

Public Space One



adaptive reuse

histories and futures of  
538 S. Gilbert  
225 N. Gilbert  
& 229 N. Gilbert

further reading

Buffalo, Jonathan L. "Meskwaki Chronology and Perspectives." [www.meskwaki.org/history/](http://www.meskwaki.org/history/). 2013.

Ellis, Edwin Charles. "Certain Stylistic Trends in Architecture in Iowa City." MA Thesis, State University of Iowa, 1947.

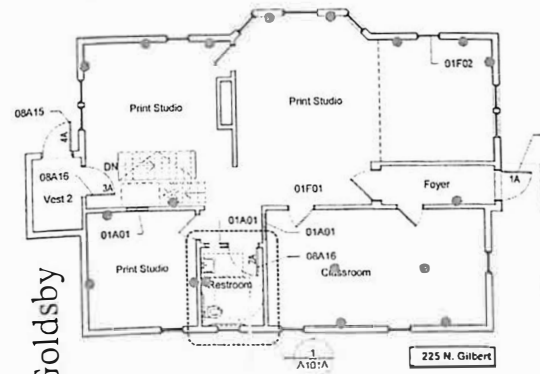
Johnson, Keach. "Iowa's Industrial Roots, 1890-1910." *The Annals of Iowa* 44 (1978): 163-190.

Keyes, Margaret N. *Nineteenth-Century Home Architecture of Iowa City*. 2nd Ed. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993.

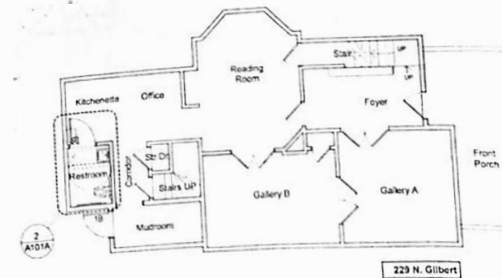
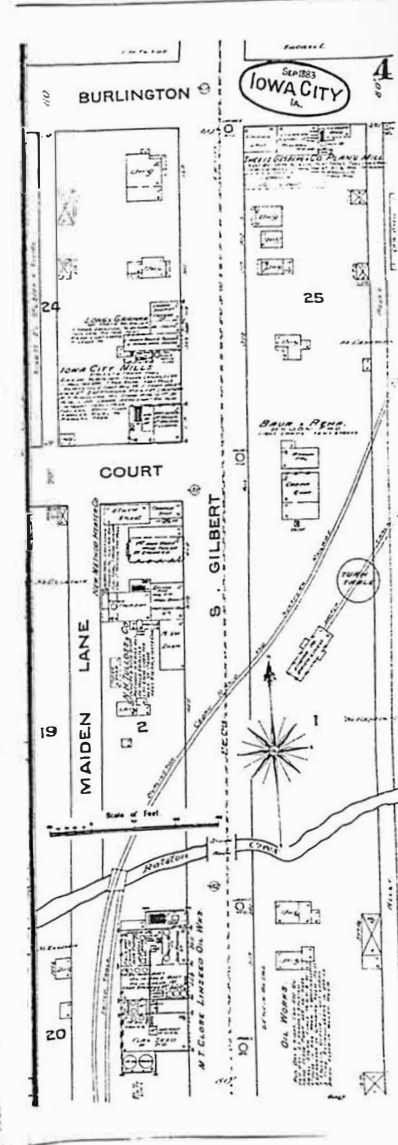
Lafore, Laurence. *American Classic*. Iowa City: Iowa State Historical Department, 1975.

Pfiefer, Michael. "The Making of a Midwestern Catholicism: Identities, Ethnicity, and Catholic Culture in Iowa City, 1840-1940." *The Annals of Iowa* 76, no. 3 (2017): 290-315.

