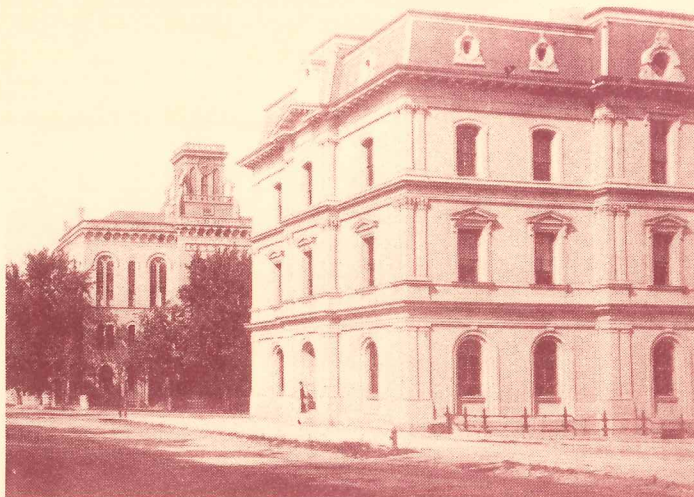


# LOST MADISON

Glimpses of Our  
Disappearing Past







Old Post Office and Federal Building, 1875-1880. E. Histed, photographer WHi(X3)18573

The urban landscape of Madison looks vastly different today from the way it did when these exhibit photographs were taken. One by one, the buildings succumbed to what succeeding generations defined as 'progress.'

In looking at what we have lost, one inevitably asks "Why?" and "What for?" An unwholesome number of these buildings fell victim to the demands of the automobile. The seas of asphalt that cover many of these sites today are perhaps our bleakest indicators of changing values and public priorities.

Other demolitions were the result of deliberate public policies. While slum clearance and redevelopment programs seemed enlightened at the time, they took a heavy toll in diversity and neighborhood cohesion.

Demolition by neglect—the continued non-maintenance of older structures—provided the impetus for more demolitions. In other cases, buildings outlived their usefulness; too small or functionally outmoded, they begged to be replaced with more modern facilities—or so it seemed.

If we had it to do all over again today, would we have been so eager to send in the bulldozers? In some cases, perhaps yes. More likely, we would be looking at imaginative ways to recycle many of these old buildings for new uses: offices, apartments and condominiums, stores, galleries, restaurants. In recent years, old buildings in Madison and cities around the country have undergone such transformations as the result of powerful incentives.

One of those incentives is simple economics. In many cases, it is substantially cheaper to rehabilitate an older building than to demolish it and build anew. Federal tax policies, which formerly encouraged demolition, now reward the renovation and re-use of designated historic structures.

The shrinking availability and skyrocketing cost of energy is another factor. It takes the energy equivalent of one gallon of gas, for example, to make, deliver and install eight bricks. Think of all the energy bound up in the brick, stone, wood and mortar of the old buildings in this exhibit alone.

There are other, less tangible reasons for hanging on to reminders of our past. Our older buildings are psychologically important reference points in a changing urban environment. These diverse remnants tell us where we came from as a city and as people. They help give Madison its sense of place and identity. And once they are gone, they are gone forever.

"You can't stop progress," we are told. Indeed not. But we can redefine what "progress" is. It need not mean plundering our past for things bigger and better. Progress, in the waning days of the 20th century, must make room for the preservation of human values. And that calls for more intelligent stewardship of the history than is written in the building blocks of our cities.

#### 1) **Municipal Boathouse** **Lake Mendota at North Carroll Street**

The twin-towered boathouse was commissioned by the civic-minded Madison Improvement Association and designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1893. It was torn down in 1928 as a larger public boathouse was being planned.

#### 2) **Lucien Hanks, Jr. House** **Langdon Street and Wisconsin Avenue**

Only the old boathouse and traces of stone terraces remain of the Hanks House, built in 1898. The building was demolished in 1971 by National Guardian Life Insurance Company and a parking lot currently marks the site.

