

**City of Madison Landmarks Commission
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (1)**

Name of Building or Site

Common Name: Woman's Building

Historic Name: Woman's Building

Location

Street Address: 240 West Gilman St.

Aldermanic District: 8th District

Classification

Type of Property: Building

Zoning District: C2

Present Use: Vacant

Current Owner of Property (available at City Assessor's Office)

Name(s): 200 Block Associates (JSM Properties)

Street Address: 53 North Mills St., Madison WI 53715

Telephone Number:

Legal Description (available at City Assessor's Office)

Parcel Number: 0709-144-2026-4

Legal Description: Original Plat, Block 59, SW 4 ft. of lot 20 all of lot 21

Condition of Property

Physical Condition: Excellent

Altered or Unaltered: Altered (see description for details)

Moved or Original Site: Original site

Wall Construction: Brick

City of Madison

LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (2)

Historical Data

Original Owner: Woman's Building Association (Woman's Club of Madison)

Original Use: Clubhouse of the Woman's Club of Madison

Architect: Jeremiah Kiersted Cady – Chicago

Builder: A.D. and J. V. Frederickson Madison

Architectural Style: Amalgamation of Spanish Colonial Revival and Mission Revival with Arts and Crafts details and fenestration and Beaux Arts plan.

Date of Construction: 1906

Indigenous Materials Used: None

List of Bibliographical References Used

Archives:

Wisconsin State Historical Society Archives. This is the most comprehensive collection of archived documents and records from the Woman's Club of Madison. They constitute a full record of the activities of the Woman's Club for 90 years, from the year of its organization in 1893 through its 90th anniversary celebration in 1983. The collection includes (but is not limited to) the constitution and by-laws of the Club, committee record books, board meeting minutes, treasurer's reports, membership information, 11 scrap books with hundreds of local newspaper articles on the activities of the Club from 1920 through 1968, and a full collection of yearbooks containing membership lists, program listings, meeting briefs, and committee boards members.

Periodicals:

Pabian, Dorothy. "Woman's Club of Madison." Historic Madison 13 (1996): 37-41.

Secord, Jane Kresge. "The Women's Club Movement in Madison and Public Health Concerns." Journal of Historic Madison 7 (1990): 28-47.

"Woman's Club Opens New Home." Madison Democrat, 1 January 1907: 2.

Phillips, Louise. "The Woman's Club of Madison." The American Club Woman 2.1 (1899): 1-2.

Books:

Boutelle, Sarah Holmes. *Julia Morgan Architect*. New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1988.

Croly, Jane Cunningham. *The History of the Woman's Club Movement in America*. New York: Henry G. Allen and Co. 1898.

Withey, Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn. *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects*. Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Company, 1956.

State of Wisconsin. State Historical Society of Wisconsin. *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin: Volume 3 A Manual for Historic Properties*. Madison, 1986.

Mollenhoff, David V. *Madison: A History of the Formative Year*. 2nd ed. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003.

Form Prepared By:

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Organization Represented: "Save The Woman's Building"

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Telephone Number: 608-843-6060

Date Form Was Prepared: 17 May 2004

Landmarks Commission

LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (3)

Describe Present and Original Physical Construction and Appearance.

Exterior

The Woman's Building features elements of several formal design styles. The arched pediment and curved gable of the façade and the arcaded window treatment above and behind it connote the Spanish Colonial and Mission Revival styles. Its piano nobile, or main level on the second story instead of the first, is a typical Beaux Arts feature, as is the bowl motif decorating the facade. Decorative motifs on the façade include triangular pendants, an element of the Greek Revival style and a square button-like motif reminiscent of Arts and Crafts decoration. The influence of the Arts and Crafts style (popular at the time of design) is also clearly demonstrated in the three art glass windows on each of the side elevations.