*History of Johnson County, Containing a History of the County and its Townships, Cities and Villages from 1836 to 1882*. Iowa City: The Publishers, 1882.



interpretation by Amelia Goldsby  
summer 2022



# Adaptation

Any work to a building over and above maintenance to change its capacity, function or performance.<sup>1</sup>

JAMES DOUGLAS, 2006

Adaptation means the process(es) of modifying a place for a compatible use while retaining its cultural heritage value. Adaptation processes include alteration and addition.<sup>2</sup>

ICOMOS NEW ZEALAND, 2010

Adaptation means changing a place to suit the existing use or a proposed use.<sup>3</sup>

THE BURRA CHARTER, ICOMOS AUSTRALIA, 2013

“Land-use as applied in conventional Western planning practice is both temporal and corporal. It bases its community development upon the regulation of land usage in a manner that balances private property rights and dominant notions of public welfare. Land-use becomes the embodiment of a corporate entity that develops it with the primary intent of raising capital valuation...”

Ted Jojola, “Indigenous Planning – An Emerging Context,” 43

“Capital flows rapidly in search of cheap labor, innovative manufacture, financial deregulation, and new markets, and the life expectancy of buildings has plummeted as a result.”

Hal Foster, *Junkspace with Running Room*, 63

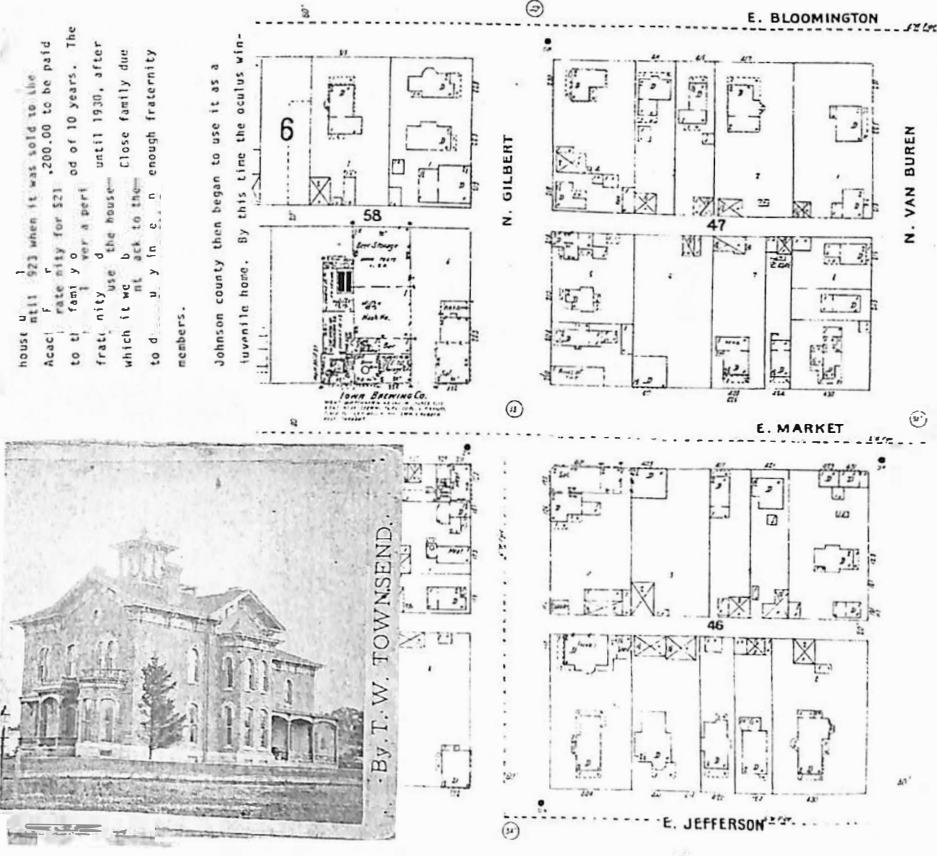
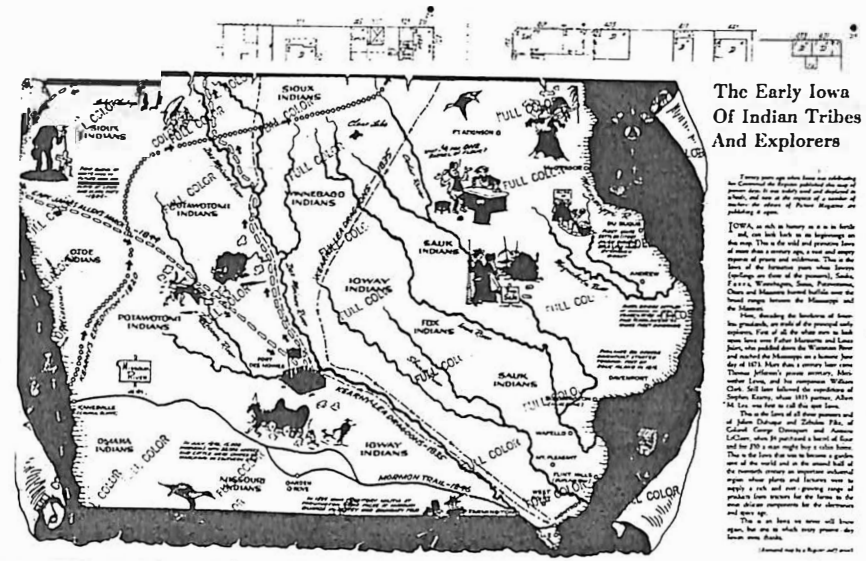
“In adaptive reuse...the effect of past experience on new interventions of reuse is equally viable as physical traces of the past...”

