
H·I·S·T·O·R·I·C RESIDENCES OF DOUGLAS

— A WALKING TOUR —



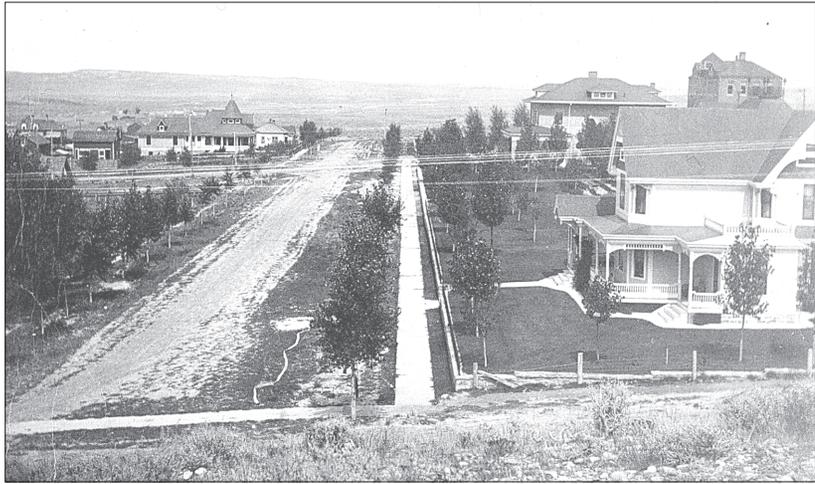
**Let not our town be large, remembering
That little Athens was the Muses' home,
That Oxford rules the heart of London still,
That Florence gave the Renaissance to Rome.**

**Record it for the grandson of your son—
A city is not built in a day;
Our little town cannot complete her soul
Till countless generations pass away.**

**—Vachel Lindsay
On the Building of Springfield (1923)**



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HISTORIC RESIDENCES OF DOUGLAS

In time, every city becomes a museum without walls. Its collection, the artifacts it offers, includes buildings, cemeteries, murals, parks and gardens, and parts of the infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and railways.

This booklet is a tour guide for one part of the collection currently offered by the city of Douglas, Wyoming: its historic residences, located in a tree-lined neighborhood on the north side of the city. The tour covers a total of 18 buildings, and thus makes no claim to being comprehensive. It affords only an interesting and representative sample of the complete collection available for viewing by the general public, at the open-air museum known as the North Douglas Historic District.

The city of Douglas is situated on a stretch of rolling, upland plains in east-central Wyoming. Founded in 1886, most of its more interesting historical elements relate to the 19th century pioneers who, out of an untamed wilderness, fashioned for themselves a tiny oasis of civilization.

The town began as a railway terminus for the Fremont, Elkhorn & Missouri Valley Railroad. It was laid out as a rectangle along the east side of the tracks, and comprised a total of about 25 city blocks. Streets proceeded along the cardinal directions and were named First through Sixth (from west to east) and: Poplar, Cedar, Walnut, Center, Oak, Elm, and Pine (from north to south).

Business buildings were the first to be constructed, and most were built along blocks readily accessible to the railroad, with addresses on Second, Third, and Center streets. Aiming to avoid the noise and smoke of the trains, the first residents built their homes on blocks further from the rails, along Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth streets. This pattern of development continued across the ensuing decades, with additional residential plats extending the town away from the railroad—toward the northeast (in 1906)—and toward the east (in 1908). By about 1940, the north neighborhoods of Douglas were all but complete, and essentially filled to capacity.

Today, the residential area of north Douglas contains approximately 130 historic buildings that, in large measure, retain their authentic historic appearance—in other words, that appear now, from the exterior, very much as they did when first constructed during the 1880's to the 1940's. About 40 of these existing structures are “out buildings”—garages and carriage houses—while most of the remainder are single-family homes. The area was also home to an early hospital, and to a few early school buildings; the former and one of the latter survive intact.

