PRESERVATION
RACINE NEWS

SPRING 2019
Volume 14

JOHN RANDAL MCDONALD IN RACINE

In carrying on Preservation Racine's interest in our Heritage buildings and the vibrant interest growing in our rich architectural building stock, there are architects, builders, and engineers who have left an important footprint in our community. One of these people is John Randal McDonald.

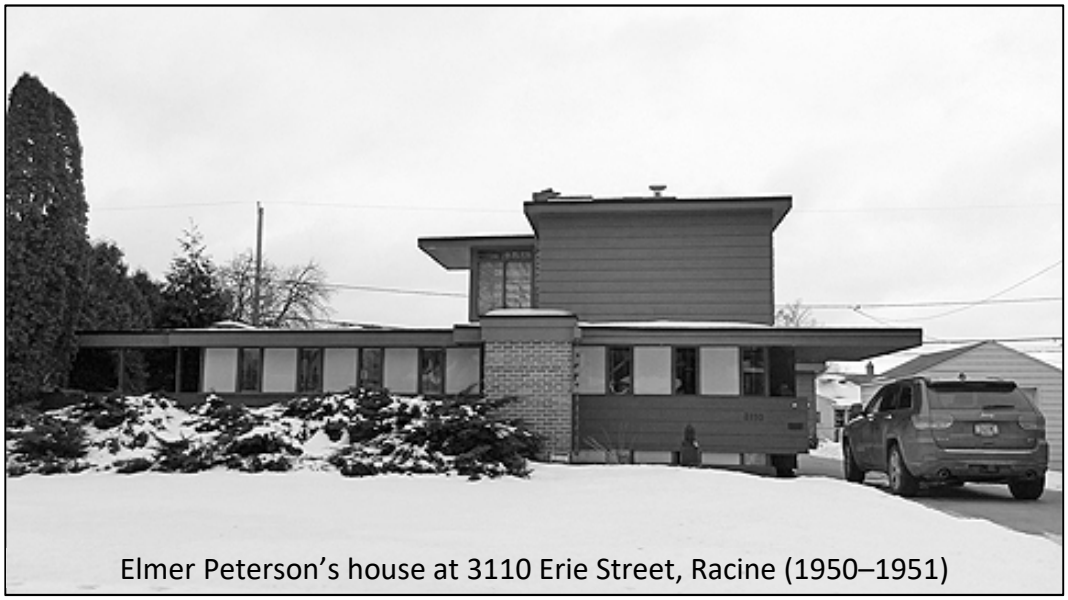
In one of my first years volunteering for Preservation Racine, I was stationed in a John Randal McDonald designed house on North Main Street, which was part of that year's Tour of Historic Places. During the tour, Mr. McDonald arrived unexpectedly dressed in a snappy red sport jacket and proceeded to engage with our guests in the most charming and positive way. This house featured expansive windows overlooking the back yard, flooding the interior with natural light and a feeling of being part of the beautifully landscaped gardens. He talked about his philosophy and use of natural materials (glass and wood): windows designed to make you feel as if you were outside, when in fact you were indoors. He followed up with a complimentary letter to me from Florida. He is remembered fondly by some Preservation Racine members. Pat Murphy remembers attending a party in West Racine, where Mr. McDonald arrived wearing white slacks and with his bongo drum. To everyone's delight, he entertained the guests with enthusiastic music. The State Historical Society has copious records about his history, his work around the world, photographs and drawings. There are 12.1 cubic feet of photographs and drawings (165 oversize folders, 22 rolls and 4 archive boxes) and 0.2 cubic feet of manuscripts (1 archive box) in its repository. With all the speculation concerning Racine's architectural stock and its future, this might be the time to look at the local inventory of John Randal McDonald houses.

John Randal McDonald

John Randal McDonald's 2nd house at 1001 Russet Street, Racine (1960)

Don Rintz wrote "Racine's Architectural Surprises—The Houses of John Randal McDonald" for Preservation Racine's Spring 1991 *Newsletter*. Following are some excerpts from that article. McDonald was born in Milwaukee in 1922; thus, he was nineteen when America entered the war [WWII]. He served as an officer in the U.S. Navy in the

Pacific Theater, seeing action in the battles for Saipan and Iwo Jima. After the war he was a student in fine arts, for a time, at the old State Teacher's College, now UWM, where one of his teachers was Robert von Neuman, the accomplished Wisconsin painter and printmaker." McDonald furthered his studies at Michigan, Ohio and Columbia Universities but he decided that architecture was his art and he moved on to Yale University, where he earned both a Bachelor of Arts Degree and a Master's Degree in, as he said, "the real dimension in which I wanted to work, the art of Architecture."
During those years at Yale, internationally known


