

Sandwiching in History
Edward Reichardt House
1201 Welch St., LR
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By: Rachel Silva



Intro

Hi, my name is Rachel Silva, and I work for the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. Welcome to the May Sandwiching in History tour of the Reichardt House. I'd like to introduce and thank the current owners, Tommy and Lakresha Diaz, for allowing us to tour their beautiful home. The Edward Reichardt House was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975 for its Folk Victorian (or restrained Queen Anne-style) architecture & for its association with one of LR's early German immigrant families.

Masonic Addition & Hanger Hill

Originally constructed about 1871 as a 1-story, 3-room cottage, the Reichardt House was one of the first homes built in the Masonic Addition. The Masonic Addition (platted October 1869) was one of the first additions to the Original City of Little Rock (platted 1822). The Grand Masonic Lodge of Arkansas sponsored the construction of St. John's College, which in 1850 was the state's first chartered institution of higher learning (the name is also spelled "St. Johns' College," for the school was dedicated to St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist, or two St. Johns). The Masonic Lodge purchased 100 acres of land immediately east of the U. S. Arsenal Building (MacArthur Park) for the construction of the college. In 1869, St. John's College enclosed a square of 10 acres around the college buildings, and the remainder of the land was subdivided to create an endowment for the school from lot sales, thus the Masonic Addition. [St. John's College

burned in 1890, but it would have been in the center of the I-30/I-630 interchange just south of 10th Street. The boundaries for the Masonic Addition were 9th St. on the north, College St. on the east, Oakland Cemetery on the south, and McAlmont St. on the west (majority of which is a chunk of I-30 now).]

Today, the only reminders of the Masonic Addition and St. John's College are street names—College Street (named after St. John's College), Welch Street (named after Rev. Thomas Rice Welch, minister of the 1st Presbyterian Church in LR for 25 years and a prominent Mason), Barber Ave. (named after Luke E. Barber, Grand Master of the AR Lodge in 1853), and McAlmont St. (named for another prominent Mason, Dr. John J. McAlmont).

However, this neighborhood is known as Hanger Hill and gets its name from Peter Hanger, who platted Hanger's Addition in November 1869 immediately to the east of the Masonic Addition. Peter Hanger, himself an early resident of Little Rock, was married to Margaret Matilda Cunningham, daughter of Dr. Matthew and Eliza Bertrand Cunningham, who were some of Little Rock's first permanent white residents. Peter Hanger owned a sizeable amount of land stretching from the Arkansas River south to Sweet Home, where he operated a large farm. Hanger was instrumental to the early development of Little Rock because he contracted with the U.S. government to provide mail service to Arkansas, and he operated both steamboat and stagecoach lines. In 1859 Hanger acquired an additional 160 acres of land east of downtown Little Rock as well as a handsome Greek Revival-style home, which he called "Oakwood," from Dr. Robert Watkins. Oakwood was located on what is now the south side of the 1400 block of East 9th Street. Hanger subdivided the land adjacent to his home in 1869, forming Hanger's Addition.

As far as the "Hill" goes...an *Arkansas Gazette* article from about 1908 reported the final destruction of Hanger's Hill, "a little hill is rapidly sinking to the level of the railroad tracks and street car lines that cobweb that section of the city. The steam shovels are biting out chunks of earth and the heart's blood of the little hill is trickling down in bright red clay...another of Little Rock's landmarks is giving way to industry."

Reichardt Family & House

The years between 1848 and 1852 saw political unrest in Germany, triggering a rise in immigration to America. John A. Reichardt, Jr., was the first of the Reichardt family to settle in Little Rock, arriving in 1848. John, Jr.'s brothers, Christopher and George, arrived in LR two years later in 1850. Then in 1852, their

parents, John Reichardt, Sr., and Eva Catherine Reichardt, came to LR and brought the younger children with them.

