

#### GAIL BORDEN LIBRARY: DIRECTORS' ROOM

DIRECTIONS: To reach this room, enter through the main door of The Library, 50 N. Spring, turn left, climb the stairs, and turn left again, into the Directors' Room.

#### HISTORY

With only one string attached—that the library be named after their step-father—Alfred and Samuel Church purchased the Scofield property on Spring Street and donated to the City of Elgin the land on which the first Gail Borden Library would stand. Rather than raze the old brick house that stood there then, architect W.W. Abell incorporated it, adding to it on all sides. When all was done, the year was 1894, the total cost, \$15,000. Not included in this figure, however, was the \$1,200 that Mrs. Alfred Church had spent to "fit and furbish" the room she had personally designed, the room for the library's Board of Directors.

When the library was moved to its present location in 1968, Ackemann's, a department store, purchased the old one, to which second-floor additions on the north and side wings had been made in the early 1930s. Although the old library served as an extension of the department store, kept intact and open for all to appreciate was the Board of Directors' room. With the closing of Ackemann's, unfortunately, came the closing of this room. Nor was it reopened in 1985, when the building was reopened as The Library restaurant. That it is open today for public viewing is due to the courtesy of Richard Gromer, who purchased the building in 1987.

#### FEATURES

Although missing are the original conference table and its chairs, among the features still to be seen in this room pronounced "elegant" are the following:

- 1) an oak entry door with carved panels;
- 2) an interior carved oak door with beveled glass, a door installed for decorative purposes only, as is apparent when one opens it and finds it leads only to a brick wall;
- 3) the fireplace, with its mantle of sycamore wood, its mosaic and ceramic tile work, and heavy plate mirrors;
- 4) a breakfront of carved oak, complete with an ornate mirror, Eastlake spindlework and 2 bench seats;
- 5) oak floor and picture rail;
- 6) plaster moldings as ornamental detailing on the walls.