

James Frank Eppenstein Biography



James Frank Eppenstein - Class of 1915 - b. 1899 d. 1955

From the EHS Yearbook, The Maroon: *"Of all my father's family I love myself the best"*, Glee Club '15; Chimes of Normandy; Junior Exhibition '14; Honorable Mention in Debate & Essay Contest; Class Play Cast; Freshman Debating Club.

Born in Chicago in 1899, Eppenstein received his Bachelor's degree from Cornell University at just 20 years old, and went on to attend the University of Michigan, the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, and receive his Masters of Architecture from the Harvard in 1933. After working at the Elgin-American Watch Company in Elgin, Illinois from 1919 to 1928, he founded his own architecture and design firm in 1934.

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FORGOTTEN CHICAGO

• HOME COLUMNS ARTICLES FEATURES EVENTS LINKS REDDIT

Forgotten Work of James F. Eppenstein, Part 3
by Patrick Steffes



RESIDENCE OF DR. & MRS. G. F. WEINFELD, RAVINIA, ILLINOIS

James F. Eppenstein, Architect, Architectural Catalog Co., Inc., 1938

Eppenstein's tremendous skill in commercial projects extended to residential designs. One of the first known houses completed by Eppenstein was built for Doctor and Mrs. G.F Weinfeld, in Highland Park, Illinois and first published nationally in 1936.

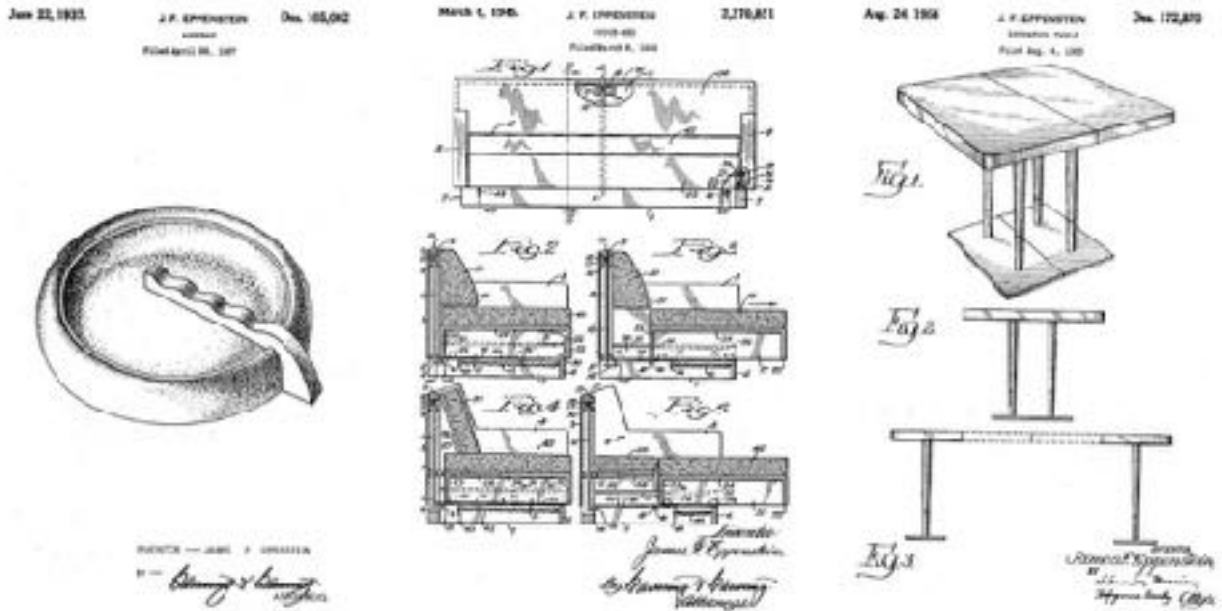
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Train Talk Bloggers

In articles, during presentations, and on tours, Forgotten Chicago aims to bring attention to the careers of little-known design professionals who made a significant, if little remembered or studied, contribution to the Chicago area's built environment. Perhaps no modernist Chicago architect and designer better exemplifies *forgotten* than **James F. Eppenstein** (1899-1955). Eppenstein's work was referred to in both our FC175 event celebrating Chicago's 175th birthday in March 2012 and our June 2013 article on South Side Shoreline Motels. In a career of just 30 years, Eppenstein would design everything from the interior and exterior of a distinctive train for the North Shore Line Railroad *seen above* to single-family homes, commercial buildings, and remodeled interiors of existing buildings for a wide variety of clients.

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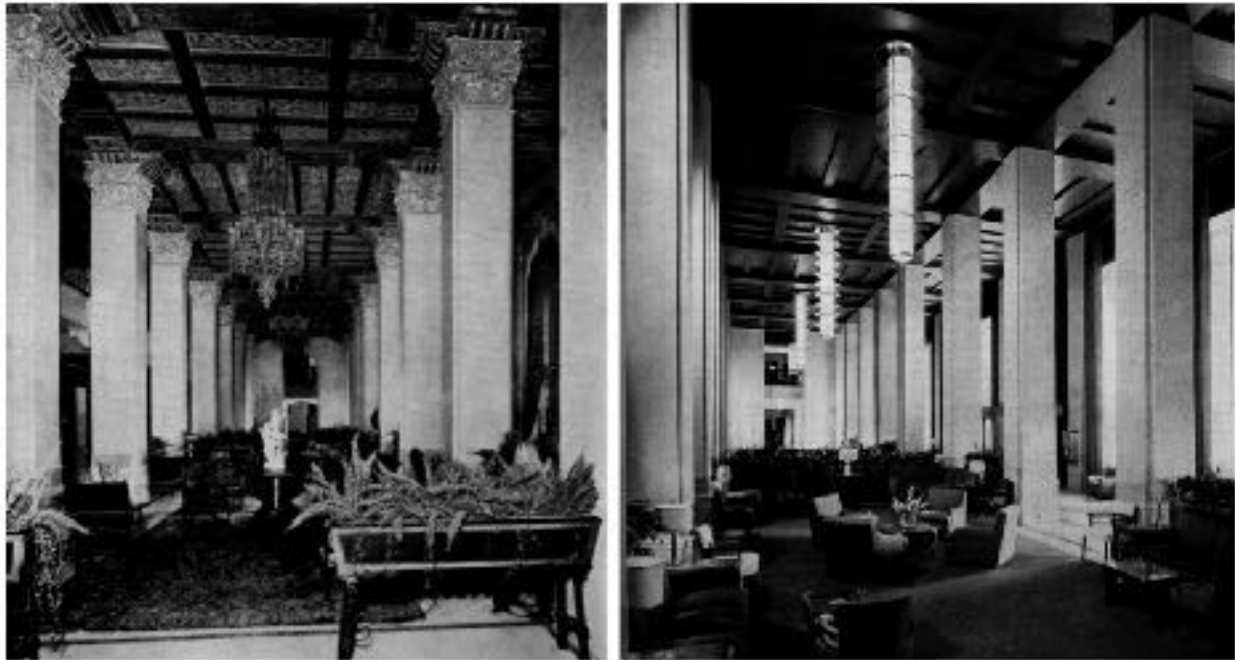


Eppenstein had twelve U.S. patents awarded in his name. These included *above left to right*, a cantilevered ashtray from 1937, a couch that turns into a bed from 1945, and an extension table awarded a patent in 1954. Many of the projects listed below also mention Eppenstein as the project's furniture designer; it is not known if any examples of his pieces survive.

Besides an architect and an interior designer, Eppenstein was a talented inventor and furniture designer. Utilizing some of Forgotten Chicago's vast database of images and articles of mostly non-digitized period publications, newspaper archives, and unpublished images housed at a variety of institutions, we have identified 76 building projects designed by James Eppenstein during his brief, but prolific, career. Following is a small sample of some of Eppenstein's known built works.

