

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

NRIS Reference Number: 96001371      Date Listed: 12/04/96

Property Name: Gingrich, Clement B., House

County: Black Hawk      State: Iowa

\_\_\_\_\_  
Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
December 4, 1996  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8. Statement of Significance

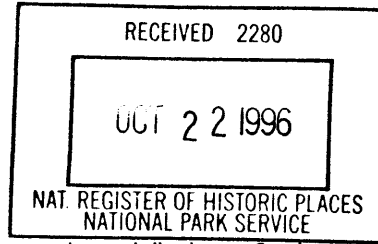
Criterion A is, hereby, removed as a qualifying criteria since the statement of significance supports architectural importance only and does not indicate that property is associated with any significant events or activities for which it might qualify under Criterion A. Criterion Consideration A is also deleted from the form because it does not apply to the ownership of the property during the period of significance.

Beth Foster, National Register coordinator for the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office, was notified of this change on December 4, 1996

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file**
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Clement B. Gingrich House

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 300 Walnut Street  N/A  not for publication

city or town LaPorte City  N/A  vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Black Hawk code 013 zip code 50651

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( see continuation sheet for additional comments).

Tom Morain  
Signature of certifying official/Title

10/14/96  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

4. National Park Service Certification

hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Linda McClard

Date of Action

12/4/96

Clement B. Gingrich House  
Name of Property

Black Hawk, Iowa  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
1		structures
		objects
2	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

Religion/Church-related residence

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals

Late 19th & 20th Century American Movements

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls wood/weatherboard

\_\_\_\_\_

roof asphalt

other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1916

**Significant Dates:**

1916

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Ralston, J. G.

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Clement B. Gingrich House  
Name of Property

Black Hawk, Iowa  
County and State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1     
Zone Easting Northing

2            
Zone Easting Northing

3

4

See continuation sheet

#### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

#### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title James E. Jacobsen

organization History Pays! (private historic preservation firm) date September 22, 1996

street & number 4215 Northwest Drive telephone (515) 274-3625

city or town Des Moines state IA zip code 50310

#### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the complete form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

#### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Geraldine and Ray Wester

street & number 300 Walnut Street telephone 1-515-342-2043

city or town LaPorte City state Iowa zip code 50641-1440

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Clement B. Gingrich House

Black Hawk County, Iowa

## Physical Description:

The Clement B. Gingrich house is located in the center of the original plat of LaPorte City. Its residential setting is within a short walking distance of the downtown. The house fronts to the northwest on to Walnut Street. It is situated across the north end of its lot, and a single car garage is located to the south of the house.

The Clement B. Gingrich house design (1916) can best be described as "transitional". It combines a Georgian cube massing, with Prairie School /Craftsman and neo-Colonial influences. The house was designed by the noted Waterloo Architect J. G. Ralston. While the house is visually noteworthy for its scale and massing, it offers an array of unusual design features. Its basic massing consists of a broader second story that cantilevers beyond and visually overwhelms the first story. The broad overhanging eaves line dominates the second floor massing in its turn. The strong Prairie School influenced horizontal sense which is created by these components contrasts with a very strong vertical design emphasis.<sup>1</sup> On the facade, a central pavilion carries through the two stories up to the paladin topped dormer. A carefully aligned fenestration pattern connects the porch steps, entrance and porch roof balcony to affect this vertical flow. On the southwest side wall the same effect is created by the alignment of a porte cochere, fenestration, a square-capped dormer and some remarkable square cut columns which define the stair landing fenestration on that face. A rich surface ornamentation is created by the use of wide plain or decorative corner and base and capital board. These "frames" define clapboarded wall panels. Solid porch balustrades and balcony parapet walls feature matching paneled designwork. Lastly, the design includes a number of key elements. These include the Craftsmen style porte cochere, the Oriental-influenced columns, and the square-cut roof dormer.

LaPorte City offers a good range of two story late Victorian house designs which began to appear in the mid-1890's. Many of these are square in plan, precursors of the four square house design. Many others have a crossed gambrel roof, where a front gambrel gable is flanked by matching side and rear gables. Bungalow plan derivations appear to have dominated pre-World War I house construction in the town and many of these are richly adorned with shingle-style like treatments. Only two other homes offer similar treatments, scale and the same period of construction as does the Gingrich house. Both of these are probable designs by the same architect, J. G. Ralston. The David Snook (current owners) home at 509 Bishop, is a two story brick plan with a columned front classical gabled portico. Its plan matches the roof pitch lines, basement concrete sill, the broad overhanging eaves, the main chimney placement and the use of horizontal lines, all found in the Gingrich house. The Greg Allers house (current owner) at 514 Sycamore is a basic rectangular two story box plan, but it has a side porte cochere. The front porch crawlspace vents, porch and porte cochere pillars, the roof pitch lines, ornate window pane designs, and matching clapboard exposure match those on the Gingrich house. Neither house design possesses the rich array of Prairie School and other influences found in the subject house.

<sup>1</sup> The house facade is oriented to the northwest, so the two side walls orient to the northeast (left-hand) and southwest (right-hand). The rear wall faces southeast.

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Clement B. Gingrich House

Black Hawk County, Iowa

The Craftsman-influenced exterior parallels a similarly influenced interior design. Key features include built-in bookcases and wall sconces in the living room, sliding pocket doors which connect that room and the dining room, a built-in sideboard in the dining room, and a wonderful stairway and three remarkable lighted columns.

While the house itself is significant for its design, it also exhibits a remarkable degree of preservation, both inside and out. Major exterior changes are limited to the loss of the main chimney, the replacement of its original red cedar shingles with asphalt shingles and the covering of the original soffit with aluminum siding. Inside, the house is virtually untouched, and it retains its original kitchen cabinets and sink, original bathroom fixtures, the original basement cast iron laundry sink, cistern, and all of its original interior in its original condition. The house has been well cared for during its 79 years. All of the original storm and screen windows survive and many are in use on the house.

