ARTHUR T. AND GONEIA HIMES HOUSE

(1901)

1502 WISCONSIN AVENUE



The Queen Anne house located on the southwest corner of 15th Street and Wisconsin Avenue is on a plot of land originally purchased from the State of Wisconsin by Moses Vilas in 1849. Vilas was the surveyor who plotted the original city of Racine. He was an alderman on the first city council and its first president. He was chosen to be the city surveyor in 1848 and assessor in 1849. The land changed hands many times in the years between 1849 and 1900. Because of the purchase price on the deeds, tax records and city directory listings we think there was a cabin or small house located on the property before this house was built in 1901.

The current house presents typical features of Queen Anne architecture, the dominant style between 1880 and 1900. Fortunately, most of its original features have been retained during its 121-year history. The house is a two-story with an asymmetrical façade, narrow clapboard siding and a steeply pitched roof with an irregular roofline. The front and side-facing gables have cutaway bay windows on the first and second floors and unusual decorative brackets in the eaves. In addition, the windows in the gable peaks and dormer have arched cathedral panes. There are also closed pedimented gables over the front entrance and dormer. The first story center bay windows have a large single-pane window topped with a smaller rectangular pane. The second story center bay windows and the three double-hung windows on the north corner above the porch all contain diamond shaped panes. Classic columns support the one-story front porch roof while decorative, turned spindles enclose the porch. A set of three small decorative windows is found above the entrance gable.

Catherine Tubulik purchased the property in 1857 for $245. The 1862 city directory lists John Tubulik living there, perhaps in a simple small house, but he had died by the 1868/69 directory. Widow Catherine continued to live there at the southwest corner, later numbered as 1500 Wisconsin Avenue, until 1897. However, in 1892 she sold the property to John S. Muenich. He was the priest at St. Louis Catholic Church in Caledonia and then became the rector at Holy Name Catholic Church a few blocks west on Grand Avenue when that parish was formed in 1894. He lived at 1509 Grand Avenue, next to the church in what was then the rectory. The Very Reverend Monsignor John S. Muenich died in 1898 and his funeral was held over two days, September 28 and 29. The newspaper reported it was the largest funeral ever held in Racine County. It seems that Father Muenich’s estate then passed to the Church, since when the property was next sold in 1900 the seller was St. Catherine’s Academy. However, William Van Arsdale, the Vice President of Racine Cement and Pipe Company who purchased the property, owned it for only three months before selling it to Arthur Himes and his wife Goneia.

Arthur Himes was the Secretary of Racine Wagon and Carriage Company. He and his wife bought the property in November of 1900 for $1150. They sold it for $7000 in 1902; most likely a substantial building, the current house, had been constructed in 1901. The house number changed from 1500 to 1502 at this time. The ownership of the house changed hands ten times since 1902. The Brya family: Daniel & Susan, Michael, and Marjorie had one of the longest tenures in the house at thirty-one years. They are believed to be responsible for the many intact original interior features.

The current owner, Kevin Shuttleworth, purchased the house in 2020 and has been returning it to its former glory. Preservation Racine truly appreciates him continuing to preserve and enhance this residence and opening his home for the tour this year.

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