



APPLICATION FOR DESIGNATION
as
LANDMARK

PEORIA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Pursuant to Article III, Sec. 9-8 of Ordinance No. 11,990, I submit the following:

A. Name(s) and address(es) of the owner(s) of property proposed for designation:

Name

Address

Endsley, Dale B. 4508 Broyhill Court, Peoria, IL 61615

B. Legal description and common street address(es) of the property proposed for designation:

PT SW 1/4 4 8 8

ORIGINAL A HALE'S ADD

117.5' ON MAIN X 302' DP ADJ HIGH

PT LOT 6

(1125 Main, Peoria, IL 61606)

C. A map delineating the boundaries and location of the property proposed for designation (attached).

D. Written statement describing the property and setting forth reasons in support of the designation proposed (attached).

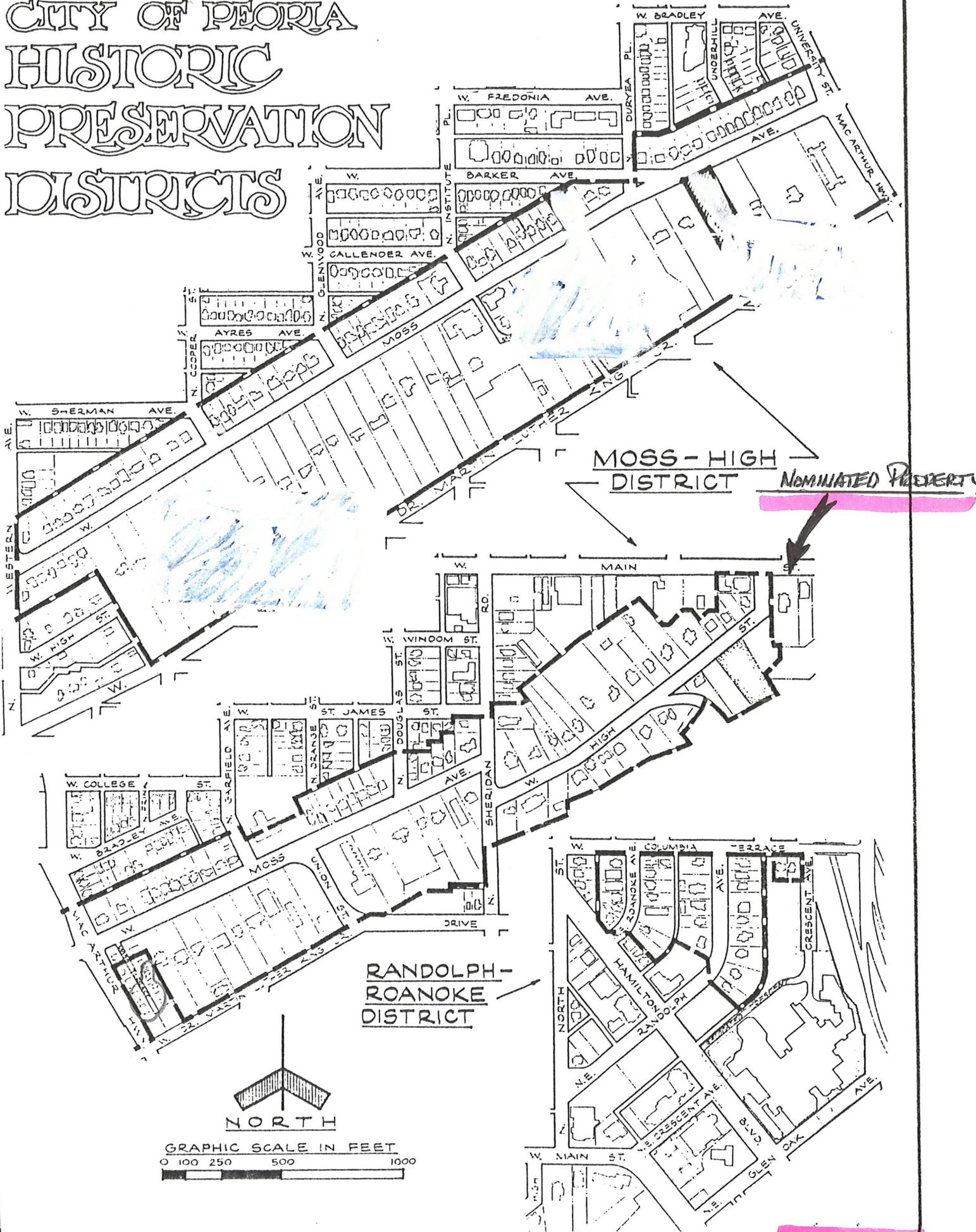
Submitted by: Sherry L. Meyer

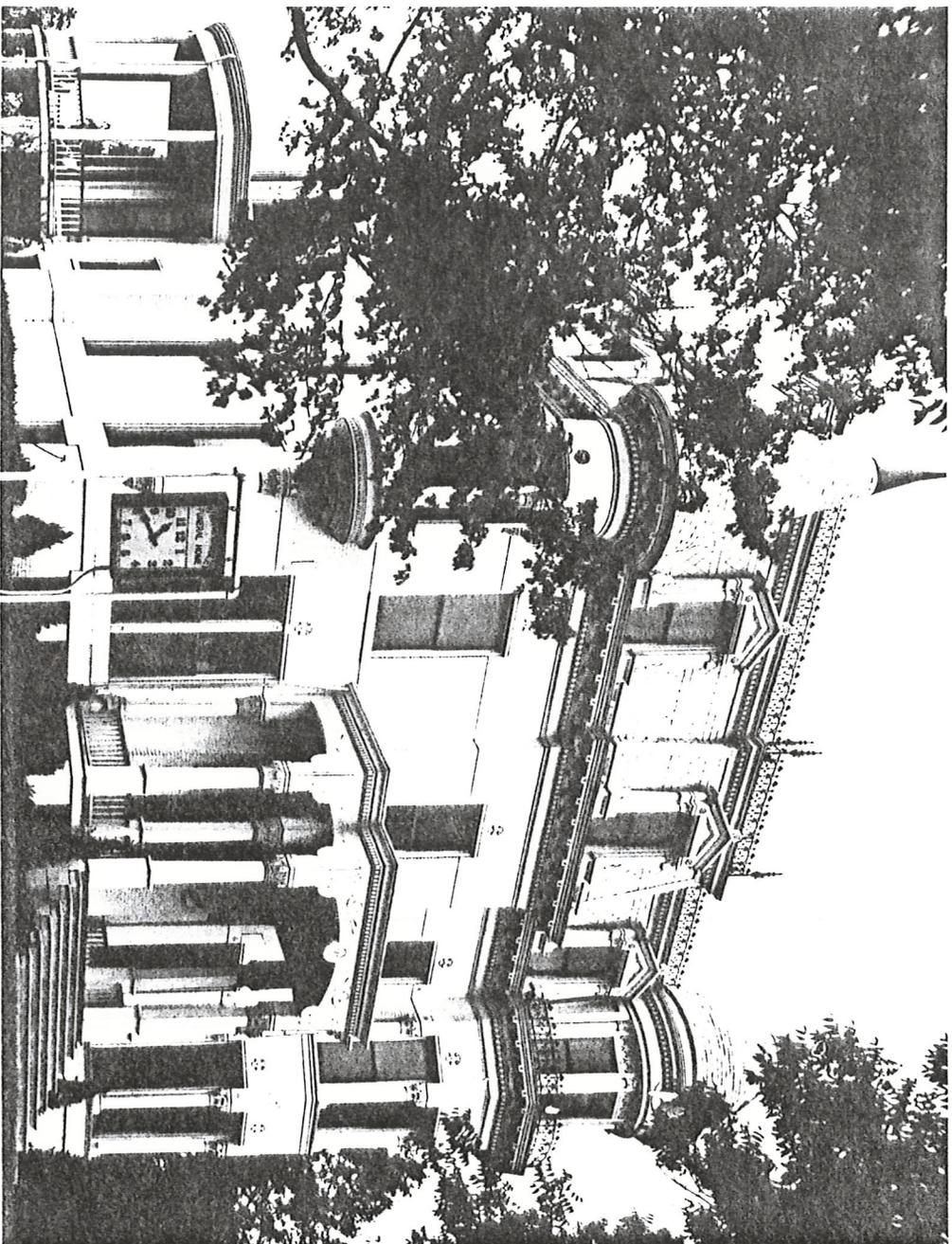
9/30/92
Date

600 W. High St. -Carriage
Address House
Peoria, IL 61606

673-7256
Phone

CITY OF PEORIA HISTORIC PRESERVATION DISTRICTS





The large white structure at 1125 Main Street, currently a funeral home, is a good example of adaptive reuse. Over the last 95 years it has made the successful transition from a residence to its present use. It was built in 1882 for Edward Easton, a successful grain dealer who eventually helped organize the Peoria Board of Trade. After a short time, the house was sold to the Comstock family, who held it until 1941 when it was sold to the current owner.

The house was designed in the Second Empire style, with the characteristic Mansard roof, delicate iron railing along the roof line, heavy cornice, dormers, and windows flanked with classical pilasters. Unfortunately some of the original detailing has been altered and removed.



