

ARCHITECTURE FOR BEGINNERS

10TH & CASS ST. NEIGHBORHOOD

INTRODUCTION

May is National Preservation Month! In this booklet, you will find 12 houses that are all listed in the National Register of Historic Places District of the 10th & Cass Street neighborhood. This means that together, the houses in this neighborhood have historical importance in the city of La Crosse and have been identified for historic preservation as a district, or a neighborhood. The information in this booklet and scavenger hunt focus largely on the people who owned and commissioned these homes. However, by learning about these families, we are also learning about the larger history of the La Crosse community. Hundreds of working-class La Crosse residents were responsible for supporting the wealth that built these homes. These were the residents that were employed at the companies and industries (e.g. sawmills, factories, construction firms, banks, etc.) owned by the residents featured on this tour.

You will notice that these houses are typically named after the owner during the construction of the house, not necessarily the longest occupant. However, just because the houses are named after these individuals, that doesn't mean they are the only important people in the stories behind these homes.

Sometimes in studying history, we forget to look at all pieces of the story. For instance, we don't know much about the domestic staff that didn't only live in these houses, but took care of them so that they are still standing in such good condition today. Domestic staff throughout history can be given credit for these houses to be appreciated as historic landmarks in our community. While looking at these houses and their intricate architectural details, try to think about the gardeners who worked on the landscape around the houses, the valets who took care of the horses (and later cars), the maids who lived in small rooms on the top floors, and the larger La Crosse community who's livelihood was often in the hands of the people who lived in these large homes.

ARCHITECTURE FOR BEGINNERS: THE BASICS

One way to think about architecture is that it is a form of art that reflects the people who lived in the home and the neighborhood. Architecture tells the story of class in our city—we can learn so much about our history just by looking at the decoration on homes and buildings throughout different neighborhoods. Each of the little architectural details were meant to display wealth and each neighborhood will reflect a different story. Today, we can understand this while also appreciating the beauty of La Crosse's neighborhoods.

The 10th & Cass Street historic district is a good place to start learning about architecture. The houses in this

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neighborhood reflect a time in La Crosse was growing at an exponential rate. This scavenger hunt will teach elements of four different architectural styles.

- **Greek Revival** was most popular in the East and South. It often features high style columns and porticos, influenced by the classical temples in Greece. It went out of style after the Civil War, so only the earliest La Crosse homes show this style.
- **Italianate style** was also a revival brought to architecture in the 1800s, but was a revival of the Italian Renaissance. Many La Crosse homes were built in Italianate style. By the early 1900s, home owners thought this style was outdated and worked to give their homes updates in more modern styles of the time.
- **Prairie style** was developed in the early 20th century, when architects were trying to look to the future and create new designs using new materials (such as concrete, glass, and steel), rather than reviving styles from the past. Frank Lloyd Wright and a team of Chicago architects are credited with developing Prairie style. The shapes and materials used in these homes are meant to echo the prairie and rock outcroppings of southern Wisconsin, where Wright grew up.
- **Queen Anne style** was one of the most popular architecture styles between 1880 and 1900. This is the style that will pop up the most on this scavenger hunt. Queen Anne style was meant to be a revival of architecture built during Queen Anne's reign in the early 1700s, but there are really few similarities.

LAND RECOGNITION

THE 10TH & CASS STREET NEIGHBORHOOD OCCUPIES THE ANCESTRAL LANDS OF THE HO-CHUNK, WHO HAVE STEWARDED THIS LAND SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL.

In fact, the entire city of La Crosse occupies land that was once a prairie that was home to a band of Ho-Chunk for many years. Then in 1830, United States President Andrew Jackson signed a document called the Indian Removal Act. By doing this, President Jackson made it legal to forcibly and often violently remove Indigenous peoples who lived east of the Mississippi River on their ancestral lands, like the Ho-Chunk. This means that they were moved from their homes, where their ancestors had lived for many, many generations—and in most cases, for thousands of years. The U.S. Government decided that eastern land in the U.S. was too valuable to newly arriving immigrants, so the Indian Removal Act called to move Indigenous peoples to territory west of the Mississippi River, even though there were other inhabitants there, including other Indigenous groups and newly arriving immigrants.

