

LaGrange Area Historical Society
Walking Tours of the LaGrange Historic District – Tour #4

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:

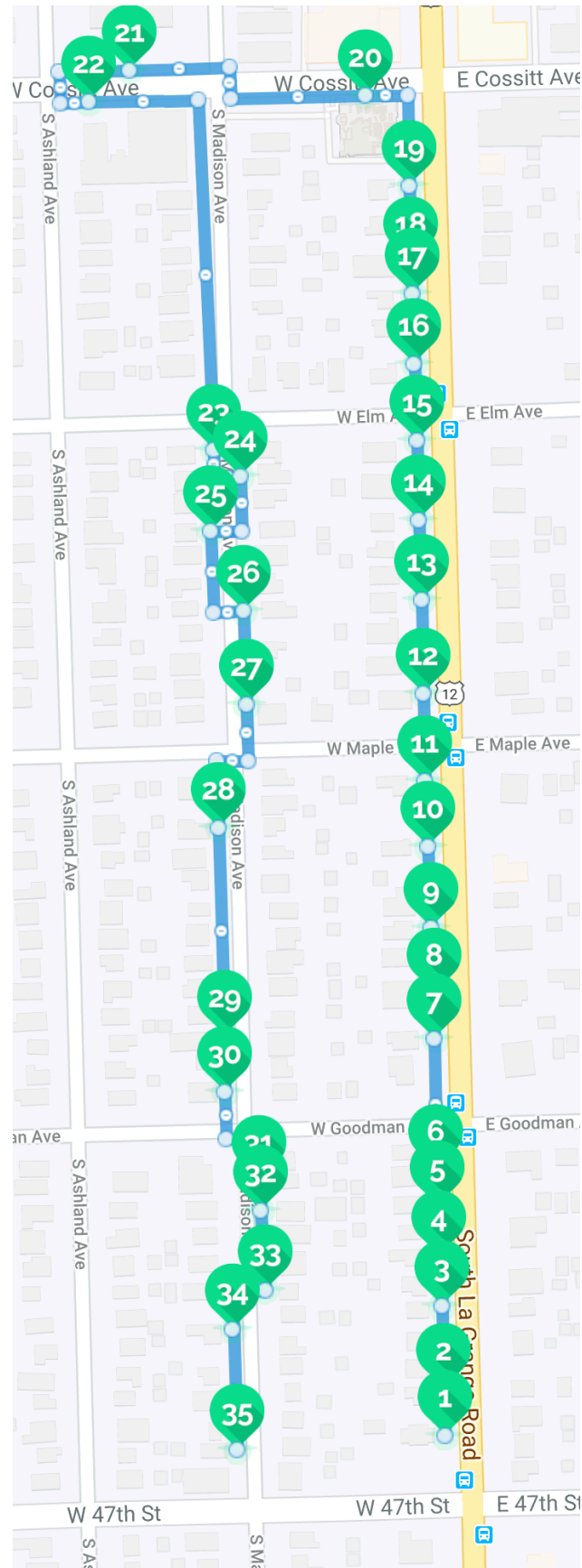
In its totality, the La Grange Historic District represents a period of architectural development of high artistic value and significance to the history of the region. Furthermore, the buildings have survived intact while continuing to be used for their original purpose.

Tour #4 presents Madison Avenue and a revised look at La Grange Road;

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.

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444 South La Grange Road was the farmhouse of Samuel Vial, whose farmland stretched eastward past East Avenue. Samuel Vial died in 1911 at the age of 92, and his son Joseph lived in the house until his death in 1949 at the age of 97.

The Vial family was active in more than farming and had a long history of service to the community as educators and as township school treasurer. Samuel Vial was a charter member of the Emmanuel Episcopal Church in 1874 and in 1881 helped from the First Congregational Church of La Grange. The Vials were also directors of the La Grange State Bank. Charles Vial once said, “My father donated land to countless organizations!”

The house remained in the Vial family for many years. It was purchased by the La Grange Area Historical Society in 1894 as a museum and research center.

The Samuel Vial House, built in 1874, is in the Italianate style, but has undergone extensive modifications. The house was remodeled in 1926-1927. The house was lowered and dormers were added. The living and dining rooms as you see them today are much the same as they were in 1874. The stained glass window on the north side of the house is the original. Inside the museum is a photograph of the house taken in 1889 which moved the original ornamentation associated with Italianate houses.



440 South La Grange Road was the home of Agnes and Samuel Vial, Jr. It is an American Foursquare. Note the hipped roof, dormer, and simple wood detailing on the porch gable.

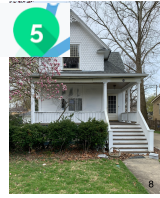


424 South La Grange Road is a vernacular which uses elements of the national style and the Queen Anne. The home has belonged to architect H.C. Tilden, Edward Walden, and Griswalk Van Dyke, who was the first local golfer to become a member of the La Grange Country Club’s “Hole-in-one-Club.”



