



Cornerstones Summer 2026

Celebrating 50 Years!

PAL Board of Directors

Marcus Zettler
President

Jennifer Zettler
Vice President

Judith Cobb
Treasurer

Barbara Kooiman
Secretary

Travis Glasshoff
Roger Grant
Samuel Lindner
Jordan Schloemer

King Holley †

PAL's 50th Anniversary: Part 2

PAL's 50th Anniversary programming interrupted at our May banquet will continue this fall – stay tuned! Compete for prizes in our trivia challenge, hear the history of PAL, eat cake and celebrate! You will have the opportunity to share your PAL memories of buildings saved, buildings lost, and buildings treasured.

Rest in Peace King Holley

PAL has sad news to share with our PAL community. On May 20th, our long time friend and board member King Holley passed away. In his last hours he was surrounded by friends who cared deeply for him at our 50th anniversary banquet. He loved architecture, was a realtor in the area for many years, and was no doubt influenced as the grandson of local, prominent architect Otto Merman. We will miss him greatly!

Preservation nominations by others

Four La Crosse buildings were recently added to the State Register of Historic Places and considered for the National Register of Historic Places: La Crosse City Hall, Fire Station No. 4, HSR (architecture/engineering firm), and Congregation Sons of Abraham (synagogue).

A Message from the President

Dear PAL members,

It is with a heavy heart that I write this letter, in remembering one of the great preservationists in the history of La Crosse. King Holley was a long-time board member of PAL, and a true friend. In the last year he would come to our house for PAL meetings and enjoy experiencing one of his grandfather's designs. He gave so much to this organization, and he will be greatly missed.

PAL is more than an organization focused on saving buildings, too many times we forget that it's about the people: preserving our history, preserving our memories, and remembering where we came from so we can appreciate and understand where we're headed. As we look back on the last half-century, we see that PAL was involved in countless efforts to save our cultural heritage as represented in our built environment. And that mission has never been more important than it is today!

We see pressures all around trying to erase the past, whether it's "just one building" or "property owner rights are more important" or people claiming "historic preservation destroys property values". We understand that a historic building is more than just a building, it's a physical, tangible piece of our past. It represents the best efforts of a previous generation, something they built well to be handed down to the next generation, the one after that, and the one after that. It is our job to protect and preserve these buildings so the next generation can experience and enjoy them. It's our way of connecting the past through the present to the future. We want to leave this world better than the way it was when we came into it, and a big part of that is respecting the past and giving the opportunity to experience that past to the future generations.

King and everyone on the PAL Board had/has that goal, and we are continuing to strive to protect the best parts of our past and give them to the next generation. Tell a friend! Explain to them what a historic building means to you. It's going to take all of us to change public opinion in favor of historic preservation, and demonstrate the benefits that can result from preservation.

Let's make PAL's next 50 years even more successful than its first 50 years!

Sincerely,

Marc Zettler
President

Horace "King" Holley, III
July 24, 1936 — May 20, 2026
Sparta, WI

Horace King Holley III, born in La Crosse, WI on July 24, 1936, current resident of Sparta, WI, passed away on May 20, 2026 at the age of 89.

He attended undergraduate school at Hamilton College in Clinton, NY. He was a career realtor for many companies in La Crosse and was President of the La Crosse Area Realtors Association in 1998-1999 and 2007-2008.

He was the grandson of well-known architect, Otto A. Merman, who was responsible for many public buildings, schools, commercial and residential buildings in the La Crosse area. He was a long-time board member of the Preservation

Alliance of La Crosse, a non-profit organization that works to save endangered historic buildings, presents awards to people in the community who demonstrate efforts in historic building preservation, and provides a Heritage Home Tour for homes that highlight the rich structural heritage of the city.

He is survived by his niece, Holley Holmberg, resident of La Crosse. He was preceded in death by his father, Horace King Holley, Jr., his mother Margaret "Petie" Holley, and his sister, Heather Holley Holmberg, along with many other family members. He was also preceded in death by his long-time partner, David Henke.

There will be a private interment at Oak Grove Cemetery on a future date. For memorial donations in King's name, please visit the Preservation Alliance of La Crosse's website at <https://www.preservation-alliance.org/donate>.



Emerson Elementary School: aka Hillview Orthopedic School

2101 Campbell Rd, La Crosse

Following PAL's nomination, Emerson was designated by the Historic Preservation Commission as a local historic landmark. The historic designation was appealed and overturned.



