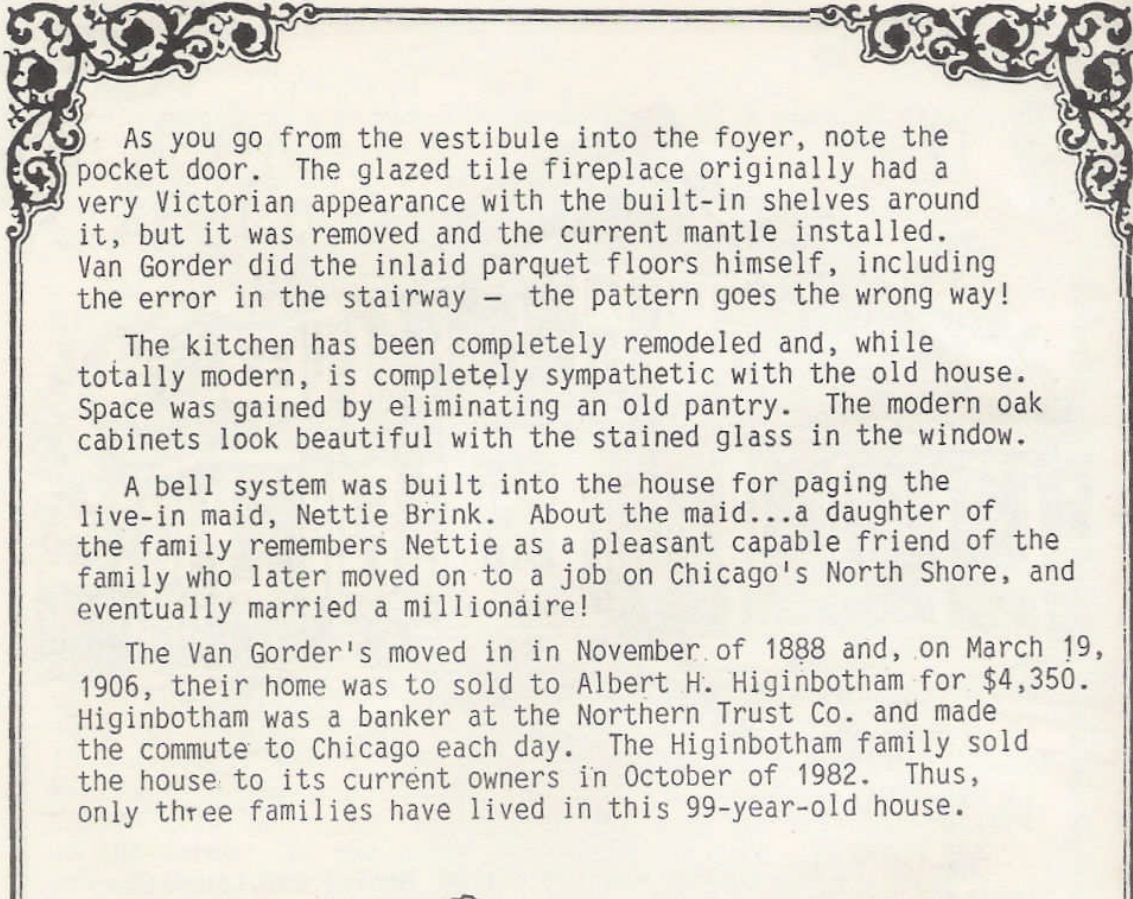


15 NORTH PORTER STREET

Charles T. Van Gorder was the son of Daniel and Laura (Welton) Van Gorder, both natives of New York. Daniel worked as a foreman on the Erie Canal, and came west to Chicago in 1857. Later, he came to Elgin, where he was a contractor with the railroads.

Charles was a "job printer" and co-owner of the Elgin Daily-News in the late 1870's. He married Hannah Bundy and a daughter, Lou, came to marry A. M. Price, the inventor of a gum wrapper patent that was sold to the Wrigley family!

Charles purchased this lot at 15 North Porter in May of 1888 for \$900. The contractor for the two-story house and barn was Martin Bullard, and mason work was done by Andrew Magnus. The building permit was issued for \$3,300. This house is built in a restrained STICK-STYLE VICTORIAN style in an asymmetrical plan. There is a variety of siding including narrow and wide clapboard and square cut and polygonal shingles in the eaves. Decorative bargeboards highlight the gabled eaves. Decorative brackets "support" the bay window on the north facade. The southwest corner has an expressive diagonal bay containing stained glass, a roof "supported" by paired brackets and pilasters. The front porch is not original to the house. It was enlarged and now reflects a Prairie Style influence in the column capitals. On the south facade, note the decorative brackets with the late turned drip, very similar to 116 North Porter. The Prairie-style side porch on the south with the room over, was originally a small side porch. Note the change in foundation materials from stone to concrete.



As you go from the vestibule into the foyer, note the pocket door. The glazed tile fireplace originally had a very Victorian appearance with the built-in shelves around it, but it was removed and the current mantle installed. Van Gorder did the inlaid parquet floors himself, including the error in the stairway – the pattern goes the wrong way!

The kitchen has been completely remodeled and, while totally modern, is completely sympathetic with the old house. Space was gained by eliminating an old pantry. The modern oak cabinets look beautiful with the stained glass in the window.

A bell system was built into the house for paging the live-in maid, Nettie Brink. About the maid...a daughter of the family remembers Nettie as a pleasant capable friend of the family who later moved on to a job on Chicago's North Shore, and eventually married a millionaire!

The Van Gorder's moved in in November of 1888 and, on March 19, 1906, their home was to sold to Albert H. Higinbotham for \$4,350. Higinbotham was a banker at the Northern Trust Co. and made the commute to Chicago each day. The Higinbotham family sold the house to its current owners in October of 1982. Thus, only three families have lived in this 99-year-old house.