

**The Gold Coast &
Hamburg Historic District
Davenport, IA**

2008 Tour of Historic Homes

**“Building the Future by
Preserving the Past”**



**Saturday, September 6, 2008
11:00am - 4:00pm
Sunday, September 7, 2008
1:00pm - 4:00pm**

TICKET

ADMIT ONE ADULT

\$10.00

Children 12 & Under FREE

When Accompanied By An Adult

-
- ☐ **712 West 2nd Street**
 - ☐ **624 West 5th Street**
 - ☐ **822 Gaines Street**
 - ☐ **412 West 6th Street**
 - ☐ **628 Ripley Street**
 - ☐ **618 West 8th Street**

Committee

Jeff Gomez, Chairman
Duane Timm, Assistant Chairman
Sara Bartholomew
Marcia Canfield
David Cordes

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Marion Meginnis
Bryan Pattschull
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Acknowledgements

The committee wishes to thank the following for their assistance with the 2008 Gold Coast Home Tour:

- ❖ Art Rose
- ❖ Big Six Studebaker Driving Club
- ❖ Dave Hast
- ❖ German American Heritage Center
- ❖ Karen Anderson
- ❖ Mississippi Valley Region AACA Antique Automobile Club of America
- ❖ Quad Cities Antique Ford Club
- ❖ Scott County-Bicentennial Building Parking
- ❖ Tour Volunteers and Docents

And very special thanks to:

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- ❖ Our advertisers, who purchased space in this brochure. Show your appreciation -- become their customer.
- ❖ Our Tour Homeowners, for so graciously opening their homes today.
- ❖ Friendly House, for the use of their shuttle bus and driver
- ❖ St. Ambrose University, for assistance in cleaning up and getting ready for the tour.

Automobiles on Tour

Three auto clubs and one collector have joined us for this year's tour. The automobiles are located on the lawns of "The Alamo," located at 627 Ripley Street.

The Quad Cities Antique Ford Club was formed in 1966. It has 50 members and welcomes all makes of cars to participate in its shows.

Members of the Mississippi Valley Region AACA Antique Automobile Club of America have celebrated the joy of the open road since 1953. Its 180 members welcome cars or motorcycles made before 1983 to participate in club events.

The Big Six River Bend Studebaker Driving Club is celebrating its 30th year in 2008 and has 60 local members. It is affiliated with the national Studebaker Drivers Club Inc.

Art Rose has been collecting automobiles since before he had a license, and has owned over 100 of these beauties dating from the 1920's to the current era. He loves the cars from the 1950's. Currently, his favorite cars are his 1957 Ford Thunderbird and his '56 Cadillac Coupe De Ville.

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About the neighborhood:

Welcome to our neighborhood, where Davenport families have thrived for 160 years. On this year's tour, we hope to shed some light on the recent, as well as the distant pasts of the homes you will visit.

We'd like you to keep one rather startling fact in mind as you tour today: If you had taken this walk about 20 years ago, five of the seven buildings you'll see today would have been vacant, boarded, or abandoned.

The Gold Coast's historic ties to Davenport's 19th Century German immigrants, who left their native land's repressive political climate for the freedom of America, are well known. But people of many heritages and varied economic means have climbed its stairways, walked its sidewalks, traveled its streets and called it home in the decades since its first inhabitants built here.

The fortunes of the neighborhood have risen, fallen, and risen again in concert with the economic climate of its closest neighbor, Davenport's downtown business district. The fates of the homes on tour today reflect those changes.

The first neighborhood structures, including the 7th Street original site of Iowa College (now Grinnell College) date to the late 1840's, with most development coming in the 60 years following. The mainly German émigré builders thrived in Davenport's developing commercial and industrial environment. It was not uncommon for the children who played on these streets together to marry a few years later. The resulting neighborhood family tree is a dizzying repetition of similar last names.

A few homes were built here after 1900. But by the turn of the century, the eyes of prosperous merchant and professional families began looking east to the bluffs of McClellan Heights, west to Telegraph and Rockingham Roads, and north towards Vander Veer Park -- the city's first "suburbs."