One of the most remarkable aspects of made in cash or through personal lines Much early Peoria construction capital from Benjamin Langford Bourland, a pioneer in the Civil War. Like many fine Peoria resident families. In 1892, Nathaniel Griswold, here since 1867.

Pre-dating most High Street houses by about 1850. Highly ornamental wood be in the 2nd floor center element and lo While the symmetry is not a characteristic in the suggestion that two heirs divide t records, scratched in an upstairs windo

Mr. Easton's home was one of the largest homes built on High Street. It stands as the first building and most prominent on the bluff at the entrance to High Street Historic District. Mr. Easton built many properties in his lifetime including Easton Flats on High Street, which was destroyed by fire. His intent was to control the character and vitality of the properties adjacent to his home.

The historic designation would carry forward Mr. Easton's own intent to preserve the character and vitality of the neighborhood. Integration of this property into the adjacent district would help stabilize and improve the economic vitality and value of the neighborhood. This property when issued Historic status would stand to enhance the city's attraction to visitors, stimulating commerce and industry. Designation would assist the effort to preserve and restore this building and protect it from being razed to make way for a fast food restaurant or high rise.

Mr. Endsley has been granted exemption from the Historical District by virtue of council and the Legal Department's ruling that he owns a structure on Main street, period. He is exempt from the District by sole virtue of the fact the property is on Main Street, not that it is unworthy of Historical Status. Subsequent to the 70's creation of the Moss-High Historical District the City of Peoria has been empowered with Home Rule and subsequently enacted Ordinance 11990 adopted August 15, 1989.