The house as built differs somewhat from Ralston's final May 1915 blueprints. Many interior specifications were dropped as building costs skyrocketed to an estimated \$12,000. Two major exterior changes were made. A plain gable roofed rear roof dormer with unadorned surfaces and plain windows that matched those on the sleeping porch, was deleted. Round Egyptoid-style porch and porte cochere columns were replaced with tapered square cut ones. A cross-shaped recessed panel, intended for the chimney base brickwork, fell victim to last minute cost-cutting.

Inside, many deletions and less expensive substitutions were made. A number of built-in components were deleted, including a china closet, stair hall seat, a master bedroom cabinet, and fancier fireplace fronts. A grid of exposed beams, intended for the dining room, was also dropped. Materials substitutions were numerous. None of the special floor or trim treatments intended for the basement were put in place. No art glass, but plainer leaded glass of a uniform pattern, was put into the public space windows. Yellow pine trimwork was used in the side entryway, the kitchen, first floor bedroom and exclusively on the second floor, apart from the stairway trim. The living room and dining room lost their parquet borders. The Architect's Specifications left all color choices, glass selection, to the discretion of the owners. All light and bathroom fixtures were to be selected by the Gingrichs and it is said that they were purchased in Chicago.

A few adjustments were made to the plan. The coal chute switched places with an adjoining window. The left-hand second floor front window was moved south to be in line with the center porch window beneath it.

The house plan mixes old and new. While lacking the traditional laundry chute, it retains picture moulding throughout the house, a full perimeter plate railing in the dining room, nine foot ceilings in basement and first floor and the use of wainscoting on the porch and secondary bathroom, all Victorian-era holdovers. It is also replete with closets, albeit small and irregular in shape. A built-in central vacuum, mentioned in the

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Clement B. Gingrich House

Black Hawk County, Iowa

specifications was one modern convenience that was deleted. The sleeping porch is an early example of a common feature in early 1920s homes. An early use of plywood-like veneered doors and cabinet panels, with a pronounced wood grain pattern, is of special interest.

### Exterior Features:

The basic house footprint is a cube, measuring 40.5 feet in width and 38 feet in depth, exclusive of front porch and sleeping porch. The second floor is fully an additional four feet wider than the first floor. The eaves project three and a half feet beyond each of the four wall-planes. The house stands tall in the neighborhood, the eavesline stands 23 feet above the ground level. The high pitched hip roof adds 13 more feet to the house's height. The basement walls rise four and a half feet above grade.

### Main Facade Description:

The main facade as mentioned is dominated by a full-length one story front porch and a central pavilion, centered porch roof-top balcony and dormer. The main facade fenestration is symmetrical with sidelights being paired on the main entryway, first floor flanking side windows, the balcony windows and the dormer. The dormer front has a Paladin-like central rounded hood. There is no upper central window as would be found in a Paladin window arrangement. The cut of this dormer contrasts sharply with the square cut dormer on the southwest side.

A recurring design on the house exterior is a cross symbol variant that appears in the decorative panels of the porch and balcony. It is used in a very large panel form on the northeast side chimney base. A smaller cross decorated the chimney top (removed) on that same side. Crosses in wooden panels define the lower corners of each second floor wall panel. A second design element that repeats on each facade is the use of shallow double or triple brackets near the base of each corner board frieze, below each window, and beneath the soffit of each dormer, the latter being larger in size and paired at each corner (two additional brackets define the corners of the squared hoodmold). Dark carved stone brackets are mounted beneath these dormer brackets. Those on the main facade flank the rounded central hoodmold, while those on the southwest side dormer are paired at each of the two corners.

### Northeast Side Facade Description:

This minor facade offers almost a single wall plane inasmuch as the first story square-cut bay window and the exposed brickwork of the chimney fill out most of the wall recess which is created by the cantilevered second story. The second floor fenestration is consciously symmetrical in its arrangement. These are roughly balanced on the first floor by smaller windows which flank the chimney and by the bay windows. The latter carry



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over the sidelight window pattern from the more primary facades. The basement window pattern is in turn aligned with that on the first floor. Scrolled decorative brackets underscore the second story cantilever.

Southwest (3rd Street) Side Description:

This highly ornamented facade plays a key supportive role in the overall design of the house. A central vertical pattern is created by combining the dormer, windows, columns, porte cochere and side entryway. The bracketed cantilever of the second story carries completely across this wall and the lower recessed wall plane continues back where an extension of the rear first floor projects out partially beneath the sleeping porch.

The porte cochere mimics the dimensions of the front porch and is supported by identical square tapered columns. The porte cochere conveys the feeling of an elaborate pergola, with its matched sets of ornamental brackets. Paired corner brackets project from the tops of the columns. Five curved brackets project from each side of the porte cochere. Eight serpent-like brackets project far beyond the front eavesline of the drive-through. The plan indicates that three parallel horizontal beams encircled each side of the pergola, supported on these projecting beams. The original circular driveway connects the garage and pergola, and its rearmost edge runs along the rear property line.

Rear Wall:

The design of this side of the house is more utilitarian, with none of the special ornamental features found on the more public faces. The visually dominant element is the deep porch/entryway sleeping porch wing. A shallow first floor extension from the kitchen and rear bedroom combines with a shallow screened porch. The sleeping porch overlays these two elements. The sleeping porch storm windows disappear into hinged sills. The sleeping porch roof pitch is an extension of the lower eaves roof and consequently, it is nearly flat as it descends to a slightly lower eaves line of its own. The same surface decorative patterns were used on the rear wall. Craftsmen-influenced ventilation vents, consisting of closely spaced vertical boards, pierce the base of the rear porch. The lower porch retains both its original robins egg blue ceiling color and its original light socket and bulb. The original screens have been replaced by aluminum windows.

Roof/Attic:

The steepness and scale of the roof is visually obscured by the broadly projecting eaveslines. The roof consists of a hipped or hipped gable construction. The large interior space was never finished or subdivided. Two of the planned three dormers face to the northwest and southwest. Two chimneys originally pierced the roof, the secondary stack (serving the furnace and water heater today) remains on the rear roof plane. The main chimney, located at the base of the northeast roof plane was removed in 1987.

