THE Goldfinch

Iowa History for Young People

Volume 15, Number 1 Fall 1993

Iowa Map of Homes

These homes are mentioned in this issue of THE GOLDFINCH.

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2. Log cabin, p. 9
3. Apartment building, p. 5
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7. Brucemore, p. 16
8. American Gothic House, p. 26
9. Pleasant Lawn School, p. 28

Mary F. Trafton

THE Goldfinch

Volume 15, Number 1
Fall 1993

EDPRESS

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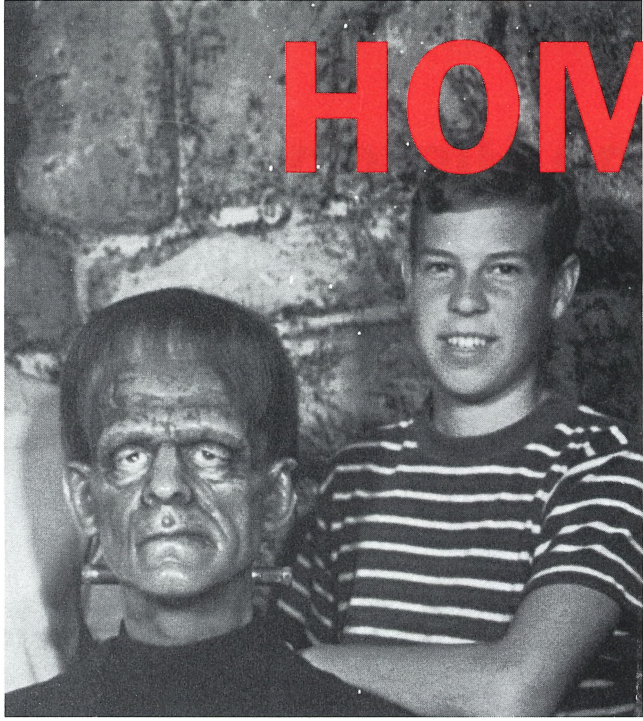
HOMES



When I was a kid I loved to get scared. I went to horror films, watched the Friday night "creature feature" on TV, and read creepy tales. As darkness deepened on long summer nights, my friends and I would swap ghost stories and dare each other to knock on the door of an abandoned house that we believed was haunted.

Why did I like getting scared? I loved the thrill of the chills. And I think there was another reason: ghost and fantasy stories opened a door into another world. There, my imagination was set free from the day-to-day drudgery of doing homework, taking out the garbage, and worrying about the zits on my face.

Like Ellen in the story on page 12, I sometimes wondered if a ghost lived in my house. It was cool to imagine all that invisible activity going on under my nose. Who knows? Maybe there's a ghost in *your* house!

GOLDFINCH fiction editor Steven Blaski, when he was 13, poses in 1969 with one of his favorite creatures, Frankenstein, at the Movieland Wax Museum in Buena Park, California.

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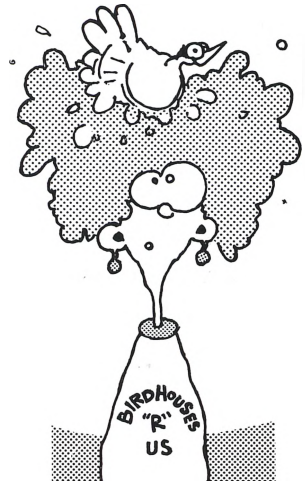


Mission Home History Search

Barbara Schmidt

In the late 19th century, railroad workers came to West Des Moines and built these homes.

Agent Goldfinch! It's time to put on your detective coat. Get out your magnifying glass. You're about to start on a new mission. Crack the history of Iowa homes—your own and your community's.

Believe it or not, homes are touchable, explorable clues to the story of our past. You can read about Iowa's history in books. But by studying homes you can see for yourself how people have lived over time.

Ever since people first lived in Iowa, they made homes. From the first Ioway Indian bark lodges and European-American log cabins, people needed a place to eat, rest, and sleep. Some homes were fancy, some plain, some big, some small. The town you live in or near probably has examples of many different kinds of styles. With a little reading, and a lot of exploring and looking, you can learn quite a bit about houses and the people who lived in them. Traveling to other towns or just going to school will be more interesting if you know about the architecture of homes you see along the way.

Say "home"

When you hear the word "home" what comes to mind? A building with lots of apartments, a one-family house in the suburbs, a farmhouse, a mobile home? They are all homes. Homes can be houses, but they also include these other kinds of places where

architecture: designing and planning buildings

you sleep, eat, hang out, pick up your room, do homework, watch television, read, and relax.

Okay, Agent Goldfinch, now that you know what homes are, your mission is to get a better sense of *your* community by reading and doing the activities in this issue of *The Goldfinch*.

Clue 2

Really *look* at the buildings in your town or nearby communities. The first thing a history detective needs to do is "look" at homes. Do they look the same? Make a photocopy of Discover Your Neighborhood on page 16 and take it with you on a walking tour. Circle all of the details you see and draw additional ones. When were the homes built? Ask the older members of the community. Or you can go to the library and do some research. The Home History Project on page 20 will give you a zillion ideas for ways to find out about homes. The article "Living History" on page 8 shows how farmhouses have changed and stayed the same over time. You'll get additional clues to help unravel the mystery of a home's history. How were rooms inside the home used over time?

Clue 1

Learn the words. Throughout this issue, you'll see words in red. Most of them have to do with architecture/homes. Two primo word games let you play with these new words

Clue 3

Find out about how homes are designed and built. Holly

Hamman, a Des Moines kid, interviews a well-known Iowa architect to find out how he designs homes. Then you can put together a famous Iowa home, the American Gothic house.

Clue 4

Read about saving buildings. They are valuable evidence to the past. Read about a group of kids from Mount Pleasant who got together to nominate their school, a teachers' house, and a barn for a special national award.

Clue 5

Have fun. Don't get too scared by the haunted house story on page 12. You can actually visit the house in Cedar Rapids.

(continued next page)

Barbara Schmidt

Homes come in all shapes and sizes—from the modern Iowa City house to the Clive apartment building.

Mission Home History Search

Agent Goldfinch, your final tip
Homes show you the desires, needs, and hopes of the people who built them and lived in them. They are full of clues to show us how life used to be and how it's changed. ■

Why homes change over time

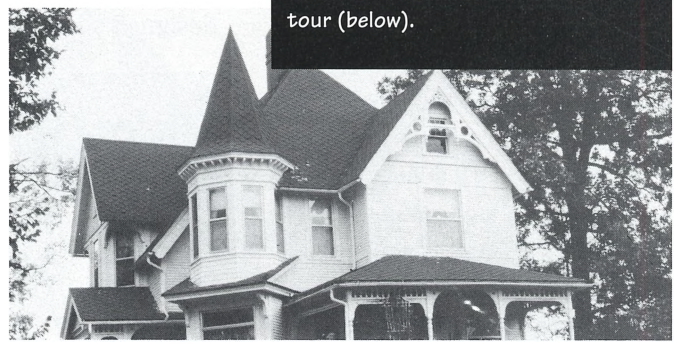
These three factors affect the way homes have been built.

❶ Climate/environment. It can get burning hot and icy cold here in Iowa. For that reason, Iowans have built homes that can take the heat, rain, snow, and cold. You won't find many year-round igloos here!

❷ Purpose. Are homes temporary or permanent? It depends upon how we live. The Ioway Indians lived in bark lodges that could easily be put up or taken apart. Today most of the homes you'll see are permanent buildings.

❸ Technology. It's another way of saying the kinds of tools, materials, and labor used to build homes. In the 19th century, Iowans used tools like axes and hand saws to work with logs. Later they more commonly used sawed lumber. ■

Architectural historian Molly Myers Naumann of Ottumwa takes kids and teachers on architecture walking tours. A student drew the sketch of the home she saw on a tour (below).



