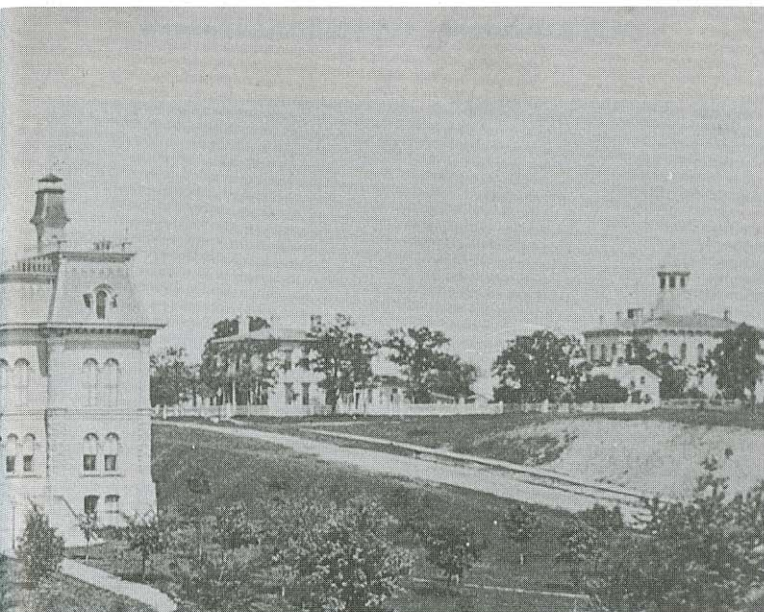


The Courthouse Hill Historic District rises above the city of Janesville and the east side of the Rock River on a steep bluff. A wooded ravine separates it from neighborhoods to the east and nineteenth and twentieth-century commercial development borders it at the west. This residential neighborhood contains outstanding examples of the architectural styles associated with Janesville's growth and development from settlement to 1940. Many of Courthouse Hill's early residents were influential in commerce, industry and legal affairs, and the district's architectural development well demonstrates their architectural tastes. The historic district, which contains 30 blocks and 219 properties, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1986 after architectural surveys made in 1975 and 1981. Listing in the National Register gives national recognition to the special character of the area, and provides properties with limited protection from any federally-funded, licensed, or permitted actions. It also makes rehabilitated income-producing properties eligible for federal and state investment tax credits. (See page 43 for more information.)

The blocks surrounding Courthouse Hill appear on Henry Janes' plat of Janesville first recorded in 1840. In 1836, the territorial legislature established the Rock County seat here on Janes' claim. Janes' plat provided for a courthouse site, with four squares sloping down the bluff. The squares were near the river landing, and also provided excellent views of the river and the bluffs to the west. Janes left the area in 1839 and was in California by 1855. In that year he corresponded to the *Janesville Gazette*:

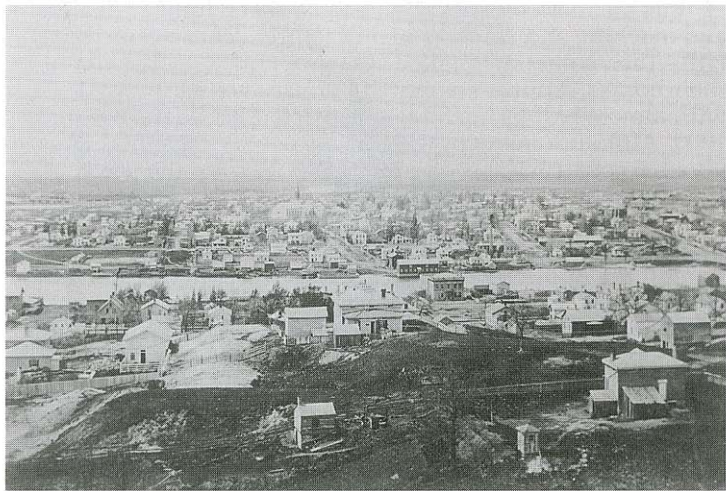
I have never been able to learn where you built your courthouse . . . I had selected a block to put it on, top of the hill, back of where Harvey Storey's blacksmith shop stood when I left Janesville . . .