The inpowerment and purposes are as noted in pages 1-5 of the Ordinance, particular attention should be paid to purposes #One through #Eleven, especially the First and Last. Further in the Ordinance (Page 8) it should be noted a Landmark seems to describe the property on the Bluff built for Mr. Easton by the City's First Architect Charles Ulricson. Furthermore on Page 9 an Historic Structure seems to be a synonym for the original residence of Edward S. Easton at 1125 Main Street, Built in 1881 by the Cit's First Architect who also acted as contractor.

The criteria for Nomination (page 16) denotes the following:

- 1) The character - Applies
See attached biographies on Mr. Edward Easton, owner and Mr. Charles Ulricson, Architect and Contractor.
- 2) Location of Significant Local Events - Applies
See attached copy of article from the A.W. Oakford Collection pointing out the social center Mr. Easton's home served on Highwines Ave. for the social elite of that time.

3) Identification of person who significantly contributed to the development of the City of Peoria - Applies

See attached biographies.

4) Distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, type, method of construction, or use of indigenous material - Applies

See attached article from "Central Peoria Observer, Wed., Oct. 20, 1982" especially noting quotations from Peoria Architect Kenyon and current owner Mr. Dale Endsley.

5) Identification as the work of a master building, designer, architect, or landscape architect whose individual work has influenced the development of the City of Peoria - Applies

See attached biography on Mr. Charles Ulricson, Peoria's First Architect.

6 & 7) Architecturally significant and innovative - Applies

Construction and extensive iron work.

8) Unique location - Applies

Stands on the Bluff Precipice and entrance to the Moss - High Historic District.

Given the above criteria met significantly over and above the one criteria required, nomination as a significant Historic Landmark is hereby requested and the board is so urged to move by this petition.

Sources of Information

<u>Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Peoria County</u>	Bateman	1902
<u>Peoria, City & County, Illinois</u>	Rice	1912
<u>Peoria Two - East/West Bluff Pre 1940</u>		
AIA - Peoria Section of Central Illinois Chapter and Junior League of Peoria - Project Preserve		1981
"Peoria Historical Society Collection," Library (Various News Articals)	Bradley University	
V.F. Peoria - "Architects and Architecture" Tim Hartneck		1984
<u>The A.W. Oakford Collection</u>		

life. The public is very apt to forget, or at least temporarily overlook, the fact that to the men of this latter class primarily belongs the credit of laying the foundation for the marvelous material prosperity that our country is enjoying. Men of that class do their work with very little outward display and but little to arrest and fix the attention of the masses, and hence oftentimes their importance is overlooked. By so much as the things of the mind and heart, of character and life, are above mere material prosperity, so are these educators of greater importance than the mere men of force. Newton Charles Dougherty belongs to the class of educators of this higher grade referred to, and, at the same time, combines it with real business capacity. Hence he is a power in the city of his adoption, beyond that of a mere business man, and also in a larger degree than a mere educator of children.

Mr. Dougherty was born in Chester County, Pennsylvania, January 10, 1847. He was the youngest son and child of Philip and Hattie (Perry) Dougherty, both natives of Chester County. His father was of Scotch-Irish extraction and his mother was of English descent. The boyhood of Mr. Dougherty was passed in the usual manner of a farmer's son, his studies being prosecuted in the district schools, until he was fourteen years of age. He then entered Newark Academy and, six months later, became a student in the State Normal school in Millersville, Pennsylvania, where he prepared for college. Entering college in 1864, he graduated in 1868. Subsequently he received the degree of Ph. D. from Knox College, and LL. D. from Wesleyan University.

He came to Illinois in 1869 as the Principal of the schools in Morris, Grundy County. He went from Morris to Mt. Morris, in Ogle County, where he became Principal of the Rock River Seminary, one of the oldest institutions in the State. It has graduated many men of talent, ability and prominence in politics, among whom are Senators Cullom and Farwell, Ex-Governor Beveridge, Hon. R. R. Hitt, and the Hon. John A. Rawlins, at one time chief of General Grant's staff. In 1878 Mr. Dougherty accepted a call to become Superintendent of the Peoria schools. The schools under his supervision immediately began to improve and soon were reduced to a system ranking them among the best of the graded schools of the State. Mr. Dougherty, with his characteristic energy, broad scholarship and genial manners, commended himself to the Board and to the teachers, and such has been his success that the thought of any successor is never entertained by the Board. Mr. Dougherty occupies a very prominent position in the educational forces of the United States. Perhaps no man is better known, and his influence and counsel are sought in educational matters, not only in this State, but throughout the country. He has been President of the National Educational Association and has been actively identified with the development of educational institutions of the State of Illinois.

Mr. Dougherty is a good business man as well

as a popular and successful educator. He is President of the Peoria National Bank, one of the oldest banks in the city.

Mr. Dougherty was married, December 25, 1871, to Anna Edwards, a daughter of Richard Edwards, now of Bloomington, Illinois. Her father, as all Illinoisians know, has been one of the prominent and efficient factors in the development, progress and success of educational institutions in the State of Illinois. He was President of the Illinois State Normal University and State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Three children have been born to Mr. and Mrs. Dougherty: Mabel E., Horace R. and Ralph L., all of whom are college graduates. Miss Mabel is Assistant Instructor in English in the Bradley Polytechnic Institute. Horace is at present Vice-President and Manager of the Title and Trust Company in Peoria, and Ralph L. is taking a law course at Harvard University.

EDWARD S. EASTON.

