

Historic Preservation Commission

2014 Spring Property of the Season

169 S Main Street

The Oswego Historic Preservation Commission is excited to name 169 S Main Street the Spring 2014 Property of the Season. The Bartlett House is considered one of the oldest homes in Oswego. The simple vernacular style one-and-a-half story wooden home was built in the early days of Oswego history by the Aaron Bartlett family. The structure predates the platting of the original village of Oswego. Because of this, the home sits at a slight angle straddling lots 4 and 5 in Block 14.



Built with the oak and walnut trees growing on the property, current owner, Budd Wormley, says the original wooden beams are still visible in the interior. The full front porch has a saltbox style roof, and the foundation is made of local limestone. The basement housed the original kitchen. As the family grew, an updated kitchen and buttery were added. The original interior chimney was removed, and an external brick fireplace chimney was constructed. An addition was added to the rear of the home in the fall of 1975, but few changes have been made to the front façade over the years.

Aaron Bartlett and Phebe Failing were raised in Montgomery County, New York. Phebe's family was of Dutch heritage arriving before the Revolutionary War in which several of her relatives served. Their two oldest children, Sarah Ann and Isaac, were born in New York. The Bartletts left Montgomery County in 1837 and arrived at Middlebury, Ohio. Here, John Peter and Lorinda were born. Unhappy with the location, they packed up once more and headed further west to Chicago. Finding the land surrounding Chicago unsuitable for their taste, they traveled west again. They stopped for the night at the edge of a creek near the Fox River. In the morning, they forded the river, landing at what became known as the Rickard farm. The story passed down through the family was that mother Bartlett was tired and did not want to travel any further. She suggested the family go back to the little creek where they had spent the night, claiming that the land closely resembled their land back in the Mohawk Valley. They returned and began living on the land they would eventually purchase from Lewis Judson. This is where their last child, Ruth Ann, was born in 1841.

In October 1843, Aaron Bartlett died leaving his widow to raise five young children alone. That next spring, Aaron's younger brother Sylvania married Phebe and helped support the children by running a blacksmith shop from a building built on the edge of the property near what became known as Bartlett's Creek. The blacksmith shop was prosperous employing up to eight men. Settlers would come from miles around, including Chief Shabbona, to have their horses shod by John Bartlett, an expert Ferrier. John shod the Potawatomie Chief's horses every year for free out of courtesy and respect, and Phebe always provided a hearty meal for Shabbona's group while they waited.

When the opportunity arose in March 1847, Alanson Bartlett purchased the land from Lewis Judson who owned all of the lots in block 14. The property remained in the Bartlett family, descending down through the generations into the 1950s. Ruth Pearl Grometer, daughter of John Peter Bartlett, renovated the home in 1939 as a wedding gift to her daughter on her marriage to Robert Ritenour. In 1951, Pearl sold the property to Donald and Shirley Edwards. Donald was a teacher and speech therapist for Oswego School District 308. Mr. Edwards sold the property to Herbert and Vivian Tripp in 1957. The property was later passed to James Edwards and then to Florence Ambroggi. Ms. Ambroggi sold the property to Richard Budd Wormley in April, 1975. Mr. Wormley added the addition to the rear of the house shortly after. He has maintained and cared for the home as an investment property since 1975.



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