Elmer Peterson's house at 3110 Erie Street, Racine (1950–1951)

architects such as Marcel Breuer, Eero Saarinen, Pietro Belluschi, Phillip Johnson, Hugo Henrik Alvar Aalto, Edward Durell Stone, Harwell Hamilton Harris, Richard Neutra and Louis Kahn conducted workshops for architectural students. Frank Lloyd Wright, much to McDonald's sorrow, was never invited to Yale, but McDonald did manage to visit Wright and his apprentices at Taliesen East in Spring Green during summer vacations. McDonald's Biographical Sketch states that "Upon graduating from Yale in 1949, McDonald was awarded the highest honor given a Fine Arts Graduate by Yale: The William Wirt Winchester Fellowship. This enabled him to study in Japan and China. He was deeply moved by the art of the Orient."

I was once told a story that John Randal McDonald met his future wife, Racine native Josephine Elholm, while both were students at Yale. They married in 1945. Her father was eager for her to return to Racine after graduation and offered some lakefront property to McDonald to begin his architectural practice. McDonald built two residences for his family in Racine. The first family home, built in 1949, is located at 801 Lathrop Avenue. By 1954 the McDonalds needed a larger home for their growing family and moved to 1001 Russet Street. Josephine and John's family would grow to five children (Karen, Jan, Lin, Jon and Mark) before they moved from Racine. Eventually Mark joined his father's architectural business.

McDonald referred to himself as the "poor man's Frank Lloyd Wright," designing modest houses, in the Prairie style showing horizontal planes with sweeping lines and an air of spaciousness. A note should be made here that some of his Racine built houses became quite commodious. His multi-level living spaces of wood, stone and glass were different from the tract and one-story ranch style houses being built at that time for the veterans returning from the war and young, middle class families, that could not afford Frank Lloyd Wright prices. Important to his house plans was the structural fireplace situated as the heart of the house, and window massing, clerestories and skylights to flood the house with natural light. His philosophy emphasizes the need for each building to belong to its surroundings and be compatible with the needs of the users. As he said, "by blending native stone and warm woods with sunlight and shadow, site and building become one."

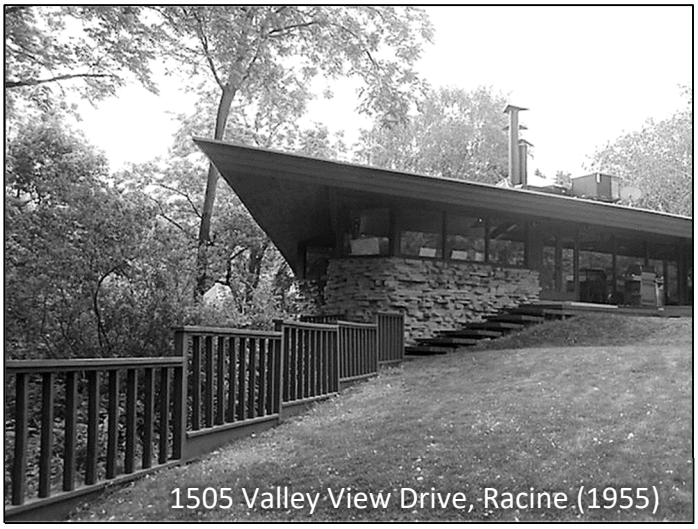
Most of the Racine County John Randal McDonald buildings were built in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1963–64 McDonald consolidated his business to a single office on the island of St. Croix, moving his family to the Virgin Islands. He remained there until

racial disturbances caused a decline in business. He then moved to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where he continued to work until his death in December of 2003.