Throughout the 1830s and 1840s, the U.S. Government tried to remove local Ho-Chunk from La Crosse six times. To do this, U.S. Army troops were ordered to take Ho-Chunk families, force them onto steamboats, and take them to guarded reservations in Iowa, northern Minnesota, southwest Minnesota, South Dakota, and finally to Nebraska. The historic steamboat landing where these removals took place is now Spence Park in downtown La Crosse (across the street from the Charmant, at the northwest corner of Front and State Streets).

However, many of La Crosse's Ho-Chunk found their way back to their homeland and settled back here in the area. The federal and local governments moved on to new strategies to eradicate Indigenous peoples and cultures from the newly established United States of America. As of 2016, Wisconsin was home to over 8,000 members of the Ho-Chunk Nation, about 230 of whom live in La Crosse County.

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STOP 1: JOHN & ALICE WHEELER HOUSE

GO TO: 950 CASS STREET

Built 1884/1891

An architect named Percy Dwight Bentley grew up in this house. His father, Edward, was one of the people who started La Crosse's YMCA. Percy graduated from Central High School in 1903 and went on to study architecture in Ohio and Chicago. When Percy came back to La Crosse, he began his own architecture firm and went on to design many houses in La Crosse. Percy is credited for bringing Prairie Style homes to La Crosse, both for working class families and wealthy families (learn more in the Prairie [Style] La Crosse tour).

Information about the domestic staff in this house is unknown, though they surely existed and likely lived in the upper floors of the house.



ARCHITECTURE EYE SPY

This is an example of a very unique Queen Anne style. Can you find these notable features?

[SHADED BACKGROUND = QUEEN ANNE STYLE ELEMENTS]

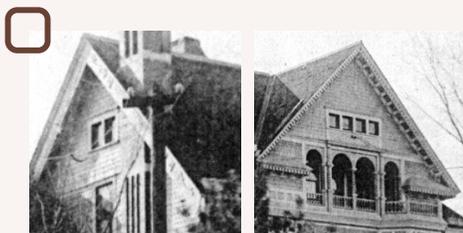


Multiple balconies and porches

Different colors and textures on siding

Fancy trim

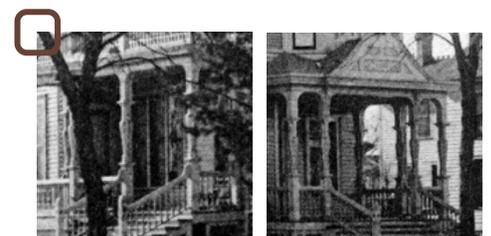
Spindles



Multiple gables



Two chimneys



Multiple entrances, only one remaining (try to find where there used to be a side entrances!)

ARCHITECTURE FOR BEGINNERS

STOP 2: FRANK & EMILY TIFFANY HOUSE

GO TO: 1010 CASS ST

Built 1889

The Frank and Emily Tiffany House is a modest interpretation of Queen Anne style architecture. Frank worked in finance in the lumber industry before it crashed in the 1890s. After the crash, he started working in banks. Emily was a philanthropist, which means she worked to better the community by organizing social clubs and services with other wealthy women. In 1898, Emily helped establish a traveling library system in La Crosse County, where boxes of books would be shipped to rural areas and changed out periodically. This was in an effort to spread literacy to families living further away from the city.



We have no historic photograph of this house.

One fun fact about this house is that it was originally located around the block (at 403 S. 11th St.) and was moved here in 1998 to complement other houses from its time.