Most of the surviving historic homes were constructed with economic constraints foremost in mind: that is, materials, layout, and “finishing touches” (if any) were dictated primarily by physical necessity or convenience—and not primarily by esthetic considerations. To a great extent, early Douglas was a “working class” city, and the numerous modest dwellings throughout the historic neighborhood are testaments to that fact. Nonetheless, there were a number of individuals who achieved great wealth during settlement of the area, especially in cattle and sheep ranching, banking, and retailing. Hence,

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Photo at front:
Looking north along 6th Street, ca. 1904
Photo at back:
Aerial view of Historic District, 1994
(Courtesy of USGS.)

there are several homes of mansion-like proportions, with most (if not all) of these concentrated along North Sixth Street (furthest from the railway line).

Insofar as esthetics are concerned, there are a fair number of homes that exemplify, with varying degrees of consistency, particular stylistic traits. Craftsman Bungalow, Queen Anne, Victorian, American Foursquare, and a few other traditional styles, are all represented in the collection. In general, however, most of the properties embody the so-called “vernacular”; which is to say, most manifest no identifiable “style” whatsoever—or, alternatively, combine elements of several different architectural traditions, with greater or lesser degrees of success.

In 2002, the general area through which the tour proceeds was listed on the U. S. Department of the Interior’s National Register of Historic Places—and designated as the **North Douglas Historic District**.

This walking tour focuses exclusively on the exteriors of the various buildings; since all but one of the points of interest are privately owned (and occupied), interiors are of course inaccessible to the general public.

Directions: Start at the corner of North 6th and Center Street, located at the east end of downtown Douglas.

Time Required: 1.5 to 2 hours

Route: For a suggested route, see map at center of guidebook.

Parking: On streets and public lots in the downtown area, or along residential streets within the Historic District.

Restrooms: Available at Jackalope Square (3rd and Center).

In this guide:

- Each home is identified by its historic name—which is usually that of its first owner.
- Architects are specified when known. In many cases, however, designs were probably based upon existing, standardized plans, or were even devised extemporaneously by the builder, and no architect was appointed. (“Unknown” is specified for any building that is almost certainly attributable to an architect, but whose name remains unrecorded.)
- Construction dates specify the year of completion (or approximate year, as indicated by the notation, *ca.*); if construction spanned from one year to another, the span is specified.

During the tour, please remember that all homes are privately owned and occupied.

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Location - 309 North 3rd Street
Constructed - 1904

Tom Cook's 3rd Street house represents an incomparable advance over the log cabin in which he and his wife, Nellie, lived after their marriage in 1886. At the time, Cook, the son of a Scottish immigrant coal miner, was himself mining coal for the Fremont, Elkhorn & Missouri Valley Railroad,

along Shawnee Creek, just east of the new town of Douglas. In the spring of 1887, Cook built a "better cabin" for his bride—using plaster in lieu of mud at the log interstices. When the mine closed in January of 1888, the Cooks moved to Douglas, which was then in the throes of infancy. "Our water," Cook's sister-in-law, Florence Hartman Cook, reports, "was hauled from the Platte River and cost us 35 cents a barrel.... Except for the abundant game and the wild small fruits, the living expenses were high, as there were no gardens." And the infrastructure, too, left something to be desired: "[O]ur streets all sparkled with bits of broken bottles from the 13 saloons we were reported to have had at that time.... There were no fences ... and the herds of range cattle driven past the town to the shipping pens were a menace to our small children."

By 1904, Cook had the wherewithal to begin construction of the house on North 3rd Street, using locally-manufactured brick, his own labor, and—probably—a set of standard, store-bought plans. Except for the modern window treatments, the building appears today much as it did then: spare, sturdy, and redolent of Scottish thrift. The broad, low-hipped roofs, the expanses of red brick, and—above all—the massive chimney that ascends from the basement up through the center of the house are all emblematic of Cook's victory over the days when, as Florence Cook recalls, "During the blizzards we had to hang our surplus carpets and blankets on the walls to keep out the snow."



Cook House, looking north.

Location - 101 South 6th Street
Constructed - 1907
Architect - (unknown)

The house built by the early 20th-century Douglas businessman E. T. David crowns a hill at the east end of Center Street. The street originally was, and remains, the nerve center of the Douglas business world. David, then, commanded an overview of both the developing city and the open plains, further to the west, that he hoped it might eventually come to replace. He thus enjoyed direct visual feedback on the fruits of his efforts to develop the city—efforts that were various, and almost uniformly successful.

