

Floyd R. Mansberger

May 2, 2019

Jeremy Buening
Senior Associate
Chastain & Associates
5 North Country Club Road
Decatur, Illinois 62521

re: National Register Assessment
Staley Pump House and Club House
Lake Decatur
Decatur, Illinois

Dear Mr. Buening:

As per your request dated 19 March 2019, in an effort to assess its potential eligibility of the Staley Pump House and Club House for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, we have prepared this historical and architectural evaluation of the building. Constructed in 1919-1920 by the A. E. Staley Manufacturing Company, the building originally functioned in the dual role of pumping station (supplying the Staley Manufacturing Company's physical plant, and the residents of Decatur with an almost inexhaustible supply of water) and club house (a social center for members of the Staley Fellowship Club). Currently, the building is abandoned and in a deteriorated condition with the current owner formulating plans for the demolition of the building. As the building is located within Lake Decatur, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) requires a permit for the demolition of the building (as per Section 404 of the Clean Water Act), which in turn requires an assessment of the potential historical and architectural significance of the building (as per Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966).

Location

The Staley Pump House and Club House (hereafter referred to simply as the Staley Pump House) is located on Lake Decatur in the City of Decatur, Macon County, Illinois. The building is situated immediately northeast of the causeway by which the CSX Railroad crosses the lake. A second causeway, which accommodates U.S. Route 36/Illinois Route 121, lies adjacent to (and south) of the railroad causeway. The nearest cross street is South Lake Shore Drive (see Figures 1 and 2). What was once the A. E. Staley Manufacturing Company's (currently Tate & Lyle Ingredients America LLC) physical plant is located slightly over a mile to the north/northwest.¹

¹ In 1985, in an effort to diversify, A. E. Staley purchased CFS Continental (a wholesale grocery firm) and changed its name to Staley Continental, Inc. In 1988, controlling shares of Staley Continental, Inc. were purchased by Tate & Lyle PLC, a British sugar refiner, and soon thereafter CFS Continental was sold off. In 2000, Tate & Lyle acquired the remaining shares of the company, which was renamed Tate & Lyle Ingredients American LLC—the American subsidiary of Tate and Lyle PLC (<https://www.nytimes.com/1988/05/14/business/staley-accepts-offer-by-tate-lyle.html>)

Description

The Staley Pump House and Club House is a moderately-sized, rectangular building that measures approximately 28'x95' in size. Constructed in the Italian-Renaissance style, the building rises a full two stories above the waters of Lake Decatur, and is situated approximately 60' from the adjacent shoreline. The building is constructed of poured (presumably reinforced) concrete, whose outer face was cast to resemble ashlar masonry. Internally, the building is divided into two distinct sections. The upper floor (referred to historically as the "Balcony Level") was specifically designed for, and used historically as, the Staley Fellowship Club's club house, and is circuted by a wide cantilevered balcony. An arched concrete bridge extends from this level to the adjoining railroad causeway to the south. The flat roof of the building, which originally was circuted by a balustrade, was used as an observation deck and for outdoor social gatherings (including dances and movies). The lower floor of the building (referred to as the "Landing Level" on construction drawings) functioned as a pump room and houses mechanical equipment and piping necessary for removing water from the adjacent Lake Decatur and transporting it by way of a conduit following the railroad right-of-way, to the Staley physical plant. Two pump pits—an upper and a lower—are located below the Landing Level and/or pump room (beneath the water level of the lake).

Typical of Italian-Renaissance architecture, the upper two levels of the building have different treatments. The pump room level is taller in height and illuminated by full-arched windows. The club room level, by contrast, has shorter openings with flat lintels. The cantilevered balcony previously mentioned has a concrete balustrade with shaped spindles interspersed by square piers. The balcony is supported from below by brackets. Matching balustrades extend around the sides of the bridge, and also formerly circuted the flat roof of the building. Light fixtures, powered by electricity generated by the Staley Manufacturing Company's power plant, were integrated into the building's exterior design at multiple points (including the balcony balustrade, cornice, and archway of the bridge). Torch lights were installed in the piers of the balustrade running along the roof level (see Figures 3 through 16).

The building was designed by the engineering staff of the Staley Manufacturing Company as part of a large modernization and expansion program undertaken by the Staley Manufacturing Company that began in 1919. O'Brien (1919:6), in discussing the large building program then underway, noted that "an article of this kind cannot be finished without mention of the very efficient work of the drafting room,—the origin of all new work. This department, headed by E. C. Larsen, has had charge of the design of all new buildings and many of the new machines, and since early last winter has worked early and late trying to keep ahead of the constant demand for plans of new work and succeeded very well." A select number of construction drawings are extant, and these have been attached to the present report.

The Staley Pump House and Club House is a well-documented building. Minimally, at least four original construction drawings have survived (see Figures 17 through 20), and more may exist in either the company archives, or the Staley Museum holdings. Searchable copies of the *Staley*

Floyd R. Mansberger

Fellowship Journal are online and offer a wide range of materials relating to the company, as well as this specific building. A great number of historic photographs are extant (published in the *Journal*, as well as within the Museum holdings, and no doubt private ownership). As the building functioned as a social center for Decatur society, numerous historic photographs of weddings and other events are available. Additional archival source material not yet investigated includes the company archives, as well as the local historical society and Staley Museum (see Figures 17 through 38).²

History

Augustus Eugene “Gene” Staley was born into a North Carolina farm family in early 1867. As a young man, Staley worked as a traveling salesman for baking powder and flavor extracts. In 1897-98, working from Baltimore, Maryland, Staley established a business devoted to repacking and selling cornstarch under his Cream Brand name. Although successful, his success with repackaging and selling other manufacturers products was dependent on others for product supply, and he soon turned his attention to the manufacture of starch. In late 1906, Staley established the A. E. Staley Manufacturing Company with the intention of producing his own corn starch. In 1909, Staley purchased the pre-existing and inoperative starch plant of the Wellington Starch Company in Decatur, Illinois and relocated his business to that city. Over the next three years (1909 to early 1912), Staley rebuilt and greatly upgraded the older plant, and began production of corn starch from his Decatur plant in March 1912.

The initial years were tough going for Staley, and in 1914 the firm experience financial problems resulting in a temporary shutdown of his Decatur manufacturing plant. But after reorganization, Staley reopened in 1915 with a renewed vigor and success. With his reorganization, Staley diversified with the introduction of new products; of particular significance was his interest in the production of corn sweeteners and/or syrups (glucose). Unfortunately, Staley’s physical plant was inadequate to meet the company’s new demands. New wet-milling techniques for corn also required greatly increased water requirements for the plant. Beginning in 1919, and continuing through the early 1920s, the Staley Manufacturing Company began a great expansion program that included the construction of multiple new buildings, power plants, and infrastructure. It was during that 1919-1920 expansion that the Staley Pump House was constructed. Shortly thereafter, in 1922, Staley began processing soybeans. This was one of the major forces that resulted in the transformation of the Midwestern agricultural landscape, altering it to one no longer dominated by corn, and putting soybean production on an equal footing with corn production. The Staley Manufacturing Company began producing soy flour by 1927, soy oil by 1930, and soy meal animal feed in the early 1930s.³ In 1930, the Staley

² The current letter report is not meant to be an all-inclusive report detailing the history or archival sources related to this building. Clearly, the limited archival research conducted to date by the authors indicates that a wealth of material is present relating to this building. Further research at the Staley Museum, researching their collections, as well as interviews with the Museum’s staff historians and/or archivists is recommended (<https://staleymuseum.com>).

³ Staley had been introduced to soybeans, by missionaries, as a young child in North Carolina. By the 1920s, Staley had begun to be concerned by deteriorating productivity of Illinois’ corn crop, and began promoting soybean production to ensure him a supply of product to process.

Floyd R. Mansberger

Manufacturing Company constructed a new administration building—a distinctive Art Deco building that was one of the finer commercial buildings in Illinois outside the city of Chicago. Even with the onslaught of the Great Depression, the A.E. Staley Manufacturing Company continued to expand during the 1930s and 1940s. A. E. Staley died in late December 1940, with his son and namesake carrying on as company president thereafter (http://www.agrinenews-pubs.com/news/staley-helped-illinois-become-soybean-capital-of-the-world/article_78bd225a-ea40-56df-ac85-bda1c6de73ec.html).

Water Supply

In October 1919, the *Staley Fellowship Journal* carried a lead article entitled “A Greater Staley’s.” This article outlined the great expansion undertaken by Staley shortly after the end of World War I. The article began by stating that “the largest building program ever entered into by a manufacturing concern in Central Illinois may be considered fully under way in this plant now. Work was started the early part of the summer and forces were increased as they were needed and now the Construction Department has about 900 men in all branches of work busily engaged.” The vast majority of the construction work, as well as all of the design work, was undertaken by the Staley Company’s “own forces” (O’Brien 1919:1).

An important part of this greatly expanded industrial complex was the water supply system. “A large piece of construction and one of the most important ones is being built outside the plant proper. In the process of glucose manufacture, a large amount of water is required for cooling purposes and as the city of Decatur is unable to furnish the required amount without going to great expense, it devolved upon the Staley Company to obtain a supply in a different way. Therefore a pumping plant with a capacity of 12 million gallons each 24 hours is being built on the Sangamon river about a mile and a half from the plant, and water will be pumped from there through a 24-inch cast iron main laid in the right-of-way of the C. I. & W. railroad” (O’Brien 1919:5).⁴

The Staley Pumping House was located on the nearby floodplain of the Sangamon River. O’Brien (1919:6) noted that “The pumping station will be equipped with electrically driven centrifugal pumps supplied by a power line from the plant engine room. The pump building will be of reinforced concrete 30x84 feet and three stories in height.⁵ The building is designed as a model of architectural beauty and, situated as it is on the new Sangamon Lake, the Staley Fellowship Club will occupy the third story as a Club House. The building will have a large overhanging balcony which will be screened in the summer and enclosed in glass in winter. The

⁴ Prior to his commitment to expand his Decatur plant, Staley had discussions with the City of Decatur regarding their water supply system. If the City of Decatur had not been willing to expand their water supply system, then Staley had threatened to relocate his manufacturing plant to Peoria. Shurtleff and Aoyagi (2018:40-41) wrote that “Soybean processor and corn refiner A. E. Staley led the campaign to persuade Decatur to borrow the \$2.0 million necessary for the project. Staley was not being altruistic; corn wet-milling is a water-intensive industrial process.”

⁵ The construction plans indicate that the building measures 28’x95’ in size. Reid (2014) incorrectly notes that the Staley Pumping House was constructed of stone.

Floyd R. Mansberger

roof of red tile surmounted by parapet and towers is expected to become a famous landmark on this new lake. Steel sheeting for the intake coffer-dam is on the ground and the job is expected to be finished in about three months.” The construction of the pumping station was under the direction of Frank Higgins. Although this article suggests that the building was to be completed by the spring of 1920, it appears to have taken slightly longer to complete.

