

Wood's Chamber of Commerce Building, 1914, reflects important developments in design of the tall commercial building. J. R. Allen photo. 201 So. 5th St.

vealed in the vertical brick piers on the north and west elevations. As in the Wainwright Building, the steel "ribs" are enclosed in alternate piers. The proportions of the building, however, suggested a need for over-all horizontality, and the verticals of the piers were effectively checked by the base of the ground floor, string courses and the "cornice." Exterior embellishment is unobtrusive and, significantly, rather than adding decorative emphasis to the main entrance, Wood incorporated it as regular interval in the base of the composition.

On the interior of the Commerce Building, office space is arranged around central corridors on the first and second floors. Each of these floors is almost identical in plan which includes an assembly room complete with a low set brick hearth at one end. The entire third floor originally served as a single open display area, but has since been divided into suites for rental.

Wood's production of residential plans seems to have moved at a fairly steady pace during the decade 1910-1920. The A. W. Mackey house, 1916-17, in Palmyra, Missouri, and only a short distance from Quincy, is a more dramatic example of Wood's mature Prairie Style work.<sup>38</sup> As one of his larger

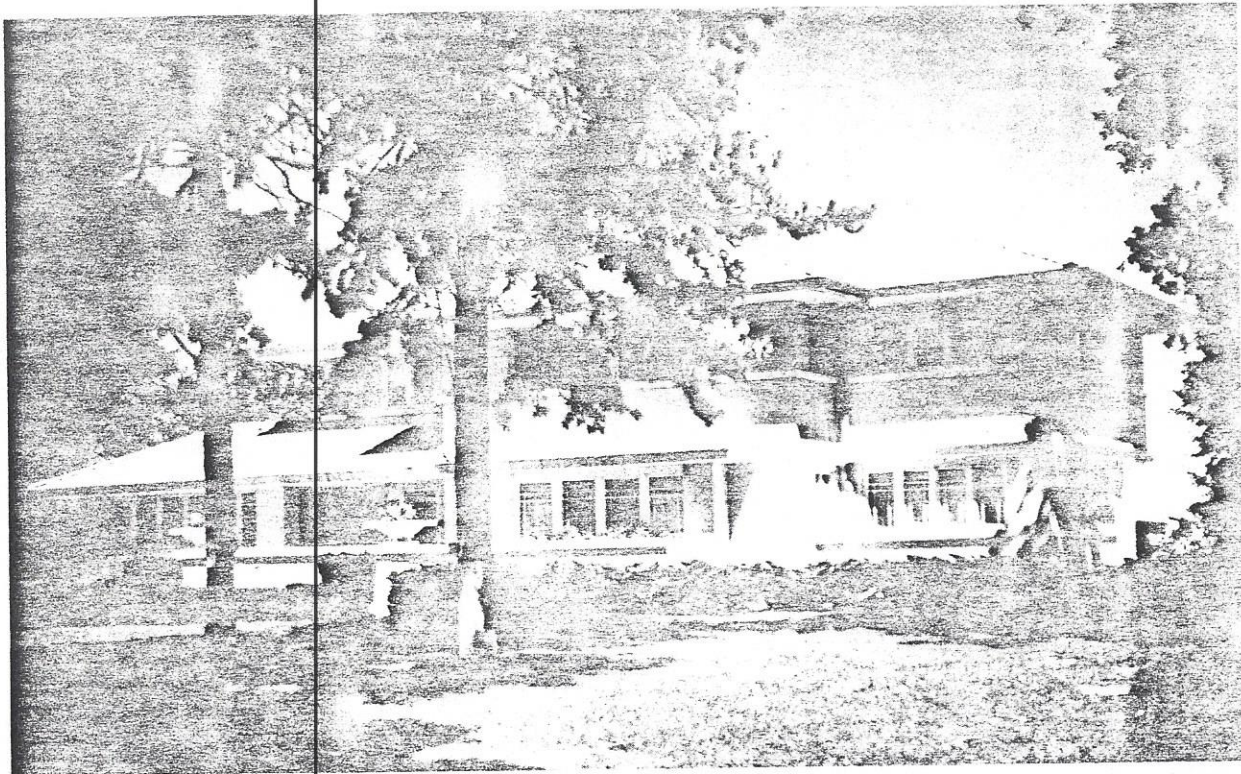
<sup>38</sup> Architect's drawings, signed and dated, are in the possession of the owners.

endeavors, its size puts it in keeping with some of the elegant houses in Chicago's suburbs by Wright and members of his circle.

