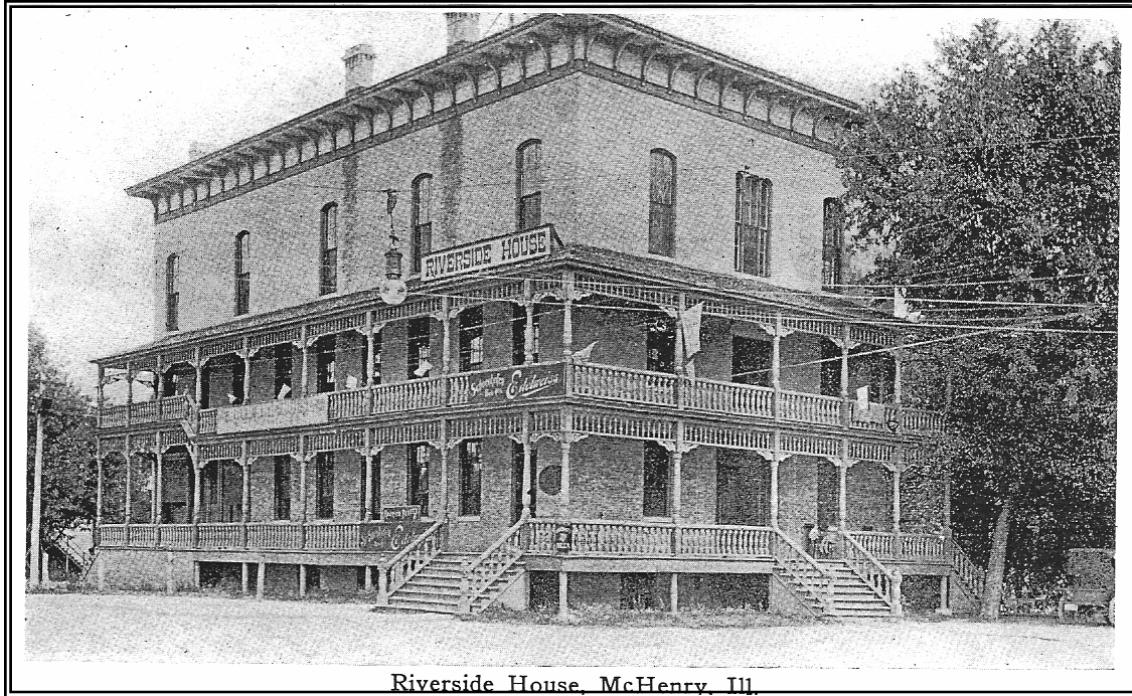


*The City of McHenry Landmark Commission  
Historic Old Town Walking Tour  
Water Street Area*



Riverside House, McHenry, Ill.

The 1830's was a time of change for what would become McHenry. In 1834 the McHenry area was inhabited by Potawatamie Indians. The Indian title to these lands was extinguished by treaty in 1835. The area was first made part of northern Cook County, then detached in the winter of 1836-37 into McHenry County. McHenry County at that time contained both present day Lake and McHenry Counties. In 1838 the county was split again into what is now Lake and McHenry Counties. The first settlement in this town was made in 1836. The settlers came to our area either by steamboat on the Great Lakes or overland by wagon from Chicago. They followed an Indian trail to the banks of the Fox River. The Water Street area, now known as Riverside Drive, is the oldest neighborhood in McHenry. The first log cabin, first tavern and first post office were located here and the first school and first church operated in this neighborhood. As McHenry grew, the town evolved into three sections, Old Town near the Fox River, Gage Town on the west side after the arrival of the railroad in 1854 and Centerville which was home to the mill pond. This walking tour will highlight the Water Street area of Old Town.

The City of McHenry Landmark Commission wishes to thank the McHenry County Historical Museum in Union for the use of their research library. We give special thanks to Nancy Fike and Grace Moline for their invaluable assistance.

**N. E. Barbian House**  
**1501 Riverside Drive**

The T-shaped vernacular style house was built by Thomas Walsh in 1889 and bears honorary city plaque #6. The house has 6 over 6 windows, some of which appear to be original, turned porch supports, a raised stone foundation and a brick floor in part of the basement. Nick Barbian and his wife, Emma (Freund), were married in Johnsburg in 1891 and moved to the home a few years later. The Barbian brothers ran a cigar factory on the N.E. corner of Green and Elm. John J. Barbian passed the rights and label of the famous "Our Monogram" cigar to his brother, Nick. After the factory closed, Nick ran the cigar making business in the attached shed behind the house. Nick's son, George, lived in the home after his father passed away.



