

LaGrange Area Historical Society
Walking Tours of the LaGrange Historic District – Tour #1

Welcome to the La Grange Historic District Tours

The Village of La Grange was incorporated in 1879, just nine years after its founder, Franklin D. Cossitt, began his program of organizing a quality residential community. The success of his plan has continued to be a source of civic pride and has resulted in the enduring attractiveness and stability of the community. According to architect Wilbert R. Hasbrouck, “Village of La Grange Historic District as a well preserved suburban community with excellent examples of domestic architecture dating from the late 19th century to the early 20th century.” In his statement requesting that the La Grange Historic District be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places, architect Hasbrouck wrote:

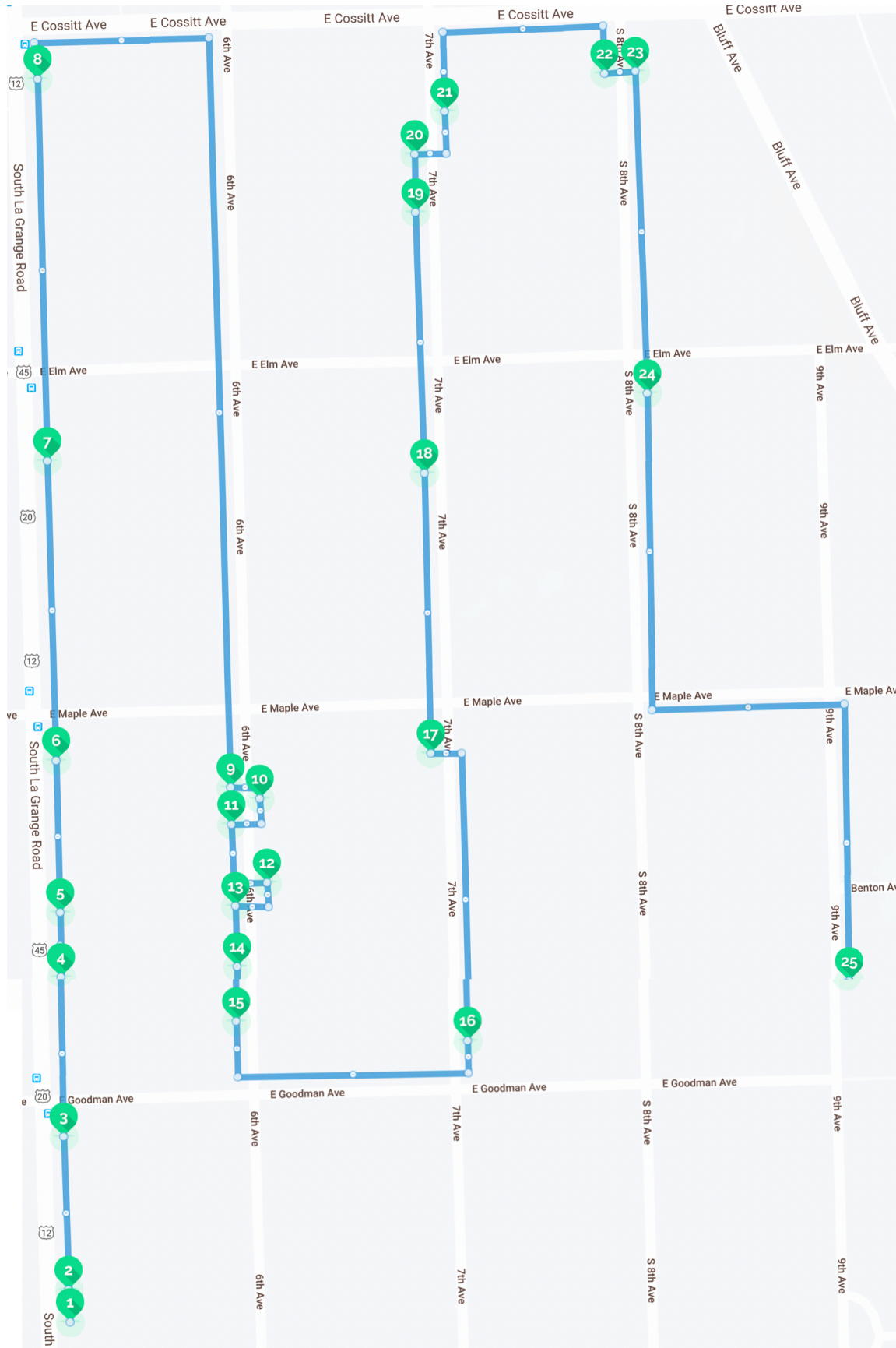
“In its totality, the La Grange Historic District represents a period of architectural development of high artistic value and significance to the history of the region. Furthermore, the buildings have survived intact while continuing to be used for their original purpose.”

