

Houses that moved from Gorham Street to the East Side

Introduction

In the early 1940's while I was still in grade school, I occasionally walked to Emerson School from my home on Moland Street through the Japanese gardens. At the time, Kedzie Street was not open between Hoard Street and East Washington Ave. This route wasn't any shorter than going by way of North Street but offered some variety and when Happy the gardener was there we usually got a few radishes and carrots. There were few houses in the area and truck gardens ran almost all the way to East Washington Ave.

In later years, when I was more interested in the history of the area, I walked down to North Lawn Ave and noticed a very large house at 426 North Lawn Ave (corner of North Lawn and Hoard Street). The house is much larger than the surrounding houses and is on lots 15, 16, 17 & part of lot 18 in block 18. Thinking that it surely must have been a farm house that I had not noticed, I decided to find out who owned it. City Assessor's records showed that it had been built in 1888 and that it was currently owned by Hulbert and Delores Pinkerton. I spoke to Mr. Pinkerton who told me the history of the house.

In July 1952 another house was moved from the Bethel Lutheran Church property. The Dodge house, formerly owned by Professor Robert Dodge at 15 West Gorham, was partly dismantled and two sections moved, one section being moved to 2241 Coolidge St and the other to 839 Mayer Ave (perhaps this should be 837 Mayer Ave) Neither house exists today as they were removed when Packers Avenue was reconstructed.

Originally, Packers Avenue ran directly in front of the Oscar Mayer plant and Mayer Ave, Coolidge, Myrtle and Roth Streets intersected with Packers Avenue. The North Street city bus line ended at the plant, going down Mayer Ave, turning left on Packers Ave and returning on Commercial Ave to North Street.

Before reconstruction, Mayer Avenue had five more properties including Art & Mikes Place, a restaurant at 849-51, and B&B Texaco at 855. Coolidge Street had seven more properties including a house located at 2226 Coolidge St., on the corner of Coolidge and Packers Ave and owned by Richard Koons that was moved to a lot just behind the Eken house and next to the park.

Today, there are two streets by the name of Packers Avenue, side by side: the original (frontage road) and the reconstructed avenue.

History of house at 426 North Lawn Ave

The house at 426 North Lawn Ave was originally located at 11 West Gorham St (part of lot 3, block 81) in what is now the parking lot of Bethel Lutheran Church. Lot 3 was owned by Dr. James Bowen as early as 1881. Mr. Bowen died Aug 27, 1881 in Boston and his wife Susan died Apr 2, 1893. The property was purchased on Jan 3, 1895 by Kaia Johnson, wife of John A Johnson, from Susan Ramsey, daughter of James and Susan Bowen, (D157-280). The house was built by the Johnsons sometime that same year for their son Carl and his wife Bertha. On Jan 11, 1908, Kaia sold the property to the Johnson children Frederick, Carl and Hobard Johnson and Ida Johnson Fisk, reserving a life estate. Carl and his wife lived in the house from 1896 until Dec 23, 1912 when it was sold to William and John Morrissey (D 236-343). The Morrissey family lived in the house from 1912 until Aug 1, 1924 when William and Katherine Morrissey sold the NE 24 feet of lot 3 and part of lots 4 & 5 to Patrick Powers (M66-181 land contract) and on July 29, 1944, Patrick sells this same property to the Bethel Lutheran Congregation (D 450-481) who used it as a church school (city directory). It appears that it was used for this purpose until Jan 1952 (article in WSJ Feb 23, 1953).

Eugene Schoblaska bought property in block 18 (at 426 North Lawn Ave), on which the house now sits, from A P Koltes on Oct 9, 1952 (document 843183). The house itself was purchased by Eugene from the Bethel Lutheran Church Congregation for \$700-\$900 prior to Oct 2, 1952 when he was granted a permit for excavation and foundation for a four unit apartment building at 426 North Lawn Ave. The house was moved from the Gorham Street location to North Lawn Ave sometime prior to May 28, 1953 when Eugene obtained a building permit for alterations at the North Lawn address. Mr. Pinkerton, who moved the house, said that he had to remove the roof to move it. It must have been a grand house. When the house was remodeled into four apartments, copper tubing for gas lighting was found in the walls and there were servant's quarters and a back stairway. Eugene's sister Delores Pinkerton bought the property from her brother Eugene on May 25, 1968 (D176-368) and the apartment building is now owned by Hulbert and Delores Pinkerton.

Owners of the house now located on North Lawn Ave

Carl Johnson

Carl Johnson, son of John A and Kaia Johnson, was born Apr 21, 1870 and died Oct 30, 1931. He married Bertha Cassoday, daughter of John B Cassoday, Chief Justice of the Wisconsin Supreme Court. Carl was a graduate of the University of Wisconsin in 1891. By 1894 he was general manager of Gisholt Machine Company, serving in this capacity for 11 years, and president of Gisholt in 1906. He moved to Gilman Street and during WWI his home was thrown open to boys of the Student Army Training Corps then quartered at the University.

Morrissey family

William, age 48, and John, age 50, Morrissey were living in Lodi, Columbia County in 1910 where they were retail merchants (census). Their father William, age 80, was living with John age 60 who was unmarried. William's wife was Catherine and they had three children, Lewis, Rose and Catherine. John died Nov 5, 1918 at the age of 60 at the home of his brother William at 11 W Gorham St (WSJ Nov 5, 1918). William, the father, died July 24, 1913 at 11 W. Gorham