Liliane Wong, *Adaptive Reuse: Extending the Lives of Buildings*, 147

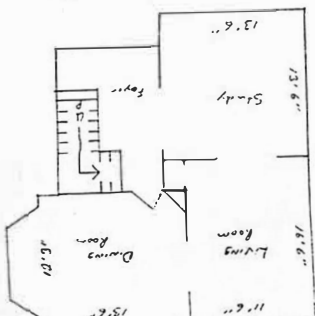
“If there ... is indeed no outside at all, they are still able to find fissures within this world, to pressure these cracks, to open up a little running room.”

Hal Foster, *Junkspace with Running Room*, 62

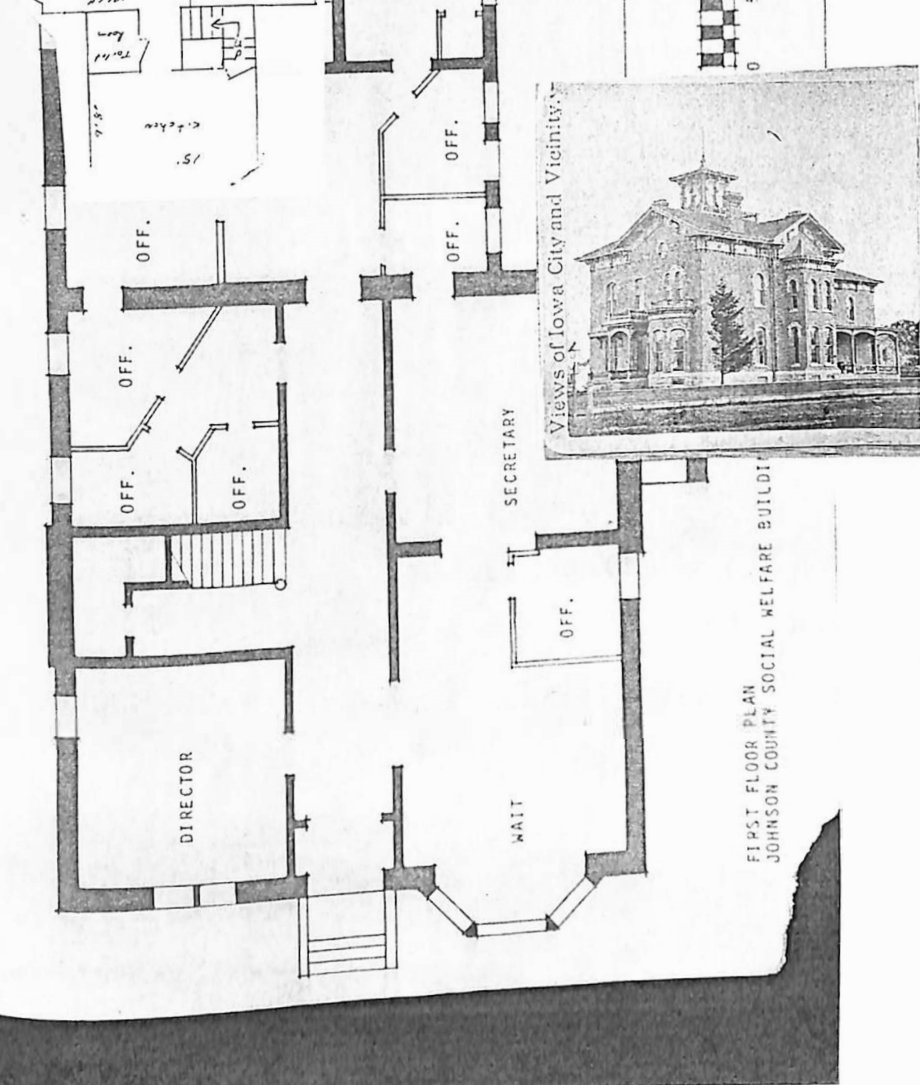
Liliane Wong, *Adaptive Reuse: Extending the Lives of Buildings*, 13