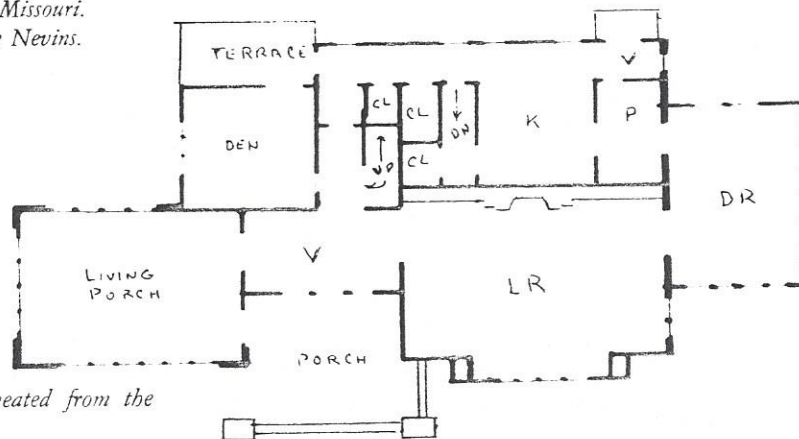
The material, like that of the J. K. Eyman house (see below), is stucco over tile walls. The wall surfaces are plain expanses of stucco and serve to give emphasis to the roof which recalls the sweeping horizontality of Wright's mature Prairie houses.

With regard to these observations, it should be noted that Wood did not attempt to imitate the full range of Wright's idiom, especially on a large scale. Whether or not Wood would have been capable is moot, because the likelihood for opportunities to do so in the Quincy area was small. His assimilation of the Prairie Style may have required selectivity, and undoubtedly economic conditions had their influence. Nevertheless, considering the local building scene, it is remarkable that he managed to provide effective residential types in the Prairie Style for over a decade.

Of particular note in the Mackey house is the mature Prairie School interior plan. Entrance is gained to a hall, much like that in the Albers house, 1914, while the hall opens in such a manner as to allow continuous movement across the front of the house to the dining area at the far side. The hall is relatively small; its sole function is to bring together at one point interior spaces from both levels. By comparison, the only areas that remain somewhat restricted by their location are the kitchen and



*The A. W. Mackey house, 1916, Palmyra, Missouri.  
Photo by Mitzie Nevins.*



*The Mackey house. First floor plan delineated from the drawings.*

pantry: both are concealed at the rear of the house.

Prairie Style aspects of the interior, such as the brick hearths and decorative motifs in the woodwork, had by this time become an established part of his idiom. Of particular distinction in this house is the expanded function given the window. Fenestration helps integrate the interior and exterior space while also realizing the most benefit from indirect natural light. As if to compensate for the inconsistency of daylight, however, the architect provided electric lighting in the form of fixtures mounted flush with the ceiling above the windows.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> In sharp contrast to the imposing scale of the Another design near Palmyra by Wood was for Alonzo White, 1917. Interview, Mrs. A. White, Palmyra, Missouri, February 1972.

Mackey house is a design that followed it by less than a year, the F. D. Thomas house, Camp Point, Illinois.<sup>40</sup> Although much smaller, the Thomas house does not sacrifice any of the success of the former. Simplified wall surfaces of stucco accentuate the darker areas of frame and emphatically call attention to the fenestration. This window treatment is among the most pleasing in Wood's residential work, especially where a band of nine sashes extends around three sides of a bedroom. With the shift of the living porch (which is the greatest variant from the Mackey house) to a position adjoining both the living and dining rooms, a relatively small interior living space is made to

<sup>40</sup> Architect's plans, signed and dated, are in the possession of the owners.