#### 3) **Levi and Esther Vilas Residence** **521 North Henry Street**

In 1851, when Madison's population was scarcely 3,000, Levi Vilas arrived from Vermont and astonished the community by building the magnificent Greek Revival sandstone mansion in the wild thickets along the edge of Lake Mendota. In 1965 it was razed and replaced by a dormitory, now home of the University's Evans Scholars.

#### 4) **William and Anna Vilas House** **12 East Gilman Street**

The building, which was acquired in 1877 by U.S. Senator William F. Vilas, was expanded into an opulent mansion where Presidents Grant and Cleveland and other visiting luminaries were entertained. In 1963, the manse was demolished by National Guardian Life Insurance Company for the construction of their present office building.

#### 5) **Madison Skyline in the 1870s**

Viewed from the roof of the William Vilas Mansion at 12 East Gilman Street, on the crest of "Yankee" or "Mansion" Hill, the picturesque spires, clock towers and turrets seem to sprout from the heart of Madison. Most were gradually replaced during the following century.



Benjamin Franklin Hopkins Residence, circa 1890. WHi(X3)30210

#### 6) **Benjamin Franklin Hopkins Residence** **142 East Gilman Street**

The elegant Italianate Victorian brick mansion was demolished about 1960. Presently on the site is the VEREX Corporation building.

#### 7) **Joseph Dean House** **636 East Gorham Street**

Founder of the Dean Clinic and Chief of Staff at St. Mary's Hospital, Dr. Joseph Dean built this house in 1914. Designed by Claude and Starck, the house was a good example of Prairie style architecture. The house, along with over a dozen others, was razed in 1970 for the expansion of James Madison Park.

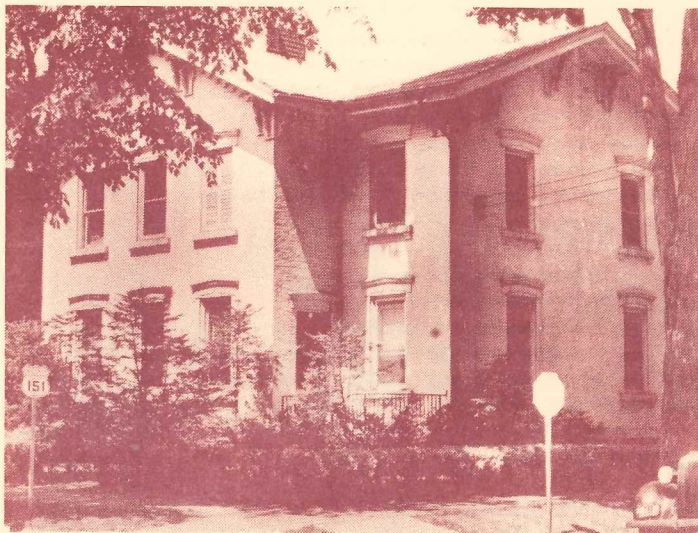


**8) Harlow S. Orton House**  
**30 East Johnson Street**

Built by implement dealer A.C. David in 1861-1862 and from 1870 until 1895 the home of Judge Orton, for whom Orton Park was named, the house was demolished in 1976 by the Masons for a \$6 million apartment development, as yet unbuilt.

**9) First United Methodist Church**  
**203 Wisconsin Avenue**

Built between 1872 and 1887 of sandstone in the Gothic Revival style, the Church fell to the wrecking ball in 1975, replaced by a more modern structure. A small garden marks the site.



Harlow S. Orton House, 1948. WHI(X3)36291

**10) Fuller Opera House**  
**8 West Mifflin Street**

With seating for 1,200, the opulent performing house was hailed as "one of the finest theatres in the state" in 1890. It was later remodeled as the Parkway movie palace. Demolished in 1954 and replaced with Chandler's Shoe Store, it is now the site of Brathaus, Too.

**11) Old City Hall**  
**2-4 West Mifflin Street**

The monumental sandstone City Hall was built in the German Romanesque Revival style in 1856, the year that Madison became a city. It was demolished in 1954 and replaced by the F.W. Woolworth store found there today.