The building is constructed of brick but is faced with an EIFS (Exterior Insulation and Finish System) that was applied in 1986. The EIFS consists of 1/8-inch thick synthetic stucco over a "brown coat" of a base material applied to a 3/4-inch thick rigid insulation board, that was attached to the brick wall on much of the façade, all of the northwest elevation, and the bottom 1/3 of the southwest elevation of the building. Over the carved stone details on the façade a 1/8-inch thick stucco layer was applied directly without the insulation layer.

The exterior now presents a white and off-white stucco surface where the EIFS was applied, and a white painted-brick surface on the balance of the exterior (the rear elevation and the top half of the southwest elevation).

The façade features two centrally-located pedestrian entryways. One is on ground level and leads to the informal assembly hall on the first floor, and the other is accessed on either side by two flanking stairways that lead up to the main entry on the piano nobile. The third story is pierced by six arched window openings with fixed windows. The arched surrounds and the pilasters between them create an aesthetic of a mission style arcade.

The northeast elevation is divided into two sections, the front section and the rear section, that reflect the interior plan. The two sections are divided by a pilaster that was originally a chimney but now serves the building's HVAC system.

The front section makes up approximately one quarter of the depth of the building and reflects the three-story interior plan of that section. The lower level of the front section is pierced by three slightly arched window openings with double-hung windows and masonry sills. One of these openings has been permanently in-filled. The windows on this level are smaller than those on the upper two stories of this section reflecting the informal nature of the lower level. The second level of the front section features two slightly arched window openings with fixed windows and masonry sills. They are larger than the windows on the lower level. The upper level has two window openings with fixed windows, masonry sills, and arched surrounds. The front section also features a stringcourse on the upper story and square motif just under the roofline continued from the façade.

The rear section comprises three-fourths of the side elevation and is comprised of two levels -- the lower level and a piano nobile level that consists of the formal auditorium that is the main assembly space in the building. The lower level is pierced by eight slightly arched window openings in four pairs. The windows in these openings are double-hung and have masonry sills. The upper level features three large arched window openings with segmented art-glass windows in the Arts and Crafts style. These windows have lead muntins and are colored with rose, green and colorless glass. The central and largest segment is a double-hung window with undecorated clear glass and a wood sash. There is also a small, slightly arched window opening with a double-hung window and masonry sill in the upper rear corner of both side elevations. These windows provide natural light to the interior backstage area of the formal auditorium.

The southwest elevation is nearly identical to the northeast elevation, except that the window openings in the front section of the southwest elevation have been permanently filled, and the rear section features a pedestrian entry near the rear of the building which exits from a small utility room behind the former kitchen area on the first floor.

The rear elevation is undecorated but features three window openings and a pedestrian entrance, all evenly spaced in quadrants. The window openings are slightly arched with masonry sills. The pedestrian entrance appears to be an altered window opening, likely constructed to comply with later fire exit codes.

The roof on the front section of the building is flat while the roof on the rear section is gabled with a very low pitch.

Floor Plan

The interior of the building is divided into two sections reflected in the division of the exterior. The front section, just behind the façade, makes up approximately one quarter of the depth of the floor plan and consists of three stories. The rear section makes up the remaining three quarters of the depth and consists of two stories. The front section is three standard stories in height. Each level of the front section is divided into various combinations of meeting rooms, dressing rooms, and storage rooms. The entries on the lower and second levels have open hallways that lead straight into the main assembly halls on each of those two levels.

The auditorium on the second level (the piano nobile) was the formal gathering space of the Woman's Building during its period of significance. It is where most of the public events were hosted. The Woman's Club used the auditorium and its stage for public lectures, presentations, performances, exhibits, and talks by experts in a wide variety of professions, crafts and fields of academia.

As a result of renovations in 1986 the entry into the formal auditorium on the piano nobile level is flanked by two curved walls of block glass that define modern office spaces within the auditorium. The rear portion of the auditorium is further divided horizontally into modern office spaces. The front portion of the auditorium retains its uninterrupted floor to ceiling height as well as the proscenium arch that surrounds the stage. The original stage

was cut back during the 1986 renovations and is now nearly flush with the rear wall of the auditorium. The backstage area was also divided into a modern meeting room and break room spaces. All of these modern office spaces are in place today.