After a failed ranching venture in the brutal Wyoming winter of 1886, and following stints as a land appraiser and ranch superintendent, David moved his family to Douglas in 1907, where he purchased the established Florence Hardware Company, a main supplier of material for early Douglas buildings. Subsequently, he was a key figure in the construction of the LaBonte Hotel on Walnut Street, which was one of the most important and elaborate buildings in early Douglas. Also politically active, he served as mayor of the city from 1912 to 1913 and, earlier, had been influential in the creation of the political entity of Converse County, in 1888.

One of the fruits of David's success was the hilltop house on South 6th Street, which he built in 1907. The hill was made to fit the house by excavating a level area across the originally-rounded crest; then the sterile, clayey surface of the newly-leveled site was overlain with 38 truckloads of fertile topsoil. Viewed from street level, only the upper story and arching roof lines of the house are visible, with the exterior wraparound porch and entire lower floor being obscured by the gentle slope of David Hill.



David House, looking southeast.



Location - 107 North 6th Street

Constructed - 1902

Architect - Payne (w/ J. Bevan Phillips)

The Jenne House exemplifies a residential variant of the “Queen Anne” architectural style. This style was a loosely-defined set of design precepts governing, primarily, the use of ornamentation. In general, an excess of ornament, and a variety of such, are the style’s hallmarks. Thus, in the Jenne

House, we see a profuse variety of window styles and treatments, including several fine specimens of stained glass; extravagantly ornate wood trim along the roof gables; elaborate woodwork incorporated within the wraparound porch; and—another stylistic hallmark—a series of complex, steeply-pitched roof lines. All of this is intended to evoke a distant, “romantic” past, distinctly at odds with the sleek lines of the “modern.” In the case of the dramatic Jenne House, this intention is fully realized.

Although the style today seems more antiquated than even its proponents perhaps intended, to Jacob and Anna Jenne, who passed the first part of their married lives living in a sheep wagon, their Queen Anne home must have seemed the height of modernity (not to mention spaciousness—with 20 rooms on four levels). Jacob Jenne was, however, no stranger to sheep wagons: Born in Illinois and raised in Missouri, he came to Wyoming in 1891, to partner with his brother, John Morton, in the sheep ranching business. The Morton-Jenne Sheep Company thrived over the ensuing decades, enabling Jenne to diversify into other enterprises. In 1916, he financed construction of an office block in downtown Douglas—the Jenne Building, at Third and Center; the building is still extant, and remains a historic attraction in its own right.



Jenne House, looking northeast.

Location - 329 North 3rd Street

Constructed - 1902

Architect - (unknown)



From the exterior, the Knittle House is distinguished by the elegantly-proportioned octagonal turret attached to the southwest corner of the building. This vertical element is capped with what is called a “bell” roof—so-called, because of its resemblance to the instrument. The apex of such a roof nearly demands a finishing touch, which in this case consists in a sizeable weather vane (that may not, however, be original to the house). Each of the two floors of the turret are equipped with double-hung windows, one at each surface of the five exterior facets, that drench the interior with light. The cornice of the main roof is continuous around the perimeter of the turret, and constitutes a visual tie between the vertical and horizontal lines that characterize the building.

The wood shingles on the upper story of the house and turret were originally finished with a natural stain, and have since been repainted a uniform color, as have the textured stucco surfaces at the lower floor.

The roof lines of the house are low, emphasizing the horizontal, and hence reminiscent of the “Foursquare” style (which is also exemplified on the present tour in the Williams House); and the full-length, low-ceilinged porch reinforces the stylistic association.

The house was originally built for Frank Knittle, a civil engineer and surveyor who, with his wife Mary and seven children, resided in it until about 1920.



Knittle House, looking northeast.



Location - 331 North 3rd Street
Constructed - ca. 1910
Architect - (unknown)

What is historically known as the “Werner House” was not actually built for its locally-known namesake—Edmund Werner—who acquired it some 17 years after its original date of construction. In fact, the identity of its initial owner remains unknown. But Edmund Werner, the son of a Wyoming pioneer, and himself a rancher along Lightning Creek, reportedly purchased the home in 1927, primarily to ensure his children access to the schools of Douglas. The house did not change owners again until the death of Werner’s wife, Margaret, in 1965.

