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Article Summary: Thomas Rogers Kimball's work has a refined character that projects a highly developed level of architectural training. He created interesting, functional, and beautiful structures comparable to those of his national contemporaries. At his death at age 72, his job book showed 871 commissions. He was a leader in the architectural profession.

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Photographs / Images: Thomas R Kimball portrait; Thomas R Kimball at work in his studio; Omaha Public Library; Omaha Burlington Station; Front portico of Burlington Station; Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition, Omaha, 1898, Grand Court; Administration Arch, 1898 Exposition, Omaha; St Cecilia's Cathedral, Omaha; Hall County Courthouse, Grand Island



*Thomas R. Kimball*

## THOMAS ROGERS KIMBALL (1890-1912): NEBRASKA ARCHITECT

*By David Lynn Batie*

For over half a century the work of Thomas Rogers Kimball has stood above the mediocre architectural designs of Nebraska. His buildings have a refined character that projects a more highly developed architectural training than that of his Nebraska contemporaries. Kimball was trained as an eclectic in the classical styles. Through his exceptional art training he learned to see structures in three dimensions.

The character of his buildings was motivated by his well-developed knowledge of design fundamentals.<sup>1</sup> Throughout his career, he stayed within the mainstream of the established styles of architectural leaders in the East. His schooling at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris taught him the use of many styles, and he was able to design knowledgeably in many of them. With such design standards, Kimball's buildings always favored a truly organic and functional architecture. "His original and active mind was well disciplined, and so he produced buildings of correct architectural grammar and syntax that were always functionally adequate, interesting in form, and often beautiful."<sup>2</sup>

In his 40 years of architectural practice, Kimball was able to develop both competent and beautiful architecture. Many of his designs showed that he stayed abreast with established design styles, yet he also created intriguing and innovative designs that still dominate the cityscape of many communities in the Midwest. Kimball was well thought of by the members of his profession for his integrity and fearless idealism. This paper relates the time in which he lived, how it affected him, and how Kimball in turn affected the profession of architecture.

The world of architecture in the 1880s was in a period of transition. Henry H. Richardson, the genius whose style had created an architectural revolution in America, died in 1886. There was at that time discussion of the establishment of a national style,

either one influenced by the great national spirit, or a turn to the historical styles of Europe. One thing was agreed upon—future architects would have to be trained in a better manner than in the past. This led to the strengthening of the role of architectural education.

Formalized education in architecture had existed since 1868. However, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the first chartered school of architecture,<sup>3</sup> did not produce its first graduate until March, 1873.

During the period that Kimball attended MIT (1885-1886), the school was a leader in architectural training.<sup>4</sup> But due to the suspicions of many participants, inadequate secondary schools, and meager resources, MIT and other schools of architecture produced no more than a fraction of the 10,581 architects reported by the 1900 census. Thus, students who had both money (education was costly and available only to the rich) and the opportunity to study at the schools, were able to experience the architectural profession in both design theory and building fundamentals. When they graduated, they were more than just draftsmen as were their contemporaries who learned the profession by working in offices; they were trained in all facets of architecture.

The focus of MIT at the time Kimball was enrolled is best explained by his roommate, Dwight H. Perkins:

The Massachusetts Inst. of Technology was the best school at the time. The "Original" thinkers had not appeared—and they have not organized a school at the present time.

We were taught to compose a plan and develop elevations to it as they would do in any Italian Renaissance country. We were a branch of the School of Fine Arts in Paris. Our problems were real enough but not *real* in the sense of being building in America at the present day.

On the whole our work was only secondary to the library. There we got our clues and then—after two days of preliminary study we handed in our small sketches—and for the rest of the month we worked on the larger scale drawings but always according to the limits imposed by our first sketch.

That was the Institute for us. It was what we were there for—and—according to the time—1885 to 1887—it was O.K., the best we could have got anywhere.<sup>5</sup>

Through the direction of Dean William Ware, the French system of balance between the aesthetic and technical was introduced at MIT. However, though the school was a leader in architectural training, an increasing number of Americans were traveling abroad to study at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts.

During the 1880s, 25 Americans followed Richard M. Hunt,

Charles F. McKim, Henry H. Richardson, and Louis Sullivan to study at the Ecole. There they were taught principles of design that dealt with unity, balance, proportion, rhythm, and scale,<sup>6</sup> but they were not interested in creating a style or copying past models of architecture for new ideas. This was not the case for Americans like Daniel Burnham, who did not attend the Ecole, and others, like McKim, who did, when they tried to legislate a style copied from classical architecture for the United States. Unfortunately those feelings were expressed by most of the students when they returned to the United States, for the architecture of the next 50 years would be dominated by buildings based on classical styles.

The use of classical architecture for design inspiration grew out of the desire of architects to establish a national style. Prominent architects of the East “favored a single style, the one used for buildings at the top of the hierarchy, [and] wished to rebuild the national face in the likeness of classical Rome.”<sup>7</sup> The production of a style the nation could be proud of was to become the motivating force for the American “Age of Elegance.”

In the 1890s and 1900s influential businessmen were interested in establishing architecture that was appropriate to their status—the classical. “They were conservative about art and they desired, consciously or unconsciously, an imperial architecture. And they had a way of getting what they wanted.”<sup>8</sup>

Such people were influential in the development of architecture in the United States. “The influence of the metropolitan financiers was an unhappy one on American architectural taste: it stood like a wall against the adventurous, against the contemporary, against new values and new significances.”<sup>9</sup> But because the most prosperous architects were concerned with their social and financial position in society, businessmen were given the designs and styles they desired. This was not the case with such architects as Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Sullivan, but it was true of the majority.

The United States during the 1890s had become an imperialistic country. Businessmen were interested in showing off to the world the symbols of their imperial society. It became inevitable that new ideas from around the world should meet, and where better than at the symbol of American wealth, the World Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago!

There had been a distinct split in the philosophies of design between eastern architects and those to the West, with the designs of William R. Mead, Stanford White, McKim, and Hunt recognized as the architectural style of our culture. Classicism had become the national style, since eastern architects felt that it "was necessary for Americans to turn to European pasts precisely because they had no history of their own."<sup>10</sup>

It was inevitable that the architecture of the Columbian Exposition would exploit this philosophy. Eastern designers went to Chicago to show that the grand, classical, national styles could be utilized for modern use, even in the prairie metropolis of Chicago.

The exposition, more than any other event in history, led to the revival of classical architecture in the United States. The fair offered Americans differing choices of architectural styles, but there was no doubt that the classical manner was exactly what they wanted. Even though Sullivan, John W. Root, William L. Jenny, William Holabird and Martin Roche and the remainder of the architects of the Chicago school<sup>11</sup> had the opportunity to show their mark outside the fairgrounds in Chicago, "the old law of hierarchy of building types still operated to insist that cultural buildings should be in the grand tradition of classical design."<sup>12</sup>

The tradition of Chicago's "White City" was carried on in future expositions in New Orleans, Atlanta, Portland, Omaha, and St. Louis, where the architecture was always Classical or Renaissance. Those expositions were never to reach the importance of the one in Chicago, but they reinforced the idea of the City Beautiful scheme of city development and architecture.

The City Beautiful idea of urban development was a movement in planning directed towards creating harmonious arrangement of buildings and open spaces in cities. In doing so architects felt that the environment would become visually exciting and make the area a unified whole. In most cases those centers were designed in classical styles of architecture and were restricted in scale, height, and color. Even buildings that served radically different functions were of the same design and as uniform as possible.

By 1900 classical architecture and planning had become entrenched as the national style, and one city after another aban-

doned regional distinctions. The City Beautiful idea of the Columbian Exposition had successfully taken over every field of design. No longer limited to upper echelons of acceptability in the hierarchy of buildings, classical architecture began to be used for factories and railroad terminals, and as such became the perfect expression of Imperialism. Through the works of McKim, Mead and White, Daniel Burnham, and Cass Gilbert, the classical style reached its highest point of popularity.

Architects McKim, Mead and White more than any others in the country were responsible for the rejuvenation of Renaissance architecture. They designed the Boston Public Library in 1891, which in composition was unsurpassed in American architecture. They were instrumental in the development of the "White City" at Chicago, and later, from 1906-1910, were the designers of a structure that attempted to provide the basis for the City Beautiful idea, New York's Pennsylvania Station. That building's great hall, taken from the Imperial Bath of Caracalla, was not a great piece of architecture, but it depicted the image necessary for developing a gateway monument for an Imperial City.