The 1900 Davenport waterfront was not the green, serene park-like setting we see today. It bustled and hummed with active smokestacks, steamboats and packets on the river, and manufacturing enterprises. In the very early days, success meant not having to live over your shop, but rather up the hill in places like the Gold Coast. Fifty years later, success and more rapid means of transportation made the idea of living further away from a loud, dirty, and busy downtown Davenport very attractive to the sons and daughters of the first generation emigrants.

Fifteen years later, World War I's anti-German fervor had a chilling effect on Davenport's thriving German culture and perhaps on its most prominent neighborhood, the Gold Coast. Honored citizens, including former mayor Henry Vollmer, were targeted and accused of anti-American sentiments. German was no longer taught in city schools, the speaking of German in public was banned, there were public burnings of German language books and the presses of the many German language newspapers were stilled.

World War I precipitated the conversion of large Victorian homes into apartments throughout Davenport's urban center; the Gold Coast neighborhood

did not escape this change. The Depression that followed only heightened the need of many to economize and find sources of cheap housing.

World War II brought jobs to the city as the Rock Island Arsenal labor force grew to over 16,000. Many grand old houses of the Gold Coast, now divided into apartments, provided space for wartime workers. In some cases, structures were further subdivided into smaller sleeping rooms.

Urban decay continued in the decades that followed. Davenport did not escape the national trend in the 1960's of tearing down Victorian architecture, at times for little more than outdated plumbing and wiring, both in its downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. In the 1970's, a proposal was floated to construct an East-West Crosstown Expressway, through the heart of the Gold Coast and other historic neighborhoods to the east. Preservationists led a vigorous fight against this plan, and it was abandoned.

Unfortunately, for the Gold Coast, *redlining*, the practice of refusing loans in what were considered undesirable or older neighborhoods, was alive and well from the 1950's through much of the 1970's despite legislation aimed at halting this practice. When faced with redlining, prospective homeowners went to owners and ask to buy homes on contract....often without conventional loans for mortgages or home renovation. It weeded out those who are faint of heart, and began to build an army of people who were committed to Davenport's neighborhood.

During the second half of the twentieth century, hundreds of the city's oldest downtown buildings were torn down. A survey of Gold Coast neighborhood in 1983 counted 361 buildings within its boundaries. Twenty five years, only 300 remain....almost 20% destroyed in the intervening years.

The 1990 Davenport city directory listings make the most compelling point about the condition of the neighborhood in that decade. Of the seven buildings on tour today, only two were occupied-- one as the home of a social services agency, and the other housed eight apartments. Four are noted as "Vacant." "Overview" doesn't even appear.

As the Gold Coast faced its darkest hour, new hope began to emerge. Challenges to historic architecture caused preservationists to band together across the city and county beginning in the 1970's. Then, in 1983, city staff succeeded in having the neighborhood added to the National Register of Historic Places. Urban homesteaders with a love of Davenport's history and its architecture rejected the trend of move away from the city's urban center and instead moved back to begin reclaiming the homes in the city's heart. During this period, neighborhood residents mounted an effort to down zone its properties.

In 1999, a petition drive by residents and a supporting vote of the Davenport City Council resulted in a 13 block area inside the National Register District being named a Local Historic District. The local designation protects neighborhood structures from unsympathetic renovation. It also provides easier access to certain grants and tax credits that assist in restoration.



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Saturday Privy Dig

Abandoned privies are an interesting way to detail the life of an historic site. In addition to providing a means of sanitary disposal of human waste, early privies also served as 19th century trash dumps prior to the days of civic garbage disposal. After a number of years, the organic material decomposes, leaving bottles and other household items behind. Typically, homeowners dug privies every fifteen to twenty years as sites filled. David Hast, who has been digging privies in the Quad Cities for twenty years, will conduct the Saturday dig.

