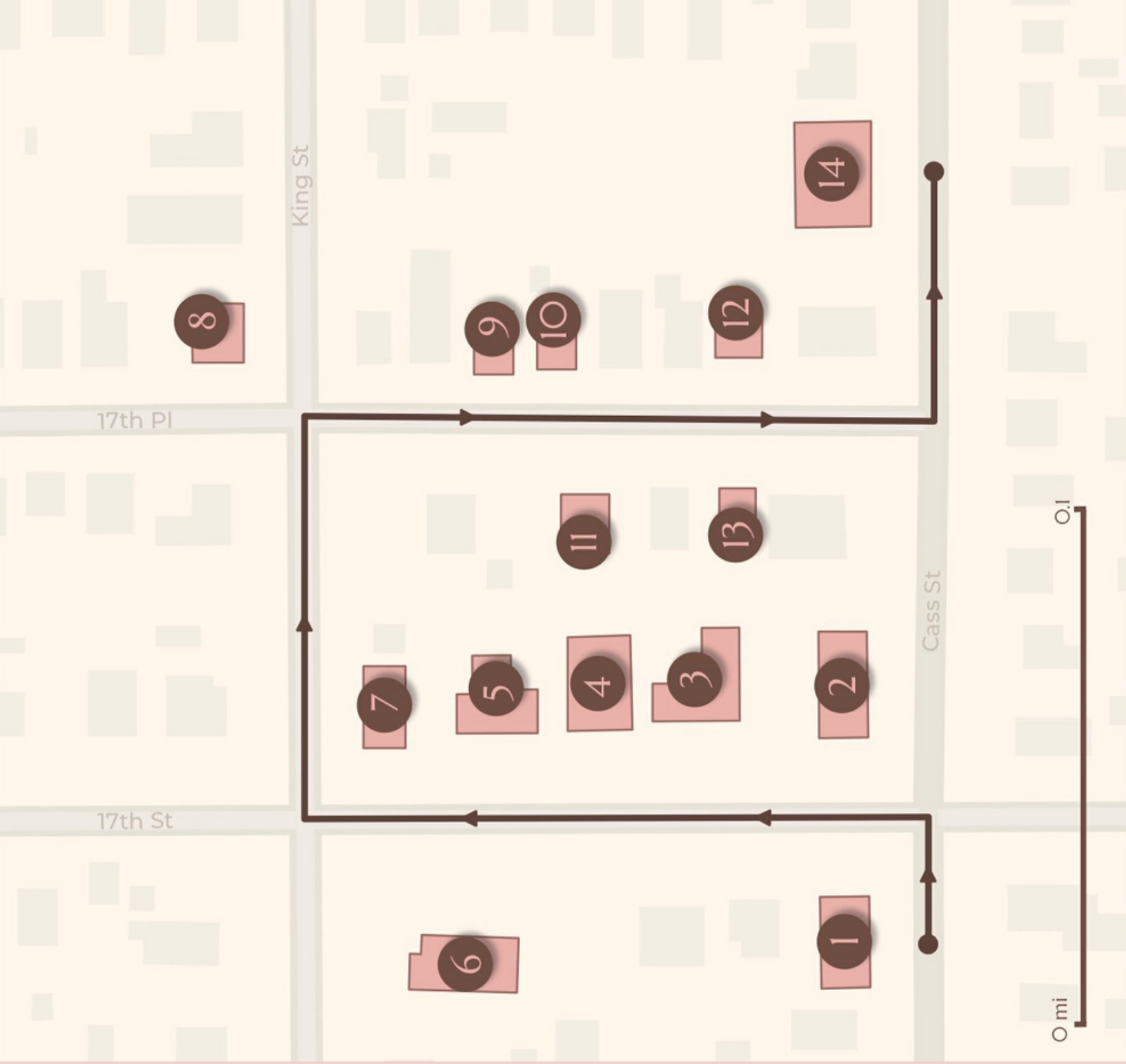




FOOTSTEPS OF LA CROSSE
TOURS THROUGH TIME

PRAIRIE STEPS

1. **Edward & Flora Bartl House**
238 17th St S
2. **Ben & Jessie Ott House**
241 17th St S
3. **Peter & Mary Valier House**
229 17th St S
4. **Frank & Lucinda Schwalbe House**
223 17th St S
5. **Edwin & Marjorie Schwalbe House**
217 17th St S
6. **Henry & Clara Salzer House**
1634 King St
7. **Thomas & Elizabeth Reynolds House**
1702 King St
8. **John & Madeline Weisse House**
1733 King St
9. **Henry & Anna Gundlach House**
215 17th Pl S
10. **Charles & Clara Loveland House**
217 17th Pl S
11. **John & Clara Tubbesing House**
220 17th Pl S
12. **Clifton & Josephine Bloom House**
231 17th Pl S
13. **Emil & Hulda Erickson House**
232 17th Pl S
14. **Richard & Jean Ellis House**
1801 Cass St



PRAIRIE [STYLE] LA CROSSE

What is *Footsteps of La Crosse*?