229 N. G. 11th St.  
1st fl. RES 6/10/20  
← N



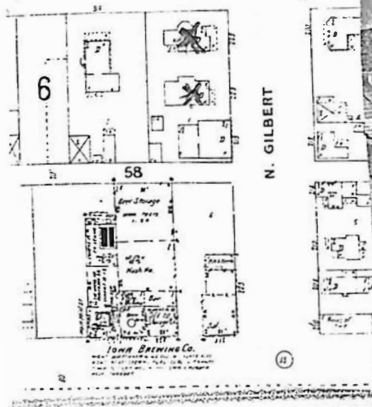
Close factory, c. 1970s



Views of Iowa City and Vicinity

FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
JOHNSON COUNTY SOCIAL WELFARE BUILDING

Sanborn Insurance Map, 1906



NOVARS NEW MAP OF  
IOWA CITY  
Revised and Enlarged  
1889

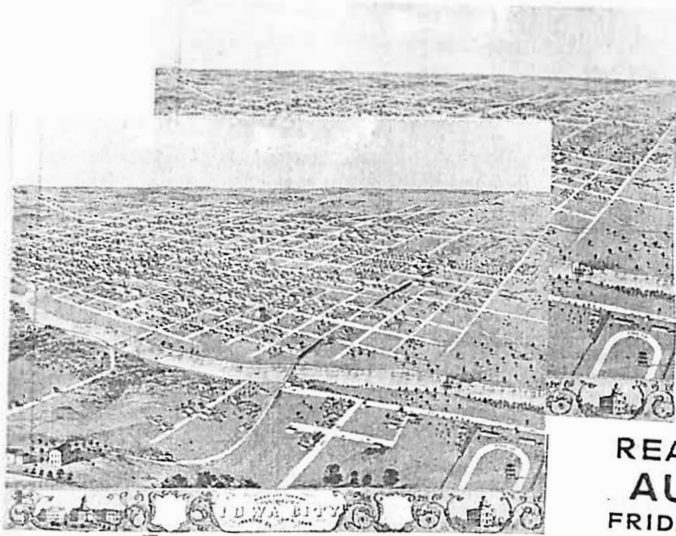


Chalmers D. Close for \$15,000. He was one of three brothers who were prominent Iowa City industrialists. The three-story brick mansion was built with eight fireplaces topped with huge mirrors, walnut staircases and bannisters to the third floor, a library, billiard and chess room, three bathrooms and servants' quarters.

Close-Skaugstad  
The Close Mansion, on the northeast corner of Gilbert and Bowery streets, was built in 1874 by



The Mansion, corner of Gilbert and Bowery Streets.