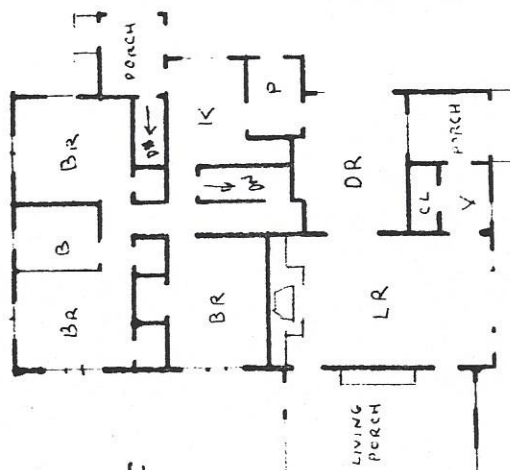
*The F. D. Thomas house, 1917, Camp Point, Illinois.  
From Northwest. Photo by Mitzie Nevins.*

appear functionally more open and expansive because of the continuous windows of the porch.

One final example from this decade of residential work represents the formal conclusion of Wood's domestic development. The date of construction of 1919 for the J. K. Eyman house, Warsaw, Illinois, reflects the swiftness of Wood's assimilation of the Prairie Style into his own expression.<sup>41</sup> Like the Thomas house, this one is also, and not surprisingly, modest. A formal difference from previous examples is the use of a gabled roof. Exposed beams carry its weight, while simple, uninterrupted pier forms meet the gable on the north elevation. These piers, together with the simple penetrations of the window openings, are the only modulation given the stucco wall surfaces. The fine original mullioned windows which were contained beneath the north gable have been removed, but their form can be appreciated in the architect's drawings.

The simplicity of the exterior is echoed on the interior. Partitions have been reduced to a minimum, permitting unimpeded movement across the

<sup>41</sup> Architect's plans, signed and dated, are in the possession of the owners.



*Warsaw, IL -  
The J. K. Eyman house. Plan delineated from the blueprints.*



main living areas. The living porch in this example is contained within the projection of the north gable. The living room, which joins the porch, was given an accent on its wide gabled ceiling with decorative patterns of molding set into the plaster.

The Eyman house draws upon a rationale for building which Wood had pursued throughout his career. In applying this rationale, particularly to small plans such as the Eyman house, the architect achieved a reduction of form to its essentials, and relationships of interior space to a basic and forceful statement. Although Wood produced some impressive house plans after 1920, he achieved his most creative expression in the previous decade.

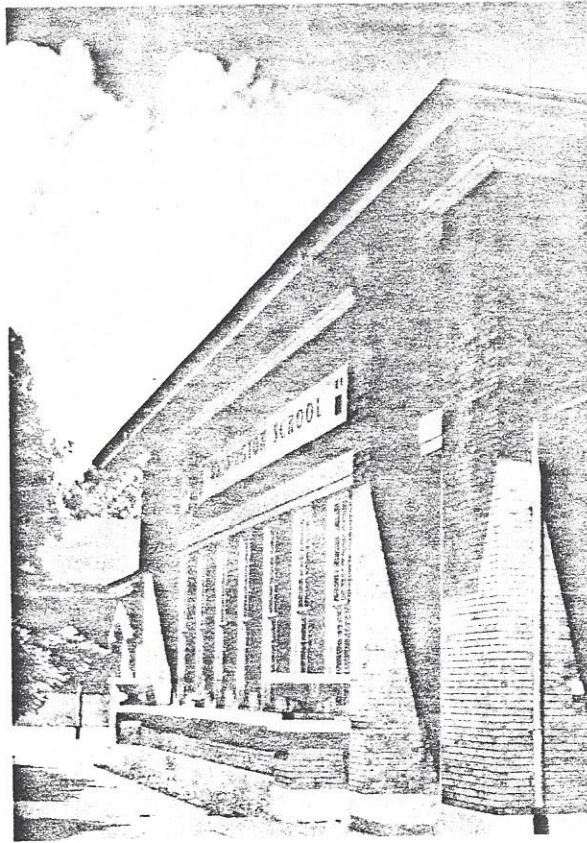
By 1920, Ernest Wood had reached fifty-seven years of age with a marked decline in the amount of production thereafter which corresponded to what H. Allen Brooks called the "Demise of the Prairie School."<sup>42</sup> As he approached sixty, however, there remained to be made one notable contribution to the Quincy area.

Washington School, 1922, embodies what Wood assimilated from his study of the Prairie School architects.<sup>43</sup> This design is a fine example of form determined by function while demonstrating a pervasive concern for maximum efficiency of space utilization.