This is a program hosted by the LPL Archives and Local History Department. Though the Footsteps tours are always available online for self-guiding, LPL Archives staff typically guides a series of tours each May and September. Each Footsteps tour focuses on themes in La Crosse history, generally giving you an overview of how architecture, class, and culture intersect on La Crosse's streets.

INTRODUCTION

The Prairie Style began in the Chicago area in the 1890s. A group of primarily young architects were drawn to Chicago in the wake of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 and the building boom that followed. Louis Sullivan (1856-1924) is considered the founder of the "New American" style of architecture, a movement that coincided with the U.S. emerging as a world power. The ideology behind Sullivan's work was that the U.S. needed a new form of architecture that did not simply imitate European design traditions. From this, a variety of social, economic, engineering, and artistic forces resulted in what we now call Modern Architecture.

Prairie Style is one of the architectural styles of Modern Architecture. Although the best-known and most successful promoter of this new vision of architecture was Frank Lloyd Wright (who was mentored by Sullivan), he was not alone in creating and designing buildings in Prairie Style. Many residents and visitors assume that the Prairie Style homes in La Crosse were designed by Wright, or one of his students from his Oak Park studio. Rather, it was local architects Percy Dwight Bentley and Otto Merman who were responsible for creating the greatest number of these homes, though not all. Other local architects and builders tried their skills with the Prairie Style as well. The most stylistically Prairie Style homes in La Crosse were built between 1910 and 1930.

Interestingly, La Crosse has more Prairie Style houses than any other city in Wisconsin. Our community is unique because hundreds of American Foursquare, Bungalow, and Vernacular Prairie residences can be

PRAIRIE [STYLE] LA CROSSE

found in older neighborhoods throughout the city, each depicting the impact of the Prairie School motif. This meant that families who could not afford Wright's version of Prairie Style were still able to incorporate high style architecture into the design of their homes. For this reason, this tour will explore homes on a spectrum of Prairie Style, unlike any tour you would find in the nation.

BENTLEY AND MERMAN

Percy Dwight Bentley and Otto Merman—working as partners and practicing individually—designed the most significant Prairie Style residences in La Crosse. The residential, commercial, religious, and public buildings designed by these two architects had a major impact on architects and contractors in the La Crosse area through the first three decades of the 20th century.

Percy Dwight Bentley (1885-1968) was the son of a La Crosse banker and was educated at Ohio Wesleyan University. He went on to study architecture and design at the Armour Institute and Art Institute in Chicago from 1906-1910. Looking at his later work, he was clearly influenced by Wright and Sullivan, who had offices nearby at the time. However, there is no evidence that Bentley studied with or worked for either—it is likely that he studied their designs by following their work in the Chicago area. Bentley returned to La Crosse in 1910 and formed a brief architectural partnership with an Armour classmate, William Bajari. Bentley designed many of the best known Prairie Style homes in La Crosse in a period from 1910 to 1920, before leaving the area for St. Paul in 1921. Later, in the 1930s, he relocated again to Oregon, where he continued his architectural practice up until his death. In his obituary it is noted that he was an accomplished pianist and organist and performed frequently in St. Paul and Oregon.

Otto Merman (1890-1935) was born in La Crosse and received training in building design in his late teen years working in the office of Parkinson and Dockendorff. He joined Bentley as a draftsman in 1912 and worked with Bentley off and on in the Twin Cities and La Crosse until Bentley left for Oregon. Merman worked alone or in partnership with Herman Skogstads and Alfred Widman for the rest of his career in La Crosse.

PARKINSON AND DOCKENDORFF

The architectural partnership of Albert Parkinson and Bernard Dockendorff began in 1906 and continued until they died (four days apart!) in 1952. During their 46 years working together, they designed over 800

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buildings. Their accomplishments include schools, hospitals, public and commercial structures, and many private residences from all over the upper Midwest, though mainly in the La Crosse area. Their style was rather eclectic and their work exhibits examples of Early Modern and Art Deco styles.

Albert Parkinson (1870-1952) was born in London, England, and received his design training from his father and at design schools in England. He joined with Bernard Dockendorff in an architectural partnership in La Crosse in 1906.

Bernard Dockendorf (1878-1952) was born in La Crosse. He was the son of Bernard Dockendorff Sr. and Elizabeth Hoeschler Dockendorff. He attended local schools and at age 19, he went to Darmstadt, Germany to study architecture at the Polytechnic Institute. After graduating, he worked in Germany for a cathedral designer for two years. Upon his return to La Crosse, he established his architectural practice with Albert Parkinson.