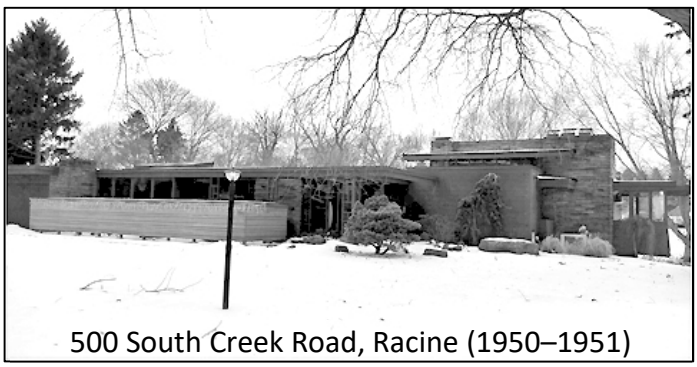
As preservationists, it is helpful to recognize and protect the gifts John Randal McDonald has left for us to enjoy. The following drawings of Racine County buildings are listed in the Wisconsin Historical Society John Randal McDonald Collection:

Caledonia
Raymond Auler, SUNSLOPE, Crestview (1953–1954)
CLIFFSIDE COTTAGES, 7100 North Cliffside Drive (1952)
Richard Outland, un-named (1957), (not built)
Abner G. Rosenfeld, un-named (undated)
CLIFFSIDE COUNTRY COLONY (The Camillian Monastery) (Dorms/Fraternities/Rentals) 5601 Erie Street (1951), (gone)

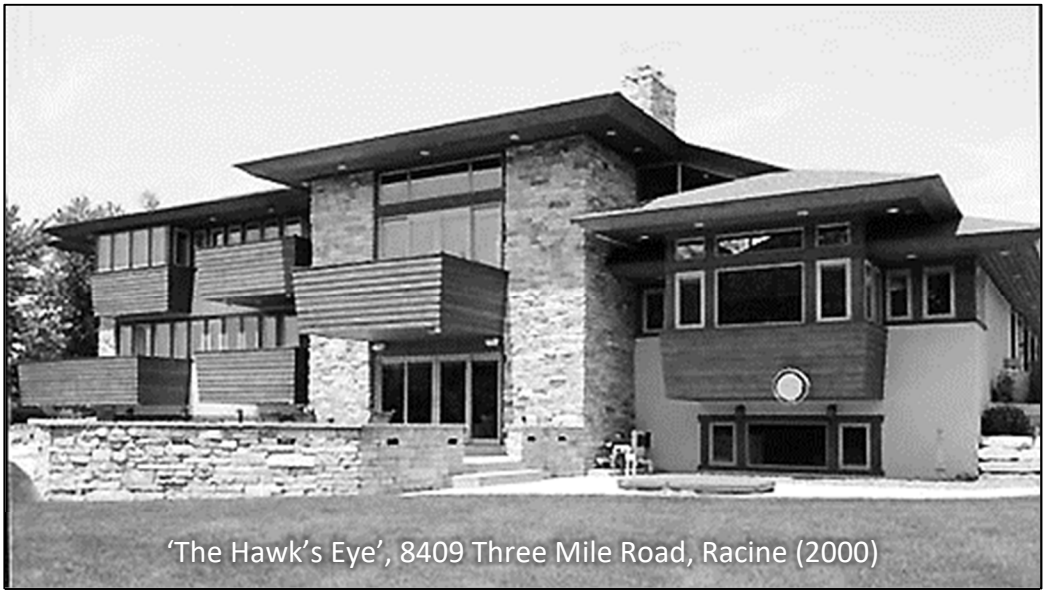
Mount Pleasant
John E. Erskine, HILLSIDE HOME, 1505 Valley View Drive (1955)


1505 Valley View Drive, Racine (1955)

Racine
David Aldrich, WINDWOOD, 2721 Delaware Street (1955)
Ray Beebe, CLIFFSIDE, not located (1952)
Richard Christensen, un-named, 500 South Creek Road (1952)


500 South Creek Road, Racine (1950–1951)

Dr. J. N. Dockery, un-named, 3333 Erie Street (1953)
Robert Erickson, un-named, 3328 North Main Street (1956)
John Erskine, kitchen plan, Ole Davidson Road (1952)
Malcolm Erskine, CROSSBOW I and II, 2909 Chatham Street
Dr. Louis Fazen, Jr., unidentified (1953)
Goulais, un-named, 4100 North Main Street (1949 or 1951), (razed)
Vernon H. Harrass, un-named, 211 Freres Avenue (1951)
Ludwig Kahn, un-named, 3056 North Main Street (1956)
John Randal McDonald, un-named, 801 Lathrop Avenue (1949)
John Randal McDonald, un-named, 1001 Russet Street (1960)
Harold Mason, LAKE LODGE, 5243 Lakeshore Drive (1958 or 1961), E. Graf, LAKE LODGE additions (undated)
Wallace Charles Miller, RIVER RUN (unidentified, undated)
J. H. Haumersen, Office, 1600 Yout Street (undated)
Lakeside Malleable Cast Company, 23rd and Clark Streets (undated)
Racine Hydraulics and Machinery Company, 2000 Albert Street (1963)
Racine Tool and Machinery Company, 1440 Racine Street (1951) (gone)
YWCA Summer Lodge, SUNFLOWER, River Bend Nature Center (1962)
Raymond Ballew, HAWK'S EYE, 8409 Three Mile Road (2000)



