



**VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE  
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
JANUARY 18, 2017 AGENDA**

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>TYPE:</b>	<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>
16-ADR-0010 4437 Seeley Avenue	Designation of a Historic Landmark	Swati Pandey Planner

**REQUEST**

The petitioners are seeking a Historic Landmark Designation for their home at 4437 Seeley Avenue based on the criteria that it was owned by Pierce Downer, a person of historic significance to the community.

**NOTICE**

The application has been filed in conformance with applicable procedural and public notice requirements.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

---

**OWNER/  
APPLICANT:** Arthur and Judith Frigo  
4437 Seeley Avenue  
Downers Grove, IL 60515

**PROPERTY INFORMATION**

---

**ARCHITECTURAL STYLE:** American Greek Revival Derivative  
**BUILDING DATE:** Early 1840s  
**HISTORICAL BUILDING USE:** Single Family Residence  
**EXISTING BUILDING USE:** Single Family Residence  
**PROPERTY SIZE:** 24,945 square feet  
**PIN:** 09-06-405-018

**ANALYSIS**

---

**SUBMITTALS**

This report is based on the following documents, which are on file with the Department of Community Development:

1. Application/Petition for Public Hearing
2. Project Summary
3. Plat of Survey
4. Certificate of Acknowledgement Form
5. Historic Landmark Information Form
6. Photographs
7. Newspaper articles

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The petitioners are seeking a Historic Landmark Designation for their property at 4437 Seeley Avenue under criteria 12.302.B.2 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance: the property was owned and occupied by a person of historic significance to the community. The property is known as the Pierce Downer house.

Pierce Downer (1782 - 1863) was the founder and first settler of the Village of Downers Grove and the Downers Grove Township. He arrived in the area, now called Downers Grove, in 1832 and camped alone in the grove of oak trees. He staked his claim to the surrounding 160 acres of prairie and timberland, and completed a log cabin on his land by the winter of 1832. The Pierce Downer house was built in the early 1840s. The original 160 acres of the Downer farm and the house remained in the family for 92 years until the farm passed out of the family and was reduced to 83 acres. On August 24, 1924, the area was annexed to Downers Grove.

Pierce Downer was a leader of the early settlers in the grove. With his towering personality and good reputation, he was often made the arbiter of disputes between the settlers. He was an abolitionist, a farmer and an educator. He built the Pierce Downer home on the highest ground of the farmland, south of the Southwestern Plank Road, which is present day Ogden Avenue. The home was a one-story structure with an east facing front door and an attached barn/summer kitchen to the west. After Seeley Avenue was built, the summer kitchen was demolished probably to make way for the road. The orientation of the house changed with the front door moving west towards Seeley Avenue. The angled location of the house is due to the construction of the street occurring after the construction of the house.

The Pierce Downer home is currently situated at its original location on the property. The house over the years has had major renovations, but the overall shape and massing of the original house has been maintained. Best efforts have been made to replace the original materials with similar items such as clapboard siding to maintain the appearance of the home. The rear additions to the house were completed in the 1970s and 1980s. Some of the remaining notable elements of the original home are the exterior basement entrance to the south of the house, stone foundation walls and the hand-hewn timber joist in basement.

## **COMPLIANCE WITH HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE**

The petitioner has outlined the request in the attached narrative letter, excerpts from books, newspaper articles and photographs. The petitioner will further address the proposal and justification to support the requested landmark designation at the public hearing.

Landmark designations require evaluation based on Section 12.302 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, *Landmark Designation Criteria*. Staff finds the request complies with Section 12.302A and Section 12.302.B, as described below.

### **Section 12.302.A.**

**The proposed landmark is either over fifty (50) years old, in whole or in part, or is under fifty (50) years of age and possesses exceptional importance such as might be recognized immediately for its reflection of an extraordinary political event or architectural innovation; and**

The house was constructed in the early 1840s and is one of the oldest remaining structures in Downers Grove. This standard is met.

### **Section 12.302.B**

**That one or more of the following conditions exist:**

- 1. The property has significant value as part of the historic, heritage or cultural characteristics of the community, county, State or Nation;**  
This criteria does not apply.
- 2. The property was owned by a person or persons of historic significance to the community, county, State or Nation;**  
Staff finds the property was built and owned by a person of historic significance to the community. Pierce Downer was the founder and first settler of the Village of Downers Grove and the Downers Grove Township. He was a community leader of the early settlers of Downers Grove. This criteria has been met.
- 3. The property represents the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural period, style, type, method of construction or use of indigenous materials;**  
This criteria does not apply.
- 4. The property represents notable work of a master builder, designer, architect or artist whose individual work has influenced the development of the community, county, State or Nation;**  
This criteria does not apply.
- 5. An area that has yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.**  
This criteria does not apply.
- 6. A source of civic pride or identity for the community.**  
This criteria does not apply.
- 7. The property is included in the National Register of Historic Places.**  
This criteria does not apply.

**NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENT**

Staff received one general inquiry from the public regarding the proposal at this time.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

---

Staff finds the petition complies with the criteria in Section 12.302 for Landmark Designation. Based on the findings above, staff recommends that the Architectural Design Review Board makes a positive recommendation to the Village Council for landmark status of 4437 Seeley Avenue.

Staff Report Approved By:



---

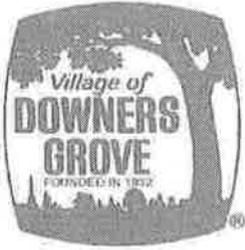
Stan Popovich, AICP  
Director of Community Development

SP:sp  
-att

P:\P&CD\PROJECTS\ADRB\PROJECTS\2016 Petitions\16-ADR-0010- 4437 Seeley Avenue Landmark\Staff Report 16-ADR-0010 4437 Seeley Avenue.doc



4437 Seeley Avenue - Location Map



# Historic Landmark Information Form

**Property Address** 4437 Seeley Avenue Downers Grove, IL 60515

**Date of Construction** early 1840s

**Architectural Style** American Greek Revival Derivative

**Architect (if known)** Pierce Downer

**Number of Stories** 2 **Basement (Y/N)** yes

**Foundation Materials (Concrete, Concrete Block, Wood, Stone, Brick, N/A)**

Fieldstone with hand hewn logs as support beams (concrete footings added as support in 2004)

**Exterior Wall Materials (Concrete, Wood, Stone, Brick, Vinyl, Other, N/A)**

James Haardie Exterior Fiber-Cement Siding

**Roof Type (Gabled, Cross-Gabled, Hipped, Hipped-Gable, Shed, Gambrel, Flat, Other, N/A)**

Gabled

**Roof Materials (Metal, Wood Shingle, Wood Shake, Composition, Slate, Tile, Other, N/A)**

Composition

**Window Type (Double-Hung, Awning, Casement, Hopper, Other, N/A)**

Double-Hung 6/6 in original house and 1977 addition, casement in 1985 addition

**Window Materials (Wood, Aluminum, Vinyl, Other, N/A)**

exterior vinyl clad wood

**Door Type (Panel, Flush, Transom, N/A) and Materials (Wood, Metal, Glass, N/A)**

six panel wood interior doors, exterior 6 panel metal

**Other significant exterior architectural features (Accessory Structures, Arches, Porches, Towers, Brick Course, etc.)**

We are the owners of 4437 Seeley Avenue, Downers Grove, Illinois, also known as the Pierce Downer Home. We are petitioning the Architectural Design Review Board to designate this property as a Historic Landmark. Under Section 12.302 Landmark Designation Criteria, the home is A. over 50 years old and B. (2) The property was owned or occupied by a person or persons of historical significance to the community and county. Pierce Downer is the founder of both the Downers Grove Township and the Village of Downers Grove. Furthermore, his 22-year-old daughter, Adeline Downer, who joined her father in 1834 to keep house for him, is the first non-native, white woman in Downers Grove.

