

the **Downers Grove**  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## CENTENNIAL HOMES



**Downers Grove Museum/Charles Blodgett House 1892**

# THE MC VEAN HOUSE

5152 Benton Avenue  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1895



The McVean house was built in 1895 for John and Leona McVean. It is part of the Straube Subdivision. It is a Victorian Home with 4" clapboard and limestone block foundation. It has unique knee closets, tandem bedrooms, yellow pine molding, 9 foot ceilings and a turret. The house has a total of 6 rooms. It also has its original horse barn with hayloft that is now used as a garage.

Submitted by Howard Hall and Paula Moore in 1995

# THE JOHN OLDFIELD HOUSE

5226 Carpenter Street  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1883



The John Oldfield House was built in 1883. The original land it stands on was owned by John Carpenter and John Gall. The home is a Victorian Farmhouse and has 9 rooms.

Submitted by Charlotte and Byron Holtzen 1995

# THE STERLING NORTH HOUSE

5228 Fairmont Avenue  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1892



William Straube was the original owner of this home. He was part owner of Van Matre and Straube Piano which originally resided in Downers Grove. He purchased the land from Charles Blodgett in 1890. He had one son, Alfred. The home was built in 1892 and the original address was 114 Fairmount. The home was sold to Sterling North in 1938. Sterling North is a famous children's author.

Submitted by Ronald and Nancy Varanuski

# THE TILLIE KINNEY HOUSE

4617 Forest Avenue  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1890



The Tillie Kinney House was built in 1890. The original land was owned by Asahel Emigh and DK Foote bought it in 1876 and then sold it in 1890. Tillie Kinney lived there with her son and a boarder. The home is a Queen Anne Stick home. The house has 11 rooms.

Submitted Mary Grummer in 1995

# The Pines / James Breasted House

4620 Highland Avenue  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1845



In 1845 John Marvin spent \$2000.00 on the house. Later a dining room and kitchen were added around 1873. In 1873 Charles Breasted moved in. James Henry Breasted, founder of the Oriental Institute at University of Chicago grew up here. He is also known as translator of King Tut's Tomb, one of the most widely respected authorities on Egyptology in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He graduated from Downers Lincoln School in 1879.

In 1891 August B. Nourse purchased the home. The daughter, Alice Tisdale Hobart became known for her book "Oil For the Lamps of China" and her auto biography "Gutsy Child."

Submitted by John and Mary Venng 1995.

# The Ella Beaudette House

4811 Linscott Avenue  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1892



The house sold for \$2,600.00 and was bought from Earl Prince. At one point there was a kitchen fire. There was a back staircase that was removed. It is a Victorian Home with 3 stained glass windows and unique tiling around the fireplace. There are 8 rooms.

Submitted by Kathryn Harvey

# The Louis B. Gesner House

4816 Linscott Avenue  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1892



This is a Victorian Home built by Earl Prince.