Work on the Lake Decatur impounding dam was begun in July 1920 (Holmes 1921:1; see also Watson 1923). The dam was an earthen embankment with concrete spillway. Lands were cleared during the winter of 1920-21, and the lake was not filled until the Spring 1922 (approximately a year after the completion of the Staley Pumping House). As such, the initial work by the A. E. Staley Manufacturing Company consisted of the clearing of 700 acres of land, and constructing a temporary dam near the Nelson Park bridge for supplying water for the Staley Manufacturing Company’s pumping station, in anticipation of the subsequent completion of the City of Decatur’s dam [see pictures in Holmes (1921)]. Work was pushed through to take advantage of the Spring rains in filling the temporary impoundment in early 1921.⁶

When completed, Lake Decatur was the largest artificial body of water in Illinois, consisting of approximately 2,800 acres with 30-mile shoreline. It pre-dates the Capital City’s Lake Springfield by over a decade, and the establishment of this artificial lake drew a large interest from a variety of local, as well as regional groups for outdoor recreational activity. The lake had its formal dedication ceremonies in early July 1923. Subsequent recreational activities associated with the new Lake Decatur developed hand in hand with the Decatur Park District, and the nearly Nelson Park (established in 1924).⁷ The earliest reference to Lake Decatur in the local newspapers appears to be circa July 1921. On 21 July 1921, the *Decatur Herald* ran a story entitled “What’s Your Choice as a Name for the Lake Decatur Created?” This article noted that Lake Decatur’s “basic use will be to provide water for the Staley corn and soybean processing plants. It will also serve as a local source of water for the growing city of Decatur, Illinois. The 2,800 acre reservoir has a watershed of 925 square miles.”

Shortly after its construction, Harry Watson detailed the works of the Staley Pump House in an article entitled “Our System of Water Supply” (Watson 1923:5-11).

⁶ There is some confusion as to the original function of the Staley Pumping House, with some thought that it may have initially been constructed to pump water directly from the Sangamon River. In this vein, Reid (2014) notes that “The pump house... pumped water first from the Sangamon River and then from Lake Decatur (the lake was built between 1920 and 1922) to help in processing the corn and soybeans at the Staley plant.” Clearly, the raised design of the Pumping House (with its pumping levels located below the current lake level) indicates that it was designed to function as part of the newly envisioned Lake Decatur. The new dam for Lake Decatur was being constructed by the City of Decatur, and was not on the same schedule as the Staley Manufacturing Company’s aggressive 1919-20 building campaign. As the Lake Decatur dam (and associated impoundment) would not be completed soon enough to meet the Staley Manufacturing Company’s schedule, the firm constructed a temporary dam at the Nelson Park bridge, to supply water to the Pumping House until the Lake Decatur dam was completed (in early 1922).

⁷ https://web.archive.org/web/20131022133147/http://www.decaturmagazine.com/business-lake_decatur.htm

Floyd R. Mansberger

The water for all plant operations is drawn from the lake by a 36-inch main which discharges into the intake pit located below the water level of the lake. The water is drawn through three large strainer gates, made of heavy copper wire. Inasmuch as the intake pit and the lower pump are below the water level in the lake an ingenious regulating valve is placed on the intake main to control the flow and maintain the water in the pits at the proper level.

The pumps, eight in all, are motor-driven centrifugal, and operate in tandem; that is, each pump in the pit has a pump of equal capacity and speed directly above it on the first floor of the pumping plant. About 500 H.P. is used for the normal gallonage. The current for the operation of the motors is supplied by a transmission line from the company's power plant.

Each pumping unit or pair of pumps are connected in series. The lower pump lifts the water from the clean water reservoir by suction against a 15 ft. head and delivers it to the suction of the second in series on the main floor of the pumping house at 60 lbs. pressure at its suction and delivers it to the 24 inch discharge main at 120 lbs. pressure.

The total pumpage for 24 hours is 7,000,000 to 8,000,000 gallons. This is equal to about 50% of water pumped by the city of Decatur in the same time (Watson 1923:5)

Staley Fellowship Club

The Staley Fellowship Club was organized in early April 1917, with membership open to all management and employees of the Staley Manufacturing Company. In 1922, in his "History of the Staley Fellowship Club," Chamberlain (1922) noted that the club was organized in an effort "for opening and maintaining closer personal and social relations between the members of the organization [Staley Manufacturing Company]." The following year, in an effort to further detail the benefits of the Club, Coyle (1923) noted that the Staley Fellowship Club was "organized... to promote the social welfare and entertainment of the employes [sic] of the A. E. Staley Mfg. Company..."

Chamberlain (1922) noted that "our percentage of native born American is very high. Every employee speaks English. It was recognized that the great majority of the personnel of the factory was made up of a class of people socially much superior to that ordinarily found in similar industries. The percentage of high school students is astonishing. As a natural consequence nearly every individual in the organization can truthfully be said to be thoroughly imbued with that natural spirit of personal dignity and self-respect which we love to call the American spirit.... Having this sort of material to work upon, it was felt that a fairly close social organization that would be harmonious and helpful, could be constructed." From the start, the Club organized a variety of social venues—including the annual picnic. Sports activities were a large part of the Club's activities, and one of the things undertaken at that first meeting was the

Floyd R. Mansberger

establishment of a company baseball team.⁸ In addition, beginning in 1917 the Club published a monthly company journal entitled *the Staley Fellowship Journal* (later renamed simply the *Staley Journal* in May 1921).

From its beginning, the Club functioned not only as a venue for social activities (dances, concerts, sporting activities, holiday celebrations, self-improvement and/or educational opportunities), but also for the relief of economic hardships. As Chamberlain (1922) noted, “In order to give the new organization a stable skeleton it was decided to embody in it the principle of monetary relief during sickness and death.” At the first meeting held on 2 April 1913, initiation fees were set at fifty cents, with monthly dues similarly priced.⁹ A. E. Staley agreed to contribute dollar for dollar to the monies contributed by the company employees. From the beginning, both paid sick and death benefits were included with the Club membership.

Annual picnics and field days were held at various local parks and company facilities during the first few years of the Club’s existence. With the planning for the plant expansion in 1919 (O’Brien 1919), and in anticipation of the construction of a grand new lake for supplying a greatly expanded water supply to the manufacturing facility, A. E. Staley designed an unusual building that combined the necessary pumping infrastructure, and an upscale social center or club house for the Fellowship Club’s use, into a single building. As Chamberlain (1922:13) commented, “When the pumping station was designed, accommodations were provided for a commodious assembly hall, a dining hall, kitchen, etc.”

Construction of the combination pumping house and club house was initiated sometime during the 1919 construction season, with the October 1919 issue of the *Staley Fellowship Journal* carrying a story highlighting the career and personal life of one Frank Higgins “who is at present superintending the construction of the pumping station for the A. E. Staley Mfg. Co.” (*Staley Fellowship Journal* 1919:8). By March 1921, the pumping station and club house had been completed and spring rains were filling a temporary impoundment awaiting the completion of the larger, and permanent dam located further downstream.¹⁰ It was not until the following spring of 1922 that the permanent dam was completed, and the larger, deeper Lake Decatur was inundated.

⁸ The A. E. Staley Manufacturing Company had a strong athletic department from its earliest days. Besides baseball, the company was well committed to its football team, the Decatur Staley’s which was organized in 1919. In March 1920, George Halas was brought as a player and coach for the football team. In 1921, Halas moved the team to Chicago, where they initially were known as the Chicago Staleys, which soon thereafter (after completing the 1921-22 season) was renamed the Chicago Bears. Halas remained owner/coach of the Chicago Bears through the 1967 season, remaining as the principal owner through his death in 1983 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A._E._Staley; <https://staleymuseum.com/history-of-the-staley-bearschicago-bears/>).

⁹ By 1923, dues had been raised to one dollar per month for men, and remained at fifty cents per month for women employees, with sick benefits costing an additional fee of \$15.00 per week for men, and \$7.50 per week for women (Coyle 1923).

¹⁰ The temporary dam was constructed by A. E. Staley Manufacturing Company to supply water to the pumping station while the new City-constructed dam farther downstream was being constructed. Staley’s temporary dam was located near the Nelson Park bridge, immediately adjacent to the pumping station.

Furnishing and decorating the Fellowship Club House was undertaken by the Fellowship Club. Chamberlain (1922:13) notes that “In 1921 the club took upon itself the financial burden of completing and furnishing these club rooms.” The Mission-style furniture was designed and constructed by Staley staff, using discarded oak whiskey casks no longer utilized by distilleries due to the passage of the Volstead Act. An accompanying article in the *Staley Fellowship Journal* for 1922 details the Club House “Furnishings” (*Staley Journal* 1922:10-11). The Club House was decorated using “Jacobean-style” oak trim, marble flooring, and ornate stone fireplaces. The Club Room had a mahogany electric player piano. Apparently the Club House had opened sometime during the summer or fall of 1921, with its formal dedication being held on New Year’s Eve (1921), with a dinner and celebration. This gala event was attended by nearly three-hundred individuals, with guests arriving by way of a special train furnished by the C. I. & W. railroad. The *Staley Journal* carried a well-illustrated article regarding the event, and detailed the furnishings within the Club House (1922:7-11). The *Staley Journal* noted that “never before has the place looked so elegant, and the club members realized more than ever the unusual privileges they have in such a fine recreational home.”

Although the Club House opened during the summer or early fall of 1921, it was not, as yet, surrounded by water at that time. Chamberlain (1922:17) noted that, after the new Decatur Lake fills later that spring (of early 1922),

the club house will be entirely surrounded by water, its only connection with terra firma being by means of the beautiful arch bridge shown on the picture on the cover [see Figure]. At that time a floating dock will be constructed around the club house, and from present indications a large flotilla of motor boats, sail boats, canoes and other similar craft will be moored along side.

The club house will gradually become a boating, fishing and skating club, although it seems improbable that the winter social activities will ever be discontinued.

Immediately adjacent to the club house is what will be the most beautiful city park in Decatur—Nelson Park. In this park is the only public golf course in the city. Thus, we may look forward to the use of the club house as a real country club for Staley Fellowship Club members, and the thought is freely voiced among them that their recreational privileges and comforts are superior to those enjoyed by any other club of whatever description in Central Illinois.

By the early 1920s, club membership offered not only sick and death benefits, but also free use of the Club house to members and guests, radio concerts, motion picture shows, lecture courses, loans for home improvement and purchase, and the annual picnic. The new Club House became a popular spot for a variety of family events, including wedding, anniversary, birthday, and confirmation celebrations. Chamberlain (1922:13) commented that “The club rooms are used by the club for regular bi-monthly dances and may be used upon application by any member of the

Floyd R. Mansberger

club for the entertainment of friends. That it fills a long unknown want is evidenced by the fact that it is being used from three to four evenings out of every week.”

Writing in June 1923, Edna Coyle stated

Perhaps the one thing of which the club members are the proudest, and that privilege of which they take the most advantage, is the beautiful club house on Lake Decatur.