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Eppenstein's Hotel Commissions



Architectural Forum, 1937

One of Eppenstein's more notable projects was a 1930s remodeling was for the enormous Shoreland Hotel at 5454 South Lake Shore, seen before and after renovation in the photographs above published in 1937. After decades of neglect, this former hotel has been brought back to its former glory, now as an apartment building, by **Studio Gang**, who has wisely used Eppenstein's 1930s remodeling *above right* and not the hotel's rather gloomy original lobby design *above left*.



Architectural Forum, 1937

Although the Shoreland Hotel's past affiliation with criminals and celebrities is extensively noted elsewhere, Eppenstein's contribution to the remodeling of the Shoreland is seemingly overlooked except by *Forgotten Chicago* and *Studio Gang*. Eppenstein's Shoreland remodeling was documented in contemporary nationally published magazines, including *Architectural Forum*, *seen above*. Eppenstein also designed many of the rooms in this hotel; above is a floor plan and photograph of one of these rooms.

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Fortune, 1935

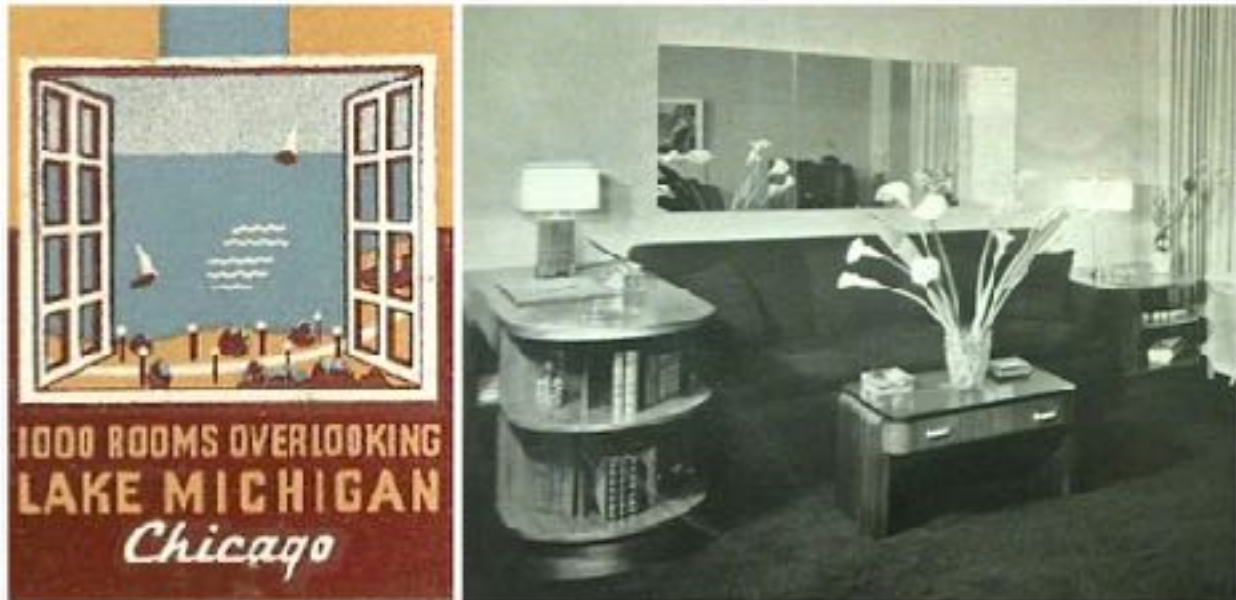
Eppenstein and some of his body of work were discovered by the Forgotten Chicago while building a database from non-digitized local and national magazines, as well as library and private collections, containing (as of this writing) over 15,000 images, articles, plans, and ephemera relating to the built environment of Chicago and elsewhere. The Shoreland was originally built in 1926 by architect Meyer Fridstein, but Eppenstein's extensive interior remodeling a decade later, including the largely intact lobby, was glaringly absent from the 36-page September 2010 Chicago Landmarks Commission Report.

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Chicago History in Postcards

No contemporary color photographs of the Shoreland have been found as of this writing, but according to the Architectural Forum article that was the source of many of these images, this was the hotel lobby's original color scheme.



Left: Chuckman Collection Right: James F. Eppenstein, Architect, Architectural Catalog Co., Inc., 1938

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Then, as now, one of the main amenities of the Shoreland are the spectacular views of the lake and skyline, seen *below* from the northeast corner room on the 12th floor. According to Studio Gang, although the hotel once advertised “1000 rooms” *above left* there were actually fewer than 800 hotel rooms and suites. The Shoreland currently has 330 apartments.



Patrick Steffes

As with many other extravagant hotels built in Chicago during the booming 1920s, the Shoreland became a financial disaster after World War II. Reportedly built for \$6 million in 1926, the hotel was sold in 1954 for only \$3 million. When the building was sold in foreclosure in 1974, the University of Chicago acquired what had once been one of the most luxurious hotels in Chicago for just \$750,000. Used as a dormitory by students at the University until 2009, this former luxury hotel was showing signs of its age when the current renovations began.



Patrick Steffes

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Although much of the extensive restoration of the Shoreland has been completed, work will be done in the future on the building's two large public spaces that were not remodeled by Eppenstein: the Louis XVI Room *seen above* and the Crystal Ballroom. Other former meeting and dining rooms of the building have been restored, and can be used by residents of the building.



Patrick Steffes

As of this writing, the Shoreland Hotel's current renovation is nearing completion; above is a view of the lobby in December 2013. For the first time in decades, the Shoreland is once again a luxury Hyde Park rental building, with the spirit of Eppenstein's dramatic lobby remodeling still intact.

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Architectural Forum, 1935

In addition to The Shoreland, Eppenstein remodeled a modest cocktail lounge in what would later become a tragic footnote in the history of another famed Chicago hotel. The long-vanished Hotel LaSalle by Holabird & Roche at 10 North LaSalle had been an important Loop landmark since 1909, and would have been overdue for a freshening by the 1930s. Eppenstein's swank remodeling included what became a signature of many of his works, a large mural acting as a focal point to the room. Above is Eppenstein's interior remodeling of the Hotel LaSalle published in 1935; this mural featuring animals was completed by Chicago artist David Leavitt.

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James F. Eppenstein, Architect, Architectural Catalog Co., Inc., 1938

Architectural Forum was enthusiastic about Eppenstein's street-level bar remodeling in this vast hotel. In a 1935 article, they gushed, "New materials – leather, stainless metals, glass – with quantities of lightness, color and durability adapt themselves so perfectly to the modern bar that they have become as typical of today's drinking places as the mahogany bar and brass rail of yesterday. In the Hotel La Salle Bar . . . the designer has displayed architectural ingenuity in interpreting these materials with no sacrifice to individuality."

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Above: Ground floor plan of Hotel LaSalle. Fire started at point X, spread throughout cocktail lounge, then through unprotected door into lobby and up the open stairs and pierced elevator shafts.

Left: *Architectural Record*, 1947 Right: *Chicago History in Postcards*, no date

Eppenstein's Hotel LaSalle bar (highlighted in the floor plan above left) was the starting point in one of the worst fires in Chicago history. Shortly after midnight on June 5, 1946, a small fire started between what was then known as the Silver Lounge and the elevator shafts; due to a series of design flaws in the hotel, the fire quickly grew and engulfed the hotel's famed walnut paneled lobby. With fire and smoke spreading quickly through the hotel, 61 people were killed and more than 200 were injured.