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Black Hawk County, Iowa

The roof rafters are 2' x 6', set 24" on center. Originally the roof cladding consisted of a layer of tarred felt, with a red cedar shingles covering (5" to 2" wide, laid 5" to weather). Heavy galvanized iron finials, with connecting ridge moulds originally capped the main roofridge and dormer roof ridge. These were removed in 1987 when they were found, rusted, beneath several successive layers of shingles. All of the deck's surfaces and flat roofs were covered with tinned sheet metal.

The roof structure is reinforced by corner collar beams placed seven feet above the attic floor. These beams are in turn braced to the roof peak. Floor joists (2" x 6") are laid 16 inches on center. The stairway access is located on the southwest side of the attic plan. A single layer of second grade pine flooring, six inches wide, covers the attic floor.

## Interior Features:

### Basement Plan:

The basement is of interest because of the special treatments which were intended for it, unusual for the time. Perhaps Mr. Gingrich wanted a private space in the house. This took the form of a basement den complete with fireplace. The house has deep footings, that of the main chimney measured 4'9" x 9' x 14". The column supports for the port cochere and porch footings alone run three feet deep. Concrete forms the footings and the basement walls up to the water table. Hollow white faced cement blocks (inscribed "LaPorte City Cement Works, J. W. Stewart, Prop."). comprise the visible basement exterior walls, above a concrete sill. The blocks use a flush mortar joint. The crawlspace beneath the porch is ventilated by a series of carved stone vents, each having two rounded side blocks and a straight center dividing block. Openings with iron gratings were initially specified for the front porch.

The basement is divided into six rooms. The expected laundry room (supplemented with a half bath) and "Fuel Room" were provided, along with a built-in concrete cistern. The original triple-bottom cast iron sink ("C. Wesley, Patented 188?", partly illegible), a raised cast iron floor drain, and a bathroom enclosure of beaded siding are of interest.

The basement concrete floor was two and a half inches thick, the smooth trowelled finish coat was half an inch thick. The den was to have had a tile floor and fancy varnished wood trimwork. There is no indication that the fireplace was ever finished.

A "Majestic No. 10" coal chute (24" x 17") allowed coal deliveries to the fuel room from the southwest side of the house. The curved ceiling mounts for a 40 gallon water heater remain in the laundry room. Powered by an Illinois Pump & Brass Co. Valveless water lift the house also was to have had a 120 gallon expansion water storage tank.

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Clement B. Gingrich House

Black Hawk County, Iowa

## First Floor Plan:

The main floor plan is comprised of four unequal "quarters." The "public" part of the house consists of the living room, dining room and stair hall. The living room is the dominant main floor space (24' x 17' interior dimension). This room features the main fireplace with flanking built-in bookshelves. Pocket French doors, with a single framed panel, open to the adjacent dining room (21' x 14'). A set of full height Craftsman style square columns with built-in lighted glass lanterns flank an open passage into the stair hall. The stair hall features a Craftsman style wall panel and the square newel post matches the two doorway columns in design but sports a wonderfully unusual wooden four-way lighted lantern. The rear hall with a second run of stairs is immediately beyond the main stair hall. The southeast corner of the plan includes the kitchen, located off of the dining room, and a corner bedroom. The kitchen offers an immaculately preserved original set of cupboards, and kitchen sink. The bedroom was equipped with its own corner sink and half bath. The dining room retains a built-in buffet. The front vestibule includes a hinged storage seat and mirror. The vestibule walls are solidly built to carry the weight of the second floor pavilion and roof top dormer. The stairway landing similarly cantilevers out above the driveway side entrance to bear the weight of the porte cochere and the sidewall pavilion and dormer on the southwest side.

Originally the first floor had 12 ceiling lights, six side lights, and the three in-post lights.<sup>2</sup> All of these fixtures remain in place. The porch and first story floors (except the kitchen, which used grade #2 pine six inch flooring were laid with clear white oak (1-1.5" exposed face).

The house interior uses an unusual triangular pediment with raised or reversed square-cut corners at each base. This feature first appears above the front entrance where it is simply integrated into the trim that encircles and incorporates the upper window casing. Here the pediment appears without the base blocks. Elsewhere the pediment treatment appears above the dining room buffet and as a header above all of the doorways. The pediments are more plainly cut on the second floor.

## Second Floor:

The second floor was laid out in a most utilitarian fashion and offered no special design features or treatments. The hall is irregularly shaped, being divided by a six foot wide passage. Four bedrooms and the main bath comprise the plan. Double doors with unusual four light openings, set vertically, open to the sleeping porch through the east bedroom. The master bedroom (21' x 22') was located in the northwest front corner.

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<sup>2</sup> The architect's specifications mandated that "there shall not be greater drop on the line than 2% when all lights are on."

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Clement B. Gingrich House

Black Hawk County, Iowa

The second story floors are laid with the same pine flooring found on the first floor, as is the sleeping porch floor. The original plan called for six ceiling lights and five side lights on this level. No second floor fireplace was included.

The bathroom is immaculately preserved, retaining the original incised plaster simulated tile (to a level 4'6" above the floor. The original built-in cabinetry and fixtures (except the tub, stored in the attic) also remain in the bathroom. These feature chrome plated faucets and hardware. All of the bathroom woodwork retains its white enamel ("Banzai" enamel paint in the specifications) paint.

### Materials and Treatments:

The chimneys were built using a pressed brick with raked joints, and were topped by concrete chimney caps (described as "colonial head[s]" in the specifications).

The lathing used white pine lumber and the plaster (Ft. Dodge stucco or equivalent in the specifications) was smooth finished. All exposed lumber was finished white pine or cypress. The exterior wall sheathing used Grade #2 yellow pine, which in turn was covered with a heavy tarred felt. All outside walls were insulated with Flaxlinum (an unidentified material mentioned in the Specifications). The exterior wall cladding consisted of 4" white pine siding laid 2.75" to the weather. The cornices used white pine.

The interior staircase was built entirely of quarter sawed oak, The attic, rear and basement steps used of yellow pine. The main floor trimwork, including the living room, stair hall and dining room used quarter sawed white oak. The remaining trimwork was of yellow pine lumber. All of the original interior and exterior doors remain in use. The interior doors use a plywood-like veneer with a pronounced wood grain pattern. The same pattern and application is found in the paneled kitchen cabinets.