Pierce Downer was born in Connecticut in 1782. His father was active with the Green Mountain Boys and at some point in time Pierce Downer moved with his parents to the territory admitted to the United States in 1791 and called Vermont. As a young man he left Rutland, Jefferson County, Vermont, and moved to Ellisburg in upstate New York. There he met and married Lucy Ann, a young widow. They settled down to farm and rear a family, giving birth to 6 children, 4 of which survived past infancy. When the oldest, a twin, Stephen, left home to seek his independence, he came to the pioneer village of Chicago at Fort Dearborn. He was a stonemason, one of three to build Fort Dearborn's first lighthouse in 1831. It collapsed within a few months of completion but Stephen was kept on to build a second replacement lighthouse. Having seen some of the fertile prairies west of the fort he sent word to his father that there was excellent land for farming. Under the Pre-emption Law of 1830 this land could be claimed. Pierce left his wife and remaining children and traveled west. Once at the confluence of the north and south branches of the Chicago River, he took an old Indian trail that ran southwest. It was May 1832, and Pierce Downer came by horseback alone. He rode tall in his saddle, his height being 6 foot 4 inches. Subsequent settlers described him as having a lean, muscular body, "a man of unusual physical powers, energetic and capable of great endurance." He was 50 when he made his journey. He had ridden 3 days west of Chicago looking with purpose for suitable and to settle. He saw what he later described as high ground with an oak grove where he camped. Seeing the trees surrounded by rich prairie, all in Spring flower, he decided this was where he would make his claim. He bent saplings to the ground and secured them with a stake to mark the claim and later paid the price for his 160 acres of \$1.25 per acre. Although the Black Hawk Indian War was forcing the new settlers of the Naper Colony back to Fort Dearborn for safety, Mr. Downer met friendly Potawatomi with their Chief Waubonsee. Waubonsee wisely recognized the advantage of cultivating the good will of the white man and this encouraged Pierce Downer to establish his claim. He completed a log cabin on his land by the winter of 1832. Our present home was built on the site sometime between 1836 (the arrival of his wife Lucy Ann and younger children) and 1844, when shown on an old schematic map of dwellings not as a log cabin but a clapboard house. At the time of the Downers Grove Sesquicentennial (1982 when the town was 150 years old), descendants of Pierce Downer staged a large family reunion to coincide with the village celebrations. They were guests in our home from across the United States. The older generations recalled more oral tradition than the young, but most said they had always been told Pierce and Lucy Ann's house was built in the early 1840's. In any case, Pierce lived alone in his log cabin for two years. In 1834 his 22-year-old daughter, Adeline Downer, joined him but fell in love with another new settler, Gary Smith. In 1835 they married and built the first frame house on property claimed by her brother

Stephen but subsequently deeded to she and her husband. Their home has been razed but stood for many years on the NE corner of Carpenter and Maple Avenue. In any case, our home, the Pierce Downer home was built on the highest ground he could see, and not very far south from that original Indian trail he first traveled. The trail was planked and referred to as the Southwestern Plank Road, which years later became present day Ogden Avenue. It also became a stagecoach route from Chicago in 1851. On the 1850 Federal Census there was no street address listed for the Downers Family, just a family enumeration number. The home was simply a farmhouse sitting on the highest point on his farm. The orientation of the house was to the East, as many homes were built then. This was for both the belief that eastward facing homes brought good luck and to take advantage of perceived longer hours of sunlight in pre gas and electric days. The original house shows in all photographs a one story rough sawn structure covered with barn siding that went off the back, or west, of the home. This was used as the kitchen, both to keep the summer heat away from the main house, but most importantly with the open fires used for cooking, it decreased the risk of fire destroying the entire residence. While the town of Downers Grove prospered and had many subdivisions added, the Downers family kept their farm intact with no roads running through it. One of the Downers descendants in 1982 did point out to Mrs. Pauline Wandschneider, Village Historian, and myself that there was a lane that connected the farmhouse with Old Plank Road and even now one can make out several of the large trees that lined the lane. Helen Downer, Pierce's great granddaughter, remembers tobacco and corn hanging from the second floor ceiling when she was a little girl. Pierce Downer could read and write and owned some books, a rarity among pioneer farmers. Reportedly, he kept a library also on the second floor at the top of the stairs, some sources calling it a "large library" but it is a very small area (always a closet we were told) so it is consistent with the adjective "large" just in reference to other settlers owning books.

The Downer farm remained in the Downer family for 92 years. The original 160 acres had been reduced to 83 acres by time it passed out of the family. A map of the property shows the smaller farm now in son Elon E. Downer's name. After Elon died in 1906, his son, James P. Downer assumed ownership. Old files in the County Recorder's Office show that James had the "Downer Estate" surveyed and recorded Feb. 20, 1909. James and his family ran a dairy business and sold out to the Arthur T. McIntosh Company. This firm subdivided the farm into the present day streets and home sites. On August 24, 1924, the area was annexed to Downers Grove. Seeley Avenue was built and the single story summer kitchen structure had to be taken down so the street could be laid. Although physically the direction of the house was not altered, what was previously known as the east facing front door became the east facing back door and the west orientation of the house now had a front door that faced the street. As is evident on the plat of the property, the house sits at an angle relative to the street because it was there long before the street. The staircase which in almost all older homes opens off of a front hallway, in the Downer house, it still opens off the back of the hallway. The original home also had second floor windows only under the gables and not facing east and west. Those windows were created in the 1940's by the John Quick family.

Pierce Downer was the acknowledged leader of those first settlers in the grove. Due to his reputation for honesty and fairness, he was often made the arbiter of disputes arising between

settlers when courts of law were not accessible. Sometimes others would try to lay claim to what was already part of his 160 acres. Once, after he was coming back from Chicago with provisions, he found 2 other settlers erecting a cabin on his property. In his own words he described cutting a sharp stick from hickory, the kind used for prodding cattle. With this in hand, he entered into a physical altercation with the men. He reported they never again bothered him.

The original clapboard house, as seen in all the early pictures, aside from the single story summer kitchen, looks like it was constructed all at the same tie. However, both in the cellar foundation and in the corresponding area of construction in the low attic area, the portion of the house in the northern third is distinctly different from the southern two-thirds. Both foundations utilize large fieldstones in the walls, but in the older southern section hand hewn timbers serve as the support beams whereas in the northern section it has rough cut lumber as its support. Most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century pictures of the home show the southern gabled exposure. These pictures clearly show the rough cut stone steps leading to the cellar basement entrance. Those exact stones are still present today. This cellar entrance served a very important role in the use of the house as part of the Underground Railroad in the Civil War. Pierce Downer's moral integrity and community spirit led him to join other early Downers Grove settlers as abolitionists. Our house, among others in the village was a station. Escaping slaves were transported at night in wagons hidden beneath hides and the wagons would be brought to the cellar entrance where they would be hidden and fed during the daylight hours. Again at night, they would be moved to the next station. Many times the next stop would be Maywood but if the cover of darkness was long enough it could be Chicago according to Dr. Glennette Tilly-Turner, author of the book *The Underground Railroad in Illinois*. The Pierce Downer House is pictured in the book. The eventual destination was Canada where there was no slavery, and was a separate sovereign country which did not have to return the slaves to their owners. Pierce Downer did not live to see the end of the Civil War. In 1863 there was an outbreak of disease (thought to be influenza) and Lucy Ann died on March 25, 1863. At the age of 81, Pierce's mind was still sharp, his body still with unusual strength, but he died the next day, March 26, 1863. Because St. Joseph's Creek had flooded with Spring rains, the wagons carrying their caskets could not get to the usual Main Street Cemetery and it was Pierce's request, made while they were planning on burying his wife, that they both be buried on the farm. Their cemetery lies off of what is now Linscott Street.