Left: Lobby and mezzanine of Hotel LaSalle were finished with walnut veneer paneling that delaminated and burned fiercely. Fire started in the adjoining cocktail lounge, also finished with combustible material. Right: False wall above elevator door lintels buckled and opened shafts to the flames. An open stairway (not shown) permitted fire and stinging smoke to penetrate quickly to the upper floors
Press Association Photo



Architectural Record, 1947

According to a 1947 article published in *Architectural Record* above, the Hotel LaSalle's devastating fire was believed to have started in the false wall behind the wall of the bar designed by Eppenstein and an elevator shaft, just to the left of the zebra seen in the 1935 *Architectural*

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Forum photograph. The fire at the Hotel LaSalle, and other deadly hotel fires in the 1940s, would lead to changes to fire safety regulations throughout the country, including Chicago.

After an extensive remodeling and improvements in safety features, the LaSalle Hotel reopened and operated for nearly three more decades under its original name. This hotel closed on June 29, 1976 and was demolished soon after; the current office building on this site was completed in 1979 by Perkins+Will, with the hotel's foundations reused for the new 26-story building.



Left: Google Street View, June 2011 Right: Patrick Steffes, January 2014

The site of the Eppenstein's bar and the start of the LaSalle Hotel fire is currently a bank of Chase ATM machines, seen *above left*. Chicago, compared with many other cities, has virtually no markers commemorating major disasters, notably fires. In Atlanta, the Winecoff Hotel fire that occurred some six months after the fire at the LaSalle, is remembered in the prominent marker *above right*.



Left: James F. Eppenstein, Architect, Architectural Catalog Co., Inc., 1938 Right: CardCow
Although nearly all of the work by Eppenstein discovered by Forgotten Chicago has been in the Chicago area, he also redesigned a portion of the exterior and interior of the 1927 Roosevelt Hotel in Pittsburgh, illustrated *above left* in a 1938 monograph published on Eppenstein's work.

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From the street, there was no doubt about the type of business behind this prominent curved glass block wall.



Architectural Forum, 1937

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For the Roosevelt Hotel, besides the exterior of the Gentleman's Bar pictured in the first image, Eppenstein would also design the Roosevelt Hotel's Coffee Shop and Hideaway Bar, *seen above top*. The bar's floor plan and Gentleman's Bar front section is *seen above bottom*. While the Roosevelt Hotel closed decades ago, the building remains in downtown Pittsburgh, now as a mixed-use building.

Eppenstein's Office



The walls of the reception room, shown above, are covered in imitation pigskin, with copper strips used to form panels. The ceiling is gold leaf in color. The specially designed furniture and fixtures are mahogany in natural finish. The carpet is copper in color and the chairs are upholstered in green leather. Indirect lighting is provided through the vertical recessed glass wall panel shown at the left in the illustration. . . . At the left is a detail in the private office of Mr. Eppenstein.

American Architect, 1935

Imitation pigskin notwithstanding, Eppenstein's work for his own office was, in the midst of the Great Depression, rather luxurious. The 1935 *American Architect* article noted that the walls were a mahogany veneer, with couches covered in wool and leather, with a ceiling a "gold leaf" color and copper-colored carpeting. It is not known if any of the furniture shown, presumably designed by Eppenstein, survives today.

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American Architect, 1935

The second Eppenstein project known to be published after the Hotel LaSalle Bar was for his own office. These images were published in 1935 in *American Architect*, a magazine that would cease publishing three years later.¹⁶ For Eppenstein's office, this magazine exclaimed, "The office of James F. Eppenstein, designed and furnished in the modern manner, is at once impressive."¹⁷ Eppenstein's office was located in the 35 East Wacker building,¹⁸ a building currently home to the **Chicago Chapter of the American Institute of Architects**.



Henrici's Cafe in Mart Is Being Modernized

Henrici's restaurant in the Merchandise Mart is being modernized from plans by James F. Eppenstein and Raymond Schwab, architects, at a reported cost of \$150,000, John R. Thompson Jr., president of John R. Thompson company, which operates the Henrici units, said yesterday. Completion is set for Dec. 15. A mural 60 feet long and 10 feet high painted in luminescent colors on a black background, by Felix Ryvaly, Chicago artist, is included.



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Brilliant, luminous murals highlight the Fantasy Room, a Henrici restaurant in Chicago's Merchandise Mart. To keep attention on the murals, designer Eppenstein subdued colors around them, using much black and dark green.

Top Left: eBay Top Center: Chicago Tribune, 1947 Top Right: Chicago Tribune, 1952 Bottom: Institutions, 1953

Eppenstein and his business partner Raymond Schwab worked on four known projects for the John R. Thompson Company, including a spectacular 1947 remodeling of their Henrici's unit at the Merchandise Mart in association with artist Felix Ruvolo, spelled incorrectly *above*.

In part two of this series, we explore Eppenstein's extensive commercial, retail, and restaurant work. A future article will also look at his residential commissions, including his own 1930s modernist residence on North Astor Street.

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James F. Eppenstein, Architect, Architectural Catalog Co., Inc., 1938

Still standing as of late 2013 on Woodland Road in Highland Park, Illinois, the Weinfeld house is one of the relatively rare International School houses built in the Chicago area during the Great Depression. Based on published photographs of the architect's previous designs, the living room *shown above* appears to have included Eppenstein-designed custom furniture.



James F. Eppenstein, Architect, Architectural Catalog Co., Inc., 1938

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The interior of the Weinfeld house is as clean and stripped-down as the exterior. One of the home's adult bedrooms is seen *above left*, and the children's bedroom is seen *above right*. According to the Eppenstein family, Doctor Weinfeld was a well-known pediatrician to many prominent Chicago-area families, including their own. Eppenstein's granddaughter Cindy recalled in 2014 that while the doctor was a "lovely and kind" man, Dr. Weinfeld was also "tremendously fat."



James F. Eppenstein, Architect, Architectural Catalog Co., Inc., 1938

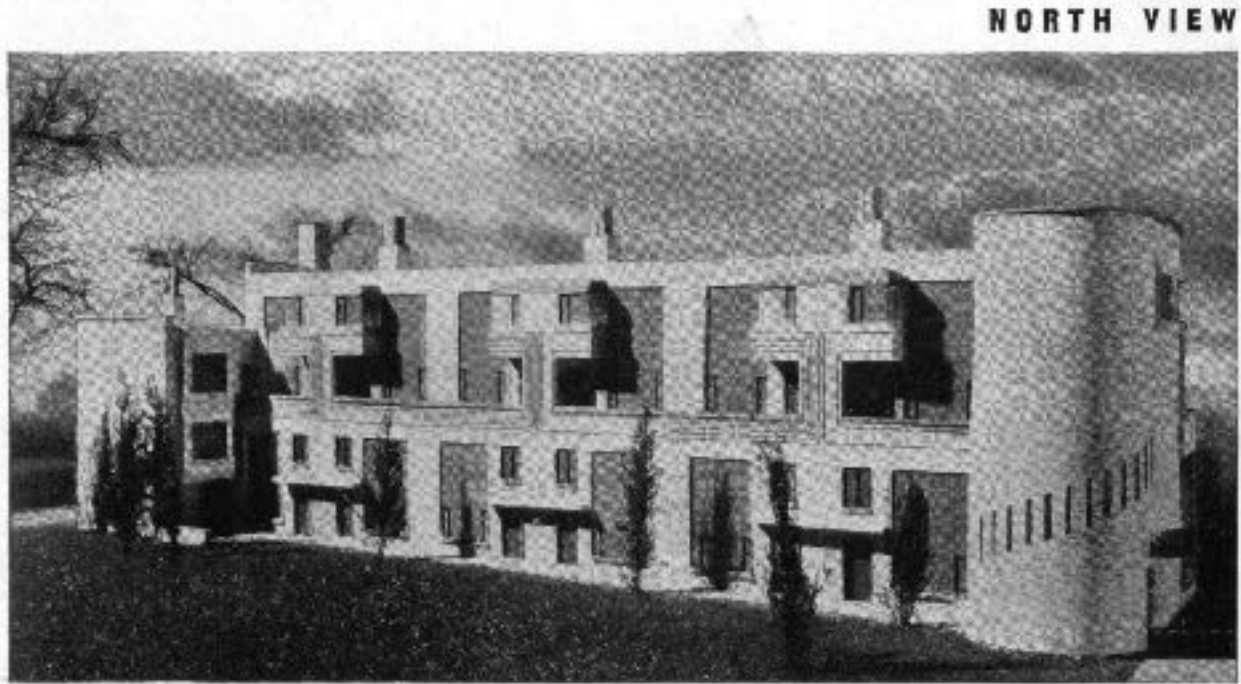
Another early Eppenstein residential commission was the apartment for Rogers Follansbee, located in the landmark Andrew Rebori and Edgar Miller-designed 1936 Fisher Studios apartment building at 1209 North State Parkway in Chicago. As with the Weinfeld House in Highland Park, this apartment may have also included custom-designed furniture by Eppenstein.