The house is noteworthy, then, owing mainly to its architectural features, which make it locally unique—if not altogether incongruent—within its context. There are, for example, the broad, boxed eaves, which include bold horizontal returns that suddenly terminate at the upper corners of the windows—in mid-air, as it were. The fully enclosed front porch with the continuous band of double-hung windows, however attractive, appears equally anomalous. And finally, the overall proportions and massing of the building—including the projecting, semi-circular window bay at the southwest corner—seem more suited to a New England, a Great Lakes, or perhaps even an Old South setting, not one of the High Plains.

One architectural historian describes the house as “displaying a blend of Colonial Revival and Shingle Style design attributes”—which is a blend of styles completely unique on the current walking tour, and probably one that is all but unique to the region.



Werner House, looking northeast.

Location - 135 North 6th Street
Constructed - 1903
Architect - William Dubois



Designed by the famous Wyoming architect, William Dubois, the Williams House vaguely suggests the work of the American architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. The strong horizontal thrust of the wraparound porch, the broad, overhanging eaves, and the intricate brickwork are all found as primary design elements in Wright’s early “Prairie style” houses. In fact, though, the Williams House actually exemplifies the “Foursquare” style that was popular throughout America from about 1895, and through the 1930’s. Foursquare houses were generally two-and-a-half stories tall, had strong rectilinear configurations, low, gently-sloping roofs, full front porches, and were crowned with dominant, central dormers. Each of these characteristics is evident in the Williams House (as each was also, in the work of Wright)—making it a classic example of the Foursquare esthetic.

William Dubois, the architect, was active in Wyoming throughout much of the first half of the 20th century. His practice, based in Cheyenne, produced not only residences but many major Wyoming government and commercial buildings as well, including county courthouses, several buildings on the University of Wyoming campus at Laramie, major additions to the state capitol, and, in Douglas, the Ashlar Lodge building, at North 4th and Walnut Street. Dubois designed another Douglas residential landmark, the Morton Mansion, at 5th and Center; while the Williams and Morton mansions differ markedly in their outward appearance, they were both designed and built in 1903.

Its first owner, John T. Williams, enjoyed success in a string of various enterprises, including a livestock ranch, a dry goods store (at Fort Fetterman) and, in a partnership with William C. Irvine, the Oglalla Land and Cattle Company. Williams was also active in state and local politics, serving as a state senator and as the first elected sheriff of Converse County.



Williams House, looking southeast.

NORTH GRADE SCHOOL



Location - 203 North 6th Street
Constructed - 1931
Architect - Goodrich and Krusmark

The North Grade School was constructed in 1931, to replace its three-story predecessor, locally known as “Old North Grade School.” A sizeable

chunk from the old concrete foundation still remains in place, jutting out from the center of the grade beam along the front facade of the present building; while the remnant may have been left as a sentimental reminder, it was more likely for reasons of economics, since the new school was built in the depths of the Great Depression.

Yet, despite the lean times in which it was constructed, the building possesses a subtle elegance; with its sturdy brick facades and buff-orange interior ceramic tiling it has, too, an air of quiet permanence. Designed by the Casper architectural firm, Goodrich and Krusmark, the floor plan is simple, logical, and wholly effective to its purpose. Eight classrooms—one per grade—occupy the north and south perimeters of the building; administrative offices are ranged along the front (west) end, while a gymnasium and auditorium, both of generous proportions, occupy the interior core. A corridor from each of the main entrances proceeds along the classrooms at either side of the building, and these two are connected by a third, which passes between the auditorium, in the heart of the building, and the offices at the front.

The exterior brick walls incorporate protruding pilasters and sparse, geometric ornamentation, both of which lend some visual interest to the otherwise plain facades. The building is set on its spacious lot well back from the distractions of the public street—a setting that, naturally, well befits the purpose of the structure.

North Grade School enrolled grades one through eight until the 1950’s, when a junior high was constructed; after which, it served grades one through six.



North Grade School, lintel above main entrance.