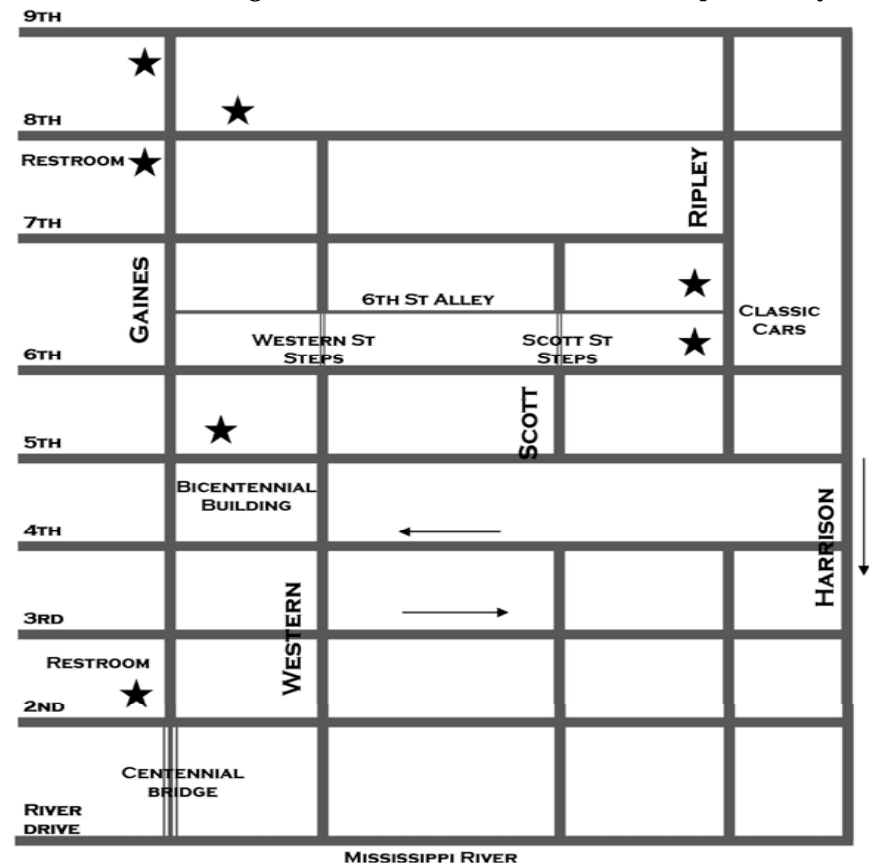
Tips on Touring: Parking is available at the Bicentennial Building, the German American Heritage Center and along the streets of the neighborhood. Driving north, the most direct access to the tour area is via Gaines or Ripley. Driving south, via Gaines or Harrison.

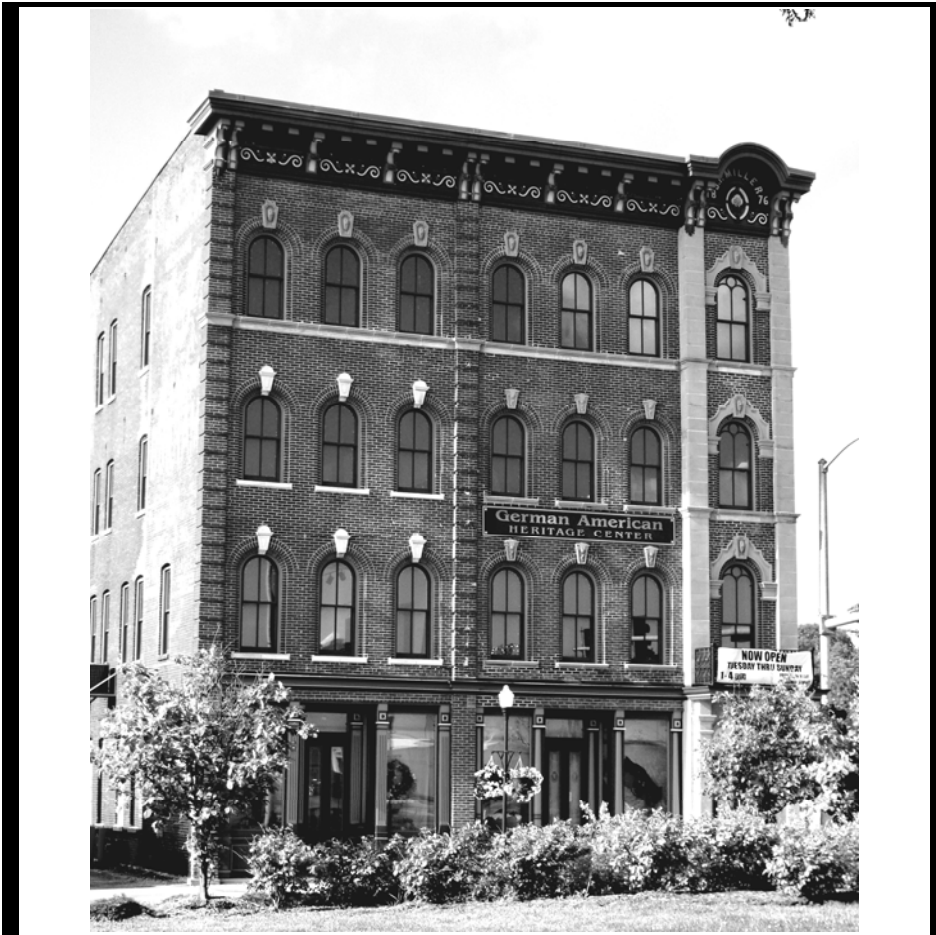
Restrooms:

