

## CHAPTER XI

# THE CONTRIBUTIONS

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### WHEN I MET HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW

I met Harland Bartholomew in 1934. Despite the almost 60 years that intervene, I remember the occasion well. Room 208 was on the second floor of Mumford Hall, one of the buildings assigned to the College of Agriculture at the University of Illinois. I was a senior student in Landscape Architecture, having entered the course in 1931, a year after Landscape Architecture--along with Art, Music and Architecture--had been incorporated into a new College of Fine and Applied Arts under the leadership of a distinguished architectural historian, Rexford Newcomb, as Dean. The class in City Planning (Landscape Architecture 71, 10:00 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays,) was required of all who were to receive a landscape architecture degree.

City planning was taught as a part of landscape architecture, which for a while had placed it--believe it or not--in the College of Agriculture. There was a city planning "option" for the junior and senior years. I was not particularly interested in city planning and was taking the "straight" landscape architecture option. (At Illinois the two disciplines were not to have

separate degrees until 1944.)

It was during the Great Depression. In common with most of my classmates, I was lucky to be at Illinois--or any other university. I worked as much as I could, mostly in the department library. I knew that my attendance resulted from great financial sacrifice on the part of my parents and that my younger brother must attend a Kansas City junior college because there was not enough money for both of us to study at a university away from home. The students knew that what was learned at Illinois would be all that stood between them and starvation when they left school and on that October morning in 1934, June of 1935 when I and my classmates would graduate did not seem far away. Consequently, we were all serious about our studies and the professions we were about to join.

My father and J. C. Nichols of Kansas City had been fraternity brothers and classmates at the University of Kansas. In Kansas City in the 1920s, we lived in almost the center of Nichols' Country Club District. Nichols was one of the most innovative and progressive land developers that ever lived (1). However, growing up in one of his subdivisions, I was completely ignorant of how new and unusual were his

neighborhood associations, curvilinear streets, planned shopping areas, and similar features. As a child I was interested in plants and growing them, and in high school and early college years was able to work for the Nichols Company doing landscape maintenance during the summers under the supervision of Stanley MacLean, their chief horticulturist. (2)

Upon graduation from Southwest High School, I entered the University of Kansas. MacLean advised me to direct my attention to landscape architecture instead of botany or horticulture. Further discussions with S. Herbert Hare and his father, the preeminent landscape architects of the Kansas City of that day, led me to choose landscape architecture as a career. Hare was a Harvard graduate. My parents could not afford to send me to Harvard and Illinois was chosen as the best place for me to go, possibly because the faculty consisted almost entirely of Harvard graduates whom S. Herbert Hare had known. At that time, there was no concern about "getting in." Harvard taught landscape architecture, then as today, only at the graduate level.

Professor Karl Lohmann was in charge of the teaching of city planning at Illinois. Lohmann had come to Illinois from Harvard in 1923. He had an enormous interest in urban planning and in his students, although he was not a dynamic teacher, perhaps because of a rather diffident manner and a hesitancy of speaking. Shortly before I entered Illinois, he had published a book, *Principles of City Planning* (3), that we used as a textbook, and the year before he had initiated a course in regional planning, the first time this was taught in the United States. Lohmann was a man of significant stature, a real innovator and pioneer.

Other members of the faculty were outstanding also. Otto Schaeffer was head



103 Harland Bartholomew, 1935.

of the department. Stanley White taught design, Florence Robinson plant materials, and Irving Peterson construction. Rexford Newcomb was interested in the department and we had the great resources of the Departments of Civil Engineering, Horticulture, Architecture, and Art at the University of Illinois to draw upon.