LAND RECOGNITION

THE STOPS ON THIS TOUR EACH OCCUPY THE ANCESTRAL LANDS OF THE HO-CHUNK,
WHO HAVE STEWARDED THIS LAND SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL.

The city of La Crosse occupies land that was once a prairie that was home to a band of Ho-Chunk. In 1830, President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act in attempt to forcibly and often violently remove Indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands located east of the Mississippi River to occupied territory west of the river. Throughout the 1830s and 1840s, the Federal Government conducted a series of six attempts to forcibly remove local Ho-Chunk by steamboat via the Mississippi River to reservations in Iowa, northern Minnesota, southwest Minnesota, South Dakota and finally to Nebraska. The historic steamboat landing where this 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 eventually 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.

PRAIRIE [STYLE] LA CROSSE

STOP 1: EDWARD AND FLORA BARTL HOUSE

GO TO: 238 17TH ST. S.

Built 1913

Edward (1883-1957) Bartl was the youngest son of Franz Bartl. Edward and Flora Bartl built this house in 1913.

Edward was involved in management of the Bartl family brewery with his two older brothers, Frank and Joseph. He and Flora had no children.

The Franz Bartl Brewing Co. was started by Franz Bartl (1840-1914), who came to the U.S. at the age of 28 from Bohemia, where he had trained as a brewmaster. He worked

in breweries in Ohio and Menasha, Wisconsin, before coming to western Wisconsin in 1874. When he got to La Crosse, he was a foreman for a succession of breweries, including Zeisler and Gund of La Crosse, and Peter Bub of Winona. In 1884, he purchased the Eagle Brewery (est. 1857) and renamed it the Franz Bartl Brewing Company. Ten years later, Bartl built a new building on the north side of La Crosse Street, where it intersects with West Avenue (Lang Drive was constructed at a later date). Franz's sons managed the business after his death in 1914. The Bartl Brewery produced a variety of soft drink beverages during Prohibition, but ceased brewing in 1933.



1973 photograph

ARCHITECTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

This home was one of Percy Dwight Bentley's first Prairie School designs. It was drafted as early as 1910. The Bartl House is identified by architectural historians as a significant regional variation of the Prairie Style. This house is featured in *The Prairie School* by H. Allen Brooks (1972), a seminal work on the Prairie Style in the Midwest.

PRAIRIE STYLE ELEMENTS

- Unusual cubic mass
- Low pitch hip roof
- Wide, overhanging eaves
- Contrasting surface texture
- Broad flat chimney
- Rows of windows

DISTINCTIVE ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS TO THIS HOME

- This specific cubic mass design was adapted from a 1907 Wright design
- Wrap-around second story windows and corner piers were borrowed from designs by Walter Burley Griffin, a prominent Chicago School architect
- Row of square windows on the street façade
- Unusual prow-shaped stairway on the north side that projects away from the exterior wall at a 45-degree angle

PRAIRIE [STYLE] LA CROSSE

STOP 2: BEN AND JESSIE OTT HOUSE

GO TO: 241 17TH ST. S.

Built 1923

Ben Ott (1893-1967) was a local leader in radio broadcasting and president of Ott Radio, Inc. when he lived in this house. He was an early ham—or amateur—radio operator and broadcast from his home. He also broadcasted the first radio frequency in La Crosse from 1923-1926. In 1926, he became lumber superintendent of the Segelke-Kohlhaus Company, a local manufacturing business specializing in residential doors, windows, and interior decorative woodwork. His brother, Will Ott, was a long-time president of the company.



1977 photo, courtesy of Les Crocker

Ben Ott and Jessie Calloway Ott (1895-1924) had two children together. After Jessie died, Ben moved to California, where he lived for the rest of his life.

ARCHITECTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

The Ben Ott House is one of the last and most complete expressions of the Prairie Style by local architect Otto Merman. This highly visible house sits upon a large corner lot and serves as a “gateway” to the Prairie Style residences in the district.

PRAIRIE STYLE ELEMENTS

- Horizontally asymmetrical
- Elongated low-pitch hip roof
- Broad flat chimneys

DISTINCTIVE ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS TO THIS HOME

- Bands of decorative leaded glass windows highlighted by horizontal detailing
- Note the “picture windows” on the Cass St. elevation that anticipate the popularity of this window in Ranch Style homes of the 1950s and 1960s
- Octagonal bay
- Recessed second story

PRAIRIE [STYLE] LA CROSSE

STOP 3: PETER AND MARGARET VALIER HOUSE

GO TO: 229 17TH ST. S.

Built 1923

Peter Valier (1850-1929) had a career in transportation that spanned over 50 years. He was born in upstate New York and came to Minnesota to work for the Southern Minnesota division of the Milwaukee Road. He came to Wisconsin in 1879 to manage the horse car line of the La Crosse City Railway and later was supervisor of the La Crosse Railway Light and Power Company. In 1904, Peter supervised the construction of the La Crosse and Southeastern Railroad, which extended rail service from La Crosse through Stoddard, Chaseburg, Coon Valley, and Westby with a terminus in Viroqua.