As stated previously, the house remained in the Downer family until 1924. Although the land was subdivided by the McIntosh Company, the house itself was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Dubiel who lived there with their 12 children. Although they were the owners of record, the Dubiels did rent out the house during the depression and it fell on very hard times. A picture of it from 1939 showed a house that had the original clapboard covered in tar paper made to look like fake bricks with a front porch addition leaning into the ground. Mrs. Dubiel sold the house in 1947 to the John Quick family. Mr. and Mrs. Quick literally saved the house from the wrecking ball since it was ready to be condemned as a fire hazard. They invested in it during their 20-year period of ownership but "modernized" it to 1950 standards. They offered it for sale to the Village Council in 1966. It was declined but sold to Rev. Kirby Wahl and his wife

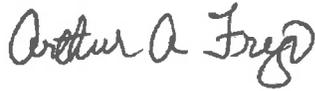
who briefly owned it for 3 years prior to our purchase in November 1970. At the time we moved in, the Quicks had put aluminum siding on it, replaced the original 6 over 6 double hung windows with newer windows and put in a picture window in the kitchen. A second bathroom was added, but all of the plumbing had separate hot and cold water taps. The dirt cellar floor was replaced with poured cement. There was plastic tile in turquoise, chartreuse, and pink covering the kitchen and bathroom walls. The pine floors, which the Quicks said had large holes looking into the basement, were covered with gray linoleum on the first floor. We purchased the house our first year of marriage and have lived in it for over 46 years. As we started our family, safety became an early priority. We replaced the above ground 60-amp service with underground 200-amp service. Plumbing was redone, the furnace was replaced with natural gas and the heating oil tanks in the cellar were removed with the old furnace. There had been no insulation in the attic so we put down rolls of insulation. As finances permitted, we replaced all the windows in the original house with new, energy efficient double hung, but we made the windows to look like the original 6/6 ones, not their 1950's counterparts with no mullions. When we needed a new roof, the previous 4 roofs were taken off and we used architect shingles to replicate the thickness of the original roof. Throughout all of our work bringing the original 2-story portion of the house up to code, architecturally it was not altered in any way. If anything, as we replaced items we tried to install what could have been there in the 1840s. We have hardwood floors now, the 8-inch wide aluminum siding was taken off, the tar paper removed, insulation added, and James Hardie fiber-cement fire-resistant board was installed to look like the original 4-inch clapboard siding. Trim over the doors, along with shutters added, was made to match the pictures we had of the home while it was still in the Downer family. We have put 2 additions on to the home, one in 1977 and another with a "new second basement" in 1985. The house has two furnaces, one still in the 1800s "cellar" and one in the second poured concrete walled basement in the southeast addition. Again, the original 2-story structure Pierce Downer structure was not changed except that the back door provides egress into the newer space. The 1977 addition of a family room and garage we kept to 1-story and the architect brought it off the original 2-story in a sense to replicate the way the original single story kitchen was adjoined to the house. The 1985 addition further extended the house, but came off the 1977 construction, not the original house.

Over our 46 years of ownership, many school children have visited it along with Pierce Downer's well across the street. It's been depicted on commemorative plates, has had its own stationary, is on the village afghan, and has found its way into many books and newspaper articles about the history of our state, region, county and town. Years ago, prior to the historical museum, we hosted meetings of the Downers Grove Historical Society. Prior to purchasing the present home used for the museum, the village considered the Pierce Downer house in the late 1970s but the committee deemed it too small.

Out of 47 years of marriage, this has been our home for 46 years. Our children were born here, educated from here and married from here. Our neighborhood has seen tremendous change. While we have wonderful neighbors, literally the majority of the homes have been completely razed with new homes built usually to the maximum height and out to the maximum allowed on the lot lines. Pierce Downer's "grove of trees" is going too. One house alone had 17 mature

trees taken down to make way for the rebuilt house. We truly believe our house, while small and not as grand as the new construction, is very much historic and we do not ever want to see it torn down, especially the 1840s 2-story original portion. We respectfully request landmark status.

Sincerely,



Arthur A. Frigo



Judith B. Frigo

December 11, 2016

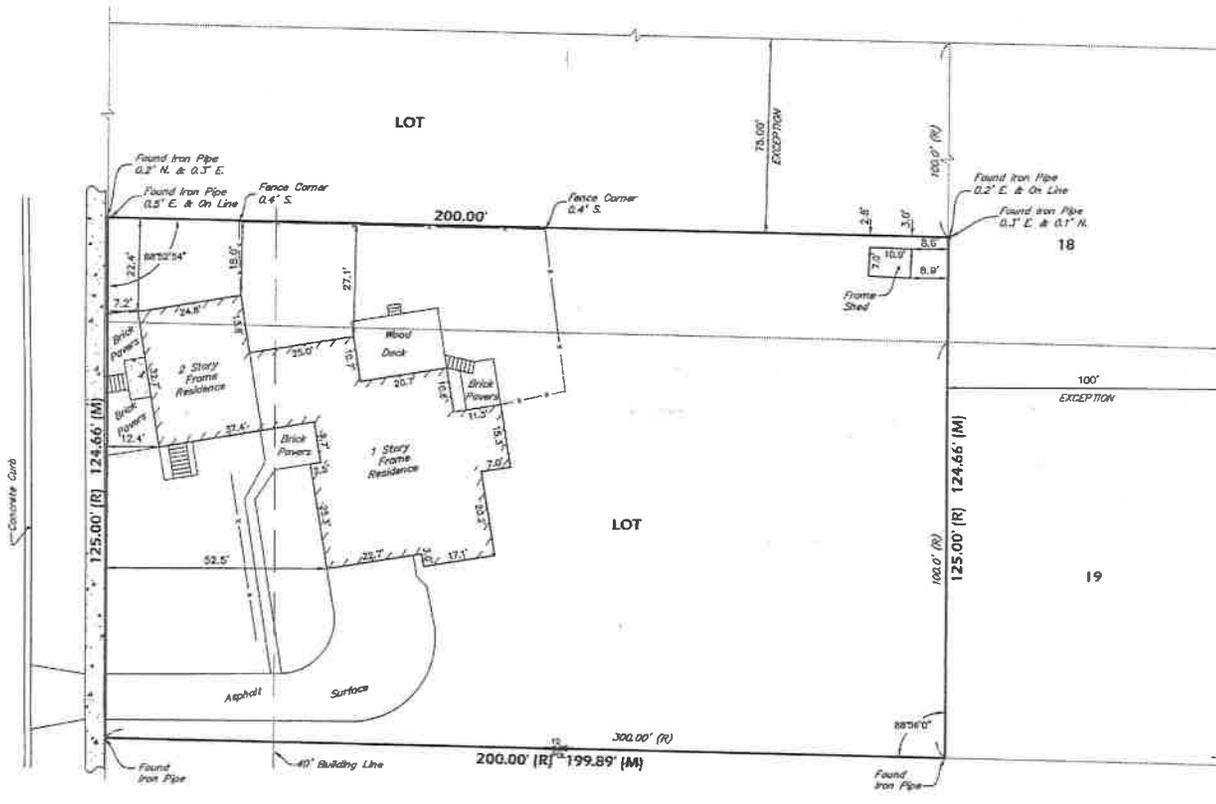
# PLAT OF SURVEY

OF

LOT 18 (EXCEPT THE NORTH 75 FEET THEREOF AND EXCEPT THE EAST 100 FEET THEREOF) AND LOT 19 (EXCEPT THE EAST 100 FEET THEREOF) IN BLOCK 2 IN ARTHUR T. McINTOSH AND COMPANY'S ADDITION TO DOWNERS GROVE, BEING A SUBDIVISION OF LOT 2 OF THE PLAT OF DOWNERS GROVE ESTATES IN THE SOUTHEAST 1/4 OF SECTION 6, TOWNSHIP 38 NORTH, RANGE 11 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT OF SAID ARTHUR T. McINTOSH AND COMPANY'S ADDITION TO DOWNERS GROVE, RECORDED JUNE 26, 1924 AS DOCUMENT 179462, IN DUPAGE COUNTY, ILLINOIS.



SEELEY AVENUE



AREA OF SURVEY:  
CONTAINING 24,921± SQ. FT.

REFER TO YOUR DEED, ABSTRACT, TITLE POLICY  
AND LOCAL BUILDING AND ZONING ORDINANCE  
FOR ITEMS OF RECORD NOT SHOWN.

STATE OF ILLINOIS) ss  
COUNTY OF DUPAGE)

PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYING, INC. HEREBY CERTIFIES THAT IT HAS  
SURVEYED THE TRACT OF LAND ABOVE DESCRIBED, AND THAT THE  
HEREON DRAWN PLAT IS A CORRECT REPRESENTATION THEREOF.

FIELD WORK COMPLETED AND DATED

THIS 29th DAY OF JUNE, 2013

*[Signature]*

IPLS No. 3483

MY LICENSE EXPIRES 11/30/14



THIS PROFESSIONAL SERVICE CONFORMS TO THE CURRENT  
ILLINOIS MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR A BOUNDARY SURVEY.

