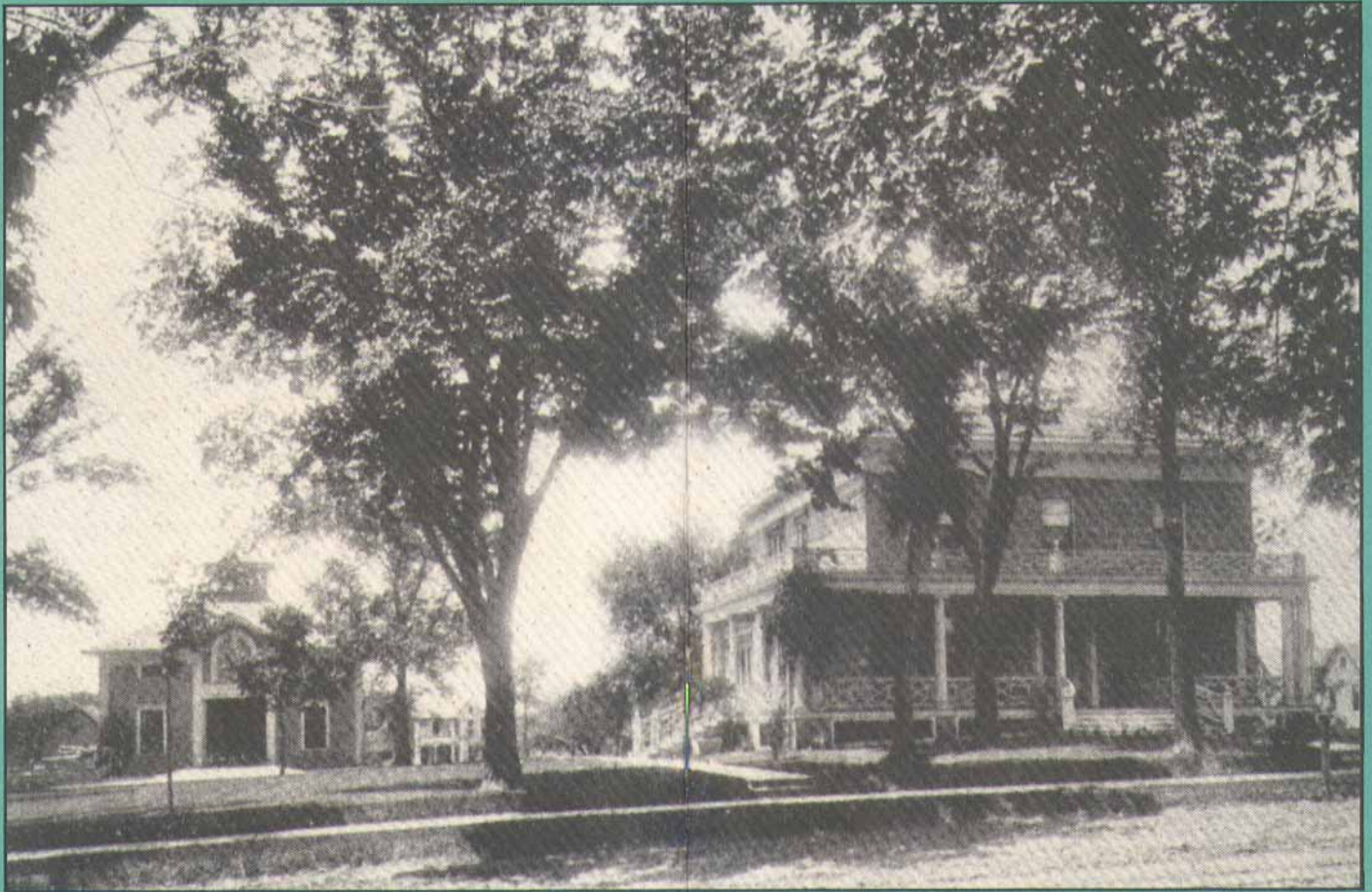


The Greenbush-Vilas  
Neighborhood:  
A Walking Tour



A Madison Heritage Publication

# The Greenbush-Vilas Neighborhood:

## A Walking Tour

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## The Walking Tours

Because of the size of the area, two tours have been designed: one for the Greenbush area and one for the Vilas neighborhood. The sites within each are arranged in this booklet in chronological order. Please note that the numbers within circles that appear at the top of the page for each site are also used in the text and are keyed to the two maps in the booklet as well. Please be aware that all the residential buildings on these tours are private and are not open to the public. Your respect for the privacy of the residents is greatly appreciated.

Cover Photo: The Van Bergen/Bowen house, from *Madison Past and Present*, 1902.

# The Brittingham-Greenbush Bayview Area

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## Historical Development

Most motorists driving on either West Washington Avenue or South Park Street between Regent Street and Vilas Avenue are unaware that the housing projects and medical facilities they pass occupy sites that were once filled with the homes, stores, gardens, and churches of Madison's Italian and Jewish communities.

These once-vibrant ethnic neighborhoods were two of a number of neighborhoods that developed in the Brittingham-Greenbush-Bayview area. This large area (see map on pages 2-3) is located just to the south of Madison's downtown section and portions of it were among the earliest additions to the original plat of Madison. It was not until the beginning of the 20th century, however, that the necessity of providing low-cost housing for Madison's newest immigrants caused this land to increase in value. Before that time this land was too distant from the center of the city to be a viable alternative to it. Another problem was the character of the land itself. Most of the property along the shores of Lake Wingra and Lake Monona and along Regent Street was originally marshland, and remained so until early in this century. Thus, development languished in these low-lying areas until Madison grew to a point where its need for land adjacent to its existing neighborhoods outweighed these problems.

The Greenbush Addition was platted in 1854 by Madison physician Dr. Chandler B. Chapman (1815-1877) and newspaper publisher and editor, John Y. Smith (1807-1874). The first development in the plat consisted of a small enclave of houses built on the higher ground in the southwest corner of the plat. ②③ Just behind these houses was the half-mile long landform known locally as Dead Lake Ridge. This tall tree-covered ridge once stood between Lake Wingra and the southern end of the plat and dominated the view in that direction throughout the 19th century. A number of Indian mounds originally studded the ridge; several still survive next to the Anne C. Stewart Memorial Fountain. ⑫ Unfortunately, the ridge's sand and gravel contents (continued on page 4)

# Brittingham-Greenbush Bayview Walking Tour



① Numbers within circles denote their order in the listing of sites.

were a valuable resource for a growing city. Much of the fill that was later used to transform this and other plats came from this ridge.