Daniel Burnham, another author of the "White City," continued to develop national centers of imperialistic ideals in architecture. His improvement of L'Enfant's plan of Washington, DC, gave the city a feeling of spaciousness and dignity. He even carried his ideas to Manila in the design of a civic center in the jungle that incorporated the style of the Chicago Fair.

Whatever their location, the buildings which were instrumental for the image of the City Beautiful were for the most part similar in style. Large or small, they became easily recognizable to the population.

But during the period that Classic, Renaissance, and Gothic styles were dominating the architectural scene, there were architects like Sullivan and Wright designing buildings contrary to the trends of the time. Sullivan was concerned with function and technology and their integration in his structures. His achievement in the Guaranty Building in Buffalo showed his ability to express verticality and his "form follows function" theory. This concept was accepted by many designers, yet eastern architects could not resist the use of form as a design determinant. In time everything that Sullivan had attempted to

establish as idioms of design was clad in classical forms. The new buildings, constructed of a steel skeleton clad in masonry, may have had all the technical innovations, but they were hidden. Despite all of Sullivan's successes with the Wainwright, Guaranty, and Schlesinger and Mayer buildings, businessmen continued to demand classical styles.

Clients in cities of the Midwest and West were no more ready to accept the ideas of Sullivan and Wright than were their contemporaries in the East. By 1913 the taste in architecture definitely favored the classical and though the buildings that were created between 1880-1913 were not always great pieces of architecture, neither were they inelegant. They were fitting structures for the imperialism of the time. Imperial architecture was short-lived, but it did play an important, yet unfortunate, role in American architecture.

The life of Thomas Rogers Kimball followed that of the prominent architects in the United States during the 1880-1913 time period. He was, due largely to his family's financial status, able to attend the right schools, travel abroad, and become familiar with the trends of architecture.

As a member of a prominent railroad family,<sup>13</sup> Kimball was one of the minority of young men able to bear the expense of education in the 1880s and entered a school of architecture. He spent two years at the University of Nebraska, three years at the Cowles School of Art in Boston to work with a private tutor in order to pass MIT examinations.<sup>14</sup> He was admitted to MIT in 1885 as a special student and given affiliation with the class of 1889.<sup>15</sup>

Like Richardson, Sullivan, and McKim, Kimball traveled to Europe and studied in Paris, where he developed his artistic talents by study under noted landscape artist and engraver, Henri Harpignies.<sup>16</sup> Through Harpignies, Kimball developed his talents in constructive drawing which would later be evident in his designs and presentation drawings, which utilized the silvery tones that Harpignies was noted for.<sup>17</sup> Those talents were later exhibited when Kimball made drawings for the American versions of Leveil's *Vignola* in 1891,<sup>18</sup> and in the preparation and design of MIT's first publication, the *Technology Architectural Review*, which he founded and published with Bates and Guild in 1888.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to his artistic studies, Kimball came home with a

broad outlook towards the field of architecture. His last partner, William Steele, once stated that "[Kimball] did not. . . as the majority of his contemporaries did, absorb a repertoire of French tricks and come home. He studied architecture as *building*, not as merely drawings of the buildings. He seemed to have acquired at an early age that grasp of fundamental principles which was to keep him from being stampeded by passing fads."<sup>20</sup> In his later life Kimball showed his ability to design in many styles, yet never exceeded limits of propriety or acceptability in his designs.

He appeared concerned with the principles of design as taught by the Ecole. Those principles, as Gaudet offered in the only authorized publication of the Ecole, *Elements and Theory of Architecture*, were:

1. You must be faithful to your program and see what is the character to be kept in the building.
2. The ground location or climate can modify the expression of a program.
3. All architectural compositions must be constructed; every unconstructable scheme is absurd.
4. Truth is the first requirement of architecture, every architectural untruth is inexcusable.
5. Effective strength is not sufficient—it must also be apparent.
6. Designs proceed by necessary sacrifices; a design must be good first of all, but it must also be beautiful. You must compose them with a view both to the utility and beauty; you will try to obtain character by variety.<sup>21</sup>

Those principles are evident in Kimball's work. His buildings expressed the desire to establish appropriate styles for buildings. In his plan for the Battle Mount Sanitarium in Hot Springs, South Dakota, the consideration of climate control and ventilation for the comfort of the patients<sup>22</sup> was instrumental in his design. "He was very thorough. He knew construction. . . . He tried to keep alive the old-fashioned standard of skilled craftsmanship. His buildings were always well-built and substantial."<sup>23</sup> His variety in design was shown in his control of many styles, ranging from the Chateausque residence of Gurdon Wattles, the Second Renaissance Revival of the Omaha Library, and the Spanish Renaissance Revival of St. Cecilia's Cathedral in Omaha.

Upon Kimball's return to the United States, he became quickly influenced by the popular classical revival. He did not, however, copy historical works like McKim had done, but used ideas from past designs when working in the classical motif.

Those ideas were carried out in the prominent buildings he produced, most of which are in Omaha.

Until 1887 Omaha had been a booming metropolis. But within three years it was declining in population due largely to depression. When Kimball returned to Nebraska to set up the branch office of Walker and Kimball in 1891,<sup>24</sup> Omaha's two major industries, the railroads and meat packing plants, were in financial and political control of the city. However, despite setbacks the city had experienced in previous years, it was motivated to rebuild its fallen fortunes.

This attempt for a "new life" for the city was initiated largely through the efforts of Omaha businessmen. Kimball's connections as a member of many of Omaha's social clubs<sup>25</sup> enabled him to know people like George Ward Holdrege, Charles Frederick Manderson, Charles Dietz, Gurdon Wattles and the Kountze family. Men of wealth and prestige, they were part of the powerful families that controlled Omaha. Kimball made friends with all of them, and such connections led to many prominent commissions in the city. He would later design the City Library, Burlington Station, Omaha Country Club, Fontenelle Hotel, and was named architect-in-chief, along with Walker, for Omaha's most famous festival, the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition of 1898.

The traditions of Chicago's "White City" of 1893 were carried on in numerous future expositions, and Omaha, like hosts of previous fairs, was used as a vehicle by city leaders to display their prosperity and the glories of the West. The exposition was a reflection of its promoters' state of mind; and would be the beginning of what was to be known as the Golden Age of Nebraska. As one Kansan stated, "The mission of the exposition is to communicate to mankind the impulses to which it owes its origin."<sup>26</sup>

The architecture of the exposition followed the style of the Chicago Fair, the exception being that Walker and Kimball had dictated that classical styles would be strictly adhered to in order to avoid personal eccentricities of individual architects. However, by maintaining a general scale and color, the exposition was distinctive in its design, that of a singular composition. Unlike Chicago's White City the Classic and Renaissance styles were not used simply to illustrate that they could be incorporated for modern use. The architecture had no relation to the

history of the plains and mountain states, nor was it intended to. Its purpose was strictly to express gaiety and stand as the "crowning glory in the history of the West."<sup>27</sup> It can be assumed that Walker and Kimball had used this style simply because it had been successfully used in the past and was becoming the mode of design for municipal buildings across the United States.

Like his eastern contemporaries, Kimball designed many structures that were important in the City Beautiful idea of urban development. Using classical styles, Kimball's designs for the Hall County Courthouse, Omaha Library, Burlington Station, and St. Cecilia's Cathedral instilled the City Beautiful scheme in the Midwest. His clients were knowledgeable of current changes in architecture and wanted designs to express the development of their communities. Through his training Kimball was able to produce the designs desired, and he aided in the acceptance of classical architecture as the style of the times.

In working with this type of architecture, Kimball had become a prominent national figure. His building designs were acknowledged by his contemporaries as exhibiting exceptional talent. Four of his plans were displayed at the Columbian Exposition,<sup>28</sup> and the drawings of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition were displayed at the Paris Exposition as an example of recent outstanding American architecture. In addition, Kimball was selected as one of the architects for the St. Louis Louisiana Purchase Exposition and was responsible for the design of the Electricity Building for that fair.<sup>29</sup>

As an individual Kimball was a man of integrity, feeling that the architectural profession needed to be practiced so that the public would "not only appreciate it, but demand it. Hence, an immediate lifting of the standard of professional practice in all lines."<sup>30</sup> This brought about his organization of the Omaha Professional Men's Club, and later the Inter-Professional Institute, for which he served as the first national president.<sup>31</sup>

His professional manner was acknowledged when the profession was in need of a leader. "He was chosen again and again to represent the architectural profession in Court, in the Legislature and at Washington."<sup>32</sup> Kimball also served two terms as president of the American Institute of Architects and was a member of its board of directors,<sup>33</sup> where he continued his efforts to make the profession one which the public could respect.<sup>34</sup>

Kimball's building designs followed the styles of the day. He maintained his attachment to classical architecture and produced structures that were instrumental in establishing the City Beautiful idea in the Midwest. He was an architect of exceptional talent, using skills honed by superior training and architectural knowledge to produce buildings of remarkable beauty and function.