And then we had a final faculty member that we were to meet for the first time this Thursday morning in October of 1934--Harland Bartholomew, non-resident professor of civic design. In 1913, Charles Mulford Robinson had been appointed professor of civic design (the first such appointment in the United States) in the Department of Landscape Gardening, then in the College of Agriculture. Robinson died in 1917. With some reluctance, Harland Bartholomew accepted the appointment, the basic purpose of which

(as he explained it to me many years later) was to bring a breath of the "real world" into the academic classroom. When we saw him that Thursday morning of 1934, Bartholomew had held the position for 16 years; he was to hold it for 22 more.

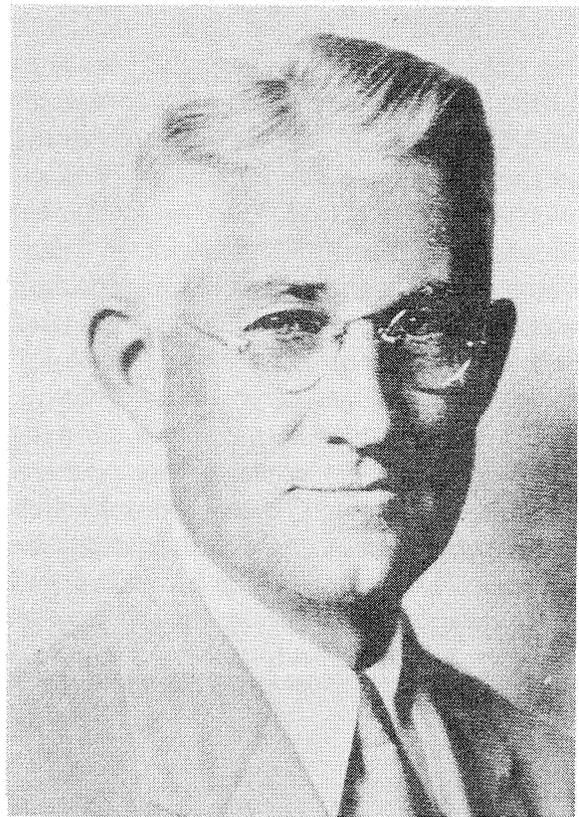
At precisely 10:00 a.m., Karl Lohmann entered the room. The man following him carried a roll of maps, was erect, unsmiling, conservatively dressed with a full head of greying hair, looking--at least to us (everyone looks old to a college student)--much older than his 45 years. After Lohmann's brief introduction, Harland Bartholomew reached into his pocket, extracted a small envelope, on the back of which were a few notes, and proceeded to give us a carefully organized lecture.

As I recall, this lecture was on the planning of a city's major street system and he used Peoria, Illinois as an example, possibly because it was fairly close to Urbana. The lecture was very much of the "how to" type and we were told, on a most straightforward basis, the step-by-step procedure whereby Peoria's major street plan had been prepared. The lecture came to its end; there was a 15 to 20 second period of silence and the bell rang ending the class.

We were to see Harland Bartholomew many more times between October and graduation in June. We were to learn about railroads, transit, parks and recreation, land use, and zoning. On each occasion we were given a succinct instruction in what to do, delivered from notes on a small card or on the back of an envelope, sometimes an envelope he had found in his hotel room.

Upon graduation, I applied for and received an appointment in the National Park Service. The architectural students had laughed at us for years, saying: "The three necessities of life are food, clothing and shelter--who needs a landscape

architect?" But in June of 1935, there were no jobs in architecture but, because of the many New Deal work programs, such as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), there were plenty of jobs for landscape architects, and at good starting salaries.



104 Harland Bartholomew, 1941.

## I JOIN HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES

One hot August afternoon sitting in our home in Kansas City awaiting the assignment, I received a telephone call. It was not from the National Park Service but from Russell Riley, Harland Bartholomew's partner in St. Louis. They had just been given the assignment to prepare the master plan for the Babler Memorial State Park

outside St. Louis and would I come to St. Louis and work with them on it? Of course I would. Riley could only assure me of six months' work. I started August 8, 1935. I retired from Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Inc. on August 1, 1981. The Thursday lecture in October of 1934 turned out to be a fateful time for me.