- ❖ The German American Heritage Center 712 W. 2nd Street
- ❖ The Jipp Home & Grocery 730/732 Gaines Street

A Walk through the Gold Coast

We welcome visitors to our neighborhood every season of the year. Free Walking Tour Brochures featuring over 80 homes are available at all stops on today's tour.





**712 West 2nd Street - The German American Heritage Center
High Victorian Commercial Architecture, ca. 1862/1877**

Regular Hours:

Tuesday thru Sunday, 1:00 – 4:00 pm; other times, by appointment.

Preserving the Past

The German American Heritage Center began life in 1862 as the William Tell House, a “Gasthaus” or guest house, built to accommodate thousands of immigrants who arrived in the area during the great migration after the Civil War.

In 1868/69, German immigrant and Davenport manufacturer John Frederick Miller, purchased the hotel and operated it first as the Germania House and in 1873 as the Miller Hotel with an accompanying restaurant, billiard parlor and saloon. In 1906, it was renamed the Arcade Hotel and in 1917, the Henry Blessing Boarding House.



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In 1924, it was renamed the Standard Hotel, the name in use for the longest period of time. The Standard closed in 1990.

### Building for the Future

In 1983 the building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1994, the German American Heritage Center was incorporated with representatives from various local German-American, historical and genealogical organizations.

The group purchased the old hotel in 1995. From 1996-1999, the building underwent restoration including a new roof, historically accurate windows, repaired exterior walls, and restoration of the first floor interior.

The first floor exhibition space was opened to the public during the 2000 Maifest celebration.

Rehab continued in 2001 with the restoration of the storefronts. The organization premiered "Why This Place" in October, a video that helps to tell the story of German immigration to this area. 2002 saw the opening of an exhibit focusing on the Turners, an early German American cultural organization.

In 2004, work began on a new stairwell and elevator, allowing the opening of second floor exhibition space in 2005. In 2008, the admissions area and gift shop were remodeled. Work will continue on the fourth floor which will be used for programs, classes and workshops and the third floor will house the main gallery telling the story of the "German American Immigrant Experience."

### Notes



624 West 5th Street -- The Wulff Hahn Home  
Greek Revival, ca. 1872

### Preserving the Past

Wulff Hahn, a farmer and founder of an insurance company, was born in Wisch, Germany in 1813. His father was murdered when Wulff was 17, leaving him chief wage earner. His efforts to find work included a stint in Denmark where opportunity was more plentiful. By 1845 he had returned to Germany and married Margaretha "Gretje" Stoltenberg. The young couple decided to immigrate to America in 1847 with their 5-month-old daughter Ida. Their 57-day journey brought them to New Orleans. They boarded steamboats for Scott County, Iowa where they establish several farms.

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Later, Wulff founded the German Fire Insurance Company, the first such group in Scott -County. He was also an active member of the German-American Pioneers Association.

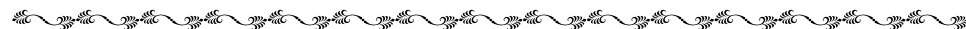
Wulff and Gretje's Gold Coast home was their retirement home, built in 1872 when Wulff left life on the farm to his children. Gretje died August 3, 1894 and Wulff followed her in death eleven days later.

The home is one of four surviving Greek Revival Vernacular homes on 5th Street on the block between Gaines and Scott Streets. This style was a favored style in late 19th Century Davenport. Several homes along the block have been torn down over the years, leaving an intact block- long streetscape of this very popular 1870's style of home.