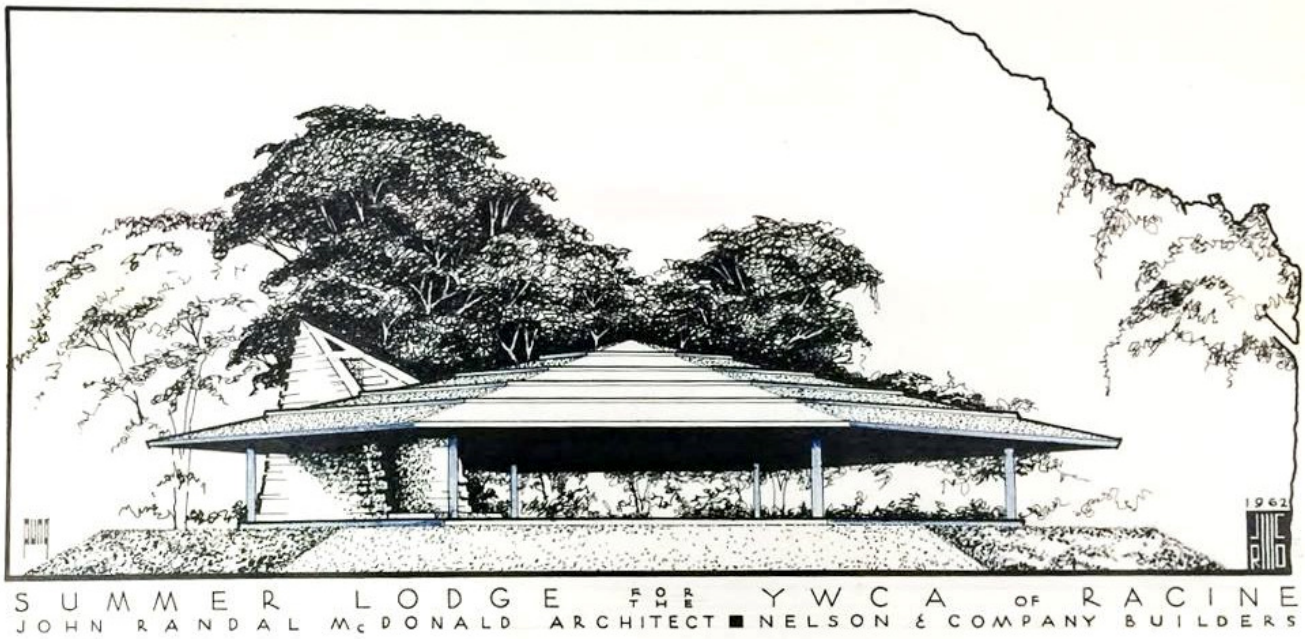
'The Hawk's Eye', 8409 Three Mile Road, Racine (2000)

North Bay
Robert Goodman, un-named, 3505 Chatham Street (1949–1950)
James and Barbara Murray, addition to Goodman House (undated)
Elmer Peterson, un-named, 3110 Erie Street (1950–1951)
Dr. Joseph D. and Jeanne Postorino, un-named, 3334 North Main Street (1951)
Quadracci, remodeling, not located (1954)
Robert Silver, un-named, 3515 Chatham Street (1949)
Lewis Van Sickle, un-named, 4340 North Neuman Road (1950)

Sturtevant
Elwood C. Creuziger, un-named, 8318 Durand Avenue (1953) (razed)

Wind Point
Arthur Birkholz, RIDGERUNNER, 5200 Hunt Club Road (1952)
Robert Johns, SPINDRIFT/SAILFISH, 4929 Lighthouse Drive (1952–1955)
Mitchell-Kosterman, KAZE SAKI, 5220 Hunt Club Road (2002)
Mitchell-Kosterman, additions (2001, *sic*)
Beach Community House (unidentified, undated)

Vivian Merlo



'Sunflower', YWCA Summer Lodge, now the River Bend Nature Center, Racine (1962)

Moving Forward...