Curbed Chicago, July 2014

The Follansbee apartment was in one of the most notable apartment buildings built in Chicago in the 1930s; units in this building are now condominiums. It is not clear which unit Eppenstein designed for Follansbee; a unit with the same windows, ceiling, and steps *seen above left* was for sale in July 2014 for \$259,000 as featured in Curbed Chicago.

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Architectural Forum, 1937

The rarely-seen north view of the Fisher Studios is seen *above* in a photograph of the building's model. The apartment designed by Eppenstein has the same style of window as the units shown.



Left: James F. Eppenstein, Architect, Architectural Catalog Co., Inc., 1938 Right: Patrick Steffes, June 2014

By 1938, Eppenstein would also design an apartment for David Rosenthal, seen *above*. Although no address was listed in the monograph shown *above left*, census records for 1940 show a David Rosenthal living at 1301 North Spaulding, an older building just west of Humboldt Park with what appears to be a circa-1930s remodeling, which may have once contained a

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tavern. It is not known as of this writing if this is the actual location for this commission, or if Eppenstein may have also remodeled the ground floor of this building with his trademark limestone trim between the windows and the curb line.

ARCHITECT BUYS BURRY HOUSE IN ASTOR STREET

James F. Eppenstein, architect, 425 Briar place, yesterday bought the nine room three story brick residence at 1432 Astor street, from Mrs. William S. Burry of 1448 Lake Shore drive, for a reported \$22,500.

The house, occupying a 25 by 110 foot lot, was built many years ago by B. E. Sunny. The late William S. Burry bought it in 1913. For the last few years it has been vacant.

The new owner will remodel both exterior and interior and modernize the property for his own use. Mrs. Mary Erskine, of the office of Frieda Foltz, negotiated the sale.



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CITY RESIDENCE SHOWS MARVELS OF REMODELING

Bath, Study and Bedroom
Have Built-In Items.

BY LOUISE BARGELT.

An optimistic poet once opined to the effect that lives of great men should remind us that we could make our own lives a bit better if we tried. Granted this is a fact, it's equally true that even the most de luxe pieces of modernization work give us ideas galore for work of our own we may be planning.

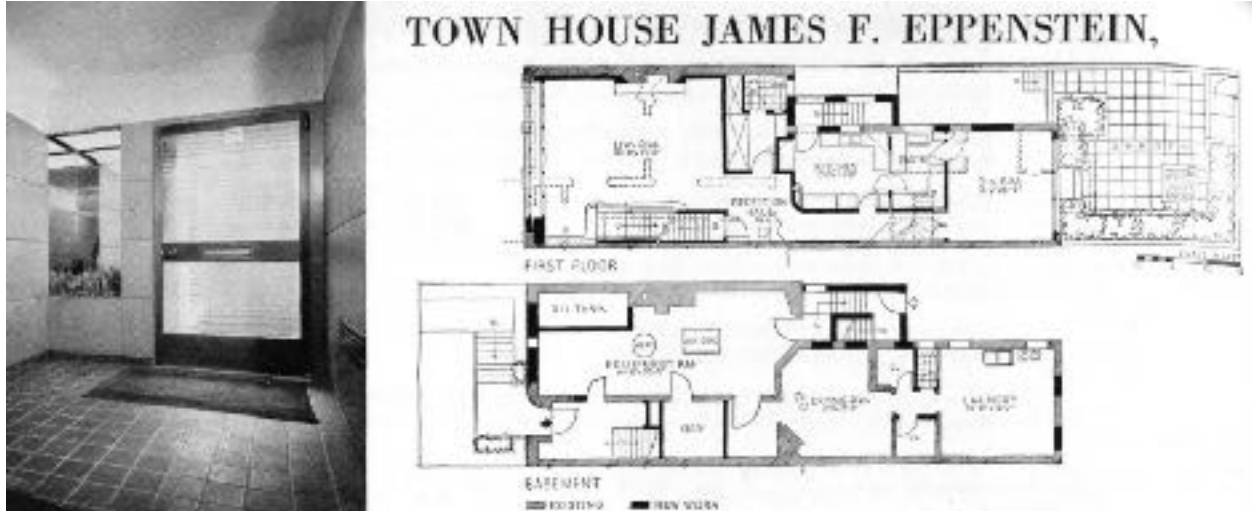
An instance of the wide appeal to be found in an excellent remodeling project is the modernized residence of James F. Eppenstein, architect, at 1432 Astor street.



*Top Left: Chicago Tribune, 1938 Top Right and Bottom Right: Architectural Forum, 1939
Bottom Left: Chicago Tribune, 1940*

The most significant residential work of Eppenstein's nearly two-decade career was for his family home at 1432 North Astor in Chicago, as shown *above* and *below*. Widely reported in local and national publications, this building's exterior is intact as of 2015. Notably, as with many significant and irreplaceable Chicago buildings, this home is not an individually listed city landmark as of this writing.

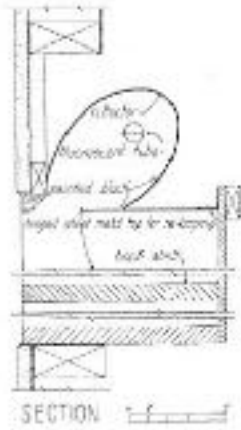
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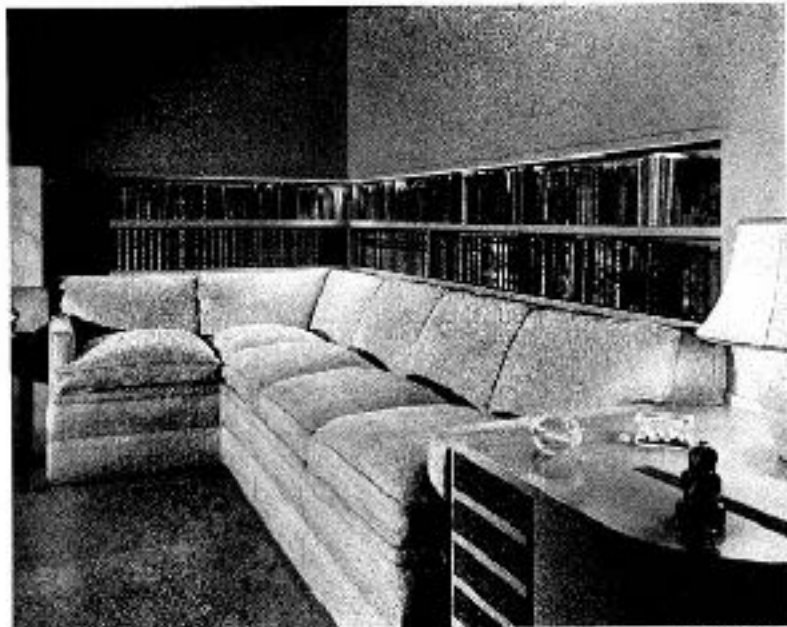
Architectural Forum, 1939

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RECESSED BOOKSHELVES



Bookshelves recessed in the wall have no top surface to collect dust and tempt disorderly overflow storage. Like all wall shelves, these are also conveniently out of the reach of small children, but the deep couches may make them somewhat difficult for adult use.