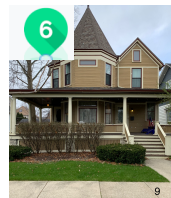
416 South La Grange Road is a simplified Queen Anne that once belonged to the family of Miss Grace Stone, a playmate of Marshall Field, Jr. Miss Stone’s half-sister, Miss Johnson, once had the honor of playing the piano for composer Franz Liszt. The owners include Basset Cadwallader, Richard Prescott, and W.E. Holton.

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408 South La Grange Road is the first of thirteen homes on this tour to have been cited as being of first architectural significance. It is a vernacular with Queen Anne/Victorian influences. Of particular interest are the decorative fishscale in the gable regions and ornamental window muntin on the first floor façade.

In 1892 the house belonged to Cornelia Richmond Harrison and her husband Thomas, at whose wedding David Lyman was an usher. Mrs. Richmond was the daughter of C.W. Richmond, one of the first settlers of La Grange and the man who personally provided and looked after the planting of the trees for which La Grange became famous. (More information about Mr. Richmond can be found in the material about 205 South Madison.)



404 South La Grange Road is an excellent example of Victorian/Queen Anne architecture and was once the home of Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Vial. Note the short, broad turret on the façade and the full-length, wraparound porch supported by classical columns.



340 South La Grange Road was built c 1886 and is a late Victorian. John Haviland, a member of the Bavarian family who manufactured Haviland China, and his family lived in this house from 1894-1960's.



334 South La Grange Road this house once belonged to Charles Horr and Marie Horr, who was president of the La Grange Women's Club and was active in charitable organizations. Daughter Louise married State Senator Arthur Sprague.

Once can see colonial, classical, and vernacular influences upon this house. The façade windows and front door sidelight are quite unusual.



320 South La Grange Road was the home of John Mavor, a prominent contractor who came to La Grange from his native Scotland with Peter Duncan McGregor. Both men played their native game of golf at the La Grange Country Club, which, at that time, was within walking distance. (The LaGrange Country Club was originally located in the SE corner of 47th and LaGrange Road.) Built in 1893, this is a late Victorian era house.



312 South La Grange Road This is an excellent example of the Victorian/Queen Anne style. Notice the two-story corner turret, full length wrap around porch with dentilwork cornice and fluted ionic column supports.



300 South La Grange Road This particular was designed by J.C. Llewellyn and became of the home of A.E. Cross in 1902. Mr. Cross became vice-president of the Chicago Board of Trade in 1918. Note the coach house with a gable roof and dormers.

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240 South La Grange Road was built in 1874 for David Lyman, one of the “founding fathers” of La Grange. Note the exaggerated detail detailing in the gables.



224 South La Grange Road This foursquare was once owned by Harry Tisdale, who in 1921 was convicted of having embezzled \$26,238 from his employers, Manufacturers’ Junction Railroad Company. Caught by Pinkerton’s, Tisdale was sentenced to 1-10 years in Joliet Prison.



212 South La Grange Road is a late Victorian that once belonged to Frank McGuigan, Jr., a regional engineer for the US. Railway Administration who attended the 1921 inauguration of President Harding. Mrs. McGuigan and her sister were the singer-whistlers who originated from the “Dolls Opera of Cinderella,” which appeared all over the U.S. and Canada.



200 South La Grange Road is a colonial revival-influenced vernacular that once belonged to Edward E. Gore, President of the Chicago Association of Commerce and Industry and of the American Institute of Accountants. In 1922 the Illinois Journal of Commerce called Gore a “genius in normalcy.” He was also president of the War Emergency Union of La Grange, and Mrs. Gore was president of the La Grange branch of the League of Women Voters. Mr. Gore helped coordinate the Manhattan Project and, in 1949, was appointed Chicago’s Deputy Coordinator of Civil Defense.



136 South La Grange Road was built in 1903 for Dr. Detweiller, whose office was located off the driveway in a small room opening onto the porch. Note the Prairie Style elements, such as the wooden beltcourse between the first and second stories and the diamond pane, leaded glass casement windows. Also lovely are the windows on the south side, which are decorated with a floral motif.

Through former owners were convinced the house had been designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, nor written proof of this has yet been discovered.

Other prominent owners include Mr. and Mrs. Frank Miles, who came to La Grange in 1893. Mrs. Miles worked for women’s rights and marched in suffragette parades in Chicago. Her husband was an associate for the meatpacker Philip D. Armour. Their son Marshall and grandson Marshall, Jr. managed the pioneer real estate firm of F.D. Cossitt Company.



130 South La Grange Road is a Queen Anne that once belonged to Walter M. Wood, a prominent educator and contribute to the Encyclopedia Americana. Note the Palladian first Palladian window in the front gable.

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124 South La Grange Road is known as the H.S. Mitchell house. Designed by E.H. Turnock, it was built in 1891 by F.D. Cossitt as a wedding gift for his daughter, who married Mr. Mitchell.

Notice the two-story corner turret with an ornamental finial at its peak. This massive tower is built of random ashlar stone. It and the heavy stone lintel over the windows give the house the “solid” look so characteristic of the Romanesque Revival style.