Edward Reichardt, born in Austria in 1844, was only 8 years old when he came to LR with his parents. During the Civil War, Edward worked in a tannery in LR. After the war, he worked as a clerk for two of his brothers-in-law, Frederick Kramer and Charles Miller, who opened a grocery store on East Markham. The firm of Kramer, Miller & Co. and its successor, Miller & Penzel, became one of the most flourishing wholesale grocery businesses in the city. In 1870 Edward Reichardt partnered with Gottlieb Eicholz to establish a merchandising and cotton trading business. Reichardt later owned part interest in the first street railway system in LR (horse or mule-drawn streetcars started in LR in late 1870s) and in a railroad bridge across the Arkansas River at LR (Rock Street Railway Bridge??? If this is the Junction Bridge...it wasn't completed until 1884, after Reichardt's death). Reichardt was even one of the original promoters of the electric light system in LR (although he died before electricity was widely used in the city—used in a few businesses in 1883 & used in some residences in 1888). He was known as “one of LR's most progressive and successful businessmen.”

Reichardt purchased 3 lots at the SE corner of 12th & Welch streets in 1870 and constructed a 3-room cottage the following year. On New Year's Eve in 1872, Reichardt married Pauline Brandt, who had come to the U.S. with her parents from Prussia in 1853. For unknown reasons, the newly-weds initially stayed in an apartment at the corner of Markham & Commerce, and their first daughter, Eva, was born there in 1873. In 1874 when the Reichardts found out that they were expecting another child, they moved to the Welch St. house. Their second daughter, Emma, was born here in 1875.

Originally, this house was a 1-story, 3-room cottage laid out in an L-shaped plan with a front entry porch filling in the elbow of the ell. The house initially faced north toward 12th St. (there's still a door and porch on that side). Then about 1875 two rooms, now parlors, separated by a wide central hall were added to the west of the original structure. At this time, a more substantial front porch was added on the west side as well, making the house front on Welch St. instead of 12th. **See historic photo in hallway.

In 1880 a second addition to the southeast of the house provided a new dining room, kitchen, and two pantries (this was always called “the annex”). Then in December 1883, Edward Reichardt died unexpectedly. By this time, the Reichardts had had 6 children (one of which died at age 5, leaving them with 5

children) and constructed 2 additions to their house. It was jokingly said among family members that a room was added every time a child was born.

After Mr. Reichardt's death in 1883, his wife, Pauline Brandt Reichardt, was left to raise 5 children, and her two half-brothers, Julius and Otto Brandt, moved in with her as well. More space was needed, so in 1885, Mrs. Reichardt added the second story to the house. When the second story was added, the front porch was redecorated with Queen Anne-style posts and gingerbread that were in style during that period. The second story gable end also features decorative shingles and Queen Anne detailing. The interior walnut staircase, and presumably the entire second story addition/front porch remodel, was designed by LR architect Thomas Harding (also did St. Andrew's Cathedral & 1st Lutheran Church). Despite its numerous additions, the Reichardt House now presents a unified architectural appearance.

Strong Reichardt Women

For the majority of its existence, women have headed the Reichardt household. Beginning with Pauline Brandt Reichardt, who was widowed at the age of 33 with 5 children, the oldest of which was 9 at the time...after her husband's death, Mrs. Reichardt carried on her business affairs at the county courthouse, and her brother-in-law told her, "You're seen going to the Courthouse and nice women don't do that." She replied, "I'll fix it so they do," and began to take her daughters with her to the courthouse.

