

4/30/96

Downtown Culver Named To National Register of Historic Places

Antiquarian & Historical Society
Culver • Indiana

Downtown Culver, Ind., has been added to the National Register of Historic Places, and a special ceremony is being planned for May 11, to mark the occasion.

The listing on the national register was the result of a lengthy application process headed by Laura Thayer, a Columbus, Ind., based historic preservation consultant.

Culver's historic district includes the area bounded by Washington Street, the north-south alley east of Main Street, Madison Street, and Ohio Street.

Buildings receiving special mention in the application include the post office, Osborn Block (north & south), a service station, the Carnegie Library, the Knights of Pythias-Marmont Lodge, and the Menser Building.

Post Office - Jefferson & Ohio

Built in a Colonial Revival style in 1935, the post office is a one-story, brick building with a hip roof and rectangular plan. The entry is in the center bay of the five-bay northern facade.

The principal decorative feature of the building is a mural entitled "Arrival of the Mail in Culver." It was painted in 1938 by Jessie Hull Mayer, an Indianapolis artist, as part of the Public Works of Art Projects.

A 1906 Sanborn map shows the Culver Post Office on the east side of Main Street between Washington and Jefferson Street in a frame building. The 1914 and 1924 Sanborn maps show the post office in the first floor of the State Exchange Bank building.

The present post office was built in 1935 by James I. Barnes Company of Culver, at a cost of \$37,466.45.

Osborn Block (north & south)

The buildings at 107-109 S. Main Street and 111-113 S. Main Street comprise the Osborn Block (north & south) and they were constructed in the Italianate style circa 1900 and 1905.

The Osborn Block (north) is a two-story brick structure with a four-bay principal facade facing east with two store fronts. Built in or around 1900, the structure

housed Charles Medour's grocery store in the south room during the early 1910s. By 1914, a dry goods store was locate there.

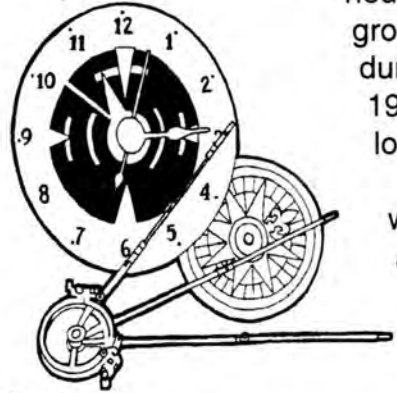
From the time the building was constructed, or soon afterwards, Thomas Slattery had the Culver City Drug Store in the north room.

The drug store, which was famous for its chocolate sodas, was here until the 1970s. Today, the town's weekly newspaper, the *Culver Citizen*, is located in this room.

The Osborn (south) building was constructed circa 1905. This building also houses two store fronts. The north storefront is an intact, circa 1920 bronze storefront made by the Kawneer Manufacturing Company of Niles, Mich. Floor tile in the storefront area are arranged to spell "Mitchell & Stabenow."

Both structures housed a number of important Culver businesses. In the south building's south room was the grocery store. In the late 1910s and 1920s, it was the Home Theater, a movie house. Today, it is Cafe Max. In the 1920s, the telephone exchange was located upstairs.

The Mitchell & Stabenow Clothing



Store, located in the north room of the south building from at least the early 1910s, was an early and long-time tenant. In recent years, Andy's Culver Clothiers was located here. Today, it is the location of Fisher and Company Clothiers. For many years while Mitchell & Stabenow were tenants, H.L. Werner, a jeweler, was located upstairs.

The Service Station - Main & Jefferson Streets

Built circa 1926, this one-story, concrete block building was influenced by the Moderne style. The main part of the building has a one-bay garage on the south, and a room with corner entrance on the north.

This station was owned by a Mr. Hand, and it was leased by the Standard Oil Company. R.R. and Howard Mikesell were the first managers.

The Carnegie Library - Main

Located at 107-111 N. Main Street, the Carnegie Library was constructed in the Colonial Revival style in 1916.

The library is a one-story, brick building with a raised basement and hipped roof.

While the original door has been replaced, the elaborate stone surround - columns supporting a Doric frieze and broken pediment with a cartouche in the shape of an open book - is intact.

General contractor for the building was Milo Ottshall of Akron. Zola Moss was the first librarian, and officers of the first library board were Dr. E.E. Parker, president; Dr. N.S. Norris, vice president, and Mrs. W.O. Osborn, secretary.

Knights of Pythias - Marmont Lodge

Located at 110-112 N. Main Street, the Knights of Pythias, Marmont Lodge 231, was constructed circa 1915 in the Tudor revival style.

The K of P building is a two-story, brick structure with a four-bay principal facade facing west. The northernmost bay has the entry to the second floor lodge rooms. The opening for the entry is recessed, Tudor arched, and it has a decorative stone surround.

Apparently, the building to the south at 108 N. Main Street, was once the Knights of Pythias Building. A circa 1910 photo shows it with "K of P Hall" on its pressed metal parapet. This earlier building was later remodeled for the Easterday Funeral Home.

Menser Building - 116-120 N. Main Street

Constructed in 1903, the Menser Building is a two-story brick building with two store fronts facing west.