A few of Kimball's earliest works, executed after joining C. Howard Walker in partnership, showed his awareness of the architectural style of the Chicago School as well the talents of H. H. Richardson. As were many architects in the nation, he was influenced by the Romanesque style made popular by Richardson, most evident in Kimball's first Omaha commission, the McCagne Building. Kimball's design for the entry portal was dominated by a Romanesque arch, and the facade was treated in the commercial skyscraper style used by the Chicago School architects. However, Kimball retained his attachment to classicism by topping the building's final floor in arches supported by the Corinthian and Doric columns.

After the experimentation in his early buildings, which combined classical and commercial designs as in the Mannheimer Building, Kimball began to design strictly in academic styles. Whether this was due entirely to his training or to the influence of Walker and other eastern architects, can only be speculated. However, because of his years of residence in Boston, he could not help but notice that architectural designs of the time were headed toward a Classical and Renaissance revival.

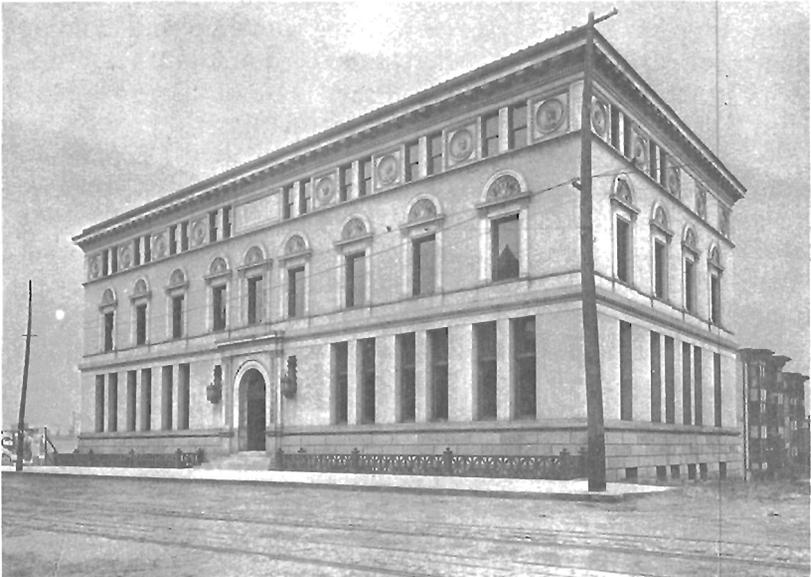
Kimball's first important building commissioned by the city of Omaha was the Public Library, designed in 1891. Modeled in the Italian Renaissance Revival style, it was obviously influenced by McKim, Mead, and White's Boston Public Library.

Since Kimball was living in Boston when the building was designed and constructed, it appears that he was quite impressed by the structure. This is interesting, since Boston's reaction to the building was negative, characterizing it as a "titanic cigar box."<sup>35</sup> However, Kimball must have noted the significance of the building, and more importantly its academic style.

In comparing the Omaha and Boston libraries, the compositional differences are obvious. McKim had had the opportunity to work with a building of much larger scale, and was able to produce a facade with a rhythmic character. Kimball's building,



*Thomas R. Kimball at work in his studio. . . (Below) Omaha Public Library.*



located on a much smaller site of just over 105 feet by 65 feet, necessitated different design techniques, wherein he separated the facade into three sections. With flanking areas of equally spaced openings expressing the structure, he placed a compressed section in the center. Hence, the composition emphasizes the front portal and the staircase. Whereas McKim's facade used the verticality of his arched openings to oppose the building's horizontality, Kimball emphasized the vertical by using long rectangular windows on the first floor. Finally, McKim designed his facade as a compositional unit by not attempting to overdesign its arrangement. By using simple arches and rectangular windows, the facade provides "a series of visual bases for the vertical movement from it (basement window) up to the small rectangles cut into the honor roll, and farther up to the big window arches."<sup>36</sup> As the eye moves past the arches, the molding of the cornice allows the eye to continue until it reaches the cornice of the roof.

In Kimball's design the same idea of upward visual mobility is attempted, but is successful only until one's gaze reaches the third level. At that point the use of a strip of large medallions, which separates the windows, interrupts the visual continuity. This level becomes a "cap" for the building and makes the structure appear exceptionally heavy. However, Kimball cannot be held entirely at fault. He was working with a site and building that required a third floor, whereas the Boston Library is a two-story structure. The third floor of the Omaha Library becomes both a physical and visual end to the structure.

Functionally, Kimball's design works quite well. The plan is a simple rectangle, dominated by a large cast-iron staircase located on the central axis. The first floor has approximately 20-foot high ceilings, needed to accommodate a mezzanine level in the western stacks, whose glass floors allow light to filter to the area below.

Just as McKim had not allowed the functional aspects of the building to alter the form of its facade, neither had Kimball. The facade enclosing the mezzanine does not differ in style from the one that encloses no such level. Thus, both men worked with an enclosure and fitted the parts into it.

The remainder of the Omaha Library housed reference books and government documents arranged in stacks. The third floor, a reading room, was illuminated by skylights, and an

auditorium was located in the basement. Sparsely ornamented, the interior is decorated only by the addition of medallions between the three arches of the entrance hallway.

Kimball's design was a good piece of Italian Renaissance Revival architecture that showed that he was aware of what was considered appropriate taste in design. Since drawings of the building were displayed in the Fine Arts section of the Columbian World's Fair, his contemporaries in the East that comprised the selection committee became aware of his work.<sup>37</sup> He would continue to follow the classical style of design, an intent reinforced by the architectural display at the exposition.

The 1893 Chicago Fair strengthened the acceptance of classical architecture in America. One of the main ideas of the architecture and layout of the park was to show that a grand classical style could be modified for modern use. The City Beautiful idea for redevelopment of downtown areas of communities into a beautiful ensemble of structures became a valuable lesson "that might have offset the negative effects of imitating classicism."<sup>38</sup>

With cities attempting to develop their own City Beautiful images, it was necessary to establish a gateway symbol to their communities, and the railroad station became the most important structure for that purpose. The railroads of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were approaching their highest point of prestige and prominence, and their owners wanted an architecture that could express their position.

Before 1900 most of the stations were reminiscent of the Romanesque style of architecture. They were still large, dark affairs such as Theodore C. Link's Union Station, executed between 1891-1894 in St. Louis, and Bradford Gilbert's Illinois Central Station begun in Chicago in 1892. Later stations took on a monumental Roman appearance due in large part to the temporary station built at the 1893 Fair by Charles Atwood. But the use of classical styles did not come into widespread prominence until after 1900, with such designs as D. H. Burnham and Company's Union Station in Washington, DC, 1903-1907, and McKim, Mead, and White's Neo-Classical Revival design of New York City's Pennsylvania Station in 1906-1910.

The Classical style was used for railroad stations prior to 1900, but perhaps there was no better application than in Kimball's design for Omaha's Burlington Station in 1896.<sup>39</sup> His

design was one of the finest examples of Neo-Classical Revival architecture in the United States. At that time it was considered one of the "most successful applications of the Classical style for industrial use" and "was talked about as one of the two finest examples of Classical architecture in America. The other was the main building of Girard College in Philadelphia with its famous portico."<sup>40</sup> Whidden, the well-known architect and critic, pronounced the station "to be one of the best three pieces of architecture in this country"<sup>41</sup> and was further praised by the *Chicago Record* for stating "there are several railway stations in the United States—in Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, St. Louis—and most of them are much larger than that of the Burlington at Omaha, but none are so beautiful from an artistic standpoint."<sup>42</sup>

The Neo-Classical Revival style was only beginning to be used by architects in the 1890s<sup>43</sup> when Kimball used a classical temple form for the station. In his design, a building 316 feet long, 112 feet wide and 70 feet high, the only variation from the Greek style was the use of 28 gigantic, pink, Colorado granite columns in the Roman Doric style to support the front portico. The columns gave the building a solid, massive appearance and served to break up large crowds at the main entrance of the building.<sup>44</sup> All wall surfaces were smooth, constructed of brick and stone, with the windows and doors trabeated with decorative pediments. The front portico, located on the west side of the station, acted as the main entrance to the building, and was carved by Chicago artist Richard Bock.<sup>45</sup> Around the central ornamental clock were classically draped figures representing agriculture, industry, commerce, science, the arts, and other disciplines.

