

The Pulaski County Historical Review

VOLUME 61

WINTER 2013

NUMBER 4

CONTENTS

A "City under One Roof": The Birth, Death, and Regeneration of the Arcade by Shannon Lausch	102
History? Legend? Symbol?: The Story of David O. Dodd by Philip H. McMath	107
Harvey Wilson "Lee" Goodwin: The Delineator of the Divine Feminine by Kaye Lundgren	118
Nearly Forgotten in West Little Rock: Pilgrim's Rest Cemetery and the Boys Reform School by Richard B. Clark	122
The Spirit of Those Times: Union Troops Occupy Little Rock and Reconstruction Begins by Bob Razer	125
News & Notes	129
<i>Our Back Pages</i> Early Schools for Girls in Little Rock by Emily Penton	130
Images of Pulaski County's History Sisters of Mercy Convent/Mount St. Mary's Academy	132

A "City under One Roof": The Birth, Death, and Regeneration of the Arcade

by Shannon Lausch

In November 1959, occupants of the Arcade received word that they had two months to vacate. Their building was scheduled for demolition, targeted to be replaced by a hotel. The residents, mostly retailers, lamented the loss of not only their storefronts, but also the friendships made in what was one of downtown Little Rock's most unusual structures. The Arcade's uniqueness was both in size and design. It sprawled across the entire city block between Louisiana and Center Streets and Sixth and Seventh Streets. An open-ended tunnel bisected the building, allowing people to walk through from Louisiana to Center Street. This architectural feature, called an arcade, is how the structure received its name.

The building was originally called the City Market and Arcade and promised to be a one-stop marketplace for Little Rockers. At its grand opening in 1914, thousands gathered to celebrate. The *Arkansas Democrat* reported that "the mobs of people who came, saw and understood that in Little Rock was to be found anything that could be seen elsewhere."¹ Little Rock's mayor boasted that the Arcade compared to "the greatest market places in the world."² The *Arkansas Catholic* proclaimed it a "city under one roof."³

¹ "Great Crowds at Arcade Opening," *Arkansas Democrat*, June 26, 1914, 7.

² "New City Market Opened to Public," *Arkansas Gazette*, June 26, 1914, 7.

³ "Beautiful City Market and Arcade Nearing Completion,"



The "City Market and Arcade" opened in 1914 and served as a one-stop marketplace. Photograph from *Sanitary Pottery (no. 1 1915): 11*.

Forty-five years later, with fewer renters, deteriorating facilities, and urban renewal on the horizon, the Arcade was no longer an impressive state-of-the-art building. Despite its downfall, however, the building remained a "city under one roof" until the end. The variety of businesses and special kinship among its denizens made it its own community.

But the Arcade not only embodied a city within itself. It also reflected the city outside of it. Its creation represented a step for Little Rock in becoming a modern city; its destruction, the city's foray into urban renewal; and its recent resurrection in the River Market, the trend for the city's downtown

Arkansas Catholic, January 31, 1914, 1.

Lausch is an archivist at the UALR Center for Arkansas History and Culture. She served on the Arcade's exhibit committee along with Deborah J. Baldwin, Kimberly Kaczinski, Kristin Mann, Stephan McAteer, and Charles Witsell. The exhibit designers are Thomas Clifton and Nicholas Sosnoski.

redevelopment to commemorate the past.

Near the time the Arcade was built, Little Rock was still enjoying its post-Civil War boom.⁴ According to the U.S. Census, Little Rock's population grew from 13,138 in 1880 to 45,941 in 1910. New buildings rose and dotted Little Rock's skyline, which included Pyramid Place (1907), the Hotel Marion (1907), and the Boyle Building (1909).

This exponential expansion was not unique to Little Rock. Nationwide, people were moving from rural areas to cities. The explosive growth exposed the dire need for improvements concerning education, health, and transportation. This gave rise to the Progressive Movement, which espoused solving these problems through increased government regulation in economic and social life.⁵ In Little Rock, progressivism came with the election of Mayor Charles Taylor in 1911. Taylor's initiatives included a new Health Department, a renovated Fire Department, paved roads, and a crackdown on gambling and prostitution.⁶ Something that the mayor could not provide was a central marketplace following strict, sanitary conditions. The city lacked funds to develop one.⁷

Recognizing opportunity, four Little Rock

⁴ F. Hampton Roy, Charles Witsell Jr., and Cheryl Griffith Nichols, *How We Lived: Little Rock as an American City* (Little Rock: August House, 1984): 183.