**The Weber House**  
**1409 Riverside Drive**

This picture, taken in the summer of 1897, shows the Weber family in front of their home. The original cottage, on the south side of the house, was constructed prior to the 1850's. The two story Greek Revival addition with cornice returns, door pediment and surround was added in 1857. The horse shed, with its gable roof and plank floor, still stands at the rear of the house.



**Weber Park**

At one time, all the lots for the homes built on the west side of Riverside Drive included the property across the street east to the edge of the river. The Weber family had a two story building used for storage for their construction business across the street from their home. The building was later used for dances on the second floor, and at one time housed a boat shop on the ground floor. The family passed the property to the city for a public park around 1944

**Doctor Brown House**  
**1405 Riverside Drive**

The Doctor Brown House, which originally belonged to a dentist, Dr. Henry Brown, son of B.B. Brown, was built in the 1850's. The one story addition on the south side of the home was added in the Craftsman style in 1911 and the one story addition on the rear of the west side was added in 1930. The kitchen and porch were added after 1930. The home has shutters, Greek Revival return cornices and a stone basement. The home was plaqued during the county bicentennial celebration. Dr. Brown sold the home to John Weber about 1911. John's daughter, Beatrice Weber Justin, lived in the home until her death in 2002.



**McHenry Power and Light Company  
1402 Riverside**

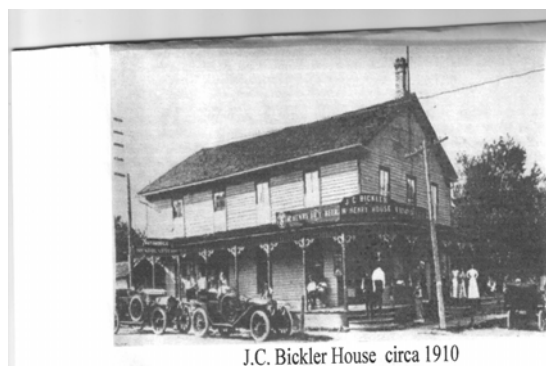
This commercial building, bearing honorary city plaque #7, was constructed with local brick in vernacular Italianate style by contractor Math Weber in 1903 for the McHenry Power and Light Company. Prior to that time, there was a shoemakers business in this location called S.S. Greenleaf's dating back to 1839. In 1909 the power company was sold and the building used as a grist mill until 1914. John Knox had a Ford dealership here from 1914 until the 1930's. Everett Hunter owned the building from 1934



until 1984. During those years, the building had many uses. The upstairs housed a dance hall, roller rink, Armed Forces tent factory and a dress factory. On the first floor, a Nash agency followed the Ford dealership. From 1952 until 1984, the Riverside Retail outlet occupied the building. The building was renovated into shops and offices in 1984.

**County Courthouse  
1401 Riverside Drive**

After three years of planning and negotiating, the first McHenry County Courthouse was erected by Rufus Soules and Caleb Davidson in the public square (now Veteran's Park) in McHenry. On August 5, 1840 the first meeting of the County Commissioners was held in the newly constructed courthouse. The McHenry county seat was moved to Centerville (Woodstock) in 1844 after McHenry and Lake Counties were divided. Sheriff Henry M. Wait conducted a sale of the courthouse on January 8, 1844. The building was sold to Horace Long who moved it from Veteran's Park to its

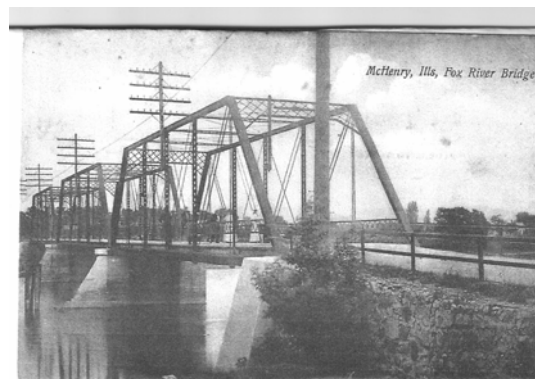


J.C. Bickler House circa 1910

present location. It has been known as the Mansion House, The J.C. Bickler House, and now the Town Club. In 2006 the structure was plaques by the Illinois State Historical Society, with the City of McHenry Landmark Commission and the McHenry County Historical Society as co-sponsors.