RICE HOUSE

Location - 339 North 3rd Street
Constructed - ca. 1910



The Rice House is a modest, vernacular dwelling of a size and character not unlike those packaged and sold as complete homebuilder’s “kits” by companies such as Sears-Roebuck, Montgomery Ward, and Alladin, beginning in the first decade of the 20th century. Precursors of the modern “pre-fab” homes, which are constructed off-site and shipped in a few separate, essentially complete sections, kit homes were shipped by rail as packaged collections of separate, numbered pieces—in some cases, as many as 30,000—and were then fit together, piece-by-piece, on-site. An estimated 500,000 such homes were packaged and sold during the century, and the Rice House may be one in that half-million.

Pre-manufactured or not, it is a tidy and compact piece of work, distinctive for its arched gables and Classically-inspired entrance portico, which is set off by Tuscan-style columns—the latter “mirrored” by decorative pilasters affixed to the surface of the front facade, along either side of the main entryway. The porch at the front is fully enclosed, extensively fenestrated, and blends seamlessly into the walls of the house proper.

History records this building as the “Rice House,” since it was inhabited for an extended time by prominent local businessman, Alva C. Rice, who helped run the family business, Rice Lumber and Hardware and, later, Rice Hardware and Motor Company—the latter being one of the earliest automobile dealerships in Converse County.



Rice House, looking northeast.



Location - 418 North 4th Street
Constructed - ca. 1898
Architect - (unknown)

George Washington Blaine, born in England in 1854, emigrated to America later in the century, and worked at sheep ranching for a time, as a pioneer settler along the banks of the Cheyenne River. After wedding in Iowa, he and his bride traveled

back to Wyoming in a covered wagon and into the tent town called Antelope, in the early to middle 1880's. Built near the turn of the century, the Blaine House served as the family home in Douglas until at least 1955, when Blaine's wife, Mary, affectionately known in Douglas as "Grandma Blaine," died at the age of 96. Hers is the oldest house on the tour, and the second-oldest house in the North Douglas Historic District.

At the time of its construction, the local press heralded the Blaine House, with its nine rooms and running hot water, as "the best and most expensive building in town." Blaine's, then, was one of the earliest substantial homes to be constructed beside the dirt streets along which Douglas was expanding, block by block—and was sited within an area that the press referred to as "Aristocracy Hill," a precursor, perhaps, to what became "mansion row" along North 6th Street.

The architecture of the house exhibits details of the "Classical Revival" style, as evidenced by the central pediments crowning the roofs at the front, the tapered columns set atop rectangular wood bases, which support the porch roof—and, above all, in the perfect symmetry of the main facade.

While the flat at the apex of the hipped roof may once have borne an iron railing, and thus constituted a traditional "widow's walk," apart from that and the refurbished siding, the exterior of the house appears now much as it did at the time of its construction, over a century ago.



Blaine House, looking northwest.

Location - 214 North 6th Street
Constructed - 1903–1904
Architect - (unknown)



Despite modern renovation and remodeling entailed by its adaptation to residential use, the old Douglas Hospital building still retains much of its historic, picturesque character. The octagonal turret with bell-shaped roof that ascends from the southeast corner of the building is the most immediately striking element—its lines mimicked both by the gentle curve of the broad roof that overhangs the porch, immediately below, and by the gable projecting from the east facade, the roof of which is pitched at an angle approximately equivalent to the angles in the facets of the bell roof. (The roof skylights are a modern addition, not original to the building.) The roof plan as a whole is exceedingly complex, especially for a building of this size, and was dictated largely by the complexity of the functions the building was constructed to serve.

In fact, it was the first (and only) hospital building in Douglas—and indeed, in all of Converse County—for about the first forty years of the 20th century. It was founded in 1903 by a Canadian-born registered nurse, Elizabeth D. Dickson, a sister to early Douglas businessman George W. Dickson, Jr. The building accommodated a small medical ward, three private patient rooms, an operating room, and, on the second floor, residential quarters for the medical staff. A living room, dining room, and kitchen were also included on the first floor, while the full basement housed a furnace and storage areas. By 1920, an addition had been constructed at the rear of the building, probably to house additional staff. The hospital ceased operations sometime in the 1940's (several years before completion of the Converse County Memorial Hospital) and the building was converted into a private residence.