In 2017 the City of Racine contracted with The Lakota Group to prepare a Heritage Preservation Plan. These consultants held numerous public meetings, online surveys, and solicitations for comments in order to understand the opinions and ideas of all interested Racine residents. Nicholas Kalogeresis presented some of the results at our February membership meeting.

Much of the final report involved background information and reasons that historic preservation is important — architecturally, historically, culturally, economically… the list goes on, and is probably preaching to the choir here. Now the Racine Landmarks Commission and the City Council have favorably received the report and adopted it as an amendment to the 2009 long-term planning document, "A Comprehensive Plan for the City of Racine: 2035". What happens next?

According to the plan:

1. The City should survey and document its architecturally and historically significant resources, including districts, neighborhoods, buildings, parks, bridges and monuments. Although Racine already has seven designated Historic Districts, there should be a special focus on residential areas such as post-World War II neighborhoods which have not been previously documented. In addition, a review and update is needed of the early National Register Historic Districts which were established in the 1970s and 80s (the Southside, Old Main Street, and Historic Sixth Street districts). Also, the stories of the many diverse groups of people who have worked in local industries and lived in many central city neighborhoods should be documented and celebrated.

2. These activities will involve the City's Landmarks Preservation Commission, which must be adequately staffed with knowledgeable, trained members. In addition, an updated ordinance should be adopted to strengthen the role of the Commission in such things as design review of changes to properties in designated historic districts.

3. New organizational frameworks and public-private partnerships will be needed to spur community revitalization. These will utilize existing incentive programs for such things as new residential living spaces and businesses, revitalized commercial areas and neighborhoods and will facilitate building rehabilitation.

4. Racine already has a strong framework for historic preservation through the efforts of Preservation Racine, the Downtown Racine Corporation, the Racine Heritage Museum, and other organizations. However, new initiatives are needed to advocate for and educate audiences and stakeholders who have not participated much in past efforts, such as young adults, millennials, and ethnic groups such as African Americans and Hispanics.

The report includes a draft Historic Preservation Ordinance which the city could adopt. Among other things, the City's Landmarks Preservation Commission would do the following:

1. Develop standards to identify and evaluate distinctive landmarks or landmark areas in the city with special historical, architectural or cultural interest.

2. Conduct studies and surveys of neighborhood structures and areas in the city to determine which ones have a distinctive character or special historic, aesthetic, architectural, archaeological or cultural interest or value.

3. Promote public education and support for preservation and enhancement of historic landmarks and sites.

4. Collaborate with and advise the Common Council, the Planning Commission, and other governmental entities regarding landmarks and special historical characteristics. *(continued page 8)*

Heritage Buildings

Letní sídlo Karla Jonáše v Racinu.
Reprodukce z fotografie.

Are you new to the Racine area? Or maybe to Preservation Racine? Have you ever wondered why we have a statue at Flat Iron Square? Then let me introduce you to Karel Jonas an internationally famous Bohemian American, and the home he built in Racine. Born in 1840 in Malesow, Bohemia and educated at The Polytechnic Institute in Prague, Jonas ran afoul of the Austrian government in 1859 when he wrote critical essays on the school system. In 1860 he was banished from Prague. He went to London, learned English and continued to write. Jonas immigrated to Racine in 1863, which had an early and significant Bohemian/Czech community. He was 23 years old and became editor of *The Slavie*, the first Bohemian/Czech language newspaper in the United States. Frank Korizek had started the paper in 1860. Jonas married Korizek's daughter Kristina.

Jonas was a journalist and writer; he would also become a politician and statesman. Noteworthy writings of his were an essay on "Federation in Austria," a treatise on "The Social Position of Women, Especially in England and America," and books on the downfall of France, the American Constitution and self-government. He also wrote the first English-Bohemian/Bohemian-English Dictionary. Jonas worked for Bohemian nationalism and against the Austrian Hapsburg rulers and Catholic clergy who then controlled Bohemia. He worked abroad and in the United States for the dignity of immigrants and all workers; he sought ways to acculturate his fellow immigrants.

Jonas loved and admired the United States and Americanized his name to Charles. He began his political career with several terms on the Racine Common Council. In 1877 he was elected to the Wisconsin State Assembly, and the State Senate in 1882. He refused the nomination for mayor of Racine in 1883. President Grover Cleveland appointed him Consul to Prague in 1885, however the Austrian government objected to his appointment due to his writings on politics and social issues. In 1886 the objection was withdrawn, and his consular service began. He was elected to his first of two terms as Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin in 1890, serving with Governor George W. Peck. He resigned

in 1894 to become U.S. Consul General in St. Petersburg, Russia. He went on to serve at a consular post in Crefeld, Germany where he died in 1896. He was buried in the National Cemetery in Prague.

