

2015 Spring Property of the Season

365 S. Madison Street



Oswego Historic Preservation Committee is excited to present 365 S. Madison as our Spring Property of the Season. This simplified Queen Ann style cross-gabled home was originally built as a carriage house to the home at 371 S. Madison Street sometime around 1900. The story, passed down from earlier homeowners, was that the carriage house sat further back on the lot and was moved forward and transformed into a residence possibly when the lot was subdivided.

The house has two-toned gray and white half-circle and diamond shaped shaker siding in the gable of the home and bluish-gray wood siding surrounding the rest of the home. Two circular replacement windows grace the front; the first in the front gable and the second above the large wooden front porch. A second story addition was added to the rear of the home after the Miller family purchased the house in 1982. Previously, only a small single-story addition had been built.

The oldest section of the carriage home still rests on the early 1900s era stone foundation. The yellow pine floors and the wooden 5 panel doors in the two front bedrooms date to the original home as well as the stairway treads. A fire had occurred at some point in the home's history and a renovation by the Millers found charred wood beneath the plaster in the kitchen and front parlor area. The story told by a former neighbor was that an unattended iron had overheated causing the small fire which was extinguished before serious damage.

L.B. Judson platted this section of Oswego on November 1, 1856. All lots in Block 3 were sold together to Charles Southerland and wife Elizabeth. Charles was born in Hanover, Germany and came to America, settling in New York. He and his family came to Oswego in 1849. Mr. Sutherland was a boot and shoe dealer with

a well-kempt building on Main Street. In 1864 Charles and his wife Lizzie sold all lots to Sarah Kennedy. Kennedy sold part of the block back to Charles in 1871 and retained the rest of the block. Charles met an untimely end a few years later. Mr. Sutherland died after being struck by a heavy object from behind while walking home on January 18, 1876. Upon investigation cause of death was a serious skull fracture. The Kendall County Record reported February 10, 1876 on his suspicious death and coroner's inquest hearing by stating,

"The jury rendered their verdict accordingly, to wit: that his death was caused by wounds inflicted by parties to the jury unknown. This carries with it the presumption that upon somebody is resting the crime of murder. The children of the deceased are all living abroad and none of them were present at the funeral."

Sadly, Charles' wife Lizzie died four short months later of Apoplexy. No criminal charges were ever filed.

Frank O. Hawley bought all lots in block 3 in 1886. Mr. Hawley was born and bred in Oswego and grew to great prominence within the community. He was Mayor of Oswego for a time, sat on the local school board, and was once the Democratic candidate for Congress against Republican I.C. Copley. Frank Hawley made a name for himself in the real estate business, buying and selling Oswego properties for many years. Mr. Hawley sold the lots six years later to Mrs. Emma Van Doozer in 1893.

Emma was the daughter of John and Frances Pearce. She married Benjamin F. Van Doozer (better known as Frank) on March 22nd 1883. The adventurous couple moved to the Black Hills, Dakota Territory, where their son Rex was born in 1887. The couple were living in Aurora in 1900 when Emma began selling off the lots in block three to her cousins; the Jessup Family. Father Frank bought the lot which was eventually split into smaller lots for his children, Daughter Jane Jessup Vaughn, and brothers Charlie and David.

Jane Jessup married Richard Vaughn in 1914. Sadly, she was widowed in 1921. In 1937 Jane sold the home to the Old Ladies' Home of Aurora. They kept possession of the property for 5 years until they sold the home to Lloyd and Betty Collins. Betty Collins spoke fondly of the home and liked to share the story of how her daughter would play near the curved landing at the top of the staircase. Here the warm sunshine would flow in from a small window bringing year-round warmth. Susan Miller, who owned the house years later, shared that her daughters loved to play in that very space as children. The Collins family lived in the home for fifteen years.

The property passed through several hands over the next two decades. Dean and Maxine Stahley sold to Della and Robert Herren, Della then sold to Paul and Joyce Krahn. Dale Krahn sold the home to Jeff Corneils in 1971. He lived there for a time before moving to Yorkville. The home passed to Eric and Susan Miller in 1982. The Miller's took loving care of the property raising two daughters there. They lived in the home until 2004 when they sold the property to John and Nancy Hilger of Oswego and moved into the home next door. The Hilger's have maintained the home and the property since 2004.