**Pearl Street Bridge**

This site was first a fording location. A ferryboat operated here from 1837 until 1842. Various wood bridges were replaced by a county bridge in 1864 at a cost of \$8,000. That bridge served until 1977 when it was replaced by the current structure. The old Pearl Street Bridge is owned by Terra Cotta Industries. One span is currently used at their facility to cross Squaw Creek. The City of McHenry plans to use a second span of the bridge to cross Boone Creek as part of the Riverwalk. The picture postcard at right has a cancellation date of 1909.



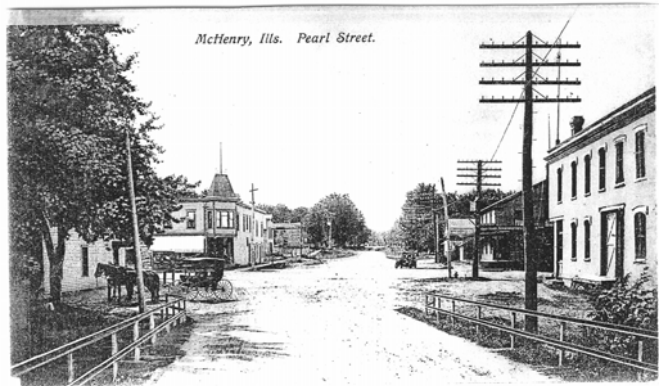
**The Hunter Boat Company  
East Side of the Fox River  
3112 Lincoln Road**

The Hunter Boat Company was located on the east side of the river, across the Pearl Street Bridge. Everett Hunter moved his company from Chicago to this location in 1910. The company owned 18 tour boats which took visitors to view the lotus beds on Grass and Fox Lakes. The company also manufactured everything from rowboats and powerboats to yachts. During the war, Hunter made boats for the United States Navy.



**Miller's General Store  
1335 Riverside Drive**

The Schneider family owned and operated a grocery store in this location. The family had their living quarters in the back section behind the store. Joseph Miller later rented the store from them. In the 1920's, Miller's General Store carried everything from paint to chocolates to biscuit mix. In later years the building housed a snack shop, candy store, deli and other enterprises. There are five apartments in the building. Today, the building is missing its "witch's hat" roof which was removed during World War II.



The picture at the right shows the store with the witch's hat intact in a view taken looking west from the Pearl Street Bridge. The photo below was taken in January of 1928 and shows Joseph J. Miller inside his general store.



**Old Bridge Tavern**  
**1334 Riverside Drive**

Records show that there was a store owned by Mr. Walkup in this building prior to 1844. It has been owned by Fred Justen who operated a hotel and bar and by John Buch who had a hotel and resort business in the building. In 1928 records show that Stephen Heimer and John Buch were cited with a prohibition violation for “illegally manufacturing, selling, keeping, storing and bartering intoxication liquor.” Harold “Schmaltz” Miller bought the property in 1944 and continued to operate a tavern here. The picture at bottom right shows Fred Justen’s hotel between 1912 and 1918. The photo on the left below shows the building as viewed from the river when it operated as Buch’s Hotel.



**Barbian Grocery Store**  
**1323 Riverside Drive**

This building, dating from the late 1800’s, began as a meat market, then housed Tony Engeln’s Tavern and ice house (located in the rear). At one time an outdoor area on the south side of the building was used by the tavern’s patrons for outside drinking. Albert and George Barbian operated a grocery store in the building for many years. They delivered groceries by boat to summer residents on Pistakee Bay. In April of 1954, a red Roman brick store front was added.



**Fox River Valley Boat Company**  
**1312 Riverside Drive**

This building was built for Joseph J. Rothermel in 1929 on property he purchased from Fred Justen, then owner of the Riverside Hotel. The original concert block building is at the rear of the lot and measures 50’ by 60’. In addition to building boats, Rothermel was an agent for Evinrude Motors. In 1935-36 a store front was added to the west side of the building. An addition was added to the north side of the building when Rothermel purchased that property from the Engels who had a hardware store in that location. The addition, known as the Colby building, was originally 3 stories tall, but the top story was later removed due to the poor condition of the roof. The original Rothermel building and a large boat hoist can still be seen in the rear of the building.