Douglas Hospital, looking northwest.



Location - 225 North 6th Street
Constructed - ca. 1910

The Rowley House is one of several buildings on the tour that can be classified as “vernacular” architecture. “Vernacular” is actually a term from the study of linguistics that refers to the ordinary, everyday language used by a particular population, at a particular time and place. But the term

has been adopted by historians to refer to buildings that are built without benefit of an architect, and according to more or less standardized plans tailored to the basic needs of a local population. With vernacular residential architecture, the aim of the builder is to meet the need for comfortable, dependable shelter, with economics being a decisive part of the mix.

The Rowley House is one of several well-preserved examples on this tour, of early 20th-century vernacular architecture. Apart from the siting, the only truly dramatic aspect of the structure is its soaring, steeply-pitched roof lines—which are dictated by utility, and not esthetics.

Its location and siting, however, afford the building a degree of interest, and even a sense of prestige, that does not ordinarily attach to vernacular design. Constructed on a low rise, and fronted by a concrete retaining wall, the house appears entirely congruent amongst the larger, more elaborate buildings it neighbors.

Its original owner, Thomas C. Rowley, was a longtime resident of the city, who worked in the local banking industry and also served as both county clerk and county treasurer, in the 1930’s.



Rowley House, looking southeast.

Location - 408 North 4th Street
Constructed - 1911–1912
Architect - J. Bevan Phillips



The Kidwell House, built for the early Douglas postmaster, Joseph Kidwell, is a conglomerate of architectural elements derivative of the Gothic and Classical styles—both of which were “revived” from their ancient origins during the 18th century. One hallmark of the former, exemplified here, are the twin, steeply-pitched gables that dominate the front facade, with the broad barge boards, complete with ornamental apex pendants, emphasizing their geometry. Small rectangular windows are installed at the top of the gables, where one would normally expect to find air vents, and these admit light into the attic area.

The broad, decorative entablature across the porch roof is a Classical element, as are the four supporting columns, which are octagonal in cross-section, and equipped with bases and capitals of similar configuration. And the projecting bay window on the south facade, roughly constituting one-half of a decagon, is similarly derivative of the Classical tradition.

The work of assembling and unifying these various elements fell to the early Douglas architect, J. Bevan Phillips, who trained in Europe, served an apprenticeship with the Victorian architect, Alfred Waterhouse, and is credited with the design of several other early Douglas buildings, including the Florence Hardware Company and the Bolln Grocery, both in downtown Douglas; neither, however, exhibits the disparate range of styles manifest in the Kidwell building. Phillips died in early 1912; hence the Kidwell House was almost certainly one of his last designs.



Kidwell House, looking northwest.



Location - 403 North 4th Street
Constructed - ca. 1906

The McWhinnie House was built for a British immigrant of Scottish descent, Campbell Holt McWhinnie. After serving aboard a sailing ship in England's merchant marine, he came to America, and thence to the Wyoming Territory, eventually homesteading along the North Platte River. In 1906, he moved his young family into

the newly-constructed 4th Street house, where they lived for the next 17 years, until 1923, when McWhinnie was appointed State Land Commissioner and the family relocated to Cheyenne.

The house is distinctive for the canted main entryway, and for the central tower, crowned with a pyramidal roof, that emerges from the junction of the gable-roofed projections at the second floor. These two features lend the building a subtle Victorian air, consonant with McWhinnie's heritage.

One other detail attracts the eye: the roof above the projecting bay window on the west facade is a level surface surmounted by a low railing—the whole assemblage looking, in its own quaint way, not unlike the deck of a merchant marine sailing ship.

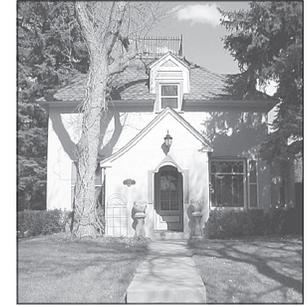
The house has undergone no fundamental outward changes since its construction, apart from replacement of roofing, siding, and window frames.

A large cottonwood tree that dominates the front yard might be by McWhinnie's hand; anyway, a multitude of the same also grace the Douglas State Fairground, thanks in large part to the program of planting initiated by the ex-merchant marine during his four-year tenure on the Fair's managing board, beginning in 1908.