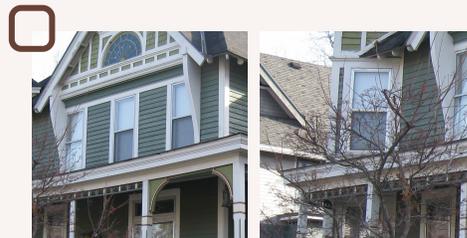
ARCHITECTURE EYE SPY

This home is an example of a modest interpretation of Queen Anne style. Can you find these notable features?

QUEEN ANNE ELEMENTS



Wide, open porch



Two rectangular bays



Highly ornamental central gable



Narrow white stripes with rounded rafter ends on central gable and corner bay

ARCHITECTURE FOR BEGINNERS

STOP 3: FRANK & ABBY BURTON HOUSE

GO TO: 1018 CASS ST.

Built 1884

This home was bought by Frank and Abby Burton in 1884. However, we do not know if Frank ever even lived in the home, having died soon after buying it. Several sources list the Burtons living at 710 Cass St. in 1884.

Unfortunately, no recorded building corresponds to this address, which leaves historians questioning whether those sources were mistaken or if there was a building that escaped records. Because he was so prominent, Frank's funeral was heavily reported in the paper and attended by thousands of residents. From the way the newspapers are written, we cannot confirm if the funeral took place at 710 Cass St. or here at 1018 Cass St. One theory is that this house was built down the street and moved here, but we cannot say for sure.

One newspaper report said that widowed Abby would be taking possession of the new residence. Abby went on to live and raise their three children here. The home stayed in the Burton family until the early 1960s.



We have no historic photograph of this house.

ARCHITECTURE EYE SPY

This home is an example of a Queen Anne style. Can you find these notable features?

QUEEN ANNE ELEMENTS



Asymmetrical features on front of house



Open porch



Colored glass windows



Vertical and horizontal details in the gables

ARCHITECTURE FOR BEGINNERS

STOP 4: JAMES & AGNES VINCENT HOUSE

GO TO: 1024 CASS ST.

Built 1884

This home was originally designed by an architect from Chicago named William Carroll. Later, it was modified by a local architect, William Parker, who designed many of the public and commercial buildings we see today in La Crosse.

James Vincent was born in New York in 1832. At the age of 16, he left his home to try and make his riches in California with the Gold Rush. After striking out, he came to La Crosse in 1855, where he became successful in lumber and grain businesses. In 1881, Vincent helped establish a rail system for the community to make travelling from one area of the city to another easier. This was years before cars were invented.

The home remained in the Vincent family until 2006. A recent restoration was done by the current owners.



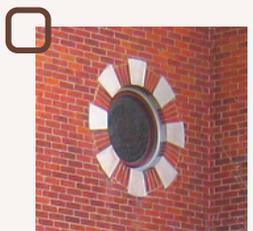
ARCHITECTURE EYE SPY

This home is a mixture of Italianate and Queen Anne style, with some Victorian Gothic influence. Can you find these notable features?

QUEEN ANNE ELEMENTS



Multiple gables (with rising sun decoration)



Circular window with brick and limestone border

ITALIANATE ELEMENTS



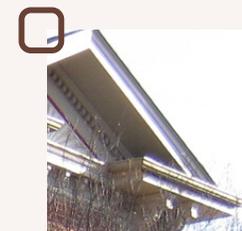
Cross-gabled mass (looks like a cross from above)



Tall, arrow windows



Open-entry porch with columns



Bracketed eaves



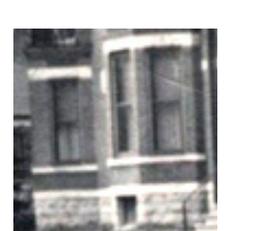
Two bay windows



Iron balustrade



limestone arches, belt course, and foundation (all contrast well with red brick)



ARCHITECTURE FOR BEGINNERS

STOP 5: STEPHEN & CATHERINE MARTINDALE HOUSE

GO TO: 237 S. 10TH ST.