### Physical Changes Since Construction:

Major changes have not been made to the house in its 79 years of use. Three important changes, all involving the roof or eaves line, have altered the exterior. In 1987 the main chimney stack was capped and sealed and deteriorating soffits were covered with aluminum siding and the attic was ventilated. The original soffit, of narrow beaded boards, laid parallel to the wall plane remains in place. The replacement material runs perpendicular to the wall plane. This has the visual effect of causing a striped surface effect. The rooftop finials and crestings were removed in 1995.

When the present antique gray asphalt shingle roof was applied in 1995, the roofers stripped off a layers of cedar shingles, one of vertical gray-black roll roofing, a layer of red interlocking shingles and a layer of green asphalt shingles. The present owners had put the green shingles on the house.

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Other minor exterior changes include the temporary covering of the cistern basement window (southwest side) and the painting over of the original buff paint and some light green paint added during the church's ownership. The basement den was used by the church and a linoleum floor was added. The basement fireplace was also sealed off at this time.

The house has always been painted white. Save for a darker sash color, there is no evidence that any detail colorings were used. The 1916 postcard view appears to indicate a single exterior color with darker colored sash. A very unique detail feature on the dormers is the use of carved stone corner brackets. They are either a natural stone or an asbestine material, and are a deep pink in color. They are attributed to a Mediterranean origin and are said to have changed colors with the seasons! During the fall it is said they turned a ruby red color. They are now painted black.

The first furnace in the house was a stoker type and Dick Denuit tended to its operation when he was a boy. Two large heat vents (18" x 36") were located in the corners of the living room and dining room. The coal furnace was converted to oil and the shadow of the storage tank remains in the fuel room. Gas came in 1968. Lastly, a high efficiency gas furnace was installed in 1985.

### Window Treatments:

The architect consciously mixed the window pane designs throughout the house. A quite subtle contrast was made between the lights in the two dormers, where varied diamond arrangements were juxtaposed. Several novel Craftsmen-influenced arrangements appear in the front porch main windows and on the southwest side of the house. These patterns similarly contrast with the French door sidelights on the front balcony and the front door fenestration. The unusual window pattern found in the bedroom windows on the southwest side was to have mirrored those in the windows which flanked the chimney base on the northeast side wall. The latter were executed in a different pattern, with eight square lights over four vertical lights in the lower sash.

### The House Siting:

Why would so large and fine a house be squeezed onto so small a lot? There is no answer to this question. The original double lot was not made available when the house was built. Instead, the previous house on the property was moved back and this house was built with its rearmost wall almost on the front lot's boundary line. In addition, the house was placed as closely as possible to Third Street, allowing for very little side yard. This setting apparently forced the architect to emphasize the house's facade and its southwest side wall.

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Clement B. Gingrich House

Black Hawk County, Iowa

## Yard and Outbuildings:

The only outbuilding associated with the house is a drive-through concrete block garage that is located in the rear corner of the property. The garage is considered to be a contributing resource. The garage was built in 1916 and appears on the 1927 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. It has the same hipped roof profile (reduced pitch at the start of the eaves line) and it is constructed of rusticated concrete block similar to those used in the house's outer foundation wall. The unusual drive-through design was made possible by the use of double side-hinged doors on front and rear. The original rear set of doors remains, the front entrance has been replaced with an overhead garage door. Each sidewall has two double-hung sash windows (3/1 panes) with projecting pre-cast concrete stone lintels. Aluminum siding covers the original wooden soffits. A sharply curving narrow original circular concrete driveway connects street, porte cochere and garage. Nothing is known of the original house's yard landscaping. The front of the house had a recessed curbed parking area where a car could be safely loaded or unloaded. The original sidewalk terminates at this original curblin. Two large American Elm trees which originally dominated the front curbing had died from Dutch Elm disease by 1968.

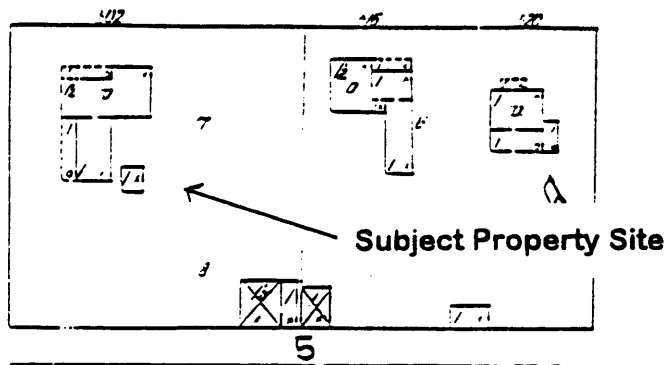
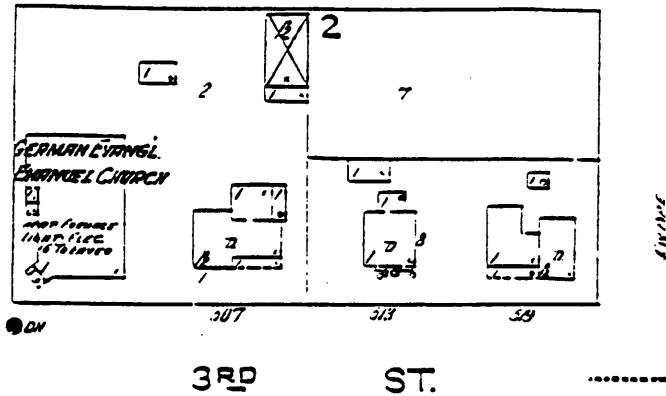
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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