Today the name of the Greenbush plat is synonymous with the portion along South Murray Street and Regent Street that was once part of Madison's Italian and Jewish communities. Only a handful of buildings from this neighborhood still survive, (9) (10) but the descendants of the families that once lived here continue to enrich Madison. Such well-known Madison names as Amato, Clementi, Cuccia, DiSalvo, Fiore, Parisi, Stassi, Troia and Frank, Sinaiko, and Sweet all first found shelter in this area. Theirs is an enduring legacy that has outlived the buildings that once sheltered their forebearers.

Warren's Addition (Brittingham) was platted in 1866 by Albert Warren, but even as late as 1890, its marshy nature prevented development. Filling began in 1904 in conjunction with work on the adjacent Brittingham Park. (6) The houses that now fill the plat began to spring up soon after.

Bowen's Addition sits on high ground to the west of the Greenbush Addition and it was once part of the 60-acre Van Bergen/Bowen farm. (1) This farm was bounded by Regent Street, Mills Street, Randall Avenue, and Emerald Street. The land continued to be farmed until 1892, when the heirs of James B. Bowen platted most of the portion south of St. James Court as Bowen's Addition. This became one of Madison's first residential suburbs.

Pregler's Addition (Bayview) was long known as the "Triangle" and it was originally divided east to west by Murray Street. The 19-acre eastern portion of this land was purchased by George Pregler (1854-1930) in 1891 and platted as Pregler's Addition in 1901. Most of Pregler's land was a marsh, but he slowly created buildable lots by filling the marsh with ashes he hauled to the site by hand. On these lots he then either put old houses he moved to the site and fixed up or new houses he built himself. These were then sold for \$5 down and \$5-\$10 a month to poor, mostly Italian immigrants. All of the housing in this plat was eventually demolished in 1962 to make way for the Triangle Redevelopment Project and it was then replaced by modern housing, offices, and medical centers.

## Seth and Harriet Van Bergen/ James and Susan Bowen House

1

302 South Mills Street  
1854-1855



The visionary act of platting the Greenbush Addition in 1854 began the real suburban development of Madison. A year later, pioneer, Dane County farmer and real estate investor, Seth Van Bergen (1814-1900) realized his own more bucolic vision when he began the construction of this Madison Landmark house as the centerpiece of the 60-acre farm he owned immediately to the west of the Greenbush. This cut stone building faces Mills Street, then the major route to south Madison, and it is an outstanding example of early Italianate design. Its hilltop setting and the absence of any neighboring houses or vegetation made it a prominent visual landmark in the area for many years.

Van Bergen lived in his new house with his wife, Harriet Bushnell Van Bergen, until 1859 when he sold both the house and farm to Madison's first homeopathic physician, Dr. James Bowen and his wife, Susan. Bowen (1815-1881) achieved success both as a physician and as a businessman and became mayor of Madison in 1871. After Bowen's death, the house was inherited first by his daughter, Susan Bowen Ramsey, wife of First National Bank cashier Wayne Ramsey, and then by the Ramsey's son, James Ramsey, who later became one of the founders of the Ray-O-Vac Battery Company.

## Matthew and Anna Maria Hause House

②

1017 Drake Street  
1855



The Greek Revival style Hause house was one of the first houses built in the new Greenbush Addition. Its solid brick walls, heavy cut stone lintels and simple, dignified two-story design make it the most impressive of the several other surviving brick houses in the immediate vicinity built in the mid-1850s. These include the house directly behind at 1014 Emerald Street, built for bookbinder John and Dorothea Eberhard in 1855, and the James Blakeley house located at 1140 Drake Street, which was built in 1857.

Each of these houses, and most of the other houses built in Madison in the 1850s, were influenced to some degree by the Greek Revival style—the first national style to be widely used in Wisconsin. Greek Revival style buildings are generally symmetrical in design, orderly in appearance, and feature regularly spaced door and window openings. The features most commonly associated with this style include: porticos and corner pilasters; prominent, generally front-facing gables framed with wide structural and decorative elements; low-pitched gable or hip roofs; and classically inspired cornices with end returns. Vernacular examples such as the Eberhard and Blakeley houses often make do with a limited number of Greek Revival details such as pedimented gable ends and returned cornices.

## Elijah Holborn/Louis and Catherine Voiyer House

③

612 South Brooks Street  
1857



In April of 1857 Chandler Chapman, one of the developers of the Greenbush Addition, sold the lot on which this small house sits to Elijah Holborn on a land contract. This contract stipulated that in return for paying \$4 down, Holborn would build a house worth at least \$400 on the lot and enclose it with a picket fence within two months of the signing of the contract. Holborn appears to have fulfilled his side of the agreement and the result is the small brick Greek Revival house we see today. A year later, in October 1858, Holborn sold this house to stonecutter Louis Voiyer and his wife Catherine, who lived here for the next seven years.

Chapman appears to have used the same means to get houses built on a number of the other lots he held in the Greenbush Addition at the time, including the lot next door at 602 South Brooks Street, on which James and Mary Joss built a house in 1857. This may have been a necessary expedient since the nationwide financial panic of 1857 dealt a serious blow to many construction plans, but Chapman may have also wanted to get as many houses as possible built in this distant location as an inducement to other prospective purchasers.

## Cronin Brothers Building

④

402 South Park Street  
1889



In 1889 the Cronin Brothers (John and Matthew) removed their saloon from its longtime downtown home at 9½ West Main Street to their new building located on the corner of Vilas Avenue and Park Street. This frame building is now the oldest commercial building in the Greenbush Addition. It is a fine and largely intact example of the Italianate vernacular style that was enormously popular for commercial buildings during this period. At first the Cronins ran a saloon on the first floor and Matthew Cronin lived in the apartment above. But three years later they sold the building to Peter Koltes, who divided the first floor and operated both a saloon and a grocery store.