Submitted by Timothy and Dawn Curley 1991

# The Farrar House

4836 Linscott Avenue  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1895



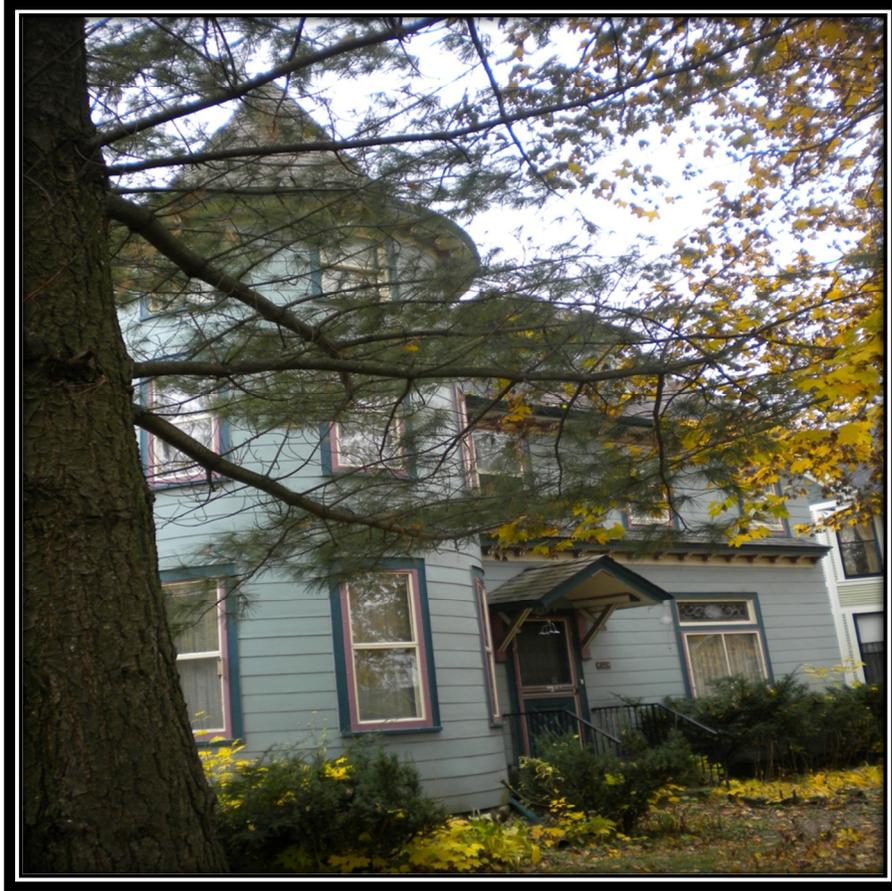
The first resident was Katie Willard. She purchased the home from Earl Prince. Later on Adelaide Farrar Lorenz moved there. She was the local piano teacher. The home is Victorian Style and has a beautiful wrap around porch and back stairway. There are 8 rooms.

Submitted by Margery W. Hanson 1996

# The Straube House

731 Maple Avenue  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1894



Straube was the owner of the local piano factory. The home has 3 single stack fireplaces which still have the original tile work.

Submitted by Alexander and Mary Anne Bokhold 2000

# The Wm. H. Carpenter House

853 Maple Avenue  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1894



In 1895 Carpenter purchased the home for \$4,000 from the Thomas Lyman Estate. Carpenter worked in Finance. This is a Princess Anne style house. The house has bulls eye moldings a coal room and chute in the basement.

Submitted by Jim and Robin Krusenoski

# The Leibundguth House

943 Maple Avenue  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1860



The original house had 6 rooms. It has massive interior doors, original wainscoting, glass knobs and open stairway. It has a Queen Anne octagonal turret.

Submitted by William and Edna Stillwell 1995

# The Barn Castle

932 Prairie Avenue  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1867



The house was built for Orlando F. Gibbs. The home is the oldest on Prairie Avenue.  
It has 11 rooms.

Submitted by Renee Marconi 1999

# The David Klein House

1741 Prairie Avenue  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1855



This farmhouse is representative of an old New England Home. It contains hand painted murals on the walls. Klein was an immigrant from Alsace France and had 9 children. The home was later owned by Marshall Field. He used it to rest horses that pulled delivery carts. It is believed M. Field stayed here after playing golf. Arthur Rhodes then purchased the home and painted the existing murals on the dining room wall. The home was used as a nursing home by Mrs. Rhodes after the death of her husband; she was a nurse.

Submitted by Lowell Bollinger 1995

# The Rosa S. Johnson House

4502 Prince Street  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1896



The house was bought by Mr. and Mrs. Krueger. The home was rented out to teachers at Downers Grove North High School. The original barn is in the back.

Submitted by Chris and Patricia Patteson 1998

# The W.B. Towsley House

4730 Prince Street  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1893



Mr. Townsley was the Private Secretary to the General Manager for Marshall Fields. He was also the President of the Board of Education in Downers Grove and on the Village Board. Their daughter Grace married Walter S. Fredenhagen. He and Earl Prince Jr began Prince Castle Ice Cream together. Later on it became known as Cock Robin.

The home itself is made of clapboard with fishscale shingles. Many of the original Queen Anne hardware remains. The house's most striking feature is the curved corner blocks on the window frames.

Submitted by Phyllis Betenia 1994

# The Sebastian Schwer House

1218 Ross Court  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1890



Sebastian Schwer was a well-known carpenter in Downers Grove. He built his own house. It has a Limestone Foundation and the joists in the basement show marks of a water powered saw. The house was bought for \$1000.