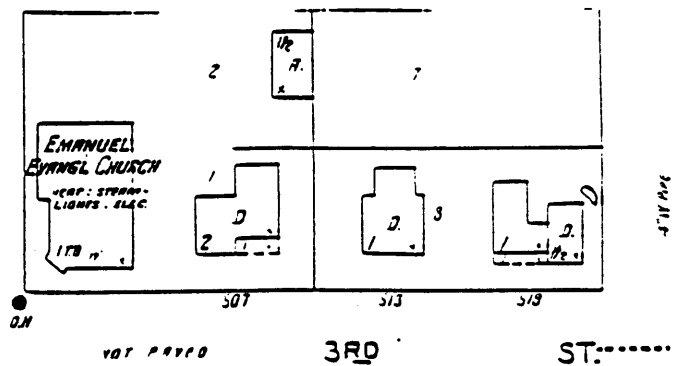
Section number 7 Page 10

Clement B. Gingrich House

Black Hawk County, Iowa

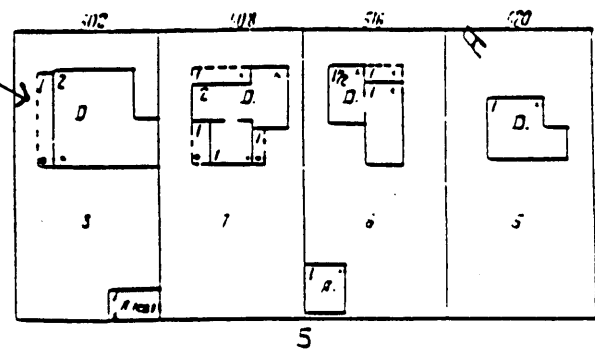


1913 Sanborn Map Excerpt



Subject Property

1927 Sanborn Map Excerpt



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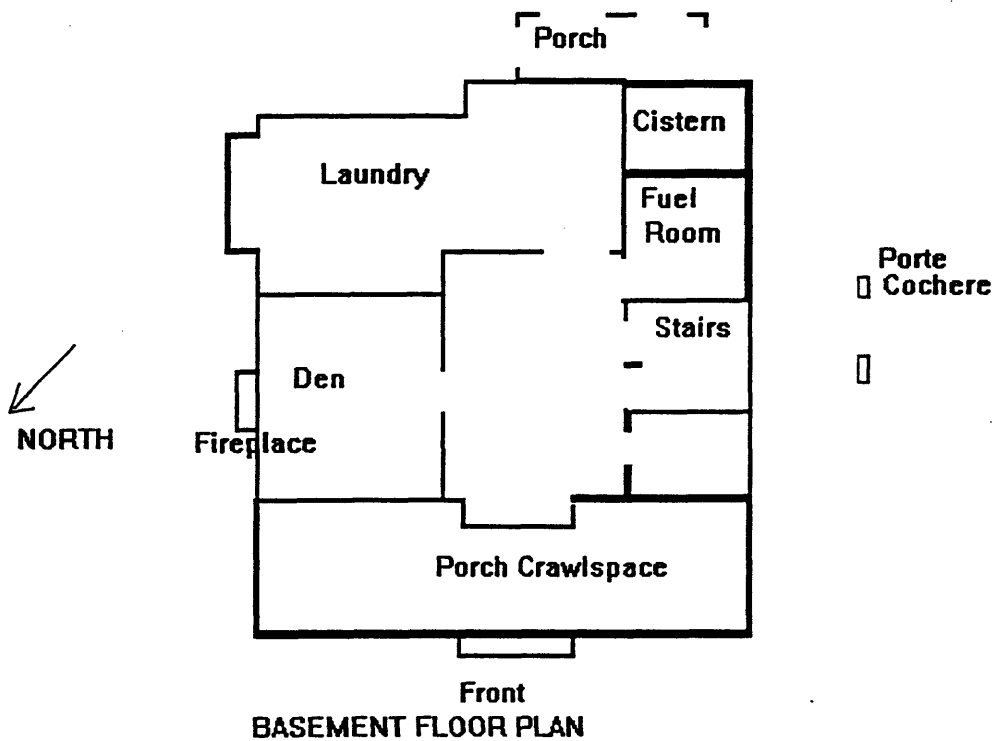
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Clement B. Gingrich House

Black Hawk County, Iowa

## Floorplans:





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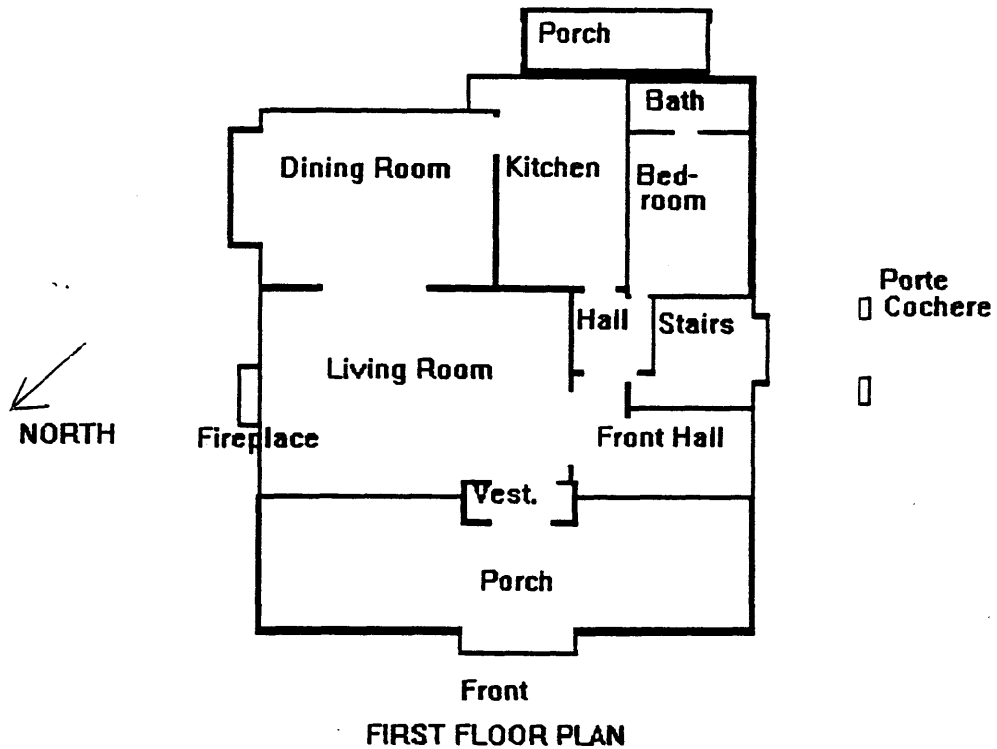
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Black Hawk County, Iowa

