



This year's tour headquarters are located in the Channing YMCA, in the Elgin Historic District. Long before the Y was built, the house pictured at left graced the corner of Division and Channing Streets. It was the residence of Elgin Judge Richard N. Botsford, whose son Carl was mayor of Elgin for a time. Judge Botsford's family owned this beautiful Italianate villa style home, complete with 5-story tower, until 1956, when it was sold and demolished to make way for the Channing YMCA to be built on the site.

## Welcome to Tour Headquarters

The YMCA has served the Elgin community since 1866, just 15 years after the first YMCAs in North America opened in Boston and Montreal. The following words appeared in an 1891 publication regarding Elgin's YMCA:

"Among the prominent religious organizations of Elgin is the Young Men's Christian Association, whose efforts in the work of ennobling and elevating the young men of the city have been productive of good results. It was organized in Sept 1882, with 7 members, and now has a membership of 250. The first meetings were held in the Rosencrans building, on River Street. These quarters proving too small for the increasing membership, larger and better quarters were secured on the third floor of Town's block, where pleasant and home-like rooms have been fitted up, consisting of a reading room, parlor, gymnasium, and bath rooms. The object of the Association is the development of the social, intellectual, and moral side of a man's nature, which is effected through the agency of socials, entertainments, evening classes in various branches of learning, and weekly meetings of a reli-

gious character. Any young man of good moral character may become a member upon payment of a nominal fee. The rooms are open to all, whether members or not, but the baths, lectures, gymnasium and evening classes are especial privileges to members only. A building especially adapted to the needs of the association is now contemplated, and will no doubt in the near future be erected."

In 1961, the Y moved to a new facility on North Channing Street and has been a part of this east side neighborhood ever since, continuing to follow our mission: to build strong kids, strong families, and strong communities.

The Channing Community Branch is an integral part of the YMCA Vision. As stated by the Daily Herald in a recent Opinion piece, "The YMCA holds a special place in the hearts of nearly every long-time Elgin resident . . . [The Y] seems intent on restoring its past position as a community pillar."

The Channing Y joins us in honoring a historic past and embracing an exciting future.