The Club House (with pumping plant underneath) has a setting unequaled by anything in this territory. It is with pride that we take our quests through the winding road in picturesque Nelson park, over the C. I. and W. track and then point to that piece of architecture at the end of the long board walk and say “That is our club house.”

And we are even prouder when we step inside and let them view the spacious rooms, furnished completely and in perfect taste. The pictures accompanying this article tell the story better than we could write it [see attached Figures 29 through 34].

The club house contains equipment for every sort of entertainment and use of it is made many times during each month. The lovely ball room, the well-appointed dining room, the electrically equipped kitchen and the spacious roof with its smooth floor are sources of delight to those who entertain there.

One may look out the many doors on all sides of the club house upon the beautiful expanse of Lake Decatur, getting one of the best views of the lake afforded anywhere. Nothing in Decatur can rival the beauty and pleasure of a party on the roof on a balmy, moonlight night. ... The club house is indeed a vital element in our organization. It has grown from insignificance into one of the most important things fostered by the company and the club (Coyle 1923:5-6).

Integrity

The building has experienced a number of modifications over the years and suffered from deterioration/vandalism. This is most evident on the interior of the Balcony Level, which has been all but gutted with interior trim and fixtures removed. Little of the interior splendor remains, although the multiple pairs of exterior doors largely remain in place. The room configuration also had been altered to some extent. On the Landing Level, by contrast, most of the mechanical equipment (piping, motors, pumps, etc.) from the pump house’s period of operation still appears to be in place. In respect to the exterior, the landward side of the building (facing the causeway) has experienced the most changes. Here, the window openings on the Landing Level have been infilled with concrete block; and in addition, a large-diameter conduit

Floyd R. Mansberger

has been suspended from the balcony and along the outside edge of the bridge (with large I-beams spanning the surface of the balcony and bridge decks to support the conduit). The only other exterior modification of note is the removal of the balustrade from around roof-top level. Despite these alterations, the integrity of the building remains good overall. This is particularly true in respect to the exterior, which still retains its location setting, feeling, and association, and the preponderance of its integrity of workmanship, design, and materials. The integrity of the building's pump house component is excellent.

National Register Eligibility

As with all historical properties assessed within the context of cultural resources management, the significance of the Staley Pump House and Club House ultimately is determined by its eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Eligibility to the National Register is based on four broad criteria that are defined by the National Park Service and used to guide the evaluation process. These criteria state that

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and

A) that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or

B) that are associated with the lives of persons significant to our past; or

C) that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

D) that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history (36CFR60.4 Criteria for Evaluation).

A property may qualify under one or more the above criteria, provided: 1) that it is historically significant, through its association with an important historic context; 2) it retains the historic integrity of those features necessary to convey its significance; and, in the case of archaeological sites, 3) it offers information that can answer relevant research questions and fill in gaps in the historical record.

The Staley Pump House and Club House was constructed in 1919-1920 by the A. E. Staley Manufacturing Company in conjuncture with the expansion of the company's plant and in anticipation of the creation of Lake Decatur. The building's design—combining the functions of a club house and pump house—was shaped by these two related developments. The pump house was a vital component to the diversification of Staley's manufacturing processes. The post-1919

Floyd R. Mansberger

growth and success of the A. E. Staley Manufacturing Company had a tremendous impact on the City of Decatur, leading to the pavement of neighborhood roads, expansion of a street car line, improved walks, worker's housing, and improvements in water supply and sewerage systems. The pump house served a very a practical purpose, "But ever mindful of his employees' well-being, [A. E.] Staley crowned the pump building with decorated upper floors, complete with fireplaces and furnishings, that became elegant rooms for social occasions" (Reid 2014). For decades, the upper floor of the building was the home of the Staley Fellowship Club. With its ornate design and surpurb setting, the Staley Pump House and Club House served as a popular venue for social gatherings into the latter half of the twentieth century. It also was a marquee landmark on Lake Decatur, which developed into an all-season playground for citizens of Decatur. The creation of the lake led to the parallel development of local parks—particularly Nelson Park adjacent to the Club House.

The Staley Pump House and Club House is considered eligible to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in respect to its local significance to social history (as the meeting place of the Staley Fellowship Club), industry (as a key support structure for the Staley plant), and recreation and culture (as related to Lake Decatur). In addition, it also is considered locally significant and eligible to the National Register under Criterion C (architecture), as a unique building type combining pump house and club house functions. The period of significance for the Staley Pump House and Club House extends from 1919 (its date of construction) to 1968 (the fifty year cut off of the National Register).¹¹

Please feel free to give either of us a call to discuss.

Sincerely,



Floyd Mansberger



Christopher Stratton

¹¹ The end date for the period of significance would correspond to the date the building no longer functioned in its original capacity. Although the date is not currently known by the authors, the Staley Fellowship Club stopped using the upper floor of the building as a club house sometime during the early 1970s (or shortly thereafter). As originally constructed, the access to the Club House was by way of a boardwalk located along the rail tracks, and over the years this access became "significantly restricted" by both highway and railroad upgrades. This access issue finally became untenable with the expansion of the US 36 Nelson Park Bridge (constructed in 1954-55) from two-lanes to the current four-lane bridge in circa 1970. Sometime prior to 1984, the Staley Fellowship Club began meeting at the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Club, which was located on South Lake Shore Drive, and the Fellowship Club appears to have disbanded in circa 1993. The Pumping House continued to supply water to the physical plant until the summer of 1996, when cooling towers were expanded to replace lake water for cooling purposes (Gerald Schlueter; email to Jeremy Buening, 7 May 2019).

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- 1923 "Boating on Lake Decatur," Volume VI, Number 11, pp. 5-10.

Floyd R. Mansberger

1924 "Decatur Enjoys Its Lake," Volume VIII, Number 2, pp. 5-8.

1938 "Club House Newly Decorated For Winter," Volume XXII, Number 4, pp. 20-21.

Watson, Harry F.

1923 "Our System of Water Supply," *Staley Journal* VII (1): 5-11.

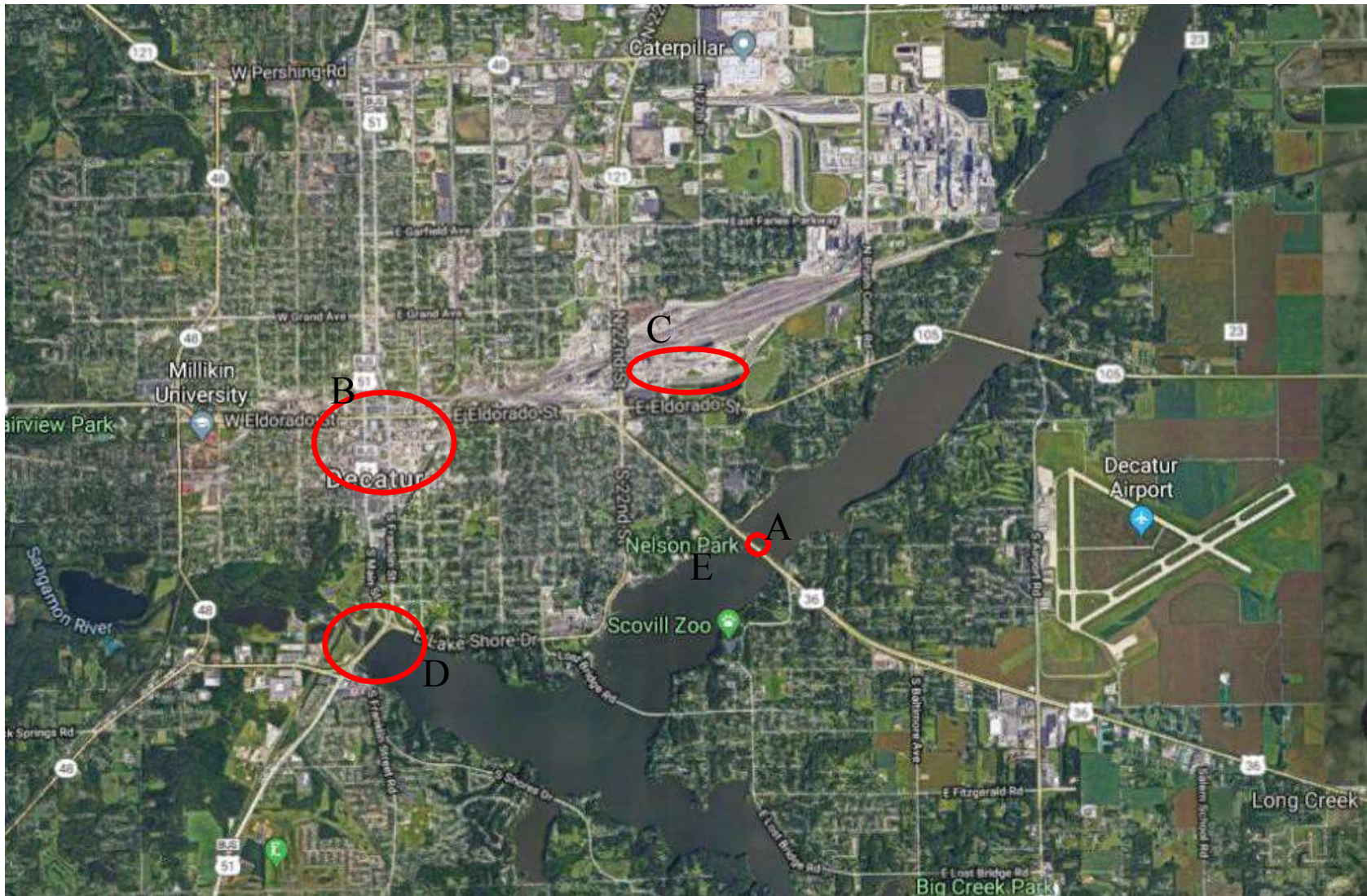


Figure 1. Location of Staley Pump House and Club House (A) in relationship to Decatur's Central Business District (B), A. E. Staley Manufacturing Company industrial plant (now Tate and Lyle Ingredients LLC; C), Lake Decatur Dam (D), and Nelson Park (E)(Google 2019).



Figure 2. Location of the Staley Pump House and Club House (Google 2019).



Figure 3. Two views showing the general setting of the Staley Pump House and Club House, looking south/southwest. The building sits in the waters of Lake Decatur adjacent to two causeways (with bridges) that carry a railroad and highway across the lake.



Figure 4. Two recent views of the Staley Pump House and Club House (*Herald & Review* 2018). Top: View looking northwest (https://herald-review.com/news/local/a-e-staley-pump-house-owner-we-have-no-plans/article_49debd84-b081-5058-b838-ae312e7ad95f.html). Bottom: View looking southwest (https://herald-review.com/gallery/gallery-the-staley-pump-house-through-the-years/collection_ccb8bbb2-3647-5c25-b932-a7b251b98472.html).



Figure 5, View of the west elevation of the Staley Pump House and Club House from across the railroad causeway.



Figure 6. View of the concrete bridge connecting the building to the adjoining causeway. Note the steel walkway below the main span.