Edward S. Easton was born at Zanesville, Ohio, April 20, 1842, and died at Peoria, Illinois, Feb. 21, 1901. He was the second son of Samuel E. and Hettie Oliver Easton.

Samuel Easton came to Peoria with his family June 20, 1846. His occupation, for many years, was that of a grain dealer. He died January 3, 1874. Hettie Oliver Easton outlived her husband many years. Always a prominent worker in various charitable organizations, sorrow and destitution found in her the prompt aid and sympathy that endeared her to all.

Edward S. Easton had only a common school education. Early in life he was possessed of a determination to become an active business man, and he felt the time given to acquiring a higher education wasted for his purposes. The commencement of his business ventures was as a train-boy on one of the first passenger trains coming into Peoria. In this occupation he soon developed his strong business instincts and keen ability. He saw in a short time this field was too narrow for him, so he gave it up and commenced buying grain. Nearly all the grain coming into Peoria was brought in wagons. There being no elevators, the grain was sold upon the streets. The buyers were often numerous and the competition naturally great. Mr. Easton's occupation was now congenial and he grew with the growth of the city. He built the Phoenix Elevator and Elevator "A."

He formed a partnership with Franklin Hall under the firm name of E. S. Easton & Co. This partnership continued until his death, doing an immense business. They built the Central City Elevator, owning a large part of its stock. They were the purchasing agents for several Distilling Companies and also for the Glucose Company for several years. Mr. Easton was instrumental in inducing the Glucose Company to locate in Peoria. He was active in the establishment of the Board of Trade (of which he was President in 1877) and in the erection of the Chamber of Commerce Building. He was a stockholder in

the Central Street Railway Company, and one of the promoters of the Peoria Terminal Railway, of which he was also President.

All of his business ventures were conducted in a very successful manner and with great profit. A portion of the money which he so rapidly accumulated was invested in his usual judicious manner in Peoria city real estate, and its increase alone made him a wealthy man.

He chose one of the most beautiful and valuable sites in Peoria, situated on the brow of the West Bluff, and erected thereon a magnificent home for his family, reserving a large piece of ground to add to the beauty and comfort of his home. He bought all the surrounding land and put up a large number of handsome tenement houses in order that nothing should detract from the value of the home. He owned a large number of fine business houses and tenements in various parts of the city, and a large and valuable stock farm lying close to Peoria.

He was a thorough Republican in politics, and twice was in the City Council,—from 1884 to 1889, and again in 1892 and 1893. During each period he served the city with energy and fidelity. He was Presidential Elector upon the Republican ticket in 1896. At the time of his death he was one of the Trustees of the Asylum for Incurable Insane at Bartonville, near Peoria.

Although but a youth at the breaking out of the Civil War, Mr. Easton was one of the first to enlist, but was not accepted at that time because he lacked the requisite height; subsequently, however, he joined Company G. of the Sixty-seventh Illinois Volunteers. At the time of his death he was a member of Bryner Post, No. 67, Grand Army of the Republic.

He was married on February 3, 1864, to Sarah D. Hall, who survives him and to whom he willed most of his large estate. Three children were born of this marriage: Charles Samuel, George Blakely, and Edna Sarah. The two sons survive but the daughter died in infancy.

Mr. Easton and his wife, as a memorial to this little daughter, erected a substantial brick structure upon the spot where their early home stood, to be used as a home for working girls and women. This was conducted for some time, but not proving all that was desired in reaching the most needy, the property was sold and the proceeds donated to the Women's Christian Home Mission.

Mr. Easton was always a most liberal contributor to and supporter of charitable institutions and charities in Peoria, the city in whose future he had so much confidence and whose business interests, by his unlimited investments coupled with his great energy and remarkable foresight, he was constantly developing.

GEORGE FRANCIS EMERSON.

George Francis Emerson, wholesale dealer in heavy hardware, was born in Morton, Tazewell County, Illinois, April 4, 1847, the son of Enoch G. and Harriet P. (Waters) Emerson. His parents were both natives of New England, his

father having been born at Rochester, Vermont, April 19, 1812, and his mother at Lebanon, New Hampshire, October 22, 1815. They came to Sangamon County, Illinois, in 1834, in company with a colony expecting to locate there, but being disappointed in securing a satisfactory location as to lands, removed to Tazewell County during the following year, where they remained until March, 1865, when they came to Peoria.

Mr. Emerson was educated in the common schools of his native county and lived upon a farm until March, 1865, when he came to Peoria, and having taken a course in the Worthington, Warner & Cole's Commercial College, in the following fall he became assistant book-keeper for D. C. Farrell, later for two years (1866-67) occupying the position of book-keeper for the firm of C. L. Bobb & Co. On June 15, 1868, he entered into the employment as book-keeper of the firm of Cummings & Stone, wholesale dealers in heavy hardware, and has been engaged in this business ever since. Mr. Stone, having sold out his interest in the establishment to his partner, Mr. Cummings, retired, the business being conducted by the latter alone for the next two years, when, on February 1, 1872, Mr. Emerson was admitted to partnership in the concern under the firm name of Cummings & Emerson. Mr. Cummings died January 25, 1878, and from that date—a period of twenty-four years—the business has been under the sole management of Mr. Emerson. In the meantime, the interest of Mr. Cummings remained under the control of his widow until her decease, which occurred in 1896, when it passed into the hands of their heirs. Early in the following year (March, 1897) the concern was formally incorporated under the original firm name of Cummings & Emerson, under which the business has been since conducted, with Mr. Emerson in the position of President and Manager. The business of the concern has had a steady growth since its establishment in 1867, and was never more prosperous than at the present time. It now keeps one of the most complete and extensive stocks in its line in the country, and is widely known as one of the most progressive and enterprising houses in the branch of trade to which it belongs.