To accomplish this, Wood arranged the classrooms in rows along both side elevations and on right angles to the office areas at the front; each classroom thereby benefits from one continuous

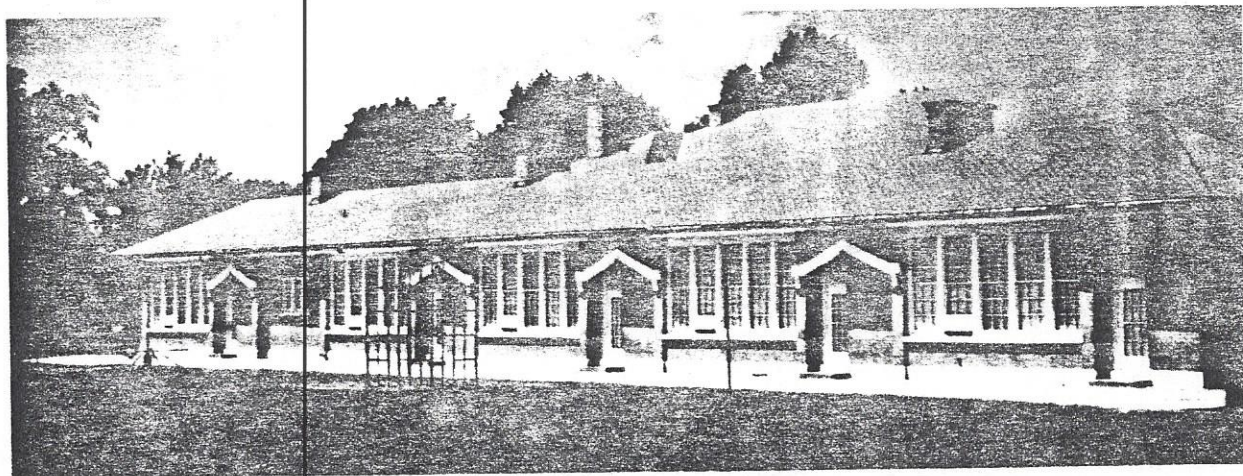
42 Brooks, *The Prairie School*, *op. cit.*, p. 336 ff.

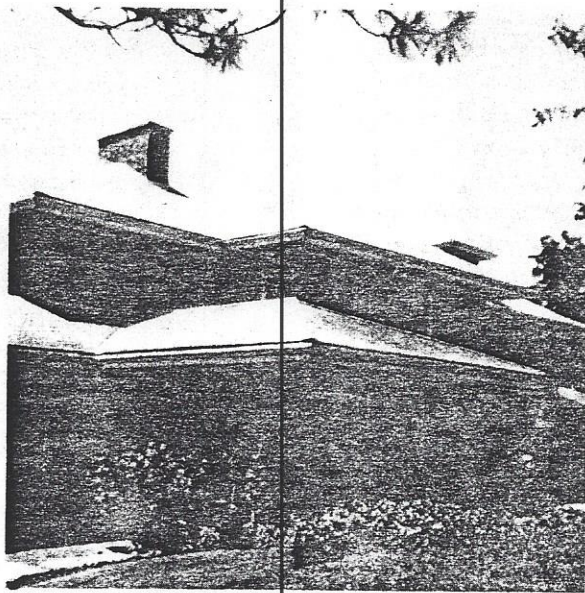
43 Although plans for Washington School are lost, the architect's specifications are on file with the Quincy Public School System; Ernest M. Wood, *Prospectus to the Contractors of Washington School*, Quincy, June 1922. In reference to Washington School, Wood's obituary, *op. cit.*, states: "It received attention in magazines and was visited by architects and educators from many cities." However, the specific sources concerning this account have not been located.



*Detail, southeast elevation of Washington School.*  
*Photo by Mitzie Nevins.*  
*8<sup>th</sup> and Sycamore Sts.*

*Photo by Mitzie Nevins.*  
*One of the classroom wings of Washington School.*





*The Winkler house, 1929, Hannibal, Missouri, is Wood's last known work in the Prairie Style. J. R. Allen photo.*

wall of fenestration. Except for the single story and separate access points, this arrangement was not greatly different from other school classrooms. But the determination of other interior spaces distinguished this school. The two rows of classrooms and one of offices have three adjoining corridors which facilitate easy access to any part of the interior. The area enclosed by these corridors accommodates the gymnasium, auditorium and other common facilities. Thus, the intervening corridors effectively buffer the classrooms from areas characterized by a high concentration of noise. The electrical and plumbing system of the school, which has not required extensive maintenance since its original installation, features a centralized access system. Electrical circuits can be reached in crawl areas along the length of each corridor, and access to water and sewer lines is gained through removable panels in the walls.