Figure 7. Views of the west elevation of the Balcony Level, taken from the bridge by which it is accessed.



Figure 8. View of the balcony running along the upper level of the building. The steel I-beams running along the deck support a large water pipe below the balcony and represent a later addition.



Figure 9. View of the west elevation of the lower, or Landing Level, in which the pump room is located. The window openings on this elevation have been enclosed with concrete block. Note the large water pipe running below the balcony.



Figure 10. Photographs illustrating the cast concrete, emulating ashlar masonry, and architectural detailing on the Balcony Level of the building. Electric lighting was integrated into the cornice. The photograph at right shows the northern of the two chimneys present on the building.



Figure 11. Views of the southern room in the Balcony Level. Note the fireplace and multiple sets of exterior doorways that ring the room. This space originally was used as a dining room.



Figure 12. Views of the northern room in the Balcony Level. This room, which originally served as the “club room”, also has a fireplace and multiple sets of exterior doors leading out onto the balcony. A small chamber has been framed out in the corner of the original room.



Figure 13. Views of the kitchen (left) and entrance hall (right) on the Balcony Level.



Figure 14. Views of the southern end of the pump room on the Landing Level of the building.



Figure 15. (Left) View of the base of the metal stairway running between the Balcony and Landing Levels of the building. (Right) A row of pumps and electrical motors are set along the west side of the pump room.



Figure 16. Views of the northern end of the pump room on the Landing Level.

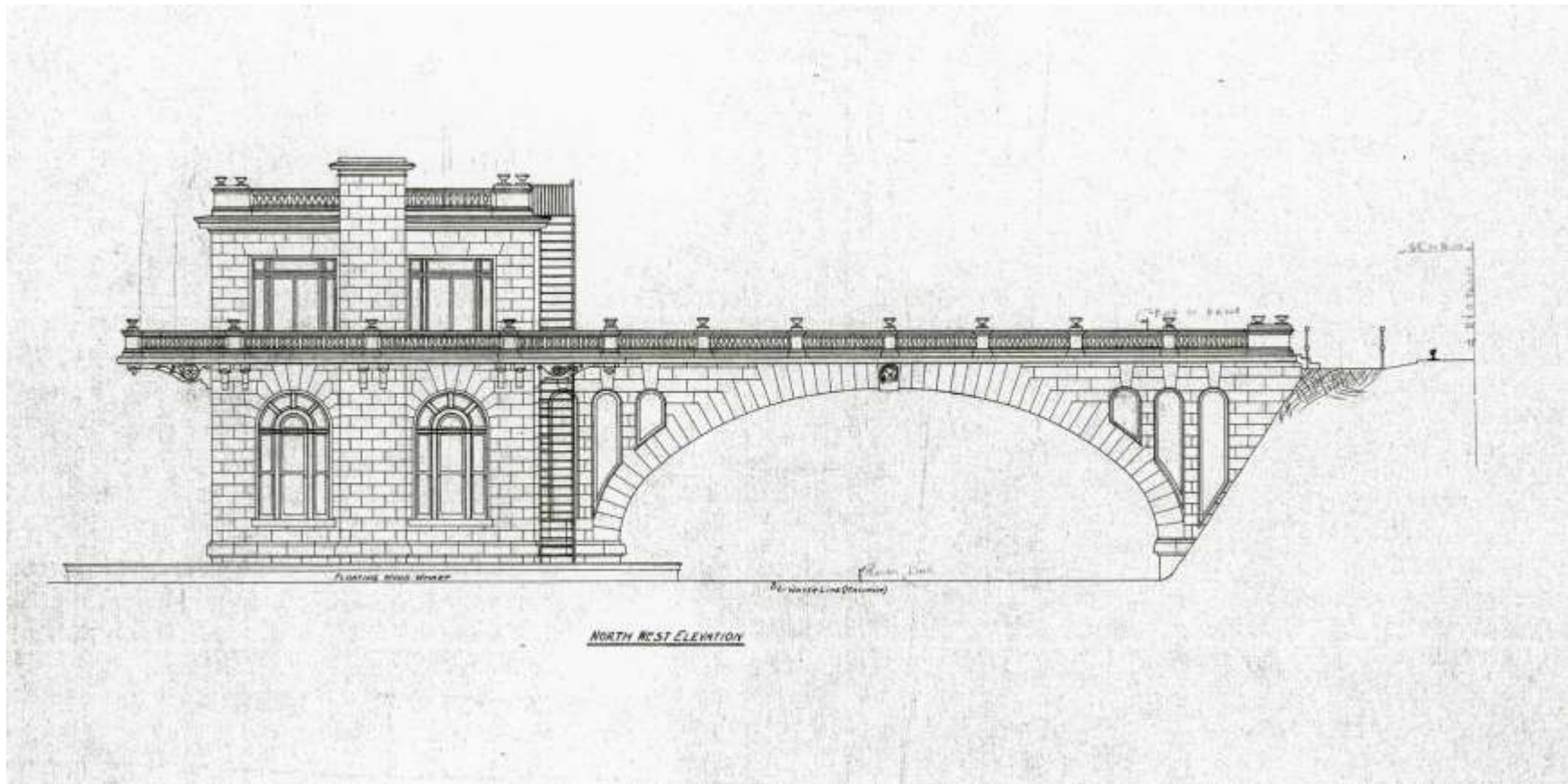


Figure 17. Historic construction drawings, “Northwest Elevation Pumping Station” (Staley Manufacturing Company n.d.). This is the view that would be seen as one approached the Club House from the boardwalk running adjacent to the railroad tracks. Note the presence of the “Floating Wood Wharf” at the water level. The drawings were produced by the Engineering Department of the A. E. Staley Manufacturing Company. Although undated, it is presumed that they were produced in 1919. One drawing (Balcony Floor Plan) has a notation that reads “Revised 6-23-20. Location of Entrance Door At Bridge Changed.”

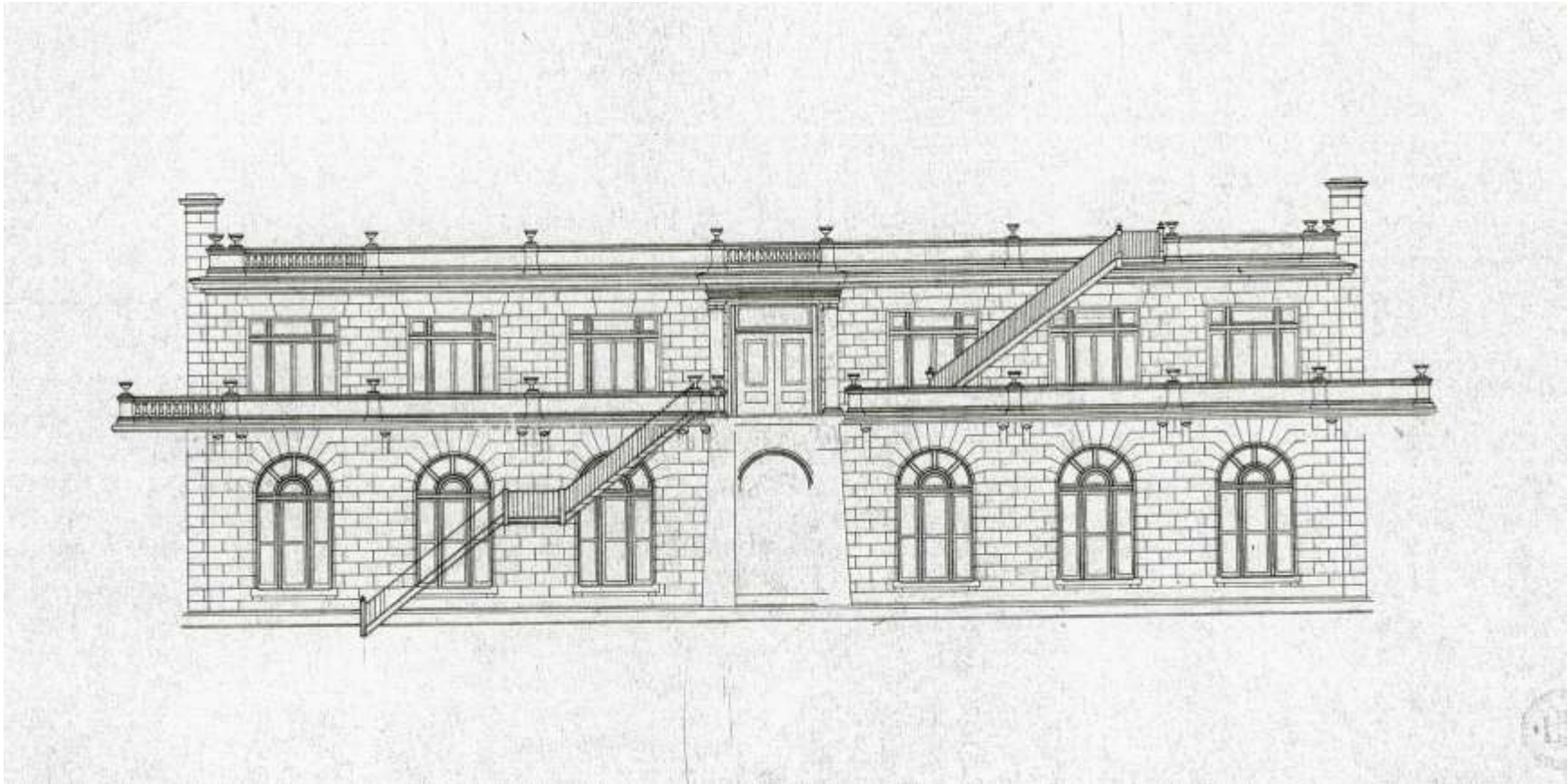


Figure 18. Historic construction drawings, “Southwest Elevation Pumping Station” (Staley Manufacturing Company n.d.). This is the view that would have been seen from the landward side of the building. There seems to be some discrepancy between these drawings and the as-built conditions illustrated in the early 1920s photographs of the buildings. The exterior stairways illustrated on this drawing apparently were not constructed, and must have been moved to the inside of the building. Similarly, the large classical columns flanking the Balcony Level doors also were removed from the final design.

