prints and Drawings* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press: 1961), pp. 199, 121.

He apparently did not go with Proudfoot to Wichita in 1885, but joined him by 1886, when his name appeared with Proudfoot's in ads placed in Wichita newspapers and directories. These notices indicate that he came to Wichita from Philadelphia.

Bird moved to Salt Lake City about 1891, one year before Proudfoot did. The two men apparently left there the same year, and we assume both men were in Des Moines before 1896 when their first advertisement was published. After sixteen or so years in Des Moines, Bird moved on to California sometime between 1910 and 1913. John Ratcliffe of Brooks Borg and Skiles believes that Bird, then 59 (in 1912), simply retired, but there might be more to the story than that.⁴¹ Weitz reports one version of a common story of Bird's activities which indicates a reason for his eventual and probably necessary separation from the firm: "Mr. Bird was a designer who entrusted business affairs to his partner and devoted his very considerable talent to design. After a tremendous surge of talent in designing the Polk County Courthouse, he spent most of his time viewing the newly developing cinema, and soon retired to California."⁴²

Proudfoot and Bird's three devices to make Schaeffer Hall coordinate with the Greek Revival Old Capitol, a uniform cornice height, a similarly proportioned portico, and the copying of surface pilasters, only partly explain the building's appearance. Proudfoot and Bird stated in their specifications that they would design the building in the "colonial" style, the style that they perceived to be the style of the Old Capitol. This choice of style responded to the then-current nostalgia for the American colonial period. What they considered colonial in architecture, however, was in reality the American Georgian style (1780 to 1820), and certain Georgian buildings in the eastern United States served as inspiration.

⁴¹John R. Ratcliffe, Brooks Borg and Skiles Architects and Engineers, Des Moines, Iowa, to Patricia Eckhardt, letter, July 18, 1990.

⁴²Rudolph W. Weitz, "Pioneer Building Industry in Polk County, A Paper Presented to the Pioneer Club at its Meeting on September 6, 1969" (manuscript, copy at the Bureau of Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines, Iowa), p. 5.

Two famous Georgian buildings were probably used as models for Schaeffer Hall, the New York City Hall (1808-12) by Joseph Francois Mangin and John McComb, Jr., and Mt. Pleasant (1761), a house in Philadelphia. New York City Hall provides both the basic plan for Schaeffer Hall and some window designs. Schaeffer Hall has a main block with perpendicular wings on the ends similar to that of New York City Hall. Schaeffer's first floor windows around the entrances and on the ends of the cross-wings are similar to those on the second floor of the wings on New York City Hall.

The window design is one with blind or closed lunettes (semi-circular areas above the windows), within a broad arched frame capped with a large key stone. On the city hall these flat areas are filled with relief sculpture depicting small wreaths and swags. The architect's drawings for Schaeffer Hall reveal similar relief designs for the windows beside the main entrance and for the three windows over the side entrances. The windows on the ends of the wings are similar in design, but with plain lunettes. When constructed the sculpture in the lunettes over the side doors was changed from wreaths and swags to busts of Indians and swags of fruits and vegetables representing Iowa and its bounty.

Other windows on the first floor have flat cornices with key stones. The flat cornices with key stones are another Georgian motif, one which Proudfoot and Bird had used before on the Buxton-Siegler building (1896-1899), Indianola, Iowa, and on the Dallas County Hospital (1897) near Adel, Iowa. Mt. Pleasant in Philadelphia illustrates similar window cornices.

But in the spirit of the true eclecticism of the Beaux-Arts approach and the American Renaissance, Proudfoot and Bird looked broadly for inspiration, and they were not limited to American Georgian or Greek Revival models. They studied ancient Greek and Roman and French Beaux-Arts monuments, too, by means of books. American architects and builders have used architectural pattern books and books of drawings of earlier monuments since colonial times. Books were one im-



East Portico of Schaeffer Hall

portant way architects kept in touch with contemporary developments in architecture throughout America and Europe.