1977 photo, courtesy of Les Crocker

After his first wife, Mary Herrbold, died in 1889, Peter married a second time to Margaret Paul (1869-1925) in 1891. They had two children, Edna and Ronald.

ARCHITECTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

The Peter Valier House is a significant later variation of the Prairie School designs by Bentley/Merman from the previous decade. The architect of the Valier home has not been documented but was reportedly from Chicago. However, other sources indicate that the architect was quite likely Otto Merman.

PRAIRIE STYLE ELEMENTS

- Low pitch intersecting hip roofs
- Exaggerated overhanging eaves
- Broad flat chimney
- Brick piers flanking the recessed entry

DISTINCTIVE ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS TO THIS HOME

This home also features some Neo-Classical features, such as:

- Blind arches in the center of the chimney and over the first story windows
- Tall, narrow French doors
- Second story wrought iron balcony

PRAIRIE [STYLE] LA CROSSE

STOP 4: FRANK JR. AND LUCINDA SCHWALBE HOUSE

GO TO: 223 17TH ST. S.

Built 1921

Frank Schwalbe Jr. (1889-1929) owned two of the most distinctive Prairie Style homes in La Crosse (the other was 1420 Madison St.). Both were designed by his friend Otto Merman and built by the Schwalbe Construction Company. When his father, Frank Sr., retired from the construction business in 1925, Frank Jr. took over operations with his brother Arthur Schwalbe (1890-1956).

After Frank Jr.'s early death at age 40, Arthur continued as head of the Schwalbe Construction Company until he retired in the mid-1950s.



circa 1920s photograph

The Schwalbe Construction Company, founded by German-speaking Bohemian immigrant Joseph Schwalbe in the late 19th century, built several of the most historically and architecturally significant public, commercial and residential buildings in La Crosse from the 1890s until the middle of the last century. Joseph Schwalbe, followed by his son Frank Sr. and his grandsons Frank Jr. and Arthur, were leaders in the construction industry in La Crosse. Several of the homes they built between 1890 and 1930 are the finest surviving examples of the late Victorian Queen Anne style and the early modern Prairie Style. Many of the most architecturally significant and well-preserved homes in the Cass/King Historic District were built by the Schwalbe builders. The Schwalbe's ability to work with several different architects, home styles, and a variety of commercial and residential clients indicates a skill and versatility that served them well during the period of the city's greatest growth.

ARCHITECTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

This stunning and impeccably-maintained Prairie Style residence was the second home designed by Otto Merman for personal use by Frank Schwalbe Jr. Along this block of South 17th Street are three other Prairie Style homes designed by Merman and built by the Schwalbe contractors. All are distinctly Prairie School, although slightly different, and all four were built between 1921 and 1923.

PRAIRIE [STYLE] LA CROSSE

In Chicago and elsewhere, by the early 1920s Prairie Style was becoming passé, with Period Revival taking its place as the most popular style for the prominent and wealthy. However, in La Crosse, the Prairie Style continued to be popular well into the 1920s. The Schwalbe-built Prairie Style houses on 17th Street were some of the last Prairie Style residences designed by Merman, and all show distinctive elements that differentiate one from another.

PRAIRIE STYLE ELEMENTS

- Low pitch hip roof
- Exaggerated overhanging eaves
- Broad flat chimney
- Horizontal band of windows

DISTINCTIVE ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS TO THIS HOME

- Centrally-placed light-colored stucco band with thin rectangular detailing and cut stone water table evoke the horizontal appearance
- Heavy single story “blockhouse” entry with round arched entry door and octagonal bay on the north side are details that Merman used to counter the horizontal flow of the façade
- Exterior walls on this house are built with brick and hollow tile and are up to 18” thick

STOP 5: EDWIN AND MARJORIE SCHWALBE HOUSE GO TO: 217 17TH ST. S.

Built 1921

Edwin Schwalbe (1894-1961) was the third son of contractor Frank Schwalbe Sr. Unlike his brothers Frank Jr. and Arthur, Edwin built a career in La Crosse in the movie theater business. His father, Frank Sr., was one of the founders of La Crosse Theaters Co. and Edwin no doubt had parental help starting in the business in 1919, after returning from service in World War I.



1977 photo, courtesy of Les Crocker

Edwin started managing the Rivoli Theater (built by the Schwalbe builders) and later also managed the Riviera (Caledonia Street), the Bijou Theatre (Third Street), and Strand Theatre (Jackson Street). He became president of the La Crosse Theaters Co. in 1958 and served in that capacity until his death. Marjorie (d. 1971), succeeded him as president of La Crosse Theaters Co., and La Crosse Amusement Co. She later remarried Dr. Ollie Olson, a La Crosse dentist.