### **Dobyns House**

#### **1202 Riverside Drive**

Tonyan Brothers built this English Tudor style brick home for Julius and Dorothy Keg and their daughter, Juanita, in the late 1920's. Mr. Keg was in the dredging business and is credited with dredging Boone Creek. The home was sold to Wallace and Helen Dobyns and their son, Gene, in 1937. On August 13th, 1938, Helen opened her antique shop and operated it until her death in 1970. After her death her son, Gene, and his wife, Grayce, took over the business and continued operation until 1987. The home has been used as a restaurant since that time.



### **Holly's Filling Station and Ice House**

#### **3307 Elm Street**

1890 records show this location to be a hitching post for horses for the hotel across the street. An 1893 Sanborn map shows a two story dwelling on the property. In 1934, Warren Holly opened Holly's Filling Station and Ice House here. The business operated until 1974. In 1976 new owners purchased the property and tore down some of the buildings, leaving only the retail store. In 1977 they opened Winhill Pancake Parlor.



### **The Riverside House**

#### **3308 West Elm Street**

It was on this site that B.B. Brown erected his Log Cabin Tavern around 1837. The structure was a double log cabin with an ell that was two stories in places. The cabin also served as McHenry's first school. On this site Joel E. Wheeler also ministered in an 1837 cabin which housed the First Baptist Church. Near the other cabins was a log post office. In 1845, John Wire Smith bought the tavern. The Fremont Hotel operated on the site from 1851 until it burned in 1859. The Riverside House was built in the Italianate style by John Smith's nephew, David Smith, in 1864 using bricks made with clay from Reed's clay hole at the south end of Riverside Drive. At one time there was a ballroom on the third floor, and a store on the west side of the building. The hotel's two story wooden porches made it a showplace. In 1911, then owner Frank Gans replaced the rotten porch pillars with cement blocks and awnings. These were removed in the 1940's. Fred Jusaten owned the hotel after World War I.



Riverside House, McHenry, Ill.

**The Riverside Dairy  
3325 Elm Street**

The old Riverside Dairy can still be seen behind the newer front of the building. If you look over the top of the present store front, you can see the original façade. It is an old, possibly pre-civil war, Greek Revival house, with brick work done in a distinctive local German style. A. P. Freund began operating the dairy in 1915. Mr. Freund kept his cows behind the building. The dairy served the McHenry and Pistakee areas. In later years, the Fewerda brothers ran the business. The picture shows Donald Givens in front of the dairy holding Molly, the horse.



**The Michael Justen Home  
3402 Elm Street**

This home was built in the early 1900's in the Queen Anne Revival style for retired farmer, Michael Justen. It was the first home in McHenry built with indoor plumbing. The porches appear mostly original. The house has corner cupboards, pattern cut shingles, a tower, dormers and arches. Palladian windows and Eastlake bulls eyes, dentil work and leaded glass have been preserved. The building appears much as it once did, minus the iron fence that surrounded the property in the past. An example of adaptive reuse, the home has served as a private residence, a boarding house, a health food store and presently is a lawyers' office.



The Michael Justen House

### **A. K. Haberdashers**

#### **3421 Elm Street**

This folk Victorian structure was built in 1856, just 20 years after the first settlers came to McHenry. From that time until 1906, it was a millinery shop where hats, ribbons, thread and other small wares were sold. The establishment was run by Mrs. Mary Fitzsimmons Searles. It is believed that after her retirement the building was used as a residence until the end of Prohibition in 1933. It then became a distributorship for Atlas Prager beer and was also a pub and eating place called the Sip Snack Inn. In 1961, it changed to Steiny's House of Prager and remained a tavern, run by Steiny, until 1985.



### **The Doctor Nye House**

#### **3431 Elm Street**

The Nye house is a Gable-Front-and-Wing Italianate. The curved window lintels/drip molds and bracketed cornice line are classic Italianate details. The additions are historically sensitive and in proportion. The Nye home was originally the home of Dr. Charles Feegers who practiced medicine there from 1884 until 1910. Dr. Nickolaus Nye married the adopted daughter of Dr. Feegers and continued to practice medicine at the home. His son, Doctor William Nye, was the third doctor to practice in that location.

