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Development and Preservation

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pigments in egg white (rather than the usual egg yolk). He then slathered a thin solution of the yolk (instead of the white) over his image and sealed everything under varnish and a coat of wax, to dull the shine. Over time, the wax collected dust, the varnish darkened to a golden brown, and the unevenly applied egg-yolk coating contracted, sometimes pulling the paint surface away from the ground.

The problems latent in Benton's unorthodox technique were then compounded by the peripatetic history of the murals. Painted in the old Germania beer hall on South Delaware Street in Indianapolis, the panels were lowered on ropes five stories to the street, where they were loaded on a truck and conveyed to Chicago. Returned to the city six months later, the murals were stored in dubious conditions at the state fairgrounds until they were transferred to Bloomington in 1939. Changes in temperature and humidity, as well as a few rude jolts in shipping, took their toll on the paintings. Benton was on hand in 1940 to advise in the arrangement of the mural panels in their new homes and to supervise any necessary cleaning and restoration. Sixteen years later, he drafted instructions for those who were assigned the job of cleaning the murals again. Unfortunately, Benton's cleaning solvents were too strong, and the crew must have been too energetic, for the paint surface, already fragile, was badly abraded in some areas.

By the early 1980s the condition of the Benton murals had become a cause for concern, particularly in Woodburn Hall, where the controversial Ku Klux Klan subject (discussed by James H. Madison in this issue) drew repeated vandalism. Led by professor of art history Bruce Cole and the Indiana University Art Museum's director (then curator) Adelheid Gealt, the university rallied funds to conserve the two panels in Woodburn and the six panels in the University Theatre. A team of conservators headed by Martin Radecki of the Indianapolis Museum of Art joined IUAM conservators Danae Thimme and Cathy Metzger to complete the work.

Ten years later, when plans for the renovation of the auditorium were under discussion, the IUAM's current paintings conservator, Margaret Contompasis, realized that the lobby murals needed to be protected from the mayhem of construction. She suggested that the period when the building was closed was the ideal time to clean and treat the paintings as needed. Tests by Contompasis and Radecki indicated that their attention had come none too soon: the murals were blistering and flaking under a coating of darkened varnish and grime. Recognizing the importance of the murals

to the university, the state, and the nation, the National Endowment for the Arts declared the project the most important current conservation treatment in the country. A similar appeal to the Getty Grant Program also brought funds to match support from the university, the NEA, and many private donors.

A new team under Radecki's supervision moved to Bloomington in May 1998 to join forces with the IUAM staff. Working on a false floor built directly beneath the lower edge of the paintings, the conservators carefully re-adhered loose and curling paint, removed grime and discolored varnish, and reduced the tension created by the egg-yolk layer. They delicately in-painted the losses and revarnished the surface to emulate the luster of the waxed surface Benton preferred. When the auditorium reopens in the fall of 1999, their work—and Benton's—can be appreciated, and his populist vision of Indiana's history enjoyed anew.

Kathleen A. Foster is curator of nineteenth- and twentieth-century art at the Indiana University Art Museum.

DEVELOPMENT AND PRESERVATION

George Geib

Separated by forty feet, ninety years, and a conceptual revolution in architecture and design, two Marion County courthouses stand back to front in this 1961 Bass photograph.

In the foreground is the county's contribution to the 1876 centennial year. Exuberant and eclectic, it is a study in the elaboration of the Second Empire style. Renaissance orders parade around its window lines, while modern cast-iron railings and balconies compete with statuary and triumphant stairways for our attention. Built in an era of intense political competition, it is a palace of popular sovereignty.

In the background is the city and county's joint contribution to the modern resurgence of downtown Indianapolis. Solidly vertical and starkly functional, it is a series of glass and stone facades that affirms the best and the worst in modernism. Built in an era of bureaucracy and efficiency, it is a corporate headquarters placed at the service of government.

Don't credit the new structure to Unigov, that merger of many city and county functions created by the Indiana General Assembly in 1969. The City-County Building appeared almost a decade earlier. The building speaks to a flexible, adaptive spirit in government services that anticipates, rather than follows, the better-known features of the Unigov era. Compliment the planners for their ability to make many clocks strike as one, bringing city hall and county offices into one location. But

do keep in mind a local folklore tradition that says the final assignment of floor space could only be achieved by measuring the area of each old office and duplicating it to the nearest square foot.

The most important cause of this dramatic architectural face-off was probably the alarm felt by many Indianapolis boosters in the 1950s, concerned they were lagging behind other Midwestern cities in erecting a promotional high-rising skyline. Whether as an incentive to further downtown investment, as a rebuttal to growing suburbanization, or as a means of laying the lingering ghosts of the Great Depression to rest, the lure of downtown revitalization was catching the imagination of a new generation of local leaders. The City-



County Building was one of government's contributions to that new city, surely incorporating the hope that it would soon be dwarfed by other new structures supported by increased private resources.

Forty years ago, there was no room for the old alongside the new on the courthouse block. The 1876 structure was scheduled to remain only long enough for the move to the new structure to be completed. But far from winning universal acclaim that another old building was going, the ensuing demolition became one of the defining events in the emergence of the current historic preservation movement in Indianapolis. Just as the wrecker's ball was about to strike, a court injunc-

tion delayed the process to permit alternatives to be sought. Angry responses by the builders only served to increase media attention, and a well-publicized auction of artifacts from the building provided symbolic souvenirs that are still treasured by many local residents. The demolition thus became a rallying issue for those skeptical of the unalloyed benefits of development.

All who have been touched by the modern historic preservation movement have seen comparable scenes somewhere in their communities as tradition and development clash over private or public space. Today we are often assured that preservationist and developer are natural partners, with far more interests in common than in conflict. But this photo captures a moment when those two concerns stared at one another across a narrow space too deep to admit compromise, giving visual expression to the stark choices that admirers of Hoosier history sometimes confront as they strive to affirm both the present and the past.

George Geib is professor of history at Butler University.

ONE PEOPLE

Todd Gould

(Photo on page 54)

She was one member of the crowd who gathered early on the morning of 27 July 1969 outside St. John's Missionary Baptist Church in downtown Indianapolis. She and so many others came from all areas of the state—Evansville, Marion, Hammond, Fort Wayne, Gary—to take part in a march for equal rights. Whether this unidentified little girl in pigtails knew it or not, she was making more than a social statement. She was making history.

That hot July day, approximately fifteen hundred civil rights workers and their families clamored around the front steps of St. John's. The church's pastor, Rev. Andrew J. Brown, a lieutenant of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the head of the local chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, addressed them: "You can see God in everything that is made. But mostly you can see Him among His fellow humans who yearn to be free—free from poverty and free from oppression."

After the short speech, Brown led the multitude in a three-mile march from downtown to Gov. Edgar D. Whitcomb's residence at 4343 North Meridian Street. The demonstrators stood side by side, young and old, black and white, marching and chanting phrases such as "Freedom Now" and "I Am Somebody."

Civil rights marches in the 1960s were potential lightning rods for racial violence in many United States