Submitted by Vickie and Kevin Chapman 1997

# The Hanson House

4641 Saratoga Avenue  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1894



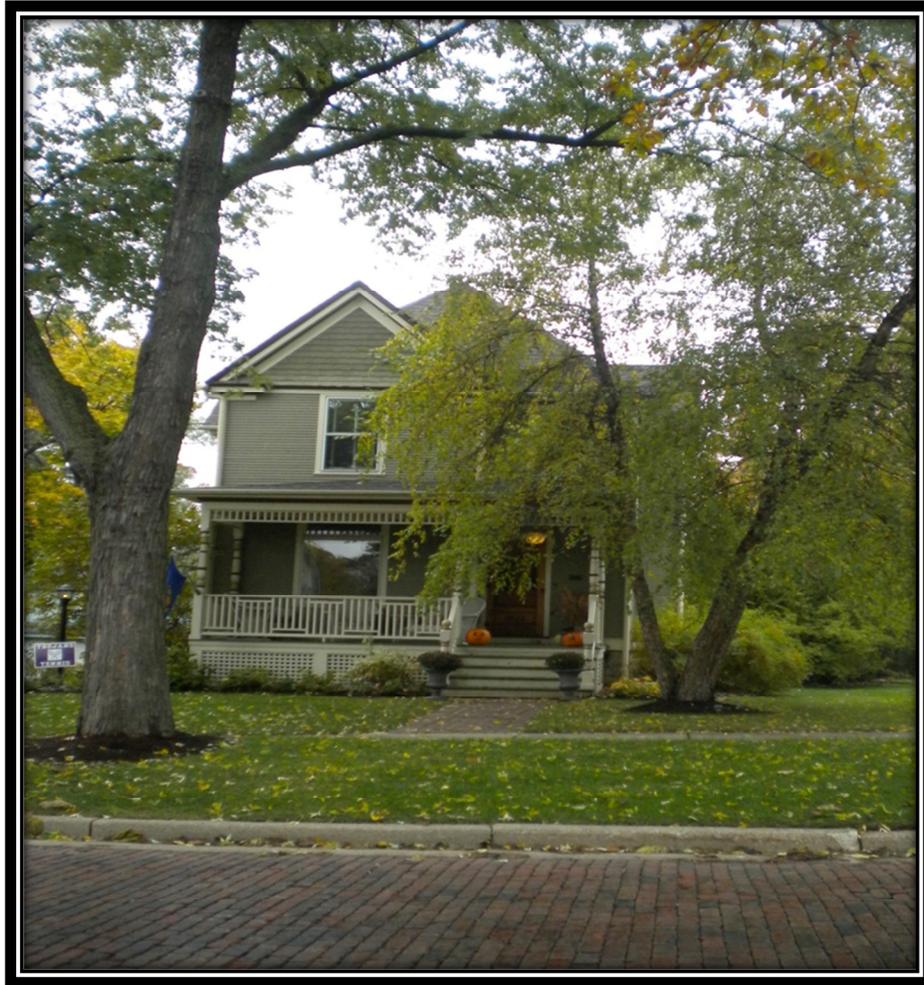
Some physical features of the house include a limestone foundation, wide plank floors, 8 inch base board and well pump in the basement still attached to the outside cistern.

Submitted by Greg and Sandy Evans

# The Joseph Staiger House

4824 Saratoga Avenue  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1897



There are 11 rooms in this historical home. It features 10 ft. ceilings, oak flooring, 10" baseboards, beaded mouldings, 5 panel doors, 2 pocket doors and none of the woodwork has been painted. The exterior of the home was clapboard.

Submitted by Sean and Juliann Coughlin 1997

# The Lewis Sucher House

1220 Warren Avenue  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1895



This is a Victorian home with hardwood floors, stained glass windows and 2 fireplaces. Mr. Sucher's father was a blacksmith and a mail carrier for Downers Grove.