116 South La Grange Road belonged to L. Henry, a pioneer of Lyons Township, whose son Robert was one of the area’s best known farmers.



10 West Cossitt In 1896 the idea for a free public library came from the La Grange Women’s Club, whose members obtained donations of 100 books which became the Village’s first lending library. Later, railroad magnate Andrew Carnegie donated \$12,500 to erect a free public library in Lagrange in 1903, and a building opened in 1905.

The second La Grange Public Library opened in fall of 1968, heralded as the “Jewel of the Village” by local newspapers at the time. Over its lifespan, the Library nearly doubled its intended collection capacity in an attempt to meet the increasing demand for materials from the community. It became evident after the turn of the 21st century that a new building would be necessary altogether. The Library Board approved the construction of the current building in 2003. The new building was completed in 2007.



Cossitt School The original limestone building housing Cossitt School was torn down in 1921. The present, larger stone and brick structure possesses the rectangular turrets and spires of tudor-style architecture. Its stained glass windows, the work of Venetian artisans, portray a story of King John and a minstrel who would not sing.



First United Methodist Church of La Grange is one of the oldest recorded churches in the La Grange Area. The original church building was designed by E.R. Tunock in 1892 and dedicated in 1895. A new sanctuary, which houses a mosaic stained glass window, was built in 1950.



202 South Madison is the Queen Anne once owned by Alfred J. Cota, a recognized authority in railroad brakes. Notable details include the decorative tussing and shingles in the front gable and the large, stained-glass stairwell window on the north side.

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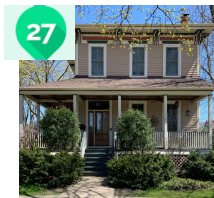
205 South Madison is a bungalow once owned by the prominent family of C.W. Richmond, one of the first settlers of La Grange and at one time the superintendent of schools. During his years involved with real estate, Richmond built the first brick house in the Village (at La Grange Road and Harris).



212 South Madison was the home of Edward E. Barrett, a Village trustee from 1907-1909. For nearly ten years he was in charge of the Mississippi River construction work for the U.S. government, as was the highest salaried individual in the service of the U.S. Government.



225 South Madison was the Queen Anne home of Judge E.B. Bushness, a descendant of David Bushnell, who invented the submarine in 1771. Esculine Thirsk was appointed in 1915 by President Wilson to be the official sponsor of the submarine tender “Bushnell.” When christened by Miss Bushnell, this submarine was the largest in the U.S. Navy.



241 South Madison was cited as being of first architectural significance to the Village. This Italianate boasts twelve-foot ceilings and many fireplaces; it was built in 1862. Notice the sandwich brackets and dentilwork on the cornice, the elongated windows, and the transom above the front door. And the stairway window on the north side.

The owner in 1931 was Mrs. Mable Tarrant. She and her daughter Victoria were editors of “College Chatter,” a long-running column in the La Grange Citizen.



312 South Madison is a Victorian with an elaborate sunburst motif panel in the gable with two variations in shingles. Owner F.K. Vial was president and member of the LT school board for twelve years. As president of the Griffin Wheel Company, he was known as the “Dean of the Chilled Iron Wheel Industry in the U.S., Europe, and Orient,” and held many patents in connection with the production of wheel. This house is an exemplary Queen Anne style.



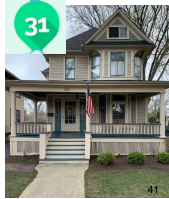
340 South Madison is an outstanding Victorian house. The porch and transoms are notable architectural details. The house has recently been covered by aluminum siding.

In 1949 Kenneth D. Fry, whose family owned the house since the beginning of the 20th century, became Director of the State Department’s International Broadcasting Division, which broadcasted Voice of America programs throughout the world. Before that time, he had been the youngest sports editor working for a Chicago newspaper.

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350 South Madison is an excellent craftsman-style house. Notice the cross gable roof, the three porches with tapered panel half-pier supports, and the triangular knee braces in the eaves of the gable.



405 South Madison exhibits high-quality elements of the Queen Anne, which include a fishscale belt course between the first and second story and an extended full front porch.



411 South Madison The Saxe Family of 411 and 120 South Madison were relatives of Mary Todd Lincoln, Abraham's wife. Mrs. Frances Drury Saxe was a member of LTHS's first graduating class in 1891.



423 South Madison is a rare La Grange Example of the Prairie Style. Especially of interest are the decorative treatment of windows on the second story and the casement windows.



424 South Madison has been recognized as a fine example of the Craftsman bungalow. Note the arched line of the eaves, as well as the decorative cornices under them.



444 South Madison was the home of Almon B. Stroger, who worked on a contrivance that revolutionized telephone communications. He is credited with the invention of the automatic switching system which enable people to make calls without going through an operator. In 1894 the Village granted Stowger a telephone franchise, and the company he formed built a system serving 52 telephones.

This ends walking Tour #4 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.

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