PRAIRIE [STYLE] LA CROSSE

ARCHITECTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

This dark, monochromatic brick home is one of three (possibly four) adjacent Prairie Style houses on the east side of the 200 block of South 17th Street designed by Otto Merman and built by the Schwalbe Construction Company.

PRAIRIE STYLE ELEMENTS

- Low pitch intersecting hip roofs
- Paired and triple windows
- Broad flat chimney

DISTINCTIVE ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS TO THIS HOME

- Blocky projecting entry, which is offset by a series of recessed round arches surrounding the entry
- Flower box atop the entry, which softens the harsh, angular brick façade
- Enclosed porches on the north and south sides add a sense of balance

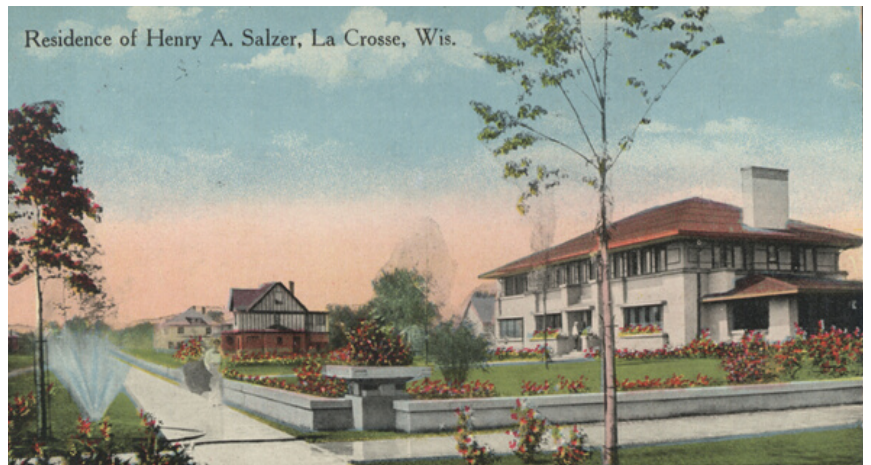
STOP 6: HENRY & CLARA SALZER HOUSE

GO TO: 1634 KING ST.

Built 1912

Henry Salzer (1855-1916) was the son of John A. Salzer (1823-1892), a German immigrant who founded the Salzer Seed Company. The Salzer Seed Co. started in John Salzer's backyard in 1869, when Henry was just a teenager. At the time, the family lived on La Crosse's South Side. The company was incorporated in 1886 and in 1892, Henry took over the company after his father's death. Within 15 years, it was one of the largest mail order seed companies in the U.S.

Henry married Clara Kremers of Milwaukee in 1890. In 1916, Henry died at the age of 61 after the car he was a passenger in rolled off a cliff in the bluffs near Dresbach. Henry had tragically been thrown the vehicle onto a rock, where the rolling car then landed on him. The chauffeur, Clara, and her siblings—also thrown from the car—were miraculously unscathed. Henry and



a pre-1921 postcard depicting the Salzer home

PRAIRIE [STYLE] LA CROSSE

Clara had two children at the time, Kenneth (22) and Gertrude (10). Clara and Gertrude continued to live in the house after Henry's death. Kenneth lived just a block away (239 17th Pl. S.) and continued to run the Salzer Seed Co. until his death in 1958. The company then closed after being family-run for 90 years. Gertrude Salzer Gordon is known locally for being a very active philanthropist in the community. Just before her death in 1998, she left a \$1 million gift to a local children's museum start-up fund. Today, the Gertrude Salzer Gordon Children's Museum of La Crosse is named in her honor.

ARCHITECTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

The Salzer House is one of the most visible and highly recognizable examples of Prairie Style residential architecture in La Crosse. The Salzer House is a local echo of the early Prairie School mansions in Oak Park designed by Wright during his prolific early period in Oak Park, Illinois, from about 1894 to 1908. The home is identified by scholars as a significant example of the Prairie School and is featured in "Wisconsin's Own: Twenty Remarkable Homes" published by the Wisconsin Historical Society Press in 2010.

This home was designed by Percy Dwight Bentley and was built by local contractors Frank R. Schwalbe and Sons, and may have been one of the first collaborations between Bentley/Merman and the Schwalbes. Notice how the detached garage shows Prairie Style design elements similar to the house. Originally, this home had a roof of cypress wood shingles stained moss green and the exterior was painted a deep tan color with brown string course and trim. The interior of the house reportedly reflects the Colonial Style that was the preference of Clara. However, much of the original furniture in the house was created by noted Arts and Crafts interior designer, George Neidecken of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

PRAIRIE STYLE ELEMENTS

- Broad, sweeping horizontality
- Overhanging eaves
- Rows of windows

DISTINCTIVE ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS TO THIS HOME

- Light colored stucco exterior, accented by horizontal decorative elements and contrasting vertical piers defining the corners and recessed entry
- Horizontal details are evident even on the broad, flat chimneys
- Large Prairie Style planters placed on the corners and flanking the walkway to the entry
- Sidelights and bracket lamps highlight the entrance
- Built of fireproof hollow tile walls and floor

PRAIRIE [STYLE] LA CROSSE

STOP 7: THOMAS AND ELIZABETH REYNOLDS HOUSE

GO TO: 1702 KING ST.