The La Grange Area Historical Society offers four different one-hour tours of this landmark area. Tour one, which extends from La Grange Road to east to Eighth Avenue, features four homes designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. All tours include commentary about the history and style of the buildings, which represent a variety of architectural styles and which were often designed by such notables as Frank Lloyd Wright, J. C. Llewellyn, E. H. Turnock, and J.N. Tilden.

In order to limit the length of each tour, the Society has highlighted only homes of the very highest degree of historical and architectural significance. However, the beauty of the Village lies in the overall quality of all of its residences. If you have an extra few minutes to devote to your tour, you might also want to study some of these other fine houses.

The residence identified as vernacular is not designed according to any specific rules and may be a product of several different styles. Nevertheless, it may be a fine example of form, scale, and materials.

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429 South La Grange Road: is a fine example of the vernacular. It was built in about 1905 for Dr. Puffer. Notice the terra Cotta roof, which is rarely found in the Midwest.



425 South La Grange Road: is also vernacular because of the use of many elements from several architectural styles. This “castle” which would be unique anywhere, is ornamented by “towers” with battlements, leaded windows, and an unusual opening at the center of the facade. La Grange legend says that the original owner desired to reconstruct for himself a look similar to that of the European castles he had so much admired.



403 South La Grange Road: was designed by W.H. Drake for C.M. Babbitt in 1892. It is still often called the “Connell House” after the family of Jean Connell Linklater. Mrs. Linklater’s husband William, Village attorney for many years, lent his name to Linklater Court. The home is in the Victorian style which is usually identified by a round turret.



327 South La Grange Road: Was built in 1904 and is an example of vernacular architecture. Notice the ornamentation under the eaves and the pediments (often used in classical temples) over the dormers. Palladian windows are located in the upper gable areas. The design for this home was begun by J.C. Llewellyn for C.N. Marthens of the Interior Marble Work Company in Chicago.



321 South La Grange Road: was also designed by Llewellyn and was built in 1906 for John E. Windsor, who was Village president from 1909-1911. The House is largely vernacular, but you can see Colonial Revival elements such as the gracious front door with sidelights and a fan light which are emphasized.



303 S LaGrange Road – This home was designed by J.C. Llewelyn in 1899 for Myron J Carpenter, the president of three railroads. He also served as Village President in 1898-1899. It was sited by the village in 1945 for multiple family use and was quickly restored to a single family residence. The exterior is brick and the roof and dormer are hipped. The porch is full length with grouped Doric columns and baulstrade above. There are simple stone lintels above each window; decorative muntins in the dormer windows; and an entabulated front door surround with fluted pilasters.

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211 South La Grange Road: is an 1892 Victorian designed by Frank Lloyd Wright which was built for J. Irving Clark, a La Grange builder and contractor. It was among the first houses that Wright designed and is considered one of the best of his ten “bootleg” houses.- so called because Wright designed them on a moonlighting basis while he worked for Adler & Sullivan, the Chicago architectural design firm.

The similarities between the Clark house and Wright’s own house in Oak Park are particularly striking. Comparable features include the pronounced intersecting gable roofs and the front gable with palladian window over twin bays.