The plan of the lower level is similar to that of the piano nobile. The entry leads straight into the building past a series of dressing and meeting rooms and into an assembly hall. The assembly hall comprises the same floor area as the auditorium above it. Behind the assembly hall, beneath what is the backstage area above, is a kitchen area. Though no longer used for food preparation the kitchen area was outfitted with what was called in 1907 "dainty and complete kitchen and pantry equipment". The assembly hall has not been as extensively altered as the rest of the interior. It was rather plain in its original design (no formal spaces, no decorative window treatments etc.) and remains so today. The kitchen area now serves as storage space and houses the building utility equipment.

During its period of significance the assembly hall provided space for the Woman's Club's informal events: card parties, business meetings, luncheons and committee meetings. Its function is reflected in its plain decoration. A 1907 Madison Democrat article introducing the new building described the hall as a "large cheerful banqueting room with yellow walls and draperies" with a seating capacity of 300.

Context

The Woman's Building was subjected to some amateur criticism when it was completed: "What use are you to make of the chopping bowls outside?" "Why did you put the building so low?" "The entrance would look quite well for a barn." One gets the impression that Cady's design was perceived locally as something unique and exceptional. In fact the design was well within the trends of designing women's clubhouses in revival styles set by the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, and by prolific designers of facilities for women's organizations.

Boston architect Sophia Hayden's Italian Renaissance design won the competition for the Woman's Building at the Columbian Exposition. The Exposition's pervasive Beaux Arts style and City Beautiful plan renewed public confidence in city planning and spurred a trend among recreational, fraternal, civic, and women's clubs of building their own architect-designed clubhouses.

One prolific designer of clubhouses for women's organizations, Julia Morgan, designed an extraordinary number of such buildings in California and Hawaii. She tended to favor Arts and Crafts and Beaux Arts styles in her organization buildings, although some of her designs exhibited features of Urban Mediterranean or Mission Revival styles. For Woman's Clubs affiliated with the General Federation of Woman's Clubs she designed several clubhouses wholly in the Arts and Crafts style.

When the Woman's Club of Madison needed a clubhouse in 1905 they formed an association to sell shares of stock for and manage the legal affairs of the clubhouse that they envisioned. The records of the Woman's Building Association are unclear about the process that led to the decision to hire Jeremiah Kiersted Cady of the Handy and Cady architectural firm in Chicago to design the Woman's Building in Madison. The Building

Committee kept minutes of their discussions but the records are limited to resulting decisions and do not include discussion topics. According to the Building Committee's meeting minutes "The members [of the Building Committee] were united in favor of a building in the Colonial style, and after discussing the subject of an architect they had decided to ask Mr. Cady of Chicago to submit sketches." A month later the chairman of the Building Committee reported that "no other plans for the building had been received." The Committee voted to accept Cady's plans with some specified modifications: exclude the bowling alley from the plans and eliminate the porch by substituting a handsome entrance on the sidewalk. Somewhere in the process the desire for a building in the "Colonial style" morphed into acceptance of Cady's Spanish Colonial/Mission Revival/Arts and Crafts presentation.

City of Madison Landmarks Commission

LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (4)

Significance of Nominated Property and Conformance to Designation Criteria.

The clubhouse of the Woman's Club of Madison is being nominated as a City of Madison Landmark for its significance to Madison's social history. The Woman's Building derives its significance from its close association with the accomplishments of the Club's civic agenda and the Club's influence on Madison's development in the early 20th century. Women's organizations are treated as a significant social/political theme in the State of Wisconsin's Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP).

Research to assess the significance of the Woman's Building to Madison's history was initiated using the *Women's Organizations* subsection of the *Social and Political* theme section of the CRMP as a baseline. The results of this research are presented below and appear to support the listing of the building as a City of Madison Landmark.

