

MORE LIGHT ON BARAT ARCHITECT EGAN

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Since the historical article appeared in *Communiqué*, more information has turned up on James Egan, who designed Barat's distinctively-facaded Main Building. The adjacent photograph is from the second "edition," the 228-page version of *Biographical Sketches of the Leading Men of Chicago* (Chicago 1876, facing p. 223).

Published shortly after the 1871 Chicago Fire, this work in effect records the stories of the men who saved the city, rebuilt and housed its business and social life following that traumatic event.

One of those who came to the fore was Egan, an educated Irishman who had arrived just before the Chicago Fire. He won the competition to build a new Court House complex on an unprecedented scale for example, though by the 1890s this

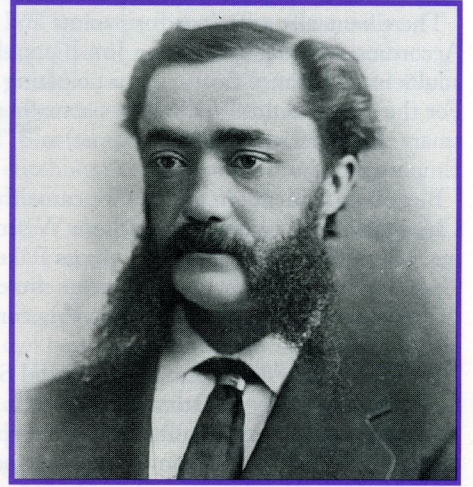
already was being replaced by a Henry Ives Cobb successor building — both for the vastly expanded Cook County population and also because the Court House turned out to be dated by the time it was completed in the mid-1880s.

Egan's was a post-Fire design experiment Court House which helped usher in an era of experimentation which led to the "Chicago School" in the next decade. "Make no little plans," Chicago architect Daniel Burnham would say later about the 1909 Chicago Plan.

Also, in 1996 the City of Chicago designated Egan's 1882 French Renaissance Hotel St. Benedict Apartments on Chicago Avenue, a National Register landmark, located just west of the Water Tower.

Egan's building at Barat today, still expansively radiant in its country setting atop a hill and with its park before it,

apparently is the best surviving example of a pioneering designer of great powers, a precursor and contemporary of better-known leaders of the "Chicago School."



James Egan