Proudford and Bird continued the tradition of a library of architectural books in their own firm. Many of their books have survived in the present library of Brooks Borg and Skiles, Architects and Engineers of Des Moines. This library which included European books and periodicals must have been consulted often and provided examples of a large variety of building types and styles.⁴³

The four column Ionic portico Proudford and Bird placed on Schaeffer Hall, while almost exactly the same size and proportion as the one on Old Capitol, is not of the same design.

⁴³Patricia Eckhardt, "Proudford and Bird, Campus Architects: Building Facilities for Professional Education at the University of Iowa, 1898-1910," Ph.D. Dissertation, 1990, pp. 285-293. Appendix D provides a list of books published before 1910 in the Brooks Borg and Skiles library.

Proudfoot and Bird combined ancient Roman and Beaux-Arts details for their portico or porch. There were a number of convenient sources for an Ionic porch like the one chosen for Schaeffer Hall, both in American buildings and in European books and periodicals illustrating ancient buildings. Proudfoot's copy of Ragueneau's *Petit Edifices Historiques*, which he probably owned by this time, offered detailed drawings of both the Temple of Athena Nike at Athens and the Temple of Fortuna Virilis at Rome, each with a four column Ionic porch.⁴⁴

There were easily accessible sources for the pediment design as well. The architectural drawing shows a wreath and swag design, but the pediment as constructed has a central rondel or wreath surrounded by leafy tendrils which fill the space. The pediment has palmette acroteria at its top and corners as does the pediment over the front entrance. This design appeared on the Palace of Fine Arts at the Columbian Exposition of 1893. This building would surely have been known by Proudfoot. Published examples of a similar type were found in Proudfoot's books. Issues 38 and 52 of the *Monographies de Batiments Modernes* show leafy pedimental designs of this type also topped with palmette acroteria.⁴⁵ This type of relief filling a pediment was international in use and appears in examples in Klassen's *Grundrissvorbilder von Gebauden aller Art* series published in the 1890s, three volumes of which were owned by W. T. Proudfoot.⁴⁶

To construct a building such as Schaeffer Hall requires more than just the designing of efficient floor plans and pretty facades. It requires the organization of many elements, material, logistical, and human. A set of specifications, which instructs the contractor about building procedures and specific materials, accompanies architectural drawings for most architectural projects. Three sets of specifications are extant for

⁴⁴A. Ragueneau, ed., *Petit Edifices Historiques* (Paris: E. Ducher, 1892-1895), Temple of Athena Victor (Nike), pp. 97-108, Temple of Fortuna Virilis, pp. 463-468.

⁴⁵A. Ragueneau, ed., *Monographies de Batiments Modernes* (Paris: E. Ducher, 1887-1905).

⁴⁶Ludwig Klassen, *Grundrissvorbilder von Gebauden aller Art*, vol. 9, "Gebauden fur Verwaltungszwecke" (Leipzig: Baumgartner's Buchhandlung, 1885-1891), p. 814.

Schaeffer Hall, general specifications for the architectural competition, construction specifications for the basement and foundation, and specifications for the superstructure.⁴⁷ These specifications reveal the technical proficiency of Proudfoot and Bird and their mastery of the building craft and its materials.

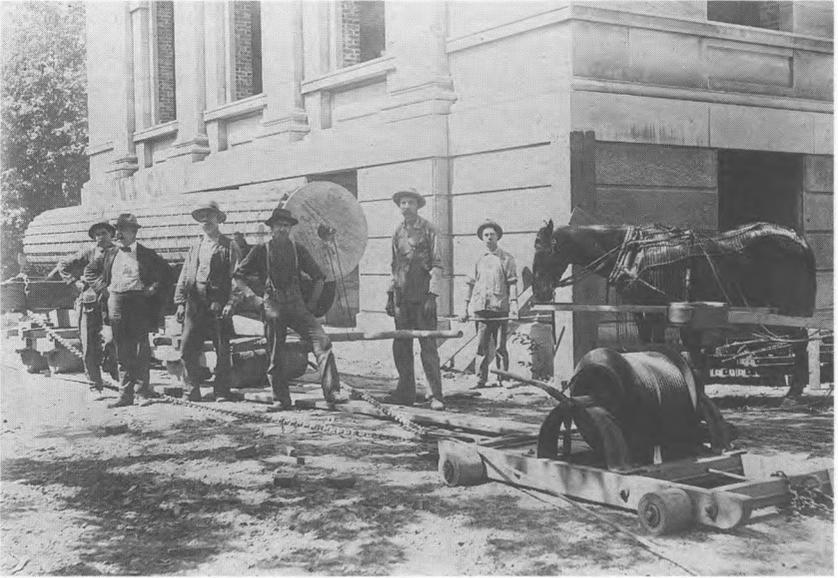
Most people assume that masonry buildings are constructed by piling up stone or brick walls like a child would build a wall with toy building blocks. In actuality, large, multistoried buildings are complex combinations of materials tied together with cements, mortars, metal bands and braces. This has been the case since the Egyptian Pyramids at least.