JAMES F. EPPENSTEIN, Architect, Chicago, Ill.

AMERICA-LOGGERS

Architectural Forum, 1941

In an unusual move, Eppenstein moved the home's entrance to the basement as seen in the floor plans *at top*. This drastic remodeling of a decades-old home into one of the Gold Coast's most ultra-modern residences is one of the many mostly forgotten and little-noted stories of the ever-changing built environment of Chicago.

Eppenstein's town home was notable enough to be published nationally in 1939 and 1941 in leading architectural magazine *Architectural Forum*, as seen above. Now more than 75 years old and a rare International Style single-family home in Chicago, photographs of this home are not known to have ever appeared in any books or guides on the history of Chicago architecture.

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The James Eppensteins found their 10 room Astor st. residence growing too big for them, so they remodeled the building and created a three room apartment for themselves.

Left: Realty & Building, 1952 Right: Chicago Tribune, 1953

With their two daughters grown and living elsewhere, by 1952 Eppenstein would remodel their four-level home into three apartments, with the architect and his wife occupying the floor above the basement level, as described in the 1952 Realty & Building article *above*. This remodeling added a door and exterior staircase to the building seen *above left*; this door would later be removed and the original row of windows restored in a later conversion back to a single-family home.

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RESIDENCE OF MR. & MRS. ROBERT D. MICHELS, WINNETKA, ILLINOIS

James F. Eppenstein, Architect, Architectural Catalog Co., Inc., 1938

In contrast to his other ultra-modern homes and residential remodelings, during the 1930s Eppenstein would also design several more traditional homes on Chicago's North Shore, perhaps for more conservative clients. One of these homes was the Robert Michels home in Winnetka, as seen *above*. Completed by the publication of a monograph on Eppenstein's work in 1938, the address and current fate of this home is unknown.

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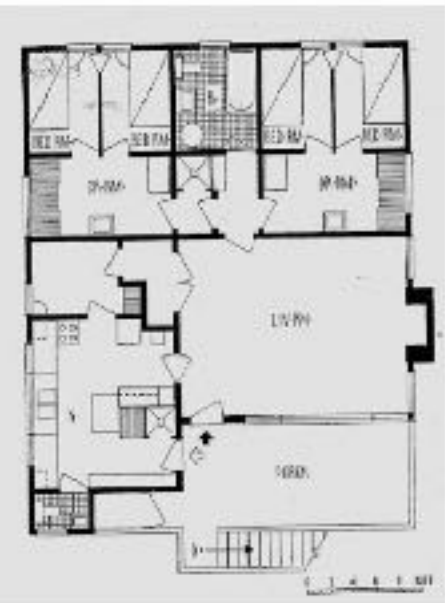


MODERN DESIGN SHOWS ITS APPROPRIATENESS IN A RUSTIC SETTING USUALLY RESERVED FOR THE LOG CABIN

Architectural Forum, 1944

This modest hunting lodge in Henry, Illinois, a small Illinois River town north of Peoria, is one of the smaller Eppenstein homes known to have been built. In the 1944 *Architectural Forum* article where these photos and floor plans were published, the article declares, “Equally direct and assured is the general treatment of a structure whose main virtue is simplicity without the fake rusticity that usually accompanies such buildings.”⁴

LIVING ROOM EMPHASIZES SOLID COMFORT WITHOUT FRILLS

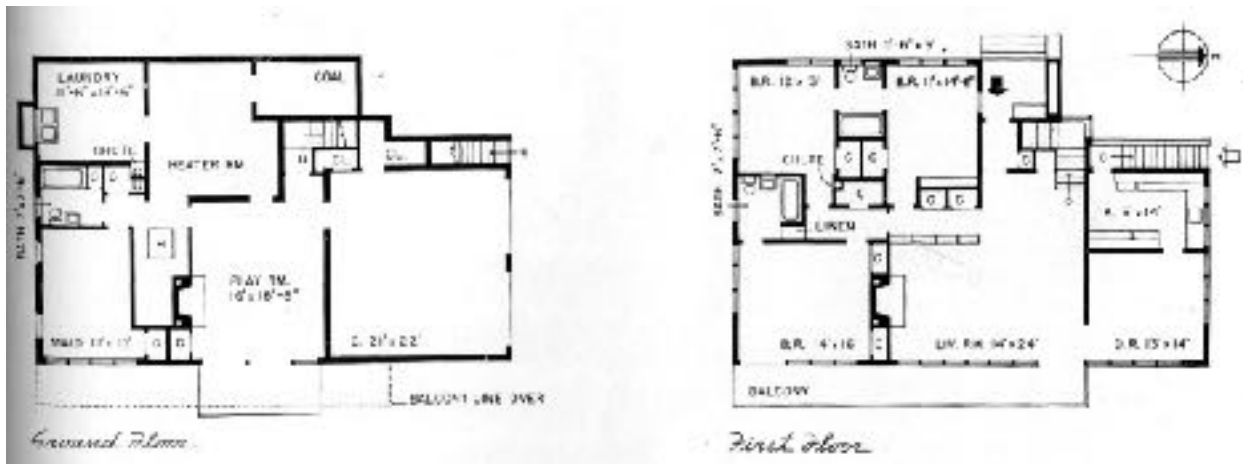
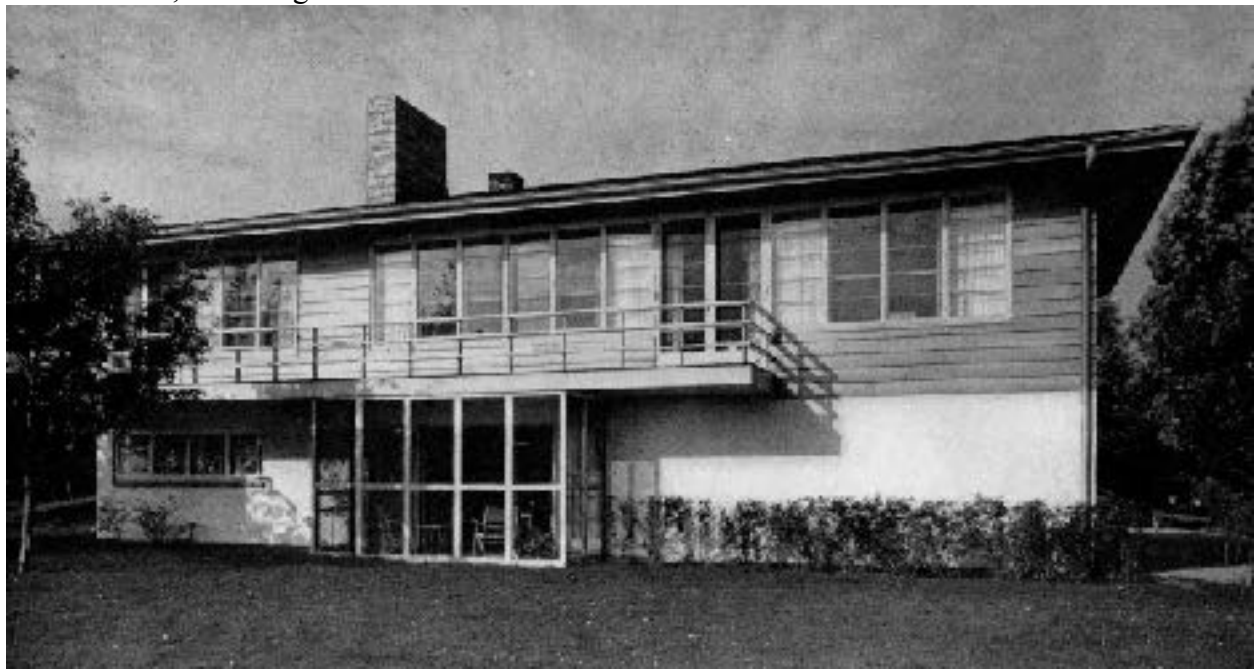