In addition to occupying a portion of Janes' original plat, the district occupies portions of later additions made by land developers Sinclair, Bates, and Connell, Jackman and Smith.



Above: Courthouse Hill, ca. 1872. The high school, built in 1859 on the site of Jefferson Park, is at far right.

Below: At the edge of Courthouse Hill, ca. 1868.



As the county seat, Janesville was important as a center of government. The city's early prosperity was also based on the development of its water power. In the 1840s, dams, bridges, and lumber, grist and woolen mills were built along the Rock River. The success of agriculture, particularly wheat growing, and the construction of three railroad lines propelled growth prior to the Civil War.

Janesville was incorporated as a city in 1853. In the decades which followed, flour milling, woolen and cotton production, cigar, shoe and brick manufacture, stone quarrying, tobacco warehousing, agricultural implement manufacture and eventually automobile manufacture underwrote the expansion of the economy and population. From a settlement of less than 300 in 1840, Janesville grew to 3,000 in 1850, to 8,789 in 1870, to 13,185 in 1900, and to 22,186 in 1925. During the nineteenth century, most of Janesville's population was comprised of natives of New York and New England. The largest group of European immigrants were natives of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

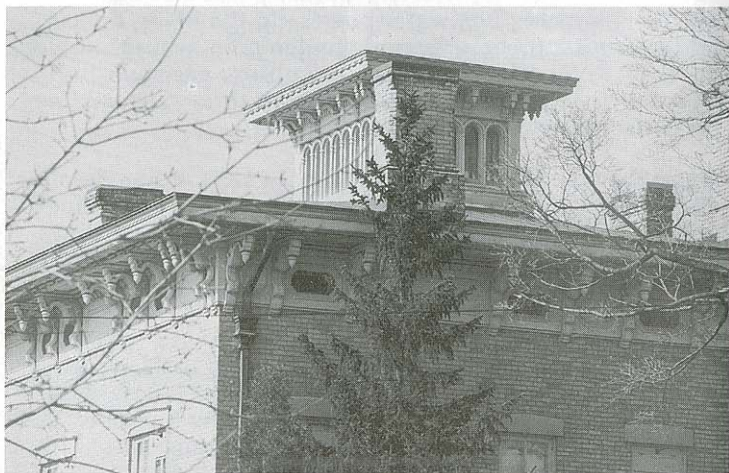
The Courthouse Hill Historic District



View of Courthouse Hill from the high school, ca. 1890.

Throughout these years, many of Janesville's prosperous business owners, lawyers, bankers, lumber dealers, and machine and carriage manufacturers chose Courthouse Hill—then sometimes called "Quality Hill"—as the site of their homes. Approximately 114 houses were built by 1900, with almost half of the total constructed between 1890 and 1900. Although many of the earliest houses have not survived, 6 constructed in the 1850s and 24 from the 1860s survive today.

In general, the earliest development was concentrated around the public squares of the original plat and along East Court Street. The 1858 *Map of Janesville* shows the area relatively unbuilt in comparison with west Janesville neighborhoods. The steep bluffs of the site provided a deterrent to building in the first decades of settlement. Early photographs show that partially-graded bluffs rose in many places around newly-constructed houses. Today, many of the large lots of the original plat are still undivided, and one can imagine the late nineteenth-century views of the river and hills from the district's porches, balconies, and cupolas.

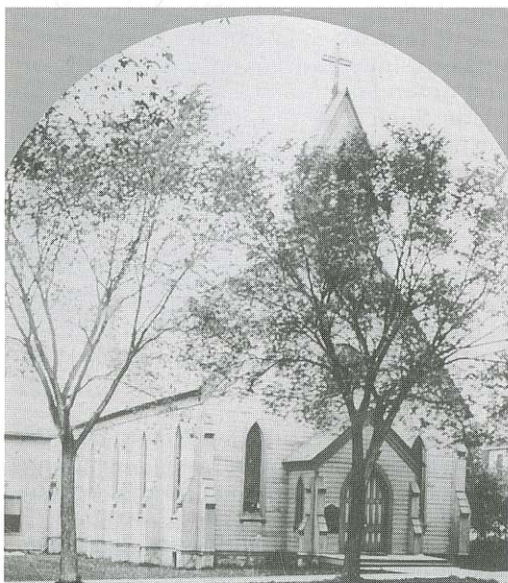


Timothy Jackman House, 1858.