McWhinnie House, looking northeast.

Location - 239 North 5th Street
Constructed - ca. 1903



George Powell, a second-generation American, married a Swedish immigrant, Margaret Skogland, at Fort Fetterman in the Wyoming Territory, in 1878. At the time, he was hauling freight and supplies to forts—including those of Steele, Fetterman, Laramie, and Casper—that lined the Wyoming frontier, and she was at the first-named, acting as maidservant to a military family. Soon after marrying, they built a house of adobe on the banks of LaPrele Creek, and lived there for the following 15 years—until 1903, when Powell built the Douglas house on North 5th Street.

It is a matter of conjecture, but the unusual styling of the house, which reflects European influence, may have materialized at the behest of the Swedish Skogland. And indeed, the many intricate details incorporated at the exterior suggest what might be considered as a feminine taste at work: the slender (purely ornamental) window shutters, the gracefully-curved trim boards over the main entrance, the subtle arching of the masonry window lintels, and even the roof lines—which, however, are not Swedish, but vaguely French, in the Tudor style—suggest some taste decidedly different from what might reasonably be expected of a pioneer American freight-hauler.

Finally, the textured stucco across the exterior yields a finish that harks back to that first house, fashioned of adobe, that the Powells had built on the LaPrele Creek.



Powell House, looking southeast.



Location - 500 Cedar Street
Constructed - ca. 1918

The Garst House is locally renowned for both its architectural character and for the identity of one of its former occupants, Doris Shannon Garst (1894-1981), who wrote, for children, a series of biographies on famous westerners. Popular during the 1950's, Garst's books fell out of fashion (and out of print) by the 1990's. Her house, however, endures, as a prime specimen of the early 20th-century "Craftsman bungalow" style.

As a house type, the "bungalow" evolved from the economics of post-Victorian society, as demand materialized for smaller, more efficient homes that could be maintained by a middle-class family without a staff of increasingly-expensive household servants. The bungalow, a house type imported from India to California (and, from thence, to the country as a whole) was often marketed as a "starter home," and exhibited strong horizontals, broad roof overhangs, and a simple, compact porch.

The bungalow was adopted as one standard house type by promoters of the "Craftsman" style of design—which emphasized materials thought of as "rustic"—such as cedar, stone, slate, and brick. In the Garst bungalow, this rustic aura is imparted by the short, battered brick piers at each end of the front facade, the exposed ends of the roof rafters, and the massive brick chimney, which dominates the west facade.

The house was constructed by the Douglas contractor, Fred Cannon, who was especially skilled in masonry work, and was also a prominent bridge builder; other famous local buildings with brickwork by Cannon include the LaBonte Hotel and the Ashlar Lodge, both located in downtown Douglas. Cannon also constructed at least four other Craftsman-style homes in Douglas, including the Storey House, which is included on the tour.



Garst House, looking northeast.

Location - 321 North 4th Street
Constructed - prob. 1904; post-1920
Architect - (unknown)



As a building type, the carriage house in America dates to the horse and buggy days—clear back, in other words, to at least the 18th century. The "house" was constructed as an outbuilding—never attached to the owner's living quarters, for reasons of hygiene—and was available only to those who could afford what it sheltered; that is, only to the comparatively well-to-do. With the invention of the automobile in the first decade of the 20th century, necessities for the two modes of transport—that is, horse, carriage, and auto—were often stored side-by-side, in the same building. Owing to the obvious disadvantages of this arrangement—a Model T reeking of horse manure being not the least of the problems—around 1910, a new type of outbuilding, the automobile garage, came into being.

But the house built for DeForest Richards in 1904, on the cusp of the technological shift, came equipped with the standard, full-fledged carriage house. Built of brick and wood, with wood shingle siding to match that of the residence, the building was replaced by a garage (attached to the Richards House), and then remodeled into a residence sometime after 1920.

Built for a single purpose, the building's lines and detailing were spare to begin with; refurbishment across the decades has yielded a structure that, today, appears sleek and ironically modern. Yet the exterior has seen only minor, superficial changes, and looks today much as it did in 1904, when it was home to the Richards' horse, buggy, and (perhaps) Model T.