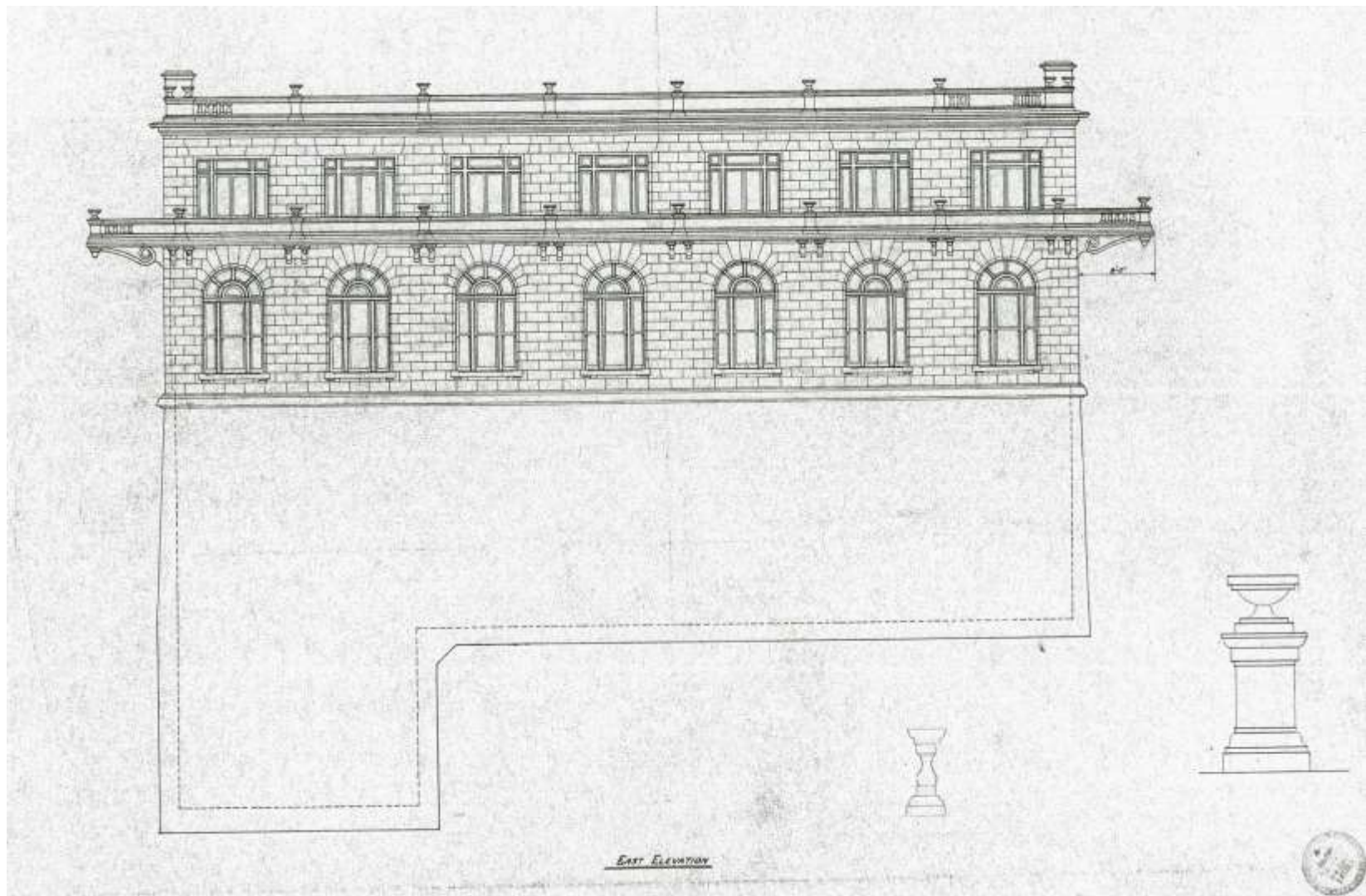


Figure 19. Historic construction drawings, “East Elevation” (Staley Manufacturing Company n.d.). This is the view of the Pump House that would have been seen from the lake side of the building. Note the presence of the lower mechanical levels of the building that were located beneath the water level of the lake.

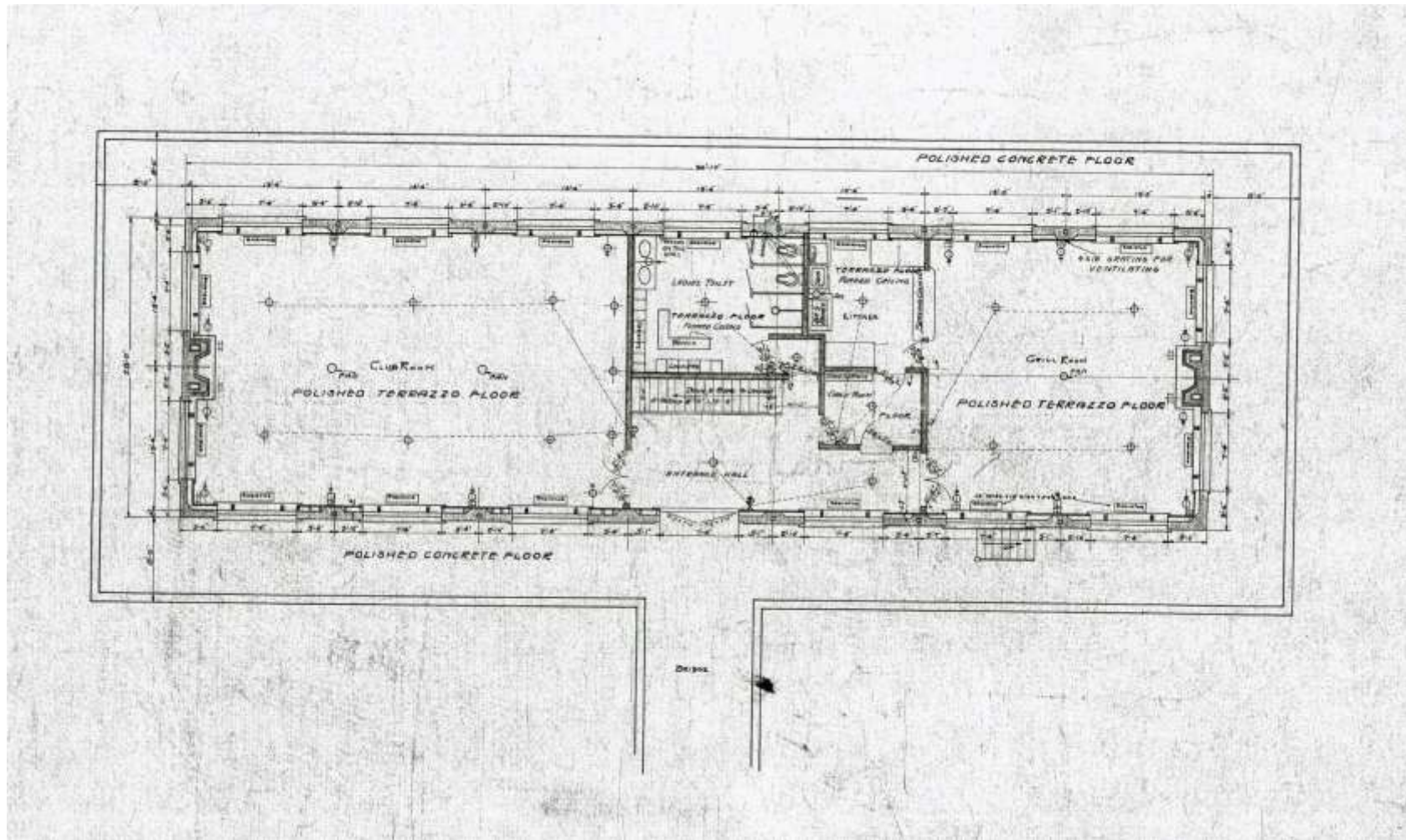


Figure 20. Historic construction drawings, “Balcony Floor Plan” (Staley Manufacturing Company n.d.). This level, which functioned as the Club House, had the Club Room, Grill Room, Entrance Hall, Check Room, Kitchen, and Ladies Toilet. Presumably the Men’s Toilet was located on the lower floor or “Landing” level. Note the interior steps to the “Landing” below.

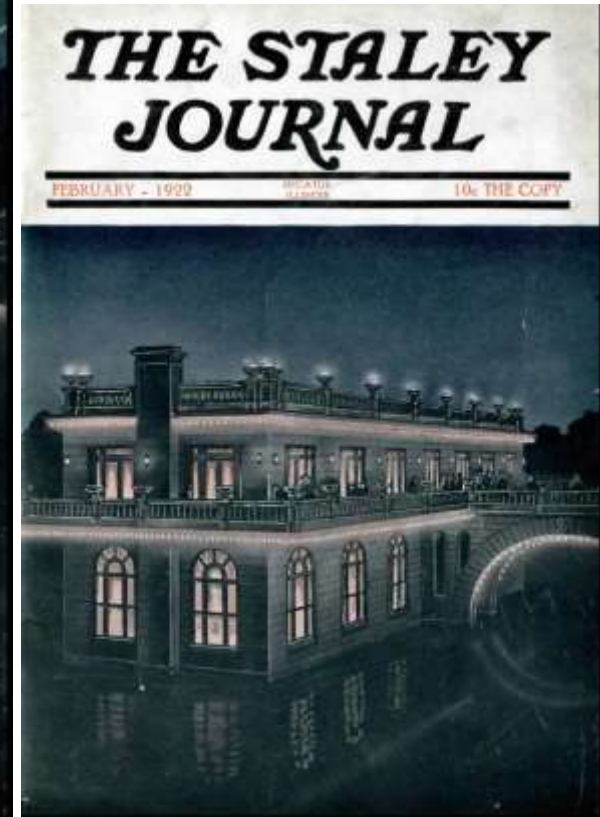


Figure 21. Early 1922 illustration of the Staley Pump House and Club House in all of its glory, shortly after its opening. Note the use of the electrical lights outlining the balcony, cornice, and arch of the entrance bridge, as well as the torch lights on top of the decorative pedestal urns on the roof level balustrade (*Staley Journal*, February 1922, Cover).

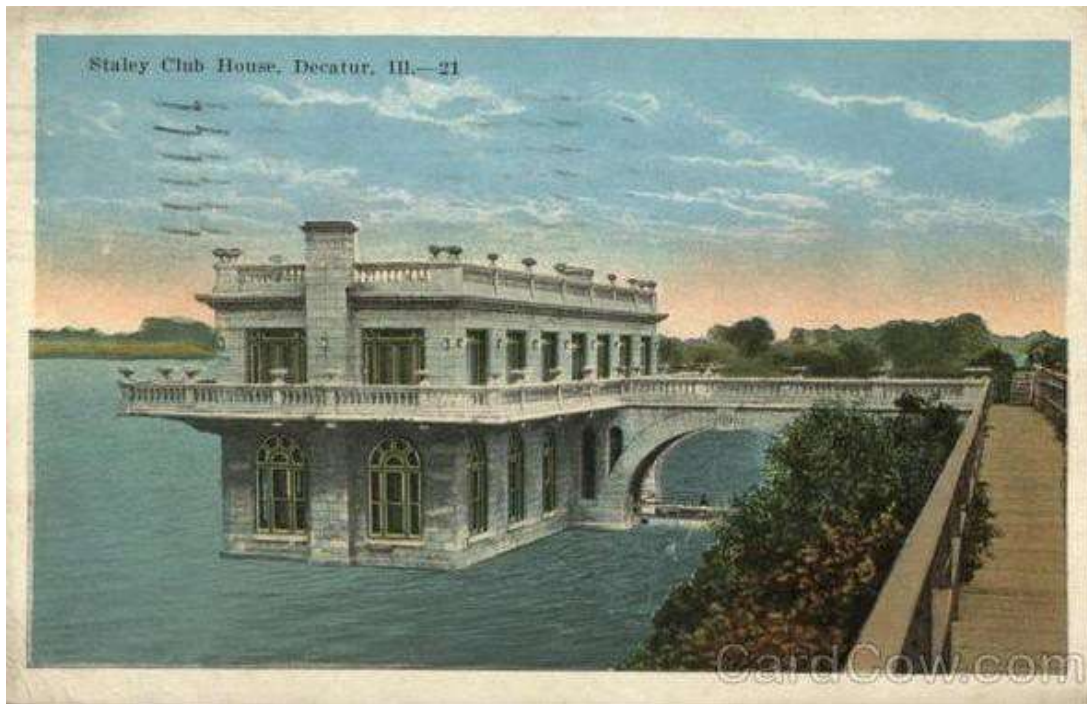


Figure 22. Two historic views of the Staley Pump House. Top: Under construction, circa 1920. Bottom: Recently completed building, with lake fully inundated (circa 1921-22). Note that the postcard image does not depict the floating dock around the base of the building (<http://picturedecatur.blogspot.com/2013/12/staley-club-house-pumphouse.html>).