Built 1859, 1869

The home was partially built by a man named Thomas Laverty in 1859. In 1861, Laverty enlisted in the Union Army to help fight in the Civil War. When he returned to La Crosse in 1863, he was a disabled war veteran and rather than finishing the large home, he sold it to Stephen Martindale III and his wife, Catherine. Together, the Martindales completed the partially-constructed two story home.

In 1906, when Stephen IV and Sophie Martindale moved into the home with their children, major modernizations were made including central heating, electric lighting, and a modern bathroom. Their daughter, Katharine lived in the home until 1977, when the Martindale House was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977. It was in the Martindale family for three generations and for over 100 years.



ARCHITECTURE EYE SPY

This home is an example of Italianate style. Can you find these notable features?

ITALIANATE ELEMENTS



Broad eaves with paired brackets



Cupola with round, arched windows



Tall, narrow windows with ornamental hoods



Wrap-around porch with classical columns



Low-pitched hip roof

ARCHITECTURE FOR BEGINNERS

STOP 6: WILLIAM & MARY CROSBY HOUSE

GO TO: 221 S. 10TH ST.

Built 1886

William Crosby moved to La Crosse in 1854 from Massachusetts. Seeking his fortune in the promised West (Wisconsin was considered to be part of America's West during this time), he organized the Boom and Log Co. William was very successful in the lumber business and became involved in social and civic affairs. He was the brother of Sarah Crosby, who was married to Gideon Hixon.

William convinced Gideon to move to La Crosse for business after Sarah died in 1856. Here in La Crosse, Gideon met Ellen. After the two were married, Ellen dedicated herself to city improvements. She used her time and money to become an environmental activist. Later, in 1909, Ellen was a driving force behind saving the area's bluffs from quarrying and permanent deforestation, which is how Hixon Forest got its name.



Coincidentally, the limestone foundation blocks in the William and Mary Crosby home were likely quarried on Grandad Bluff. The wood—oak, cherry, and mahogany, and redwood— was all shipped from California, which was typical of elite lumber men and carpenters. The carriage house in the back of the home was connected to the main house in recent years.

ARCHITECTURE EYE SPY

This is an example of a very unique Queen Anne style. Can you find these notable features?

QUEEN ANNE STYLE ELEMENTS



Multiple gables



Multiple chimneys with decoration



Cone-shaped turret



Elaborate woodwork



Irregularly-placed stained glass windows



Projecting bays



Variety of textures and colors on surface



Large, open porch with columns

ARCHITECTURE FOR BEGINNERS

STOP 7: ROBERT & NELLIE KINNEAR HOUSE

Built 1914

In 1890 after completing medical school, Dr. Robert Kinnear began his medical practice in La Crosse and was considered the leading doctor of homeopathy. After a 1914 fire destroyed the Kinnears' home, they had this Prairie Style home built on the same site.

The two-story residence has an upper level with an identical but less spacious floor plan, indicating that possibly the building was designed as a duplex. In 1916, a smaller two-story American Foursquare style residence was built just to the south and to the rear of the Kinnear House. The houses were divided in the mid-1900s.

The architect of the Kinnear House is unknown, though it is speculated that it was Percy Dwight Bently (from Stop #1).

GO TO: 220-222 S. 10TH ST.



We have no historic photograph of this house.

ARCHITECTURE EYE SPY

This home is an excellent example of Prairie style in La Crosse.
Can you find these notable features?

PRAIRIE STYLE ELEMENTS



Bands of windows with simple frames



Overhanging eaves



Stucco second story, complementing the brick



Main entrance near rear of house



Broad flat chimney



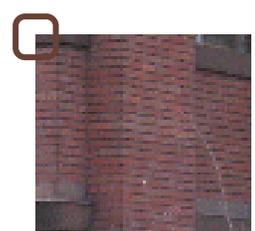
Recessed bays



Brick piers



Low pitch hip roof



Roman brick façade

ARCHITECTURE FOR BEGINNERS

STOP 8: NELSON & MARTHA ALLEN HOUSE

GO TO: 203 S. 10TH ST.