Schaeffer Hall is a structure with load-bearing masonry walls of cut Bedford stone faced on the inside with plastered brick. This exterior supports steel floor beams which in turn support wood-framed walls and ceilings of lath and plaster and hardwood floors. Central supports are steel on brick piers. Wood and steel trusses support the roof. All of this sits on a foundation constructed by combining different types of stone and brick for different purposes (Granite, Bedford limestone, rubble stone, hard-fired brick) joined with iron clamps and anchors and mortars formulated specifically for the hardness or flexibility needed to suit their particular purposes.

After the determination of the design and specifications, the actual construction of the building in accordance with the specifications presented another set of problems. Supply sources, labor relations, deadlines, cost overruns and even problem personalities had to be dealt with so the construction could go forward.

The construction of Schaeffer Hall was overseen by the building committee of the Board of Regents consisting of M. A.

⁴⁷Proudfoot and Bird, "Outline Specifications of Materials for the Proposed Collegiate Building, State University of Iowa," 1898, Brooks Borg and Skiles, Architects and Engineers, Des Moines, Iowa. Proudfoot and Bird, "Specifications of the Basement and Foundation of the Collegiate Building," Building Files, University of Iowa Archives. Proudfoot and Bird, "Specifications for the Superstructure of the Collegiate Building," University of Iowa Architect's Office. A booklet of specifications for construction always accompanies architectural plans, but often these are lost even when the plans are saved.



Schaeffer Hall under Construction

Higley of Cedar Rapids, P. K. Holbrook of Onawa, and Alonzo Abernethy of Osage. Later W. I. Babb of Mount Pleasant and Carroll Wright of Des Moines served on the committee. Charlton Wright was hired to be building superintendent and to supervise the construction. He consulted the architects and board members when necessary. Thanks to his vigilance, contractors were kept from using inferior materials and inadequate methods. Wright's "Diary", kept on the request of Proudfoot, informs us in detail about all activities of the construction—when stone arrived, how many men and mules were at work, the weather, who was injured, when the architect came to inspect, and many other items.⁴⁸ Professor Alfred Varley Sims of the Engineering Department helped with the surveying of the site and conducted tests of the cements.

⁴⁸Charlton Wright, "Diary," September 1, 1898 to June 30, 1900, University of Iowa Archives. The composition book is filled to the end with the last entry dating to June 30, 1900. No second volume has been found.

The construction of the building was bid in two parts, the basement and foundation as one project and the superstructure the other. On July 28, 1898, information for bidders for the basement and foundation was released which gave a general outline of specifications, date of bidding and an approximate estimate of materials needed.⁴⁹ The actual plans and specifications themselves were available for viewing at the University and at the architect's office in Des Moines. The bid was to contain three different estimates for the construction, each one employing the use of a different, specified kind of stone. Each bid was to be accompanied by a check for \$500 and the company was to be bonded for fifty per cent of the bid. This was necessary because construction companies did not always complete their work or pay their sub-contractors. David Stephens got the bid for \$16,810 and began construction on September 1, 1898.⁵⁰ The cornerstone was laid on June 7, 1899, with Governor Leslie M. Shaw, presiding.⁵¹ The contract was completed by the end of July in spite of the problems encountered in the construction due to winter weather.⁵²

By February of 1899 the bidding process was underway for the superstructure. This time the check from the bidder was to be \$5,000 and the bond \$40,000.⁵³ The contract was won by Warren Roberts, a Chicago contractor, with the bid of \$159,850. Roberts began work on the superstructure on July 28, 1899.