**REAL ESTATE AUCTION**  
**FRIDAY, MARCH 21**  
**"CLOSE MANSION"**  
 538 S. Gilbert St.  
 Iowa City, Iowa

A bird's eye view of Iowa City, printed by Chicago Lithographing Co. in 1868, depicts the "civilizing" placemaking mission of white settlers. The view is expansive, precise-but-not-accurate, almost-but-not-quite a map. It is as much an object of aesthetic self-imagining as it is record of spatial information. Orderly rows of streets line city blocks. Each street is labelled - Gilbert (John Gilbert, supposedly the first white man to set foot in Johnson County), van Buren (Martin van Buren, president at the time when Iowa became a territory), Johnson (Colonel Richard Johnson, famous for killing the Indian warrior Tecumseh in 1813 and who also gave the county its name), and so on.

If you trace the labelled streets, you can find the approximate location of the first lot that was sold in 1839. John Trout won the first bid - \$100 for a parcel near Clinton and Market. In 1881, the value of Iowa City land was valued at \$1,598,113 (or about \$45,796,278.18, accounting for inflation). It was said that "Iowa" meant "beautiful country," an (untrue) effective real estate marketing tactic. Beauty, of course, means white clouds in a blue sky and green grass, but also factories, trains, and steamboats to make and transport products.

\*In 2021, the Johnson County Board of Supervisors voted to rename the county for **Lulu Merle Johnson**. She was the first Black woman to receive a doctorate from the University of Iowa and the first Black woman to receive a PhD in history in the United States.

Supervisors has  
 538 S. Gilbert  
 longer needed  
 permission to  
 at PUBLIC

in 200' frontage  
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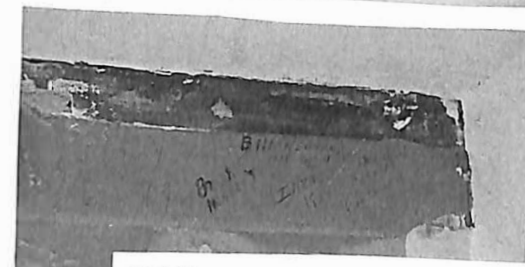
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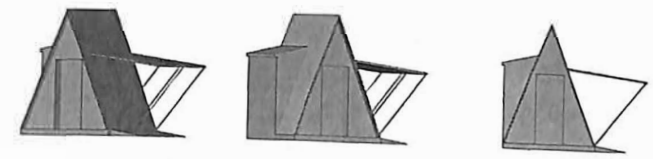
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Auction Arranged and Conducted by  
**OSTER and SON**  
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 490 Road  
 City, Iowa  
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 artising.

In 1936, 225 was purchased by Katie Hervert and Frank Henry Hervert. Frank himself was a carpenter and made many modernizing updates to the home with salvage he brought from construction sites. If you walk into 225, you can see an unpainted portion of ceiling with the signatures of Frank and his children (along with doodles).



Public Space One purchased 229 and 225 in 2019. 229 became gallery space on the first floor and artist studios on the second, while 225 houses the Iowa City Press Co-Op. Doors were removed in 229 to make it brighter. In the basement of 225, braces were added to accommodate the weight of presses. A red and white piece of wood from a past exhibition was repurposed as the trap door. Community, experimentation, reuse - these threads trace back.



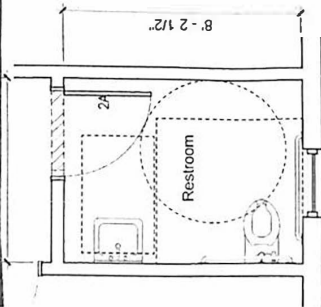
rendering of the teaching shed by Hannah Givler

PRESORTICEN 3/11/20

medal of St. Jude, found in 229



The Hohenschuhs built a second home on the lot next door in 1904 (unlike 229, it was single-storied – perhaps due to Christian’s prolonged struggle with illness). 225 was built by Charles Mentzer. Like Hotz, Mentzer was a designer-builder – a skilled craftsperson who could draft plans for structures (architecture licensure did not develop until the 1920s). Simpler than 229, 225 is a vernacular Folk Victorian home. After Christian’s death in 1918, Clara returned to 229 and began to rent 225. Many people – postmen, technicians, etc. – lived there.