The Courthouse Hill Historic District



Courthouse Hill, from the Atlas of Rock County (1893).



Christ Episcopal Church, Court Street, 1861. Razed.

Over its more than 150-year history, Courthouse Hill has been the site of a cemetery, a school, and several churches and public offices as well as houses. The first Rock County Courthouse, built in 1842 and burned in 1859, was located on the present courthouse block. A second courthouse was completed in 1871. It was demolished in 1957 after the construction of the current building. The first high school, built in 1859, was located on the site of present-day Jefferson Park. The park site was formerly a cemetery.

The Trinity Episcopal Church (1931) at 409 East Court Street is the only church remaining in the district. Trinity replaced the earlier Christ Episcopal Church. The All Souls Unitarian Church (1866) still stands just west of the district. The building was converted to apartments in 1902.

The Courthouse Hill Historic District



Architect F.B. Townsend's drawing for the Claremont Jackman house, 1884.

Residential Architecture

Courthouse Hill has an abundance of late nineteenth-century Queen Anne style houses, but also many fine examples of the architectural styles popular in Wisconsin from 1840 to 1940. Despite a common architectural vocabulary within each style, no two houses are identical. A number are fusions of two or more styles, or reveal several decades of architectural changes. Some buildings have been completely altered so as to make their historic styles indistinguishable. Architect-designed houses as well as those of very simple form and ornamentation can be found here, sometimes side-by-side. Such diverse neighborhoods were quite common in the nineteenth-century, when unstable land values and frequent boom-and-bust cycles were accompanied by much speculation in real estate.

The variety of styles and details seen throughout the district is partially attributable to the influence of carpenter's handbooks, to plans published in popular periodicals, and to the standardized millwork and trim available at lumberyards. Carpenters, masons, and architects also contributed to the exchange of architectural ideas.

Among nineteenth-century architectural styles found in the district are Greek Revival, Second Empire, and Queen Anne. Classical Revival, Bungalow and Craftsman, Prairie School, and a variety of historic revival styles, such as Georgian, were popular in the early twentieth. The district also has a number of vernacular houses which make little reference to a particular style.



Claremont Jackman house, 1884, detail.

The Courthouse Hill Historic District

C. F. SCHULZE,
Successor to NETTLETON & SCHULZE,
ARCHITECT,
And consulting engineer on heating and ventilation
of Buildings, **DESIGNS AND PLANS,**
with elevation, perspective and detail drawing for
VILLAS, FARM HOUSES, COTTAGES, CHURCHES,
CITY RESIDENCES, SCHOOL HOUSES, COURT
HOUSES, STORE FRONTS, &c.,
furnished on short notice.
Office Over 31 W. Milwaukee Street,
JANESVILLE, WISCONSIN.

*Architect George F. Schulze
oversaw the construction of the
second Rice County Courthouse
(1871) for Milwaukee architect
Edward Townsend Mix.
Advertisement from Holland's
Janesville City Directory, 1870.*

Architects and Courthouse Hill

The work of several prominent architects can be seen in the district, including that of James Douglas of Milwaukee, Frank Kemp of Janesville and Beloit, and Hugh Garden of Chicago. Their biographies are included here; other architects are mentioned in the following building descriptions.

Allen P. Lovejoy House, detail.



James Douglas was born in Scotland in 1823 and arrived in Milwaukee in 1843. Between 1843 and 1863 Douglas was in partnership with his brother, Alexander, as "J.A. Douglas, Architects and Builders." Prior to a period spent working for the Northwestern Life Insurance Company, he was noted as a designer of churches. When he resumed his career he turned to domestic architecture. Most of Douglas' extant residential work in Milwaukee dates from the 1870s. The so-called "Douglas Style" included stepped towers, steeply-pitched roofs, numerous dormers, and a variety of carved or turned millwork and stone trim. He was the designer of the Allen P. Lovejoy House (1881), and possibly the Clarence W. Jackman House (1885).