### Building for the Future

After the deaths of Wulff and Gretje, the home was owned by the Blunck family for about 20 years. As early as 1910, there is a notation of a second tenant in city directories and of a second address, 624-1/2, at the property. By 1940, a third apartment, designated as "basement" holds a third occupant. Even with the additional living spaces, the building continued to be designated as owner occupied until about 1980. By 1990, the building is listed as "Vacant."

The home is owned by the occupants of 630 West 5th, just next door. Their tenant, a photographer, uses the home as both studio and living space. The home's owner owns a wallpaper company and hand silk screens patterns. Some of his projects have included Terrace Hill; the Iowa Governor's Mansion; the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan; as well as all of the wallpaper featured in the movie, "Bridges of Madison County." The walls of 624 West 5th Street are decorated with some of his striking work.





**730-732 Gaines Street -- The Christian Jipp Grocery & Home  
Greek Revival Vernacular, 1868 & 1878**

### Preserving the Past

Christian Jipp, an immigrant from Schleswig-Holstein, worked as a clerk at various retail shops along the Mississippi riverfront from 1860 to 1867. In 1868 he built the grocery. This was one of the first retail businesses to progress up the hill from the riverfront on the city's west side. He and his wife Fanny and their three children Ella, Rhoda and Meta live in the back of the store for 10 years. In 1876, he apparently had made enough money to build the attached house.

After Christian's death in 1913, the home was owned by his daughter Meta Jipp. The home was divided into two dwellings by 1920, with Meta and a tenant in residence. Various grocers ran the store from 1910 to 1950. By 1940, the home is in the name of Rhoda Jipp, the last surviving member of the family. She is living there with a tenant. After her death in 1948, the home continued to be two apartments. By 1960, the grocery had become a Laundromat. By 1980, the home address at 730 Gaines is no longer listed in city directories, although there appears to be a Laundromat still open in the store.

### Building for the Future

The building was shuttered in 1989. After a number of code violations were cited, city inspection staff recommended demolition. The entire building is listed as "Vacant" in the 1990 directory. Photos from the period show a structure heavily disfigured with graffiti.

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Various plans for use for the structure were proposed, including a beer garden; these plans were never realized. In 1997, the building was purchased by the neighborhood organization with the goal of obtaining grants to rehabilitate the structure. These plans also went unrealized. By 2004, deterioration on the west side caused an interior brick wall to collapse. The building rose to #1 on the city's demolition list. That same year, Gateway Redevelopment Group, a grass roots not-for-profit whose goal is saving abandoned building in the neighborhood, launched a fund drive to save the building. Using a variety of donations, from cash gifted by neighbors and supporters, to professional expertise from area contractors, to grants from RDA and the State Historical Society of Iowa, and many hours of volunteer labor, the building was stabilized.

Currently, renovations continue with construction on an efficiency apartment on the second floor of the home, a neighborhood history room on the home's first floor, and the Architectural Rescue Shop in the former store. The ARS will sell architectural salvage. Proceeds from the shop and apartment will help maintain the building and help fund additional future restoration in the neighborhood.

Notes





**822 Gaines Street -- The John and Frank Bredow Home  
Elements of Greek and Gothic Revival, Ca. 1876**

### Preserving the Past

Two generations of Bredows lived in the house at 822 Gaines Street for about 44 years. The Bredow family traces its ancestry to Schleswig Holstein. John T. and Anna Bredow were born there in 1825. Their eldest son, John F. was born there in 1853 and immigrated with his parents to Kiel, Wisconsin shortly afterwards. There, two more sons, Frank and Gerhard, were born. The family moved to Davenport in 1870 where John T. operated a saloon. He built the family home at 822 Gaines about 1876 for his wife and sons, now young men.

In 1883, John F. married Bertha Krieger. Their daughter Rhoda was born in 1884. The other sons married and moved else where in the city; John, Bertha and Rhoda continued to share the house with his parents at 822 Gaines. John worked for the German Savings Bank, becoming Assistant Cashier. After 25 years, he left the banking business to become first the President of the Iowa Mantle Manufacturing Company and later the President of the Hydraulic Concrete Construction Company.

The senior Bredows died about 1896. The John F. Bredows continued to occupy the house until about 1920 when they moved to West 4th Street.