Problems with the Warren Roberts company started early. In September 1899 the contractor attempted to use broken stone "not according to the specifications," but Wright notified the

⁴⁹State University of Iowa, "Information concerning the foundations and basement of the new collegiate building of the State University of Iowa, to be erected on the Campus, at Iowa City, Iowa," Schaeffer Hall folder, University of Iowa Archives.

⁵⁰Board of Regents Minutes, August 1898.

⁵¹"Ceremonies at the Corner Stone of the New Collegiate Hall," June 7, 1899, Schaeffer Hall folder, University of Iowa Archives.

⁵²Wright, "Diary."

⁵³State University of Iowa, Business Department, "Information concerning the new Collegiate Building of the State University of Iowa, to be erected on the Campus, at Iowa City, Iowa," February 3, 1899.

architect and better materials were then employed.⁵⁴ There were conflicts over the hardness of the concrete as tested by Professor A.V. Sims. Problems continued as construction progressed. One year later Wright complained about the slowness of the work due to the contractor "not getting ready" and also "the unsettled state of things occasioned by the contractor's disposition to deviate from plans and instructions given them by Architect".⁵⁵ On September 21 Wright records the contractor's complaint that "the work was good enough and that I (Wright) was too particular and that I didn't care how much expense I put them (contractor) to."⁵⁶

The Board of Regents was dissatisfied with the progress of the work and the contractor's continual attempts to use materials other than those named in the specifications. By April 1901 after a year and a half of conflict, Secretary Haddock, for the Board of Regents, wrote Warren Roberts and Company to inform them that the contract would be taken away from them. He told Warren Roberts that they "have failed refused and neglected to carry out their contract according to its terms and failed refused and neglected to prosecute the work therein with sufficient workmen and proper materials, and with proper promptness and diligence."

The problems were still not over. The Warren Roberts Company had left many bills unpaid, and the sub-contractors tried to get paid by the University. The Arthur Frantzen Company was one of many subcontractors left without pay for work or materials supplied. "We understand that the College will be completed on or about the first of August and we beg to inquire if we may expect our balance for which we have already mailed you an order from the general contractors Warren Roberts and Company. We feel that by this time you certainly ought to be able to pay us the amount in full and we surely are entitled to same after waiting nearly three months. We installed our work in a first class manner and as quickly as possible and

⁵⁴Wright, "Diary," September 30, 1898.

⁵⁵Wright, "Diary," September 12, 1899.

⁵⁶Wright, "Diary," September 21, 1899.

also in good faith that upon completion of our work we would be paid our full balance which we certainly were entitled to at the time."⁵⁷ The Board of Regents agreed to pay sixty per cent of claims of various subcontractors in return that they all waive any future claims.⁵⁸ After Warren Roberts Company was released, Schaeffer Hall was completed by the Iowa City contractor, James Rowson. The building was accepted by the Board of Regents and occupied for the fall term in 1902. It cost \$191,407.82 to construct without equipment.

The Beaux-Arts Pentacrest which was developed at The University of Iowa between 1898 and 1910 stands completed today. The last red brick building, Old Dental, was removed in 1975. The university has been careful not to encroach on the capitol square with new construction. Only the four great classically detailed buildings remain surrounding the Old Capitol. The Pentacrest is the heart of the campus today and continues to be a beautiful and symbolic focal point for the University.

⁵⁷Arthur Frantzen Company, letter to Secretary of the Board of Regents, July 26, 1901. Their letter is one of many similar letters from sub-contractors in the file of Schaeffer Hall correspondence in The University of Iowa Archives.

⁵⁸Board of Regents Minutes, April 25, 1902.