Submitted by Barbara Ouimet 1995

# The Corinne S. Foote House

1130 Franklin Avenue  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1892



The home was built by Emerson Foote whom was EH Prince's business partner in EH Prince and Company. Emerson died suddenly a month before moving into the home he built for his family. His wife Corinne and their children, Mason and Marguerite along with the servant Hilma Anderson moved in. Corinne stayed active with E.H. Prince and Company erecting the Green House that once stood between Saratoga and Forest (once known as Foote St.). Emerson was a cousin to DK Foote whom was one of the first residents to ride the train to Downers Grove in 1843.

The Foote family has donated the original plot maps for the subdivision to the museum. Emerson's map can be found at the Foote House.

The home itself has passed through many hands including the Dicke Family (Dicke Tools), Heartt Family (Father was a Civil War hero), and the Draper Family (the ticket agent during the Zepher crash).

The house has its original clapboard siding and limestone foundation. All of the wood work is original to the home. It had wide plank floors which are now covered with oak. The unique features of the home include the traditional Queen Anne turret and a servants hall.

Submitted by Cindy Zaeske 2012

# The Stanley House

5316 Lane Place  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1893



It seems this home was one of many that the family owned. They bought many of the lots and sold them off.

# The Frank J. Gorman House

1205 Franklin Avenue  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1895



# Israel Blodgett House

812 Maple Avenue  
(Now Museum)  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1846



This house was originally a 1.5 story building with a lean to kitchen. The kitchen was added on the west side in the 1890's. The east family room was added around 1940. There are 7 rooms. Israel Blodgett was one of the first settlers in Downers Grove.

Submitted Ralph and Peggy Smith 1995

# The Wm. Singleterry House

5317 Webster Street  
Downers Grove, Illinois

1903



This is a lovely turn of the century home.

# The George P. Luce House

1216 Gilbert Avenue  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1890



This charming home has seen an added powder room, pantry and a finished third floor. At one time the Klein family lived here. They owned a grocery store in town.

# The Frank R. Owens House

4913 Main Street  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1894



Records show the original owners built the home for \$1500.  
The original owner joined the Klondike and while he was gone lost the home to  
foreclosure. The home is now an office.

# The Lyman House

806 Maple Avenue  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1839/1883



This property was originally owned by Orange Lyman whom was an early settler and preacher in Downers Grove. The home is believed to be a passage stop on the Underground Railroad. At one point this historic home was to be demolished but the process was stopped and the home saved. The original carriage house also remains on the property.

# The Lottie McDougall House

4709 Linscott Avenue  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1894



This Victorian house still has its original woodwork, doors and built-in cabinets. Some modifications to the home include enclosing the front porch, enlarging the kitchen, adding a bathroom and a porch. This home has been lucky enough to have the same family reside there until 1977.

# The A.C. Riddler House

4908 Oakwood Avenue  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1892



This is a two story wood house with double hung windows. The front door is original and the house still contains its wavy windows. It has its original woodwork and built-in cabinets.