### Building for the Future

We turn to city directories for information about the home in intervening years. From 1920 into the 1950's, 822 Gaines was home to Mrs. Anna Nagel. By 1960, it was listed as a St. Ambrose Residence Hall. A St. Ambrose alum of that era recalls that he rented the home with ten other students. The home was nicknamed "The Haunted House" although there were, to his recollection, no ghostly manifestations. The home was listed as having 3 and 4 apartments during the

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1970's and 80's. By 1990, it was listed "Vacant." The house was boarded up sometime in the 1990's. Substantial outstanding tax certificates prevented interested parties from proceeding with restoration.

Davenport first proposed demolition in 1999, but that request was delayed and the structure was granted local landmark status. In March 2005, the city requested approval from the Historic Preservation Commission for the demolition as the structure moved to #1 on the city's demo list. The Commission tabled a decision for 6 months.

During that time, Scott County was able to issue a Right of Redemption notice to clear the title and abate taxes and assessments and turn the property over to Gateway Redevelopment Group, a not-for-profit organization whose mission is restoration of buildings in the Hamburg Historic District. At the same time, Davenport launched its HAPPEN program that provides partial funding for restoration of abandoned homes. 822 Gaines was designated as a HAPPEN house. Work began in April 2006 and was completed in June 2008 and its new owners closed on the home in August.

Notes



**412 West 6th Street -- "Overview," The August Steffen Jr. Home  
Georgian/Classical Revival, ca. 1901**

### **Preserving the Past**

The Overview mansion is one of the crown jewels of the Gold Coast representing the pinnacle of home building and wealth in the neighborhood. It is actually the second home built on the site; an earlier house at 406 W. 6th was home to retired grocer Henry Hasler. Located on the eastern part of the Overview property, it was razed to make way for the construction of the new home.

The Overview was built for August E. Steffen Jr. from plans dated July 15, 1901. Designed by one of the Davenport's most prominent architectural firms, Clausen and Burrows, the Overview is a breakaway from the various late Victorian styles that by 1900 were considered excessive and gaudy. The inspiration for the design comes instead, from the buildings built during the reign of King George as well as various design motifs from classical Greece. As is often the case, people have a hard time letting go of the familiar, and thus there are several design elements on the Overview that are carryovers from the Victorian Queen Anne Style. These are the twin rounded front bays with curved glass windows, the use of elaborate art


### **Building for the Future:**

In 1969, the building became home to United Neighbors. It is one of two structures on today's tour that was occupied in 1990. In 1997, it reverted to a single family residence.

In addition to restoration of the interior, the current owners have reclaimed an adjacent empty lot to create a restful outdoor patio.




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**618 West 8th Street -- The Andrew J. Finch Home  
American Four Square with Prairie Influence, ca. 1901**

### **Preserving the Past**

This house is the second home to be built at this address. While the home served as offices for several decades, it is unique in being the only home on tour today that never was divided into apartments.

The first structure on the site was built in 1876 by a Ficke family, with an occupation of fresco painter listed in city directories of the time. The original house burned in 1899 and the current building was erected in 1901 for Andrew J. Finch and his wife Jennie.

By 1908, it was home to Charles H. Korn, son of the founder of the Henry Korn & Sons Bakery located on Harrison Street. Charles' brother built the Dutch Colonial home one block west at the corner of 8th & Brown Streets. The father of longtime Davenport podiatrist Dr. Korn grew up in the home. The Wilkins family was its longest tenant, living here from the 1920's through much of the 1940's.

Unique features include 3 sets of pocket doors, a living room bench seat and a great view from its wonderful front porch. 618 West 8th was a very "modern" home for its time. Its long, low style is typical of the growing popularity of Prairie architecture. And it was designed for effect. Its mantel and pocket doors were positioned for maximum impact as one enters the home, with a relatively simple interior elsewhere.

The colors on the home's exterior are similar to what the owners believe was its original color scheme, based on scraping layers of old paint.

glass transoms above the double-hung windows on the first floor, and the art nouveau newel posts at the base of the otherwise classical stairway.

