



313 Perry Street

1915 Bungalow
Krista Schifferer



This bungalow exemplifies something good about the southwest side of Elgin. Many homes here are like this one—single-family, detached, with a yard and mature trees—and are affordable for many people. They provide an attractive alternative to apartments or condominiums. The demographics are diverse: singles, whether never-married, divorced or widowed; couples; and families with children. Residents are older, middle-aged and young, a mix fostering a sense of community. It's visible in the neighborhood at large and in the houses on this year's tour in particular.

Built in 1915, this house is first listed in the Elgin City Directory for 1917-18 as belonging to Oscar and Fanny Eisenbise. Oscar repaired gates for the Chicago, Minneapolis, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad, which once ran through Elgin. The Eisenbises moved to Long Beach, Calif., and sold their home to Herman Rahn and his wife, Emma, in 1920.

Herman Rahn was employed by the Elgin National Watch Co., the large employer that was central to the

city's growth. He first worked in the motion room, starting in 1886. Later he was transferred to the plate department, according to his obituary in the February 1952 Watch Word, the watch company's magazine. He retired in 1932 "on pension."

Herman lived his entire life in Elgin. He was born Dec. 10, 1871 in the city, died at home Jan. 22, 1952, and was buried in Bluff City Cemetery. Herman lived in this house 32 years, and his widow for three more.

Emma Rahn sold the house in 1956 to Spencer Lehman and his wife, Anna. Spencer was an engineer for the Chicago, Minneapolis, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad, retiring in 1964. The Lehmans lived here until 1968.

Larry and Gwendolyn Shock purchased the home in 1968. Larry was a driver for Chicago Rawhide, an Elgin-based manufacturer of seals used in the agricultural, automotive, steel and other industries.

Howard and Gertrude Green bought this house from the Shocks in 1974. Howard Green was a farmer



who was employed by landowner Marvin Dunteman of South Barrington (there's now a Marvin Dunteman Park in South Barrington). The couple remained in this home until 1988.

Dennis and Susan Rockhill were the next owners. Dennis was a music minister at Elgin Bible Church and Susan was a clerk. Later, Dennis was a professor and technician. The Rockhills lived here from 1988 to 2005. After that, Rosa Avalos and Geraldine and Hosea Flores owned the house.

In 2007, Krista Schifferer decided to look for a house. Except for college, this young homeowner has lived her entire life in Elgin and works here as well. Krista grew up about five minutes away—in another old house on Gertrude Street—and always liked the area. For a time, she and her family also lived in Elgin's Eagle Heights neighborhood in a newer home.

Krista was seeking a home with a front porch and a neighborhood feel, she says. She also hoped to find a house close to her family. This one filled the bill; that it was a bungalow was a “welcome surprise,” Krista says. She bought this home—her first—in November 2007 and moved in the next month.

Krista is a teacher in the Elgin public schools. She has taught kindergarten for three years, third grade for two and will teach third grade again this fall.

Since purchasing her home, Krista has had the hardwood floors refinished, painted every room, remodeled the bathroom, and had a new tile floor installed in the kitchen. She's begun landscaping the backyard, with her family's help, and she hopes to do more of this in the future.

This teacher says she has always loved older homes. She especially loves her house's woodwork, period charm and front porch.

Owning a house has given Krista something additional in common with some of her friends. Two friends live “just blocks away,” also in old houses. One owns a bungalow; the other, a Cape Cod-style house. The friends enjoy discussing their old houses and sharing the occasional old-house problems and

funny stories that come up. Krista has known these friends a long time: one since kindergarten and the other since middle school. These friends also enjoy sitting outside together, or meeting to walk their dogs around the neighborhood.

Krista knows her neighbors, and says everyone waves to each other on the block when going about their daily lives. She's an active member of the South West Area Neighbors association and has made friends through the group as well.

Neighbors watch out for each other and each other's homes here, Krista comments—something not always true today.

Architectural Notes

The garage of this house has an architectural curiosity found on several built in Elgin before 1950. However, it is one unlikely to be recognized by younger people today. Take a peek at the far end of the building, where the car's front bumper would be if it was driven straight into the garage. Viewed from the building's exterior, you will note a distinctive “bump-out” rising about four feet up the wall. That little addition was to make the garage slightly longer. During the 1950s, automobiles grew too big to fit into early-20th-century garages. This solution did not require replacing the building. Another house on the tour, at 670 Oak Street, has a similar addition. Now that you know what to look for, you can probably find others. ♡

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