Although a late work in Wood's development, the Washington School ranks among the best school designs by architects of the Prairie Style. It is also the culmination of Wood's achievements. Too little is presently known about his work during the remainder of the twenties, and practically nothing about the last decade of his career. What is known would support Brooks' observation regarding Percy Bentley's deference to shifting demands of clientele. The Williams house, circa 1928, for example, was done for a client who had lived in England, and accordingly requested Wood to design an "English" house. On the other hand, he may have been drawn by a restlessness of spirit which was the undoing of

George Maher, for in his commission to do the Winkler house, in Hannibal, Missouri, the following year, he returned to the Prairie Style.<sup>44</sup>

Ernest Wood lived on to retire in 1938, and he died eighteen years later, in 1956. Lack of information makes this period of his life as an architect a virtual mystery, except that he is still remembered as a personable character around town with a few idiosyncracies, and that he maintained a lively interest in civic and cultural affairs. His dedication to the assimilation of discipline and principles expressed through the idiom of the Prairie Style has been overlooked, and it was easy to look upon Wood as a mere imitator. In retrospect, the deliberateness with which he recapitulated precedent and requisite developments inherent to the understanding of the Prairie Style gives testimony to the noteworthy accomplishments of a solitary but unforgettable figure in Quincy's architecture.<sup>45</sup>

44 Brooks, "Percy Dwight Bentley at La Crosse," *op. cit.*, p. 17. See also Brooks, *The Prairie School, op. cit.*, pp. 318-319 and 329-330.

45 What is meant by Wood's solitariness needs some explanation. A quick survey of Prairie Style architecture in Quincy and its environs will show a large number of attempts at its expression. Such an overview will reveal an inconsistency in quality and character. This essay would be misleading if it did not note that at least two others made forays into the Prairie idiom. One was a contractor and builder, Martin Geise. The other was an architect, George P. Behrensmeyer, a contemporary of Wood who, while well-trained, was not the beneficiary of pervasive assimilation (either by schooling or self-discipline) of Wrightian principles. A comparative study would be enlightening, especially for local interests. For the purpose of this essay, it would serve to emphasize that Wood was solitary in his accomplishments, for it would show that the best of the Prairie Style in the area is his.

*The Williams house, circa 1928, Quincy. E. M. Wood, architect. J. R. Allen photo. 2001 Jersey St.*



where he died and where his widow and sons still live; the second in age is John Robert; Benjamin, a farmer in this vicinity, died at Marcelline, one of the inland villages of Adams County, about two miles west of the Laughlin farm, in 1910, at the age of sixty-three, leaving a widow and two children; and Dudley, also a farmer at Marcelline.

It is generally true that the American farmer who has made the best success at his business is the one who has remained longest on the job. Bob Laughlin has not only lived all his life on a farm but has been content to acknowledge no other important interests away from farming, though he has rendered such service as he could to his community, helping forward projects that were worthy and cooperating with his fellow citizens when his cooperation was needed. At the age of twenty-one his father gave him a farm, and later he bought out the other interests and now owns the 220 acres which was originally taken up by his grandfather. Later he bought 100 acres on the west, giving him a complete half section in one farm, and since then has added another eighty acres nearby and recently bought fifteen acres. One improvement has followed another, and twenty years ago he built the comfortable residence which now houses the family. In 1881 he erected a barn that was one of the best in the county at the time, being of the familiar bank construction, 40 by 60 feet in ground dimensions and with 20-foot posts. For forty years Mr. Laughlin specialized in horses and jacks, and has had as many as sixty-five head of these animals at one time. He has also been unusually successful in growing wheat, and has raised some splendid crops of that cereal. His farm now comprises as fine a body of land as is found anywhere in the county and with as good improvements. He has hired labor as well as worked hard himself, and has given every detail of the farm his personal supervision. In politics he is a democrat, as was his father before him, but in local issues is strictly independent, and has never allowed his name to be presented as a candidate for office.