Built 1922

Elizabeth Bartel Reynolds worked for the Doerflinger Company before purchasing the A. F. Reitzel Store in 1910 with her brother, Joseph Bartel. They renamed the store the J. Bartel Dry Goods Company and maintained the business until they retired in 1930. Elizabeth's husband, Thomas Reynolds, was a buyer for her and her brother's dry goods store. In 1939, Thomas moved to Chicago while Elizabeth remained here in La Crosse. Joseph lived with her in the house, where he died after a lingering illness in 1951. Elizabeth died just two years later in 1953.



1977 photo, courtesy of Les Crocker

Her only living relatives were a few nieces and nephews. One nephew, Robert Franke, inherited the house, but chose not to move into it or sell it. He either rented it out or left the house vacant for over 40 years. The current owners, Jon and Debra Erickson, purchased the Reynolds House in 1998 and have maintained the Arts and Crafts influenced exterior and interior.

ARCHITECTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

The Reynolds House is a significant example of a Prairie Style variant designed by local architects Parkinson and Dockendorff. Some of the typical Prairie Style aspects featured on this home are also commonly seen in most homes designed by Bentley and Merman in La Crosse. However, the elements that are distinctive to this residence are aspects not typically used by Bently, nor Wright. These elements are similar to details seen in several earlier Prairie School designs by Chicago-based architect George Maher.

PRAIRIE STYLE ELEMENTS

- Low-pitch hip roof
- Overhanging eaves
- Bands of leaded casement windows
- Compressed second story with contrasting stucco and brick exterior

DISTINCTIVE ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS TO THIS HOME

- Vertical trim detail on the enclosed porch (north side) and vertical window framing provide a balance to the horizontality
- Battered or tapered walls
- instinctive entry with arched roof canopy

PRAIRIE [STYLE] LA CROSSE

STOP 8: JOHN AND MADELINE WEISSE HOUSE

GO TO: 1733 KING ST.

Built 1917

John Weisse (1865-1934) was born in Germany and came to La Crosse in 1882. When he first came to La Crosse, John secured an entry-level job with the John Paul Lumber Company and later worked his way up to manager of the sash and door department. He married Madeline Schwalbe Weisse (1870-1943), whose father, Joseph Schwalbe, started the Schwalbe Construction Company. Her brother, Frank Sr., later ran the company. These connections likely helped John's career in lumber and construction.



2011 photo, courtesy of Eric Wheeler

In 1897, he became manager of the Novelty Wood Works Company located on La Crosse's north side. In 1908, he left La Crosse for two years to work for the Edward Hines Lumber Company in Illinois. In 1910, he returned to La Crosse to manage the former Kuhn Sash and Door plant for the Segelke-Kohlhaus Company. Finally, after working in the industry for over 30 years, John was able to establish his own business in 1914: the Weisse Manufacturing Company, which was on the 1400 block of Rose Street.

By this time, John was widely known and well respected in the lumber business in the region. John and Madeline's three sons joined the Weisse family business as well. Madeline lived in the house until her death at the age of 73, and sons Harold and Curtis continued the family residency here for many years.

ARCHITECTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

The John Weisse House is a fine example of an early Contractor Prairie Style residence in La Crosse designed by a local builder and not directly associated with Bentley or Merman.

PRAIRIE STYLE ELEMENTS

- Rectangular mass
- Low pitch hip roof
- Compressed second story with contrasting stucco and wood siding
- Bands of windows

DISTINCTIVE ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS TO THIS HOME

- Prominent second story bay window atop the hip roofed entry with flanking Neo-Classical Tuscan columns
- Transom windows over the triple windows on the west side porch
- Detached garage

PRAIRIE [STYLE] LA CROSSE

STOP 9: HENRY AND ANNA GUNDLACH HOUSE

GO TO: 215 17TH PL. S.

Built 1926

Henry Gundlach Jr. was one of five sons of Henry and Amelia Krachels Gundlach. He and his wife Anna were presumably the first owners of this home, though if they occupied the residence it was only for a few years. They later moved to Lynxville, Wisconsin.

His father, Henry Gundlach Sr. (1852-1925), was born in Germany and served a five-year apprenticeship as a weaver in Berlin before coming to the U.S. at the age of 22. He worked in various capacities in Minnesota and western Wisconsin before coming to La Crosse in 1886 to open the La Crosse Chenille Works. In 1896 he established the Western Hammock Company, which operated into the 20th century.