Mr. Emerson was married on November 7, 1871, to Miss Harriet C. Woodruff, daughter of Nelson L. and Mary A. Woodruff, of Peoria, and they have had four children: Ada, Frank Nelson, George W. and Grace W. Ada died in infancy, and George W. at five and a half years of age. Frank N. Emerson, the only remaining son, graduated from Princeton University and the Institute of Technology in Boston, Massachusetts, and is now pursuing his profession as an architect in the city of Chicago.

In religious faith and affiliation Mr. Emerson is a Presbyterian without sectarian prejudices. While an earnest Republican, politically, he is in no sense a seeker for office, preferring to devote his time and energies to his business and the interests of his family, without neglecting his duty to the community in which, for over thirty-five years, he has made his home.

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PEORIA PUBLIC LIBRARY
REFERENCE DEPT.

CHARLES ULRICSON (1816 - 1887)

#1385

Charles Ulricson, in all probability Peoria's pioneer Swedish settler and very first architect, was born in Stockholm, Sweden, on November 17, 1816. His father had been Government Architect of Sweden, but died when Ulricson was quite young. As was customary in Sweden then, he was compelled to learn a trade. As a matter of fact, he mastered three, all from the ground up: architect, stone-cutter, and brick-layer. He eventually added contractor to these. Here in Peoria, he acquired his own planing mill in which to produce all his own mill-work.

When Ulricson was 19, in 1835, he came to America. According to the story recalled by his son, Oscar E. Ulricson, it was customary in Sweden in those days for all the estate to pass to the children of a deceased father instead of to the widow. But Charles Ulricson and his brother relinquished all rights to their father's estate in favor of their mother. This decision raised so much controversy among the nobility in Sweden, that the two brothers decided to leave the country and make their fortune elsewhere. Charles' brother started out for Australia, but died at sea en route.

The Ulricson family were of the Swedish nobility, and there is some authority for saying that they were related to the royal family itself. When a nephew of Mr. Ulricson visited Sweden ~~recently~~ while on a world tour, he was entertained by the royal family. But the exact relationship cannot be determined in spite of the family's efforts to discover it.

Upon his arrival in the United States, Ulricson established himself as an architect first in New York City, where he remained for a little more than four years. He spent the next few years travelling through the Southern states in search of the ideal place to settle. According to the 1889 History of Peoria County, Ulricson did not find the "peculiar institutions" of the South congenial and, therefore, extended his search northward, settling at last in Peoria, probably in 1844.

The first public record of Ulricson's long and successful career in Peoria appears in the 1845 newspaper notice of the opening of his office on Main Street for the purpose of designing and executing architectural and ornamental drawings, for erecting private and public buildings, and for drawing up the specifications of works to be executed. And the Peorians of that time quickly availed themselves of his services, both as architect and as builder-contractor: as late as 1857, Koot's City Directory showed only two architects working in Peoria. Although the list of all of Ulricson's buildings is not available, even a partial list is astounding. And his standing in the community - and his participation in it - is also reflected in his directorship of the city library, his vice-presidency of the Peoria Chess Club, his secretaryship of a property holders' association, and his service as a vestryman of St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

So it was not until many years later that Ulricson, having established himself permanently in the community both commercially and personally, found the time or the inclination to marry and start a family. In Oshkosh, Wisconsin, on April 16, 1861, this successful 45 year old architect married Maria E. Cowham, the

daughter of an English clergyman and his Swedish wife.

Ulricson brought the 18 year old Maria home to Peoria and, in 1863, built a fine, two storey frame home on North Monroe Street for her, where six children, four sons and two daughters, were to be born.

Ulricson's own family was Lutheran and his wife's Methodist, but in Peoria, both husband and wife were affiliated with the Episcopal Church. This affiliation probably dates back to 1849, when Ulricson prepared the plans and specifications for the building of a new church building for St. Paul's Parish. Benjamin Cowell, in his history of St. Paul's, calls Ulricson the father of the first Church building and notes with great satisfaction and pleasure that so early an association continued and prospered. "His Ulricson's wife, and later his daughter also, have been constant in preparing and executing plans and specific work to the good of the parish. For much of its early existence, the vested choir had a mother in Mrs. Ulricson."

A quick recap of Ulricson's numerous architectural efforts must include the Anderson Building where Clarke & Co. was located, the building have since been remodelled. He built the Masonic Temple which was torn down when the Commercial Merchants National Bank was erected on that site. He built the Washington Cockle house, later bought by Robert Ingersoll, and still later the National Hotel on the north corner of Hamilton and Jefferson. Ulricson built the Savings Bank of Peoria and also the Merchants' Bank.

The County Home at Maxwell was also one of Ulricson's projects, and he was supposed to have had some connection with Jubilee College, but his children are not exactly certain just what was his involvement there.

Ulricson drew up and gave to St. Paul's Episcopal Church the plans for their first building, which is also the site of their present Church. He built the Comstock Homestead on Main and High Streets. He built Rouse's Hall.