After Koltes retired, his grocery store was run by Moses Sweet, one of the first members of what would become one of Madison's largest Jewish families. Sweet's store served Madison's growing Jewish community, whose homes then lined Mound Street between Park and Murray Streets. The spiritual and social center of this community was the Agudas Achim Synagogue (built on the corner of Mound and Park Street in 1904). Eventually, larger synagogues were needed, culminating in the construction of the current Beth Israel Center at 1406 Mound Street. Almost all the original buildings associated with this community, including the first synagogue, were later demolished for the Triangle Redevelopment Project and the expansion of Madison General Hospital.

## Michael and Katherine O'Connell House

⑤

1022 Mound Street  
1897



This excellent and highly intact Queen Anne style residence was built on the corner of Mound and Mills Streets as the home of Michael O'Connell (1864–1927) and his wife, Katherine O'Connell (1860–1931). By 1897 the movement to the suburbs was starting to become a reality in Madison. The 1892 platting of the Bowen farm just across Mills Street from the O'Connells' lot gave this area an added boost. The lot is on the western edge of the Greenbush Addition, and during their lifetime it was also just six blocks away from the Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad yards. This was an important consideration for O'Connell, who worked as a flagman for the railroad and most likely walked to work.

Both the wide, encircling veranda of the O'Connell house and the elaborate treatment of its gable ends are characteristics commonly associated with the Queen Anne style. The stylistic evolution of some of these design elements can also be studied by examining later buildings in the area. For instance, the typically Queen Anne style treatment of the half-timbered gable ends of the O'Connell house can be compared with the similar but simplified American Craftsman style treatment of the gable end on the front of the Charles Marks House, ②① which was built in 1905.

## Brittingham Park

6

701 West Brittingham Place  
Ossian C. Simonds, landscape architect  
1905-1911



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The role of the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association in creating modern Madison is not as well known today as it was in 1939 when Ladislav Segoe, the nationally famous urban planner stated that: "What started out as a movement by a small group of men to create pleasure drives through some of the beautiful scenery along the lakes assumed wider portions until it has become a real force in shaping the development of the city." The Association's principal tools were the parks that it was instrumental in developing in the first decade of the century along Madison's then underutilized lake shores. The largest of these parks (Tenney Park, Vilas Park, <sup>(19)</sup> and Brittingham Park) were each constructed by filling in low-lying marsh land with materials dredged up from the adjacent lakes. Since these parks were then located either on the outskirts of the city or in areas rendered unusable by swampy conditions, the timely transformation of these areas gave the largely underdeveloped suburbs that surrounded them a major boost and helped to steer development activity in their direction.

In 1905, prominent Madison lumberman and civic benefactor Thomas Brittingham (1860-1924) pledged the sum of \$8,000 for the creation of a park along the shore of the "stinking slough" known today as Monona Bay. This area was then mostly a swampy dumping ground. Over the next six years, however, the work of the Association and Brittingham's continuing largess transformed this area into an urban showpiece. Its new bathhouse and beach became a favorite summer pleasure ground for all of Madison, but especially for the nearby Italian-American community in the Greenbush Addition, who fondly referred to it as "Columbus Park" in honor of their illustrious countryman. Ultimately, Brittingham's gifts totalled \$24,500 for which the city gained a 27-acre park that eventually extended around almost the entire shoreline of Monona Bay, plus a bathhouse (demolished), and a boathouse that is now a Madison Landmark.

## St. Mary's Hospital

7

*720 South Brooks Street  
Ferdinand Kronenberg, architect  
1911-1912 with additions*



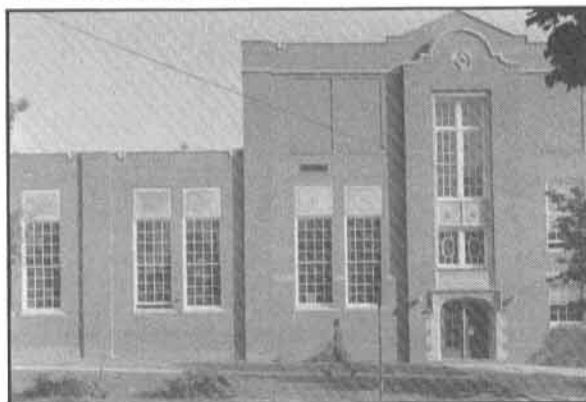
Madison's current reputation as a hospital center began with the establishment of the two hospitals located within the Brittingham-Greenbush area, the earliest of which is the Madison General Hospital complex located at 202 South Park Street. This complex evolved from Madison's first public hospital, a building constructed on the same site in 1903 (demolished). Its creation was a major victory for local supporters of public health and for the newly energized women's movement, which worked tirelessly to establish Madison General. The hospital's immediate success paved the way for the other hospitals which were to follow.

The growing demand for hospital rooms emboldened Madison's Catholic community to begin planning another hospital. After several false starts they chose the two-acre former site of Madison's first Catholic cemetery located at the southern end of Mills and Brooks Streets. Rev. H. C. Hengel of St. Paul's Chapel convinced the Sister's of St. Mary in St. Louis, Missouri, to construct a 70-bed \$157,000 hospital designed by Madison architect, Ferdinand Kronenberg. This building was completed in 1912 and is now the oldest unit of the St. Mary's complex.

## Longfellow School

8

*1010 Chandler Street  
Law, Law and Potter, architects  
1918 with additions*



Longfellow School is one of the most architecturally distinguished of all Madison's school buildings. The excellence of the design of the Tudor and Jacobean-influenced stone detailing on its center portion and around its entrance doors is typical of the best work of the distinguished Madison architectural firm of Law, Law, and Potter. This firm was Madison's largest during the 1920s and 1930s and was responsible for many of the city's best known landmarks among which are two other city schools: West High (1930) and Marquette (1938-1939).

The nearly symmetrical Chandler Street facade of Longfellow School belies the fact that the school was built in three stages over a 20-year period as the needs of the neighborhood expanded. The first stage was the northernmost one and it contained classrooms on its first and second floors and a gym in its basement. The second stage was the projecting central block that bisects the main facade and contained the two-story school auditorium, while the third and last stage was the largest and contained a new gym, clinic, library, music room, and more classrooms.