# The J. Thomas Bunning House

5307 Belmont Avenue  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1890

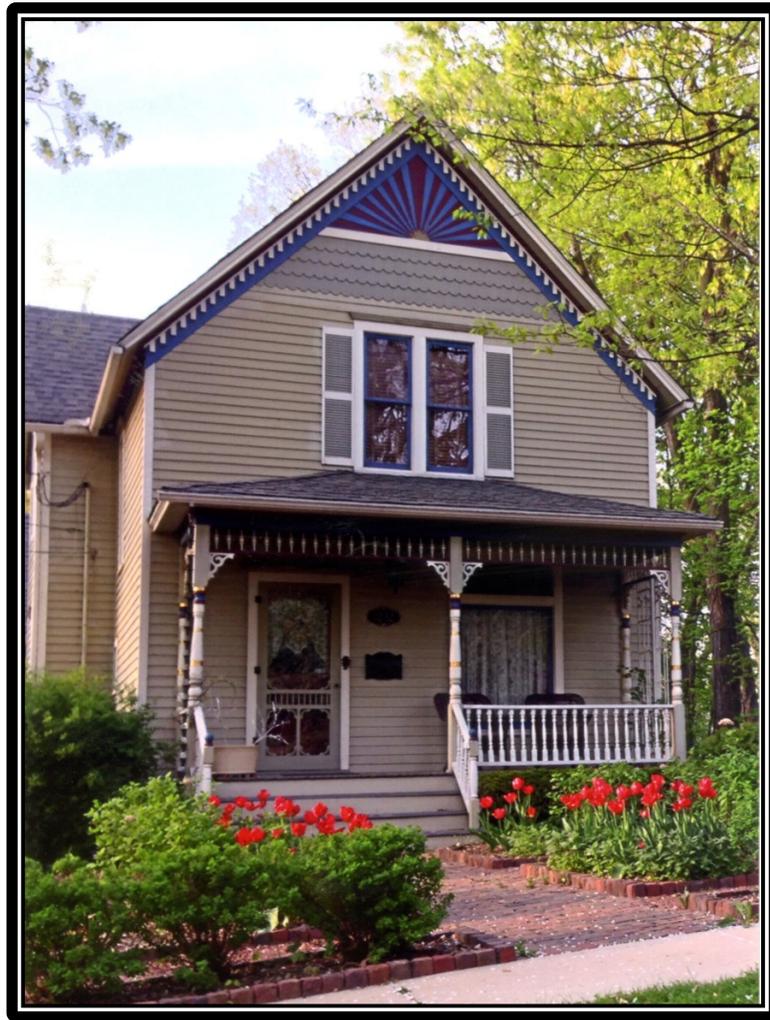


This house is quite the traveler. Its original address is 1116 Gilbert; it was moved to 1123 Gilbert in 1954 and then was moved to 5307 Belmont in 2001. The original address numbers are still imprinted on the front porch post. All of the interior and exterior mouldings are original as well as the doors and the hardware.

# The Gjerde House

1232 Gilbert Avenue  
Downers Grove, IL 60515

1891



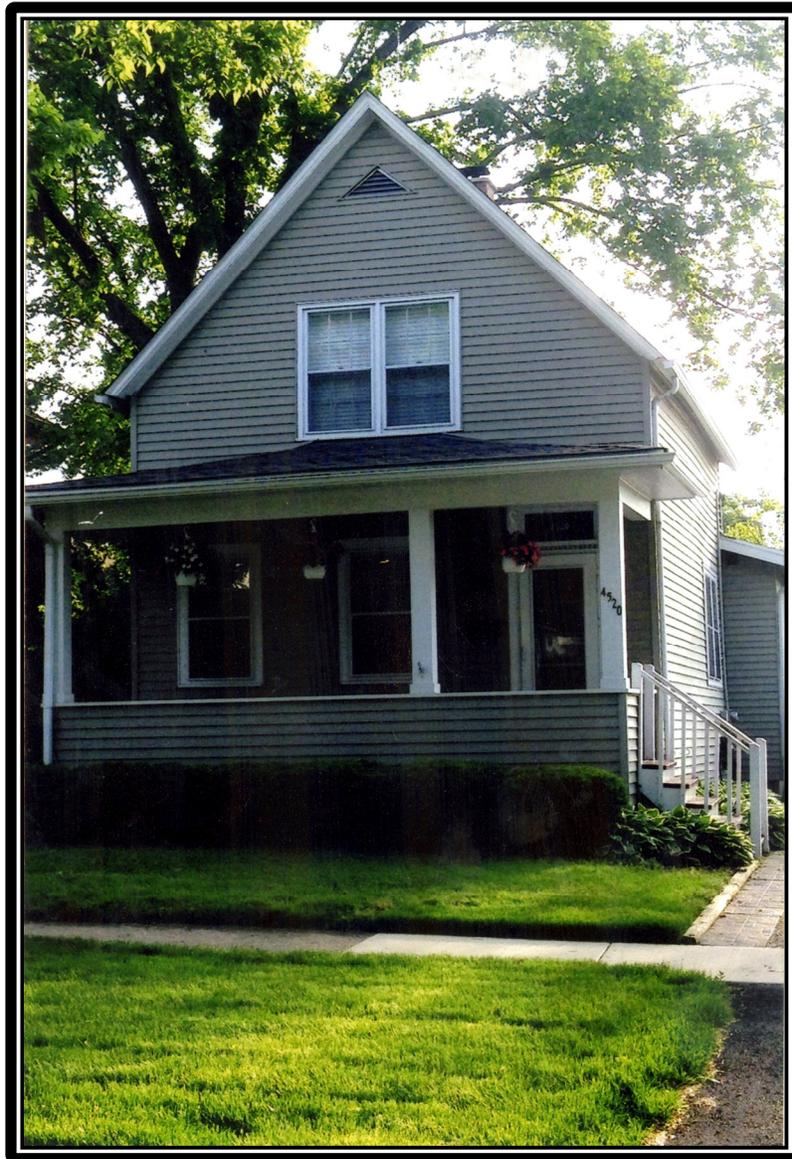
Rachel and Melchor Gjerde were Norwegian immigrants who arrived in America in 1862 and 1875, respectively. Melchor was a blacksmith and machinist. They purchased the property from Emily Gilbert Lathrop for \$600 in 1891. Five years later this Folk Victorian became rental property and remained so for more than 20 years. In 1928, the house was purchased by George and Helen Bateman and it remained in the family until daughter Charlotte sold the house in 1986.