View looking west from Campbell Street. Ca. 1940. Courtesy of University of Wisconsin – La Crosse (UWL) Murphy Library Special

The Emerson Orthopedic School was dedicated on Saturday, January 20, 1940.¹ During the planning stages, the school was known as the Hillside Orthopedic School. The school was renamed to Emerson Orthopedic School (after the poet) in January 1940 just before the dedication.² The construction of this school was part of a city-wide overhaul of the public school system. From 1938-1940 there were eight school projects under construction in the city.³ Funds from

the PWA (Public Works Administration) made this building boom possible. It was designed by the architecture firm of Boyum, Schubert & Sorensen.⁴ This school was not a typical elementary school. From the beginning it was specifically designed to accommodate children with disabilities. In the late 1930s studies determined the need for the orthopedic department as the existing facilities were woefully inadequate. The Orthopedic Department located on the third floor of the old Washburn School requiring children with disabilities to climb flights of stairs! This department was the first of its kind in Wisconsin and had students from 9 counties in 1938 – it was the predecessor of today's special ed.⁵



Treatment room at Emerson Orthopedic School. Ca. 1940. Courtesy of UWL Murphy Library Special Collections.



Hubbard Hydrotherapy Tank at Emerson Orthopedic School. Ca. 1940. Courtesy of UWL Murphy Library Special

¹ "Emerson Orthopedic School Transferred to Local Board." La Crosse Tribune. Jan. 21, 1940. P1, 10

² "School Board Re-Elects Rossiter; Defines Boundaries of Districts." La Crosse Tribune. Jan. 19, 1940. P7

³ "Eight New Schools and Additions Involve Expenditure of \$1,734,161." La Crosse Tribune. July 2, 1939. P5

⁴ Steele, Fred E. "Agreement" 1938.

⁵ "State and Counties Aid Finance of Handicapped Child Training." La Crosse Tribune. Feb. 2, 1938. P1

The Orthopedic Department worked with children who had various disabilities and diseases (children in the 1930s still had to fear debilitating diseases such as polio and tuberculosis), as well as students recovering from surgeries, malnourishment, and nervous disorders.⁶



First floor corridor at Emerson Orthopedic School. Ca. 1940.
Courtesy of UWL Murphy Library Special Collections.

The single-story, stair-free design for the school was unique among the educational buildings in the city. Ramps were used to change floor levels and grab bars were located on the walls. The school consisted of the Orthopedic and Open Window wing on the southwest side of the building and the regular elementary school classrooms on the northeast. In addition to the special education classrooms, there were treatment rooms with therapy pools and resting areas.

At the conclusion of World War II, the “baby boom” began. This increase in children required more classroom space. The School

Board again turned to Schubert, Sorensen and Associates (name of the firm changed) to design a large addition to Emerson School.⁷ The resulting low bid of \$314,834.94 was submitted by WMC, Inc. of Winona for General Contractor on February, 3, 1955. Around 1972 new additions were added for classrooms and library. The library was burned down on January 1, 1983.⁸ The reconstruction reopened on August 30, 1983. As a result of the fire, the new library was the first to be computerized in the La Crosse School District.⁹ Another addition was added in 1991. Student enrollment has been declining in recent years. In 2024 consolidation plans for Emerson and Spence schools resulted in Hogan School being needlessly demolished for a new building on the site.¹⁰

This building is a significant and highly intact historic structure contributing to the cultural heritage in the Coulee Region. The fact that the building is still owned and used by the original client almost 90 years after its completion is a testament to the superior design and quality of construction. Buildings constructed as substantially as the Emerson Orthopedic School can last hundreds of years if properly maintained.



View of the modern main entry at the southwest corner of Emerson School. October 2025.

⁶ “Special School Here Inadequate.” La Crosse Tribune. Feb. 4, 1938. P1

⁷ “Board Opens Bids on New Project Feb. 3.” La Crosse Tribune, Jan. 4, 1955. P1

⁸ “Youth Admits Torching Emerson.” La Crosse Tribune, Mar. 19, 1983. P1, 16

⁹ “Rebuilt Emerson Awaits Students.” La Crosse Tribune, Aug. 25, 1983. P40

¹⁰ “Board Looking at Long-Range Consolidation Plan, Referendum.” La Crosse Tribune, Feb. 8, 2024. PA1

Goddard Hotel - now Fred Antonneau Apartments, 1639 Prospect St, La Crosse
Nomination approved and designated by the Heritage Preservation Commission.

The Goddard Hotel is a two-story L-shaped wood-framed structure with local orange brick veneer and hints of Victorian detailing. It started as a simple rectangular massing with a hip roof and a tower on the southwest corner. The cupola (now covered) had a triple curve that ended in a finial. A full-length one-story porch once graced the front of the building but now has been replaced with entries to individual apartments.



View looking west from Prospect Street. Ca. 1909-1913. Courtesy of UWL Murphy Library Special Collections.