PROFESSIONAL DESIGN FIRM NO. 184-004198

## SYMBOL LEGEND

- CONCRETE SURFACE
- FENCE LINE
- RECORD DATA
- MEASURED DATA
- UTILITY POLE
- OVERHEAD WIRES

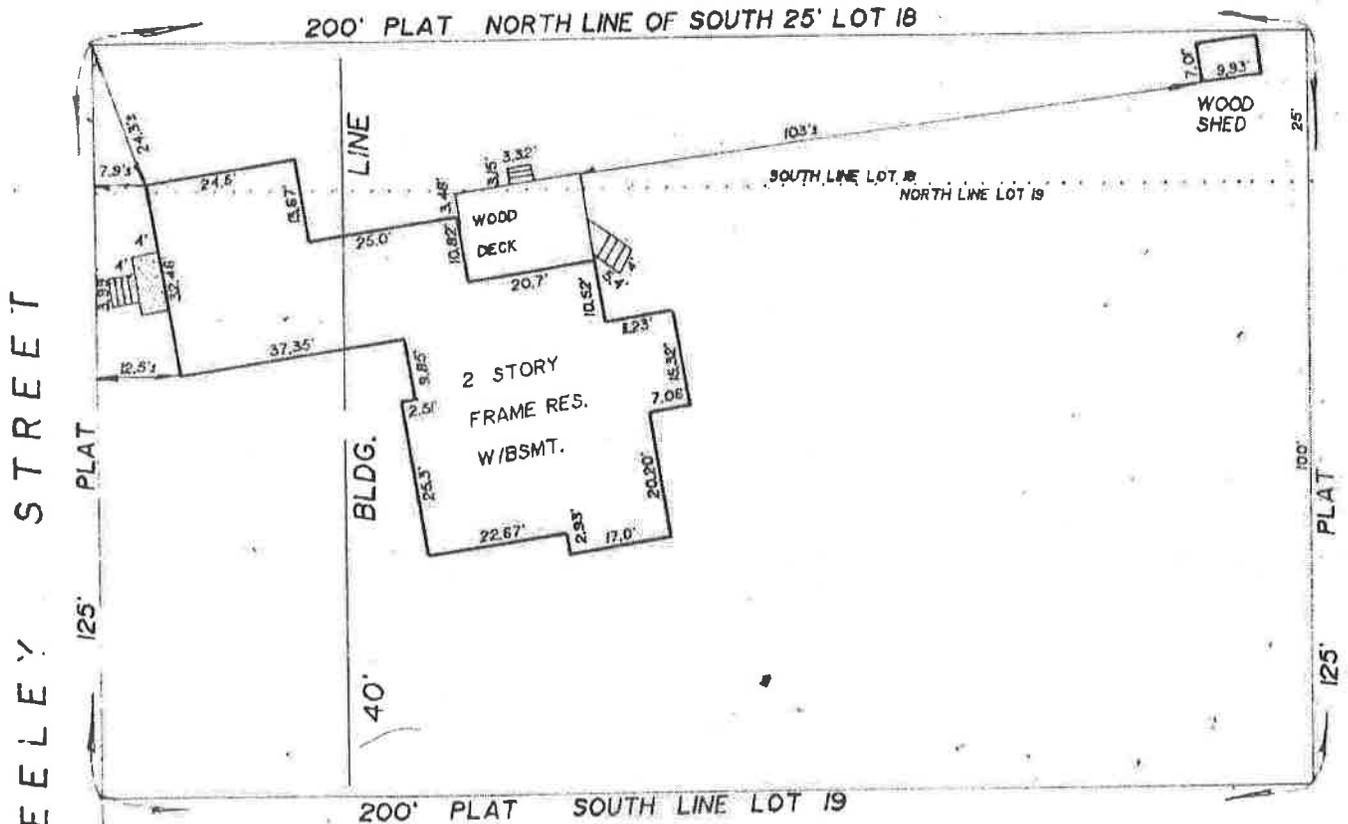
PREPARED FOR: FRIGO  
JOB ADDRESS: 4437 SEELEY STREET  
DOWNERS GROVE, ILLINOIS

**Professional Land Surveying, Inc.**  
3080 Ogden Avenue Suite 107  
Lisle, Illinois 60532  
Phone 630.778.1757 Fax 630.778.7757

DRAWN BY: JRP FLD. BK./PG. NO.: 90/30  
COMPLETION DATE: 07-03-13 JOB NO.: 136256  
REVISED:

# PLAT OF MORTGAGE INSPECTION

Lot 18 (except the North 75 feet and except the East 100 feet thereof) and Lot 19 (except the East 100 feet thereof) in Block 2 in Arthur T. McIntosh and Company's Addition to Downers Grove, being a subdivision of Lot 2 of the Plat of Downers Grove Estates in the South East 1/4 of Section 6, Township 38 North, Range 11, East of the Third Principal Meridian, according to the Plat of said Arthur T. McIntosh and Company's Addition to Downers Grove, Recorded June 26, 1924 as Document 179462, in Dupage County, Illinois



SEELEY STREET

125' PLAT

180' PLAT

GRANT ST.

Prepared for: Citizens Federal Savings  
707 Ridge Road  
Munster, Indiana

Common Address: 4437 Seeley Street  
Downers Grove

STATE OF INDIANA )  
COUNTY OF LAKE ) ss:

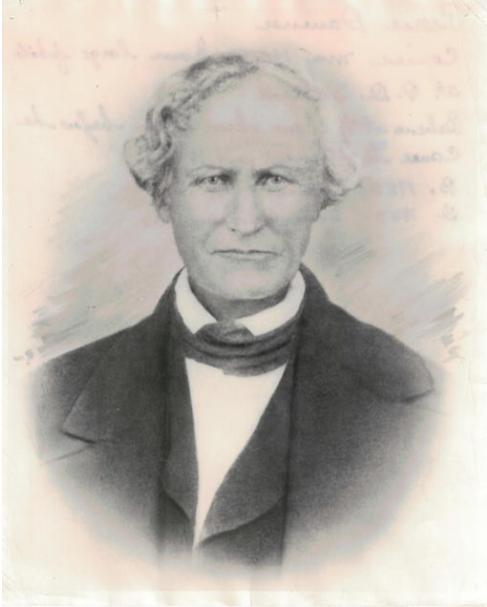
I hereby certify that this MORTGAGE INSPECTION was prepared for MORTGAGE purposes only, and that said inspection shows buildings and out buildings as located on and within lot lines of said property and that no improvements on adjoining property encroach on the property hereinafter described. This plat shall not be construed to represent exact location of property lines.

*Donald A. Shapiro*  
SHAPIRO & ASSOCIATES

520 Ridge Road, Munster, Indiana, 46321, (219) 836-5773  
30-11-1981 211E/BA 1-1-81 83-41-1



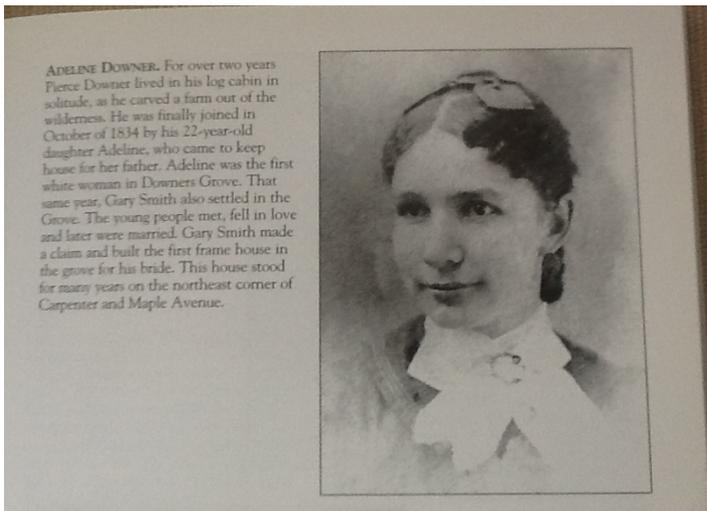
## Landmark Application Pictures



Pierce Downer in his 50s

Pierce Downer was the founder and first settler of Downers Grove Township and the Village of Downers Grove Illinois