Richards Carriage House, looking east.



Location - 406 Cedar Street
Constructed - 1904
Architect - (unknown)

The elaborate Richards House was built for the son of the early Wyoming governor, DeForest Richards. He, J. DeForest, had followed his father into the family banking business as vice president of the First National Bank in Douglas, which the elder Richards had established, in partnership with his brother, in 1886. When his father, while still governor of Wyoming, died suddenly in 1903, the then twenty-eight-year-old J. DeForest assumed control of the family's local banking and business interests, and simultaneously built this new residence, at 4th and Cedar Street. Its completion was an event of some note—for the local newspaper at the time, in a feature entitled “A Handsome Home,” hailed it as nothing less than “a monument to the confidence and pride which our people feel in the future of Douglas.”

The architect, who remains unknown, managed to combine an eclectic assortment of elements into a reasonably integrated whole that bears the stamp of no particular style; as such, it can best be described as “eclectic vernacular.” At two-and-one-half stories, its proportions place it, for Douglas, firmly into the “mansion” category. The natural wood shingle siding on the upper stories lends it a rustic look, while the multiple, steeply-pitched, gabled roofs suggest turn-of-the-century Victorian. Arches within the side gables of the main roof are of a vaguely Gothic character. Diamond-patterned window mullions draw the eye toward the uppermost story, where the projecting gables, with exposed, Craftsman-style ornamental support brackets, are framed by wide, decorative boards that boldly contrast with the dark shingle siding, and emphasize the gables’ triangular geometry.

J. DeForest inhabited the home until around 1911, in which year, the house was purchased by the Douglas dry goods merchant, George Metcalf.



Richards House, looking northeast.

Location - 424 Cedar Street
Constructed - ca. 1917



The Storey House is a “Craftsman”-style bungalow built by the Douglas contractor, Fred Cannon. It shares certain qualities with Cannon’s Garst House (also on the tour), especially in the materials employed: brick below, wood frame above. And, as in the Garst House, the exposed roof rafters lend the building a slightly rustic aura; finally, the low, broad, gently-pitched central roof is also similar to that found on the Garst House. The massive wooden brackets beneath the overhanging roof eaves are purely ornamental, and telling hallmarks of the Craftsman style.

But overall, the Storey House is a more elaborate representation of Craftsman esthetics. The roof lines, especially when viewed from the east, are more varied, and offered in greater quantity, in accord with the more complex floor plan. And the brickwork, a Cannon specialty, is more intricate than that on the Garst residence, the ornamentation more detailed and pronounced, with geometric figures ranging from squares to diamonds to cruciforms. The massive chimney on the east facade displays a “triple wheat stalk” graphic, the anatomy of the grain lending itself readily to idealized re-creation in brick.

The original owner of the home was the prominent local physician, L. W. Storey, who practiced in the area during the 1910’s and 1920’s. The house was later occupied by local businessman Gene Payne, who operated his agricultural supply company out of a warehouse along the tracks of the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad.



Storey House, looking southwest.

MAP KEY

- 1 DAVID HOUSE – 101 S 6TH ST
- 2 JENNE HOUSE – 107 N 6TH ST
- 3 WILLIAMS HOUSE – 135 N 6TH ST
- 4 NORTH GRADE SCHOOL – 203 N 6TH ST
- 5 DOUGLAS HOSPITAL – 214 N 6TH ST
- 6 ROWLEY HOUSE – 225 N 6TH ST
- 7 POWELL HOUSE – 239 N 5TH ST
- 8 GARST HOUSE – 500 CEDAR ST
- 9 STOREY HOUSE – 424 CEDAR ST
- 10 RICHARDS HOUSE – 406 CEDAR ST
- 11 RICHARDS CARRIAGE HOUSE – 321 N 4TH ST
- 12 MCWHINNIE HOUSE – 403 N 4TH ST
- 13 KIDWELL HOUSE – 408 N 4TH ST
- 14 BLAINE HOUSE – 418 N 4TH ST
- 15 RICE HOUSE – 339 N 3RD ST
- 16 WERNER HOUSE – 331 N 3RD ST
- 17 KNITTLE HOUSE – 329 N 3RD ST