Located immediately to the west of the Overview is the home of August Steffen Sr. He emigrated from Germany in 1848 and traveled in many parts of his adopted country, including the California gold fields, where he made his fortune before coming to Davenport in the 1850s. The senior Steffen's many financial interests included a grocery, a grain business and a very profitable dry goods establishment. In 1876, he built the August Steffen building, at the time the largest business block in the city. August Senior died in 1899 and was survived by four adult children. Construction of the Overview brought electricity and plumbing to the hilltop on 6th and even today, the basement of Overview includes an easement and main pipeline that allows water service to the two properties immediately west, both former Steffen properties.

The Steffen business dynasty operated on such a scale that when the family dissolved the dry goods firm almost fifteen years after August Senior's death, the sale of the store's stock conducted by a New York auction house, was noted in an article in the New York Times.

A. E. Steffens and his two sons August and Phillip continued to live in the home during much the 1920's. A. E. died in 1932. It is believed that sometime in the 1930's the house was divided to make two separate living quarters. Neighborhood legend says that the split was due to animosity between the two brothers. However, a recollection of a family member maintains that the impact of the Depression forced the family to create two living spaces in the home. Whatever the reason, traces of the center dividing wall are still visible on the ceiling and grand staircase.

### **Building for the Future**

In the 1930 city directory, A. E. Steffen is still designated as owner occupant of the Overview. By 1940, the home is listed as two addresses (410 & 412) with two non-owner occupants. Alex J. Berger was the owner during the 1950's, 60's and 70's; he is listed as occupant along with two tenants. In 1980, Katharyn Lawson is owner and occupant, again with two other tenants. By 1990, with the structure empty, it does not appear in the city directory.

The home was featured in the 1990 Avati Brothers film "When the Night Begins." Plans to turn it into a bed & breakfast/banquet facility introduced that same year did not materialize. A number of owners have attempted its restoration and significant work has been completed. Accomplishments include restoration of the clay tile roof, meticulous repair to original windows, replacement of the massive concrete porches, restoration of the stone retaining wall on 6th Street, rewiring, and installation of a state of the art kitchen.

While much of the original interior has been gutted, beautifully carved woodwork and elaborate crown moldings remain. Despite the current condition, the stunning beauty of this palace on the hill leaves visitors in awe. This once glorious mansion patiently awaits the next owner who will take on the daunting task of completing its restoration.



**628 Ripley Street -- The William Ruser Home**  
**Queen Anne/Colonial Revival, ca. 1896**

### **Preserving the Past**

The house was built in 1896 for jeweler William Ruser. He was born in Schleswig-Holstein in 1844 and emigrated to America and Davenport in 1865.

While Ruser's 1920 obituary features a picture of a distinguished gentleman and remembers him as a "pioneer settler" and "a man of splendid character and unquestioned integrity," at least one early reference indicates he might not have been made to feel his adopted city to be quite so welcoming. An article in the April 14th 1867 The Davenport Daily Gazette admonishes immigrants of certain guidelines they must follow before being allowed to vote and warns that anyone attempting to vote illegally in an upcoming election will be subjected "to severe punishment." It includes a list of every man who had filed for citizenship within the past two years. Many names on that list are of Germanic origin. Included is one "Wilhelm Ruser."

In the 1870 Davenport Census, 26-year-old "Wilhelm Ruser" is listed as living in Ward #3 with occupation as a Miller and real estate valued at \$4,000. In a household nearby lived 13-year-old Emma Hoering with her mother, father and three siblings. Wilhelm and Emma married six years later, July 8, 1876.

William and George P. Stark operated the jewelry and watch-making firm of Stark and Ruser which was located at 119 W. 2nd Street. William was active in the firm for twenty five years. He died in 1920 at age 76.

He and his wife Emma had five daughters. Their daughter Etta graduated from Cornell University and Chicago University. She never married and taught German at area high schools. At the time of her father's death, she was living

with her mother on Ripley Street. Mrs. Ruser died in 1933. Etta lived in the home until 1942.

### **Building for the Future**

The transitions experienced by the William Ruser home parallel the fate of the neighborhood. In 1963, a permit was granted to convert the building from a single to a two family home. In 1972, another permit allowed further changes to accommodate two apartments and 4 sleeping rooms on the second floor.

By the time the 1990 city directory was published, it was one of only two homes on today's tour that was occupied; it containing eight apartments. In 2007, the house was purchased by its current owners. It is undergoing renovation to return it to a single family residence.

### **Notes**