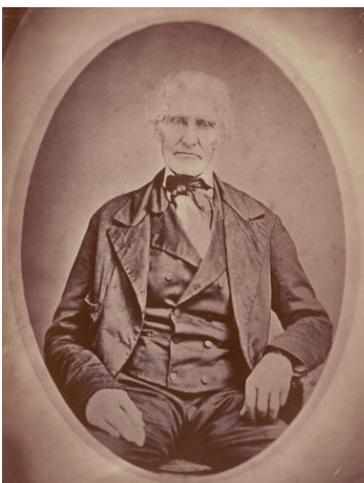
(photo courtesy Downers Grove Museum and Downers Grove Historical Society)



Daughter Adeline Downer

At the age of 22 she came to keep house for her father, Pierce Downer, in 1834. She was the first non-native, white female settler

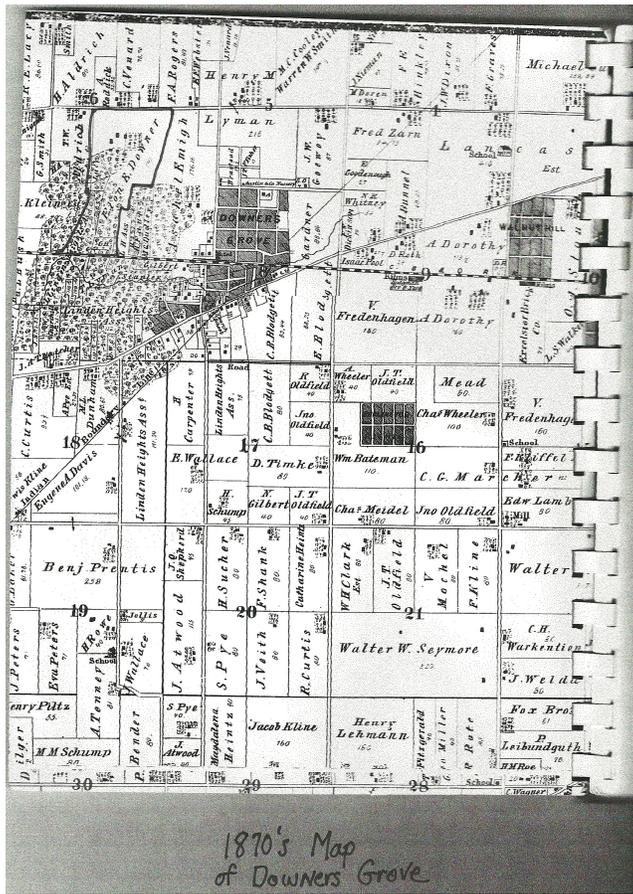
(photo from book Downers Grove, 1832 to 1982 by Montrew Dunham and Pauline Wandschneider)



Pierce Downer in his later Years

Founding Father  
Community Leader  
Property Arbitrator  
Farmer  
Educator  
Abolitionist  
Family Patriarch

(photo courtesy Downers Grove Museum and Downers Grove Historical Society)



Downers Grove 1870 Landowners' Map  
Elon Downer's property is outlined in upper left.

1850 United States Federal Census for Pierce Downer

SCHEDULE L - Free Inhabitants in the town of Downers Grove in the County of Cook State of Illinois enumerated by me, on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of Sept, 1850. James Colbatch Ass't Marshal 3567

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
178	153	Pierce Downer	62	m	Married	Farmer	4200	Illinois				
		Lucy	16	f	Married			Illinois				
		Ellen	22	f	Married			Illinois				
172	478	Charles Vinson	41	m	Married	Farmer	1100	Illinois				
		Catherine	41	f	Married			Illinois				
		Ann	17	f	Married			Illinois				
		John	16	m	Married			Illinois				
		Charles	14	m	Married			Illinois				
		Thomas	11	m	Married			Illinois				
		Edwards	9	m	Married			Illinois				
		John	7	m	Married			Illinois				
		Catherine	4	f	Married			Illinois				
		Ann Fitzpatrick	2	f	Married			Illinois				
173	482	Joseph Hodges	43	m	Married	Farmer	2000	Illinois				
		Caroline	38	f	Married			Illinois				
		Mary	20	f	Married			Illinois				
		Michael	17	m	Married			Illinois				
		Elizabeth	14	f	Married			Illinois				
		Thomas	9	m	Married			Illinois				

1850 Federal Census – Page enumerating the Pierce Downer Family



Pierce Downer House – circa late 1800s  
(photo courtesy Downers Grove Historical Museum)



Pierce Downer House – 1905  
(photo courtesy Downers Grove Historical Museum)



Pierce Downer House – 1968  
(photo courtesy Downers Grove Historical Museum)



Pierce Downer House and Well – 1982  
(photo courtesy Downers Grove Historical Museum)



1840s hand-hewn timber joist in basement with present-day smoke and fire alarm



Original stone and mortar upper basement wall foundation



Original larger boulders at base of foundation



Interior bedroom opened to attic showing original construction  
(photographed during 2002 remodeling project)



Interior of original attic  
(photographed during 2002 remodeling project)



House after removal of 1960's vintage 8-inch aluminum siding and prior to installation of 4-inch fiber-cement siding (photographed during 2008 exterior residing project)



Close up showing original clapboard covered with 1930's brown, fake-brick tar paper after aluminum siding removed (photographed during 2008 exterior residing project)



Original stone steps to exterior basement entrance. This entrance was used to provide safe haven for escaping slaves as part of the Underground Railroad during the Civil War era.



Present day 2016 Pierce Downer Home

# Tracing the rich history of Downers Grove

The column "The Way We Were" premieres this week with a general overview of the history of Illinois and the subsequent settling of what is now Downers Grove. In future columns, topics related to the area's rich history of landmarks, interesting events and people who helped shape the town will be addressed by Elaine LaBuda, a volunteer with the Downers Grove Historical Society.

Illinois, often referred to as the Prairie State, was discovered by Father Jacques Marquette and Louis Joliet in 1673. A French hunter and trader named DeDashe followed their trail and settled in the area we now call DuPage.

In 1818, Illinois (part of the Northwest Territory) entered the Union. The Indians in Illinois were Algonquins which consisted of tribes named Miamis, Kickapoos, Potawatomes, Sacs and Foxes, Winnebagos and Illiniwok.

Chief Blackhawk and his warriors in 1832 wanted to recover their lands east of the Mississippi. The war brought together soldiers from different parts of America and the capture of Chief Blackhawk ended the Indian resistance. As a result, a 20-mile corridor named Indian Boundary was established for safe passage for both Indian and white man.

Rapid settlement followed. The soldiers came back with their families to settle in this

beautiful rich farmland where an acre of land could be bought for \$1.25.

Robert Downer and his wife Hannah (Vincent) came to Newbury, Massachusetts, from Wiltshire, England around 1650. They had 2 sons, Robert and Joseph.

Pierce Downer, the founder of Downers Grove who was born July 25, 1782 in Plainfield, Windham County, Vermont, is a direct descendant of Joseph. In 1808 he married Lucy Ann Ellis.

The Anglo-Saxon name Downer originated at this time and was given to the people who had homes in the "Downs."

1832 brought Pierce to the Chicago area to join his son Stephen, who was a mason helping to construct a lighthouse near Fort Dearborn, the first ever of its kind built in the Chicago area.

After making inquiries regarding the surrounding lands of Fort Dearborn, Downer decided to claim land in the area of Chief Waubensee of the Potawatomes. The main attraction to this area were the groves of trees and rich farmland. The original claim included the land from Ogden

Ave. to the present railroad tracks and from Downers Dr. on the west to Highland Ave. on the east. Buyers of wood from the Chicagoland area would come to Downer to purchase excellent and large quantities of wood from his groves.

Downer's 22-year-old daughter, Adeline, the first white woman to live in what is now Downers Grove, came in October of 1834 to keep house for her father. Adeline married Garey Smith who was also of the grove. Smith built the first frame house in Downers Grove for his bride.

Downer's wife and children came to join him in 1836.

In 1835, Israel Blodgett built a log cabin on the present site of the Downers Grove Historical Museum, 831 Maple, for his wife and family. He established a farm and blacksmith shop, and also laid claim to land just north of the Blodgett homestead which is now in the center of the village's business district.