The H. J. Woodward home on Moss Avenue was his work. Clarke's building was his responsibility as was Puterbaugh's home on North Jefferson. The first County Jail, the first County Court House, his own homes at 502 North Madison and at 309 West Armstrong, Clint Farrell's house and L. L. Day's house on North Madison, the Valentine DeWein house on the northwest corner of Knoxville and Columbia Terrace, the Mansfield home which stood on the site of the present First Methodist Church, all these were built by Ulricson.

He also built the Pinkney Building at the corner of Jefferson and Main and the Cole Business College, the Day Brothers Dry Goods Store, and the building which housed Woolworth's, now torn down. Ulricson also played a large part in the building of quite a few of the public school buildings here in Peoria.

Among the buildings Ulricson worked on outside of Peoria are the Danforth home in Washington, a church in Bushnell, and "Old Main" at Knox College in Galesburg, recently declared an ~~"Historic Site"~~ by the Secretary of the Interior. The latter is described as typically Gothic in style, displaying a somewhat stiff symmetry in contrast to the ~~infix~~ more informal massing then coming into vogue.

Ulricson's last building was the Fey Hotel, which was later razed to make way for the Montgomery Ward Store building,

Yet Ulricson and his family, though comfortably well off, were not rich. The architect never realized a single cent from some of his buildings. In those days, it was just not possible to put a lien on buildings to guarantee the payment of monies owed to a

builder. At the time of the financial panic of 1873, Ulricson lost some \$70,000.00 because people for whom he had built were either unable or unwilling to pay him.

On December 13, 1887, Charles Ulricson died at his home. His obituary in the next day's Peoria Daily Transcript lauded him: "Charles Ulricson, an old citizen, highly respected for his many good qualities of heart and mind, died yesterday morning at 10 o'clock of paralysis, aged 71 years, after an illness of several months, during which he had been confined to his house. He had resided in Peoria forty years, and was one of the oldest architects and builders in the city. He was the architect of the Masonic Temple and of nearly all the old school houses. He was a devout member of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and in all things, a quiet, thorough-going, conscientious man. He leaves a wife and four children. The funeral, conducted by John R. Zeigler, will take place from the residence, corner of Armstrong Avenue and North Street, this afternoon at 2 o'clock."

Mrs. Maria Ulricson died twenty-five years later, on January 26, 1912.

THE EASTON FAMILY

The Easton family took root in Peoria in 1833, when John Easton came to the small community and engaged in the grain business. He was of Scotch descent; his grandfather came to America in the late Seventeen Hundreds and settled in Maryland.

John Easton in 1837, together with William and Asahel Hale and others, operated a water mill on Kickapoo Creek near Pottstown.

While residing in Peoria John was married. Shortly thereafter he returned East. Mr. and Mrs. John Easton had a son, Samuel, born in Virginia. He married Miss Hettie Oliver of Zanesville, Ohio. In 1856 they came to Peoria. Their early Peoria residence was at what is now 209 Third Street. They became the parents of five sons and two daughters.

The sons were: Edward S., Horace A., Charles, Freddie and Otis Milo. The daughters were: Sarah (Mrs. John Sproat) and Keziah (Mrs. James Baxter). The father, Samuel was a successful grain dealer. He was one of the organizers of the Odd Fellows Lodge in Peoria. Mrs. Hettie Oliver Easton, his wife, gave generously of her time and means in soldiers relief work during and following the Civil War. She was one of the patriotic Peoria women who organized the Women's National League of Peoria, which later became known as the The Soldiers Monument Association.

EDWARD S. EASTON

Ed Easton, as he was known to his friends, was born at Zanesville, Ohio in 1842. He came to Peoria with his parents in 1856. He satisfied himself with a grade school education. Then, while still in his teens, he became a train boy on one of the earliest passenger runs out of Peoria.

Keen of mind and ambitious to forge ahead, he was quick to grasp opportunities. He soon began buying grain. That was before the first grain elevator was built in Peoria. At that time grain was sold on the street to competitive bidders.

At the beginning of the Civil War Ed Easton endeavored to enlist, but was rejected because of his height. He later joined Company C of the Sixty-seventh Illinois Volunteers. Following the war he became an active member of Post 67 G.A.R.

In 1864 he married Miss Sarah D. Hall of Peoria. In 1874, following his father's death, he succeeded to the Samuel Easton grain business. He later became a partner of Franklin Hall under the firm name of E. S. Easton & Co.

They erected the early Central City Elevator, and later the Phoenix Elevator, and bought grain for various distilling companies. Mr. Easton was instrumental in persuading the American Glucose Company to locate in Peoria.

He became one of Peoria's well-to-do citizens. He was a stockholder in the Central City Railway Co., and later one of the promoters of the Peoria Terminal Railway, of which he served as president. He erected the Easton Building adjacent to the Board of Trade Building, and also made some sound real estate investments.

He was vice president of the Monarch Distilling Co., and later, in association with Mr. Sumner Clarke, built the Manhattan Distillery. It is said that in the later venture, because of an exceptional purchase of low priced corn, the cost of the Manhattan Distillery was met in a single year.

Mr. Easton was active in the organization of the Peoria Board of Trade and served as president in 1877. When the present Chamber of Commerce Building was rebuilt in 1888, following a fire, he was one of the promoters.

Another of his investments was a stock farm close to the city, which he named Aeriton, for one of his prized horses. That farm was in more recent years purchased by the late Dr. Clarence Ward.

Mr. Easton served two years as a member of the Peoria City Council, and was also a Trustee of the Illinois State Asylum at Bartonville.