The hotel was named for Hiram Goddard, a wise businessman who came to La Crosse from Massachusetts in 1857.¹¹ He was one of La Crosse's lumber barons, owning the Hiram Goddard Lumber Company. He also bought up a number of farms, was a director of State Bank of La Crosse, an active member of the Black River Improvement Company and a trustee of the First Congregational Church.¹² This is someone who we might refer to as a venture capitalist today.

Mr. Goddard wanted a good quality, but not luxury, hotel and hired notable La Crosse architect William Parker for the project. The hotel was designed to be well proportioned with just enough architectural interest to make a statement about the quality of the structure without being overly exuberant. This was to be a railroad hotel for the north side of La Crosse, the equivalent to a modern nice, clean hotel close to I-90. The hotel was completed on December 3, 1888 and turned over from the contractor (Mr. Powers) to Hiram Goddard.¹³ The original hotel was a rectangle running east-west with a tower at the southeast corner. It may have had a porch on the east façade from the beginning. The oldest known photo of the hotel was taken after the north wing was added, but there is a clear differentiation in the porch where the original building meets the new addition. The approximate cost was stated to be \$3,500.¹⁴ Three years later (1891) the addition was added at a stated cost of \$2,000.¹⁵

¹¹ Tatarek, Judith. "The Goddard Hotel also known as The C.B. & Q. Hotel." May 3, 1983. Research Paper.

¹² "Hiram Goddard Dies Suddenly." La Crosse Tribune. June 6, 1910. P1

¹³ Ibid. Dec. 4, 1888 P3

¹⁴ La Crosse Republican and Leader. Dec. 31, 1888. P1

¹⁵ La Crosse Republican and Leader. Dec. 31, 1891. P4

A railroad hotel was once a very common building type across the country. The Chicago, Burlington and Northern Railroad opened for business in La Crosse in 1886. They had an extensive campus of buildings including a roundhouse and various car shops.¹⁶ The hotel was situated just blocks from the depot; however, it was not just a single railroad that made this location so important. The area became known as “Grand Crossing” because of the intersection of multiple major rail lines.¹⁷ The three major railroads that intersected at Grand Crossing were the above-mentioned Chicago, Burlington and Northern that later became the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, the Chicago Northwestern, and the Milwaukee Road later acquired by the Soo Line. The yards of the Burlington brought many good jobs to the neighborhood. There were already two hotels, the Union House at 1915 Prospect Street and the Burlington House at 1813 Onalaska Street in the area when the Goddard opened.

The hotel had a string of bad luck: there was a chimney fire that spread to the roof on February 27, 1911,¹⁸ a passing train on the adjacent railroad track threw sparks that ignited the roof again on May 18, 1913,¹⁹ and a third fire (apparent arson while the building was vacant) started in the basement did more damage than the first two spreading through the walls into the attic.^{20 21}

The hotel was converted into apartments in the early 1920s. At the building’s zenith as a hotel there were estimated to be thirty guest rooms. The apartment conversion began by creating eight apartment units with four more being completed in 1930.²² The front porch was still extant into the early 1930s. New doorways were added as the building was converted to apartments including the two on the south façade.²³ Sometime around 1930 the front porch was removed and two new doors were added to the east side of the building. It appears that this is when the window and door openings were modified on the east side of the building. The cupola on the tower was removed around 1938.²⁴

The building has a long, important history to the City of La Crosse. It has stood the test of time and has remained a residential building for almost 140 years. Although some of its more ornate details are gone, the vast majority of the building’s exterior retains a high degree of historic integrity.



View of the south and east elevations of the Goddard Hotel, taken from Prospect Street. March 2026.

¹⁶ Tatarek, Judith. “The Goddard Hotel also known as The C.B. & Q. Hotel.” May 3, 1983. Research Paper.

¹⁷ Ibid. P2 of 8

¹⁸ “Fire in Old Goddard Hotel.” La Crosse Tribune. Feb. 28, 1911. P4

¹⁹ “Sparks Fire Roof.” La Crosse Tribune. May 19, 1913. P4

²⁰ “Fire Damages Willard Hotel on North Side.” La Crosse Tribune. March 19, 1924. P1

²¹ “Fire Losses in 1924 Fall Below Total of 1923.” La Crosse Tribune. March 1, 1925. P7

²² Tamarek, Judith. “The Goddard Hotel also known as The C.B. & Q. Hotel.” May 3, 1983. P7 of 8

²³ Ibid. P7 of 8

²⁴ Ibid. P8 of 8



Preservation Alliance of La Crosse
PO Box 2938
La Crosse, WI 54602-2938

Join PAL!

Yes! I will support historic preservation through membership in the
Preservation Alliance of La Crosse.

Name

☐ \$250 (Business/Supporting)

Address

☐ \$100 (Patron)

☐ \$50 (Household)

City/State

☐ \$30 (Individual)

☐ \$20 (Senior)

Zip Code

☐ \$15 (Student)

Phone Number

Email