Historical Context, National

The earliest clubs and societies for women in the U.S. were organized around the turn of the nineteenth century. Many of these pioneering clubs were affiliated with religious groups and were organized to support and raise funds for church mission work. Between 1800 and 1810 many such religious societies for women were organized in cities throughout the country. These early organizations grew steadily in size and influence until, in 1839, there were more than 650 religiously affiliated societies exclusively for women.

The "Female Charitable Society" of Baldwinsville, New York was a typical and long-standing women's group with a religious temperament. The object of the Baldwinsville society was, as stated in their constitution, "to obtain a more perfect view of the infinite excellence of the Christian religion in its own nature, the importance of making this religion the chief concern of our own hearts, the necessity of promoting it in our own families, and of diffusing it to our fellow sinners."

The limited scope of these pious societies, however, did not provide the range of intellectual and social opportunities needed to attract a growing membership base. Their inability to attract successive generations of women led to their gradual decline coincident with the decline of their charter members. By 1860 they had become nearly extinct.

The broadening of ideas about religion and about morality and social individualism advanced in the writings of philosophers like Goethe and Rousseau began to find purchase in a broader section of the American public in the middle of the nineteenth century. Goethe's advocacy for the rights of the individual and, by extension, of every created being was particularly resonant with women. "This new view," according to early Woman's Club movement historian Jane Cunningham Croly in 1898 "addressed itself with signal significance to women. The broadening of human sympathy, the freedom of will gave rise to a thousand new forms of activity; some of these an expansion of those which had previously existed; others opening new channels of communication; all looking toward

wider fields of effort, a larger unity; a more complete realization of the eternal ideal: the Fatherhood of God, the motherhood of woman, the brotherhood of man." Religious women were acquiring a consciousness of human rights and social action.

In many parts of the United States women initially became involved in social and political issues by allying themselves with the abolitionists prior to the American Civil War. Activity on behalf of enslaved blacks awakened in many women a consciousness of their own restricted freedoms in a society dominated by men. Women began to feel other issues of personal sovereignty even more personally. The women's rights, suffrage, and the temperance movements were attracting increasing numbers of women to political action. A crusade for better education opportunities for women became as significant as the struggle for emancipation.

In 1868, after the Civil War had painfully united the States against ownership and enslavement of people, female members of the New York Press Club, emboldened by the national dialog on personal liberty stirred by the War, organized the first known secular organization composed entirely of women. Sorosis (later The Woman's League) was intended as a club "hospitable to women of different minds, degrees and habits of work and thought" The idea of the club was to "rid [society] of the system of exclusion and separation." Women in Boston founded a woman's club that same year with similar aims.

The two New England clubs touched off a national trend of organizing Woman's Clubs modeled on the Sorosis idea. By 1889 around 100 such clubs had formed across the country. The following year it became a nationally organized movement with the founding of the General Federation of Woman's Clubs. Hundreds of clubs rushed to join. The typical clubwoman, according to Croly, also the founder of Sorosis, was "a wife and mother, alive to means of culture, interested in all means of progress, and eager to seize and multiply opportunities for individual and collective advancement."

Through the Progressive Era women used their organization, in the absence of the vote, to shape public policy and create a civic agenda with the good of both genders in mind. They influenced advances in labor reform, health programs, educational opportunities, and an array of social welfare measures at the local and state levels. At the federal level they even succeeded in creating the Children's Bureau and the Woman's Bureau in the Department of Labor. Overall, women's activism played a significant role in creating a more intimate relationship between citizens and their government.

Historical Context, State

The secular Woman's Club movement of the late nineteenth century extended to Wisconsin with the founding of the Clio club in Sparta in 1871, but was slow to spread. Early clubs were formed in Berlin and Milwaukee in 1873 and 1874 respectively. Wisconsin cities and towns with a stronger attraction for intellectually oriented populations tended to be the early incubators of Woman's Clubs. Women in larger cities like Green Bay, Wausau, Oshkosh and smaller towns with private colleges like Ripon formed clubs in late 1870s and early 1880s.

