

**STATE OF INDIANA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
INDIANA HISTORIC SITES AND STRUCTURES INVENTORY**

Additional Architectural Information

A. NAME Fellwock Automobile Company **C. NUMBER** 82-196-00216

B. ADDRESS 214 NW Fourth Street

D. UTM References 1,6 4,4,9,6,8,0 4,2,0,2,8,3,0

E. 19:

The Fellwock Automobile Company produced two buildings within the MRA. The small garage building at 315 Court Street (82-196-0134) was its first, erected by the company a few years after their establishment in 1908. The second building was constructed later as the company was expanding its lines in 1923 and fronts on Fourth Street just around the corner from the first Fellwock building.

The Fellwicks were perfectly suited to the free-wheeling beginnings of the local auto industry. With roots in Evansville's enormous furniture-manufacturing industry, the company was already well-established in the business community and had the mechanical talents and inventive flexibility required for the early days of cars and trucks. Not content to sit back and wait for business to come to it, the firm spent a good deal of its early resources helping the local auto club promote good driving, road construction, and the like. After the opening in 1917 of the Coliseum across Court Street from their first building, the company pushed to organize the first city-wide car show.

The Fellwicks' enterprise was rewarded. In 1910, when the total national car sales totaled 181,000, the Fellwock Company could claim 500. Its reputation for the sale and servicing of "high grade" cars was founded on their representation of Cadillac, Pontiac, Dodge Brothers, and Reos vehicles. By the early Twenties, it was apparent that the company was ready to tap ever-increasing markets for their products and services.

In 1923, the Fellwicks were ready to expand. They selected a site on Fourth Street for their new building, connected in an L-shaped manner to their first building and across Fourth Street from the Vanderburgh County Courthouse. The Fellwicks turned to the successor of the firm of Harris & Shopbell (designers of their 1908 building on Court Street), architects Clifford Shopbell and Company, for the design of their new sales and showroom facility. By the early Twenties, Shopbell & Company had the Evansville and regional architectural market nearly cornered. With the aid of one of their chief designers, Edward J. Thole, Shopbell & Company was producing buildings of nearly every type, increasingly in this period in the progressive styles associated with the Prairie and Chicago Schools. The design for the new Fellwock building was handled by Thole and represents the finest expression locally of the architecture of Louis

F. INFORMATION SOURCES _____

G. PREPARED BY Douglas L Stern **H. DATE** 07 December 1982

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Sullivan. The green terra cotta pendants and contrasting white-glazed brick of the rectangular facade is directly out of Sullivan's genre and presents the zenith of the Thole's Prairie School work.

Together with the garage on Court, the Fellwock building on Fourth forms one of the finest complexes locally associated with the early auto industry and illustrates the passage of one firm from the transitional Arts and Crafts of 1908 to a full-blown Prairie School example of 1923. Except for certain minor, reversible changes to the interior of the buildings made over the years, the level of integrity remains exceedingly high and the essential character of the buildings completely undiminished.

P. B. FELLWOCK

P. B. Fellwock was born in 1866 on a farm near the hamlet of St. Paul, Fayette County, Ill. He wielded the ax and shoved the plow until sixteen years old. Then began clerking in a country store, and followed this for four years.

Twenty finds him absorbing a commercial course at the Northern Indiana Normal School, Valparaiso, Ind. In February, 1887, he struck Evansville dead broke, but the possessor of a good appetite and full of anxiety to work. The next four years were put in as a travelling salesman for F. J. Scholz, the marble man. Tired of road life he in 1891 accepted a minor position with the Karges Furniture Co., and a year later was promoted to head bookkeeper, which position he held for thirteen years.

Mr. Fellwock is a pioneer in the automobile sport, in 1900 he began with a three-wheeler, in 1905 he, with his two brothers, Will and Fred, organized the Fellwock Auto and Manufacturing Co. Their factory bulds veneered rolls and automobile tonneaus, tops, turn-tables, and other specialties, that they ship all over the country, from Maine to Mexico. At their up-town store they exhibit such a variety of cars as has never before been attempted in Evansville. Their garage is the largest and best equipped in Southern Indiana. Mr. Fellwock is a director in the Commercial Bank, and also manager of the Bockstege Furniture Co. It goes without saying that he is a very busy man, but never too busy to serve his many friends with a first-class automobile or a good table.

From: Remy, Richard. WHO'S WHO & WHY. Evansville:
The author, c. 1907.