Molly Myers Naumann

Think of your hand as a town. Open your fingers. The knuckles and fingertips are suburbs. After World War II (1939-1945), a building boom took place throughout the United States. Many people moved to the outlying areas of cities. Apartment buildings, townhouses, mobile home courts, and one-family homes were and still are built on the rim of many Iowa towns.

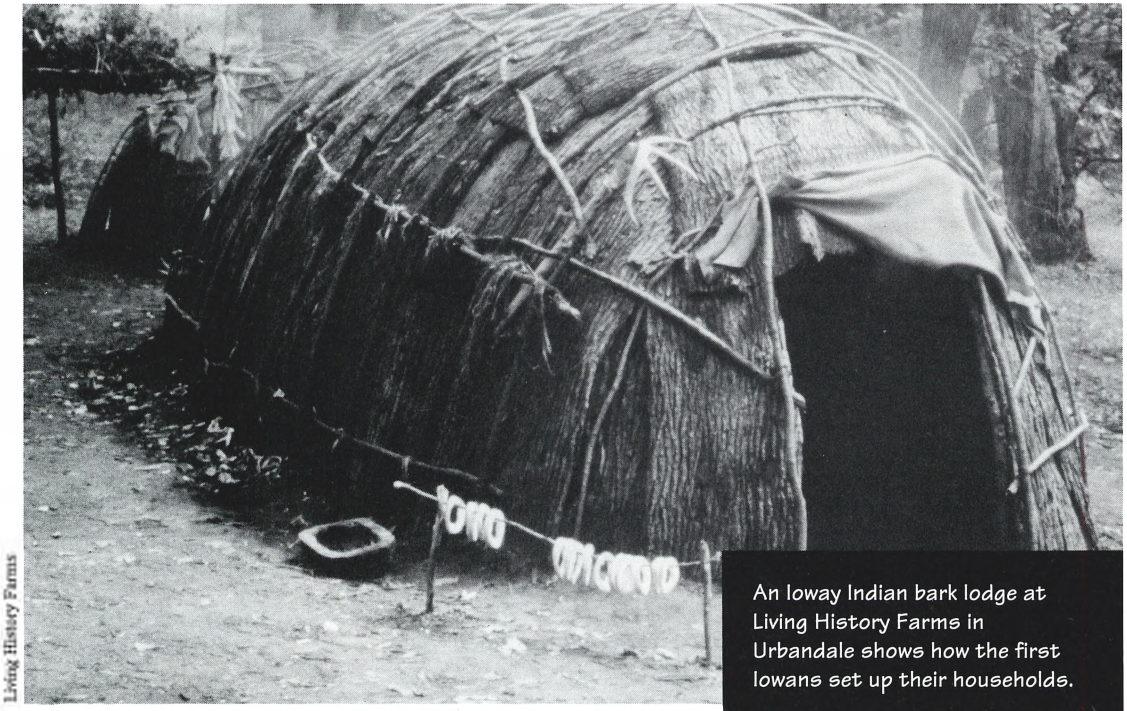
American Institute of Architects—Iowa Chapter

Living Homes

The Goldfinch visited Living History Farms in Des Moines to show you how farms have changed over time

By Susanna Ashton

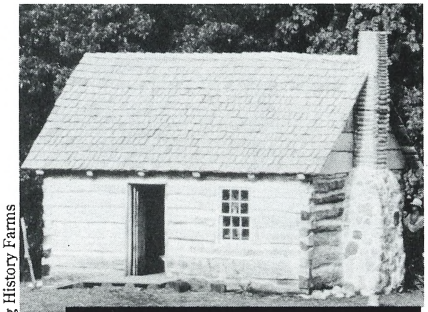
What does an Iowa farmhouse look like? You'll see a variety of shapes and sizes on big and small chunks of land. Iowans in the past farmed differently from the way they farm today. Modern machinery and global markets have created an industry out of farming. But growing food on the land has not changed all that much over the years. Farmers are still dependent upon nature and still need to live near their land. Living History Farms in Des Moines show how farms have both changed and stayed the same over the years.



Living History Farms

An Ioway Indian bark lodge at Living History Farms in Urbandale shows how the first Iowans set up their households.

The Ioway Indians were the earliest farmers in Iowa. They managed to farm for hundreds of years! Their "farmhouses" are actually small bark lodges built to shelter people from cold weather. These buildings



Living History Farms

Log cabins like this one were temporary homes until more permanent houses could be built.

were called *nahächi* (pronounced na-HAA-chee). The Ioway used these houses for only part of the year. After planting crops in the spring, most of the Ioway would leave to hunt game for several months and then return to help with the harvest. Some Ioway (usually the older people and the younger children) would stay at the *nahächi.* Six to ten people lived in each lodge. Living History Farms has two of these structures but often there would be groups of many more lodges together, creating an Ioway village.

The lodges were usually about the size of a mini-van. They were constructed out of bark, sticks, and mud. Unless it was especially cold outside, most of the day-to-day work would be conducted outside of the structure, but with a fire inside, the *nahächi* was warm to sleep and work in when necessary. During warmer weather people worked in groups outside to cook, prepare food, and do other chores.

When European Americans came to Iowa in the 1830s, their style of farming was more of a year-round affair. Although some extra crops were sold, the first couple of years were spent just supporting the household by growing food. The basic pioneer farms included several outbuildings, (the pioneer farm shown here has a hen house, a barn, a corn crib, and a smokehouse for drying and preserving food). Sometimes homes were made out of logs and sometimes out of sod. The farm shown here was typical of many early pioneer farms in western Iowa in 1850. Log cabins

(continued next page)

Living in a Log Cabin

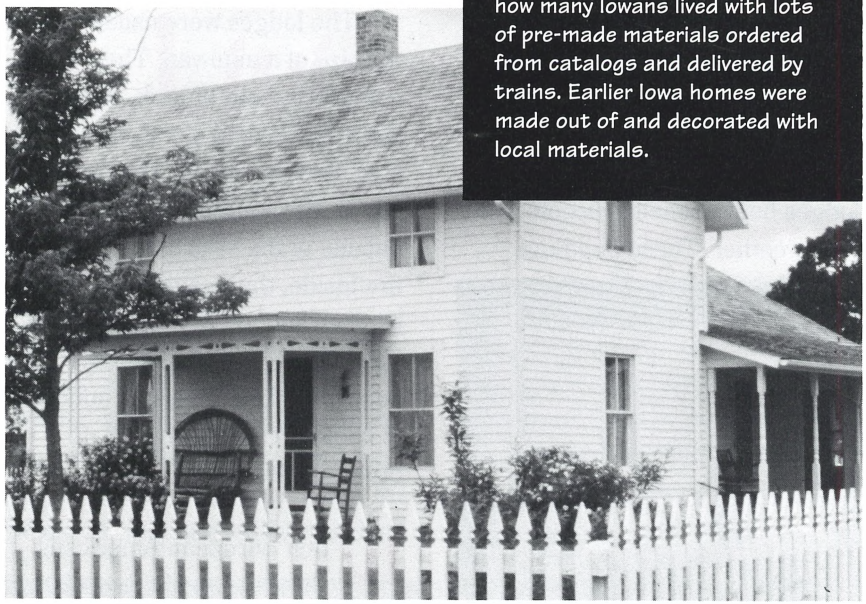
I share my home with some animal pests. In my log cabin near Carlisle, Iowa, the spaces between the logs hold a number of tiny mouse skulls. The mice carried hickory nuts into the walls to eat in dry comfort. Maybe some of the mice ate so many nuts they were too fat to get back out again!

The dining room and a small bedroom of my house are built of logs. These two rooms are actually a log cabin! The cabin was built sometime between 1850 and 1870 by an early Iowa settler. In the 125 years since then, rooms have been added one at a time. Now the original log cabin sits in the middle of a larger farmhouse.

Many log cabins and houses still survive today, though some may be hidden within the walls of farmhouses—like mine. Looking at the temporary log cabins and more permanent log houses of European-Americans provides us with clues about how people lived in Iowa in the 1800s.

