



705 HIGHLAND AVENUE

This home is celebrating its 90th birthday this year. The owner of the house agreed to include the home on the tour to show the house before restoration. The owner's plans are to have the house fully restored (exterior and interior) in time for its 100th birthday in 1994 and to again open it to the Historic Elgin House Tour then.

This grand residence was designed by local architect Smith Hoag and constructed in 1894 for Alfred and Elenora Bosworth. Alfred Bosworth was a prominent local banker with the First National Bank, president of the Elgin Opera House Company and held the position of City Treasurer. The Bosworth family was prominent in the early history of Elgin. Increase Bosworth, Alfred's father, was one of the founders of the First National Bank as well as one of the founders of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad. Born in 1846, Alfred Bosworth became a resident of Elgin in 1867 after graduating from the University of Chicago.

This home reflects the Queen Anne architectural style. Note the swag/garland detail on the exterior front bay that is also reflected in the three story turret's stained glass window. Typical of the Queen Anne style is the variation of siding material (first floor brick, second floor shingles), the varied roof forms (gambrel, gable and turret cap) and the swag/garland detailing. Of particular interest is the three story side bay on the east side of the house and the porte cochere on the west side of the house. Note the height of the steps in the porte cochere. This was a practical element allowing persons to step directly from a carriage to the side entrance without touching the ground.

This house contains sixteen rooms and five fireplaces. The foyer of the house contains a fireplace with glazed tile. Viewing the staircase, the eye is drawn to the large stained glass window along side the staircase. Recently restored, the stained glass window is unusually large. On the first floor, note the wide pocket doors, original woodwork, hardwood floors and fireplaces. Of particular interest is the ornate carved oak mantle of the fireplace in the main parlor. Throughout the first floor, window seats were built in along the turret windows, bay windows and in the dining room. In the dining room, note the built-in cabinetry, the large cut glass chandelier, oak chair railing and panels, beamed ceiling, and stained glass window transom.

The second floor contains five bedrooms. Note the transoms above the doors. The bedrooms contain built-in wardrobes and walk-in closets. Elenora's master bedroom contains a glazed tile fireplace and a walk-in closet connecting to Alfred's master bedroom. The upstairs bath contains an unusual feature- a marble shower with a proliferation of nickel-plated pipes and knobs.

ALONG THE WAY

**RANSTEAD HOME, NORTHWEST CORNER OF W. CHICAGO & JACKSON**  
 Attorney John W. Ranstead (1843-1915), was a political rarity in Elgin, a post Civil War Democrat who was elected to two terms as a Kane County judge, 1873-1882. While serving as president of the Home National Bank, he built this home about 1885. Emerson Hough (1857-1923), a Western writer, lived here briefly while completing his most famous novel, *The Covered Wagon*. It became an epic motion picture of the silent era.

**NANCY CURRIER KIMBALL HOME, 302 WEST CHICAGO STREET**  
**COBBLESTONE**

This little cobblestone, built in 1848, is one of the oldest existing homes in Elgin. It originally contained six rooms and a basement. Until improvements were made, the plastering was supported by oak laths from nearby forests. All the floor beams are made of oak.

The house was erected for the Kimball brothers and presented to their mother, Nancy Currier Kimball (1787-1888), widow of Joseph, who died here just a few days before her 101st birthday. Her daughter, Ruth Ann, lived with her. She was the widow of Captain Edward E. Harvey, a local attorney, who left for the War with Mexico and died of disease at Pueblo in 1847.

THIS ENDS THE WEST LOOP