Longfellow was the grade school of the Greenbush community and is remembered with fondness by many ex-residents. Its use as a school was discontinued in 1980.

## Italian Workmen's Club

9

914 Regent Street  
1922 and 1936



The Italian immigrants who came to Madison around 1900 soon created their own local institutions, as had other national groups who had arrived here before them. These institutions served both secular and religious purposes and they helped to give the new arrivals a sense of community. Many of the buildings associated with Madison's Italian-American institutions such as St. Joseph's Church (1915) were later demolished by urban renewal projects in the Greenbush. Also demolished were most of the area's Italian restaurants, which were once so numerous that the intersection of Park and Regent Streets was known throughout Madison as "Spaghetti Corners." Today the only survivor is Josie's Restaurant (906 Regent Street), built in 1941 as Jimmie's.

Just two doors away from Josie's is the most important of the surviving institutions associated with this once vibrant ethnic neighborhood—the Italian Workmen's Club. This club was founded as a mutual benefit organization in 1912 to help members burdened by the costs of illness, injury or death. By 1922 its members were able to build their own clubhouse using volunteer labor and equipment donated in part by local contractor and former city engineer, John Icke. The club has served for years as a community social center. It continues to thrive with over 250 members.

## Benjamin and Frances DiSalvo Building

10

802 Regent Street  
1923



As the Italian-American community in Madison prospered, many of its early members were eventually able to realize the dream of most immigrants and purchase land upon which to build their homes and businesses. Prominent among the first generation of this community were Sicilian native Ben DiSalvo and his wife Frances who built this substantial brick building in 1923. The DiSalvos lived in the large second floor apartment and used the first floor to house their grocery store and food importing business. This living arrangement was called "living above the shop" and had been practiced in Europe for centuries prior to its introduction in America.

DiSalvo's Imported Foods soon became a Greenbush institution. After DiSalvo retired in 1945 the store continued to be run by his sons until Tom DiSalvo retired in 1984. When Ben DiSalvo opened his new store it was one of 16 Italian-owned grocery stores in the neighborhood. DiSalvo's branched out into related areas as business warranted and the store later added a bakery, a meat market, and a liquor department. They also built a one-story annex next door in the same style as the store. Located where the side parking lot is now and used for years as DiSalvo's Spaghetti House, the annex burned down in the early 1960s.

## St. James Roman Catholic Church ⑪

1130 St. James Court  
Ferdinand Kronenberg, architect  
1923



As the population of Madison swelled around the turn-of-the-century and the exodus to the suburbs started, some of the city's existing religious organizations began to seek out suburban sites for new churches. One of the first was the predominantly German parish of Holy Redeemer Catholic Church, located at 120 W. Johnson Street. By 1904 many of its members lived in the area near Bowen's Addition, as did many new immigrants from Bavaria. This prompted the pastor of Holy Redeemer, Father Alois Zitterl, to approach the Wayne Ramsey family ① after hearing that Mrs. Ramsey had made a deathbed request in 1904 asking her family to donate land to a worthy religious organization. The family replied by donating six lots for the site of a new church.

The newly formed parish built a brick church and school building on these lots in 1905–1906 along with a brick rectory (extant) located at 1128 St. James Court. These buildings, dedicated to St. James, were named after the first name of Mrs. Ramsey's father and son. The present church was built in 1923 between the two original buildings and was designed by German-born architect Ferdinand Kronenberg. This is one of Kronenberg's finest works and it is also the best example of late Romanesque Revival architecture in Madison. In 1958 the original church-school building was torn down to make way for a new school.