Blodgett sold part of his land near the center of the village to Samuel Curtiss for \$1,000. Curtiss constructed a tavern with stables on the site. Then in 1838 the 2 men laid out Maple Ave. by hitching 6 yoke of oxen to a heavy log which they

## *The way we were*

by Elaine LaBuda



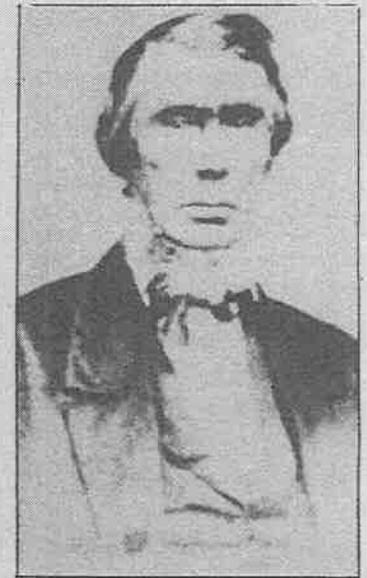
**PIERCE DOWNER**

dragged back and forth. On either side of the avenue they planted maple saplings. This road intercepted the trail to Naperville and brought trade and the stagecoach to Downers Grove.

Plank Rd, roughly following the Old Galena Rd., which is now part of Ogden Ave, was surveyed in 1833. Built of heavy planks, it permitted travel during the 4 seasons for payment of a toll.

With the construction of the Illinois-Michigan Canal in 1836, Europeans mostly from England, Ireland and Germany were able to make their way to Downers Grove in a much easier manner than the earlier settlers.

DuPage County was officially separated from Cook County in



**ISREAL BLODGETT**

1839. By 1840 two blacksmith shops were operating and Henry Carpenter opened the first store and post office in 1842 on the south side of Maple Ave. at Lane Pl. When Carpenter subdivided his land near his store on Maple Ave. west of what was to be Main St., it encouraged more people to settle in this area.

Construction on the railroad began in 1862 and the first train arrived in 1864. The town was growing. What other events occurred during these years taking us to 1989? What did the town people enjoy and establish? These are some of the questions that will be answered in "The Way We Were."

Pictures courtesy of Downers Grove Historical Society.

# Downer home survives 142 years

by Alice Velth

Every school-aged child in Downers Grove is taught the story of the founding of their village. How in May 1832 Pierce Downer, a Vermont native, travelled from central New York State via boat through the Great Lakes to Fort Dearborn. He was greeted there by his son, Stephen, who had been helping to build the first lighthouse in Chicago.

Pierce Downer, age 50, bought a horse and rode westward for 2½ days along an Indian trail (now Ogden ave.) until he reached this area. Once here he took deed to the 160 acres he had purchased from the U.S. government for \$1.25 an acre. (His property is bordered approximately today by Ogden ave., Highland ave., Downer dr. and the Burlington railroad tracks.)

Pierce Downer was the only white settler in the midst of the friendly Pottawatomie Indians who were about to leave for the West.

In that first year, he was to build a log cabin in order that his daughter, Adeline, could join him and keep house while he cleared the fertile land. His wife, Lucy Ann, and the rest of the children followed soon after.

Sometime between 1834 and 1840, Pierce Downer began the construction of a larger frame house to replace the log cabin. Saw mills being scarce in those times, it probably took several years to build, according to Pauline Wandschneider, curator of the Downers Grove Historical Museum, but the most accepted guess dates completion of the house at 1840.

Today Pierce Downer's house — which stands at 4437 Seeley ave. — changed in some ways but with many of its original features intact — belongs to the Arthur Frigo family. They have called it home for the past 11½ years. Art, a mechanical engineer with Bell Labs, and Judy, a former Downers Grove elementary school teacher, presently completing her 3rd year of medical school at Loyola Stritch School of Medicine, have 3 children: Mark 10, Betsy 8 and Dan 6. The family has been most gracious over the years in welcoming school children and other visitors some of whom recall playing in the home when they were very young children themselves.

The house today is easy to pick out on Seeley ave. because it sits awkward on the lot.

whether or not his house would be parallel with the future grid work of streets when he built this home in the wilderness.

In addition, the front and rear of the home are now reversed and, in times gone by, there was a long summer kitchen off the original back. When Seeley ave. was put through in the 1920's this part of the house was removed. In 1927 the back door became the main entrance we see today.

The Downer family's well was discovered accidentally when Joseph Beagle across Seeley ave. dug to plant a tree. The well is now surrounded by a low stone wall to mark the spot.

The house itself is small with low ceilings — 7½ feet downstairs and 7 feet upstairs. The ground floor originally consisted of 3 rooms. Above was most likely a loft where the family slept.

A visitor to the home today finds a living room to the right of the front door, a dining room to the left and a kitchen behind it. A small powder room has been added downstairs and, through Pierce Downer's front door, a large family room. The upstairs was divided much earlier into 4 bedrooms and a bath.

A center hall stairway faces today's back of the house. In Pierce Downer's day it would have led upstairs from the front door. One of the Frigo's visitors remembers a cherry wood staircase from his childhood play at the house.

According to Judy, it was the Quick family who saved the home from the ravages of time and the hardship of the Depression when they bought the old farmhouse in 1947. The Quicks applied aluminum siding over the worn exterior and added windows on the second floor and in the kitchen. After the Quicks, the Wahl family owned the house until the Frigos purchased it in 1970. Oddly enough, the realtor's listing simply called it an "unusual house" with no mention of its



LOCATED AT 4437 SEELEY AVE., this home was completed by Pierce Downer, founder of Downers Grove, in 1840. On the south side of the house can be seen a hatchway door through which slaves escaping to freedom entered to find a safe haven, part of the underground railroad in the 1860's.

In 1976 Art and Judy added on the large family room at the back of their house, along with a mud room, French doors and a 2-car garage.

The Frigos chose a cathedral ceiling for the family room because it gave Art a break from the old house's low ceilings. Together Art and Judy built a massive stone fireplace there and Judy laughingly remembers working with 800 pounds of mortar as being so stressful that she decided their marriage could survive anything after that including medical school.

Most interesting in a tour of the home are the 4' thick limestone walls that line the basement. Another unusual feature are the horizontal supporting beams in the ceiling which are made of entire tree trunks with the branches and some of the bark stripped

probably felled with his own hands. Smoke hooks once used for curing and storing meats also may be seen on the wooden up-rights.

This basement served as part of the underground railroad in the 1860's. Slaves escaping to freedom entered through the hatchway door on the south side of the house to rest in safety during daylight hours and travel on when dark fell.

Thirty years after pitching his tent that first May night, Pierce Downer died and was buried beside his wife who had just died a few days earlier. The burial site is on his original farm, now just to the north of 4524 Lincoln. Pierce Downer and Lucy Ann left behind a well-built home, an established farm, industrious descendants and the begin-



'ARMHOUSE' looked like this when Mr. and Mrs. John Quick sed it in 1947.

His wife, Lucy Ann, who came the following year with the rest of their children, was a brave, farsighted and noble woman. She endured the rigors and hardship of travel in those days and when she reached here, she found Indians who, just a few years back, might have cut off their heads and scalped them, living, as her neighbors in that still-foresty part of Seeley Avenue which reaches down to Chicago Avenue from Grant Street.

She administered to them, and the pioneers who joined her and Pierce a few years later, with herbs and potions which were good for those with ailments. A charming story tells of her going to her stove and getting hot coals to give to the Indians whose fires had gone out. Mr. Downer's library was a good-sized one and he was often called upon to make decisions for his fellow citizens because of his knowledge.

It's not very romantic to know that the Elks' restaurant graces one side of the maple-lined lane which came up to the front of this house and that Burger King graces

the other side. But if one looks up between these two buildings, one can see the remains of the trees which once yielded sap for maple sugar for the family and between which came wagons and visitors of all kinds. We have been told that Abraham Lincoln came campaigning along the avenue on his way to (or from) Naperville and that the family went down to meet him and shook hands with him on that spot.

The front of our house is really the back and the back is really the front. Once a long summer kitchen joined the house about where our front door is now and went over into the Swansons' front yard. Mr. Joseph Beegle went to plant a young tree a few years back and found the family well. Thanks to his interest and efforts, a fine well now stands for all to see, and how the children enjoy looking into it.

