

Historic Preservation Commission

2014 Fall Property of the Season

211 S Main Street

The Oswego Historic Preservation Commission is excited to present 211 S. Main Street as the Fall Property of the Season. The home is a simplified Queen Anne style with wraparound front porch. The front gable of the home has a decorative frieze with multicolor wooden shingle pattern. The home has had few changes over the years such as the addition of the bay window at the front of the home in 1989. At some time, the door on the second floor which led out onto the top of the wraparound porch, was replaced with a small vinyl window. The porch and an addition to the back corner of the home were completed between 1900 and 1905.



This home is historically significant for being the residence of several political leaders over the years. Platted as lot four in block 19 within the original town of Oswego in 1842, the property was sold to Lewis Judson along with lots five through eight. Mr. Judson sold the lot to John and Emma Robinson in 1847. Tragically, John Robinson died within months of the purchase, and his widow sold the lot five years later to John W. Chapman and his wife Catherine. It is unclear if Emma Robinson built the first home on this lot or John and Catherine Chapman, but the original home was built circa 1850. John Chapman was one of the earliest settlers to Oswego arriving around 1835. During his successful political career he held the offices of Kendall County Commissioner, Oswego Township Supervisor, Oswego Post Master, and Oswego Village Board member. The Chapman's sold the property to Jeremiah Cole, a well known politician, early settler, and friend of future Governor Joel Matteson.

The home passed to stone mason Charles Avery after the Civil War. Avery and his wife Parnal bought the home in

1866 from Peter Cooney and lived here for the next 23 years. Charles served as alderman for many years and was known for having a pet crow that would obediently follow him around town. Mr. Avery made many improvements and changes to the original home over the next few years including adding a hitching post made from a large hardhead stone from the river. In April 1887, disaster struck, destroying the Avery home. The Kendall County Records reported the event on April 6, 1887,

"The startling cry of fire reverberated through the streets about half past eight Sunday morning and Charles Avery's house was found to be on fire. The house was insured in the Rockford but didn't learn the amount; the burnt out family moved into the Van Doozer house nearby, which happened to be vacant."

They rebuilt quickly and moved into their new home in July 1887. Mrs. Avery died after a lingering illness, at the young age of 55, just two years later in 1889. Three weeks after Parnal's death, Charles Avery sold the home to Professor Walter McFarlane. Charles left this world three years later in 1892, at the age of 75.

Walter McFarlane was a beloved local educator. He taught at the Plano Academy before joining the staff in Oswego and eventually becoming Principal of the Oswego Public School. Professor McFarlane's classes were large by today's standards. In 1883 his average daily attendance was 44 students. Shortly after buying the home, Professor McFarlane decided to retire and sold the home to Charles and Maggie Rieger. In 1890 Mr. and Mrs. McFarlane retired to Waterman, Illinois, where he became a lumber merchant. Charley and his wife lived in the home for a decade with their daughter Nettie May. They sold out to Mary Louise Kennedy, the widow of Joseph D. Kennedy in the spring of 1900 and moved to Texas. Widow Kennedy lived in



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Ft. Bevans, Mass. Andrew "Bud" Pierce, located at Shreveport, La., received his sergeant stripes last week. Marian Pierce, now in Burbank, Calif., is a roving stenographic operator for the Lockheed Co. These are children of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Pierce of Main street."

Mayor Pierce, known to friends and family as Andy, died on August 25, 1966. The home passed through the years to Marian P. McCauley, Harold and Mary Peters, John and Pamela Meckley, and Doug Halverson, who owned the home at the time of the last renovations.

the house, after suffering from a fall the month before. She was 92 years old. The executors of her estate sold the home the following summer to Andrew M. Pierce.

Andrew Pierce was Village president for a generation until his retirement in 1953. He served the village in many capacities such as village trustee and Oswego Fire Protection District President. Andrew and his wife, Anna, had six children, 5 girls and a boy. Patriotic to both village and nation, several of his children were active during the Second World War. The Kendall County Records reported,

"Sgt. Alice Pierce of the 4th WAC T-C, has been transferred from the south to



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