

McLean County Museum of History

Ensenberger Building Collection

Processed by
Carol Straka
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Collection Information

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 Box
COLLECTION DATES:	1925-27
RESTRICTIONS:	None
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History
ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
LOCATION:	Archives
NOTES:	See also Photos – Architecture-B-Center St N 200 block

Brief History

G.A. Ensenberger and Sons had become a successful retail furniture store in Bloomington. Although the founder died in 1917, sons Frank, Gus and Joseph were managing the business and eventually decided to replace their current building with a new and more impressive one. In 1925-1926, they replaced their building at 212-214 N. Center Street with a modern English Gothic structure. The A.L. Pillsbury firm designed the building which cost about \$250,000-300,000. Its gothic spires, colorful terra-cotta medallions, and ornate indoor decorations made the new seven-story Ensenberger building quite unlike anything else in the community. It opened May 11, 1926, and an estimated 40,000 people, some from as far away as California and New York, visited the store during the first five days.

Frank, Gus, and Joe continued to operate the store for the next few decades and later a third and fourth generation of the family took the helm at the store. Changing customer expectations led to the store's closing in November 1995.

Around 2008, the structure, including the original 1910 building plus the seven-story addition from 1926, was re-opened as a residential condo complex with retail space on the first floor.

Scope

The collection includes Pillsbury's spec sheets, construction and loan contracts, etc. from 1925-26 plus an article concerning the architecture of the finished building.

Box and Folder Inventory

Folder 1: Spec Sheets

- 1.1 Specifications for Material and Labor to be Used in the Six Story and Basement Fireproof Store Bldg. for G.A. Ensenberger and Sons at Bloomington, IL, by architect Arthur L. Pillsbury, February 1925. 66 pp.

Folder 2: Construction Contracts

- 2.1 Simmons-Dick Company, Bloomington, to erect the building, 31 March 1925. Also includes quote and bank receipt for bonds.
- 2.2 Affidavit from H.K. Dick that all construction bills have been paid, 24 May 1926. Note that this covers the original Simons Dick Company and its successor Dick and Fletcher Company.
- 2.3 Mann's Incorporated agreement regarding construction impact on shared building wall, 29 April 1925.
- 2.4 Frank A. Dewenter agreement regarding construction impact on shared building wall, 4 May 1925.
- 2.5 Johnston Plumbing Company, Bloomington, for sewerage, plumbing, and water, 26 Jun 1925. Includes surety bond.
- 2.6 Hitchcock Sprinkler & Heating Company, Peoria, for automatic sprinklers and fire extinguishing apparatus, 24 Jun 1925.
- 2.7 Gray Trimble & Follick Electric Co, Inc., Bloomington, for electric wiring, 10 July 1925. Includes surety bond.
- 2.8 Shield Brothers (John P. & Frank L. Shields), Bloomington, for steam heating and ventilating plant, 6 Jul 1925. Includes surety bond.

Folder 3: Loan Contract

- 3.1 Application for \$150,000 loan from First Trust and Savings Bank of Bloomington, 15 Jun 1925.
- 3.2 Agreement with First Trust and Savings Bank of Bloomington for secured loan of \$150,000, 1 Jul 1925.

Folder 4: Simmons-Dick Company Invoices

- 4.1 Six (6) invoices for payments with receipt noted, 1925-26.
- 4.2 Itemized invoice, 10 March 1926.
- 4.3 Notification on change in owners of the company, which is not Dick & Fletch Company, 22 May 1926.
- 4.4 Notarized affidavit of completion with final amount (\$30,000) due, 24 May 1926.
- 4.5 Affidavit from H.K. Dick that all construction bills have been paid, 24 May 1926. Note that this covers the original Simons Dick Company and its successor Dick and Fletcher Company.

Folder 5: Architectural Commentaries

- 5.1 "Advanced Retail Store Design," from *American Builder*, April 1927, p 184-5.