My two log-cabin rooms together are about the size of a one-car garage. With logs the size of telephone poles, my cabin was probably built by a group of people at a house-raising. No person would have been able to lift one of these huge logs alone. The neighbors would get together and put up a log cabin. They had no power tools, no nails, no tractors, or other equipment to lift the logs into place. But they did have ropes!

Log cabins weren't airtight, even with the mortar in place. It was quite common to paper over the logs—but not with wallpaper like you'd use in your house today! That would have cost too much. My cabin, like many others, was covered with several layers of newspaper. People always had something to read!
—Sondra Feldstein



The 1900 pioneer farm shows how many Iowans lived with lots of pre-made materials ordered from catalogs and delivered by trains. Earlier Iowa homes were made out of and decorated with local materials.

planks: wide, thick boards

like the one on page 9 were usually considered only temporary buildings. Most farmers hoped to build larger and more solid buildings after they saved money for several years. This building has a floor made out of planks from a saw mill, but it was also common to have a floor made out of dirt or logs which had been sawed in half. This home was basically one big room with a loft above where the children slept.

Farmhouses around 1900 looked similar to the earlier style of houses, but since styles of farming had changed, so did the buildings. Instead of building their homes with rough logs, many families purchased planks of wood from local sawmills. Several items in and on the house were pre-made or manufactured. Notice the dinner bell in the front yard. It probably would have been bought at a local store or ordered from a catalog. In this home there is a parlor, a kitchen, a pantry, a back kitchen/work area, a front bedroom and two upstairs bedrooms. This farm also has several typical outbuildings: a barn, a corn-crib, a hog house, a chicken house, a machine shed, and an outhouse.

Turn-of-the-century farmhouses were often bigger than houses from the 1850s. Sometimes more than one generation of a family lived together in a home.

Ask Yourself

1. **What are the similarities and differences between these three structures?**
2. **What things have stayed about the same in the three homes? What are the biggest changes?**
3. **How has your home changed since you have lived there?**

Iowa's Homeless Kids

Imagine for a minute what it must be like not to have a home at all. There would be no living room in which to watch TV. No refrigerator to raid after school. No phone to talk on with friends. No bed to sleep in. No furnace or fans to keep you comfortable when the weather is unpleasant. And no special place to go to just to feel safe and "at home."

Kids make up 50 percent of Iowa's homeless. Recently, experts estimated that more than 8,950 kids in Iowa are without homes and the number is growing fast. That is a number about the size of the population of Decorah. According to the Iowa Coalition for Housing and the Homeless, at least 16,111 Iowans (kids and adults) are homeless. Some people say that the number is really much higher, but it's hard to pinpoint exactly because only the number of homeless people that go to shelters can be counted.

Homeless children can be found throughout the Midwest and United States. Artwork by homeless children who lived at a shelter in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, appears on a T-shirt .

There are many reasons people become homeless. Rent prices go up, wages go down, and fewer jobs are available. Sometimes federal or state programs to help the homeless get cut.

There are lots of ways to help homeless people in Iowa and across the nation. Many groups have fund raisers that you could help with, or you could start your own fund raiser and donate the money you raise to a local homeless shelter. You could also write to your state or U.S. Representative or Senator and ask him/her to support bills that would provide help for homeless people.

—Jen Guttenfelder

THE HAUNTED LIBRARY

The library at Brucemore is a cozy place, but one night Ellen saw something terrifying.

cat's meow: 1920's term for "cool"

By Jen Guttenfelder

Ellen Douglas fidgeted in the big leather chair, and leaned her elbows on the desk. The wide desk and tall chair dwarfed Ellen and made her look like a little girl, even though she was 14 years old. Ellen chewed on the end of her pencil and twisted her newly bobbed hair. She was stuck on her last algebra problem. As soon as she finished, she had promised to roller-skate in the hall with her younger sister Barbara. Ellen thought roller-skating was the cat's meow. Barbara liked to think that she was modern girl of the 1920s because she knew how to roller-skate.

George Douglas, their father, sat in his favorite armchair, reading the newspaper. Ellen loved to study in the cozy library with its tall bookcases and long smooth mantel with two big blue vases above the fireplace. Ellen held her chin in her hands as she let the flames in the fireplace hypnotize her.

"Ellen, stop daydreaming and finish your lessons," Father said, as he folded the newspaper and left the room.

Just as Ellen was about to answer her algebra problem, she heard a hollow scraping noise. Even though it was soft, the sound made her jump as if a cannon had just gone off outside the window. Ellen froze as she watched the tall vase on the right end of the mantelpiece slowly slide toward the other vase on the left.

Slapping her book shut, she flew up the stairs to tell Barbara what had just happened.

They didn't skate that night. Instead they huddled together in the nursery whispering about what could have made the vase scoot across the mantel all by itself.

study: a room to work and study in

The next evening when it was time for Ellen to do her homework, she protested.

"Father, can't I do my history lesson in the study with you, *please*?" begged Ellen.

"Not tonight, Ellen," said Father. "I've got a very

important business meeting and I can't be interrupted." Ellen could see that there was no changing his mind.

"All right, Father," Ellen whispered. She went back to the library and began her homework. Suddenly Ellen heard a THUD behind her. The word she was writing suddenly turned into a scribble as she whirled around to find that a heavy book had just fallen off of a shelf. She stood up to put it back. Once the book was back on the shelf, Ellen turned to go back to the desk, and an icy cold breeze blew her papers to the floor. Ellen's heart pounded as she picked up the papers. She slipped behind the closed heavy drapes to make sure the window was closed.

"Is anyone there?" Ellen whispered. Another chilly breeze answered. Ellen felt trapped in the small space between the closed window and the heavy curtains.

As she felt for an opening in the drapes, a cold blast blew her hair.

Ellen screamed and desperately tried to escape, but she was caught in the drapes. She clutched at the drapes and tried to run, but got nowhere. Instead the drapes tumbled down. She lay in a tangled mess on the floor when Mother, Father, and Barbara rushed into the library.

"What is going on here?" demanded Father.

"Oh, Father," cried Ellen. "A book flew off the shelf, and my papers blew off the desk, and I felt a ghost behind the curtains. And last night I saw the vase move across the mantelpiece. Oh, Mother, I'm so frightened," Ellen said, trying to untangle herself from the drapes.

"Ellen, your imagination is out of control. The mantelpiece in the library is just a little slanted, that's all," said Father as Mother comforted Ellen. "And just to stop any rumors, I'll get the carpenter's level to prove it." Father marched out to the shed to get the tool.

Ellen Douglas, when she was a young girl

Father returned and placed the level on the mantel. The little bubble came to rest right in the middle of the tube. The mantel was not slanted after all.

"Father, does this mean that there is a ghost in the library?" Ellen asked.

"Absolutely not!" Father said firmly. "This doesn't prove anything. I'll wire for a scientist to come out and look over the house. I'm sure he will find our house free of ghosts."

A week later, a ghost buster from Chicago made a special trip to Brucemore at Father's invitation. The family met him at the front door.

"Thank you for coming, Mr. Peabody," Father said. "I would like you to inspect the entire house and report to me anything unusual you find, if there is anything unusual," said Father. "I would like your best

carpenter's level: tool to measure how straight something is

THE HAUNTED LIBRARY

scientific opinion."

Have you experienced or noticed anything unusual?" asked Mr. Peabody.

"Yes!" piped Ellen.

"I haven't," said Father.

Ellen and Barbara squirmed uncomfortably.

It took Mr. Peabody all morning to inspect the house. At noon, Mr. Peabody gave his report to the family.

"Well, Mr. and Mrs. Douglas, you certainly have a beautiful home," said Mr. Peabody. "And I have found nothing unusual at all."