As designed, the structure was a two-level station with the street entrance leading to the second floor of the building, where an 80-foot-square general waiting room was located. A circular staircase inspired by the stairway at the Chambord Castle in France<sup>46</sup> connected the upper and lower floors. Interior spaces were faced with enameled brick, and mosaic floors trimmed with slate; and the ceiling of the rooms on the first floor were of enameled brick and glass mosaic, a contrast to the ceilings of the lower rooms, finished in ornamental plaster.

A comparison of the Burlington Station with other buildings under construction at the same time shows that Kimball's design



*Omaha Burlington Station. . .(Below) Burlington Station front por-  
tico.*



expressed his ability to work with a prominent Classical style and fit it as an effective solution to a difficult problem. It was a successful adaptation of a Greek temple for contemporary purposes. Kimball's Burlington Station was a magnificent piece of Neo-Classical Revival architecture and ahead of its time in establishing the railroad station as one of the important buildings in urban development.

The City Beautiful idea was applied to many aspects of city architecture, but its widest use was in the development of national and international fairs that took place across the United States and the world following the 1893 Exposition. By 1904 there were reincarnations of the White City in New Orleans, Atlanta, Portland, Buffalo, Nashville, Paris, St. Louis, and at Omaha's Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition of 1898.

At Chicago, Daniel H. Burnham, McKim, Mead, White, Hunt, and Frederick Law Olmstead and the remainder of the men that comprised the architectural board<sup>47</sup> made a remarkable planning statement. It was the first time that a group of buildings was designed in a total ensemble, whose success was in the unity of its parts. In addition, Olmstead's landscape design was fundamental to the unity, with the architecture supplementing the festive atmosphere by being both temporary and illusionary.

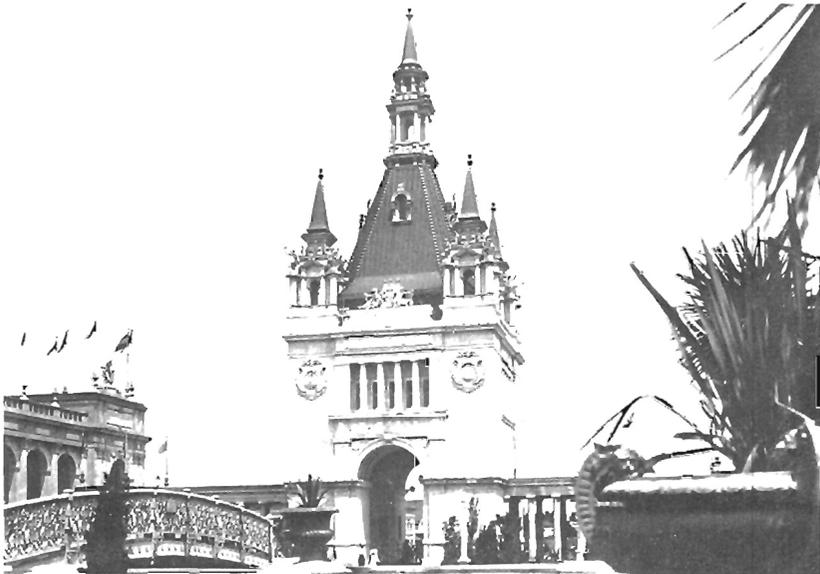
The tradition of the White City was carried to the Midwest with Omaha's Trans-Mississippi Exposition of 1898, in which Kimball and C. Howard Walker were architects-in-chief. Under the architectural direction of Kimball,<sup>48</sup> the fair's design was later praised as the "most perfect of a whole of any of the expositions of the past."<sup>49</sup>

Indeed, Walker and Kimball's design was recognized to be one of Chicago's most successful offspring, despite the following personal comment by Kimball:

A comparison of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition plans and views with those published in magazines, etc., during the development of the Columbian Exposition, shows to even an ordinary eye the entire dissimilarity of the two schemes, as well as their individual buildings and features. It was not any lack of admiration for Chicago's splendid achievement that led the architects-in-chief of the Trans-Mississippi Exposition, Messrs. Walker and Kimball, to rely on their own creative powers for the designing of this latest plan. There was really no reason why it should not be an entirely original one, depending on no preceding one whatever for its inspiration; and this is precisely what has resulted.<sup>50</sup>



*Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition, Omaha, 1898. Grand Court looking west. . . (Below) Administration Arch.*



In size and expenditure this exposition could not compete with the Chicago Fair, and "whatever individual character it could expect to have was necessarily that of distinction."<sup>51</sup> Since economic considerations forbade the use of color, distinction was secured through simplicity of treatment and harmony of form.

From the first meeting of the architectural board,<sup>52</sup> it was recognized that a general type of architecture was to be maintained, as well as a general color and scale. These ideas were not out of the ordinary, since the Chicago Exposition architects had used the same considerations in the design of their buildings.

But two factors of the Main Court were new and had not been insisted on in any other fair. First, all towers and vertical motifs were placed only where they were indicated upon the general plan, and with only one prominent dome, which was placed at the termination of the longest vista. Second, no portion of the private buildings or grounds outside the main court was to be seen from the interior. In order to accomplish this point, all buildings were connected with colonnades backed by arboreal screens. In such a manner the court became a vast plaza visually isolated from all other architectural elements.

The plans of both the Chicago and Omaha expositions used the Court of Honor as the main focus of the respective fairs. However, they differed due to the distinct variance in size and arrangement of buildings. At Chicago, the court was comprised of seven principal buildings with only two structures actually facing the Basin. The Administration Building designed by Hunt was used as the western focal point with Atwood's Peristyle acting as the enclosing structure for the eastern end. In this court all of the buildings were designed in the Classical style, restricted only by a fixed maximum height of 60 feet from ground level to the cornice.

At Omaha, Kimball and Walker's layout utilized nine main buildings surrounding the lagoon and its western end, called the Mirror. All buildings in the Grand Court, with the exception of the Art Building, were designed according to definite dimensions and instructions dictated by Kimball and Walker:

All buildings should be simple classic or renaissance style, without the excess of ornament. The height of the order to the top of the entablature is determined. Each building should have a dominant central pavilion and subordinate corner pavilions and the colonnades arcades, or subdivisions of spaces between the pavilions should be absolute

repeats of a uniform scale, said scale being stated. The buildings should be ivory white and the roofs of a uniform gray green.<sup>53</sup>

The design for the layout of the fair was a radical departure from the almost universal practice of previous expositions. The groupings of the various features of exhibits and amusement areas were as follows:

This aggregation of grounds included an extreme length North and South of a trifle over a mile, and an extreme width East and West of about three quarters of a mile, yet the grouping of the various classes of Buildings and exhibits and the location of the various classes of entertainment with the Grand Court and the Government Building as the radiating center of attraction, were such that the visitor was conscious of no weariness in seeking to avail himself of every opportunity to surfeit himself with knowledge and amusement.<sup>54</sup>

As a result, while there still was a great variety of designs and minor details, the buildings were harmonious in style, color, scale, height, and general mass. By imposing such rigorous standards, Walker and Kimball were able to maintain control over all designs and now allow for eccentricities of individual architects.

In looking at the structures designed by Kimball, two main works, the Arch of the States and the Administration Building, played important roles in the overall composition of the Grand Court. The Arch of the States, apparently inspired by Atwood's Peristyle at the Chicago Fair, was one of the most noticeable structures of the exposition, since it formed the Grand Entrance. On either side were curved exedra which contained the main ticket offices. The Arch was 50 feet wide by 25 feet deep and had a height to the top of the parapet of 68 feet. Abutments on either side helped support a broad frieze consisting of a double arcade of 24 arches, which contained shields decorated in color with the coat of arms of the Trans-Mississippi states. Above the frieze a panel inscribed "Arch of the States" was placed with a decorated cornice and high parapet surmounting the structure.

The sculpture of the parapet, designed by R. P. Bringhurst of St. Louis, was a large shield with the arms of the United States under a golden eagle, and upheld by youths bearing masts for the national colors. The triumphal arch formed a point of attention from areas of view throughout the exposition, and produced a "gay effect" with streamers flying from the top.<sup>55</sup>

Directly opposite the Arch of the States was the Ad-

ministrative Building, serving as general headquarters for the exposition officers. In his work Kimball created one of the most distinctive and original structures of the exposition. It measured 50 by 50 feet, was 150 feet in height, including the spires, and was designed as a rectangular mass of four square pavilions surmounted by a high hipped French roof and lantern, and heroic statuary designed by Watler Mattler of Chicago.<sup>56</sup> The design was categorized as "free classic," though much influenced by the French Renaissance and having a certain "Gaelic grace about its airy headpiece of spires."<sup>57</sup> It was the finishing touch to the Court of Honor ensemble.