## Annie C. Stewart Memorial Fountain ⑫

Erin Street at Wingra Street  
Frederic C. Clasgens, sculptor  
1917–1925

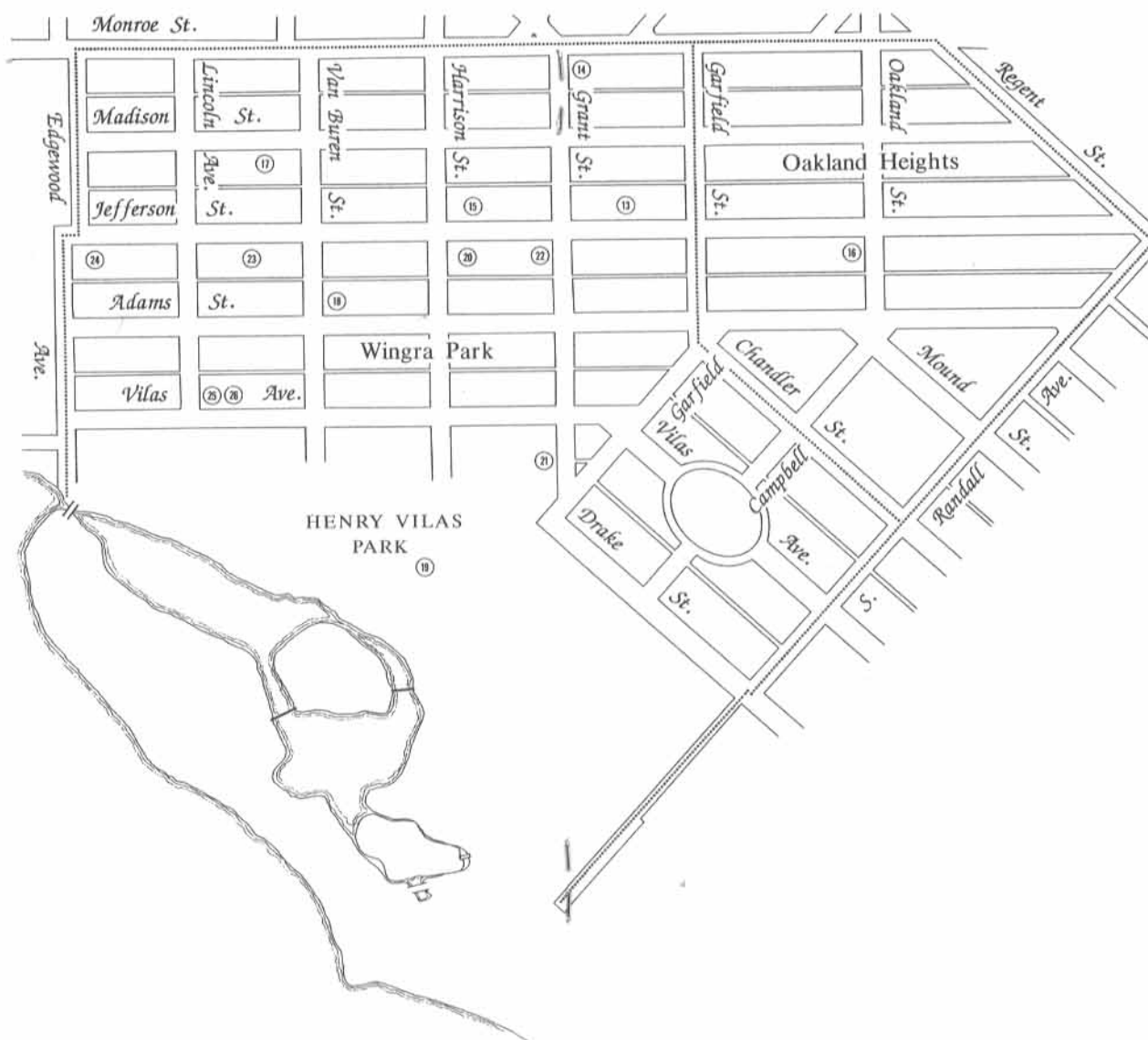


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In 1906 Mrs. Mary Stewart left \$2,000 to the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association for the erection of a public drinking fountain in memory of her daughter, Annie C. Stewart. Finally, in 1917, the Association commissioned Ohio-born sculptor Frederic C. Clasgens to design an appropriate structure to be located adjacent to what was then the main pedestrian entrance to the zoo. ⑬ Clasgens had received his first training at the Cincinnati Art Institute and then spent most of the next two decades working in Europe. He probably owed this Madison commission to the influence of his sister and brother-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. B. J. Halligan, who were long-time Madison residents and Park and Pleasure Drive Association members.

Clasgen's design featured a round concrete basin decorated with ocean motifs. On the tall concrete pedestal at the center was placed a group carved from marble representing a mermaid, a dolphin, and a triton (a youthful attendant of the gods of the sea). Two marble tritons adorned the sides of the basin and held conch shells from which drinking water flowed. The work was completed by 1925, but vandals damaged the fountain in 1931 and 1943. The City is now contemplating restoring the fountain to its original condition.

# The Wingra Park-Oakland Heights Walking Tour



① Numbers within circles denote their order in the listing of sites.

## The Wingra Park–Oakland Heights Area

### *Historical Development*

The Wingra Park Addition was platted in 1889. It was the first of Madison's modern suburbs to be created in response to the desire of many to escape from the increasingly crowded conditions on the isthmus. The developer of this addition was longtime Madison resident William Fish (1833–1904). Fish was then a partner in the firm of Sorensen, Fredrickson, and Fish, proprietors of the Madison Planing Mill and Lumberyard and the city's most successful building contractor in the 1870s and 1880s. Fish had, in fact, played a key role in creating the very conditions his new suburb was designed to alleviate.

The 106-acre Van Dusen farm Fish purchased for his new suburb in 1889 was largely open, well-drained land that adjoined the western edge of the existing city limits. Fish quickly had a plat drawn by local engineer and surveyor McClellan Dodge and then formed the Madison Land and Improvement Co. to sell the 380+ lots Dodge had laid out. Ads in the local papers began offering "choice bargains" and "cheap homes" and targeted "Merchants, Clerks, and Bookkeepers" and "The Retired Farmer, the Mechanic and the Laborer" as the potential owners of these lots. Sales were slow, however, due to a poor national economy and the lack of public transportation in the area. Even changing the pitch to target more wealthy prospects could not alleviate the basic handicap of being a few years in advance of demand, and in 1893 Fish sold all his unsold lots to H.C. Adams, H.C. Thom, and C.E. Bross and used the lessons he had learned to form the University Heights Company, whose plat was at the end of the newly extended streetcar line.

The new proprietors of Wingra Park set about remedying the plat's defects by forming the Wingra Park Advancement Association on October 31, 1893. The stated purpose of the new association was "to beautify and improve Wingra Park" and it did so by organizing the owners of the lots into a highly effective group who worked for needed community improvements in much the same way as today's neighborhood associations do. This work was made easier by the fact that all three of the plat's principal proprietors built homes of their own in the plat and made the improvement of the area part of their daily lives.

One of the first acts of the association was to build a neighborhood center (14) as a visible symbol of their community and as a place where neighborhood activities could take place. They then began a local subscription drive to bring electric street lights to the area in 1895 (an effort made easier by H. C. Thom's position as manager of the Four Lakes Light and Power Co.). In 1897 the electric street car line was extended down Breese Terrace to Monroe Street and then on to Forest Hills cemetery. This act was the single most important event in securing the success of the plat and was largely due to the efforts of H. C. Adams and William Fish, each of whom took the responsibility in their own plat for securing the franchise, organizing the successful effort to assess each lot owner \$25 for the cost of the road, and overseeing the actual construction. The road was then donated to the streetcar company and the opening of the new line finally brought the suburb to the city's door.

The intent of these efforts did not go unnoticed. In 1896 Edward Riley (1847–1926) purchased the land between Wingra Park and Bowen's Addition from the Illinois Central Railroad, and formed the Oakland Heights Addition. Even though both its lots and buildings were slightly smaller than those in Wingra Park, the new plat seems to have been considered an addition to Wingra Park both by outsiders and by residents, and it too benefited from and supported the actions of the Wingra Park Association.

By the time both additions were annexed to the city in 1903 this whole area was considered one of Madison's finest residential districts, a view that is still true today. The sizeable group of houses within this area contains some of Madison's finest Queen Anne, Prairie School, and period revival homes. These buildings now constitute one of Madison's most important and intact architectural legacies.

George Nielson/Ralph and Amy  
Vernon House

13

1716 Jefferson Street  
George Nielson, carpenter  
1892



The great majority of houses built in Madison were built by contractors who used published plans as the source of their designs. Usually, pairing the names of these contractors with a specific house is impossible, but occasionally, as in this case, if the original owner is also known to have been a contractor, it is safe to assume that contractor and owner were one and the same. George Nielson was a carpenter-contractor living at 723 University Avenue (gone) when he built this fine Queen Anne style house in Wingra Park in 1892 as a speculative venture. In 1893 Nielson sold the house to realtor and retired Dane County sheriff Ralph Vernon and his wife Amy.