Built 1868

Nelson Allen arrived in La Crosse in 1862 from Vermont and was the superintendent of the Colman Lumber Company, which was among the earliest lumber mills in the city. It started in 1854 as a shingle manufacturing company. It went on to become one of the largest mills in La Crosse, employing 160 people. In 1888, these workers produced 27 million feet of lumber and 16 million wooden shingles. The company shut down in 1903 as the last operating sawmill on La Crosse's South Side. It was located on the riverfront at the end of Cameron Avenue.

Greek Revival style architecture was one of many interpretations of classical architecture found in residential, government and church buildings across the 19th century in America. Originating in New England in the 1820s and incorporating several of the design and detail elements found in classical Greek architecture, the style went out of favor with architects and their clients soon after the end of the Civil War. Only the oldest existing residences in La Crosse display Greek Revival elements.



We have no historic photograph of this house.

ARCHITECTURE EYE SPY

This home is an example of Green Revival. Can you find these notable features?

GREEK REVIVAL ELEMENTS



Pedimented porch entrance



Simple, narrow columns



Brackets



Shallow window lintels (hoods)



Front gable



Rectangle shape



No ornaments under eaves

ARCHITECTURE FOR BEGINNERS

STOP 9: EDWIN & RACHEL TENNEY/ CARL & AMELIA NOELKE HOUSE

GO TO: 1003 KING ST.

Built 1859, 1891

*We have no historic photograph of this house.

Edwin Tenney and his wife Rachel (Miner) Tenney built this house in 1859 after moving to La Crosse from New Hampshire. Rachel's brother, Rev. Alonzo Ames Miner, was a wealthy Universalist minister in Boston. To help Rachel start her new family, her brother paid for the house with Miner family money for several years. This means he was listed as the property owner in early tax records, even though he still lived in Boston and the Tenneys occupied the home.

Edwin operated a hardware store that was on Front St., near the riverfront (where Riverside Park is now) before moving on to other jobs, including a one-year term as La Crosse's first chief of police. The Tenneys were key organizers and supporters of La Crosse's Universalist Church. They lived in the house at 1003 King St. until their respective deaths. In Edwin's 1895 obituary (likely written by Rachel), it fondly states, "...when [the Tenneys] built [their house], it was one of the half dozen mansions of La Crosse and has always been one of the best cared for and most comfortable homes of the city." After Rachel died in 1912, the house was vacant until the next family, the Noelkes, moved in around 1915.

Carl Noelke was a piano dealer (go to 529 Main St. to see a building with the Noelke name, where they sold pianos). Do you see how some of the brickwork here looks like piano keys? Sometime between 1915 and 1925, the Noelkes gave the house a facelift, adding the brick veneer and a few other Early Modern elements. This kind of recycling of buildings and homes was more common at the time than it is now, though some urban developers and architecture historians speculate that this is the direction to be heading in as dwindling resources and climate change will rapidly affect our built environment in the near future.

ARCHITECTURE EYE SPY

This house was built Italianate style in 1859. In ~1920, it had major renovations that gave it an Early Modern style. Can you find these notable features?

ITALIANATE ELEMENTS



Modillions under the eaves (likely replaced original paired brackets)



Tall narrow windows



Low pitch roof

EARLY MODERN ELEMENTS



Arched entry, with tapered corners



Brick veneer (original wood frame structure underneath)

ARCHITECTURE FOR BEGINNERS

STOP 10: SAMUEL & MARY BURTON HOUSE

GO TO: 929 KING ST.

Built c. 1865, 1869-1871

Samuel “Judge” Burton was born in Manchester, Vermont and came to La Crosse in 1858. He was educated at Burr and Burton Seminary, a (still running) private high school funded by his father in Manchester. In La Crosse, he started a law practice and was appointed as the County Judge in 1859—just after a year of living here. Even though he served only for six years, he would always be known as Judge Burton for the rest of his life in La Crosse. Judge Burton and his wife Mary Ann had one child, Munson Burton, in 1869.



