

Historic Preservation Commission

2014 Summer Property of the Season

219 S Main Street

The Oswego Historic Preservation Commission is excited to announce the Charles Roberts home at 219 S. Main Street as the Summer 2014 Property of the Season. The well-maintained Queen Anne style home was built in August 1897 for Charles and Fannie Gregg Roberts. The home is a classic upright and wing home with an elaborate wraparound front porch covered by an overhanging cross gable shingle roof. Wooden windows and sashes surround



the home including a unique oriel window on the north façade of the ground floor. Elaborate window hoods and brackets adorn the angled windows on the second floor. Minimal changes have been made to the home since it was built in 1897. The home suffered damage during a fire next door in 1920 and was repaired. Since that time a small single story addition had been added to the home along the south facade in the late 1950s and the porch railings and posts have been replaced.

Charles Roberts purchased lots 5 and 6 in block 19 in the original platted town of Oswego in March 1897. The lot was originally subdivided by Lewis Judson in 1845. Blanchard and Sophronia Fossgate owned the lot and built a small home in 1852. The Fossgates sold the home to John McKinney who owned the property until 1864 when it passed into the hands of Garret Teller. Teller owned the home for forty years until it was sold to the First Congregational Church as a parsonage for Rev. J.H. Reed March 31, 1894.

A fire destroyed the parsonage and the church just a short time later on July 17, 1894. In the early morning hours a fire broke out in the back of the home. The Kendall County Records wrote, "It is fortunate there was no wind, as the village would have been the victim of a disastrous conflagration had there been much of a breeze. Understand there was no insurance on the church; \$800 on the house and that Mr. Reed had a little insurance on his furniture. The fire caused a good deal of excitement. The church was one of the landmarks of Oswego, and had been most useful as a gathering place for many organizations." The Congregational Church temporarily moved into the vacant Baptist church one block away. A new Congregational Church was dedicated less than a year after the fire on the first Sunday in May 1895. It is unclear if the parsonage lot sat vacant until Roberts bought the lot on March 25, 1897.

Charles Roberts was born in Oswego May 2, 1848 to Charles L. and Miss Mary Bunn who was just sixteen years old when she married

Charles Sr. in New York City in 1842. Charles Sr. was the son of Samuel and Phoebe Roberts.

The Roberts families came from New Jersey to Oswego in 1843. Charles Sr.'s brother George W. served in the Mexican war in 1848.

Years later the battle cry was sounded again. Charles Jr. was too young to fight in the Civil War, but his older brother John Roberts served for 3 years as part of Sherman's Union forces. Charles and his siblings were raised on a 250 acre farm on the west side of the Fox River. Charles had an extensive education. While in Champaign, Illinois, at the age of thewnty-three, he married Fannie L. Gregg on September 14, 1871. They spent the rest of their lives in the Oswegoland area.

After moving into the home on Main St. Fannie and Charles led active and prosperous lives. Charles was a member of the Masonic lodge, holding elected offices in both that organization as well as within the village. He was caretaker for the Congregational Church, which caught fire once again in March, 1920. The church was completely destroyed and the Charles Roberts home was badly damaged. Sadly, Mrs. Fannie Roberts had passed away less than three months earlier on November 17, 1919. Charles had just vacated the home in February and was renting the home to Harlan Richards and his family. Luckily, no one was injured. The Kendall County Record reported, "The south side of the Richards home was badly damaged, roof completely burned, the furniture was saved by being carried into the street. The piano and a few seats were the only things saved from the church. Mr. Roberts, owner of the house, was in West Chicago at the time." Charles Roberts passed from this world on March 25, 1928 in Oswego. He is buried next to his wife Fannie in the Oswego Township Cemetery.

Five years before Mr. Roberts died; he sold lot 5 to Julia Richards in April, 1923. The Richards family owned the property for thirty years until the home was sold to Andrew and Anna Pierce in 1953. Since that time owners have included Judd and Dorothy McCulley, James DeKing, Ervin and Mary Heinman, Fred and Joann Walker. Kevin and Angela DeBolt have cared for the home since 2003.