Two doors away from the Nielson house is the equally fine Queen Anne style James and Elizabeth Bull house located at 1724 Jefferson Street. Bull, a retired farmer, built this house in 1891—the fourth one in the new subdivision. The trees Bull planted on the corner of his property were the first to be planted in the new suburb, which had previously been a dairy and truck farm, and in 1891 was still an open field sloping down to Lake Wingra.

Wingra Park Advancement  
Association Hall

14

1723 Monroe Street  
John Cory, carpenter  
1893



The Wingra Park Advancement Association Hall is the earliest non-residential building in the Wingra Park-Oakland Heights area. It originally sat on an adjacent lot around the corner at 807 Grant Street. The Association was formed on October 31, 1893, by H. C. Adams, H. C. Thom, and C. E. Bross, all prominent Madison men who had just purchased all of the unsold lots in Wingra Park from the plat's developer, William Fish. The purpose of the Association was to beautify and improve Wingra Park, and not surprisingly most of its members were Wingra Park residents.

One of the first acts of the new association was to request bids for the construction of a neighborhood hall, which could be used for social and administrative purposes by the association and could be rented out to others. The winning bid of \$658 came from carpenter John Cory. This simple frame building was ready for interior plastering by November 15, 1893. The new hall was then used by the Association until it disbanded in 1910. During this period the hall also served as the town of Madison town hall, besides housing Sunday school classes and dances. The hall was sold to painting contractors Cork and Holt. Years later the building was moved around the corner to its present location.

## Richard and Ella Dudgeon House

15

1820 Jefferson Street  
1893-1894



Another of the earliest buildings in Wingra Park is this excellent Queen Anne house built for Richard Dudgeon (1853-1922) and his wife, Ella (1857-1933). Dudgeon was a distinguished Wisconsin educator who had just been named the superintendent of the Madison public schools in 1891, a position he filled until the year before his death. In 1894 he was named the president of the Wisconsin State Teachers Association and he also served as the secretary of the Wingra Park Advancement Association from 1895 to 1902.

While not huge, the ample size of the Dudgeons' house was appropriate to their new status in Madison. It was also typical of the size and design of other houses then built elsewhere in Wingra Park. Almost all of the houses built in Wingra Park before 1900 were influenced in some degree by the Queen Anne style. The Dudgeon house, with its towered, asymmetrical main facade and its combination of clapboard and wood shingle siding, is one of the best of these houses. Dudgeon lived in this house until his death, as did his wife afterwards, and the house was then lived in by their son, Sidney Dudgeon. This unusually long family tenure undoubtedly helps explain why the house still exhibits such a high degree of integrity today.

## Leslie and Grace Burd House

16

1603 Jefferson Street  
1897



Architectural fashion underwent a transition in the 1890s from the more elaborate Queen Anne style houses that had predominated in Madison and elsewhere to buildings exhibiting simpler, more classically-inspired designs which drew their inspiration from America's colonial past. As in any other transitional period, however, some designs tried to have it both ways and the results occasionally bordered on the eccentric. A case in point is this highly individualistic design created by an unknown architect for Leslie and Grace Burd. Burd was then the clerk of the UW Board of Regents and his new house was the first house built in Oakland Heights. The basically cruciform plan of the house typified many of the smaller Queen Anne style houses of the day, but the Dutch Colonial gambrel roofs, with their Palladian window groups, looked forward to the period revival styles that were to follow. The very elaborate shingling in the gable ends, though, echoes the complexity of the Queen Anne style.

In 1904 noted Madison attorney Emerson Ela (1875-1956) built a larger but more restrained version of this house at 1101 Grant Street. While its plan and massing still retained echoes of the Queen Anne style, its greater simplicity was much more in keeping with its Dutch Colonial precedents.

## Belle Fuller House

17

2009 Madison Street  
1902



Some houses catch the eye because of their costliness and elaborate design, others because of the beauty of their proportions or their sense of the picturesque. Still others impress because of their absolute integrity and their ability to perfectly portray a period or style. Among the latter is this excellent example of an early American Foursquare, built in 1902 for Mrs. Belle Fuller. While more elaborate examples of this house type can be found in Wingra Park, the more typical examples such as this were usually built by contractors from published designs and are characterized by their box-like massing and rectilinear proportions, their two-story height, and their four-room floor plans. Ornamentation is usually minimal and early examples such as the Fuller House are typically sided in clapboard, although later examples influenced by the American Craftsman style may be sided in a combination of materials such as clapboard, wood shingles, and stucco.

Belle Fuller was a well-known local piano teacher, a common occupation for an educated woman of that day, and she shared her home with her elderly parents, Thomas and Louisa Plumb. Thomas Plumb (1821–1911) was then a retired printer who came to Madison in 1857 and became a respected publisher of law blanks.