1947, "Landmark" looked like this. This is why, probably, it is not mentioned in old historical records, but since our remodelling of the house, it now is. Two months after we moved in, the furnace, with only one duct, the one in the front hall, blew a hole in its side and nearly set fire to the house. Luckily, I was able to douse it, but we had to find another place to rent till we could build a new house, or remodel at once. We had to remodel and, after finding a picture of the house as it was (around the turn of the century), we worked to make the house look as much like the picture as possible.

Now some could argue that because we have amazingly updated this lovely old home, that it has lost its historic value. We do not agree. If we had left it as we found it and then allowed it to become nearly 20 years older without caring for it and repairing it, our neighbors could, justifiably, have called for fire department action on it. The house is a happy one, with lots of light, sunshine and is cheerful, with lots of room. When one looks at its walls, its windows, its stairs, its log beams in the basement and its stone walls down there, one can easily imagine Pierce and Lucy Ann Downer and their family looking out of these same windows and doors and enjoying Downers Grove some 126 years back.

Children, I believe, have gotten a needful sense of their own personal importance in the stream of humanity which flows on endlessly and have come away,

at least I hope they have, feeling that perhaps 125 years from now, someone may remember them, if they do something fine and noble like the simple Downers did. They didn't set the world on fire, but they did follow their wish to do something brave and now they are remembered and admired and may be emulated. Here could be remembered Lottie Holman O'Neill, the first woman senator in Illinois, who even now lives in Downers Grove. So could "Shorty" Powers, the voice of the astronauts, and his dear parents who raised him and his brother here. So could others who have helped make Downers Grove the lovely place it is.

Seventy-five years from now, if the world is still living, who knows, perhaps even the names of the council members before whom the opportunity to preserve this place for the village may find their names recorded here.

And now we come to the land surrounding the house. We know we could have offered the house to the school board because very soon Pierce Downer School may need to add rooms and this ground, bought at the very nominal sum we are asking, could save the townspeople much money. Unless Pierce Downer can spread outward, they will have to hunt for large pieces of ground for a new school and we know they will have to pay a big price for it. We've been in town for nearly 26 years and we've seen it happen before. The house could serve as a residence for school teachers

who can't afford apartments and who, in a very little while, will be lucky to find one.

But I am interested in preserving this house for the town. And that is why we offered it to the village council. Manned by volunteers from the woman's clubs and furnished (and not necessarily fully) with donated pieces as authentic as possible, "Landmark" could be a source of revenue to the village at the house and from the land sold reasonably for other purposes as well as a source of pride and pleasure to many people in the village. Children from all the classrooms and their teachers could come here and learn of the town. So could newcomers and so could passers-through.

I would be happy to make available what material I know, and I beg to be forgiven when I say it is considerable, to the town we love so much and where our children have grown up. It grieves me to think of leaving it, but we are grateful for what we have had here, for the wonderful happiness which has been ours in this place.

We want the village to go on with it from us. I wish we could donate it, but we can't. I hope my name will not be "Cassandra" in about two years when, I believe, that whoever is holding title to this land will find it alone worth the price we are asking for this valuable house. And the house, which Downers Grove will, in time, wish it had honored, will have been a gift, after all, to its owners.

Millicent Bogadi Quick

(The following article was received as a letter from

Millicent Quick, but because of its general interest the Graphic decided to present it further up in today's issue.)

Editor:

Because of a newly-developed heart condition, my husband needs a rest and change, and our family would like very much to see that he gets it, and share it with him while we have each other.

We own "Landmark" (our name for it) which is the farm home of Pierce Downer, founder of Downers Grove, and we will sell it, use what money we get from it, go around the world together to visit dear friends who have been here in our home and then come back to dedicate ourselves to some work dealing with children.

In thinking about selling this historic house, because we know little about selling houses, approached two real estate firms. One "company" wants the house and has offered us a price. At first, we were pleased with their offer. Then the second company came with its estimate which is \$2,500 higher than the first offer made to us. Then a fine Negro family came along with an offer in between but no 6 percent handling charge because an attorney could handle the deal.

These developments were moving along nicely when a fourth idea entered the picture. A dear and elder friend who knows that "Landmark" could become a village project and a source of pride, if not also revenue, suggested that Mr. Quick and I should be the ones to offer it to the village, if for no other reason than that our appreciation and love of this old home had made us work hard to make something beautiful and durable of what might have become something condemned.

So we went to our village council meeting on May 16 and offered it to them for historical purposes for the \$20,000 price. In the following week, two gentlemen, neither of them council members, nor the village manager, came to look over the house and grounds. Neither of them, though very nice and kind, knew very much about the history of

Downers

house nor the family came to see the countless number of children who live here, I "to history and them to show etery.

After they waited for the village when none again to the meeting. Ouger, in his without see and with o information, probably be lived in the he could ne toric value er's farm though, adv of the coun visit for the rive at a fin our offer.

In the pr we had witne for the Fre ests claim had not read he did not thing that y the matter he ing before th newspapers ed by report meetings we amazed us t importance v something s what he was.

It has o that unless what is going they, too, i what Mr. C offering in meeting unl from your n enough to te they, hopefu be informed.

For this writing so know our ste

(The following article was received as a letter from Millicent Quick, but because of its general interest the Graphic decided to present it further up in today's issue.)

Editor:

Because of a newly-developed heart condition, my husband needs a rest and change, and our family would like very much to see that he gets it, and share it with him while we have each other.

We own "Landmark" (our name for it) which is the farm home of Pierce Downer, founder of Downers Grove, and we will sell it, use what money we get from it, go around the world together to visit dear friends who have been here in our home and then come back to dedicate ourselves to some work dealing with children.

In thinking about selling this historic house, because we know little about selling houses, approached two real estate firms. One "company" wants the house and has offered us a price. At first, we were pleased with their offer. Then the second company came with its estimate which is \$2,500 higher than the first offer made to us. Then a fine Negro family came along with an offer in between but no 6 percent handling charge because an attorney could handle the deal.

These developments were moving along nicely when a fourth idea entered the picture. A dear and elder friend who knows that "Landmark" could become a village project and a source of pride, if not also revenue, suggested that Mr. Quick and I should be the ones to offer it to the village, if for no other reason than that our appreciation and love of this old home had made us work hard to make something beautiful and durable of what might have become something condemned.

So we went to our village council meeting on May 16 and offered it to them for historical purposes for the \$20,000 price. In the following week, two gentlemen, neither of them council members, nor the village manager, came to look over the house and grounds. Neither of them, though very nice and kind, knew very much about the history of

Downers Grove, nor this house nor the charming little family cemetery. As with the countless numbers of school children who have come here, I "taught" them our history and even went with them to show them the cemetery.

After their departure, we waited for word from at least the village manager, but when none came, we went again to the village council meeting. Our village manager, in his progress report, without seeing the house, and with only second-hand information, announced that probably because he had not lived in the village for long, he could not see any historic value in Pierce Downer's farm home. He did, though, advise the members of the council to make a visit for themselves and arrive at a final solution about our offer.

In the previous meeting, we had witnessed an attorney for the Fredenhagen interests claim that because he had not read the newspapers, he did not know of something that was relevant to the matter he was representing before the council. Three newspapers were represented by reporters at each of the meetings we attended and it amazed us that a man of his importance would not know of something so necessary to what he was doing.

It has occurred to me that unless citizens know what is going on (even there), they, too, might not know what Mr. Quick and I are offering in a village council meeting unless we petition from your newspaper space enough to tell our story and they, hopefully, read it and be informed.

For this reason, I am writing so that they may know our story.



THE PIERCE Downer farmhouse as it appeared when the founder of Downers Grove owned it back in 1840.

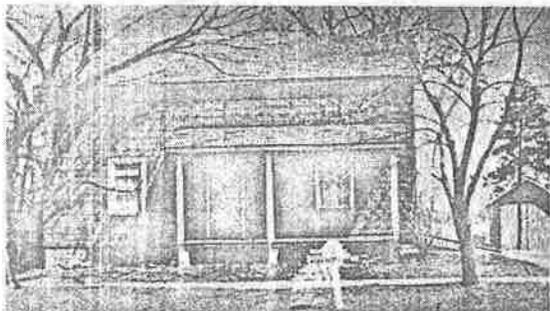
When one travels to another city on vacation, and if he has time and such interest, he naturally looks for some historic place to visit. He will gladly pay a small fee for looking for walls with cracks in them and battered stairs and old furniture which need not be authentic. He will then come home and tell his friends of all the wonderful things he saw.