⁵ Carl H. Moneyhon, *Arkansas and the New South, 1874-1929* (Fayetteville: UA Press, 1997): 116.

⁶ Martha Rimmer, "Progressivism Comes to Little Rock: The Election of 1911," *Pulaski County Historical Review* 25 (Fall 1977): 50.

⁷ The City Market and Arcade Building," *Sanitary Pottery* 7, no. 1 (1915): 11

businessmen, Fred W. Allsopp, Ike Kempner, Harry Lasker, and Chris Ledwidge, formed the City Market and Arcade Company on July 6, 1912.⁸ They imagined for Little Rock a modern marketplace similar to ones found in Europe. Needing an entire city block for their vision, the directors found an ideal site in the heart of what was then Little Rock's business district. Owned by the Diocese of Little Rock, the lot sat across from the Cathedral of Saint Andrew and was formerly the location of Mount St. Mary Academy. The school had moved four years prior to Pulaski Heights, needing more space for its rapidly growing student population. Nearby taverns and manufacturing industries had also made its former location increasingly unattractive for the school.⁹ For a marketplace, however, the spot was perfect.

Bishop John B. Morris agreed to lease the land to the City Market and Arcade Company for 99 years.¹⁰ Now possessing the necessary land, two of the company directors and an architect traveled the country to study marketplaces in other cities. When they returned, they invited bids from architects to design their ideas.¹¹

The company accepted the plans of architects

⁸ "Articles of Agreement and Incorporation of the City Market and Arcade Company of Little Rock," Arkansas Secretary of State, July 8, 1912.

⁹ Sisters of Mercy in Arkansas with Jane Ramos, *Arkansas Frontiers of Mercy: A History of the Sisters of Mercy in the Diocese of Little Rock* (Fort Smith, AR: St. Edwards Press, 1989): 149.

¹⁰ "Beautiful City Market and Arcade Nearing Completion," 1.

¹¹ Bobbie Forster, "New Motel, Transition Recorded," *Arkansas Democrat*, December 13, 1959.

A "City under One Roof": The Birth, Death, and Regeneration of the Arcade

George R. Mann and Theodore M. Sanders.¹² Mann, already well-known for designing many prominent buildings in Little Rock, and Sanders, at the start of what would be a distinguished architectural career, were from two different architectural firms. Working together, they designed what would be one of the most unusual structures in Little Rock.

The architects were careful in ensuring that the Arcade supported a clean environment. In fact, this is why an arcade was such a common feature in early 20th century marketplaces. A high-ceiling and wide passageway encouraged a well-ventilated area. The arcade in this particular building was 20-feet wide and 300-feet long. A series of columns recessed in the walls supported the arched ceiling. A band of windows further encouraged fresh air to circulate throughout the building and provided a natural source of light.¹³ Domed roofs allowed even more light into the atrium. The total effect impressed one periodical named *Sanitary Pottery*: "The entire building is so splendidly arranged for ventilation and light that there is not a dark spot in it."¹⁴

The Arcade also sported a full basement, equipped with toilet facilities for the public; machinery to operate the building, including a steam plant and ice-making machine; and 35,000 cubic feet of cold-storage bins to store perishable items.¹⁵ Not just designed with function in mind, various decorative elements

adorned the Arcade's façade. These embellishments included terra cotta shingles for the roof; marble for the stairways and washrooms; plate glass for store fronts; and white ceramic tiled floors.¹⁶

Costing \$300,000 and taking over a year to construct, the Arcade was ready for its debut on June 25, 1914.¹⁷ At 8 p.m., the Arcade opened its doors to an eager public and included an entire festival to celebrate. On display were not just the permanent stores housed within the building. The festivities included expositions, music, and even dancing.¹⁸