At the age of twenty-four Mr. Laughlin married Eliza Ann Randolph. She was left an orphan when a small girl and was reared in the family of a cousin. Mrs. Laughlin died in 1903, after they had been married forty years. There were two children, George and Sarah Elizabeth. The latter is now Mrs. John Austin and lives at Brookfield, Missouri. George Laughlin, the only son, died at the age of forty-eight years. He was a farmer and was also in the automobile business at Quincy. He married Sarah Shepherd, who is still living and makes her home with Mr. Laughlin, and her two children have practically grown up in the home of their grandfather. The children are Ruth and Hazel, the former the wife of Chester Miller, and the latter the wife of George Sauble. Chester Miller and George Sauble are now operating the Laughlin farm. Mr. and Mrs. Miller have one son, Robert Lee Miller.

**THEODORE C. POLING.** With practically every phase of Quincy's development in financial power, business resources, and the enrichment of its community and institutional life, Theodore C. Poling has been identified during the past forty years. His name in connection with any enterprise has at once given it dignity and has brought to it the sustaining confidence of the best people. No man deserves a more grateful memory and is more worthy of a record for what he has done and what he has stood for in this city.

He was born at Middletown, New Jersey, January 10, 1840, and has been a resident of Quincy since 1870. In Quincy and elsewhere he taught school, and educational work was his chief occupation until he was admitted to the bar in Quincy in 1871. From 1861 to 1864 he was a student of Knox College at Galesburg, and enlisted from there for two periods in the Civil war. He was first a member of Company E of the Seventy-first Illinois Infantry for four months and later re-enlisted in Company C of the One Hundred and Thirty-Seventh Regiment under the command of Governor John Woods, the founder of

Otho's  
father

Quincy. Altogether he was in the army for nine months. His brother James K. was killed in battle at Memphis, Tennessee, and another brother, George W., died at home from disease contracted in the swamps before Vicksburg.

One of Mr. Poling's earliest acquaintances at Quincy and for a number of years his partner in law practice was Hope S. Davis. He studied law in Mr. Davis' office and at the same time taught school. One of the schools he taught occupied the site of the present courthouse and the following year he taught in the building now known as the Powers Building.

His first law partnership was with Judge Philo A. Goodwin and the Hon. Hope S. Davis, under the firm name of Goodwin, Davis & Poling. Judge Goodwin died two years later and the firm of Davis & Poling continued until 1885. From that date until the mortgage banking firm of T. C. Poling & Company was organized, Mr. Poling gradually withdrew from the routine work of the legal profession and gave his time and attention to the work of building up a strictly financial business, to which the firm has devoted all its energies for many years.

Mr. Poling is now the oldest mortgage banker in Quincy, and is the head of one of the oldest investment companies doing business in the states of Illinois and Missouri. That this company has invested many millions of dollars without the loss of a single dollar on any loan it ever made is evidence of the skill and care of its founder. The company's offices are in the Blackstone Building, of which Mr. Poling is one of the owners and builders. It was erected in the '80s. His business in farm loans extends over a large territory around Quincy in both Illinois and Missouri. Since 1905 his active associate has been his son Theodore Chester Poling, Jr. At the present time their annual volume of business is over \$1,500,000 in loans now outstanding.

Mr. Poling has been responsible for the development of some of Quincy's best known residence and business additions. One of them was the ninety-six acres subdivided and now known as the Poling & Cruttenden Addition.

This city is largely indebted to Mr. Poling for the beautiful Lawndale Addition, where his own handsome home is located. Another property in which he is actively concerned is the Walton Heights Manufacturing Section, of which he and the late John S. Cruttenden, were joint trustees until the latter's death left Mr. Poling as sole trustee. Mr. Poling's labors and financial assistance aided materially in securing additions to Quincy's splendid boulevard and park system.