2011 photo, courtesy of Eric Wheeler

ARCHITECTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

This home is a unique combination of two architectural styles: Prairie Style and American Foursquare. For this reason, architecture historians dub it a “Prairie Box.” This kind of design was a result of the two styles both becoming popular at the same time in La Crosse. Architects like Bentley and Merman—as well as their predecessors in the 1920s—designed many homes like this in La Crosse. You can see other Prairie Boxes on this block and similar ones near the corner of Cass and 15th St.

The Prairie Style fad eventually burned out, but the American Foursquare only grew in popularity. The American Foursquare gained such traction because of its flexibility. At its most simple form, it was an inexpensive home that used interior space functionally for large working-class or lower-middle class families. For families that had more money to spend on their home’s design, it could be interpreted as other, more intricate architectural styles. After learning its key ingredients, see if you can find other Foursquares in our community with different design elements!

PRAIRIE [STYLE] LA CROSSE

PRAIRIE STYLE ELEMENTS

- Low pitch hip roof
- Overhanging eaves
- Compressed second story with contrasting stucco and brick exterior walls
- Leaded glass paired or triple windows

FOURSQUARE ELEMENTS

- Square mass
- Full-width front porch
- Offset entry in an otherwise symmetrical façade
- Two symmetrical groupings of windows on each side of the home

DISTINCTIVE ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS TO THIS HOME

- Brick soldier course just below the second story window sills
- Reduced broad, flat brick chimney on the south wall
- Garage to the rear of the house has complimentary Prairie design elements

STOP 10: CHARLES AND CLARA LOVELAND HOUSE

GO TO: 217 17TH PL. S.

Built 1927

Charles Loveland (1881-1951) was born in La Crosse to early settlers from Vermont. He studied commercial art at the Art Institute in Chicago and then returned to La Crosse to do freelance art work. He married Clara Ebner (1881-1955), who was also from La Crosse.

In 1909 he co-founded the Northern Engraving Company along with Axel and Earl Olson and J. E.

Novak. In the early years, Northern Engraving specialized in advertising work and photo engraving. In 1919, the company incorporated with Philo Gelatt and the nature of the business changed to the manufacture of metal dials and nameplates, especially for the automobile industry. Charles was an innovator in this field, developing many designs for clock and watch faces that were used at the time. In 1932, he became president of the re-incorporated Northern Engraving and Manufacturing Company, an office he held until his death at the age of 70.

Charles and Clara had four children together: Ruth, Charles Jr., Warren, and Donald. Warren Loveland served as mayor of La Crosse from 1965 to 1971.



2011 photo, courtesy of Eric Wheeler

PRAIRIE [STYLE] LA CROSSE

ARCHITECTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

Nearly identical to the Gundlach House next door to the north, the Loveland House shows only one small, yet distinctive trait.

PRAIRIE STYLE ELEMENTS

- Low pitch hip roof
- Overhanging eaves
- Compressed second story with contrasting stucco and brick exterior walls
- Leaded glass paired or triple windows

FOURSQUARE ELEMENTS

- Square mass
- Full-width front porch
- Offset entry in an otherwise symmetrical façade
- Two symmetrical groupings of windows on each side of the home

DISTINCTIVE ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS TO THIS HOME

- Placement of the broad flat brick chimney in the street-facing wall

STOP 11: JOHN AND CLARA TUBBESING HOUSE

GO TO: 220 17TH PL. S.

Built 1923

John Tubbesing and Clara Sorgel were married in La Crosse in 1901. Before they met, Clara had been living with her widowed mother and sister at 1408 Madison St. She was working as a milliner, making women's hats. Her sister, Lydia, was a stenographer for contractors Segelke & Kohlhaus. Together, they helped support their mother and themselves.

After getting married, Clara moved to Red Wing, Minnesota with John, where his father Fred had founded a millwork company. In 1906, they moved back to La Crosse because John was hired by Segelke & Kohlhaus as a manager. John worked for these contractors until 1928, when he joined his brother in Mason City, Iowa to operate the Mason City Millwork Company.

When the two lived in this home, their adult daughter Harriet, lived here with them while she earned a college education in La Crosse. She joined her parents when they moved to Mason City and this home was sold to another family.



2011 photo, courtesy of Eric Wheeler

PRAIRIE [STYLE] LA CROSSE

ARCHITECTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

Another local interpretation of the Prairie Style, the Tubbesing House has a unique design that is a mesh of a few styles. A few distinct features match up with some of Bentley's other work from a decade before, likely showing his influence on this designer of this home.