The Reichardts' second oldest child, Emma, married Jacob Hoeltzel {pronounced Hell-tsell} in January 1898, but Jacob Hoeltzel died that summer of appendicitis (at age 29). So Emma Reichardt Hoeltzel moved back to this house with her mother. Emma was 23 years old and pregnant at the time she was widowed. Emma's only child, Pauline Hoeltzel, was born in November 1898. After Pauline Reichardt's death in 1909, Emma Hoeltzel and her daughter, Pauline Hoeltzel, occupied the family home. They were both born in the house and lived there their entire lives. Emma didn't remarry, and Pauline never married. Emma Hoeltzel was active in civic and social affairs, and like her mother, she had spunk. From an early age, she discovered that it was unfair for women to pay taxes without the right to vote. She had asked her mother for an expensive birthday present, and her mother told her "no" because she had to pay taxes during that time and couldn't afford it. Later that day Emma overheard her uncles talking about an upcoming election and asked her mother for whom she would vote. Her mother replied that

women couldn't vote. Emma remarked, "Taxation without representation caused the Revolutionary War, and when I grow up, I'm going to vote."

Sure enough, Emma Hoeltzel was a charter member of the city's Women's Suffrage League and a member of the first League of Women Voters of LR. Mrs. Hoeltzel served as clerk of the Budget Committee for the state senate in 1915 and held the same position for the state House of Representatives in 1923. She was active in the auxiliary of United Spanish War Veterans, the Woman's City Club, the Fine Arts Club of AR, and the Pulaski Co. Historical Society. She was secretary of the LR Women's Division of the Democratic Party from 1927-29 and was elected several times to the City Democratic Central Committee from Ward 2. Finally, she was a member of the County Quorum Court from 1925 to 1970. Emma Hoeltzel died in 1971 at the age of 95.

Pauline Hoeltzel, only child of Emma Hoeltzel and granddaughter of Edward and Pauline Brandt Reichardt, was a notable figure in her own right and carried on the civic-minded traditions of her forebears. Miss Pauline graduated from LR High School at the age of 16 and went on to receive a Bachelor's Degree in German from the University of Arkansas as well as a Master's Degree in German from the University of Wisconsin...all by the time she was 20. In 1923 she started teaching at LR High School and was quickly chosen to teach extension classes for the U of A b/c she had a Master's Degree. Then in 1927, when the LR Junior College was housed in a wing of Central High School, Miss Pauline became one of the original faculty members of the school. She saw the LR Jr. College become a 4-year university in 1957 and then in 1969 she watched reluctantly as Little Rock University merged with the U of A to become UALR (hated to see school lose its independence). Hoeltzel was a professor of English and German at the school and also served as chair of the English and Foreign Languages departments as well as the Humanities Division of LR University. Gov. Sid McMath appointed Hoeltzel to serve a 10-year term on the U of A Board of Trustees from 1950 to 1960—she was the first female member of the board. When she retired in 1964, people joked that it would take 5 people to replace her because she was so involved in campus activities (school newspaper, honor society, sorority, etc.).

Hoeltzel was the first female to serve as deputy tax assessor in Pulaski County and was a longtime justice of the peace...until 1972 when an official on the Pulaski Co. Quorum Court thought she had died...he was actually a former student of hers and after reading her mother's obituary, mistakenly had Gov. Dale Bumpers appoint someone else to fill the position...Miss Pauline laughed about this incident, and it was even included in her own obituary. 😊

By popular vote, Miss Pauline was chosen as LR's Woman of the Year in 1949 in the annual *Arkansas Democrat* contest.

Miss Pauline was also involved in many organizations outside the university setting. She served as chair of the LR Women's Division of the Democratic National Party, presiding officer of the Arkansas Division of the American Association of University Women, state president of the Auxiliary of United Spanish War Veterans, district governor of Altrusa International, president of the Pulaski Co. Historical Society, and member of the QQA, Historic Preservation Alliance, AR Historical Association, the Woman's City Club, and the AR Arts Center Board. Pauline Hoeltzel died in 1989 at the age of 90.

Urban Farmstead

When this house was built in the early 1870s, it was common for families to keep enough livestock to sustain themselves. The Reichardt family had an urban farmstead on the land around the house—Edward Reichardt initially purchased 3 lots (equal to ½ acre), and the house is still located on the same piece of land. In the late 1800s, the Reichardt farm would have been laid out like this...see *How We Lived: LR as an American City* by Roy, Witsell & Nichols.