Floorplans:



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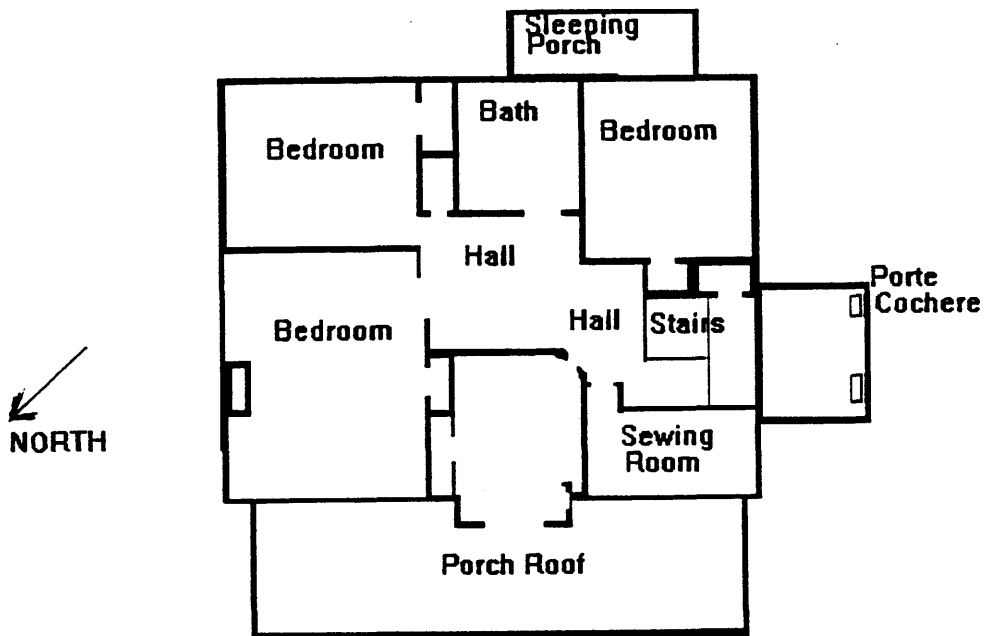
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Clement B. Gingrich House

Black Hawk County, Iowa

Floorplans:



Front  
SECOND FLOOR PLAN

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Clement B. Gingrich House

Black Hawk County, Iowa

## Historical Significance/History:

The Clement B. Gingrich House (1915) is locally significant as the best preserved and most substantial example of the early 20th Century Revival style of residential architecture in LaPorte City. This house was designed by the noted Waterloo Iowa architect J. G. Ralston. Its interior exhibits a remarkable array of well preserved Craftsman style features and trimwork.

A survey of comparable period residences of the 20th Century Revival styles or styles even remotely related to this house failed to identify any other residence similar to the Gingrich house. A handful of large post-1900 residences are discussed (see below) in terms of their period and design origins.

Clement B. Gingrich (October 16, 1857-June 3, 1935) was born in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, the son of Gabriel and Anna Gingrich. His family relocated to a Benton County farm in Cedar Township, just four miles southwest from LaPorte City, Iowa. They farmed there until 1903, at which time the family relocated to nearby LaPorte City. Son Clement was educated at the Tilford Academy in Vinton and the State Normal School at Cedar Falls, Iowa, and he taught for years in area rural schools. He married Iowa-born Miss Ella Brown on June 22, 1889.

Clement became involved in creameries and operated one which was owned by the family until 1889. He was elected secretary and later secretary/manager of the Farmers Co-operative Creamery in LaPorte City in 1894, and served in that capacity with but one brief interruption until 1914 when the company dissolved. In 1910 he was elected as president of the Black Hawk County Farmers Institute Association and was actively involved in the extension work carried on by that organization. He was an officer and founder of the Farmers Mutual telephone exchange and was an incorporator of the Farmers Saving Bank in LaPorte City in March, 1913. Gingrich staged an annual nut and apple show in the area for many years. He was actively involved in Republican party politics and was a frequent speaker on agricultural matters throughout the region. He served on the local school board until 1915 and advocated the updating of the local high school that year.

Mr. Gingrich purchased the double-lot property of the late Peter Trost from G. W. and Lyda Fisher in early May, 1907. The house then extant on the site stood on the corner of Lot 7 and consisted of a one and a half or two story "upright and wing" gabled house. The side wing was a single story tall. This house was moved after October 1913 and prior to the construction of this house to the adjacent Lot 7, where it was turned 90° to front on 3rd Street.

The Gingrich family did not live at the corner of Third and Walnut. The 1910 census places them at a Chestnut Street address where they owned a home free of any mortgage. The family at that time consisted of the parents and three of their four daughters (Velora A., aged 19; Josephine, aged 17; and Lucille, aged 12). Only the

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1916 Postcard View, looking west on Third Street, Gingrich House to right-hand side

C. B. Gingrich (Obituary Photo)



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Clement B. Gingrich House

Black Hawk County, Iowa

oldest of these, Velora, was employed, working as a bookkeeper for the local telegraph office. Clement Gingrich was managing the creamery. Catherine was the fourth daughter, who was born c. 1894, and would have been aged 16 as of 1910. Here whereabouts is not known as of 1910.

Why would a man in Mr. Gingrich's position choose to build such a large and expensive house? No clues have been found to answer this question. He certainly didn't build it to house a large and growing family. The Gingrich household at best numbered six persons, the parents and their four daughters. It never included Mr. Gingrich's elderly parents. They lived independently in a rented house on Commercial Street as of 1910. Both were even then in their early eighties. Perhaps the large house was partly intended for their eventual care.