A 1906 Sanborn map shows a meat market in the north room and a bakery in the south room. Nathan Rector is known to have rented a room in the building in 1909 when he started his pharmacy. By 1914, the was a grocery store in the north room and a silent movie theatre in the south room.

Culver's Downtown

The area in which Culver's downtown commercial district developed was first platted as Union Town by Bayless L. Dickson in 1844. In 1857, Union Town was replatted by Thomas K. Houghton, and

the town name was changed to Marmont. It was at this time that the current street names, including Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Main, were established.

An early picture of the businesses on Main Street comes from a 1905 directory. At this time, there were two bakeries, a bank (the State Exchange Bank), a barber, a drug store (Slattery's), several dry goods stores, a shoe repair shop, a carriage and wagon repair shop, a furniture store and funeral home (Easterday's), several grocery stores, a hardware store, two meat markets, a millinery, and a newspaper (*Culver Citizen*).

There also was a boarding house, post office, church and a lodge hall in the two-block area on Main Street between Washington and Madison Streets.

The Culver Commercial Historic District contains the largest concentration of historic commercial buildings in Union Township.



Historic Culver Day, May 11th, To Mark Occasion

To Commemorate Culver's listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the Antiquarian & Historical Society of Culver is planning a special day-long community celebration on May 11.

For this event, Main Street through Culver's two-block downtown business district will be limited to pedestrian traffic.

Among the events scheduled for the day is an ecumenical church service at 10 a.m. at Grace United Church, and a 10:30 a.m. concert by the Culver Community Jr. High School Band and the High School Glee Club.

Beginning at 11 a.m. will be a special plaque dedication ceremony, which is expected to last until noon. The Culver Military Academy Color Guard will present the national colors. Among the special guests participating in the ceremony will be 5th District Congressman Steve Buyer.

From noon to 3 p.m. people may walk along

Main Street and shop at the downtown businesses. Also participating in the celebration will be Tri Kappa, which will be sponsoring a bake sale.

Also scheduled for the day is an open house at the Union Township/Town of Culver Fire Department. Open house hours are from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Winners of the Antiquarian & Historical Society Essay Contest also will be announced during the day. Open to students at Culver Community Jr.- Sr. High School and Culver Elementary School, the essay contest will award a \$100 savings bond to the first place finishers at each school, and a \$50 savings bond for the second place finishers at each school. The winning essay will be the one which best captures the spirit of the early years of the Town of Culver.

In addition to savings bonds, winners will have their essays published in *The Culver Citizen*.

Special Book Signing Planned for June

"East Shore Summer: A Lake Maxinkuckee Memoir of the '40s and '50s" has been authored by Judy Eckerson based upon her growing-up years in the Ball Cottage. Her mother is Lucina Ball Moxley, whose parents William and Agnes Ball owned the cottage during those years.

The book recaptures the easy, long-summer days of children growing up when families moved into cottages in June and stayed until Labor Day.

Ann Eckerson, Judy's sister, has nostalgically sketched more than 20 illustrations, some of which are based on historic photos from the Antiquarian & Historical Society's collection, the Academy, the Bigley family, and Abad & Epley.

The lake cottage became a place of refuge for the family after their father, Dr. Ed Eckerson, was

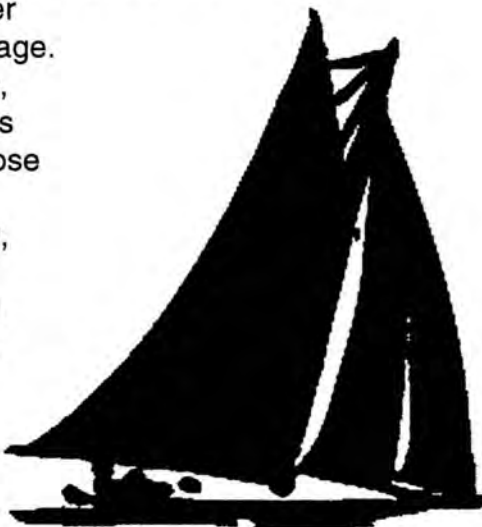
killed in World War II when a kamikaze plane bombed the surgery room where he was operating on the hospital ship Comfort.

However, the book is written to evoke that whole world, now gone: the old Campbell boathouse with its lily pads; Rossa's store; the Maxinkuckee Players' barn; long Sunday dinners served by servants; and, later, Academy dances and beaus.

Scheduled to come off the presses at Guild Press of Indiana in June, a special book signing is being planned for the last week of June at

Through the Grapevine in Culver.

The initial press run will be 1,000, and for every book sold, one dollar will be donated to the Antiquarian & Historical Society.



Antiquarian & Historical Society
Meeting Schedule

June 8th

Tom Spiece Residence
1614 East Shore Drive

July 13th

Dr. and Mrs. Robert Greenleaf's
1100 East Shore Drive

August 10th

Jim Baker Residence
2100 East Shore Drive

Historic Culver Day
Special Rates at

The Culver Cove

For Reservations Call

1-800-The-Cove

The Cove also will have tea and cookies
in the lobby on May 11th.