Jonas bought lots 15 and 16 of Block 51 of the Original City Plat in 1874. Shortly after being elected to the State Assembly Jonas built his house in 1878 at 1337 Erie Street (corner of Erie and Barker Streets) in the heavily Czech Fourth Ward. It was built as a dignified two-story, gable-roofed, ell-shaped brick house with a one-story brick wing on the rear. The main entrance was through the angle of the ell where there was a long porch on the southern side. The style was Italianate with deep eaves supported by alternating single and double brackets, and it had segmentally-arched windows with rowlocks and header brick hood moldings. The walls are unusually thick brick covered with plaster. Interior walls are 12 inches and exterior are 17 inches thick. The exterior brick design is stretcher bond, whereas most Racine northside brick homes have the common bond design.

In 1894, when he left Racine for Russia, Jonas sold the house to merchant Peter Stoffel. The Stoffel family grew to include eight children and in 1901 they added on to the house with a fashionable two-story bay, rounding the southeast corner and filling in the inside angle of the original ell-shape. A classical, pedimented entrance portico juts out from the base of the bay and a turret with a conical roof rises at the corner. The curved southeast corner was built entirely of header bricks. The rear kitchen wing was raised to two-stories. The additions have resulted in a rather whimsical and exotic structure.

In September of 1978 the Jonas house was on the Preservation Racine Tour of Historic Places; in 1982 it was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

The statue memorializing Karel Jonas and honoring his accomplishments was erected in Racine by his grateful countrymen. It was dedicated in May 1912 in a small park on Lake Michigan at Michigan Boulevard and Barker Street. The sculptor was Mario Korbel. In 1935 the statue was moved to its present location, the triangular intersection of Douglas Avenue, High Street and Martin Luther King Drive. Racine's Bohemian American mayor, William Svoboda, was a major force behind the move.

While researching this article at the Racine Public Library I met Borek Lizec, Ph.D., Consul General of the Czech Republic in Chicago. He was in Racine researching Karel Jonas and his global influence. Look for a new book on our hometown statesman in the future!

Debbie Yale

1. Work with and obtain assistance from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Wisconsin Historical Society, the Racine County Historical Society, and other groups and individuals active in historic and cultural preservation.

2. Develop and recommend ordinances, programs, and other information regarding historic preservation to assist the Common Council and other governmental entities.

3. Work with owners of landmarks and landmark sites or areas to advise them on benefits, problems, and solutions to encourage participation in historic preservation.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission consists of seven members: a registered architect or building professional, a historian qualified in the field of historic preservation, a licensed real estate broker, an alderperson, and three citizen members. All of these should have, as far as practicable, a known interest in landmarks preservation. The commissioners are appointed by the mayor to three-year terms and are subject to confirmation by the Common Council. Interested parties are welcome to apply.

Moving forward, the City Council will be considering such things as the responsibilities, costs, and funding to carry out the proposed new ordinance, which is not yet in effect. Stay tuned for more information.

Here's a direct link to the plan:
https://www.thelakotagroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Final_Draft_HeritagePreservationPlan.pdf
Janet Carter

From the President

A new year brings with it many new opportunities for the organization to promote local history and historic preservation in the greater Racine County region by hosting educational and entertaining programs. The year has started with an excellent program by Nicholas Kalogeresis, Associate Principal of the Lakota Group in Chicago, who spoke about the *City of Racine's Heritage Preservation Plan*, which the City adopted on February 5. The purpose of the Plan is to "formulate and identify specific, realistic, and achievable strategies for enhancing the City's current heritage preservation program and initiatives."

Part of the Plan calls for collaboration between historic organizations to encourage education and advocacy:
"Successful community preservation efforts require building a local preservation ethic," the Plan states, "that preserves Racine's important historic resources through effective advocacy, education, stewardship and collaboration between the municipality, preservation advocates, non-profit entities, developers and investors, and owners of historic resources. Racine has been developing its preservation program for more than four decades, creating a strong institutional framework for historic preservation with Preservation Racine, the Downtown Racine Corporation and the Racine Heritage Museum, among others. However, new education and advocacy initiatives are needed to reach new audiences and stakeholder groups that have not participated in past preservation initiatives — new families, young adults and millennials, and Hispanic and African Americans. The Plan suggests several new initiatives that bolster and expand the preservation message, including the use of internet-based technologies and new and maturing partnerships with local neighborhood groups, the Heritage Museum and Preservation Racine." Our Board of Directors will be discussing ways to accomplish these objectives.