The house has had eight owners, including C.S. Bentley, a Civil War general who was a member of the Board of Trade and Village trustee from 1908-1910; and Joel Daly, a Chicago TV newscaster. The present owners are restoring the house to the way it looked in 1892. In 1988 they removed aluminum siding and restored the original clapboard siding and trim. A side porch, enclosed in the 1950’s was restored. The paint colors were determined by a historic paint analysis to be the original ones. Future plans include the restoration of the original front porch.



First Congregational Church. We invite your attention to the west wing, the portion that includes the bell tower. A wooden church which had stood on the site gave way in 1892 to the west wing, which is the only remaining evidence of early churches in La Grange. Other churches were organized earlier than this one, but all have been either burned or razed. The west wing, now known as the “Founders’ Room,” is dedicated to the pioneers of the church, a group which includes such prominent names as Cossitt, Vial, and Fox.

The south window is dedicated to one of the original deacons; the southeast windows was donated by the “king’s Daughters,” an organization of young Women who met and sewed for charity; and the southwest window was donated by Reverend Harrison’s Bible Class. The “Normal Class,” which is believed to have been a training class for Sunday School teachers, were honored by the dedication of the northwest window to them. The lily window on the north is thought to be associated with Mrs. Cossitt, who was a tower of strength to the church and who furnished lilies from her garden and inaugurated “Lily Sunday.” The large west window was donated in 1903 as a Thanksgiving offering by the congregation.

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308 S 6th Ave – This house was originally built on the northwest corner of Maple and LaGrange Road and was moved to its present location in 1889. This home is of the Folk Victorian style. The roof is a front gable type. The porch is a partial wraparound with $\frac{3}{4}$ classical columns. The foundation is limestone, which was readily available in this area. Note the fish scaling on the upper portion of the gable, this was a very common detail added to simple homes.



311 S 6th Ave – This Colonial Revival was built for \$15,000 in 1908 by J.C. Llewellyn for E.K. Boisot, vice-president and manager of the First Trust and Savings Bank. The exterior facade is clapboard and the roof is a hipped with extended eaves. The porch has a roof entrance portico with decorative cutout balustrade and full Doric Column supports. The full screened south side has the same details. Note the Sullivanesque-style ornamentation around the front door, on the second story panel above front porch and by the front windows. Art glass sidelights are around the front door.



316 S 6th Ave – This house was built in 1908 by J.C. Llewellyn for Charles Vial, the grandson of Joseph Vial, and was a charter member of the LaGrange Area Historical Society. It is a Colonial Revival style with aluminum siding over clapboard. The dormer is hipped. The porch is flat roofed, with a front portico that has broad, fluted column supports. Note the copper gutters. The house was remodeled in 1915 and the plans are in the files of the Historical Society.

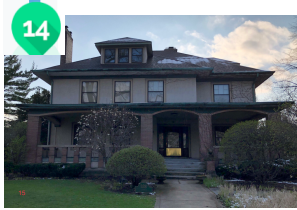


321 S 6th Ave – The style of this home is Spanish Eclectic. The exterior is stucco and the roof is flat with pseudo front. The porch is an open terrace area. The Spanish Eclectic style uses decorative details borrowed from Spanish architecture which was Byzantine, Gothic and Italian Renaissance inspired.



324 South Sixth is an interpretation of Classic Revival by architect Joseph Llewellyn in 1894. It has a symmetrical and orderly arrangement of door and windows and the pediment style gable. The suggestion of a Palladian window appears on the north wall. Mr. Llewellyn increased the size of the house in 1914 by adding a three story addition to the south wall. Part of the original clapboard siding has been stuccoed. Mr. Llewellyn designed at least 23 houses and three banks in La Grange, as well as LTHS North Campus, Congress Park School, and Oak Avenue School. He was one of the most prominent of the La Grange families, giving unselfishly of their time and talents for the cultural enrichment of the community. The Llewellyn family lived in this home until 1952.