**12) Old Post Office and Federal Building**  
**4 East Mifflin Street**

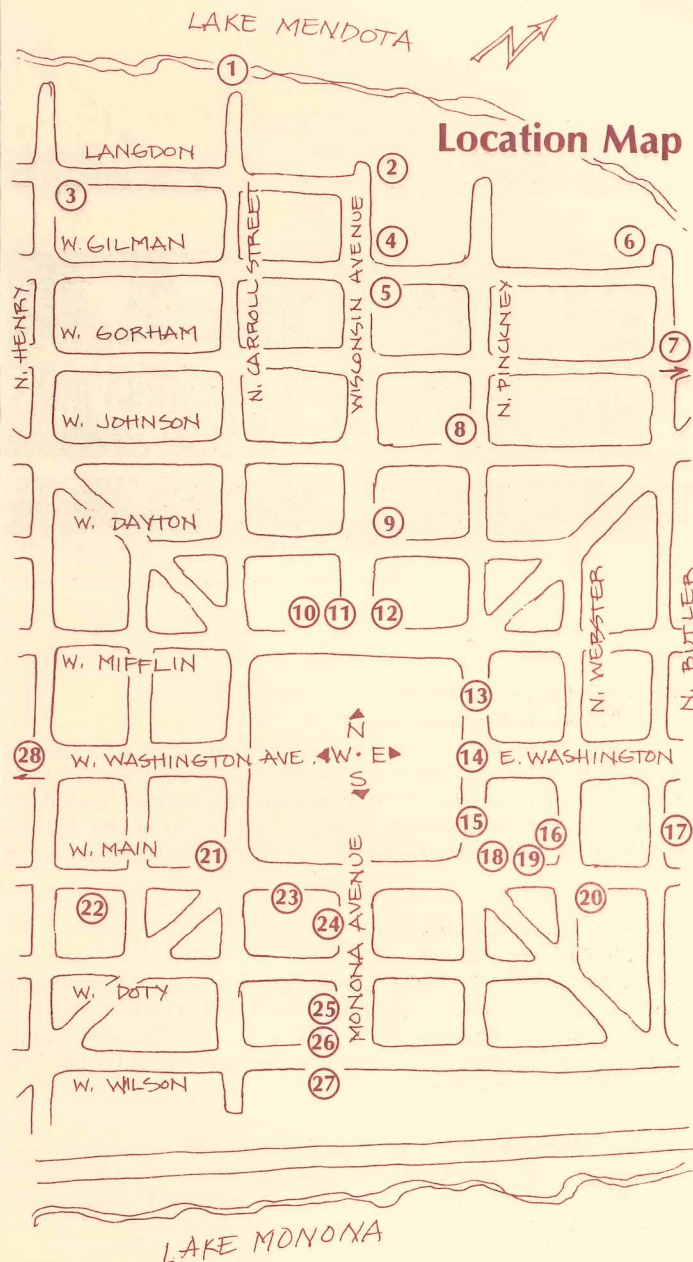
The French Second Empire style building was constructed in 1871 of local sandstone. The building fell in the late 1920s to make way for the present Manchester's Department Store.

**13) 19-31 North Pinckney Street, circa 1875-1880**

Of this row of buildings that stretched between East Washington Avenue and East Mifflin Street only the Ellsworth Block remains. The Italianate sandstone building was built in 1872-1873. Hidden for many years behind a perforated steel sheathing, the building was recently renovated and is known as The Atrium.

**14) East Washington Avenue, circa 1895**

The Renaissance Revival style American Exchange Bank building, built as the Park Bank in 1872, still stands today. The farmers congregated to sell their produce around the water-tower, which was demolished in 1921.



**15) 1-29 South Pinckney Street, circa 1881**

Today the block is the site of the third and fourth generations of buildings to occupy it. Much of the block gave way to the construction of the First Wisconsin National Bank in the early 1970s. The southern portion of the block was razed for the Tenney Building.