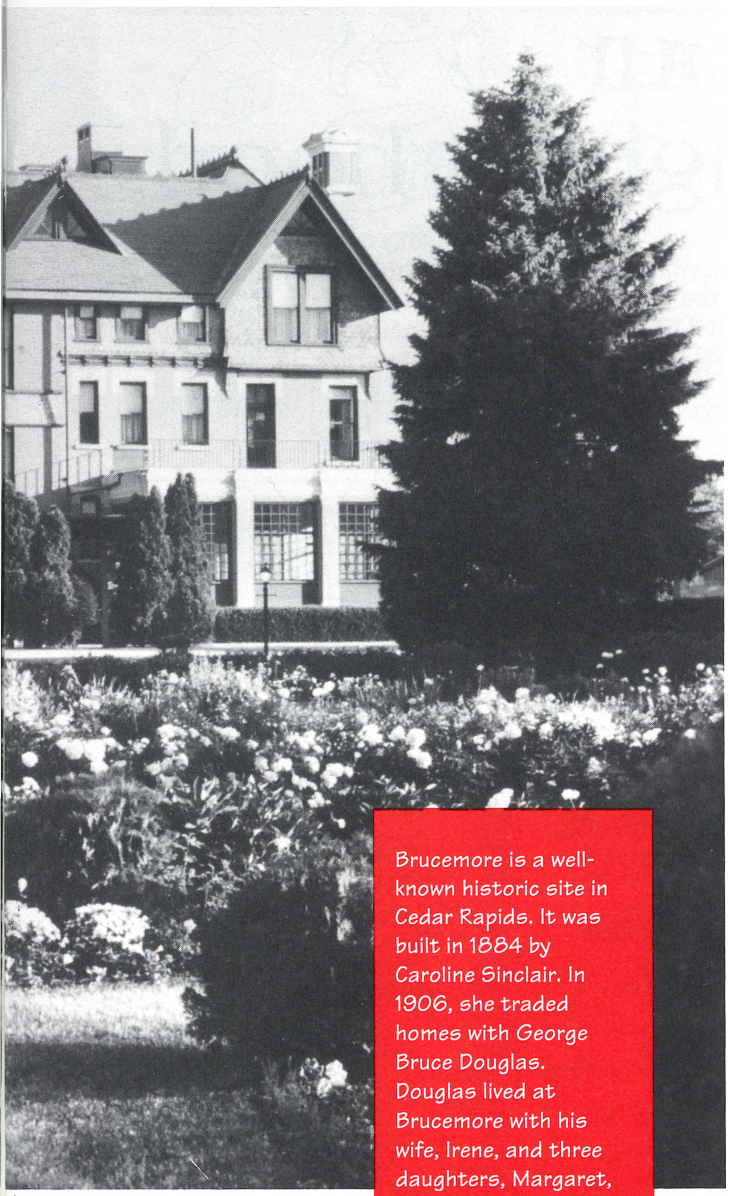
"A-ha!" exclaimed Father. "I knew it," he smiled.

"Except," said Mr. Peabody, "in the library." Father and Mother looked shocked. Ellen and Barbara gasped.

"There seems to be a rather unusual and unnatural atmosphere in your library, Mr. and Mrs. Douglas. I can't explain it exactly, but I think something is wrong in there. I'd like to stay and do a few experiments to determine just what or who it is," said Mr. Peabody. Barbara stared at Mr. Peabody as if he was a ghost himself. Ellen's stomach fluttered.

"There will be no experiments in the library!"

Photos from Brucemore



Brucemore is a well-known historic site in Cedar Rapids. It was built in 1884 by Caroline Sinclair. In 1906, she traded homes with George Bruce Douglas. Douglas lived at Brucemore with his wife, Irene, and three daughters, Margaret, Ellen, and Barbara. In 1981, Brucemore was opened to the public.

exclaimed Father, turning red. And with that he marched Mr. Peabody out to the car and drove him to the train station.

After that, Ellen did her homework upstairs with Barbara. And no one in the family—not even Father!—liked to linger in the library alone.

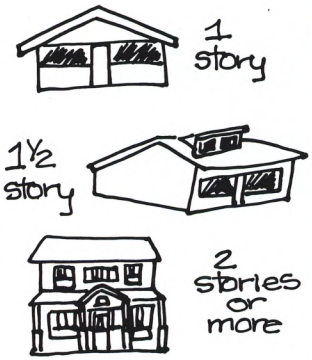
PS. The tale of a ghost in the library at Brucemore is just that—a tale. I got the idea to create this story after reading a book that Ellen Douglas wrote when she was grown-up. No one else in Ellen's family ever said anything about a ghost in the library. Ellen was known for her wild imagination and ability to tell a good story.

Discover Your Neighborhood

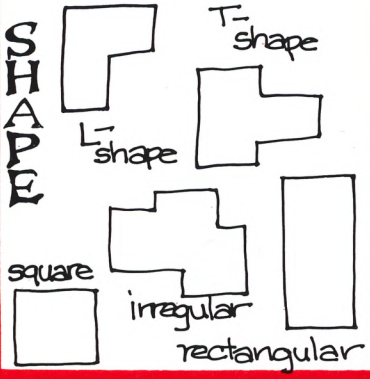
Take a walking tour of your own neighborhood or a favorite neighborhood with a photocopy of these pages. Where are the homes located? How tall are they? What shape? Can you identify the house type? Check out the roofs, materials, and windows. Circle the details that you see. You may want to draw additional details on a separate sheet of paper.

PLACE

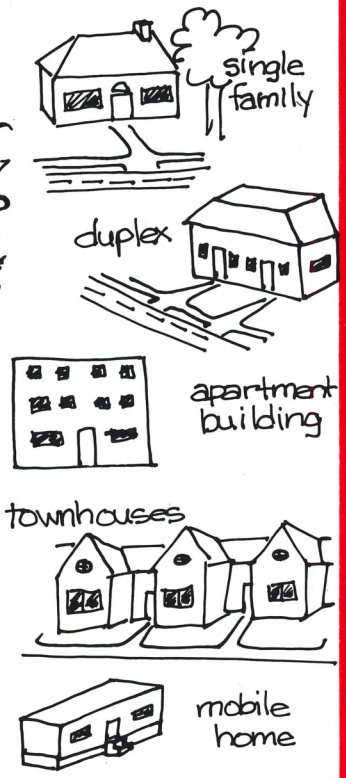
HEIGHT



SHAPE



TYPES

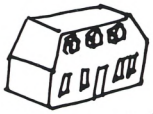


Art by Tory Pomeroy

ROOFS

gable

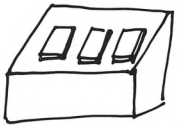
gambrel


mansard

hip

irregular

flat


skylights or solar panels

brackets under eaves

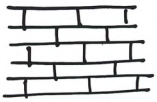
roofing materials

slate

tile

shingles

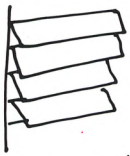
MATERIALS

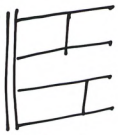

brick

stone

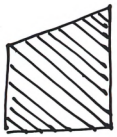
stucco

concrete block


clapboard


flush (smooth)

shingles


diagonal

combination of types

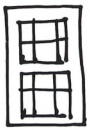
brick ☐

stone ☐

wood ☐

other ☐

WINDOWS


6 over 6

6 over 1

arched

Palladian

paired

bay

fanlight

dormer

circular

casement

single pane

picture

corner

VISITING AN ARCHITECT

AN IOWA KID INTERVIEWS A BUILDING DESIGNER

Doug Wells always wanted to be an architect. As a child, he liked to draw, play with Lincoln Logs, and tear apart old toasters to see how they were put together. He followed his childhood dream and today owns an architectural firm in Des Moines.

Holly Hamman, 11, also knows something about how buildings are put together. As a fifth grader at Hillis Elementary School in Des Moines, she learned about how buildings are built through her school's partnership with a local construction firm.

"We learned about the tools builders use, how they lay out the blueprint, and what they do to be safe on the job," said Holly. "But I've never met an architect, and I'm not really sure what they do."

To solve the mystery, Holly and *The Goldfinch* visited Doug Wells's office—a renovated brick house in Des Moines—so Holly could interview Doug herself. Here are some of the things Holly discovered.

renovated: restored, to make like new

Holly: What exactly do you do?
We are hired by clients to manage construction projects. One part of managing each project is designing a building—that's the most fun part. But there are a lot of other things we have to do to manage the whole process—such as listening carefully to what the client wants, making sure the design fits their budget, hiring a contractor, watching the construction to make sure it follows the laws.