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338 South Sixth: was designed by J.N. Tilden for the James Kidston family in 1906. This vernacular house, which combines elements of the American Foursquare and Prairie Styles, has had only four owners. The Kidstons lived here for fifty years, the William Mason family for fifteen years, and the Hansons for the last nineteen years.



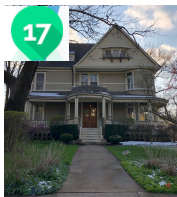
344 South Sixth,: the Lucius Yale House, was built in 1913 and was cited by the Illinois Historic Structures Survey for its architectural significance. It is a vernacular house that included elements of the American Prairie School. Notice the extended porch, dormer, and bay windows.



345 South Seventh: is the home used in our illustration of the Prairie Style for this tour. It was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright as his Third Ladies Home Journal House, “A Fireproof House for \$5,000,” in 1906. Wright executed the plan in La Grange in 1907 for Mr. Stephen Hunt. The house differs somewhat from the

Journal plan, notably in that Wright hoped to build the house from case concrete but instead built it of wood and stucco. This is one of Wright’s “square” houses, which are known for their economy of space and general compactness. This was also one of the first times that he used the L-shaped living room -dining room concept - almost unknown until then.

The Wright Prairie House was an attempt to harmonize a home and its setting. The low horizontal lines were inspired by the stretch of the prairies, and the deep overhand of the roof intended to protect the house from the intense summer rains. The cantilevered carport and porch roofs of the home lend further emphasis to the strong horizontal lines of the house itself. The landscaping adds to the effect.



300 South Seventh: is architecturally interesting as an example of the Queen Anne style. The design incorporates many geometric shapes, natural bays, and specially blown glass in the turret windows. The wide porch, fishscale decoration, and “gingerbread” appearance are hallmarks of its architectural style. Built in about 1892, it was the residence of Henry Hobble Cooper, an attorney and resident agent for Levi Lieter, who purchased all the lots east of 5th Avenue (La Grange Road) from F.D. Cossitt. Mr. Lieter, a partner of Marshall Field, developed the area in 1892. Mr. Cooper was Village President from 1895-1896.

This house has also been owned by John Hausmann, who was Village President from 1981-89

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212 S 7th Ave - This home was built in 1887 as a traditional Victorian home. In 1896 Otto Heppes, one of LaGrange's leading citizens purchased the house. In 1913, Mr. Heppes had the house remodeled into the current English Tudor style. The room located over the driveway was built in 1933 as an Art Studio for Mr. Heppes. Art became of passion of his after he was forced to retire due to his heart condition. He was an active member of the La Grange Art League and enjoyed painting.

For six years, Mr. Heppes was the president of the Board of Education for District 102 and it was during his administration that the Cossitt School was planned and built. It was through his vision and enthusiasm that money was contributed by generous citizens and groups for the special equipment and facilities that could not be supplied by the school funds.

Mrs. Heppes was an avid gardener. She had the stone walls put in to accent her gardens. She had multiple ponds with water falls. She also had an irrigation system installed that used water from the cistern. Initially her gardens were limited to the south lawn. But in 1940 the Heppes purchased the house just north of them and tore it down to expand Mrs. Heppes gardens. Often people would take the train from the city of Chicago to view her gardens.

The carriage house is original to the property as well. Once used to house horses and carriages, it is now used for cars. On a Sanborn map from 1917, it shows the carriage house and has "Auto" labeled on it, indicating the location of one of the first automobiles in LaGrange.



124 South Seventh,: With its canopy over the door and its dormer and sunburst motif in the south side gable, is a fine example of Queen Anne style. George M. Vial built the house in about 1902 and lived in it until his death in 1915. The exterior of the house is much the same as it was upon construction, with the exception of the porch that was added in 1900. The dining room, kitchen, and maid's quarters on the second floor were added in 1905.