The 1915 census found just the couple and two daughters (Lucille, aged 17; and Catherine aged 21) in the Gingrich household. Clement Gingrich was identified as being a retired farmer. Daughter Catherine was a cashier for the Farmers Savings Bank. Clement Gingrich's parents still lived separately from their son. Gingrich's mother Anna Ginder Gingrich (1828-1915) died in late June as the new house was being raised. His father Gabriel was injured in mid-November when he gashed his head in a fall downtown. The newspaper simply noted that it took more than that to slow down the older man, who was past the age of 85 at the time. Gabriel Gingrich lived two more years, dying in 1917. It is possible that Gabriel Gingrich briefly lived in the house. The Gingrich family was already scattered. Clement Gingrich had two surviving siblings but only his family remained in LaPorte City. A brother and sister resided in Denver, Colorado.

The original house on the property was moved sometime prior to the spring of 1915. That adjoining property remained in the Gingrich family's ownership until the death of Clement's widow, Ella, in 1943 and the settlement of her estate. The adjacent house was likely a rental property throughout this period.

The development of drawings and the construction of the house are traced in the *LaPorte Progress Review*. It is surprising that more was not said about the house. The Gingrich family was apparently rather private in regards to the house and this perhaps explains the paucity of references on the part of the paper.

The newspaper first announced the house project to the community on February 11, 1915 when it reported the first visit by the chosen architect to the town:

Mr. J. R. [sic] Ralston, an architect from Waterloo, was in the city the first of the week with the first sketch of the plans for a house for C. B. Gingrich. Mr. Gingrich will build a residence this coming summer, and when completed it will be one of the finest in the city. Mr. Ralston is also working out plans for some other buildings that are being contemplated for LaPorte City. If present plans are carried out there will be several buildings erected here this coming summer."

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Clement B. Gingrich House

Black Hawk County, Iowa

The year 1915 would see considerable new residential construction in the area and its immediate rural surroundings. Similarly substantial municipal improvements and industrial and commercial expansion occurred that year. Improvements of this scale were reflective of a prosperous agricultural historical period today known as the "Golden Age of Agriculture." Farmers were making money and were improving their farms and their lifestyles. Their prosperity rebounded to their local and regional service communities and these were able to fund the infrastructural improvements that changing tastes and a prosperous economy demanded of them. As will be seen, the value of new farmhouses generally exceeded that of their urban counterparts.

At year's end the *Waterloo Courier* tallied the progress in nearby communities and the *Progress Review* copied and augmented the list to include new area farmhouses. LaPorte City had hired a landscape architect to design a small park area that adjoined its newly completed Rock Island railroad depot, and funded and completed a four mile long sanitary sewer system (\$16,000) and a high school addition and auditorium (Mortimer Cleveland, Waterloo, was the architect) (valued at \$25,000). The local waterworks and electric utility were both private corporations. The former dug a 355 foot-deep well and raised a 55,500 gallon steel water tower (\$17,000 and \$2,250 respectively). The latter rebuilt the electrical distribution system (\$4,850).

Two area churches completed substantial remodelings. The downtown gained a brand new theater (the Pastime), a new lumber yard (Spahn and Rose \$3,500) and the newspaper built a red pressed brick building on Commercial Street (\$3,500). Area employment was buoyed by the construction of a three-story glove factory (\$9,000 value) in the Virden Addition. Most important for this historic property, the following new homes were constructed in 1915 in and around the city:

Farmhouses:

G. E. King, "one of the finest farm residences of the county...having all the conveniences of a city home," valued at \$8,000. This was on a 160 acre farm located 4.5 miles southwest of LaPorte City on present day Tama Road (now Emberton's). Carpentry was done by Chilton Passmore.

John Casbon, farmhouse, over \$7,000 without heating and plumbing, 11 rooms with basement and washroom, carpentry work by J. A Miller of LaPorte City.

Samuel Fleming, farmhouse, Bruce Township.

I. S. Ronk, farmhouse, fully modern, Benton County

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Clement B. Gingrich House

Black Hawk County, Iowa

City Houses:

- C. B. Gingrich, "large modern home," \$11,000
- Bruce Kline, "splendid modern home," \$7,000
- Henry Ballheim, "splendid modern home," \$4,000
- Gertrude Strohecker, "good substantial home," \$3,500
- Albert Kline, "cement block house," \$4,000
- H. C. Unger, "comfortable house to rent," \$1,500
- John Miller, "bungalow, modern," \$3,500

The local paper listed seven homeowners in town who completed home improvements ranging from \$200 to \$1,000 that year. The Gingrich house clearly outpaced all other new construction efforts in terms of its total value.

A single construction reference to the house appears in the *Progress Review* on April 22, 1915. Editor H. B. Lizer reported that, "Workmen are completing the excavation for the basement of the new house to be erected by C. B. Gingrich, and the foundation will soon be put in." A week earlier, the family, apparently celebrating the beginning of house construction, treated themselves to a new private conveyance. The paper noted on April 15 that "C. B. Gingrich and family are now enjoying a handsome new Buick Six automobile, which was purchased of the Hilmer-Shull Auto & Supply Co. this week." While the new car hinted at a taste for conspicuous consumption, the housesite itself was one that was undistinguished in terms of its class and location. As was the case with most smaller Iowa communities, there was no "Knob Hill" neighborhood set aside for the major homes and the Gingrich house nestled comfortably next to much older and smaller homes. Two story homes and the Emanuel Evangelical Church fronted on the next (northwestern) block of Walnut Street.

The end of year progress report was the only indicator that the house had been completed, or largely so during the year. Formal occupancy by the family came in early February, 1916, as was reported in the *Progress Review*.

Are Occupying Fine New Home

Mr. and Mrs. C. B. Gingrich and family are now occupying their handsome new residence at the corner of Third and Chestnut streets, having moved into the same the latter part of last week. They are now nicely settled and are thoroughly enjoying the comforts and conveniences of the new home. The new residence is one of the most substantial and up-to-date residences in our city. It is modern in every way, and the Gingrich family can well feel proud of their new residence. The building's completed cost [is] in the neighborhood of \$12,000.

Absent from the newspaper is the usual open house or tour. Also absent are the construction references which normally identify the major contractors involved in the house construction. Mrs. Marion Davis of LaPorte City was six years old when the house was built. She thinks the principal carpenter was William Ballheim.