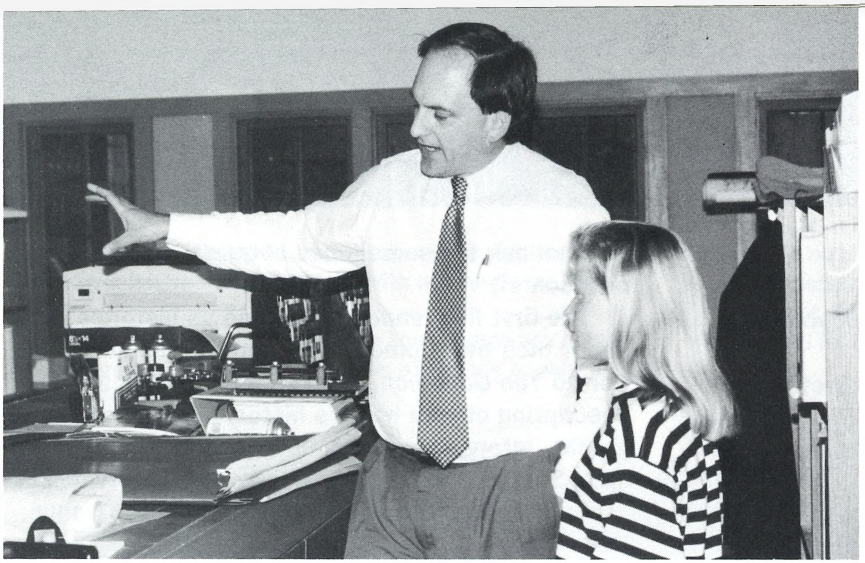
Holly is the daughter of Shari Hamman and Bob Hamman, both of Des Moines. Holly said she never thought about being an architect—she's leaning toward a career in the medical field. But she loves to draw, and took cartooning lessons at the Des Moines Art Center last summer.

What kinds of buildings do you design?
We specialize in buildings like churches, schools, college buildings, hospitals, nursing homes, and retirement communities.

Do you design or fix up homes?
Two-thirds of the work we do on homes is renovating—working with an existing house or adding an addition. About a third of it is designing a new house. That is a small part of our business now. When I first started my own business, I did a lot of homes. But now we're doing more and more commercial projects.

When you're working on a home, what's the first thing you do?
I listen very carefully to what my clients tell me they want. In my business listening is a big deal. If I don't listen carefully, I'll have to go back and redesign it. It's a fun challenge—kind of a game for me—to see if I can listen and ask

commercial: having to do with business



STORY AND PHOTOS BY
MILLIE FRESE

Douglas Wells's advice to kids interested in being architects: Learn how to use a computer! Much of the actual drawing is now done on screen. He says it's more accurate than drawing by hand, although he can still produce a drawing faster by hand.

enough questions during the first meeting so I don't have to change the design.

Do you have to be an artist to be an architect?

No, but it's helpful. There's a lot of art involved in making a beautiful building. Buildings have decoration, color, and use of light. . . .We want to make our buildings memorable. . . that makes people happy.

How much of your job is the creative part—coming up with ideas and designs—and how much is following through with the job?

Maybe 10 percent of the time I spend is the creative part. But we don't get to see the idea unless we follow through with it. Unless we do our jobs. There's a goal—and the goal is to get the building built the way the client wants it and the way we want it.

As the business owner, I probably spend a third of my time trying to find more projects, interviewing for projects, or putting information together for a project to be considered.

How many hours a day do you work?

I got here at 6:30 this morning to get ready for a meeting, and I'll end the day by going to a city council meeting to present a project. I'll get home around 8:30 tonight—that's a typical day. But it's not work—it's fun. ■

Home History Project

You're a detective.

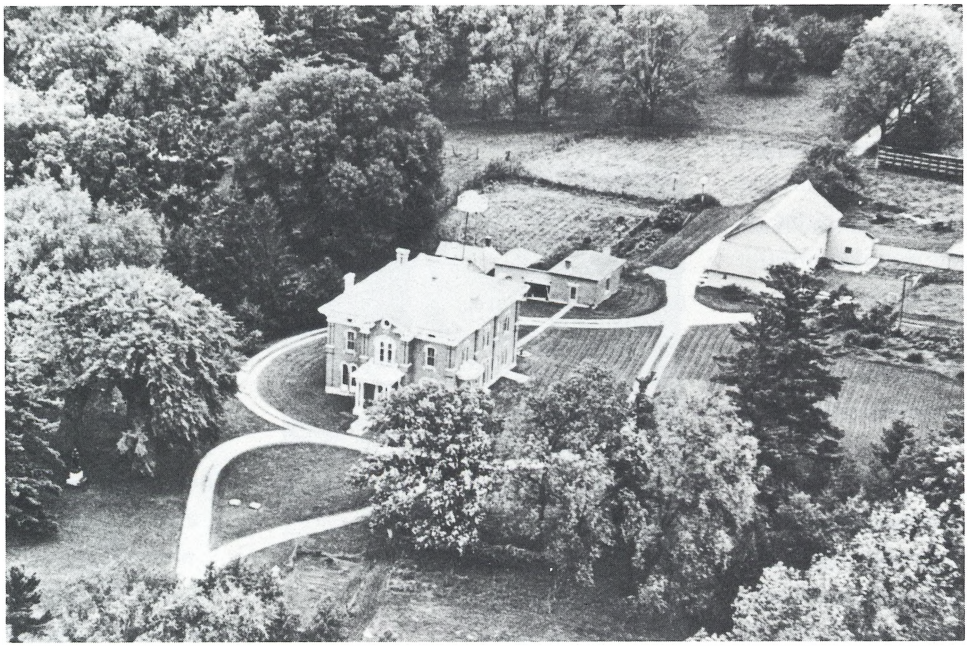
Here's your mission:

Find out all you can about the history of your own home.

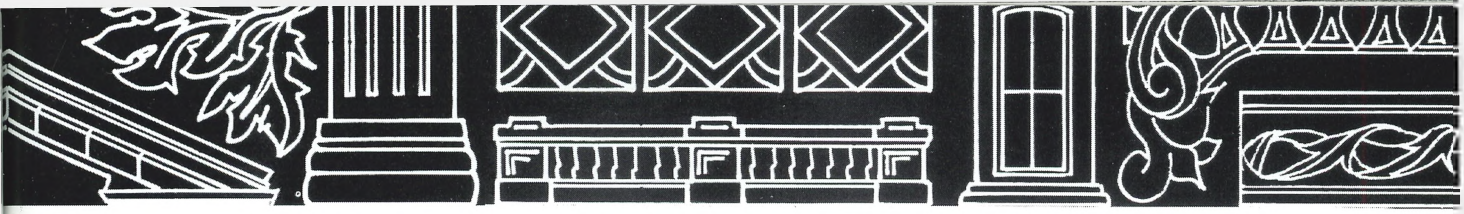
To help you, The Home History Project highlights a famous Iowa home, Montauk. It's a historic site owned by the State Historical Society of Iowa in Clermont.

The following three pages provide clues to help you uncover the history of the house. (Remember, you can ask the same kinds of questions about your own home!)

The first five readers who send us histories about their own homes will receive a free subscription to *The Goldfinch*. Send us at least a one-page description of your home's history using photographs, interviews, maps, newspapers, and drawings. Send to: Home History Project, *The Goldfinch*, State Historical Society of Iowa, 402 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, Iowa 52240-1806.



High on a hill above the northeastern Iowa town of Clermont, stands a large red brick mansion. It was built in 1874 by William Larrabee, Iowa's 12th governor, and his wife Anna Appelman Larrabee. The home is now a state historic site. The Larrabee's daughter, Anna, lived at Montauk after her parents' deaths, until she died at age 96 in 1965. Thousands of schoolchildren and tourists visit the mansion every year. Unlike most historic homes, it is preserved with furniture and objects that either belonged to the family when they lived there. The photo above shows a bird's-eye view of the house and surrounding buildings.