Harland Bartholomew retired from the firm of Harland Bartholomew and Associates in 1961. He was retained as a consultant until his death in 1989. The remaining partners purchased his interest in the firm over a ten-year period, 1961 to 1971. He had directed the firm's affairs for 42 years. The firm's decentralized organization, accompanied by a diversified practice, had meant that no one person could supervise all of the work but, more importantly, no one person could be professionally competent in every aspect of our practice. The firm had to be an association of equals based upon mutual trust rather than the reflection of one dominant individual and



105 Harland Bartholomew, 1961.

his ideas and philosophy. Partners had differences of opinions on almost every aspect of the firm's practice. The "managing partner" scheme was tried but seemed to only increase the overhead. Soon, Harry W. Alexander and then Russell H. Riley, partners from the 1930s and employees since the 1920s, retired.

## HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW RETIRES

Harland Bartholomew continued to live in Washington, D.C. except for the summer and early autumn months when he lived at "Cedarwood," his home overlooking Lake Michigan in Leland, Michigan. In 1963 his second wife, Frances, died. In 1968 he married Gladys B. Funsten of St. Louis, whom he had known in St. Louis and Leland, and they moved to her home at 19 Wydown Terrace in Clayton, Missouri (a St. Louis suburb).

He continued to have a keen interest in Harland Bartholomew and Associates, working with the Washington office while living there and with the St. Louis office after he moved back. Gladys, Harland's third wife, died in 1971. Harland Bartholomew purchased the home from her heirs and arranged a long-term lease on its contents. He continued to spend four to five months a year at Cedarwood, but difficulties in getting back and forth and in obtaining household help led to the sale of the property in Michigan and full-time living in St. Louis in 1984.

Fortunately, he could afford the assistance and was able to live at the Wydown home. St. Louis newspapers gave him recognition with stories on his 97th birthday and on his 100th birthday. Ten weeks after his 100th birthday, he suffered an attack of pneumonia and could no



106 Harland Bartholomew, 97 years old.

longer summon the strength to fight it off.

### WORKING WITH HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW

I worked with Harland Bartholomew for 26 years and knew him for another 29 years. You never felt that you worked for him but rather that you worked with him. He was studious and curious, and always wanted to know how things worked and what things would work.

Harland Bartholomew was a competitive person. On the few occasions that we would lose an assignment to one of our (then) few competitors, he would be depressed for several days. He firmly believed that his firm was the very best. Why anyone would hire anyone else was always a mystery to him.

Harland Bartholomew had an open mind. If a staff member came up with a better solution, he would throw his away, embrace the new idea with enthusiasm, and be warm with praise and sometimes even a raise!

He operated the firm with the highest integrity. Conflicts of interest with the real estate and land developer interests were avoided. We were to take no action that was not in the public interest. Harland Bartholomew had what was almost a fixation on the quality of work the firm produced.

To Harland Bartholomew profit was a pleasant but a secondary objective. At one time, his firm was doing a major part of the city planning research being done in the United States. Two major books were written. He received no grants or other financial assistance for these. He spent significant amounts of his time in investigating, discussing, and proposing solutions to urban problems, including the key part that he played in the evolution of the process for rebuilding cities that we have come to call "urban renewal."

All of this made Harland Bartholomew and Associates a very exciting place to work. It enabled us to attract to our staff people of talent and ability, enabling the firm to expand professionally and geographically. The firm continues to follow Harland Bartholomew's principles.

### HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW'S CONTRIBUTIONS

In the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral in London on the tomb of Christopher Wren, who designed the cathedral and some 50 other London churches, is Wren's epitaph, "Si monumentum requiris, circumspice"--If you seek his monument, look about you.

The epitaph might be applied to Harland Bartholomew also.

Buses going by outside in St. Louis carry the label: "Bi-State St. Louis Development Agency." The agency was created as a result of a recommendation in Harland Bartholomew's St. Louis Regional Plan of 1936. Great new buildings being built in downtown St. Louis are built because of Missouri Law 353. Harland Bartholomew wrote Law 353.