Of all his business activities Mr. Poling will doubtless be best remembered for his leadership in movements having to do with the most complete and best known expression of Quincy's community spirit. He has managed the financial affairs of many wealthy citizens and has been entrusted with the settlement of a large number of estates as executor and trustee. It is said that more than \$400,000 devoted to charitable purposes passed through his hands as executor or trustee, and this fact is indicated by the county records. He helped raise the money and was the first treasurer of the Building Committee of the local Young Men's Christian Association. He took a similarly prominent part in the Public Library movement many years earlier. The building and lot on which the library was erected were secured largely through the joint labors and solicitations of Mr. Poling and Mr. J. N. Sprigg. Mr. Poling served as one of the early directors of the library. It was through the earnest appeal made by Mr. Poling and his associates that the handsome Quincy Library of today was built. As financial adviser and as executor of the estates of Charles Brown, Jr., and Anna Brown, he carried to completion their plans to found what is now the Anna Brown Home for the Aged, and has been responsible, in a large measure, for the success of that institution.

Mr. Poling is a trustee of the Blessing Hospital, was many years a director of the Chamber of Commerce, and a willing worker for and contributor to many other public enterprises. Seldom has an appeal for assistance in worthy char-

ities been presented to him in vain. He was a director and treasurer of the original Quincy Gas, Light and Coke Company, and has served as treasurer of the Adams County Memorial Association and the Quincy Cemetery Association. He is active as a senior deacon in the Congregational church. He is also a member of John Wood Post No. 96, Grand Army of the Republic.

Mr. Poling married Miss Ella A. Wharton, a native of Philadelphia, but reared and educated in Payson, Illinois. She was born March 8, 1848. Their oldest child, Florence Poling Nielson, born March 4, 1869, died February 9, 1911. She was the wife of James Nielson. Otho Curtis Poling, the second child, was born June 20, 1871, and is now a resident of Arizona and is the father of two children. Eugene Edwin Poling, born March 23, 1873, died September 28, 1880. Theodore Chester Poling, born January 31, 1885, is his father's business associate, and is married. Mr. Poling has four grandchildren: Eleanor Poling Nielson; James Poling Nielson, now serving in the United States Navy; Frances E. Poling; and Howard O. Poling.

CAPT. GREENLEAF H. DAVIS. Many times the name and career of Captain Davis have been made subjects of articles in the general press and other publications. He is a most interesting character not only in Quincy but in all the Middle West. Not nearly so much romance surrounds the building of railroads in modern times as it did when Captain Davis was a pioneer in pushing along some of the old railway systems. He is about the last survivor of that group of railroad builders who constructed the old Illinois Central and some of the main branches of what is now the great Burlington System.

Captain Davis was born in Stafford County, New Hampshire, March 16, 1834. He is of old New England stock. His grandfather, Nathaniel Davis, spent his life as a New Hampshire farmer. Captain Davis' parents were natives of the same state and were also farmers there during their lives.

Captain Davis was educated in New Hampshire, and lived there until about eighteen years old, when he came west to Chicago. In 1851 he did his first work as a pioneer railroad builder with the old Illinois Central road while it was being constructed from Chicago to Kankakee, Illinois. He was at first in the track laying department, and subsequently was assigned to charge of the supply department at Muddy Creek. Such was his ability that he was able to reduce his working force to half and increase the efficiency of the department. After getting the department in working order he was assigned to superintendent of the track laying force, and his wages were more than doubled. He carried the tracks of the Illinois Central on as far as Centralia, Illinois, and about that time was offered the position of roadmaster. He declined because of a previous contract he had made to assist in laying the rails of the old Northern Cross Railway, now that part of the Burlington between Galesburg and Quincy.

Captain Davis began track laying for the Northern Cross Railway in 1855, and had the work completed between Galesburg and Quincy by about the first of January, 1856. He then accepted the responsibility of laying the track on the old Hannibal and St. Joseph Railway, a distance of 206 miles across the northern half of Missouri. He was three years in building this pioneer line, and when it was completed he was offered and accepted the position of railroad stock agent at St. Joseph. Later he was made stock agent for the entire road between Chicago and St. Joseph. He has seen practically all the changes in management and extension of these early railway lines until they now compose part of one of the biggest systems in the United States. Captain Davis continued for thirty-six years in the service of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy. For a time he was under General Superintendent J. T. K. Haywood, later for a short time under C. W. Meade, and also served under General Superintendent W. C. Brown, John C. Carsons and other men whose names are household words in railroad affairs. In 1898 Captain Davis became claim agent for the road and filled that office for ten years with headquarters at St. Joseph.