When you were a little kid, no matter where you lived, did you draw a house using a square with a triangle for the roof?

If you look carefully, you'll see that homes are not just squares and triangles. All kinds of shapes appear on homes. To be a good home history detective you gotta SEE your details!

Look at this photo of Montauk. Circle all of the shapes and features you can find.

Can you find?

1. a circle
2. a square
3. a rectangle
4. a triangle
5. an arch
6. a balcony
7. a column or pillar
8. a lightning rod
9. a porch

Ask Yourself

1. How do shapes influence the way buildings look?
2. What shapes are in the building you live in?

If you visit Montauk today, much of the house looks like it did at the turn of the century. Like many historic homes, the furniture and family possessions have been preserved. But sometimes it's hard to imagine people living in the rooms.

Look at these two photographs to find clues about what kinds of activities the Larrabee family might have done in each of these rooms. Circle three activities in each photograph that the family could have done here 100 years ago. Answers on page 30.

1. Rock a baby to sleep
2. Listen to a CD
3. In-line skate
4. Play the piano
5. Play Nintendo
6. Have a recital

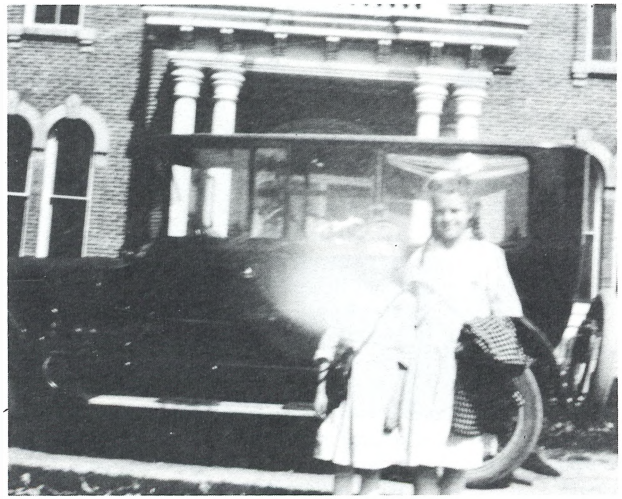
1. Wave a flag
2. Sleep
3. Read a book
4. Light a lamp
5. Talk on the phone
6. Play on a computer

Ask Yourself

1. What are the clues that helped you decide what activities took place in each room?
2. List five things you can do in your room.

Sometimes its hard to imagine how people lived in a historic home, especially if it is now a museum like Montauk. Luckily, we have a lot of photographs of the house.

Do you take pictures of your house or room so that you can remember it? Probably not. Usually people take photographs of the *people* who live in a house. People pictures can tell you a lot about the house that they live in, even though the house is in the background. Look at these photographs of the people who once lived at Montauk. What do they tell you about their house?



Ask Yourself

❶ Do you think these girls live in this house? Are they just visitors? What are the clues that would tell you?

❷ Do you think the picture is supposed to be of the girls, the car, or the house? Why?

There are lots of other ways to discover things about a home without photographs. You can look at newspapers, letters, or diaries. You might want to interview the former owner or talk to people who have lived in the neighborhood for a long time. Ask them questions about what your house used to be like, who lived there, or how your house and the neighborhood have changed over time.

Read the following two excerpts about events at Montauk from a newspaper and see what you can find out about the house.

This is part of an article about Julia Larrabee's wedding on August 10, 1890. During this time, weddings were often held in the bride's family home, no matter how rich or poor the family was.

> The grand old family home, Montauk, near Clermont, was decorated in every part with masses of beautiful flowers mostly gathered from the home lawn. Montauk Hill, on which the house stands, [has] a view of one of the finest scenes in all northeastern Iowa. . . .The grand staircase, where the bridal party descended as from a fairy land above, was decorated with [beautiful flowers] . . . The happy pair [stood] in the large bay window, which was lined with evergreens and flowers. When the last words were said . . . the window opened, and the couple was covered with roses.

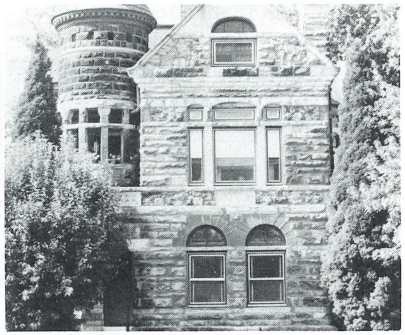
Ask Yourself

❶ Instead of the aisle, what did the bride walk down?

❷ Why do you think people don't get married very often at home today?

What's What

Here are three kinds of building styles you can see in Iowa. Famous architects designed two of them. The other is just kind of strange. Keep your eyes open for these home styles sprinkled around Iowa.



What: The spirit of H.H. Richardson. He's not a ghost, but a famous architect from Boston, Massachusetts, who lived from 1839 to 1886. Although most of his designed buildings were actually built in Chicago or on the East Coast, his designs influenced buildings throughout Iowa and the Midwest in the 1880's and 1890's.
What to look for: Heavy rock walls, arches over windows, fancy carved stone around and above windows.
The style: Richardson's style became so famous it was named after him—it's a tongue twister: Richardsonian Romanesque (some say it: Richards Simmons-style!).
What makes it special: Architects used local materials from Iowa to build Richardson-like homes and other kinds of buildings here.
Where to find it: To see some Richardsonian buildings, visit one of these Iowa towns: Sioux City, Ida Grove, Cedar Falls, Dubuque, and Davenport (just to name a few.) The photo above is the Edinger House in Davenport built in 1890.

What: Prairie School of architecture. You can't go to this school. It's a building style made famous by Frank Lloyd Wright, a famous architect, who lived from 1867 to 1959. The word "prairie" symbolizes the Midwest.
What to look for: Many of the homes are horizontal with long, flat or slightly angled roofs. Many have wide eaves (the roof parts that hang over the edge of a house) and lots of windows.
The style: Wright wanted his homes to echo the broad, flat prairie. His designs were most popular in the 1900's through 1920's, then came back in style in the 1940's and 1950's.
What makes it special: Prairie School homes are designed to fit the environment. For example, the wide eaves shield snow. The windows let in sun for light and warmth. Inside, there are big open spaces for the dining and living areas.
Where to find it: All over the United States, although Wright is especially known for his work in Chicago, Illinois, and its suburb, Oak Park. Several Prairie School homes are in Iowa. You can see them in Mason City, Sioux City, Des Moines, Clear Lake, and Newton.

What: Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's a house made of steel! It's called a Lustron house. About 2,400 were assembled in the United States between 1948 and 1949. This was the time when many people moved from cities to the new and growing suburbs.
What to look for: Little houses made of big shiny steel squares in gray, yellow, or aqua.
The style: The creator Carl Stradlund borrowed millions of federal dollars for the project. He leased a defense plant in Chicago to make the Lustron houses. Each house was shipped in 3,300 parts in a single truck and bolted together when it got to its yard.
What makes it special: They never needed painting. Lustron homes were made for only two years because they became too expensive to make on the spot. Their popularity didn't last long. But just imagine living in a house of steel! You could decorate your room with magnets.
Where to find it: At least 112 Lustron homes can be found in Iowa. You can see some of them in Des Moines, Clarion, Iowa City, and Webster City.

the Building Blocks Game

When you were a little kid, you probably played with building blocks or Legos. Use your past experience and new knowledge about architecture to do some of your own construction. Use the pile of bricks below to finish building nine new words from this issue. Answers on page 30.

Hint: ▬ means a combination block fits here.

Find these words:

ARCHITECT
RICHARDSONIAN
RENOVATE
PRAIRIE STYLE
ARCHITECTURE
BLUEPRINT
LUSTRON
CONTRACTOR
PRESERVATION

Make a House

by Kay Chambers

You can re-create the famous house in the background of Iowa artist Grant Wood's painting *American Gothic* by making a shoe-box model.

