

## *A Look Back in Time*

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*The Francis G. Myers House, 4010 Seventh Avenue, was designated a historic structure by the Kenosha Common Council on October 20, 2003 based on the property's distinguishing characteristics of the late Italianate style of architecture.*

*This architecturally significant home was built in 1880-81 on the entire northeast quarter of the block suggesting a "suburban estate." Currently, it sits on a narrow lot on Kenosha's north side along Seventh Avenue, a busy thoroughfare through the north side of the city.*

*The Italianate style of architecture was popular in Wisconsin between 1850 and 1885. The hallmarks of the style are a square or rectangular main block, sometimes with a rear ell; a low-pitched hip roof; wide overhanging eaves with brackets; round or segmentally-arched openings; heavily ornamented window hoods and door surrounds; one-story bays; and small porches with thin posts and brackets.*

*The Myers house is a fine example of this style because it has all of these features executed with a high quality of construction materials and methods. The house is typical of the style seen in the later part of its popularity, the late 1870s and early 1880s. It has a more vertical emphasis than earlier Italianate style houses, which are often low and "boxy" looking. But the house's most distinctive quality are its window openings with the elaborate carved window hoods. Also distinctive is the decorated overhanging eaves of the main block.*



*Preservation of this significant home is evident as few alterations have been made and all of the most distinctive qualities are intact and beautifully preserved. Even the later-added garage is built with a complementary material and attached to the house in a manner that does not detract much from the architectural character of the house.*

*F*rancis Gerhard Myers was a German immigrant who came to the United States with his parents in 1839. In 1840, the family came to the Town of Paris in Kenosha County and began farming. In 1849, Myers was struck with "gold fever," like many others, and went to California to strike it rich. Like most who went to California, he did not strike it rich and returned to the farm in 1850. He went to California a second time in 1851 and did make some money, but soon returned to Kenosha County.

*I*n 1875, Myers was listed in the Kenosha County directory as a resident of the Town of Paris, with a 340-acre farm. He was obviously a successful farmer, because when he retired, he purchased the entire northeast quarter of Block 28 on the north side of the City of Kenosha and built this fine retirement home in 1880-81. In 1894, Myers sold the house and large land parcel to Joseph Thomas, and in 1897, Myers died. Joseph Thomas had numerous occupations, including grocer and owner of a creamery, but in the 1910s, he was an employee of the Simmons Company. Perhaps he was able to keep his fancy house by selling off the majority of the original parcel of land. Thomas vacated the house between 1923 and 1925.

*W*e invite you to ride by and experience the distinctive characteristics of this Italianate style home for yourself.