Our house might differ from some of them in age only. The historic value and qualities are here, and they are thrilling, if the reac-

tions of, say, the school children mean anything.

Pierce Downer, a man of good family (the book in the public library will bear me out in this) listen to his son, Stephan, had come to "Chicagou" in 1831 to help build a lighthouse, and, in 1832, he arrived in this area to hunt for a piece of land with timber on it. He took to horse one day and headed westward on the Indian trail that is now Ogden Avenue (Highway 34) and when the sun began to go down, looked for a good camping spot for the night. About in line with what is now the Herrick Junior High School, Mr. Downer saw a fine high rise of land with a stream beyond it. He chose this hill in the prairie land for his resting spot that night and now, 134 years later, he rests there, with his wife and descendants, forever.

He liked the land and claimed it for his own. Anyone who lives on land from Ogden Avenue and Downers Drive down to the railroad tracks and thence to Highland Avenue and back to Ogden lives on Pierce Downer's original farm land. And our own house is the manor which once, alone, crowned it.



'ARMHOUSE looked like this when Mr. and Mrs. John Quick sed it in 1947.

His wife, Lucy Ann, who came the following year with the rest of their children, was a brave, farsighted and noble woman. She endured the rigors and hardship of travel in those days and when she reached here, she found Indians who, just a few years back, might have cut off their heads and scalped them, living, as her neighbors in that still-forestry part of Seeley Avenue which reaches down to Chicago Avenue from Grant Street.

She administered to them, and the pioneers who joined her and Pierce a few years later, with herbs and potions which were good for those with ailments. A charming story tells of her going to her stove and getting hot coals to give to the Indians whose fires had gone out. Mr. Downer's library was a good-sized one and he was often called upon to make decisions for his fellow citizens because of his knowledge.

It's not very romantic to know that the Elks' restaurant graces one side of the maple-lined lane which came up to the front of this house and that Burger King graces

the other side. But if one looks up between these two buildings, one can see the remains of the trees which once yielded sap for maple sugar for the family and between which came wagons and visitors of all kinds. We have been told that Abraham Lincoln came campaigning along the avenue on his way to (or from) Naperville and that the family went down to meet him and shook hands with him on that spot.

The front of our house is really the back and the back is really the front. Once a long summer kitchen joined the house about where our front door is now and went over into the Swansons' front yard. Mr. Joseph Seegle went to plant a young tree a few years back and found the family well. Thanks to his interest and efforts, a fine well now stands for all to see, and how the children enjoy looking into it.

1947. "Landmark" looked like this. This is why, probably, it is not mentioned in old historical records, but since our remodeling of the house, it now is. Two months after we moved in, the furnace, with only one duct, the one in the front hall, blew a hole in its side and nearly set fire to the house. Luckily, I was able to douse it, but we had to find another place to rent till we could build a new house, or remodel at once. We had to remodel and, after finding a picture of the house as it was (around the turn of the century), we worked to make the house look as much like the picture as possible.

Now some could argue that because we have amazingly updated this lovely old home, that it has lost its historic value. We do not agree. If we had left it as we found it and then allowed it to become nearly 20 years older without caring for it and repairing it, our neighbors could, justifiably, have called for fire department action on it. The house is a happy one, with lots of light, sunshine and is cheerful, with lots of room. When one looks at its walls, its windows, its stairs, its log beams in the basement and its stone walls down there, one can easily imagine Pierce and Lucy Ann Downer and their family looking out of these same windows and doors and enjoying Downers Grove some 126 years back.

Children, I believe, have gotten a needful sense of their own personal importance in the stream of humanity which flows on endlessly and have come away,

at least I hope they have, feeling that perhaps 125 years from now, someone may remember them, if they do something fine and noble like the simple Downers did. They didn't set the world on fire, but they did follow their wish to do something brave and now they are remembered and admired and may be emulated. Here could be remembered Lotie Holman O'Neill, the first woman senator in Illinois, who even now lives in Downers Grove. So could "Sherry" Powers, the voice of the astronauts, and his dear parents who raised him and his brother here. So could others who have helped make Downers Grove the lovely place it is.

Seventy-five years from now, if the world is still living, who knows, perhaps even the names of the council members before whom the opportunity to preserve this place for the village may find their names recorded here.

And now we come to the land surrounding the house. We know we could have offered the house to the school board because very soon Pierce Downer School may need to add rooms and this ground, bought at the very nominal sum we are asking, could save the townspeople much money. Unless Pierce Downer can spread outward, they will have to hunt for large pieces of ground for a new school and we know they will have to pay a big price for it. We've been in town for nearly 26 years and we've seen it happen before. The house could serve as a residence for school teachers

who can't afford apartments and who, in a very little while, will be lucky to find one.

But I am interested in preserving this house for the town. And that is why we offered it to the village council. Manned by volunteers from the women's clubs and furnished (and not necessarily fully) with donated pieces as authentic as possible, "Landmark" could be a source of revenue to the village at the house and from the land sold reasonably for other purposes as well as a source of pride and pleasure to many people in the village. Children from all the classrooms and their teachers could come here and learn of the town. So could newcomers and so could passers-through.

I would be happy to make available what material I know, and I beg to be forgiven when I say it is considerable, to the town we love so much and where our children have grown up. It grieves me to think of leaving it, but we are grateful for what we have had here, for the wonderful happiness which has been ours in this place.

We want the village to go on with it from us. I wish we could donate it, but we can't. I hope my name will not be "Cassandra" in about two years when, I believe, that whoever is holding title to this land will find it alone worth the price we are asking for this valuable house. And the house, which Downers Grove will, in time, wish it had honored, will have been a gift, after all, to its owners.

Millicent Bogadi Quick

## Landmark

I have been reading about the restoration of the College Hill area in Providence, R.I. where, in 1636, Roger Williams established his settlement. It had deteriorated and literally had become a slum. I thought to myself that it always seems to take a couple of hundred years before someone bestirs himself to do something about the preservation of our beginnings so that subsequent generations may know they did not just spring from a cabbage head.

So it was with considerable interest that I noted in the Council minutes published last week that Millicent and Jack Quick of Seeley avenue have offered their home, (the original Pierce Downer homestead) for sale to the village before putting it on the open market.

I certainly hope this is one time the Council has a unanimous meeting of minds and quickly decides to purchase this home so it may become the true landmark and signature of the town. That goes for the townspeople, too! We should all be vocal about this and let the Council know this acquisition is important to us and to our families. After all, a town is not a nebulous bit of fluff in the atmosphere - WE are the town - and we should grasp this opportunity to preserve a heritage of this spot we call "home."

When Downers celebrated its Centennial, people came from miles around to ooh and aah over the antiques and interesting memorabilia displayed in every store window, library, bank, and available cranny that would hold an exhibit of some sort.

Many of the children and grandchildren of the original settlers of the Grove still live here and would be proud to have these inherited artifacts arranged in the type of home for which they had originally been made. The DAR have already stepped forward with an offer of help and I am sure other women's organizations will appoint committees to help plan the furnishing and beautification of "Landmark."

Undoubtedly the Council's first thought will be "Money." Well, when one considers the thousands of dollars spent without a murmur on fruitless traffic surveys, \$20,000 spent on a livable house and good land which will be enjoyed by generations to come seems a very small price indeed.

Places like Williamsburg, Greenfield Village, Land of Lincoln, and closer to home, Graue Mill, are always crowded and if you've visited there haven't you sooner or later heard someone say, "Why, there's a pan (spoon, iron or dish) just like my grandmother had!" in a tone hard to describe - a mixture of surprise, awe and pride of identification.

In our family we cherish a little flowered china teapot which belonged to my husband's grandmother, brought by her to this country from Germany many years ago. Every time we use it we cannot help but think of the succession of loving hands pouring tea and carefully washing and drying the little pot to preserve its painted roses. Needless to say this is one article that doesn't get left up-ended in the dishdrainer! - - and I think that is how the people of Downers Grove will feel about the care and preservation of Lucy and Pierce Downer's home.

Reporter  
June 13, 1966