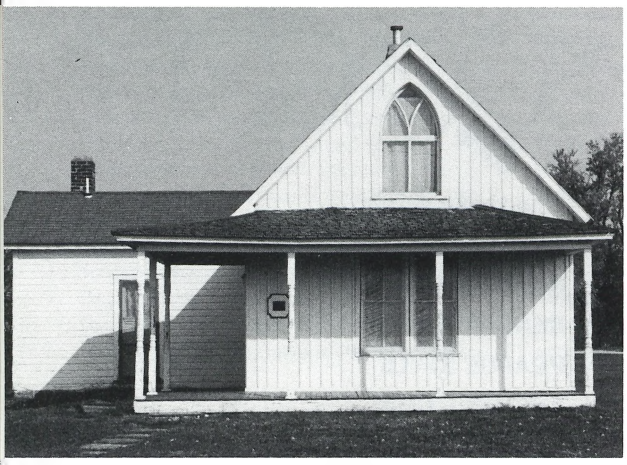
You need:

1 shoe box
scissors
glue or tape
2 sheets blue construction paper
1 sheet green construction paper
6 round toothpicks
colored pencils or crayons
(access to a photocopy machine)

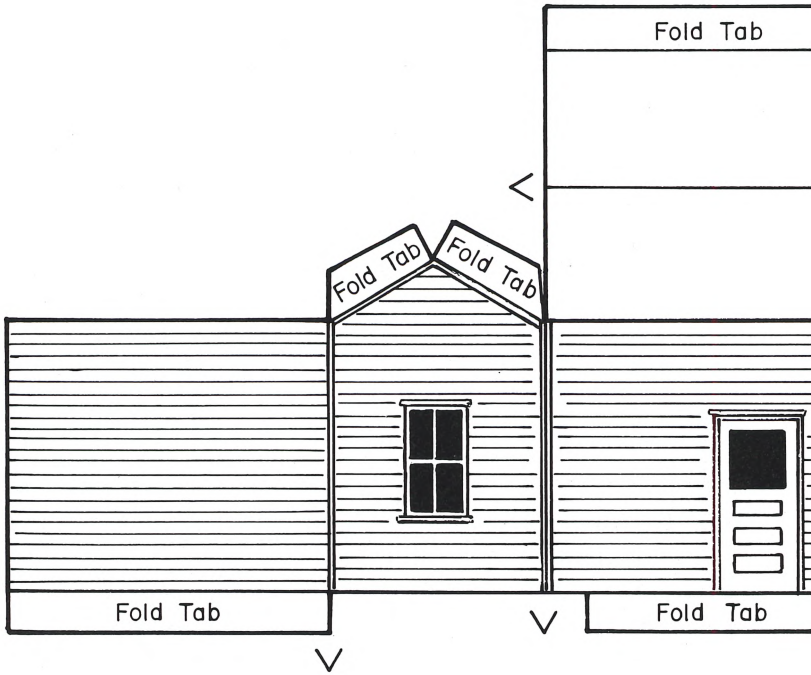
Steps:

❶ Make a photocopy of the illustrations on these two pages.
❷ Cut out the house and porch roof.
❸ Fold along lines marked V. One line marked VL must be folded toward you to make the L shape of the house.
❹ Glue or tape the roof tabs to the house sides.
❺ Fold under porch roof and position it around the house corner. Glue one tab to the front and one to the side of the house so that the top of the porch roof is straight along the dotted lines.
❻ With shoe box on its side, glue blue paper to represent sky and green paper to represent grass.
❼ Center house against the long side of shoe box. Fold under tabs and blue them to the bottom of the box.
❽ Cut and glue toothpicks to the bottom of the box and the porch to make pillars as shown in the photograph.
❾ Color the flowers and cat pieces. Cut, fold, and glue as shown to make stand-up figures.

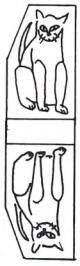
The original American Gothic house in Eldon, Iowa.

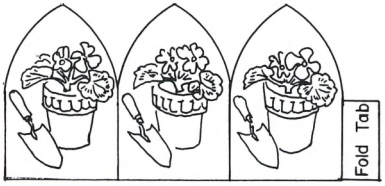


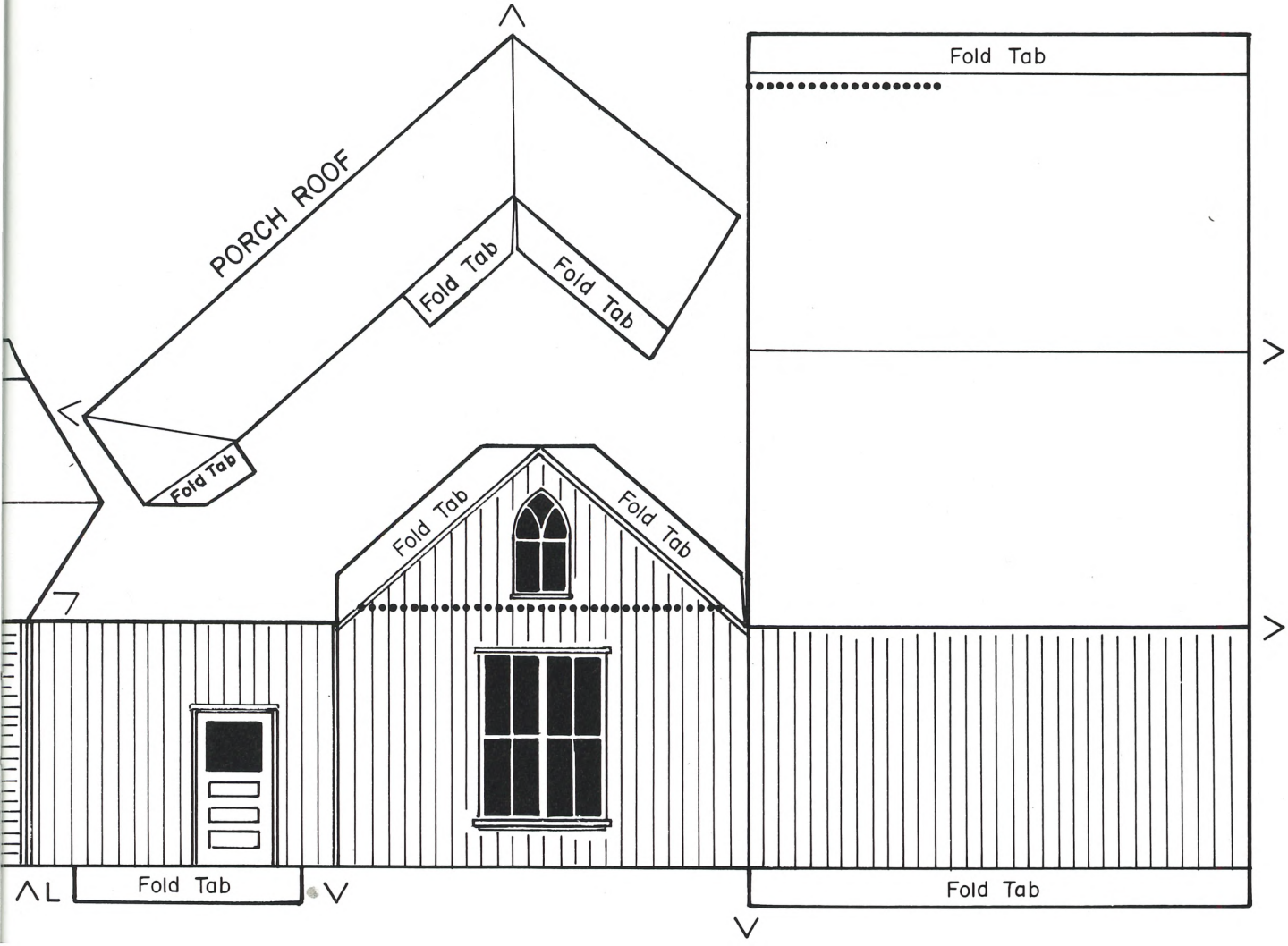
Steven Ohrn

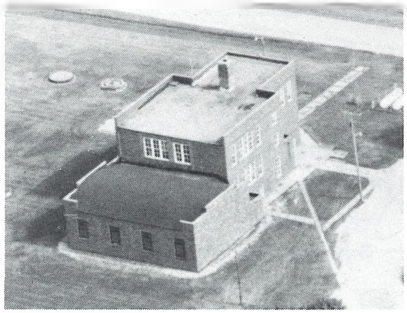


Old Places IN IOWA









HISTORY MAKERS

Schools may be common enough, but Pleasant Lawn School in Mt. Pleasant is one-of-a-kind. It's so unique that some students at the school decided it should be a national historic site. And that's exactly what it became.