Harland Bartholomew proposed the great open space on the Mississippi River, now The Arch and its grounds. In the St. Louis area, he was instrumental in developing the civic center, arranging for the fountain in front of the Union Station, and inspiring the gift of Babler State Park.

In New York, his work in Newark got the regional airport system of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey started.

Wherever an American city has undertaken an urban renewal project, it has used a process in whose evolution Harland Bartholomew was instrumental.

Direct and specific results of his work may be seen more dramatically in St. Louis, Washington, Memphis, Corpus Christi, Hawaii, and Williamsburg. Indirectly, they may be seen in every American city applying the planning process to its operations, growth, and development.

## CONCLUSION

Recital of Harland Bartholomew's ten major contributions to urban planning cannot help but sound like a continuous procession of one triumph after another. This is misleading. There were failures mixed with the successes. There were bad years and bad times. There was the series

of personal tragedies--the deaths of his sister, two sons, and three wives. While comfortably well off, he did not become wealthy. Of his first two sets of partners, I am the only one still alive.

The ten contributions are of overwhelming magnitude. Some of them have been accepted so well and are so universally incorporated in the practice of urban planning that it is impossible for a present day planner to conceive of anyone inventing them. Any one of the ten would justify a lifetime career and make its author distinguished if not famous. For one person to have brought about all ten is nothing less than extraordinary.

Harland Bartholomew was a product of his times. He was presented with a professional opportunity that will never be equaled, it is true. But he had the ability, the interest, the vigor, and the personality to take advantage of this opportunity. Others were presented with the same opportunity but they were unable to take advantage of it the way he did.

Harland Bartholomew has left his profession, which he did so much to create, a real legacy, a legacy of:

1. Recognition of the desperate need for urban planning and of the general dimensions of that need;
2. A systematic approach to the comprehensive plan;
3. Planning as an accepted function of local government;
4. Planning as a discipline that may be taught;
5. The interdisciplinary team as the means of solving complex urban problems;
6. Realistic public control of the private use of land;
7. A process for the rebuilding of cities;
8. Principles for relating the

- urban freeways to the other urban components;
9. A rapid transit system for the nation's capital; and
  10. The knowledge that planning without mechanisms for achievement is worthless.

The total legacy is greater than a sum of the ten parts. For these things, not just the planners, but every American may be grateful.

He would be the first to say that he could not have made these contributions by himself. He had help and a lot of it. As one of the "helpers," I can say that without him, the spark that got them done would not have been there.

#### FOOTNOTES

XI-1 J. C. Nichols was a charter member of the American City Planning Institute and of the Urban Land Institute and, later, a member of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

XI-2 See *J.C. Nichols And The Shaping of Kansas City*, William S. Worley, University of Missouri Press, 1990

XI-3 *Principles Of City Planning*, Karl B. Lohmann, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1931

*A reasonable, sound, and businesslike program of procedure is needed that can be followed consistently. Here is the reason for city planning - the science of providing a policy, program or plan for guiding a city's physical development.*

*- Newark, 1915*

*A city is nothing more than a business venture. It is virtually a cooperative scheme wherein a group of individuals unite to secure better, cheaper and more pleasant means of living than could each obtain individually. Taxes are the price paid for benefits derived.*

*- St. Louis, 1915*

*Each urban area should possess an overall design or master plan. This plan should not be a fixed or rigid mould, but it should provide a dynamic framework because of changing needs and conditions. The preparation of an overall design or master plan involves: (a) a forecast of population growth, (b) a plan of future distribution and density of population, (c) determination of the most practicable and satisfactory land use pattern, and (d) coordinated plans for various parts of the master plan, i.e., major streets; most transportation; railroad, air and water terminals; housing; zoning; parks and recreation areas; and public lands.*

*- St. Louis, 1917*