Countdown to Riverside City College's 100th Anniversary

In the early 1920s, Riverside Junior College was still emerging from the shadow of Riverside Polytechnic High School. When the college was first established in 1916, it had no buildings of its own and held all of its classes in rooms provided by the high school.

R.J.C. did not have its own building until it purchased “The Gage House” and the surrounding land which was located across the street from the high school. That house is seen below:
The essay below, written by Erna Marzinke, appeared in the 1923 “Tequesquite” yearbook. It was entitled “Our College – Its Future”

“In the fall of 1916 a Riverside Junior College was opened to the public. Circumstances were particularly favorable to the development of a Junior College at Riverside. The city had recently erected the strictly modern and well equipped Polytechnic High School, in which there was still plenty of room for the additional classes required. The well-equipped shops and laboratories became at once available for the use of the new college. And last, an especially able high school faculty—many of whose members had had experience in college teaching stood ready to guide the new institution to success. In October, 1921, as the result of a popular election, the Riverside Junior College District was organized according to the Junior College Law passed by the California State Legislature that year. By this law the Junior College had its own corporate existence, entirely distinct from the High School, its own governing board, and its own system of finance, involving increased state aid. It now forms part of a system of regional junior colleges whose purpose is to popularize education in co-operation with the State University. Riverside Junior College has become very important in the intellectual life of the community. Year after year the enrollments of the freshman classes have greatly increased, and under the present crowded conditions the students do not have the proper college atmosphere in which to maintain the highest standards of education. A community or social group sustains itself through continuous self-renewal, and this renewal takes place by means of the educational growth of the young members of society. Education is a fostering and a cultivating process. The ruling passion of the race is for education. Individuals would amass wealth; individuals would exert influence and power; individuals would live lives of luxury and ease, but the common purpose of the masses of men from all walks of life is a set determination to acquire knowledge. With this purpose in view and the yearly increase in enrollment, Riverside is to have a $700,000 Junior College within the next few years. The buildings complete will he among the most beautiful and distinctive in the Southland. The first unit of the group of buildings will be ready for occupancy in December, 1925. The group when completed will consist of an assembly hall, a large lecture hall and library, and the smaller lecture rooms and laboratories grouped around a patio. The long corridors will form cloisters around the court, and the lecture rooms will be lighted from the exterior of the building. The architecture will resemble the Spanish and Italian Renaissance styles. The large lecture hall will be lighted on the north side by five high arches, and the entrance will be on the south through the patio cloisters. The administration offices will occupy the northeast corner of the building, and behind these will rise the stair tower. This tower will contain chimes to announce classes. On the east side of the patio the chemistry, physics, botany, zoology and geology departments will be located. South of the patio will be the assembly hall. The seating capacity of the hall is to be four hundred and fifty persons. It will have a sloping floor, raised platform and open truss ceilings. The main entrance will be from the patio on the north, with additional side entrances on the south and west. The west wing and two one-story wings projecting from the main building to the south will contain various small lecture and recitation rooms. The patio will be planted with subtropical plants and will be used as an open air study court. The entire arrangement will provide for a quiet, academic atmosphere well suited to tile student. The influence of the college students is preponderate in the lives of the young people of our present social order. In directing the activities of the younger generation, society determines its own future. The cumulative movement of action toward a later result is what is known as growth. The educative process is a continuous process of growth, having as its aim at every stage an added capacity of growth. The realization of a form of social life in which interests are mutually interpenetrating, and where progress—or adjustment—is an important consider action, makes a democratic community more interested than other communities have cause to be. The college of today must be made the predominating source of influence for the
young people who are to be the coming leaders of society. The significant educational fact today is that men of all classes have come to look upon education as a thing that will better their condition. They mean by that, first of all, something to make their labor more effective and more profitable; and, second, they mean something that will enable them to live fuller lives. To better their condition through education is the abiding faith and purpose of all men everywhere, and they will persist until it is realized."

The two drawings below accompanied the essay. The top drawing looks east from the interior of the Quadrangle. The bottom drawing is looking south from the exterior of the Quad along Terracina Drive.

The photo below shows the Quadrangle in mid-construction.
The article predicted that the buildings would be ready for occupancy in December 1925. The buildings were actually in use during the 1924 fall semester.

There are 26 weeks until RCC’s 100th Anniversary on March 13, 2016. The Riverside City College Instructional Media Center is bringing you this five-year countdown to RCC’s 100th Anniversary. Our intention is to give everyone a weekly glance at the many people and events that have been a part of the college. Our thanks go to the RCC Digital Library Archives and the District’s Office of Strategic Communications and Relations for allowing us to use their photo and newspaper collections. Thanks as well to all of the RCC students and Faculty Advisors that were a part of the yearbook and newspaper staffs. Thanks also to Tom Johnson and Gilbert Jimenez who wrote “the book” about RCC’s history. “Riverside City College 1916-1981- A 65 Year History” is available in the RCC Digital Library. For copyright purposes, all images originating from Riverside City College publications and the District’s Office of Strategic Communications and Relations are the property of the Riverside Community College District.