Those two buildings, along with the designs of the Boys' and Girls' Building, Transportation Building, the connecting colonnades and accessories, and layout of the park, all furthered the development of Kimball as an architect. He became nationally known, and within three years following the exposition, he was to be named a fellow of the American Institute of Architects.<sup>58</sup> In addition, the design of the exposition was shown at the Paris Exposition of 1900 as an example of recent outstanding American architecture.

The Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition was an architectural success. From that time forward Kimball was to become a well-known figure, both regionally and nationally. His academic design talents would be further used to design two more structures of importance in the City Beautiful scheme of architecture, a courthouse and a cathedral. As had his previous buildings, these structures would dominate the communities in which they were located.

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, the courthouse dominated the county seat town, especially in the Midwest. "It was a focus of community activity, town planning, patriotic idealism, and architectural aspirations."<sup>59</sup> The courthouse was often idealized as a "Temple of Justice,"<sup>60</sup> and the design of a courthouse was a commission that interested many architects. In most cases they were a profitable endeavor and offered an architect the opportunity to expand his design talents.

In the last quarter of the 19th century, the designs of courthouses were dominated by the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Using broad arches, squat column clusters, rough faced stone, masonry and massive hipped roofs, architects succeeded in creating recognizably personal adaptations of the Richardso-

nian style. By the turn of the century, the influx of architects schooled and trained in academic styles caused courthouse architecture to become influenced by Beaux-Arts classicism. That training, which emphasized the Renaissance tradition, made academic classicism the dominant style for courthouse architecture in the early 20th century.

Such were the characteristics of courthouse design when Kimball was selected from a group of prominent Nebraska architects<sup>61</sup> to design the Hall County Courthouse in Grand Island, Nebraska, in 1901.\* With Kimball's trained adherence to popular styles, it was inevitable that his design would be classical. He used the style of Beaux-Arts Classicism,<sup>62</sup> a mode of design that had enjoyed little acceptance in Nebraska, though popular in other parts of the United States between 1890-1915. It was used for many types of well-known public and quasi-public buildings such as New York's Public Library and Grand Central Station, but in courthouse design this did not seem the case.

At the beginning of the 20th century, it was popular to reflect the design of the United States Capitol in most new public projects. In many of the buildings, therefore, the classical design was dominated by a huge dome and a cupola. Kimball abstained from copying the Capitol, however, and produced one of the finest examples of Beaux-Arts Classicism in the Midwest.

The brick and stone building has a three-part composition. Flanked by identical wings, the central section is dominated by monumental stairs leading to the main entrance of the building. Located above the entrance is a balcony, where there are four coupled columns which support the cornice and town clock. The entire structure is capped by a copper-clad tower and cupola, which is a "design element common in almost all post-Civil War courthouse styles,"<sup>63</sup> and acts as a dominant figure in the city's skyline.

The courthouse is rectangular in plan, with main and secondary openings centrally located in each wall. Above the intersection of the hallways is a rotunda dominated by a domed skylight of blue and gold glass. The second-level mezzanine is octagonal, each section being infilled with a marble arch and columns,

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\*See cover for painting of Hall County Courthouse by Hebron artist Ralph Hawkins.

alternately housing either office entrances or water fountains and adjacent seats. The ribs projecting from the top of the mezzanine's cornice to the skylights are usual in their design, since they resemble bound papyrus columns.

In overall design the Hall County Courthouse is well controlled in its composition, and the functional requirements of a courthouse are adequately met. Kimball effectively incorporated the features of Beaux-Arts Classicism into a simple, yet monumental design, dominant in the cityscape.

During the same year that the courthouse was designed, Kimball also began working on the design of Omaha's St. Cecilia's Cathedral. In this church Kimball developed a radical departure from the established and accepted designs used in ecclesiastical architecture. Churches, considered important facets in the scheme of the City Beautiful, generally remained outside of the realm of the classical image. Although the Classical or Renaissance styles had been used, as evidenced by McKim's Madison Square Presbyterian Church in 1906, the preferred style by church officials was Gothic. Among church designers, the leader was Ralph Adams Cram. He felt that "the heart of religious worship lay in the service at the altar, in the Mass" and "any service in which the Communion served as the major demonstration of the theological beliefs should be held in a Gothic building."<sup>64</sup> Cram's Gothic Revival idea is no better expressed than in St. Thomas' Episcopal Church in New York, created by his partner, Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue.

It was during this time, when most Roman Catholic structures were in the Gothic or Italian Baroque style,<sup>65</sup> that Kimball produced St. Cecilia's Cathedral, influenced by Spanish Renaissance designs. That style, prevalent in South America and Mexico, had not yet been explored in American architecture. It would, in fact, not become prominent in the United States until after the Panama-California Exposition at San Diego in 1915,<sup>66</sup> after which Spanish architecture became the rage. If only in that respect, the cathedral was unique. It was "one of the first, if not the first, to be built in the United States strictly following the Old Country conventions."<sup>67</sup> Kimball was still using classical architecture as a basis for his designs, but it appears that he was making an attempt to produce an architecture fitting to the region, particularly since he later designed St. Philomena's Church in Omaha, and the Battle Mount

Sanitarium in Hot Springs, South Dakota, using the same Spanish Revival characteristics.

In the cathedral's design Kimball produced a structure that was monumentally stark and bold in its simple massing and purity of detail. The main facade is dominated by a richly detailed portal, choir loft windows, rose windows and the eastern gable of the nave, which are flanked by unadorned twin towers. The detailing of the towers employs voluted curves, first used in Vignola's Gesu in Rome, and later characteristic of the Spanish Baroque period. This detail, first introduced as supporting buttresses for the tower's cupolas, is used throughout the building as a unifying feature. Massive buttresses flank and are continued around the apse. This use of detailing gives the building a style more of "brilliant contrasts than [of] harmony, the ornament being grouped lavishly at focused points and thrown into relief by simple surroundings and backgrounds."<sup>68</sup>

The interior design reflects the exterior form. It is composed of a nave without transepts, a surrounding ambulatory, a spacious narthex, circular apse and the attached Chapel of Our Lady of Nebraska. The ceiling is a huge barrel vault with molded ribs of the same papyrus design as used in the Hall County Courthouse, supported by a series of five double arched bays. The nave is lit by two clerestory windows, each with arched lintels, as well as the first floor side windows.

The nave is a great auditorium terminating with a sanctuary dominated by the high altar and bishop's throne. Opposite the sanctuary, under the western rose window, are the choir loft and organ loft. Interior decoration is limited to murals placed between clerestory windows, the richly decorated sanctuary and statuary, and medallions placed on each column. The ambulatory aisles are unusually heightened by the use of blue-painted ceilings decorated with gold stars.

Kimball's design was exceptional in ecclesiastic architecture for its time. Since Gothic was the prominent style of the period, Kimball's building was a radical departure from the usual style of architecture. Still using his classical training as a design tool, he produced "a structure. . . artistically correct, striking in its massiveness, imposing in its outline, a decided deviation from the common-place."<sup>69</sup>

Between 1880 and 1915 architecture enjoyed a greater use of the Classical approach than ever before or since in the history of



*St. Cecilia's Cathedral, Omaha*

our nation. The men who had created it felt that their designs were the best adaptations of past styles that could be utilized in the creation of our country's own national style. Of the few men who had the knowledge and expertise to execute those types of designs, Thomas Rogers Kimball was outstanding.

During his life Kimball's training had played an important role in his development as an architect. He was given a background that allowed him to design at a level of excellence equal to his national contemporaries, and superior to those in Nebraska. His midwestern buildings stand as excellent, functional examples of classical design.

Kimball's awareness of the developments in the field of architecture kept him abreast of the accepted and appropriate styles for buildings. Never were his designs out of style, rather, in some cases ahead of their time, such as those of the Burlington Station and St. Cecilia's Cathedral. His ability to design in various styles and his knowledge of construction allowed him flexibility in the design of varied projects, enabling him to utilize the appropriate styles for different building requirements. Kimball followed the ideals of his contemporaries in much of his work, using classical styles that were accepted as the norm, and never actually developing a style of his own, as Sullivan and Wright had done. However, his design for St. Cecilia's Cathedral showed his awareness of the need for the development of a regional image. Many of Kimball's later designs featured notable Spanish influence, his attempt to develop a style for regional unity.