George M. Vial was very active in civic affairs and was at one time President of School District #6 which incorporated schools in La Grange and Western Springs. His grandmother, Margaret McNaughton Vial, was the first teacher when the first township school opened in a log cabin in 1843. The Joseph Vial Lumber Company was located on Hillgrove and Spring Avenues



116 South Seventh: was built in about 1890 by Franklin Cossitt for his son, F.D. Cossitt, Jr., Who was also prominent in the development of the Village as Director of the La Grange State Bank, Village trustee, and Village President from 1901-1905. The house is an outstanding example of Victorian architecture. The interior boasts a lovely foyer, an enormous living room with pink marble fireplace, and a banquet sized dining room with a built-in wood buffet. The five-room apartment located on the third floor was perhaps once the servants' quarters.

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111 South Seventh: was the residence of State Representative Farley and was built in about 1892. The Farleys' son Charles was Postmaster of La Grange from 1953-1958 and was one of the organizers of the La Grange Citizens' Council. Mr. Farley represented this area in the 43rd and 44th General Assemblies. The house has also been the property of another political leader, U.S. Representative (Oklahoma) Pres Peden. Notice the splendid coach house.

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108 South Eighth: is a vernacular home that closely resembles the American Foursquare. In 1894 Frank Lloyd Wright designed it for the original owner, Mr. Goan, who built the house as a gift for his bride. The house has wide overhangs, simple lines, and a terrace that extends the full width. A second story and porch were in the original plans.

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109 South Eighth: is a landmark because of its historical and architectural significance. R.G. Emmond commissioned Frank Lloyd Wright to design it for him in 1892, and it is known to be one of Wright's very first designs. Various geometric shapes - the arch, triangle, rectangle, and circle - are present. Note the large leaded glass windows. Wright's interpretation of the Victoria/Queen Anne style demonstrates his famous tendency to "break up the box" of most home designs. Notice the complicated roofline, the irregular south facade, and the decorative treatment of the entrance. The integrity of this house has been maintained, with the only exterior alterations being the resurfacing of the lower brick and the porch enclosure.

The fact that the Emmond family has resided in this house since 1892 is noteworthy. R.G. Emmond lived here until his death; his daughter, Mrs. K. Thompson, then occupied the house. When Mrs. Thompson moved, her son, E.K. Thompson, took possession of the house. The fact that this house has continuous family ownership has been relevant to its inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. R.G. Emmond was the Village's forester and a Lyons Township school board member. An athletic field formerly at the northwest corner of Cossitt and Brainard Avenues was named for him.

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203 S 8th Ave – This home was designed by John Tilton in 1898 for Charles W Good. Mr. Good was a special agent for the German American Insurance Company. This is a Colonial Revival influenced home with clapboard siding. The hipped roof has extended eaves. The partial wraparound porch has full grouped classical column supports. This house also features a two story bay on the façade and west side as well as a stairwell bay on the south side. Notably, it was featured in the 1995 Sandra Bullock movie "While You Were Sleeping."

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339 S 9th Ave – Illinois Masonic Orphans Home – (now Meadowbrook Manor) – The Illinois Grand Lodge selected a tract of land in LaGrange to be the location for their New Orphans Home. On March 15, 1911, seventy eight children from all over Illinois moved into their new home on Goodman and 9th

Ave in LaGrange. Cholera and the Spanish Flu spread quickly thereafter creating more orphans. In 1919 two dormitories were erected to adjoin the main building as wings on the north and south side. Adjoining the south wing was a hospital. At its peak, the number of children under care in LaGrange grew to 314 in 1931. These wings and hospital were removed in 2018 when Meadowbrook Manor remodeled the space.

This ends walking Tour #1 sponsored by the La Grange Area Historical District. We hope that you have gained a greater appreciation of the homes in this area by taking this tour.

If you enjoyed this tour, please tell others and consider a donation to the LaGrange Area Historical Society. Your donations make it possible for us to continue to provide services like this tour to the community.

For information about membership, donations and other programming at the LaGrange Area Historical Society, please visit our website at www.lagrangehistory.org