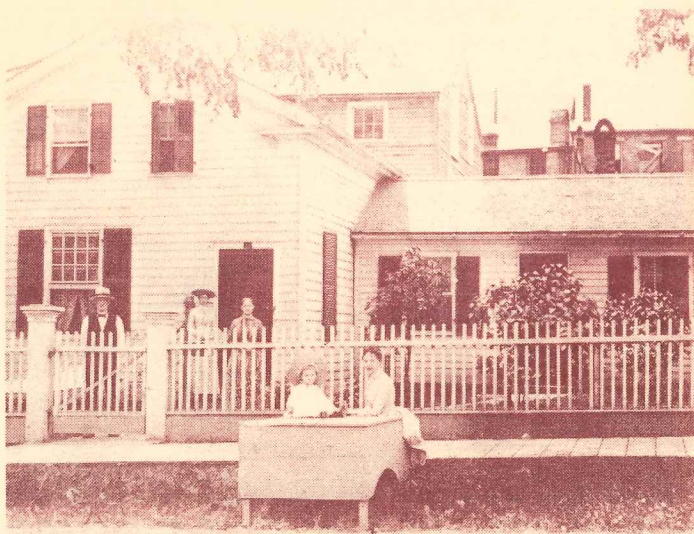
**16) Darwin Clark House**  
**22 South Webster Street**

The modest frame residence built in 1847 in the Greek Revival vernacular motif was the home of pioneer Darwin Clark. Clark was the first member of the construction crew for the Wisconsin Territorial Capitol to arrive in Madison in 1837. The house was demolished in about 1914 to provide parking space for the adjacent Madison Gas & Electric Company.

**17) Turner Hall**  
**21 South Butler Street**

The social and cultural center for the city's German community, Turner Hall was erected in 1863 by the Madison Turnverein, who promoted programs in gymnastics, physical fitness and cultural development. The building was gutted by fire in 1940 and was ordered demolished by the city. The current Turner's building was erected on the same foundation in 1941.





*Darwin Clark House, 1870-1880. WHi(X3) 36294*

**18) United States Hotel Block**  
**25-29 South Pinckney Street**

Demolished in 1875 for the construction of the first Tenney Building by attorney Daniel K. Tenney, the United States Hotel housed a host of businesses at what was then the most trafficked of intersections in Madison. Today it is the site of the Tenney Building, the city's first all-steel frame office structure, erected in 1928.

**19) W.A. Oppel Grocery Store**  
**116 East Main Street**

Built in 1875, William Oppel's grocery store offered such items as quail (54 apiece), partridge and prairie chickens (104 and 154 apiece) and eggs (34 to 54 a dozen). The sandstone-faced building was razed in 1970 to become the parking lot for the First Wisconsin National Bank.

**20) East Main and South Webster Streets, 1896**

A once vital commercial district, as shown on a Fourth of July, the block was cleared a decade ago and in 1979-80 saw the erection of the General Executive Facility II (GEF II).

**21) Park Hotel**  
**30 South Carroll Street**

Built in 1871 of Milwaukee cream brick with sandstone trim, the Park Hotel featured marble fireplaces, "ladies' and gentlemen's balconies," and a suite for the governor. The building was demolished in the summer of 1961 for the construction of a new Park Hotel, now Inn on the Park.

**22) Dane County Courthouse**  
**207 West Main Street**

An imposing Romanesque Revival building erected in 1886 at a cost of \$134,700 was demolished in 1958 following the construction of a combined City-County Building. Today the Dane County Parking Ramp stands on the site.

**23) Levitan Building**  
**15-19 West Main Street**

The richly decorated Art Deco Egyptian motif of the terracotta facade of the building was designed by the prolific local firm of Claude and Starck in 1928. The building was torn down in 1975 by the Affiliated Bank of Madison for a parking lot. Some of the facade was saved from the wrecking ball, including the pharaoh's head on display in the lobby of the City-County Building. The public outcry following its wrecking led to the development of the present demolition review procedure.

**24) G.A.R. Hall**  
**118 Monona Avenue**

Designed by August Kutzbock, the dignified Renaissance Revival building was built in 1858-1859 as a law office although it is best remembered as the long-time home for the local G.A.R. (Grand Army of the Republic), an organization of Civil War veterans. The sandstone structure was demolished in 1973 to expand the Bank of Madison (Affiliated Bank) parking lot.