Figure 23. Historic photographic views from circa 1922 illustrating the Pump House and recently flooded reservoir of Lake Decatur. Note the lack of exterior stairs on the east elevation, and the lack of the floating dock in the upper image. Left: <http://picturedecatour.blogspot.com/2013/12/staley-club-house-pumphouse.html>. Right: Coyle (1923).



Figure 24. Two early views of the Staley Pump House and Club House. Bottom: Circa 1928 view looking northwest. Top: Undated, pre-1930 view looking northeast (<http://picturedecatour.blogspot.com/2013/12/staley-club-house-pumphouse.html>). Note the low water level and the presence of the floating dock. It appears that by this date a lower level frame bridge had been constructed beneath the Balcony level bridge for accessing the floating docks



Figure 25. Group of dignitaries, standing on the bridge and balcony at the Club House. Eric Lutz (16 April 2014) notes that “The picture with the group of men in front of the clubhouse must be from the club's initial opening. The man wearing the cap and black suit is (I think) the plant's original General Superintendent, George Chamberlain. To the right, with his hand in his pocket and a straw boater in the other, is a very young A. E. Staley, Jr (aka Gus). The reason I think it's from the opening in 1920 is Chamberlain's weight. Although once a thin man, by 1923 Chamberlain had gained about 50 pounds and was quite rotund. Gus must have been home for the summer, as he didn't graduate from Wharton School of Business and join the company until about 1924” (<http://picturedecatour.blogspot.com/2013/12/staley-club-house-pumphouse.html>). Note the treatment of the entrance door, and the lack of the Classical details illustrated in the earlier construction drawings.

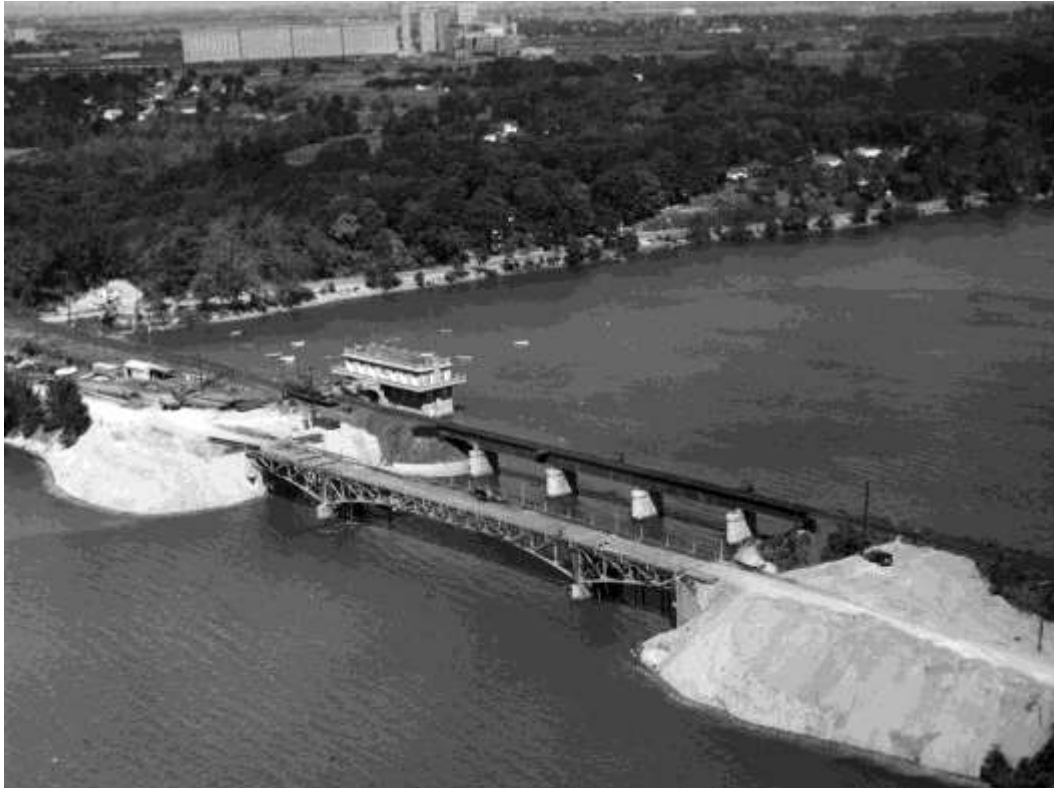
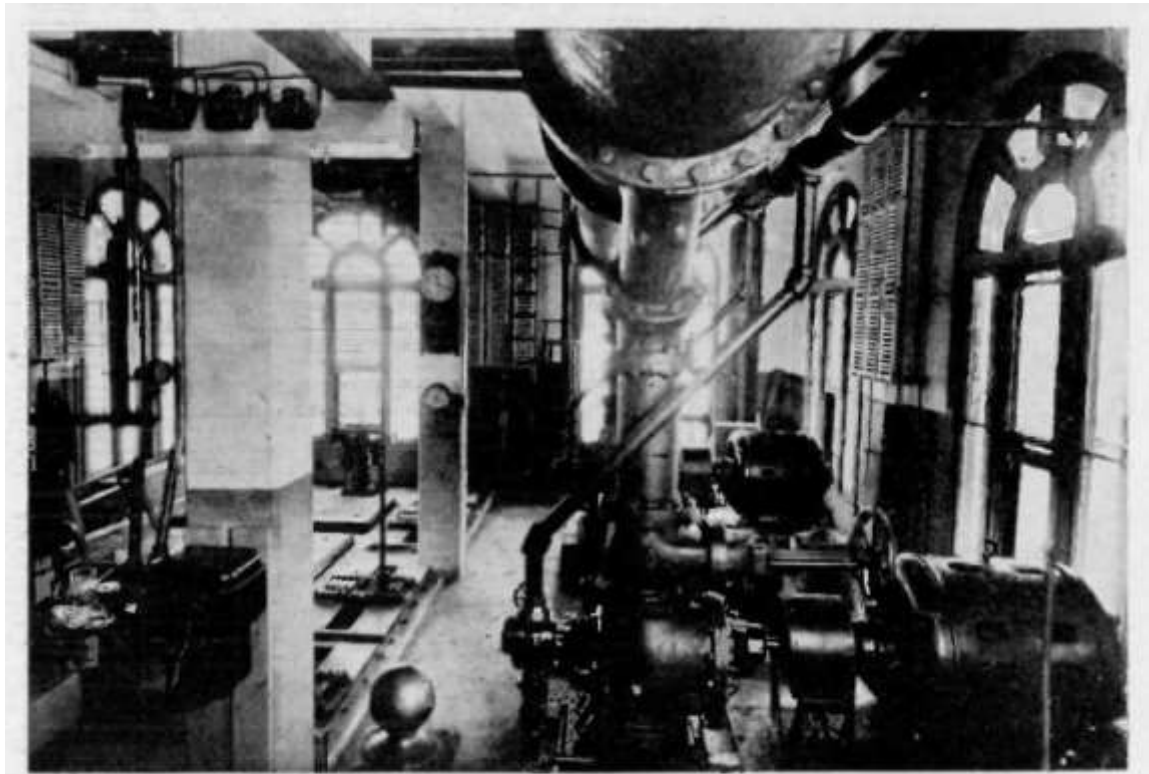
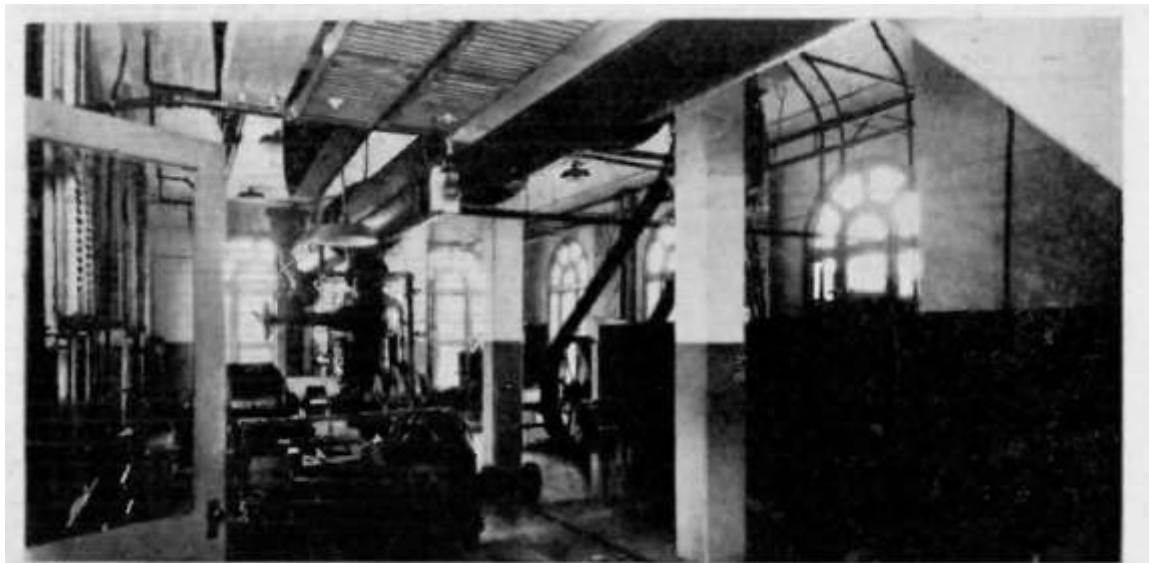


Figure 26. Top: Undated photograph, with extremely low water level in Lake Decatur (<http://picturidecatur.blogspot.com/2013/12/staley-club-house-pumphouse.html>). Bottom: Aerial view of Staley Pump House from September 9, 1954, illustrating the construction of the new “Nelson Park bridge” (current route of U.S. Route 36/Illinois Route 121; https://herald-review.com/news/local/a-e-staley-pump-house-owner-we-have-no-plans/article_49debd84-b081-5058-b838-ae312e7ad95f.html). Note the Staley plant in the background.