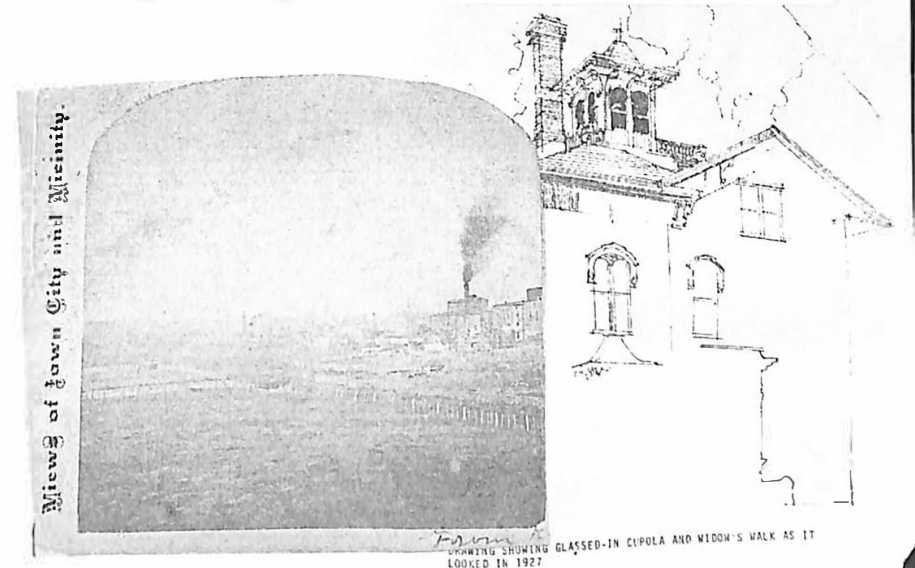
All fixtures, accessories, grab bars, etc to be installed per ADA guidelines. Provide ADA clear floor areas at fixtures and 60" turning diameter.

More recently, 225 was a punk house and 229 sheltered nuns.

C. D. Close came to Iowa City in 1854 and opened a linseed oil factory with his brothers. Before its closure in 1899, the factory

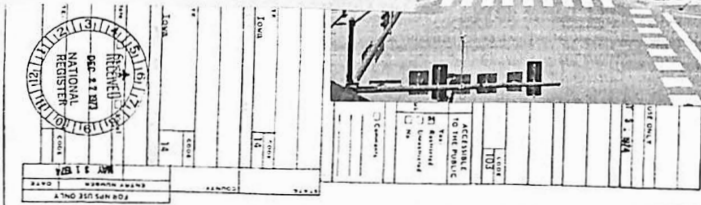
consumed 75,000 bushels of flax seed a year (the building became a grain warehouse afterwards – it’s now a restaurant). In 1874, Close commissioned an Italianate-style home to be built kitty-corner from his factory. Its location is 538 S. Gilbert. Zoning laws had not yet been developed, so factory owners often built their homes next to their factories. The well-to-do part of Iowa City was on the outskirts, by the railroad tracks. Connecting 538 S. Gilbert and Close’s factory is a now blocked-off tunnel (or pipes, depending on what you read) that runs under S. Gilbert. Steam from the factory helped heat the house, which also had multiple carved-marble fireplaces. Pine, a nonnative, luxurious wood, lined the first level. It traveled down the Mississippi and was unloaded at what is now Muscatine. The fine mansion, according to the papers, would make the town proud (a four- or five-room, heated-by-one-stove home would make a factory worker proud).

538 housed the Close family, fraternity brothers, orphans and foster children, Johnson County Social Services, and a furniture showroom. The frat added a fire escape, the county removed façade decoration and painted the brick white. The cupola and widow’s walk were removed and replaced with a television antenna (they’re both back now, recreated in the 1980s from a 1920s photograph – I found an old pair of Ray-Ban aviators up there, along with a lawn chair and ashtray). If you walk by the house, you can tell its perfectly green lawn was treated with pesticides – it will take time for plants to be able to grow there again.