Starting in the southwest corner of yard—lawn tennis court, long arbor running N to S covered with grapes, flower garden, cold frame pit (you can still see this in the ground—it would have been covered with glass and served as a secure place to start seedlings), vegetable garden, chicken coop, cow barn w/ small lot, privy with a board walk to the back porch of the house, buggy shed w/ coal & wood storage, stables, carriage house, well house (on NE corner of house), and there was a small building connected to the rear of the house that enclosed the cistern. These outbuildings were gradually demolished after Pauline Brandt Reichardt died in 1909, signaling the end of the urban farmstead and the transition to a more modern lifestyle.

Interior

*****Gas lights will be on in the house—please don't touch them! Also, please do not touch the wallpaper in the house. It's really old...**

As Miss Pauline liked to say, "This house is a preservation, not a restoration"...descendants of Edward Reichardt occupied the house until Pauline Hoeltzel died in 1989. When Miss Pauline died, most of the home's furnishings

were sold with the house. Since then, it has been occupied by only 2 other families—Charlie & Ann Brown and Tommy & Lakresha Diaz. So the house exists in a rare state of preservation with Reichardt family portraits still hanging in the same places as they were in 1896.

The Reichardts added on to their house to accommodate their growing family, but the evolution of the home also indicated Edward Reichardt's success as a businessman in LR. The Reichardt House parlor is probably the oldest intact room in LR. While this room was certainly stylish for its day, it was not particularly elaborate, and neither the house nor the parlor would have been considered one of LR's finest during that period, rather it's a good example of a middle class house.

Parlor

--The west parlors & central hallway were added about 1875 along with a front porch on the west side, changing the front of the house to face Welch St.

The north parlor has always been known as the formal parlor. The parlor and the room across the hall (originally called the library—now a parlor as well) were redecorated in 1896 for the Reichardt daughters' debut party (Eva would have been 23 & Emma 21—debut announced that they were eligible to marry & introduced them to society for the first time). The wallpaper in both rooms was hung by a Mr. Heerwagen, grandfather of famed interior decorator Bill Heerwagen. Notice that the ceiling and wall do not form a right angle, but a curve—a thin screen-like material or canvas was used to create the curve and the wallpaper was put on top. This is called the "Heerwagen cove."

The fireplace is cast iron painted to look like marble and was made to burn coal—still has its coal grate.

The portraits of Edward and Pauline Brandt Reichardt still hang in the same places they were in the 1890s. Even the portrait of the Reichardt children on the easel is visible in a 1890s photo of the room.

The valences on the windows also date to the 1890s redecoration—Diazes found them in the attic. Both the parlor and the library across the hall have pocket doors, but dowel across the doorways always held draperies (Lakresha made the current drapes herself—but tie-backs are old). The fretwork over the doorways would have been typical of the 1890s—probably also done during redecoration. Pier mirrors in the house were purchased by the Reichardt family in the early 1880s.

The parlor has been so well-preserved b/c it was only used for Sunday visits and funerals; otherwise, it was not exposed to outside light and air (had window drapes that went down to the floor). Miss Pauline Hoeltzel called this room the “morgue” because: it was always cold in here, it held all the family portraits, and all the family funerals were in here.

The Reichardt family used to have a horse hair sofa in this room that was in the Whitehouse when Abraham Lincoln was in office. Reichardts acquired it sometime in the 1920s.

Front Hall: Notice photo of house b/f second story addition. Front door has original stained glass (~1880s?), “E. Reichardt” nameplate, and doorbell.

Library

Originally called the library, this room was also redecorated in 1896 for the debut parties. However, the wallpaper border with palm sprigs is a reproduction of the 1890s wallpaper. It was installed by Becky Witsell and Carl Miller in the 1970s to replace the deteriorating original paper. Lakresha did the stenciling on the ceiling in this room—there was originally another piece of wallpaper above the palm border, but it kept falling down.