You can read the Plan by going to
www.thelakotagroup.com/projects/racine-heritage-preservation/

Preservation Racine will be hosting an exciting public program on Wednesday, April 3, at The Covenant. Entitled "The Big 3, Plus 1: An Evening with Racine Historians," local renowned historians Jerry Karwowski, Jim Mercier, and John Van Thiel will be sharing a stage and discussing fascinating aspects of Racine history and their individual

collections of Racine memorabilia. It marks the very first time "The Big Three" have ever appeared anywhere at the same time, and I will moderate their discussion as the "Plus One." Details will be forthcoming on our website, Facebook page, and through the mail.

Finally, I am announcing that the Board has decided to launch a capital campaign to raise money to rebuild the back porch on the Blake House. It has deteriorated to the point of becoming a safety hazard and needs total replacement. Estimates show it will require about $10,000 to replace the porch. Information will be made available soon on the campaign.

I look forward to another fun-filled year of preservation programs and projects!

Steven K. Rogstad
President

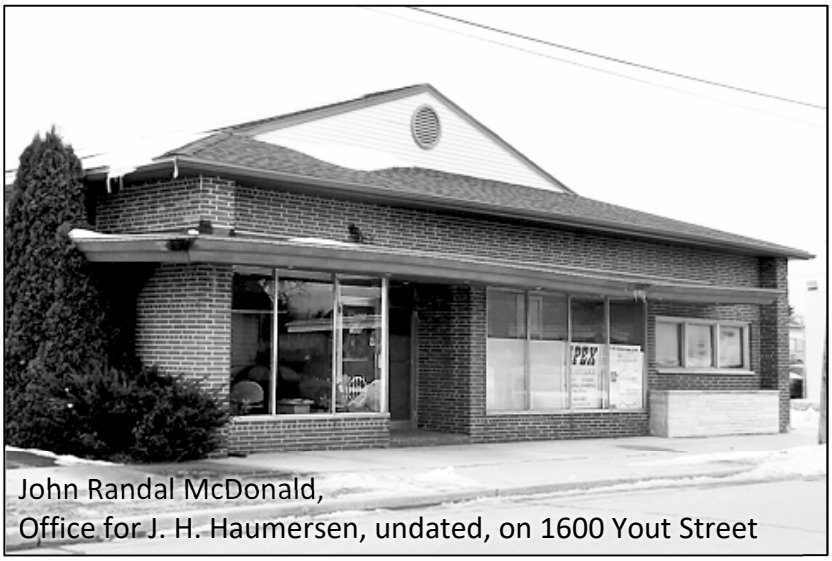
Blake House Update

Blake House, located at 936 Main Street, is owned and operated by Preservation Racine. There are three rental units on the second floor and one on the first floor, with our offices located on the north side of the first floor of this beautiful Tuscan Villa-style house. All rental units are occupied. This is the first building in Racine designated as a historic structure under Racine's Historic Ordinance guidelines. In another part of this newsletter, you will read about the campaign to raise money to rebuild the back porch, but in the meantime, Preservation Racine has been busy with other facelifts. After the 2017 careful replication of the front porch using historic pictures to assure accuracy, period-appropriate plantings of hostas and rhododendrons were placed around the front of the building and bridal wreath spirea was planted as a hedge along the north lot line. Work then moved inside to the parlors on the south side of the first floor. The large windows in both rooms had been painted shut and were not operating. Bruce Romeril loosened the windows and replaced the ropes needed for the 35-pound window weights. The windows now work beautifully. Dennis Mailand and Tony Anchando repaired the parquet flooring around the edge of the front parlor floor and restored the center of the floor, replicating what was in the back parlor. Plaster in both rooms was repaired where needed and painted. Most recently the ceiling plaster in the first-floor main hallway has been restored. The end result is beautiful and a complement to the history of the house.

Vivian Merlo

Century Buildings

Nicholas Kalogeresis, the guest speaker at our February Preservation Racine membership meeting, reminded us that the National Historic Preservation Act became law in 1966, authorizing the creation of the National Register of Historic Places. Preservation Racine members and friends will celebrate Preservation Month this May with the presentation of Century Building Certificates at a reception and program in the Great Hall of the DeKoven Center on Monday, May 6, 2019 at 6:30 pm. The next issue of this newsletter will feature these Century Buildings. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us in honoring buildings which are at least a century old and whose owners have maintained, preserved, renovated or restored their exteriors for our continued enjoyment.