The Courthouse Hill Walking Tour



Margaret Cargill Barker house, detail.

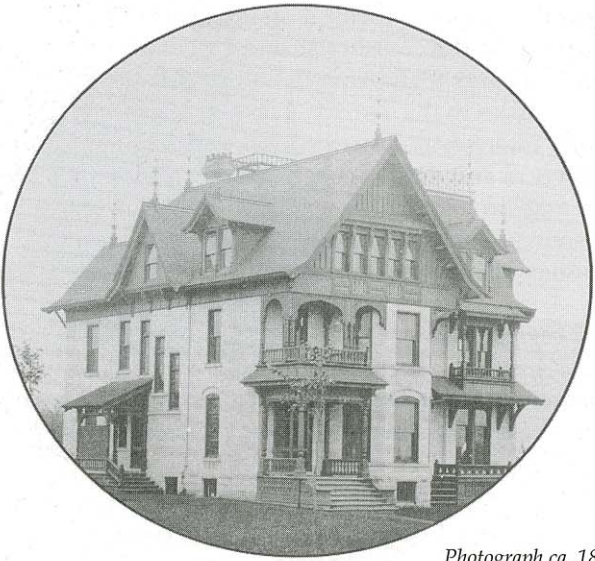
Hugh Mackie Gordon Garden (1873-1961) was born in Toronto. His family moved to Minneapolis in 1887 and then to Chicago. His early experience was gained in the Chicago offices of Flanders and Zimmerman, Henry Ives Cobb, and Sheply, Rutan, and Coolidge. In 1893 he began free-lance work in Illinois and Wisconsin. Some of Garden's residential commissions reflect the influence of the Prairie School. His notable commercial buildings include the Grommes and Ulrich Building (1901) and Montgomery Ward Warehouse (1925) in Chicago. He also designed churches, including the Prairie School First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Marshalltown, Iowa, of 1902-3. In Janesville, he designed the Margaret Cargill Barker House (1904) at 308 St. Lawrence.



Olaf H. Olson house, 630 E. Holmes, 1909, detail.

Frank Kemp was born in Roxbury, Wisconsin. His parents emigrated from France and Germany in 1854. He entered an architectural school in Milwaukee, completing his studies in St. Louis. He had a carpentry and painting business between 1884 and 1890 and began practicing architecture in Madison in 1890. He had a Janesville office between 1892 and 1897; was in Madison again 1897-1899, and worked in Beloit between 1899 and 1918. He is credited with 70 churches, 35 schools, and a great number of residences. In Janesville, he designed the London Hotel (1893) and St. Mary's Church (1900) as well as a number of houses in the Courthouse Hill area. His residential designs included Queen Anne, Prairie, Tudor, Craftsman, and a variety of Historic Revival examples. The Fred R. Jones house (1908) at 315 Jackman Street is among his work in Janesville. He died in 1944.

The Courthouse Hill Historic District



Photograph ca. 1888.

ONE HOUSE, MANY LIVES

The building which houses the YMCA today was built by Allen P. Lovejoy following his marriage to Julia Stow in 1880. After an extensive European honeymoon, they returned to Janesville and lived at the Myers Hotel and later on Prospect Avenue while this house was built. Lovejoy, a former carpenter, kept a watchful eye on the construction of the house. It is said that he sat on a camp stool observing the construction to ensure that everything was built according to his specifications. Lovejoy became a bank director, Janesville Mayor (1881) and State Senator (1887–1889) in addition to following his manufacturing interests. He died in 1904; Mrs. Lovejoy resided here until her death in 1953. She was one of a group of local women who established the first hospital. She founded the first kindergarten in the city, and was also active in the campaign for womens' suffrage.



Photograph 1986.

Today the Lovejoy House, now the YWCA, houses a variety of educational and recreational activities for children, teenagers, and adults.