Submitted by Irene Hogstrom and Mark Bragen 2015

# The Gerardus J. Verbeck House

4520 Highland Avenue  
Downers Grove, IL 60515

1893



Gerardus J. Verbeck was the first owner of this house. The land that the house sits on was originally owned by E.H. Prince.

Submitted by Joseph and Sarah Soelberg 2015

There are a few homes that have been 'misplaced'. The research still exists but the homes do not. Gone but not forgotten are:

The Abraham Wells House 1115 Gilbert Avenue; built in 1891.

The Rhoderic Dhu House 1131 Gilbert Avenue; built in 1892.

The Edward Wooten House 1137 Gilbert Avenue; built in 1892.

The John Wallace House 6000 Main Street; built in 1873.

The George Binder House 1122 Curtiss Street; built in 1888.

The John Holland House 1126/28 Curtiss Street; built in 1890.

## Centennial Homes

House Name	Street Address	Page #	Notes
The J. Thomas Bunning House	5307 Belmont Avenue	31	Relocated from 1116 and 1123 Gilbert Avenue
The Mc Vean House	5152 Benton Avenue	2	
The John Oldfield House	5226 Carpenter Street	3	
The George Binder House	1122 Curtis Street	34	Demolished
The John Holland House	1126/1128 Curtis Street	34	Demolished
The Sterling North House	5228 Fairmount Avenue	4	
The Tillie Kinney House	4617 Forest Avenue	5	
The Corinne S. Foote House	1130 Franklin Avenue	21	
The Frank J. Gorman House	1205 Franklin	23	
The Abraham Wells House	1115 Gilbert Avenue	34	Demolished
The Rhoderic Dhu House	1131 Gilbert Avenue	34	Demolished
The Edward Whooten House	1137 Gilbert Avenue	34	Demolished
The George P. Luce House	1216 Gilbert Avenue	26	
The Gjerde House	1232 Gilbert Avenue	32	
The Gerardus J. Verbeck House	4520 Highland Avenue	33	
The Pines/James Breasted House	4620 Highland Avenue	6	
The Stanley House	5316 Lane Place	22	
The Lottie McDougall House	4709 Linscott Avenue	29	
The Ella Beaudette House	4811 Linscott Avenue	7	Demolished
The Louis B. Gesner House	4816 Linscott Avenue	8	
The Farrar House	4836 Linscott Avenue	9	
The Frank R. Owens House	4913 Main Street	27	
The John Wallace House	6000 Main Street	34	Demolished
The Straube House	731 Maple Avenue	10	
The Lyman House	806 Maple Avenue	28	
The Israel Blodgett House	812 Maple Avenue	24	
The Wm. H. Carpenter House	853 Maple Avenue	11	
The Leibundguth House	943 Maple Avenue	12	
The A.C. Riddler House	4908 Oakwood Avenue	30	
The Barn Castle	932 Prairie Avenue	13	
The David Klein House	1741 Prairie Avenue	14	
The Rosa S. Johnson House	4502 Prince Street	15	
The W.B. Towsley House	4730 Prince Street	16	
The Sebastian Schwer House	1218 Ross Court	17	
The Hanson House	4641 Saratoga Avenue	18	
The Joseph Staiger House	4824 Saratoga Avenue	19	
The Lewis Sucher House	1220 Warren Avenue	20	
The Wm. Singletery House	5317 Webster Street	25	