The early E. S. Easton home was at 207 Third Street. Mr. and Mrs. Easton were the parents of three children: Charles, George and Edna.

The daughter, Edna S. Easton, died when only six years of age. In her memory the parents established the Edna Home for Working Girls, at 201 Third Street. It operated for about three years, from 1888 to 1891. Meeting with only partial success, the Home was sold and the proceeds donated to the Women's Christian Home Mission.

About 1882 Mr. Easton erected a large handsome brick residence on the east corner of Main and High Street, at the top of Main Street hill. On adjoining property on High Street he built a very substantial row of connecting brick residences. On the hillside, below his residence, he built a large brick stable at a cost of \$5600.00. That building is now occupied as the headquarters of Post 814, Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Charles Easton, like his father, became identified with the grain business.

The Edward S. Easton family were members of the Universalist Church. Mr. Easton was a Republican in politics. His fondness for horses caused him to erect a number of stone drinking fountains for man and beast, in different sections of the city.

About 1908 the large residence was sold to Mr. John Comstock, a prominent Peoria realtor. The Comstock family resided there for many years. The residence has more recently been acquired by Mr. Frank M. Endsley and is now a mortuary chapel.

Following Mr. Easton's death in 1901, his widow and members of her family continued to occupy the large residence until 1908. Then Mrs. Easton went to California, making her part time residence in a Los Angeles hotel. During her later years she travelled extensively, making several journeys to Europe.

OTIS MILO EASTON

Otis Milo Easton, the youngest son of Samuel E. and Hettie Oliver Easton was born in Peoria in 1857. His first employment was in the grain business with his father. Then for some years he was a gauger in the United States Revenue Service. Later he was auditor for the Peoria and Pekin Terminal Railway. In politics he was a Republican.

Mr. Easton married Miss Della Celesta Tripp, a daughter of David H. and Mary Barbour Tripp. Her father was associated with his brother, Stephen S. Tripp, in the early book business in Peoria.

The early Otis M. Easton residence was at 209 Third Street. Mr. and Mrs. Easton had two sons, Milo Tripp Easton, named for his father, and Sidney Harris Easton. The parents realized the value of education for their sons, both of whom graduated from the Peoria High School and later studied medicine. Further reference is made concerning them and their noteworthy careers. The father, Otis Milo Easton, died in 1927. His wife, Mrs. Della Tripp Easton, a woman of fine intelligence, died in 1938.

Milo T. Easton, the older son of Otis Milo and Della Tripp Easton, was educated in the Peoria Public Schools. He then worked in a drug store for a brief period. In 1902 he entered the Northwestern University Medical College, graduating in 1906. He was one of the younger members of his class.

Dr. Easton served as a house physician in Cook County Hospital

SALE of the grand old Easton mansion—in more recent years the Comstock home, on the bluff crest inside the curve of Main st. turns a fresh page in the history of this stately and beautiful old residence. It is bought by Charles L. Swords, subject to a contract for deed held by Frank M. Endsley, who it is said, will convert it into a memorial home. The purchase price is said to be \$9,000. It is not likely that it will be occupied or any extensive repairs and remodeling undertaken during the duration, because priorities and restrictions of war conditions make the immediate present inopportune.

The sale was concluded by Atty. O. P. Westervelt, who for many years has represented the Comstock heirs. The place was purchased by Col. John Comstock a few years after the turn of the century. Col. Comstock died in 1905. There were three sons and six daughters, Helena, John, Spencer, Nathaniel, Jessie, Eva, Bena, Susan and Mary. One by one they passed away until today only two, Mrs. Eva V. Shelley of Florida and John of Chicago, survive. Title to the property was vested in Mrs. Sue Hart who died two years ago, the title reverting to her son and daughter, Walter D. Hart of Florida and Mrs. Irene Allen of Philadelphia, who have now disposed of their interests.

John Comstock was a self-made man. He was born in 1818 in Ohio. Left an orphan when 11 years old, Peoria became his home in January 1840. It was not until the early fifties that he became identified with the real estate business. He was a man of judgment and an authority on land laws. He was conservative but daring in his property investments, following his own shrewd appraisal. In 1883 he formed a partnership with James M. Morse. During the Civil war he was a stalwart advocate of the Union cause and was rewarded by Governor Richard Yates with a colonel's commission. He was prominent in Masonry and a member of the Episcopal church.

In 1851 he was married, his bride being the accomplished Amelia A. Molineaux who was as prominent in the social life of Peoria as her husband in business activities. The Comstocks were a grand old family.

Edward S. Easton, who built the Bluff Crest mansion, nearly 75 years ago, is a tradition in the business history of Peoria. He was born in Zanesville, Ohio, in 1842 and was four years old when his father, Samuel Easton, moved his family to Peoria. Commencement of his business ventures was as a train boy on one of the first passenger trains running into the city. Next he became a grain buyer. Grain was hauled in wagons then and sold on the street. There were no elevators. Buyers were often numerous and bitter competition. He prospered and built the old Phoenix elevator and Elevator A.

He formed a partnership with Franklin Hall (E. S. Easton & Co.) which continued until his death in 1901. He was concerned actively in the distilling business and establishment of the Glucose Co. He was instrumental in organization of the Board of Trade of which he was president in 1877, also in the building of the Chamber of Commerce. He was prominent in the Peoria Street Railway Co., and a promoter of the Peoria Railway Terminal and its president.

He was a Republican in politics, an alderman several terms and a presidential elector in 1896. At the time of his death he was one of the trustees of the Asylum for the Incurable Insane at Bartonville.