Throughout Kimball's long architectural life, he was well thought of by his contemporaries. Be it in the field of architec-

tural design or in his work as a member and president of the national AIA, his efforts looked to the betterment of the profession.

Kimball never sought expression in architecture through radical design. His work showed a great concern for the development of well-built structures important to the overall fabric of the city, and in doing so he created interesting, functional, and beautiful structures. Kimball's work and life made him more than just an average architect. He was a leader in the profession—more than just a good Nebraska architect.

### *Biography of Thomas Rogers Kimball*

Thomas Rogers Kimball was born in Linwood, Ohio, near Cincinnati, on April 19, 1862.<sup>70</sup> His father, Thomas Lord Kimball, was an executive for the Union Pacific Railroad and later the president of the American National Bank of Omaha.<sup>71</sup> In Kimball's early teens the family moved to Omaha, where he grew up in cultured and affluent circles in the city, a tie that would benefit him in his architectural career.

After completing high school and two years at the University of Nebraska, Kimball moved to Boston in 1880. For the following three years, he studied with a private tutor to eliminate academic deficiencies before enrolling at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.<sup>72</sup> In 1883 he began studies at the Cowles School of Art, where he developed his talents in drawing and painting. He was to become versatile in many art forms (pencil, charcoal, pen and ink, and watercolor) under the watchful eyes of Ross Turner, Theodore Langerfeldt, and Emile Carlsen.<sup>73</sup>

In 1885 Kimball entered the School of Architecture at MIT<sup>74</sup> where he was trained in the accepted classical tradition. From 1885-1887, he was registered as a special student in architecture. While there he received the Boston Society of Architects Scholarship,<sup>75</sup> and was ultimately given an affiliation with the class of 1889, although he never received a degree.<sup>76</sup>

While at MIT, Kimball was introduced to C. Howard Walker, his future partner, who was at the time an institute instructor in architectural decoration. At the same time, Kimball became acquainted with Dwight H. Perkins, George Prinz, and Arthur Dillon, all of whom became life-long friends and worked with Kimball during his career.<sup>77</sup>

After leaving MIT in 1887, Kimball traveled to France to study at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts under artist Henri Harpignies.<sup>78</sup> Learning Harpignies' techniques in landscape painting, distinguished for constructive drawing and breadth of treatment,<sup>79</sup> Kimball was able to further develop his artistic talents, as shown in his later watercolor drawings.

By 1888 Kimball returned to Boston where he began his active career with the founding of the publishing firm of Bates and Kimball. Under that association with Henry D. Bates, the firm founded and published the *Technology Architectural Review*,<sup>80</sup> the first MIT architectural magazine. In his designs for many covers, Kimball's artistic talents in the use of classical characteristics of design were most evident. Those talents would later be exhibited when Kimball made the drawings, as well as the translation, for the American version of Leveil's *Vignola* in 1891.<sup>81</sup>

In 1889 Kimball married Annie McPhail, an artist of unusual ability, and the daughter of a prominent Boston family of piano manufacturers. Within the same year while maintaining his tie with Bates by designing advertising posters for local manufacturing and retail firms, he began his own architectural office.

Until 1891 Kimball continued to work with Bates, and with the addition of a new partner, Irving Guild, became known as Bates, Kimball, and Guild. During that association they founded and published *The Brochure* series of architectural illustration.<sup>82</sup> In the same year Kimball joined his former mentor, C. Howard Walker, and Herbert D. Best to form the architectural firm of Walker, Kimball and Best. By the end of the year upon the death of Best, the firm was renamed Walker and Kimball. Kimball remained in that partnership until 1889, at which time he began his own practice.<sup>83</sup>

With the addition of Kimball, the office was able to expand its practice outside of Boston and into the Midwest, specifically to the rapidly growing city of Omaha, Nebraska. On his return to Omaha to open a branch office in 1891,<sup>84</sup> Kimball and his wife became involved with the social circle of the city. Over the years he became a member of the Omaha Club, the Civic League (which he later served as president), the Chamber of Commerce, the Omaha Professional Mens Club, Palimpsest, and the Sheridan Land Club.<sup>85</sup> By becoming active in many organizations, Kimball became friends with Omaha's wealthiest

citizens, which led to many architectural contracts for the firm.

Two important buildings were designed by Kimball in his first year in Omaha, the Omaha Telephone and McCagne Buildings, the latter being of greater interest. Kimball, while designing for one of Omaha's most prominent real estate businessmen, John L. McCagne, seemed to be influenced by the Chicago school architects.

By 1892, when the design for the Omaha Public Library was completed, Kimball was working exclusively in accepted architectural design styles, and produced a fine example of Italian Renaissance Revival architecture. Small in scale, only 105 feet by 65 feet, three stories in height and built of light-colored brick, the building design followed the style prominent in the East since 1883.

In 1893 Kimball apparently severed his ties with Bates and Guild, and began working exclusively as an architect. It was the year of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, and Kimball, like most architects, became addicted to the Classical Revival architecture on display. At the fair Kimball's exceptional talent was displayed in his four design drawings.<sup>86</sup>

During 1894 Kimball made two important connections with people in Omaha, when he was commissioned to design the Gurdon Wattles residence and begin layout planning of the Dome Lake Club. In his work for Wattles, Kimball came to know the man who was probably responsible for his selection as architect-in-chief for the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition. Wattles, an Omaha banker, was to become the president of the 1898 Fair.

In the Wattles residence Kimball used the Chateausque style, and produced a three-story structure whose design resulted from the mixing of Renaissance and late Gothic details.<sup>87</sup> Even though the Chateausque style was reaching its culmination at the time of Kimball's design,<sup>88</sup> he was probably influenced by that style of architecture when he traveled in Europe. The Chateausque or Francis I style was exemplified in the castle of Chambord, a detail of which would become important in the interior of a later building by Kimball, the Burlington Station.

Kimball was selected as the architect for the Dome Lake Club<sup>89</sup> because of his membership in the organization. His association with George Holdrege, James and Gould Cooke Dietz, and Charles Frederick Manderson<sup>90</sup> in other organiza-

tions had brought about his charter membership of the club in Sheridan, Wyoming. The association was organized by railroad executives and Omaha businessmen as a summer resort to escape the press of business and ultimately to make money. After a few years of losing money, the club became strictly a private organization.

Kimball's architectural talents became of utmost importance in the design of the resort. Almost all work for the club was through the Omaha office, with Kimball responsible for the layout of the resort, as well as the clubhouse and cabins for members. Association with those executives played an important role in Kimball's practice. The next year he was selected to design the Burlington Station.

With the idea of the City Beautiful started by the Chicago Fair, the demand for monumental buildings at the gateway of the city became an utmost necessity. Of course the railroad station was the most important. The city of Omaha, with its increasing importance in railroad expansion in the 1890s, was the perfect location for such a structure, and the building designed by Kimball was an exceptional example.

By 1897 Omaha was engaged in the establishment of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition, and Kimball and Walker were selected as architects-in-chief.<sup>91</sup> The exposition was, like its predecessors in Chicago, New Orleans, Nashville and Atlanta, a show sponsored by the area to display its symbols of prosperity and inform America about Omaha and the West. Under the architectural direction of Kimball, the fair's design was later praised as the "most perfect of a whole of any of the expositions of the past."<sup>92</sup>

At the fair Kimball was responsible for the designs of the Arch of the States, Administration Building, the Boys' and Girls' Building, Transportation Building, the connecting colonnades and accessories, and the layout of the park. Kimball's stature as an architect was enhanced by his fine work in planning the exposition. He became nationally known, and the design of the exposition was shown at the Paris Exposition of 1900 as an example of recent outstanding American architecture.

Following the exposition the firm of Walker and Kimball was disbanded by mutual consent. The two men remained friends and once again united in partnership as two of the architects for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St. Louis in 1904.

By 1899 Kimball had become recognized by his profession for both his architectural talent and integrity. That became evident when he was named one of the jurists for the New York Custom House Competition.<sup>93</sup> Even so, there was considerable controversy over his selection of Cass Gilbert, since many felt that Gilbert won because of his past connections with Kimball and James Knox Taylor, another jurist.<sup>94</sup> However, protests by the architects were overruled and Gilbert's design was selected.