We have no historic photograph of this house.

The Burton house changed hands several times before being purchased by two German immigrant brothers, Arthur and Theodore Beutler. The brothers owned a grocery store where the City Brewery is now. The home stayed in their family until 1963, when it became a rental property. The house changed ownership many times but was finally rescued and restored in 1976.

ARCHITECTURE EYE SPY

This home is a fine example of 19th century Italianate style. Can you find these notable features?

ITALIANATE ELEMENTS



Low-pitch roof



Paired brackets



Tall narrow windows



Clapboard siding



Classical corner
(rectangular flat columns)



Decorative entryway
(east side)

ARCHITECTURE FOR BEGINNERS

STOP II: JAMES & MARY LOOMIS/GEORGE & HATTIE RAY HOUSE

Built 1859, 1891

This home has had two architectural styles and two addresses. Originally built in Italianate style (see historic photo for details), it had a square or cubic shape and a low-pitch hip roof) for lumberyard owner James Loomis in 1859, the home's address historically was 928 King Street. Then in the early 1890s log dealer George Ray enlarged and re-configured the home into the popular Queen Anne Style to match the homes in the neighborhood. The Ray family lived in the home until the 1940s, when it was converted to apartments.

For some time between 1954 and 2011 the home was operated as a rooming house by the owners Delilah Nelson Grassman and her husband Elmer Wehrs. In the 1960s, the address changed to 204 10th St. Since 2011, the current owners have worked hard to restore it to its original 1890s Queen Anne appearance, opening up the first floor porch and replacing the siding to bring back the home's historical character.

GO TO: 928-932 KING ST.



1859 Italianate style



With 1891 Queen Anne renovations

ARCHITECTURE EYE SPY

This home is an example of Queen Anne style. Can you find these notable features?

QUEEN ANNE ELEMENTS



Grand, decorative gables



3-story round tower



Scalloped cladding



Decorative scrollwork



Two story open porch

ARCHITECTURE FOR BEGINNERS

STOP 12: THOMAS AND ADA SPENCE HOUSE

Built 1891

Before the Thomas and Ada Spence House was built, there was originally a different home on the site. This home was strange and wacky, built by a man named William Root in 1865. Most architecture historians agree that Root's wacky home was built on this site, though some disagree and think it was located somewhere else. You can see the home in the historic photo to the right. It was built right in the center of the lot, with an octagonal frame tower and porch. The house had a strange mix of Italianate and Gothic Revival styles.

GO TO: 916-920 KING ST.



1865 Root House



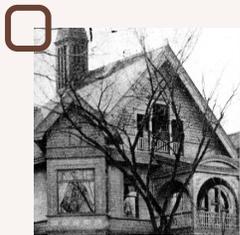
1891 Spence House

Later, in 1871 Thomas Spence arrived in La Crosse. He founded the largest wholesale pharmacy in the La Crosse area at the time. The Spence-McCord Drug Company was headquartered on Front Street, near present day Spence Park and the Charmant building. Thomas bought the wacky home and demolished it in 1891 to make way for the Queen Anne style house that you see now.

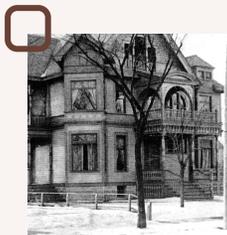
ARCHITECTURE EYE SPY

This home is an example of Queen Anne style. Can you find these notable features?

QUEEN ANNE ELEMENTS



Multiple gables



Asymmetrical mass



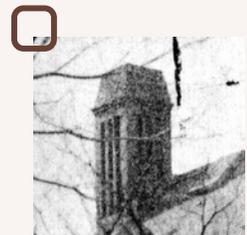
Projecting bays



Clapboard siding & scalloped cladding



Open porches



Towering chimney

Questions? Contact the Archives & Local History Department

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(608) 789-7136
archives@lacrosselibrary.org

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