He was one of the first to volunteer when the Civil war broke out, but was rejected as too short in stature. Not discouraged he enlisted in Company G, Sixty-Seventh Illinois Volunteers and was a member of Bryner Post No. 67, G.A.R.

He was married in 1864 to Sarah D. Hall. Three children were born, Charles S., George B. and Edna Sarah. She died in infancy. The Edna Home for working girls and women was erected in her memory. Mrs. Easton and both sons have died in more recent years.

As a home for his family, Mr. Easton purchased the beautiful and valuable site commanding a magnificent view of the growing city and Illinois valley from Asahel Hale, Peoria pioneer and erected the stately mansion that became famed for its gracious and lavish hospitality. There were formal functions and the ballroom on the third floor was often crowded with the beauty and chivalry of Peoria in the palmy days when High st. was known as Highwines ave., social center of the city. Its register including the homes of Frank Hall, Fred Birks, J. B. Greenhut, John H. Francis, sr., Sumner Clarke, R. W. Kempshall, Horace Clarke, J. B. Hogue, Rev. A. A. Stevens, Attorney John S. Stevens and others whose names are woven in the social and industrial upbuilding of Peoria, in which Ed Easton and his accomplished wife, lovers of life and living, were moving spirits.

Ed Easton loved horses. Back of his old home is a great brick barn where he kept his speedsters, while beyond the western suburbs was his famous Aireton Stock Farm, where he bred and raised his track horses and thoroughbreds.

In every enterprise that could add to Peoria prestige he was a leading spirit.

Of late years the old mansion has been vacant, ransacked by vandals, windows broken, plumbing stolen, light fixtures broken and even fireplaces and mantles torn from the walls, perhaps in hopes of finding some secret safe with jewels or money. Vandals worked their will until the Police took it under surveillance. C.B.S.

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At Main and High

Second Empire mansion is part of Peoria's past

By Theresa Staley

The 100-year-old, stately structure situated on the eastern corner of Main and High Streets may look somewhat out of place amidst the stores, gas stations, and restaurants that dominate this busy section of Peoria's West Bluff. It belongs to a bygone era, when the elite of Peoria society flocked to the top of Main St. Hill to attend the gala affairs held within the walls of this mansion.

Built in 1882 by Edward S. Easton, a wealthy grain dealer and distiller who moved to Peoria in 1856 at the age of four, this imposing edifice was designed to suit the lavish lifestyle of its occupants. The third-story ballroom and billiard room provided the setting for many soirees, which were attended by promi-



The interior shutters that appear throughout the structure on the eastern corner of Main and High streets are characteristic of the Second Empire style of architecture.

nent Peorians and, it is believed, the 23rd president of the United States, Benjamin Harrison.

Peoria architect Leslie Kenyon, an authority on local historic structures, noted that the ballroom was an American adaptation and not a traditional feature of the Second Empire architectural style in which the Easton estate, also known as the "Bluff Crest" mansion, was built. He pointed out that there were no elegant hotels with ballrooms suitable for formal occasions, such as debutante balls, during that period in America's history.

"At the time that house was in its full glory, the big event was the coming out of your daughter," Kenyon said, indicating the need in upper-class social circles for private ballrooms in which the maidens could be properly introduced to society.

According to Kenyon, the Second Empire style was developed in France during the time of Napoleon II (1811-32). It is characterized by such features as a mansard roof, interior shutters, and porches. While the old Easton estate, the site of Endsley & Son Funeral Home since 1943, was originally designed with these three distinguishing characteristics, it is now devoid of the porches indigenous to its architectural style.

Separating this particular Second Estate house from others in the city is its "unique placement," Kenyon observed.

"It can be seen from almost every side. The man who built it wanted everybody to know he had the money," he said.

The fact that Easton, a descendant of Scottish immigrants who settled in this country in the late 1700s, was a man of considerable wealth is evidenced throughout the interior of the house he had erected as his personal residence.

Adorning the 16-room structure is



During the late 1800s, countless prominent Peorians ascended the steps leading to this mansion in order to attend a soiree hosted by the original owner, Edward S. Easton.

carved walnut woodwork imported from Sweden. The doors—including the elevator door and the double doors at the main entrance and ballroom entrance—

and windows of this elaborate building are enhanced with beveled, plate, or etched glass or a combination thereof. Easton's expensive taste is apparent even in such minute details as the door handles and hinges, which are of cast bronze.

"Everything Ed Easton did was perfect. When he built this house, he didn't spare a thing," said Dale Endsley, current owner of the house and son of the late Frank M. Endsley, who purchased the house in 1941 after it was released for sale by the heirs of the second owner, Col. John Comstock, a real estate tycoon who purchased the house around the turn of the century.

"This is the best home ever built in Peoria, construction wise. This place was built like a fortress," he added, pointing out that the house was constructed with a "double brick outside wall, forming its own insulation with the air space. It (the house) could be here another hundred years and outlast some of the houses being built today."

The Endsleys have redecorated the building somewhat in order to accommodate their business. For example, the nature of the business demanded that carpeting be laid over the hardwood floors to reduce the noise created by footsteps.

For the most part, however, the Endsley family has attempted to "keep the original flavor of the house. We feel that modernization is great," Endsley said, "but when you've got something like this, it should be kept rather than changed."



The red brick structure was painted white in 1943 after it was purchased by Frank M. Endsley for use as a funeral home.