By Kimber Mitchell

In 1985, the 18 third graders at Pleasant Lawn began a historical adventure right in their own classroom. They became curious about their school after some students found cinder on the playground. They knew their school was old, but they didn't know much about its history. The students were so curious that their teacher thought a fun way to learn about the school would be to write a booklet for a social studies project. The third graders would be researchers, and the subject would be their school. This was the beginning of a discovery that would make the students proud to be a part of the Pleasant Lawn heritage.

School detectives

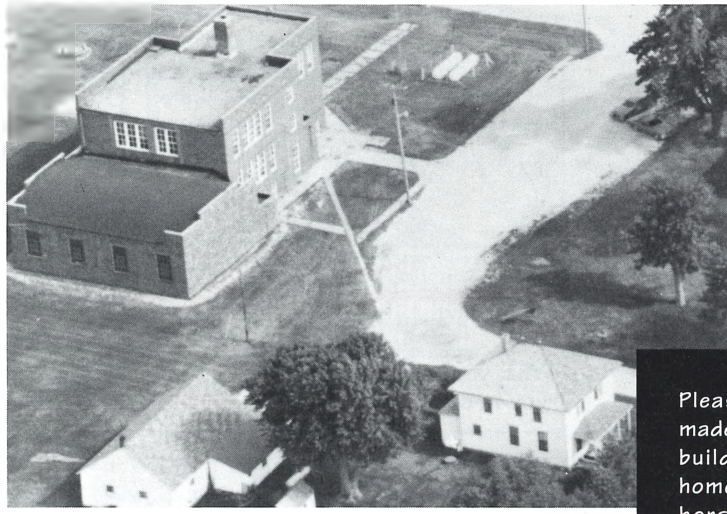
The students needed to find a way to learn about their school. But how? Who could tell them about the old school and house nearby? The kids began their research by talking to relatives, community members, the school principal, and people who had gone to school there before. The community responded by writing many letters, sending pictures, and even volunteering to sing the school song to them. The students soon found out that the school was not just a school to these people. It was the center of social life in the community.

The students discovered that Pleasant Lawn became a school in 1916, when four country schools decided to join together and they named their new district the Pleasant Lawn Consolidated

School. Originally, the school had grades 1-12, but in 1959 it became an elementary school.

Every student chose a topic on the school to write about. Some wrote about the tornado of 1965 that tore the school's roof off. Some wrote about sports at Pleasant Lawn and how students once practiced basketball outside even in the winter before a gym was built. Some kids wrote about transportation and how students would ride bobsleds to school in the winter. Kids even drew diagrams of each floor in the school using graph paper and measured the school and playground. Others set out to find out how many relatives had attended their school. One girl had four relatives who had gone to Pleasant Lawn. Her father, grandfather, grandmother, and great grandmother were all once students at Pleasant Lawn.

The kids created a booklet called *68 Years on the Prairie.* The historical adventure did not end when the kids finished their booklet. Two years later, the kids, who were now fifth graders, were still thinking about their school's rich history. They kept wondering if there were any other schools in Iowa quite like their school. They especially wanted to find out if there were other schools with a school building, a teachers' home, and a barn for horses. With the help of their principal, the students discovered Pleasant Lawn School was the only Iowa school still in use that had three buildings!



Pleasant Lawn is made up of a school building, a teachers' home, and a barn for horses. The teachers' home was for the teachers who lived out of town and needed a place to stay when road conditions were too bad for travel.

Because their school seemed so unique, the kids, school officials, and community members thought it had a good chance of getting on the National Register of Historic Places (a national program to help preserve special places of historic value). The kids' research was one of the reasons that their school would become a national historic site. The booklet and drawings of the school were sent as part of the school's application to the National Register of Historic Places.

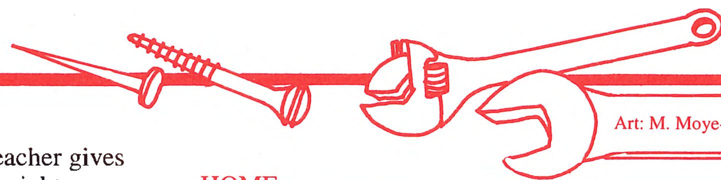
After a meeting with National Register officials, the school, house, and barn were officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1987. The students topped off a community-wide celebration by burying a time capsule filled with articles they had written about the school when they were third graders. They will dig the capsule up when they graduate from high school in 1994. ■

ANSWERS

Page 22: Photo on left—1, 4, 6; Photo on right—1, 2, 3.

Page 25: contractor, architect, renovate, Richardsonian, prairie style, architecture, Lustron, preservation, blueprint.

Page 30: homework; "Home, Home, on the Range"; Home Improvement; homemade; homeplate; homeroom; homeless.

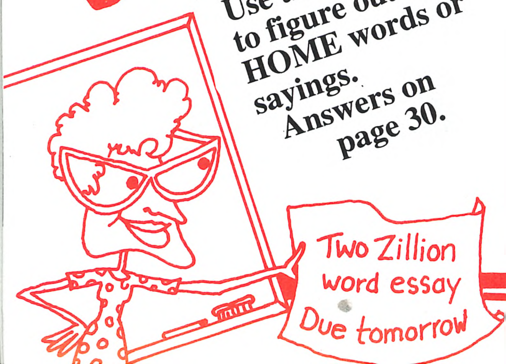


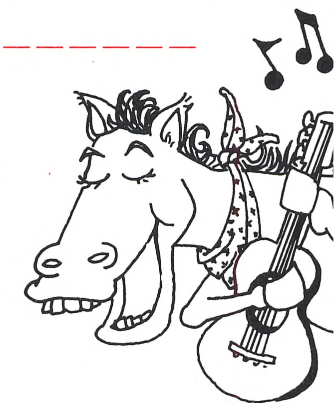
Art: M. Moye-Rowley

HOME WORDS

Use the clues to figure out the HOME words or sayings. Answers on page 30.

1. What your teacher gives you to do at night — HOME _ _ _ _
2. A song about cowboys — "HOME, HOME _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _"
3. Fix it up (also a TV show) — HOME _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
4. Made at home — HOME _ _ _ _
5. You can score a run at — HOME _ _ _ _ _
6. Where you hear announcements at school — HOME _ _ _ _
7. Having no home — HOME _ _ _ _





The Roost

HOWDY, HOWDY, LITTLE FRIENDS! HOW CAN I HELP YOU TODAY?
BIRDHOUSES "R" US
GOLDIE, HERE, IS LOOKING FOR A NEW BIRDHOUSE.
YEAH! THE NEST I HAVE NOW IS WAY TOO DINKY!
BIRDHOUSES "R" US
I HAVE JUST THE THING FOR YOU!!
THIS IS OUR DELUXE 'MONTAUK' BIRDHOUSE.
IT'S TOO FLASHY!
WELL... THIS IS OUR 'AMERICAN GOTHIC' DESIGN.
TOO DULL!
HOW ABOUT OUR 'GARDNER CABIN' SPECIAL?
TOO PREHISTORIC!
WELL... JUST WHAT KIND OF HOUSE ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?!!
WAITTTT!! THAT'S IT!
BIRDHOUSES "R" US
BIRDHOUSES "R" US
JERRY BROWN

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