## Philip and Louisa Noel House

18

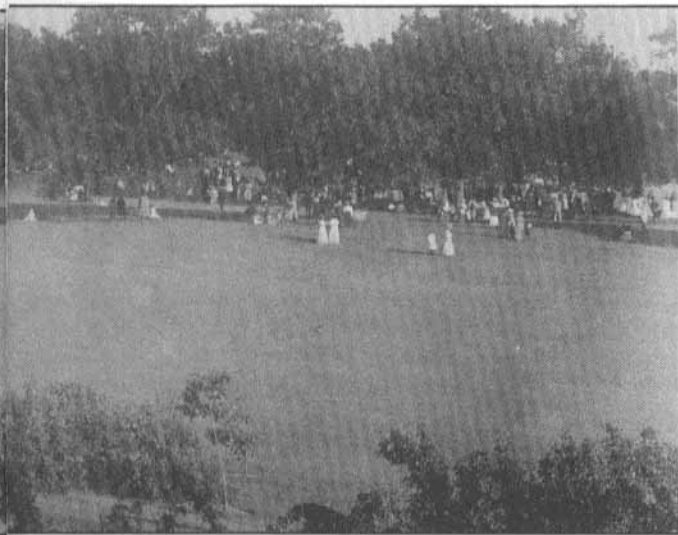
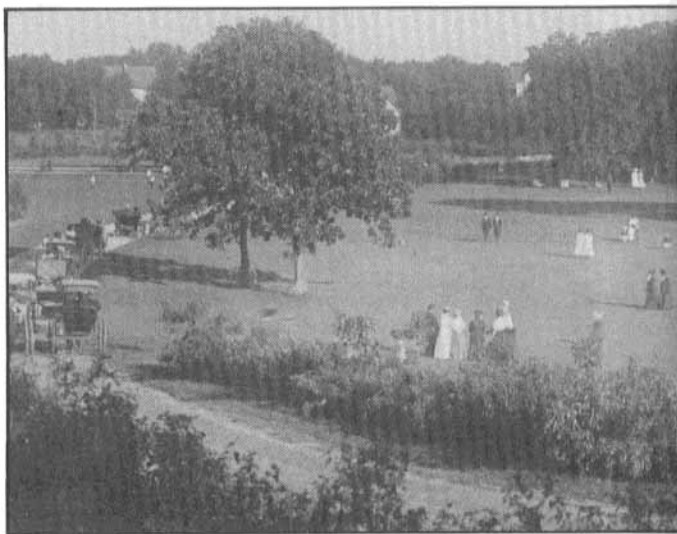
1922 Adams Street  
1907



A more complex version of the American Foursquare house type is this excellent and highly original house built for Philip and Louise Noel in 1907. Here the fluted Doric columns and the Palladian style dormers reflect the influence of the Georgian Revival. The two-story bays on the sides of the house create a larger and more complex building than is usually associated with Foursquare houses. This house is also notable for its intact carriage house. The Noels lived here for just two years before selling to assistant state superintendent of public instruction and future state budget director James B. Borden (1869–1939) and his wife Mary.

This house is actually a simplified version of the more elaborate Georgian Revival house the Noels built in 1905 one block away at 2010 Adams Street. Noel listed himself as a "miner" in the city directory at the time and this outstanding house may have been built with the profits from that career. Two years later the Noels sold 2010 Adams Street to well-known Madison photographer Fred Curtiss and his wife Kate. Still later, the house was owned for many years by the family of Col. Joseph Jackson (1879–1969), the long-time head of the Madison and Wisconsin Foundation and a prominent civic benefactor and friend of the UW Arboretum.

702 South Randall Avenue  
*Ossian C. Simonds, landscape architect*  
 1905-1916



The inspiration for what was to become Henry Vilas Park came from a public suggestion made in 1903 by Wingra Park developer and then U. S. Congressman H. C. Adams and local physician Dr. Edward Kremers. Their dream was to have the 25-acre parcel of land along the north shore of Lake Wingra secured as a public park. This plan was then conveyed by John Olin, the president of the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association, to one of Madison's wealthiest men, former U. S. senator and postmaster general William Vilas (1840-1908). Vilas and his wife Annie considered Olin's proposal on a trip to Europe in the fall of 1903. When they returned, they agreed to purchase the land for \$18,000 provided that the association raise \$10,000 for its improvement, secure and build a road (now Edgewood Drive) along the portion of the Lake Wingra shore belonging to St. Clara College (now Edgewood College), dredge Wingra Creek, and name the park after the Vilas' deceased son, Henry.

The Association immediately accepted the Vilas offer and engaged Chicago landscape architect O. C. Simonds to plan the new park. Besides the land given by Vilas, 50 acres of bog along the lakeshore was to be converted into park land by dredging fill from the lake. A four-acre portion was to become a lagoon. The work to realize this plan continued for the next 13 years and resulted in a 65-acre park that has long been one of Madison's most cherished resources.

The creation of the Vilas Park Zoo happened by accident when the Association was offered a herd of five deer in 1910. A decision was made to house them at Vilas Park and the new zoo opened in 1911 with a collection of "nine deer, three ground hogs, three wood chucks, two guinea pigs, two rabbits, two white rats, one raccoon, one eagle, one squirrel, and one toothless red fox." With the continuing support of the Association and the Vilas family (who gave a total of \$82,500 by 1920) this became the nucleus of what is today Dane County's most popular tourist attraction.

## Charles and Minerva Marks House

20

1815 Jefferson Street

Charles E. Marks, architect and builder  
1905



Most building contractors play some role in modifying designs for their clients but few produce their own designs. One exception was Charles E. Marks (1875–?), a Madison carpenter, contractor and self-styled architect who built a number of fine houses in the city's western suburbs. Marks and his brother, Eugene H. Marks (1873–1933), both learned the carpentry trade from their father, Henry P. Marks. After their family moved to Madison in 1894 the brothers worked together for a few years before starting their separate but parallel careers.

The identified houses of the brothers show that both were skilled at adapting currently fashionable styles for their clients. The works of Eugene Marks in the Wingra Park area include 2015 Adams Street (1915); 1504 Madison Street (1918); 1506 Madison Street (1916); 2015 Monroe Street (1914); 1108 Garfield Street (1914); and his house at 1104 Garfield Street (1912). Some works of Charles Marks in this same area include 1101 Grant Street; (16) 1909 Adams Street (1912); 2119 Madison Street; (24) and the Colby building, 1725 Monroe Street (1914). He also occupied (and probably designed and built) three other houses in the area: 2006 Madison Street (1898–1900); 2015 Jefferson Street; (23) and this excellent Shingle Style house at 1815 Jefferson Street.

## Cora Tuttle House

21

1206 Grant Street

Cora Tuttle, designer  
1909



Cora Tuttle (1864–1948) is the only woman known to have designed buildings in Madison before WWI. Her output was small, but it was of great quality. The group of five houses she designed in Wingra Park are Madison's finest examples of the combined Bungalow and American Craftsman styles. The best-known houses in the United States exhibiting this particular combination of styles are the early works of the California architects Charles and Henry Green. Their design for one and one-half story bungalow houses made elaborate use of naturally treated wood, wood shingles, brick, and other Craftsman materials and resulted in buildings that were rustic in appearance, yet highly sophisticated. Tuttle used the same basic elements in her houses, including using details with an oriental flavor.