Architectural Forum, 1944

The unique design of this lodge’s compact bedrooms and adjacent dressing rooms was also noted in the article describing this commission, and as with the Michels house in Winnetka, the location and fate of this hunting lodge is unknown as of this writing. The Forgotten Chicago

James Frank Eppenstein Biography

crew has studied aerial maps, driven around Henry and the banks of the Illinois River, and contacted the Henry Public Library, but we were unable to obtain any additional information on this structure, including if it remains extant in 2015.



Homes Selected by the Editors of Progressive Architecture, 1949

First published in *Architectural Record* in 1941, Eppenstein would design a home in Menominee, Michigan, the southernmost point of the Upper Peninsula, and a rare commission for him outside of Illinois. Perched on a hillside overlooking Lake Michigan, this home featured a practical two-way linen closet, as shown *above center right*. As with many of these previously unstudied Eppenstein commissions, the fate of this home is also unknown.

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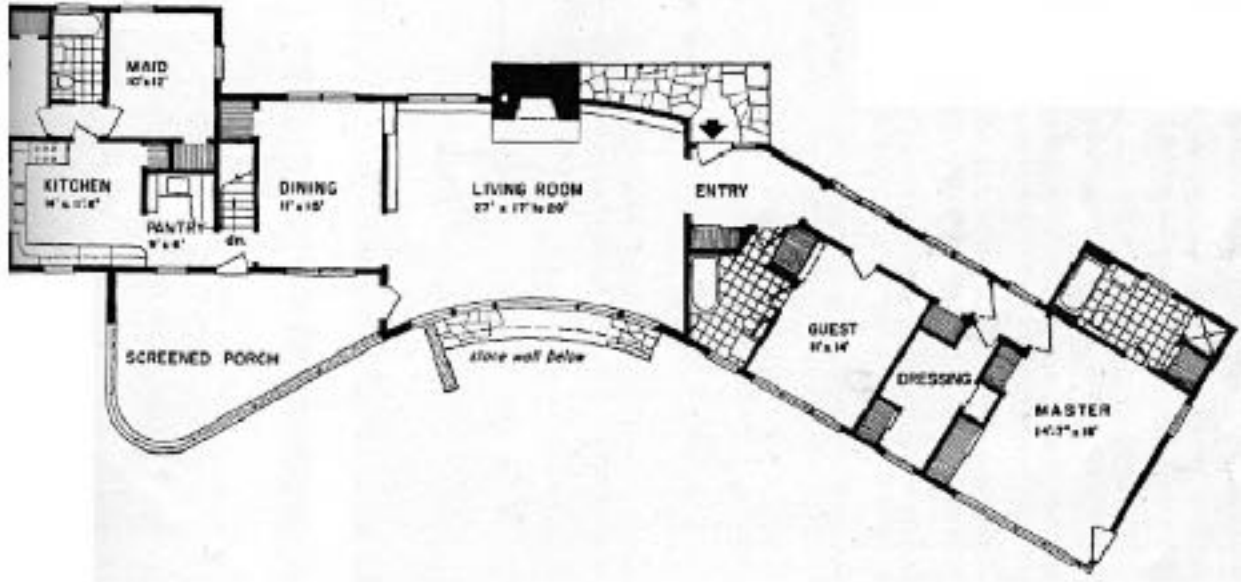
Modern furniture, dramatically patterned draperies, and a fireplace facing of beige-gray travertine marble have rejuvenated this living room in the home of the B. W. Heinemans on the south side. The architect and interior designer was James F. Eppenstein,

Chicago Tribune, 1947

As shown above, a residential remodeling by Eppenstein was published by the *Chicago Tribune* in 1947 for the Heineman family on the “south side”. Although no address was given in the above article, attorney Ben Heineman as listed in a 1949 phone book as living on East 48th Street in Kenwood. Eppenstein would also design the law offices of Swiren, Heineman & Antonon at 135 South LaSalle in 1945.




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Architectural Forum, 1948

In the years before and after World War II, Eppenstein kept current with residential design trends, and moved away from the sometimes severe International Style of his buildings in the 1930s. The final Eppenstein commission known to be published nationally (1948) was also far from Chicago.

This home was built for an unknown client in tony Chappaqua, New York. The town achieved notoriety in 1999 when President Bill Clinton and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton purchased a home there to establish residency for Clinton's run for the U.S. Senate race in New York State in 2000. The location and fate of this home is also not known as of this writing.

THE DECORATOR JAMES EPPENSTEIN 

THE THEME LAKE SHORE MODERN 

"Good modern," says James F. Eppenstein, outstanding Chicago architect, noted member of the American Institute of Decorators and creator of many a famous modern home in the Great Lakes Country, "is like any period style in one respect. It's better when keyed to carpet."

The Gulistan Resilience carpet does things for the room above—many things. The smart dead guy is a perfect base for the subtle color scheme. The thick, sculptured texture contrasts nicely with gleaming marble and wood. Well-to-wall in one soft color, Resilience makes the room look larger, more spacious. Gulistan Resilience can do things for that room of yours—bring out new beauty you never knew was there.

There are other lovely Gulistan weaves. All 100% virgin wool pile, from \$8.75 per sq. yd. up. (Demand for Gulistan still outstrips supply. Delivery from your favorite store may be delayed.)

GULISTAN *Carpet*

Chicago Tribune, 1948

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In 1948, the same year as photographs of his Chappaqua home was published, Eppenstein appeared in an ad for Gulistan Carpets in the *Chicago Tribune*. Gulistan, one of America's oldest companies, could trace its roots to 1818, declared bankruptcy in December 2012, and went out of business in December 2013. It is not known if the curious term "Great Lakes Country" as seen *above* was in wide use in the Midwest in the late 1940s, or was an invention of this North Carolina-based carpet manufacturer or their advertising agency.

Although an utterly defunct company, Gulistan Carpets maintains a presence as of this writing from beyond the corporate graveyard. As is sometimes the case in the age of social media, Gulistan's Facebook page is still eerily online at this writing. Gulistan's most recent post dates from November 2012, correctly predicting a strong housing market through at least 2014.



FOR A GREAT LAKES HOME—The airy and restful living room sketched here is one of the 18 model rooms which are being constructed in the exhibition hall of the Palmer House by representatives of all 18 chapters of the American Institute of Decorators and which will be open to the public for a moderate admission fee June 24 thru July 1. The exhibit, called "At Home in America, 1954," is to be a major feature of the institute's 1954 conference to be held in Chicago June 27 thru July 1. Each model room in the exhibit will reflect a type of decor popular in or suitable to some particular section of the country. The Great Lakes home's living area [illustrated] is being executed by an Illinois chapter committee consisting of Rose Barr, Catherine Rawson, James F. Eppenstein, Edward Kershaw, and Florence Ely Huan, with the last named as chairman. Other parts of the Great Lakes home will be the work of the Indiana, Michigan, and Minnesota chapters.