John Randal McDonald,
Office for J. H. Haumersen, undated, on 1600 Yout Street

Coming Up

March Membership Meeting
Monday, March 4, 2019, 7:00 pm
First Evangelical Lutheran Church
728 Villa Street, Racine
The Reverend Nathan Pope presents
History and Tour of the Church

"The Big 3, Plus 1: An Evening with Racine Historians"
Wednesday, April 3, 2019
Special Dinner and Presentation
The Covenant at Murray Mansion
2219 Washington Avenue, Racine
Featuring Racine Historians Gerald Karwowski, James Mercier,
John Van Thiel, Plus Steven Rogstad

April Membership Meeting
Monday, April 8, 2019, 7:00 pm
(Note, the meeting date is the **second** Monday of the month)
St. Edward Church Hall
1425 Grove Avenue, Racine
Michael Slater will present
Travel the North Shore Line through Racine County

National Preservation Month
May 2019
"This Place Matters"

Century Building Certificate Awards
Monday, May 6, 2019, 6:30 pm
Great Hall at DeKoven Center
600 21st Street, Racine

June Membership Meeting
Monday, June 3, 2019, 7:00 pm
Location to Be Announced
Ben Tyjeski, Historian and Sculptor
Tyjeski Terra Cotta Works, LLC, Milwaukee
Major architectural terra cotta
landmarks in Racine including the West Sixth Street Bridge

Correction

In our previous issue we had a mistake in the caption to a photograph of Whitman Publishing in 1916. The caption stated that the view was looking east on Water Street. This should have been Stannard Street. We apologize for the mistake.

The Karel Jonas statue originally stood in North Beach Park on the edge of Michigan Boulevard at the junction with Barker Street.

This postcard dates to c.1919

realracine
America's Kringle Capital

Real Racine is pleased to help promote two of Preservation Racine's regular events:

the *Century Buildings Awards*
and
the *Tour of Historic Places*

Visit our location at I-94 on Highway 20 or you can visit us regularly on the web at

www.realracine.com
14015 Washington Ave. 884-6400

PRESERVATION RACINE, INC.
Published quarterly by
Preservation Racine, Inc., P.O. Box 383
Racine, WI 53401

President	StTeven Rogstad
Vice-President	Mark Sommer
Secretary	Pippin Michelli
Treasurer	Porter Venn
Historian	Sharon Baldukas

NEWSLETTER

Editors	Janet Carter
	Heather Egan
	Vivian Merlo
	Pippin Michelli
	Jerry Ritter
	Nancy Ritter
	Barbara Walter
	Debbie Yale

Office: Blake House, 936 South Main Street,
Racine, WI 53403 (262) 634-5748
www.preservationracine.org

Thank you for your continued support of Preservation Racine

Dear Members,

March is the time to renew your annual Preservation Racine membership. Your membership dues are important. Your time and talent are important too. We are asking you to complete and return the form on the reverse side. We would like to know your areas of interest. The many ideas and the participation of all our members make our organization stronger. Non-lifetime members, please complete the form, enclose a check for your current membership dues and mail to the address listed at the bottom of the form. You cannot vote if you are not current with your dues.

Sincerely,
Marcia Pfost
Membership Chair

Preservation Racine is a 501(c)(3) corporation and membership is tax deductible.
Membership renewals are due in March each year, except for Lifetime Memberships. The address label on the newsletter shows your membership expiration date. To renew and invest in your community's preservation, please fill out the membership form.

Preservation Racine, Inc.
P.O. Box 383
Racine, WI 53401

Return Service Requested

NonProfit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Racine, Wisconsin
Permit No. 242

PRESERVATION RACINE MEMBERSHIP

☐ Life Member $500
or, please check the appropriate annual membership category:

☐ Corporate $250 or more ☐ Sponsoring $75 ☐ Contributing $40
☐ Family $25 ☐ Individual $15

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____ Email: _____ Phone: _____

I would like to make a donation of: $ _____

I would like to help with:

☐ Tours (committee) ☐ Membership ☐ Publications ☐ Refreshments
☐ Tours (guide) ☐ Programs ☐ Photography ☐ Art Fairs
☐ Research ☐ Fund Raising ☐ Newsletter

Please mail check to: Preservation Racine, Inc., PO Box 383, Racine, WI 53401
www.preservationracine.org on Facebook PreservationRacine, Inc