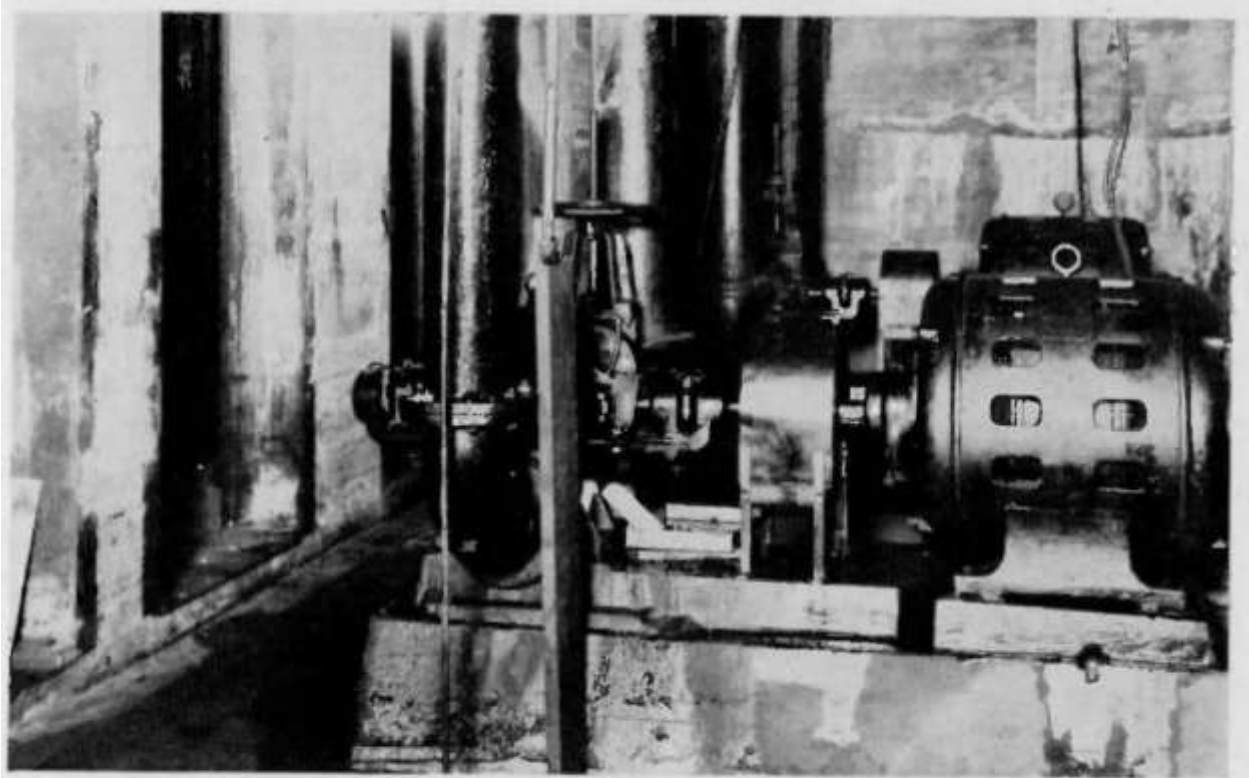


First Floor Pumping Station—The two 100 H. P. pumps in the foreground.
Intake valves in background.



First Floor Pumping Station—West End. 150 H. P. pump in foreground.

Figure 27. Two views of the interior of the Staley Pump House, illustrating the interior of the Landing Level, or First Floor of the pumping station (Watson 1923:6).



Pumps and Intake Gates Above Intake Pits at Pumping Plant

Figure 28. A third image illustrating the pumps and intake gates, presumably on the First Floor of the Staley Pump House (Watson 1923:7).

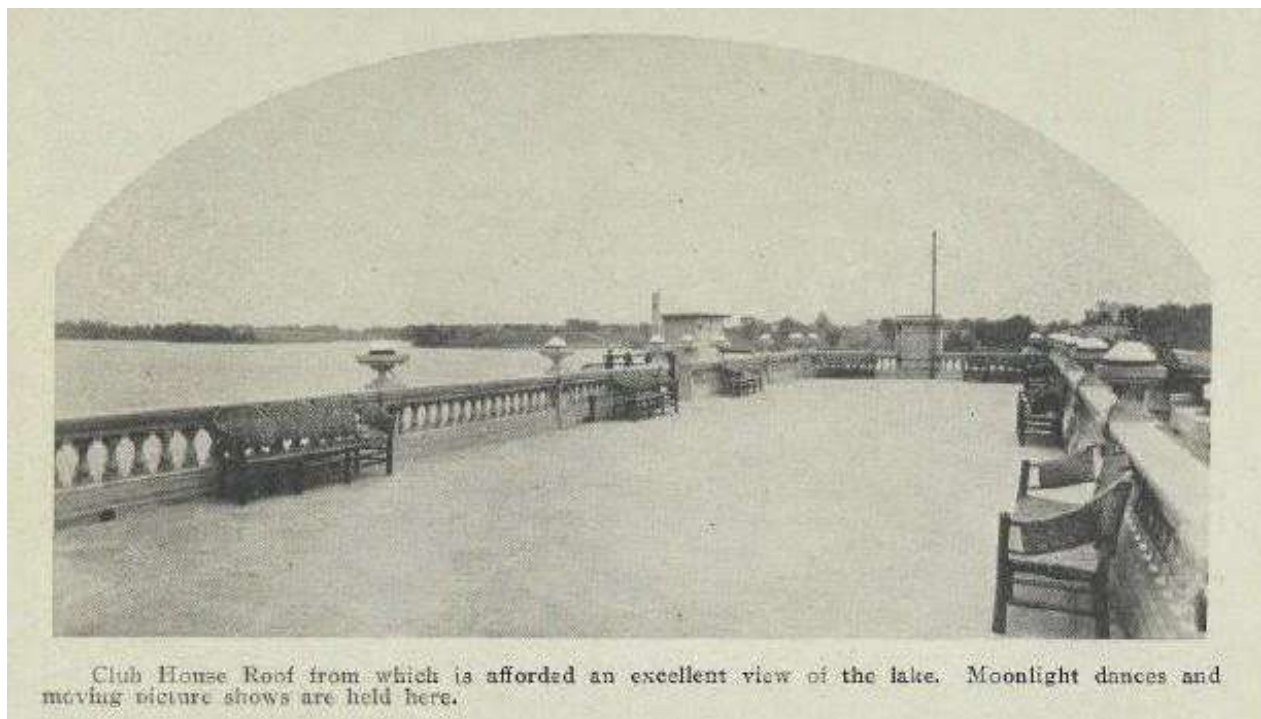


Figure 29. Two views of the newly constructed Staley Pump House—illustrating the social function of the Club House (Coyle 1923).



The ball room of the club house with its artistic hangings and furniture. The fireplace may be seen at the back and decorations for the New Year's party are up.



Another picture of the ball room with some of the New Year's dancers on the floor.

Figure 30. Interior views of the Staley Club House, grand opening celebration (Staley Journal 1922).



The grill room was very pretty on New Year's eve with its decorations of silver holly and its new furnishings. Bouquets of Ward roses were used on the tables.



The eight tables in the grill room were filled twice for the fine dinner served preceding the dance.

Figure 31. Interior views of the Staley Club House, grand opening celebration (Staley Journal 1922).

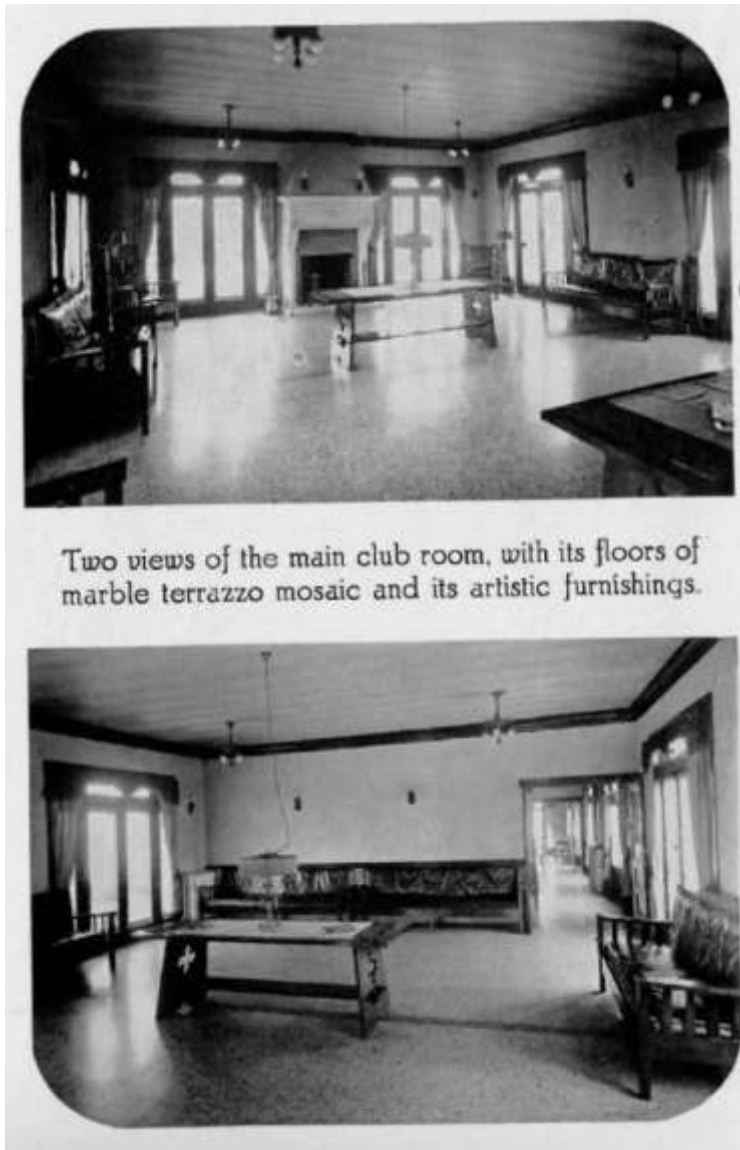
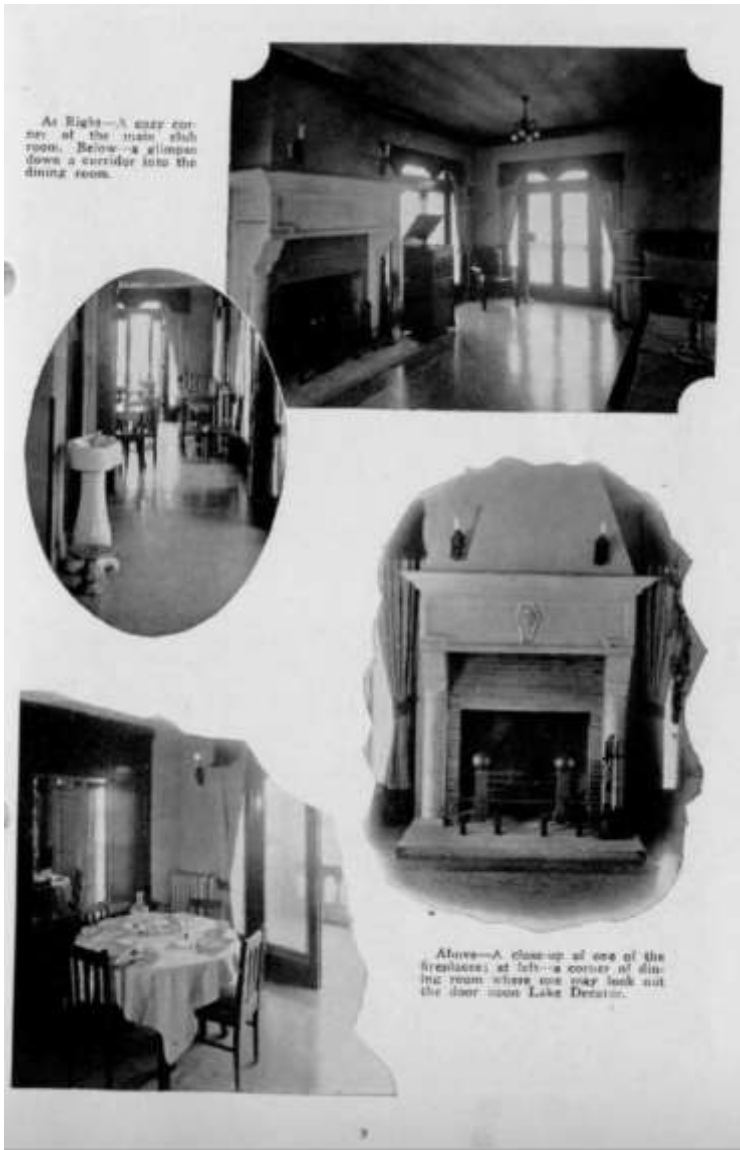