Membership numbers in most Wisconsin clubs were restricted by the necessity of meeting in the homes of club members. Few clubs had the resources to construct a building for their exclusive use and clubs in the smaller towns usually faced a dearth of adequate venues.

The initial trend of the club movement in Wisconsin was toward the formation of study classes as most clubs took on a distinctly literary nature. As such they became a medium of social intercourse, advocating and providing a venue for social interaction and intellectual stimulation for women who had few such opportunities amidst child and home responsibilities. Croly credits these early clubs with elevating the entire social and intellectual atmosphere of their communities. Topics of study and discussion were impressively diverse and sophisticated. Women made inquiries into all facets of multiethnic literature, history, music, art and culture, and shared their learning with their communities through programs, performances, lectures and recitals.

Despite the slow adoption of the Woman's Club concept by Wisconsin women, the idea eventually gained momentum, and by 1898 there were around one hundred and fifty Woman's Clubs in Wisconsin. The active civic and political dialog of Progressive Era Wisconsin increased awareness among these clubs of their collective power to influence the civic agendas of their cities. With increasing interest and membership these clubs were able to exploit their influence further by organizing themselves into departments and committees to examine and make recommendations on specific social and civic issues and areas of study: education, philanthropy, history, art, and literature departments were the most common.

Women were also becoming more aware of their roles in their communities beyond their own homes. There was a sense that the home included one's community by extension. Their children went to the town's schools, their families benefited from the town's hospitals and commercial districts, and their friends consisted of the town's merchants, officers and residents. Realizing that the civic health of their towns had an intimate effect on their families and homes, many sought to broaden their influence on civic affairs and recognized the organization of women's clubs as a potential catalyst. Departments were expanded from culturally oriented endeavors to civic-minded pursuits and specialized according to the specific agenda of the town.

In an attempt to further assert their power, still being unable to vote, Wisconsin women's clubs formed the Wisconsin Federation of Woman's Clubs in 1896 in the fashion of the General (national) Federation of Women's Clubs organized six years earlier. A statewide federation provided a more recognizable and broad-based authority that helped to increase, even further, the influence of these clubs on their local civic policies.

Historical Context, Local

Madison, the capitol of Wisconsin since 1836 and the site of the State University since 1851, has always had a strong attraction for the intellectual and political elite of the state and region. A diverse mix of ideas and political views gave the city an early reputation as a

salon for progressive as well as conservative ideas in politics and culture that continues today.

The Woman's Club idea was embraced by a group of Madison women in 1893. The first informal gathering of the women who would later organize the Woman's Club of Madison took place on February 22 at the Monona Avenue mansion of Mary Louisa Atwood. Atwood was the wife of David Atwood, founder and long-term publisher of the Wisconsin State Journal, today the newspaper of record in Wisconsin. Ten women were present at that first gathering. Three days later 70 women met for an organizational meeting and to draft club charter. Within a few days the charter was signed by 96 members. On April 21 the Woman's Club of Madison held its first formal meeting as a chartered club at the home of Mary Adams, wife of then University of Wisconsin president Charles Kendall Adams. Atwood was elected the Club's first president. The initial involvement of women like Adams and Atwood lent an upper class status to the Club from the start that attracted a catalog of elite Madison names throughout its history. Club members included the wives of State and U.S. legislators, governors, businessmen, university presidents and regents, foreign ambassadors, Madison's early town planners, and other wealthy and elite members of the Madison community.

The Woman's Club of Madison, however, was faced with the same paucity of adequate meeting space as those clubs in smaller towns. Not being allowed to use clubhouses intended for men's clubs and having few suitable options to hold large assemblies the Club was forced to meet at the homes of its members. This forced the Club to limit its membership despite keen interest and a rapid increase in membership.