**25) Atwood-Buck Residence**  
**210-214 Monona Avenue**

The bracketed cornice of the stately 1851-vintage red brick duplex was the subject of the camera shortly before its demolition in 1950 for a parking lot. The City-County Building now occupies the site.

**26) Simeon Mills House**  
**222 Monona Avenue at Wilson Street**

Madison pioneer Simeon Mills built the magnificent French Second Empire dwelling in 1869. His first substantial house—a twenty room sandstone farmhouse—still stands at 2709 Sommers Avenue. The house was demolished in the mid-1930s to be replaced by a gas station. Today it is the site of the City-County Building.

**27) Fairchild Residence**  
**1 West Wilson Street**

In 1846, Madison's first mayor, Jairus Fairchild, selected the site, an abandoned quarry, for the construction of his brick home, which was surrounded by wooded grounds that stretched down to the shore of Lake Monona. In 1925, the mansion was leveled for the construction of the One West Wilson Street State Office Building.

**28) Claridge Apartment Hotel**  
**333 West Washington Avenue**

Following a court battle led by residents and housing preservationists, the Claridge and sixty-eight other housing units fell to the wrecking crews in the winter of 1979-80 to make way for a new Jackson Clinic and parking ramp. (Not shown on map.)

**29) "The Bush"**  
**West Washington Avenue, Park and Regent Streets**

Hailed at the time as a "successful" example of slum clearing, the demolition of the neighborhood known as "Greenbush," or more commonly "The Bush," began in 1962. The \$6 million federal-city sponsored project eventually displaced 350 primarily Italian, Black and Jewish families. Today it is known as the "Triangle." (Not shown on map.)



*East Main and South Webster Streets, 1896. William Oppel, photographer. WHi(X3)26225*

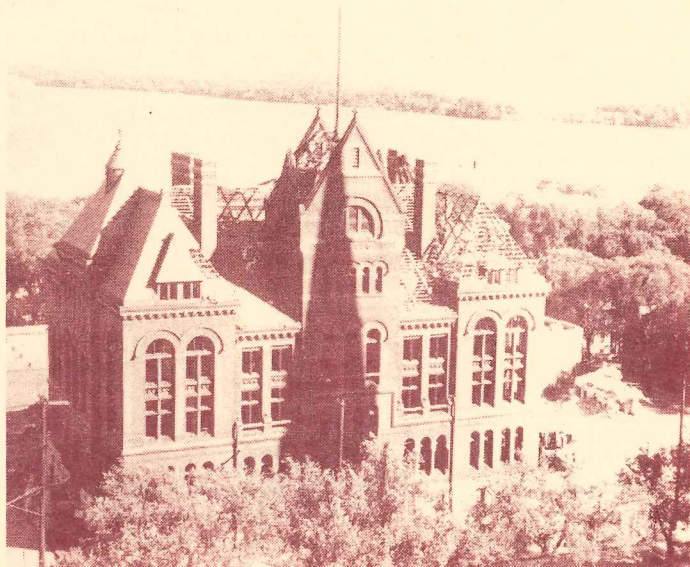


**30) University of Wisconsin Boathouse  
Near Lake Street at Langdon Street**

Rickety and in need of repair, the old boathouse, which was built in 1892 for use by the crew team, was razed in 1968 after the construction of a more modern structure elsewhere. Now the site of the pier. (Not shown on map.)

**31) Abel Dunning Residence—Mapleside  
3335 University Avenue**

The demolition of the buff sandstone Greek Revival residence in 1970 for a Burger King restaurant fueled the effort that resulted in the formation of the Madison Landmarks Commission. The handsome farmhouse was built in 1853 from stone quarried nearby. (Not shown on map.)



*Dane County Courthouse, 1958. John Newhouse, photographer. WHi(X3)35064*

Lost Madison has been sponsored by the Madison Landmarks Commission, the Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission, Historic Madison, Inc., the Isthmus Housing Preservation Group, the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation, the Bassett Neighborhood Association, the Fourth District Neighborhood Association, and the Wisconsin Humanities Committee, with partial funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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Cover photo: Municipal Boathouse designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, circa 1898. WHi(X31)272.

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