The Arcade introduced a new shopping experience for Little Rock shoppers, who could compare prices from competing grocery vendors, purchase household goods and furnishings, send a letter across town, or bank — all under one roof. Opening stores included Allen's Confectionery, Altheimer Dry Goods Company, Kirby's Flower Palace, and Terry Dairy Company. *Arkansas Catholic* was confident in the building's success, calling it "a thing of beauty and a joy forever."¹⁹

Over the years, the Arcade's nature changed. Specialty stores replaced grocery stores, making the Arcade more like a modern-day mall. In the 1950s, retailers included the Famous Department Store, Caxton Book Store, American Beauty Shop, and the Polyanna Gift Shop. Despite its stores' adaptation with

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Clifton E. Hull, "Old LR Buildings Gone but Not Forgotten," *Arkansas Gazette*, November 26, 1972.

¹⁴ "The City Market and Arcade Building," 11.

¹⁵ Ibid; Patrick J. Owens, "Arcade Tenants Hate to Go — They'll Miss Friendly 'Hole,'" *Arkansas Gazette*, January 4, 1960.

¹⁶ Arcade building, 1912, UALR.ARD.110V. UALR Center for Arkansas History and Culture, Arkansas Studies Institute, Little Rock.

¹⁷ "The City Market and Arcade Building," 11.

¹⁸ "Great Crowds at Arcade Opening," 7.

¹⁹ "Beautiful City Market and Arcade Nearing Completion," 1.



An arcade is an architectural feature. This arched passageway is how the building received its name. *Photograph courtesy of the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, Clifton Hull Photograph Collection.*

the times, the upkeep of the building was neglected. And with fewer people shopping downtown, revenue was down.

In the late 1950s, urban renewal was beginning to take its hold in Little Rock, and developers took a critical eye toward the Arcade. Deemed too expensive to rehabilitate, the building was slated for destruction. Remaining store owners were told to leave the building by December 31, 1959.²⁰

Store owners accepted their fate, yet regretted

²⁰ Owens, "Arcade Tenants Hate to Go."

leaving each other. "We can't stand in the way of progress," said J. R. English, whose law firm was located in the Arcade. "But these were the nicest, pleasantest people you'd meet anywhere." Another store owner, Lillian Garrett, said: "It's just one of those things. You have to go along with progress, you know."²¹

The Arcade was completely razed in March 1960. Its replacement was the Downtowner Motor

Inn, later renamed the Little Rock Inn. The hotel was considered a boon to Little Rock's downtown which was struggling to repair its image after the state's opposition to desegregate Central High School in 1957.

The hotel, however, would go from being a point of pride to an embarrassing blight. It became a haven for drugs and prostitution. In an *Arkansas Gazette* interview in 1989, the hotel's owner-operator admitted he allowed prostitutes in the inn but barred them from the first floor lounges. "We don't tolerate any hookers

²¹ Ibid.

A “City under One Roof”: The Birth, Death, and Regeneration of the Arcade

in the bars,” he said.²²

Attempts to curb crime at the hotel repeatedly failed. In 2002, an *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* editorial exclaimed: “Tear it down. To the ground. Sometimes nothing can be a wonderful improvement.”²³ The hotel was ultimately torn down in 2004. The entire area today is a parking lot.

The Arcade, however, recently found new life. In October 2012, downtown developers announced that a new building in the River Market district would be

named after the old building. Like its predecessor, the new Arcade will house a variety of organizations and businesses, and its location in the River Market District resonates with its original marketplace roots. The building is a joint venture between the Central Arkansas Library System and Moses Tucker Real Estate.

The new Arcade building is scheduled to open in late 2013. An exhibit detailing the old structure’s history is set to go on display in the Arcade Lobby in early 2014. Despite the destruction of the original building, the Arcade continues to reflect Little Rock’s growth as a city. This time by reviving memories of historic buildings while meeting the needs of 21st-century Arkansans.

²² C. S. Heinbockel, “Little Rock Inn in the Action,” *Arkansas Gazette*, August 20, 1989.

²³ “The Losers Inn,” *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, June 18, 2002.