In 1899 the Club began to discuss the feasibility of owning a building. Building a custom-designed structure eventually emerged as the best option. Edna E. Chynoweth, President of the Club from 1901 to 1903, in a subsequent address on the decision to build the Woman's Building, cited membership growth and envy of other Woman's Club buildings as the reasons behind the decision to pursue funding for land and a structure. In 1904 Phillip Loring Spooner, a local businessman and land owner, offered the Gilman Street site to the Woman's Club at no cost, provided the Club establish an association and sell 600 shares of stock at \$25.00 a share. The Gilman Street location would eventually become significant because of its proximity to both the University of Wisconsin campus and the downtown/capitol area. This facilitated its focus on reinforcing "town/gown" connections.

The Woman's Building Association was incorporated on September 29, 1905. It was modeled on the association used by the Woman's Club of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. The Milwaukee club founded the nation's first known women-owned stock company in order to raise money to build their clubhouse, the Athenaeum, on East Kilbourn Avenue in 1887. The fund-raising of the Madison club was successful, the land was made available, and more shares of stock were sold to raise enough money to secure construction contracts. The entire process was undertaken and accomplished by the women of the Club, from the formation of the building committee, to the establishment of the Building Association, and selection and oversight of the architect and the building contractor.

It became the policy of the Club that the building would be more than just a home for the Woman's Club of Madison, but rather "a meeting place to be owned by the women of Madison." In fact the building was used regularly by several other women's organizations while it was owned by the Woman's Club: the Catholic Woman's Club, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the League of Women Voters, the Business and Professional Women's Club of Madison as well as mixed gender clubs.

The Club's purpose, as stated in the first article of its constitution, was "to promote useful and agreeable relations among women and to afford an organized social center for united thought and action." This two-pronged aim was achieved unreservedly year after year throughout the period of the Woman's Building's significance.

The Woman's Club established committees to discuss and make recommendations for a wide variety of social issues. These committees were often successful in influencing municipal policies, and the philanthropy department added to the effectiveness of the committees' work with real capital investments in the projects they undertook. The Club was most successful in educational issues. They funded the first children's library in Madison in 1901, campaigned with other organizations for the first branch location of the Madison Public Library on Williamson Street in 1909, started annual physical examinations in public schools in 1902, and started manual and domestic arts programs in schools in 1905. They started and supported the Parent Teacher Association movement in 1905, and the in-school hot lunch program in 1917. They also encouraged multi-cultural programs in public schools to augment the standard academic curriculum.

The Club was active in promoting health and public safety issues. In 1900 they promoted city garbage pickup. They started clinics and programs in Madison to provide health exams for infants, calling on the mayor to declare an annual "baby day" and sponsoring programs on the importance of prenatal care for mothers. The Club encouraged a "Community Union" in the 1920s - raising money for non-profit social welfare organizations. The Community Union was the forerunner of the United Way. They established a revolving loan fund which enabled parents to buy braces and other appliances for disabled children. In 1905 the Club established a "Milk Committee" to study ways to improve the efficiency of milk distribution in Madison and to establish mandatory testing of milk for harmful bacteria. The Club successfully urged the city to adopt stricter and more comprehensive fire safety ordinances in theaters and night clubs.