1890s

1 2 3 4 5 6 M 8 9 10 11



Lafore, 1973

Public Space One bought the Close House in 2021. Since then, the Center for Afrofuturist Studies and the LGBTQ Iowa Archives & Library have settled in. As I write this in the enclosed porch on the first floor, the Indigenous Peoples Art Gallery and Café is being set up on the second.

IOWA CITY PRESS-CITIZEN

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1924

SOCIETY

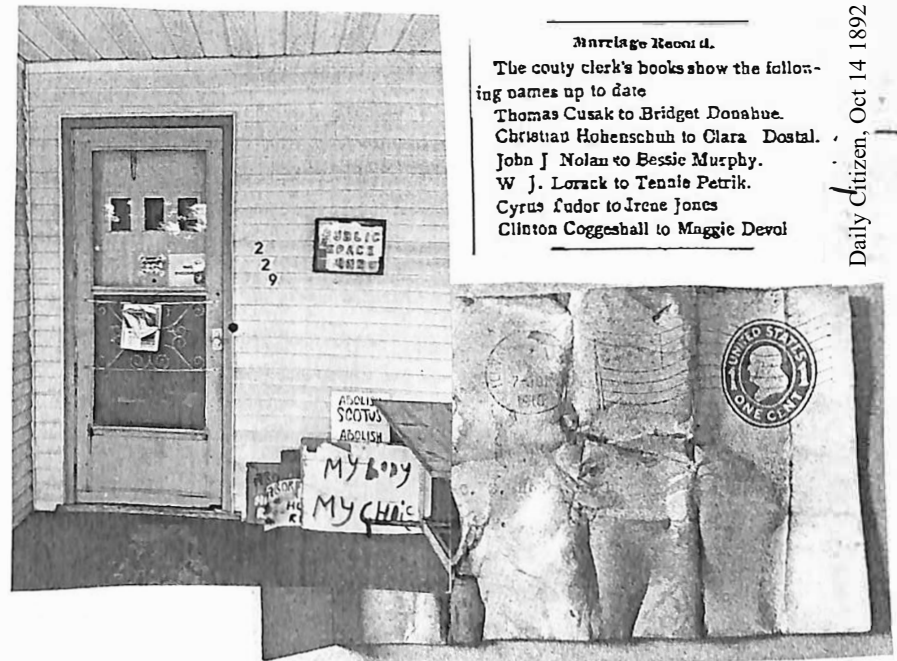
—PHONE 964—

St. Rita's Progressive Tea  
 St. Rita's guild of St. Mary's parish will preside at another progressive tea of the series at which they are entertaining on Monday afternoon, October 13th, from five to seven-thirty o'clock. The affair will be held at the homes of Miss Mary Hohenschuh, 229 North Gilbert street, Miss Mary Sheedy, 311 North Gilbert street, and Miss Anna Stach, 325 North Gilbert street. All members and friends are cordially invited.

229 and 225 N. Gilbert are known as the Christian and Clara Dostal Hohenschuh House and the Hohenschuh-Hervert House, respectively. The Hohenschuhs, a second-generation immigrant family, commissioned Jacob J. Hotz (who also owned a pickle company) to build 229 in 1897. It is a Free Classic Queen Anne home and fairly elaborate. Well-off and well-liked, the family was often featured in the society pages. 229 became a place of connection for the immigrant communities of the Northside, as the Hohenschuhs often entertained there.

Marriage Record.

The county clerk's books show the following names up to date:  
 Thomas Cusak to Bridget Donahue.  
 Christian Hohenschuh to Clara Dostal.  
 John J. Nolan to Bessie Murphy.  
 W. J. Lorack to Tenale Petrik.  
 Cyrus Sudor to Irene Jones.  
 Clinton Coggeshall to Maggie Deval.



Daily Citizen, Oct 14 1892