Tuttle's first house in Wingra Park was her own, built in 1909 at 1206 Grant Street. This success led her to design a second house in 1910 around the corner at 1813 Vilas Avenue as a speculative venture with her brother-in-law, Edgar Smith. She then built three more in the immediate vicinity with the help of her nephew, E. C. Smith: E. C. Smith's own house, 1811 Vilas Avenue (1910–1911); a speculative house for E. C. Smith at 1821 Vilas Avenue (1912–1913); and a house for Edgar and Marie Smith, 1202 Grant Street (1913–1914).

**A. Cornelius and Della  
Larson House**

22

*1006 Grant Street  
1911*



This outstanding house was built for local insurance executive August Cornelius Larson and his wife Della in 1911. It is one of the finest of Madison's Prairie style houses. Larson (1875–1961) was born in Wiotia, Wisconsin, and began dealing in life insurance while still in college in Iowa. Soon after graduation he became the manager of the Central Life Assurance Society's Wisconsin office. Larson made this the Society's biggest branch and was later elected president of the Northwest Congress of Life Underwriters, became a director of several Madison financial institutions, and was a one-time president of the Randall Bank, an important lender in the Wingra Park–Oakland Heights area.

With its wide overhanging eaves, plaster-covered soffits, decorative beltcourses, leaded glass windows, and strong horizontal emphasis, the Larson House is a textbook example of Prairie design. It was most likely designed by the Madison firm of Claude and Starck. The Wingra Park–Oakland Heights area also contains a number of other fine Prairie houses. An especially intact later example is the house of UW professor Warren Geib and his wife Edith at 1522 Vilas Avenue (1922), the design of which is attributed to Madison architect Alvan E. Small.

**E. A. Brown/Charles and Minerva  
Marks House**

23

*2015 Jefferson Street  
Charles E. Marks, architect  
1911*



Another fine Prairie style house constructed in the same year as the Larson house is the one built for E. A. Brown at 2015 Jefferson Street. Brown does not appear to have ever lived here, however, and the first known occupants were contractor Charles E. Marks and his family. 20 Marks had become successful enough by 1909 to be elected to the first of two terms as an alderman for the tenth ward. He and his family lived in this house until 1918. For many years thereafter it was owned by attorney Frank Jenks and his wife, Hazel.

Marks may well have been both the designer and builder of the house. Comparing it and his other work of that period to the works of Claude and Starck makes it clear that he was quite able to utilize the same design vocabulary to create fine Prairie designs.

More established Madison architects were also able to produce creditable Prairie designs using the same basic elements that Marks and Claude and Starck utilized. A case in point is the fine Craftsman/Prairie house at 2121 Jefferson Street that Madison's then most senior architect, J. O. Gordon, designed for Thomas and Emma Coxon in 1909.

## Charles H. and Caroline Mills House

24

2119 Jefferson Street  
Charles E. Marks, general contractor  
1915



Both the Prairie and the American Craftsman styles owed a substantial debt to the earlier British Arts and Crafts movement, whose emphasis on the use of natural materials and simplicity of appearance and function held great appeal for architects and clients tired of the decorative excesses of the Victorian period.

America had its British-inspired equivalent of this style, which is also related to the Prairie and Craftsman styles. Almost all the buildings associated with it are residential designs that feature stucco walls, simple volumetric massing, and multi-paned windows. True Arts and Crafts style buildings are rare in Wisconsin but its influence can be felt in the house of UW professor of music Charles Mills (1873–1937) and his wife Caroline. This hybrid design combines simple wood trim, multi-paned windows, and plain, stucco-covered walls. But its most distinctive feature is its unusual roof, which has wide rolled edges imitating the thatched roofs associated with buildings of the English Cottage Revival style. Despite different details, however, the Mills house (23) is an obvious sibling of Charles Marks' Brown house and it has the same symmetrical main facade and wide overhanging eaves.

Another variant on the British Arts and Crafts theme is the fine house at 2025 Jefferson Street.

## Emanuel and Elva Simon House

25

1111 Lincoln Street  
Frank Riley, architect  
1926



It is fitting that some of the finest designs of Madison's best period revival architect, Madison born Frank M. Riley (1875–1949), should be located in this area since his father, Edward Riley, developed the Oakland Heights Addition. Like most architects who specialized in period revival styles, Riley moved fluently between them. Nowhere in Madison can this be better seen than in the outstanding group of four homes he designed in three different styles at the intersections of Lincoln and Adams Streets.

The earliest of these is located at 1102 Lincoln Street and was designed in the Colonial Revival style for John Conklin and his wife Margaret in 1923. In 1926 Riley designed a second home for the Conklins in the French Provincial style at 1101 Lincoln Street. In the same year Riley designed the outstanding Georgian Revival style house illustrated above for Emanuel and Elva Simon. Simon was a partner in Simon Bros., wholesale grocers in Madison. Riley designed an equally fine Georgian Revival house for Simon's brother, Jerry Simon, and his wife, Frances, a block away at 1016 Lincoln Street in 1922.

Other Riley designs in the area include the Rayne house, 1108 Grant Street, and later houses at 1427 Vilas Avenue and 1533 Jefferson Street.

2020 Vilas Avenue  
Carl Ahl, Builder  
1927



Houses designed in the Tudor Revival style are scarce in the Wingra Park–Oakland Heights area. One of the best is this house built for Mary Boyd. Mrs. Boyd had only recently lost her husband—local caterer, dance hall owner, alderman and Madison native John Boyd (1881–1924)—when she built this large home for herself and four small children in 1927. The Boyd family lived here for only a few years, however, before selling the house to Maurice and Harriet Davis in 1930. Davis was the manager of the Madison Army and Navy store, and by the end of the decade was the president and manager of Davis and O'Connell, Inc., dealers in men's clothes.

The Boyd house is a good example of the large, comfortable suburban houses built during the heyday of the period revival styles. Its irregular outline, steeply pitched roofs, complex form and picturesque use of brick, stone, stucco, and wood are characteristics shared with other Tudor Revival houses found in the area. Among the most impressive of these other Tudor Revival houses is the one at 2023 Jefferson Street and the outstanding example at 1110 Edgewood Avenue designed in 1928 for Leo Crowley by the firm of Law, Law, and Potter.

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