

# 163 HILL

Queen Anne - Eastlake  
Built 1888



**T**his stately house with Queen Anne touches was built in 1888 for E. Artel Metcalf at a cost of \$3,000. He had just married his wife, Bertha, who was the daughter of a pastor at First Congregational Church. Metcalf owned a hardware store called Metcalf and Reed on Chicago Street. Sadly, in 1891, one month after the birth of his son and at the age of 33, Metcalf died. His widow lived for a time in the house, but eventually moved to Ohio to be nearer to her parents, who had returned there. The Metcalfs' great-great granddaughter lives in Taos, N.M., and has said that the name "Artel" is still in use in the family.

Despite a very long list of owners and renters, the house remained well maintained. One of the owners, a grocer named George Knott, lived with his father in the house. The father was famous for having gone down to Springfield to personally

congratulate Abraham Lincoln on his presidential victory. He later became a Civil War hero.

The post-World War II housing shortage in Elgin probably led to the home being divided into two apartments in 1946. This change detracted from the house's splendor. However, in 1989, Mark and Nancy MacLeod purchased the home and restored it back to a single-family residence. Featured on the 1993 Historic House Tour, 163 Hill was making its way back!

Mike and Sarah Burns purchased the house in 2004. They were attracted to Elgin because it was near their business, Emmett's Tavern and Brewing Company in West Dundee. Mike and Sarah also liked the city's price range and the large selection of older homes.

Having lived in a Wauconda home that dated back to 1862, the couple said that the house at 163 Hill Avenue was love at first sight and the carriage house was a big bonus for them. In fact, entertaining is very important to Mike and Sarah, and they have created their own little “beach” bar in the carriage house.

Although the house was in relatively good shape, the couple has painted the house – interior and exterior restored the living room fireplace from a mantel found in the basement, finished the bath on the first floor, and refinished the floors. One project that Mike wants to accomplish is to restore the pocket door and doorway leading from the living room to the entry hall. A second project that Mike wants to tackle is to return the front porch to its original look. He has contacted the Metcalf descendants to see if any early photos of the exterior exist. A lover of history, Mike has collected a huge amount memorabilia and news articles relating to the house.



### *Architectural Notes*

Almost half of the homes in the Elgin Historic District were built in a single decade — the 1880s. This house is one of them. Like many others, this home is a reflection of the city’s growing prosperity and emerging merchant class. It is amply sized for a family, nicely detailed with Victorian-era flourishes, and exudes craftsmanship.

While the building does not have the elaborate spindle-work, wraparound porch or prominent tower commonly associated with Queen Anne Style, it certainly has other aspects of the motif. Those are blended with an overall massing of the building that was commonly found in the upper Midwest on farmhouses and vernacular homes in small cities. The design of the house begins with a

simple cross-gable configuration. Then a number of other features are added to give the facade a rich texture. These include: the front box bay window; the protruding porch with the small dormer on second floor above it; the small porch (now enclosed) along the south side of the building near the rear; the use of shingles in the gable ends; stained-glass windows in strategic locations; and various other smaller-sized trim details. The house is situated on the north side of the lot, giving passersby the best possible view as they walk up Hill Avenue from the south.



Tour Patrons

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**ELGIN HISTORY FAIR**

**Sunday, October 4, 2009**

**12:00 to 4:00 p.m.**

**Lords Park Pavilion**

**ADMISSION IS FREE**

For More Info Call

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