That year also brought commissions to design residences for two Omaha businessmen, Luther Kountze and Freeman Kirken-dall. The latter was more impressive, since it followed the Italian Renaissance Revival style. Once again Kimball produced a fine residential example in a classical style.

Over the next two years, Kimball designed many structures in Nebraska and the Midwest. He was responsible for the Shingle style Omaha Country Club; the Hastings Railroad Station; and two other buildings of prime importance: the Hall County Courthouse in Grand Island and St. Cecilia's Cathedral in Omaha.

During the years 1900-1903 Kimball and Walker reformed their partnership when they were selected as two of the 21 architects for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. As members of the architectural board, they were instrumental in the layout and design of the park. In addition Kimball designed the Electricity Building,<sup>95</sup> one of the main structures surrounding the Great Basin. One design idea used by Kimball was that the building should in some manner express the nervous activity associated with power.<sup>96</sup> The building masses were simple, with the exception of the tops of corner pavilions which were modified models of temples of India and Siam, decorated with classic detail.<sup>97</sup>

At the same time the St. Louis Fair was being planned, the National Chapter of the American Institute of Architects met in Buffalo, New York, in 1901 for the 35th annual convention. At that meeting Kimball was honored as a fellow of the AIA. In addition Kimball presented a paper entitled "The Management and Design of Expositions."<sup>98</sup>

By 1902 the Electricity Building was designed and being constructed, and Kimball began work on a government commission, the Battle Mount Sanitarium in Hot Springs, South Dakota. The design, in Spanish Mission style, was a different

approach to hospital layout. By using a star or radial plan, Kimball produced a building that gave several possible kinds of orientation for the several wards. The arrangement was such that each section had one covered porch side, while the other side was purposely exposed to the sun. In addition the entire structure was so placed that its principal front faced the best approach to the city, thus allowing a grand view from the city. Finally, the orientation provided a great amount of fresh air to circulate through and around the wards.<sup>99</sup>

Kimball's design incorporated ramps instead of stairs wherever patients were able to go, and located them at connecting links between wards so that no space was wasted. In addition, a circular pedestrian way connected all sections of the buildings, which provided a shady, cool walkway in summer and a dry, warm area in winter.<sup>100</sup>

The commission was the "first government work of any considerable importance entrusted to a western architect."<sup>101</sup> It was praised by Government Supervising Architect James Knox Taylor as "a gem; one of the finest conceptions for a hospital I ever saw. The work is creditable to Mr. Kimball. I am sorry he is burying himself in Omaha. He ought to be in New York."<sup>102</sup>

Following the execution of the sanitarium, Kimball designed a variety of buildings in Nebraska. In 1903 after discontinuing his partnership with Walker, Kimball designed the Grand Island First National Bank, the University of Nebraska Administration Building in Lincoln, and the Monmouth Park School in Omaha. While working on those projects, he still found time to enter the San Francisco Custom House Competition.

In 1904 Kimball was asked by the building committee for the St. Joseph, Missouri, Auditorium competition to serve as advisor. It was his first experience in that capacity, and he was later called upon to serve in the same position for the Indiana War Memorial and Nebraska State Capitol competitions.<sup>103</sup>

The same year brought commissions for Beals School in Omaha and two residences. The first was a three-story Tudor style home for Edmund Fairfield, and the other was a home for Kimball's mother and sister. The Kimball residence is a unique design that incorporates Gothic, Florentine, and Georgian details to produce an unconfusing structure of stability. The building is symmetrical, dominated by an ornamental stepped and gabled front facade, which features different window treat-



*Hall County Courthouse, Grand Island*

ment on each floor. Linteled windows with stone transoms are used on the first floor; segmented arches on the second floor; the third floor gable contains a Florentine arch with two windows set into it. Windows are rectangular with lintels.

The interior is ornately decorated in wood and marble. Beneath a dark oak-beam ceiling, the living room is dominated by a fireplace with carved Italian marble around the opening. Carved oak paneling covers the walls from floor to ceiling.<sup>104</sup>

In the years that followed Kimball's work load lessened as he began to devote his time to organizations. He did design the All Saints Parish House and Church in Omaha, which was paid for in part by his friend Gurdon Wattles. Other structures commissioned were the Omaha YWCA, the Holdrege Library in 1905, and St. Philomena's Church in 1908. In the design for the Omaha church, Kimball once again used Spanish Mission style for the exterior treatment.

In 1909 Kimball was once again needed by his profession. He was appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt as a member of the first Commission for Fine Arts.<sup>105</sup> In following years he was

appointed to many committees for the national AIA, and in 1918 was elected to his first term as national president of that organization.<sup>106</sup> During his two terms of office Kimball fought to bring a more professional image to the architect. While in office, he strove to establish the architect on the level of acceptance to the public as a doctor or lawyer. That was illustrated in his speech at the 53rd Annual Convention of the AIA:

Certainly failure to hold, in a higher degree, the confidence of the public and of the client, is traceable directly to this fallacious and mischievous source of suspicion which we have erected into a barrier between ourselves and our clients and society. Until architects as a class realize this and better understand the nature and extent of the harm done, I feel perfectly sure they will never enjoy the position of trust in the community to which their qualifications should entitle them, nor will they receive that degree of usefulness which the public has the right to expect of them.<sup>107</sup>

Those feelings were motivated by his desire to establish better professional relations with the public. He felt that "the interest of the public was supreme, the interest of the client next, and his own personal interest last."<sup>108</sup> He believed if his attitudes were accepted and practiced by enough professionals, the public would not only appreciate it, but demand it. Hence, an immediate uplifting of professional practice would occur in all facets of society.

In the years prior to his joining William Steele and Josiah D. Sandham in partnership, Kimball designed two important structures in Omaha, the Hotel Fontenelle (Gurdon Wattles was president) and the *Omaha World Herald* Building. Later he designed the Hotel Paddock in Beatrice.

By 1927, when the firm of Kimball, Steele, and Sandham was formed, Kimball was no longer working actively as an architect. The firm designed the Church of Christ Scientist in Minneapolis, and were associate architects for the Federal Office Building in Omaha, but Kimball acted primarily as a consultant. He did, however, continue to draw presentation sketches, using his skill in watercolors.<sup>109</sup>

On September 7, 1934, at the age of 72, Thomas Rogers Kimball died.<sup>110</sup> A legacy of prominent buildings in Nebraska and the Midwest remained. His work load was extraordinary, his job book showing 871 commissions—167 new residential buildings and 162 new non-residential structures.

As an architect, Kimball was well thought of by his contem-

poraries, and his designs were displayed and acknowledged by his profession. His work at the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition first made him prominent and led to commissions that were important in the development of City Beautiful schemes. He was many times honored by his profession. His work and idealism ultimately brought him the presidency of the AIA. He was a leader in many Omaha civic organizations.

Finally, Kimball never sought architectural expression beyond the accepted designs. His work showed concern for designing well-built structures important in the overall fabric of the city. In doing so he created interesting, functional, and beautiful structures comparable to those of his national contemporaries. His work and life made him more than an average architect. He was a leader in the profession.

#### NOTES

1. William Steele, "Thomas Rogers Kimball—An Appreciation," *The Octagon*, 6 (October, 1934), 3.

2. *Ibid.*

3. A good description of MIT and the schools of architecture is included in *The Architect at Mid-Century*, ed. Turpin C. Bannister, Vol. 1 (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corp., 1954), 96-99.

4. *Ibid.*

5. Dwight H. Perkins to Mrs. Lawrence B. Perkins, August 21, 1940, Dwight H. Perkins Papers, Lawrence B. Perkins Family, Evanston, Illinois.

6. Information about the Ecole and the points emphasized are included in John Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown *The Architecture of America* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1961), 249-250.

7. Burchard and Bush-Brown, 243.

8. *Ibid.*, 200.

9. Lewis Mumford, *Roots of Contemporary American Architecture* (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corp., 1952), 16.

10. Burchard and Bush-Brown, 203.

11. For information about the Chicago School see Mark L. Pusch, *The Chicago School of Architecture* (New York: Random House, 1964).

12. Burchard and Bush-Brown, 256.

13. For information about Kimball's father and family see William L. Steele, "Thomas Rogers Kimball" notes used in an address delivered at the Joslyn Memorial, Omaha, October, 1934, and Omaha Chapter of the American Inter-Professional Institute, "Thomas Rogers Kimball: An Appreciation," a resolution adopted after Kimball's death in 1934.

14. Steele, "Thomas Rogers Kimball."

15. Eleanor L. Bartlett, MIT Institute Archives librarian, to David L. Batie, December 16, 1976, Archive Records of MIT, Boston.