PRAIRIE STYLE ELEMENTS

- Rectangular mass
- Low pitch roof
- Overhanging eaves
- Broad, flat chimney with horizontal detail
- A compressed, shingled second story with pairs of casement windows

DISTINCTIVE ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS TO THIS HOME

- Projecting canopy over an entry with flanking vertical brick piers (similar to the Salzer House, which was designed 10 years earlier by Bentley)
- Projecting corner piers
- Simple, yet very distinctive Craftsman "drop" on the sill trim of the centrally placed, double fixed-pane second story window above the entry

STOP 12: CLIFTON AND JOSEPHINE BLOOM HOUSE

GO TO: 231 17TH PL. S.

Built 1925

There is little information known about Clifton and Josephine Bloom. It seems that they did not live in La Crosse for very long. They did not show up in City Directories until after 1922. In the 1924 Directory, Clifton was listed as a foreman and the two are living on Ferry St. In 1925, Clifton's father, Peter, died, leaving some of his estate to Clifton. That same year, this house was built.



2011 photo, courtesy of Eric Wheeler

The couple lived in this home for at least five years. In 1928, they had a daughter and, according to a birth announcement in the newspaper, were still listed at this address. Another newspaper article from 1930 reported that Josephine was a guest to the Delphians Society, during which she read and taught Spanish literature, as it was her native language.

PRAIRIE [STYLE] LA CROSSE

ARCHITECTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

The Clifton Bloom House is another Prairie-influenced variation with several design features that distinguish this residence from others in the neighborhood.

PRAIRIE STYLE ELEMENTS

- Low pitch roof
- Compressed and recessed second story with contrasting stucco and brick walls
- Pairs of vertical casement windows

DISTINCTIVE ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS TO THIS HOME

- Prairie Box mass is modified by a recessed wing on the north side
- A cubic, hip roofed entry reminds viewer of the square-like appearance of the house
- Continuation of the porch roof line around the front of the house with a shingled pent roof is an adaptation not used in this neighborhood, but seen in other “Contractor Prairie” homes in La Crosse
- The attached, tuck-under garage that is incorporated into the mass of the house predates the popularity of built-in garages by 30 or more years (through the first half of the 20th century, garages were universally detached, echoing carriage houses from an earlier time)

STOP 13: EMIL AND HULDA ERICKSON HOUSE

GO TO: 232 17TH PL. S.

Built 1923

Emil Erickson (1876-1950) was a well-known industrial and civic leader in La Crosse through the first half of the 20th century. He was born in La Crosse, the son of Eric Erickson, an early settler in the city. He married Hulda Weisbecker (1880-1971) and they had two children, Miles and Bernice.

Emil worked for the James A. Trane plumbing business in 1902 and again starting in 1917 after the Trane Company switched its manufacturing emphasis to heating and, later, cooling equipment. He served in several capacities for the company, including plant supervisor, vice-president and director. His civic contributions included volunteer work for the newly formed Aviation Board and the local draft board during WWII. In the late 1940s, he was honored with many civic awards from the community organizations for his involvement.



1977 photo, courtesy of Les Crocker

PRAIRIE [STYLE] LA CROSSE

ARCHITECTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

The Erickson House is another one of the later Prairie School designs by local architect Otto Merman.

PRAIRIE STYLE ELEMENTS

- Low pitch hip roof
- Exaggerated overhanging eaves
- Groupings of vertical, leaded, casement windows
- Broad flat chimney

DISTINCTIVE ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS TO THIS HOME

- Narrow front rectangular mass with projecting bays to the north and south lends a complexity that somewhat offsets the uniformity of the dark brown brick façade
- South bay has an unusual octagonal glass block upper story
- Hip roofed, brick, and detached garage complements the house

STOP 14: RICHARD AND JEAN ELLIS HOUSE

GO TO: 1801 CASS ST.

Built circa 2009

ARCHITECTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

This tour concludes with this non-historic home to give an example of a Prairie “Revival” Style. The residence has an appearance similar to many of the original Prairie School houses designed by local architects and builders in La Crosse over one hundred years ago. The location and prominence of this home emphasizes the early 20th century architectural heritage of the neighborhood.



2011 photo, courtesy of Eric Wheeler

PRAIRIE STYLE ELEMENTS

- Low pitch roof
- Extended overhanging eaves with concealed rain gutters
- Pairs of vertical casement windows
- Contrasting stucco and horizontal siding on the exterior walls

DISTINCTIVE ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS TO THIS HOME

- Starting in the central two-story mass, the alternating surfaces layered into multiple bands that are contiguous across the horizontal plane, present an interesting variation to this early 21st century interpretation of the Prairie Style

Questions? Contact the Archives
& Local History Department

(608) 789-7136
archives@lacrosselibrary.org

Interested in other tours?

To learn more about the Footsteps of La Crosse history tours and other available self-guided walking tours, go to footstepsoflacrosse.org or contact the La Crosse Public Library Archives.