Figure 32. Details of the interior of the Staley Fellowship Club House (Coyle 1923).

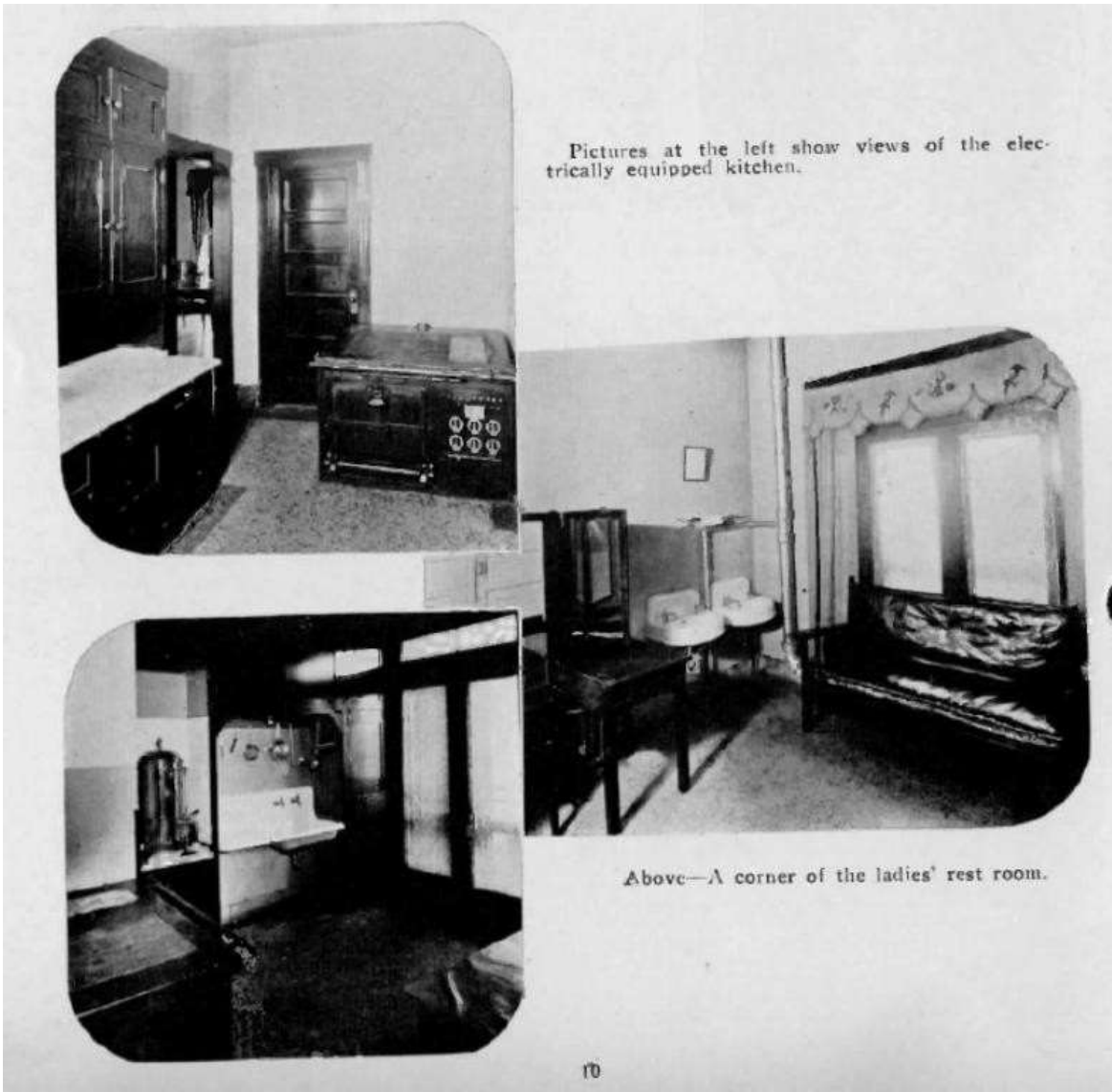
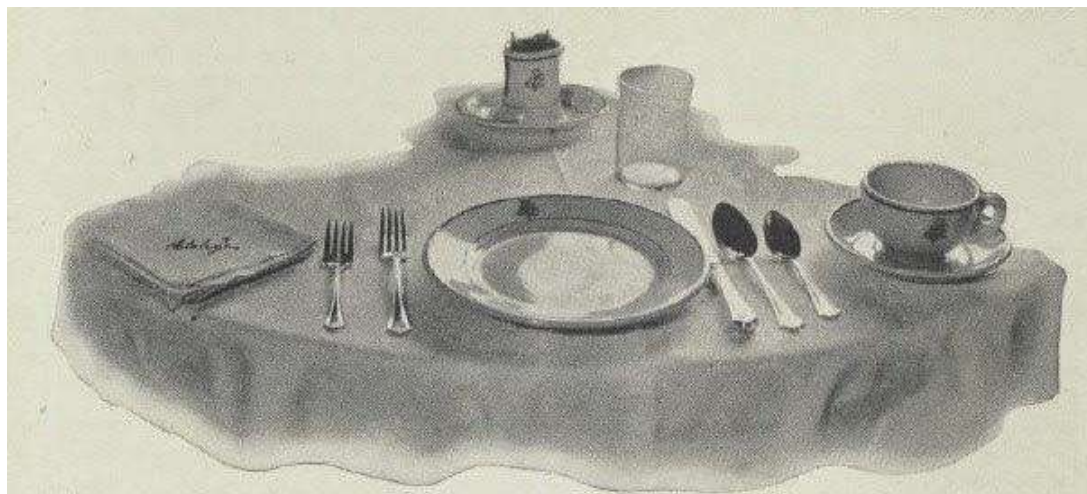


Figure 33. Details of the interior of the Staley Fellowship Club House (Coyle 1923). One of the characteristics of the Club House was the all-electric kitchen, complete with an electric kitchen range.



Above—The dining room in festive dress for a big party.



Below—A table setting showing the monogrammed china and linen.

Figure 34. Interior view of Club House (top), and formal table setting (bottom) (Coyle 1923).



CLUB HOUSE NEWLY

It was sixteen years ago last January that the Staley club house was formally opened at a big party attended by as many of the club members as could crowd into the rooms. This club house, at that time, was absolutely the last word in such places. It was spacious, it was well built, it was attractively furnished, and the cupboards were filled with dishes, china, glass and silver for entertaining as many people as could be crowded into the rooms. In addition to all that the kitchen was the marvel of its day—it was equipped with an electric range and every size and type of cooking utensil that any cook could ask for.

These rooms—the big main room, the dining room, the kitchen and the dressing room—were located on the second floor of the pumping station, an ideal location for when in the club house one always has the feeling of being aboard ship.

The furnishings and hangings, when purchased sixteen years ago, were of excellent quality, but recently they have begun to show their age. The club has been cleaned regularly, and the dishes, china, silver and glass have been cared for per-

PAGE 20

THE STALEY JOURNAL



DECORATED FOR WINTER

fectly so that it is all in good condition, but the whole thing needed sprucing up.

This fall it has received that treatment. The floors, which have always shown like mirrors, needed nothing, but walls and ceilings were cleaned and furniture gone over and repaired or waxed as needed. In both rooms the old monks cloth hangings were taken down and blocked linen in bold but not gaudy patterns were put up. In the dining room, shown at the right, new table tops were put on. These will resist heat and stain and can be used with or without cloths. The old player piano was traded in on one which is now used in the dining room, and another was purchased for the main club room. The radio, which is in the main room, has an extension loud speaker in the dining room.

In charge of the club are Eldred Jacobs, shown in the main room, and William Kossieck, in the picture at the right. One of these men is always at the club, they see to keeping it in order, and are responsible for the excellent condition in which it is always kept.

OCTOBER, 1938

PAGE 21

Figure 35. Two pages advertising the newly re-decorated and/or refurbished Club House (*Staley Journal*, October 1938).



Figure 36. The two dams constructed in the early 1920s. Left: May 1921 cover of the *Staley Journal* illustrating the Staley Dam, constructed in 1921 as a temporary structure to supply water to the Staley Pumping House prior to completion of the City of Decatur's dam, located further downstream and not completed until 1922. Right: August 1920 Cover of the *Staley Fellowship Journal* illustrating a depiction of the proposed City of Decatur dam.



Figure 37. Three views of the Staley Pump House and Club House, as depicted on the cover of the *Staley Fellowship Journal* in May 1920 (Left), and the *Staley Journal* in January 1923 (Middle), and June 1923 (Right). These three covers illustrate the range of outdoor recreational activities (boating, swimming, ice skating) that were associated with this structure, and which were promoted by the Staley Fellowship Club.



Figure 38. Although these two covers of the *Staley Journal* do not illustrate the Staley Pump House and Club House, they do emphasize recreational activity on the newly created Decatur Lake. Left: Speed and sail boating (May 1923). Right: Water skiing (August 1924).