16. Steele, "Thomas Rogers Kimball."

17. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1962 ed., S. V. "Harpignies, Henri."

18. Steele, "Thomas Rogers Kimball."

19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Elements et Theorie d'Architecture*, 1901, cited by John Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown, *The Architecture of America* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Co., 1961), 249.
22. Kimball's design for the Battle Mount Sanitarium is discussed in *Omaha Excelsior*, December 27, 1902.
23. Steele, "Thomas Rogers Kimball."
24. Kimball became a partner in the firm of Walker and Kimball in 1891 and returned to Omaha to set up an office apparently due to his family and social connections.
25. *Who's Who in America*, Albert Nelsen Marquis, editor, 17 (Chicago: The A. N. Marquis Co., 1932), 319, lists Kimball as a member of the Chamber of Commerce, Civic League, Association Professional Men's Club, University Engineers, Palimpsest, and Country Clubs, all in Omaha.
26. George R. Leighton, *Five Cities* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1939), 186.
27. *Ibid.*, 189.
28. An official announcement of four of Kimball's designs when a Lincoln resident, the McCagne Building, Omaha Telephone Building, and Omaha Library is included in the "Thomas Rogers Kimball" Scrapbook, Nebraska State Historical Archives, Lincoln.
29. *Sunday-Dispatch Magazine* (St. Louis), November 3, 1901.
30. Steele, "Thomas Rogers Kimball."
31. American Inter-Professional Institute, "An Appreciation."
32. Steele, "Thomas Rogers Kimball."
33. Walter H. Kilham, "1889," *The Technology Review*, 37 (December, 1934), vi.
34. In Kimball's speech when president of the American Institute of Architects, the thrust was towards this idea. The speech is printed as Thomas Rogers Kimball, "53rd Annual Convention of the Institute," *American Institute of Architects Journal*, No. 6 (1920), 220-222.
35. *Boston Herald*, October 31, 1891, cited by William H. Jordy, *Progressive and Academic Ideals at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co. Inc., 1972), 330.
36. Jordy, 341.
37. For the names of the selection committee see *The Official Directory of the World's Columbian Exposition*, Moses P. Handy, editor (Chicago: W. B. Conkey Co., 1893), 278-279.
38. David F. Burg, *Chicago's White City of 1893* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1976), 303.
39. The Burlington Station has been so altered that it no longer represents its original design. In 1930 Graham, Anderson, Probst, and White redesigned the building in the modern style and removed the front portico and pitched roof. Columns that adorned the front portico are located at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln adjacent to the track and football stadiums.
40. *Excelsior*, January 27, 1908.
41. Excerpts from general manager's file. Publicity items contributed by Kimball, Steele, and Sandham, Architects, Omaha, Nebraska State Historical Archives, Lincoln.
42. *Chicago Record*, excerpt from article in CB&Q timetable, August, 1900, Nebraska State Historical Archives, Lincoln.
43. Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969), 167-171.
44. "New B.&M.R. Passenger Station," *The Railroad and Engineering News*, October 15, 1898, 575.
45. "The New Railway Station at Omaha, Nebraska," *Engineering News*, 18 (January-June 1899), 278.

46. *Railroad and Engineering News*, 576.

47. For further information about the 1893 fair and its organization see *History of the World's Columbian Exposition*, Hon. William E. Cameron, editor, (Chicago: Columbia History Co., 1893).

48. Since Kimball was located in Omaha, it is most likely that he was responsible for running the architectural design of the fair for the firm. Because his job book lists all the buildings the firm was commissioned to design, it seems likely that he was the architect. All drawings for buildings came out of the Kimball office and all presentation drawings were executed by him.

49. James B. Haynes, *The Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition of 1898* (Omaha: Published under direction of the Committee on History, 1910), 106.

50. From handwritten article by Kimball, T.R. Kimball Scrapbook, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln.

51. *Ibid.*

52. Haynes, 109.

53. *Ibid.*

54. *Ibid.*, 31

55. *Ibid.*, 125-126. Originally designed as a permanent structure and the entrance to "Kountze Park," it has long since been removed, leaving nothing as a commemoration of the exposition.

56. Haynes, 115-116.

57. From a handwritten article by Kimball, T. R. Kimball Scrapbook, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln.

58. Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Co., 1956), 344-345.

59. Paul Kenneth Goeldner, "Samples of Justice: Nineteenth Century Courthouses in the Midwest and Texas," (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1970), 23.

60. *Ibid.*, 31.

61. See Hall County Board Proceeding, August 21, 1901, Hall County Records, Grand Island, Nebraska. The architects were James Tyler of Lincoln, James Craddock of Lincoln, George A. Berlinghof of Beatrice, James McDonnell of South Omaha and a Mr. Prescott of Marshalltown, Iowa.

62. See Whiffen, 149-153, for information about this style and its characteristics.

63. Goeldner, 31.

64. Burchard and Bush-Brown, 283.

65. The distribution of styles most commonly used by different religious sects is shown in Thomas E. Tallmadge, *Story of Architecture in America* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1927), 271.

66. Whiffen, 225-228.

67. *True Voice*, March 17, 1905.

68. *Omaha Bee*, July 6, 1902.

69. *Ibid.*

70. Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (deceased)* (Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Co., 1956), 344-345.

71. For information about Kimball's father and family see William L. Steele, "Thomas Rogers Kimball," notes used in an address delivered at the Joslyn Memorial, Omaha, October, 1934, and Omaha Chapter of the American Inter-Professional Institute "Thomas Rogers Kimball: An Appreciation," a resolution adopted after Kimball's death in 1934.

72. Steele, "Thomas Rogers Kimball."

73. *Who's Who in America*, Albert Nelson Marquis, editor, 17. (Chicago: The A. N. Marquis Co., 1932), 319.

74. Eleanor L. Bartlett, MIT Institute Archives Librarian to David L. Batie, December 16, 1976, Archive Records of MIT, Boston.

75. Walter H. Kilham, "1889," *The Technology Review*, 37 (December, 1934), vi.
76. Eleanor L. Bartlett.
77. Dwight H. Perkins to Mrs. Lawrence B. Perkins, August 21, 1940, Dwight H. Perkins Papers, Lawrence B. Perkins Family, Evanston, Illinois.
78. Steele, "Thomas Rogers Kimball."
79. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1962, S. V. "Harpignies, Henri."
80. Kilham, "1889."
81. Steele, "Thomas Rogers Kimball."
82. *Ibid.*
83. The formal announcement of the disbanding of the partnership can be found in the "Thomas Rogers Kimball" Scrapbook, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln.
84. *Who's Who in America; Omaha Directory*, 1901.
85. *Who's Who in America*; Steele, "Thomas Rogers Kimball."
86. An official announcement of four of Kimball's designs, a Lincoln residence, the McCagne Building, Omaha Telephone Building and Omaha Library is included in the "Thomas Rogers Kimball" Scrapbook, Nebraska State Historical Archives, Lincoln.
87. Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles* (Boston, MIT Press, 1969), 145.
88. *Ibid.*
89. Robert W. Richmond, "A Mountain Refuge for the Prosperous Man," a paper prepared for the Kansas State Archives.
90. *Ibid.*
91. James B. Haynes, *The Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition of 1898* (Omaha: Published under Direction of the Committee on History, 1910), 106.
92. *Ibid.*
93. "The Custom House Plans," *New York Times*, November 2, 1899.
94. *Ibid.*
95. C. Howard Walker, "The Louisiana Purchase Exposition," *Architectural Review*, 11 (September, 1904), 197-220.
96. *Ibid.*
97. *Ibid.*
98. Thomas Rogers Kimball, "The Management and Design of Expositions," *American Architects and Architecture* (October, 1901), 29-36.
99. "Sub Rosa," *Omaha Excelsior*, December 27, 1902.
100. *Ibid.*
101. *Ibid.*
102. *Ibid.*
103. "Nebraska State Capitol Competition," *American Architect*, CVXIII (July, 1920), 79-80.
104. "A House That's One of a Kind," *South Omaha Sun*, December 3, 1975.
105. Walter H. Kilham, "1889."
106. *Ibid.*
107. Thomas Rogers Kimball, "Address of President Thomas Rogers Kimball," *ATA Journal*, 8 (June, 1920), 220-222.
108. Steele, "Thomas Rogers Kimball."
109. Examples of Kimball's watercolor presentation drawings can be seen at the Nebraska State Historical Society and in the Library of the College of Architecture, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.
110. Steele, "Thomas Rogers Kimball."