Chicago Tribune, 1954

Another of Eppenstein's periodic appearances in the *Chicago Tribune* was for a model home constructed inside Chicago's Palmer House Hotel. This rendering appeared in 1954, a year before Eppenstein died.

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Courtesy of the Eppenstein Family

Eppenstein's granddaughter Cindy has been most helpful in researching the life and career of James Eppenstein. The label *at top* was from one of the pieces of furniture she inherited from her grandfather. The photo *at bottom* shows some of Eppenstein's still-smart furniture today, including a sofa and coffee and end tables topped in green leather.

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what's your

Decorating Problem?

• Send in your questions about home decoration and furnishing. Within space limitations, they will be answered here by a member of the Illinois chapter of the American Institute of Decorators. Address "Decorators," Chicago Tribune Magazine, Chicago 11. Questions not used cannot be returned.

By James F. Eppenstein

American Institute of Decorators

Chicago Tribune, January 1955

James Eppenstein had a periodic advice column for the Chicago Tribune; the above entry was published in January 1955. Eppenstein would die that same year after a series of strokes.¹ Although his career had been widely reported in the Chicago Tribune for nearly 20 years, and he was an occasional contributor to the newspaper, no published Tribune obituary for Eppenstein has been found.



Architectural Forum, 1945

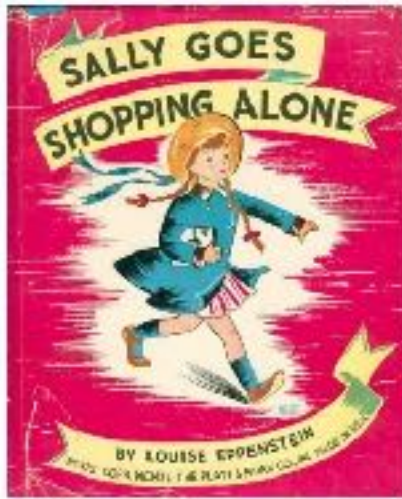
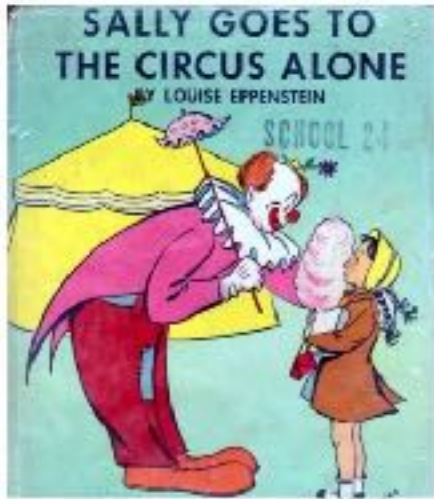
In recent years, the high land values, large lots, and the status of enormous and extravagant new homes has doomed many of Eppenstein's commissions along the North Shore of Chicago, specifically the Village of Highland Park. This home at 90 Lakewood Place was published in *Architectural Forum* in 1945 as seen *above* and was demolished in February 2011.

Chicago Tribune, 1951

James Eppenstein and his wife Louise had two daughters, Sally and Peggy. Each member of the Eppenstein family worked in a creative field; Sally became a painter, and Peggy became an actress, as mentioned in a 1951 Chicago Tribune column above. Matriarch Louise was the author

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of a series of books featuring a protagonist with the same name as her daughter Sally, including two of three published titles seen *below left and center*:



'Do I have to get up?' said new dad

Many prospective young fathers today take their role quite seriously, attending classes with their pregnant wives in preparation for the process of birth and being helpful during the delivery. But years ago, it was different.

We were living in Cambridge, Mass., as Jim was studying architecture at Harvard University. And when one night in March at 4 a.m. I felt a preliminary pang of pain, I nudged him awake.

The observer

announcing that our baby was ready to arrive.

"Do I have to get up?" was his literal response and while he sat at the edge of the bed contemplating the situation, I called up my doctor and then the hospital to announce I was coming in to have a baby. "Don't come here, baby," a man's voice responded. "This is the Navy Yard."

Left and Center: eBay Right: Chicago Tribune, 1986

Louise Eppenstein would also have an occasional column in the Chicago Tribune, including this humorous 1986 entry, *above right*. Louise Eppenstein passed away in 1987 at the age of 86.



Courtesy Posterlounge

James Frank Eppenstein Biography

Besides having extraordinarily good taste in architecture and interior design, James Eppenstein also had a gifted eye for art as an investment. As described by the Eppenstein family and in the posthumously published 2006 book by noted former Art Institute of Chicago curator Katharine Kuh, Eppenstein purchased Wassily Kandinsky's 1909 painting "Landscape with Church I" from Kuh for \$350 in 1937; this painting was sold at auction at Christie's for \$2.4 million in 1987.¹⁶ In the decades since this sale, works by Kandinsky have sold for many times that amount.



Courtesy of James Markham and the Eppenstein Family

James Eppenstein, his wife Louise, and their children Sally at *left* and Peggy at *right* are seen in an unidentified beach location in 1930.



Photo courtesy of Richard Renner

James Frank Eppenstein Biography

Eppenstein's Electroliner Trains, Inside & Out

TODAY'S NEW NORTH SHORE LINE...AMERICA'S FINEST ALL-ELECTRIC LUXURY TRAINS

The New *Electroliner* —Trains of the future at your service today—5 trips each way—every day

... plus a complete newly-designed fleet of 28 other fast, hourly trains between Chicago and Milwaukee



Stylish by Famous Designers

The ELECTROLINERS are masterly beautiful. Only master designers could have created the work, rich in texture and texture of the new ELECTROLINERS. Every coach is masterly styled in a different color motif—each more beautiful than the rest!

Coral, blue and silver... scarlet and gray... apricot and turquoise... never before have you seen such incomparable use of colors, such outstanding luxury equipment!

The ELECTROLINERS' seating patterns were designed especially by James F. Eppenstein and Associates, which is their agents, ultra-modern creations.

30 CONVENIENT TRAINS EVERY DAY

JULY 1941 SCHEDULE

Train No.	Chicago	Milwaukee	Chicago	Milwaukee	Chicago	Milwaukee	Chicago	Milwaukee
1	7:00 AM	8:00 AM	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM
2	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM
3	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	12:00 PM	1:00 PM
4	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	12:00 PM	1:00 PM	1:00 PM	2:00 PM
5	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	12:00 PM	1:00 PM	1:00 PM	2:00 PM	2:00 PM	3:00 PM
6	12:00 PM	1:00 PM	1:00 PM	2:00 PM	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	3:00 PM	4:00 PM
7	1:00 PM	2:00 PM	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	4:00 PM	5:00 PM
8	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM
9	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	6:00 PM	7:00 PM
10	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	6:00 PM	7:00 PM	7:00 PM	8:00 PM
11	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	6:00 PM	7:00 PM	7:00 PM	8:00 PM	8:00 PM	9:00 PM
12	6:00 PM	7:00 PM	7:00 PM	8:00 PM	8:00 PM	9:00 PM	9:00 PM	10:00 PM
13	7:00 PM	8:00 PM	8:00 PM	9:00 PM	9:00 PM	10:00 PM	10:00 PM	11:00 PM
14	8:00 PM	9:00 PM	9:00 PM	10:00 PM	10:00 PM	11:00 PM	11:00 PM	12:00 AM
15	9:00 PM	10:00 PM	10:00 PM	11:00 PM	11:00 PM	12:00 AM	12:00 AM	1:00 AM
16	10:00 PM	11:00 PM	11:00 PM	12:00 AM	12:00 AM	1:00 AM	1:00 AM	2:00 AM
17	11:00 PM	12:00 AM	12:00 AM	1:00 AM	1:00 AM	2:00 AM	2:00 AM	3:00 AM
18	12:00 AM	1:00 AM	1:00 AM	2:00 AM	2:00 AM	3:00 AM	3:00 AM	4:00 AM
19	1:00 AM	2:00 AM	2:00 AM	3:00 AM	3:00 AM	4:00 AM	4:00 AM	5:00 AM
20	2:00 AM	3:00 AM	3:00 AM	4:00 AM	4:00 AM	5:00 AM	5:00 AM	6:00 AM
21	3:00 AM	4:00 AM	4:00 AM	5:00 AM	5:00 AM	6:00 AM	6:00 AM	7:00 AM
22	4:00 AM	5:00 AM	5:00 AM	6:00 AM	6:00 AM	7:00 AM	7:00 AM	8:00 AM
23	5:00 AM	6:00 AM	6:00 AM	7:00 AM	7:00 AM	8:00 AM	8:00 AM	9:00 AM
24	6:00 AM	7:00 AM	7:00 AM	8:00 AM	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM
25	7:00 AM	8:00 AM	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM
26	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM
27	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	12:00 PM	1:00 PM
28	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	12:00 PM	1:00 PM	1:00 PM	2:00 PM