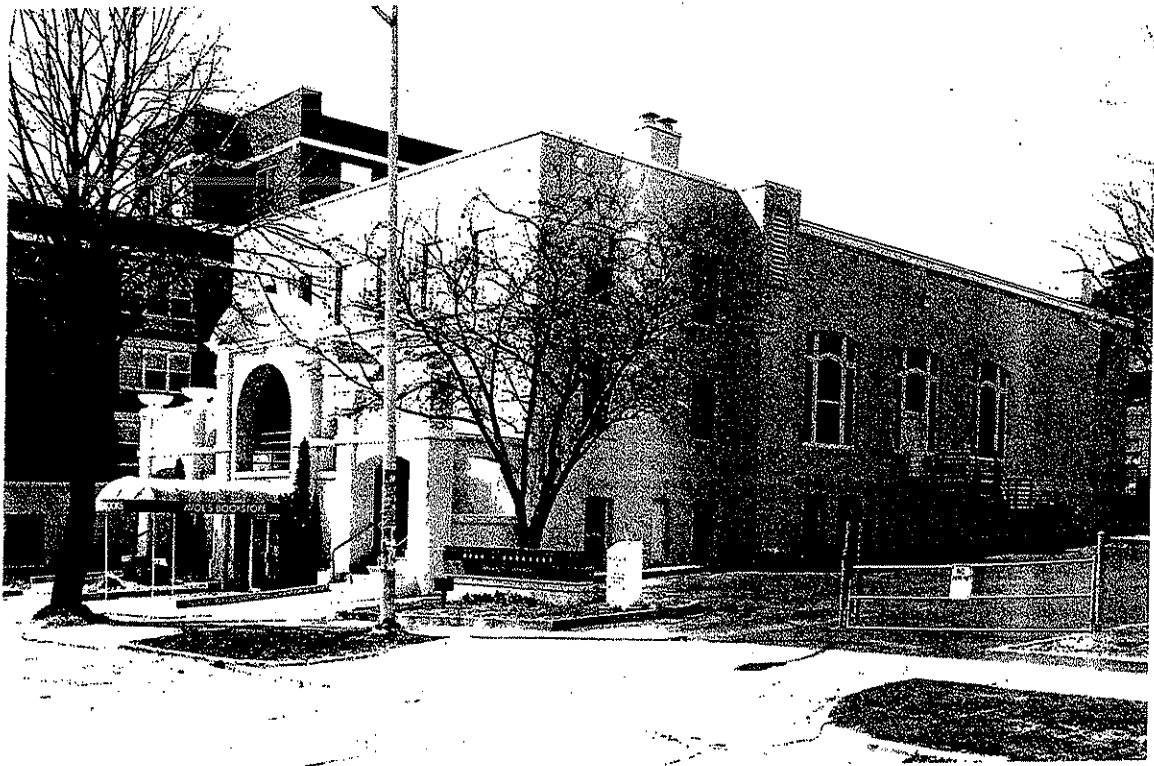
Many members had been active in the effort to establish a city hospital in Madison prior to joining the Woman's Club. The effort had been ongoing in since the 1880. The Club's philanthropy department provided encouragement, planning, funding, supplies, and staff for the Madison General Hospital which finally opened in 1903.

In addition to their effective civic agenda the Woman's Club of Madison provided active and diverse cultural programs that not only benefited their philanthropic endeavors but also exposed the Madison public to multicultural art, history, literature and culture. Such programs included the study of "negro music" in 1922, traditional stage performances by Asian immigrants, fashion shows of clothing styles from "every country since medieval times," instruction in world history, exhibitions of cultural art, dance instruction,

performances of plays, music and literature with origins in foreign cultures, travelogues, and countless talks on every contemporary topic in politics, education, home management, child care, architecture, civilian defense, social action and more.

The Club was willing to present speakers with unpopular viewpoints. Despite Madison's generally Progressive sentiments the Woman's Club occasionally invited conservative speakers whose views were at odds with the community's prevailing political attitudes.

The Woman's Club of Madison was a powerful force for change and progress in Madison in the first three decades of the twentieth century, and the Woman's Building was the physical presence of the Club in the city. It provided space for the meetings at which resolutions and decisions were made that affected the social and political development of Madison. It hosted innumerable cultural performances and presentations that undoubtedly stimulated the tolerance and a cultural awareness in the Madison citizenry that is evident today. It functioned as a community meeting space, a theater, an exhibition hall, a dining room, a meeting hall, a classroom, and a lecture hall. Today it represents the significant role of the Woman's Club in the social history of Madison.



240 WEST GILMAN STREET