Current “Library”

This was one of the 3 original rooms in the Reichardt cottage. It was larger before the hallway was added to go back to the big dining room (added in 1880). This room was originally a bedroom, then a back sitting room, Miss Pauline Hoeltzel’s playroom, and beginning in 1920, a dining room. It was redecorated by Charlie & Ann Brown. Now serves as a library.

Downstairs Bathroom

Was original kitchen in 3-bedroom house. Used as the kitchen until the 1880 addition of a large dining room and new kitchen. In the early 1900s this was used as a “junk room” with a work bench...later converted back into a kitchen by the 1920s. Diazes made it a downstairs bathroom—moved the original bathroom fixtures from the old upstairs bathroom down here so more people could see them (tub is antique but not original to house). Lakresha did tile work.

Next room down hallway

Also part of the original 3-room house. Once used as the maid's room and later the storeroom or "plunder room." Now the Diaz's living room.

Large Dining Room

Part of the 1880 "annex." Has 2-tone walnut paneling. Was originally family dining room. Used by Pauline Hoeltzel as family room/study. Has a pass-through to the kitchen, where servants could pass food into the dining room w/o being seen or place food on shelves and then come through to the dining room side to serve it. Dining room table was supposedly purchased from a Yankee officer that had been stationed in LR during the Civil War...also supposedly an exact duplicate of the table in Ulysses S. Grant's home in Galena, Illinois.

Kitchen

Part of 1880 annex. Redecorated by Tommy & Lakresha. Has two pantries—one of which would have had an inside door (warm pantry) to hold dry goods, and another that would have had a door to the outside (cold pantry) to hold perishable goods.

Back porch

Always been latticed, but Diazes cut a window through lattice to let in some light.

Upstairs

Walnut staircase designed by Thomas Harding. Bathroom & four bedrooms upstairs. As you can see, this is a work in progress—contrary to Miss Pauline's assertion that this house was a "preservation, not a restoration," the Diazes are currently working to restore the upstairs.

Notice bureau—from Reichardt family.

Rooms would have had screen doors on them to provide privacy as well as air flow (and keep out bugs).

Notice small room inside front north room—a dressing room for one of the Reichardt daughters. B/c the rooms didn't have closet space, everyone kept their clothes in giant bureaus in the upstairs hallway. After graduation, one of the Reichardt girls (Eva or Emma) got their choice of a trip to Europe or a private dressing room, and she chose the dressing room.

Diaz Family

Tommy & Lakresha Diaz have done an enormous amount of work on this house since they purchased it three years ago!! It was in terrible shape and barely visible with trees engulfing the house.

- ❖ Bee hive removal—bee hive in btwn floors on north wall (missing siding on outside). Was about 2' x 6' and had probably been there for 20 years. Surprisingly, no one would work on the house until the bee hive was removed. ☺
- ❖ Tree trimming/removal
- ❖ Sewer line repair (completely broken line)
- ❖ Rotting floors upstairs
- ❖ HVAC
- ❖ New plumbing required (b/c some plumbing was on outside of house—pipes literally ran down outside of house)
- ❖ Didn't have electricity in all rooms—some just set up for gas
- ❖ Repair of exterior wood siding that was rotten or missing
- ❖ Paint
- ❖ Plaster repair
- ❖ Storm windows
- ❖ Insulation in attic & under house
- ❖ Porch floors rebuilt (Lakresha's dad)
- ❖ 1885 roof had to be repaired in several places

Tommy & Lakresha did everything themselves except for the systems, exterior paint, and roof.

Thibaut Limited Editions Historic Homes of America Vol. VII made a reproduction wallpaper print out of a sample from the Reichardt House parlor. Wallpapered one room (the large dining room) for free for the Diaz family.