Smooth-Flying, All-Luxury Train of Regular Coach/Fares on the New ELECTROLINERS

Only after long, careful selection and by modern, up-to-date ELECTROLINERS can you get the rich, smooth riding of every possible hour to keep you relaxed in comfort for the duration. ELECTROLINERS also give a maximum of enjoyment in each other, every hour.

Truly, the new ELECTROLINERS are the best of the line—at that price today!

28 Other Masterly Designed Master Trains

Every coach—every train on the North Shore Line's newly designed hourly train between Chicago and Milwaukee is masterly designed.

THREE TIMES MORE LIGHT—Installed overhead before any coach was made, glass-the illumination for perfect reading comfort.

SMOOTH QUIET RIDING—Newly designed avoid jolting through the roughest rails. Not jolting and every vibration absorbed by your seat as you speed along. Smooth riding on non-stop wheels... every riding with the smoothness of the electric power car.

... plenty of room, fresh air, hot food (at Chicago and Milwaukee) served electrically and automatically to the right temperature regardless of outdoor weather conditions.

You'll find an abundance of neat, clean, modern and beauty in these fast, smooth, excellent lines!



Salon.com

The career of Eppenstein was prolific and diverse. In addition to nationally published projects at two of the largest hotels in the Midwest, he designed the ultra-modern Electroliner trains for the North Shore Line running *fast* between Chicago and Milwaukee from 1941 to 1963. As exuberantly described in the promotional piece above, the color scheme of the Electroliners was, well, eclectic: “Coral, blue and silver . . . scarlet and gray . . . apricot and turquoise . . . never before have you seen such incomparable use of colors, such outstanding luxury equipment!” Eppenstein’s firm is mentioned in the ad above, at lower left.

James Frank Eppenstein Biography

SCHEDULE
Of Electroliner and Shore Line SPECIAL TRAINS
FEBRUARY 6, 1941

From CHICAGO

1a. CHICAGO - NORTH STATE TERMINAL	11:30 AM
HOWARD STREET	11:50 AM
2. KENNES (DODDINGTON ST.)	12:30 AM
3. MILWAUKEE	1:00 PM
4. WATKINSON (at or about)	2:30 PM

Back stop Howard St., West St., Belmont Ave. North Water Terminal

From MILWAUKEE

1a. MILWAUKEE	11:30 AM
2. KENNES	12:40 AM
3. EDGEMO	1:10 AM
4. DODD	1:40 PM
5. WATKINSON	1:15 PM
6. WATKINSON (at or about)	1:30 PM

Back stop at North Station as indicated on Going sign.

SHORE LINE SCHEDULE

1a. COUNTY ST., WASHINGTON	10:45 AM
2. 10th St. NORTH CHICAGO	10:45 AM
3. NORTH CHICAGO ST.	10:55 AM
4. GREAT LAKES	11:10 AM
5. LAKE BLUFF	11:20 AM
6. LAKE FOREST	11:30 AM
7. FORT SNODGRAN	11:40 AM
8. BIRCHWOOD	11:50 AM
9. HIGHLAND PARK	12:00 AM
10. GLENVIEW	12:10 AM
11. WOODSTOCK	12:20 AM
12. KENNES	12:30 AM
13. EVANSTON (COUNCIL ST.)	12:40 AM
14. MILWAUKEE ST.	12:45 AM

Notes: Operating from Howard St. all grades North Bound Special Train to 10th Street and North Station as indicated on Going sign. This train will leave Howard St. at 10:45 if there is no Special Train.



J. J. Sedelmaier and www.printmag.com

Just two Electroliner trains would be built. The only restored Electroliner is part of the collection of the Illinois Railway Museum in Union, Illinois. This museum, featuring the largest railway collection in the United States, is well worth a visit. More information and their schedule may be found on the IRM web site.



Enjoy a perfectly-served "snack" or refreshments in the unique Tavern-Lounge as you glide smoothly over the rails. With its clever murals, its superb appointments, its specially-designed lighting, the distinctive Tavern-Lounge is festive, colorful and inviting! All ELECTROLINER interiors styled and created by James F. Eppenstein and Associates.

J. J. Sedelmaier and www.printmag.com

James Frank Eppenstein Biography



The Man on Five

Eppenstein's sleek and modern interiors designed for a mostly adult audience featured an incongruous décor. Primarily serving commuters and businesspeople drinking and smoking between Milwaukee, the North Shore, and Chicago, Eppenstein's Electroliners curiously featured the animal-themed and child-friendly *Tavern-Lounge*.



J. J. Sedelmaier and www.printmag.com

James Frank Eppenstein Biography

The colorful appearance of Eppenstein's Electroliners was carried through on many other aspects of this train. Seen above, even the playing cards distributed to riders appeared in a variety of colors.

With one notable exception, little has been found on Eppenstein's contribution to this unique inter-urban train serving Milwaukee and Chicago, or on Eppenstein's career whatsoever.

Fortunately, there are many additional rare images of these Electroliner trains in a comprehensive article by J. J. Sedelmaier located [here](#).

In July 2015, two of James and Louise Eppenstein's grandchildren visited the Chicago area from San Francisco and New York City to explore their grandfather's remarkable body of work. Shown above at the site of the former Illinois Watch Case Company in Elgin, Illinois (once owned by their family) are Jim Markham and Cindy Salans Rosenheim. Besides a visit to many historic family sites in Elgin, the grandchildren and their spouses Susie and Dan were able to visit the interior of an Eppenstein house in Highland Park, the Shoreland Hotel, and a guided tour of the former Thompson's in Motor Row, now a dry cleaner, which still has the original 1942 restrooms on the lower level.

Thanks & Acknowledgements

The author would like to greatly thank Eppenstein's grandson James, who contacted Forgotten Chicago after the publication of the first two articles in this series, and has been tremendously helpful in providing additional information about his grandfather's life and legacy.

I would also like to thank Eppenstein's granddaughter Cindy, who has also been a great help in piecing together many details about this vastly under appreciated Chicago design professional. Cindy has also helped tremendously in contacting her mother Sally about the life and career of her father James Eppenstein.

Finally, many thanks to Angela, bartender extraordinaire at Cody's Bar at North Paulina and West Barry in Chicago. The beer garden of Cody's, arguably the best in Chicago, was the perfect location to write and research these articles, as is Cody's indoor bar during colder months. Angela's friendly service and interest in James Eppenstein and his family was most appreciated over many nights writing these articles.