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Clement B. Gingrich House

Black Hawk County, Iowa

The "open house" for the community did not take place until the middle of May, 1916 when Mrs. Gingrich hosted her first club meeting:

#### Club Entertainment

Mrs. C. B. Gingrich opened her beautiful new home, Tuesday afternoon, for the Lotus club division day. The assisting hostesses were the Mesdames W. H. Bahr, George Klock, F. W. Kline and Mora Salmon. Besides the club members, there were a number of guests, making in all a company of sixty...

Family members gradually dropped in to visit and see the splendid house. Clement's brother James Gingrich, who had just married in Denver the previous December, brought his new bride home to visit the new house in early June, 1916.

The very large house was not very crowded, at least as far as the Gingrich family went. The family had four daughters but these were all nearly adults when the new house was built. The 1920 Federal census found just three occupants in the home, Clement and Ella Gingrich and their 26-year old daughter Catherine P. Gingrich. Clement Gingrich was 57 years old when the house was finished, and 62 at the time of the census. His wife was twelve years his junior. The three other daughters were scattered across the country at the time of their father's death in 1935. Mrs. (Velora) Howard Van Brocklin lived in Port Angeles, Washington; Mrs. (Josephine) A. J. McClain lived in Ashland, Ohio; Mrs. Lucille Bannister and Mrs. (Catherine) H. S. McQuilkin both lived in Chicago. By 1925, only Mr. and Mrs. Gingrich were living in the house. Clement Gingrich was still providing professional services. The couple were members of the Methodist Church at that time. Curiously the house was valued at just \$8,000 as of 1925, a face value indication of the drop in real estate values following the First World War. Still, the house out-valued other houses in LaPorte City at that time.

Clement's will transferred his property to his wife Ella. Ella Gingrich died intestate November 23, 1943 and her daughter Catherine McQuilkin served as administratrix of the estate. C. V. and Mayme E. Kline received an initial quarter interest in the Gingrich house on July 10, 1945. Within a year they owned the entire property and they sold it to the Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church of LaPorte City on December 31, 1946. The present owners, Raphael C. and Geraldine F. Wester purchased the property from the church on June 28, 1968.

The adjoining property at 603 3rd Street, was sold off with parts of the two lots in 1920. Mike Wilkinson, the railroad depot agent bought the house and lived there for a long time, selling it to Emma Brallier in 1948, who sold it in turn to Mr. and Mrs. Harry Merifield in 1954. T. A. and Mary Davison bought it in 1970. It has a lovely curved staircase in the center of its plan.

The following priests occupied the house between 1946 and 1973; Rev. James Supple (1946-47), Rev. Clair Drummy (1947-51), Rev. John Ryan (1951-53), Rev. Gregory Hemesath (1953-63) and Rev. Robert Cizik



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Clement B. Gingrich House

Black Hawk County, Iowa

(1963-73). The church used the basement for catechism classes, chapel and daily mass. The house was the setting for 27 interdenominational weddings.

The Westers raised nine children to the house and it was for the first time, fully occupied. The children were Delores, Mary, Thomas, Joel, Andrea, June, Richard, Ruth and Geraldine, and they ranged in age from 15 (Delores) to two years (Geraldine). The downstairs bedroom served as "the eating room," a less formal dining room, just enough room to put eleven persons at one table. A major family event was the marriage of son Thomas in the house.

### The Architect:

Architect John Glen Ralston (1870-1956) was born in Vinton, Iowa, just south of LaPorte City. He was married in Vinton to Gertrude Verharen on June 24, 1897 and they moved to Waterloo. Ralston completed a year of schooling at Tilford Academy in Vinton, and his architectural training came from a mail order course offered by the International Correspondence School of Scranton, Pa. Otherwise trained as a carpenter, Ralston worked in that trade for five years preparing designs and then serving as general contractor on the construction work. He was employed by Murphy and Wallace, architects and builders, of Vinton from 1892 until 1897. He then entered into a partnership with W. F. Murphy ("Murphy and Ralston") and the partners decided to specialize as architects beginning in 1897. Murphy died in 1904 and Ralston worked alone until 1927 when his son Glen joined the firm, and the name was changed to Ralston and Ralston.

Perhaps it was the common experience of growing up in Benton County that brought architect and Mr. Gingrich together. Ralston's designs were scattered throughout the state. He designed a \$10,000 apartment row in Waterloo prior to 1906. In 1906 he designed an \$8,000 residence for Mrs. B. S. Hillman in Waterloo. The two story residence featured Bedford Stone trim. A \$3,000 residence for J. H. Neverman was planned for Tripoli, Ia. A \$5,000 residence for L. A. Knittle went up in Waterloo. Ralston also planned a commercial block for Greene, Iowa for the firm of Bucholz and Son. Closer in date to this commission, he designed in 1913 a \$6,000 residence for J. E. Sedgwick in Waterloo and another for Dr. G. R. Woodhouse in Vinton, valued at \$5,000 (1918). Sedgwick's house was two and a half stories with basement, and featured pressed brick as well as iron and steel work. The majority of Ralston's identified designs were of an institutional nature. He designed courthouses in West Union, Ia. (Fayette, prior to 1927), and in Miller, S.D. (Hand County, prior to 1927). He designed a dozen schools including a \$75,000 school for Waterloo in 1918, the high school at Mt. Vernon, IA, and a \$50,000 design at Ackley, IA, in 1907. All of his Waterloo school designs were for the West Waterloo School District. Before 1910 he had drawn plans for the Caward Building (later known as the Penney's Building) in Waterloo, the Masonic Temple, Waterloo, the Hippodrome Auditorium, two public libraries, and the nurses' home at Allen Hospital in Waterloo. The almshouse at Primghar, O'Brien County, Ia., designed in 1913, was valued at \$25,000. A hospital that he planned for Cedar Falls, Ia. was worth \$30,000. By 1912, Ralston

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Clement B. Gingrich House

Black Hawk County, Iowa

individually, and with his deceased partner, had designed a total of 100 homes in Waterloo, 90 others outside of that city, and 79 commercial and institutional buildings (33 of these in Waterloo). Mr. Gingrich's house was the most expensive identified residential design that Ralston took on outside of Waterloo. Many of his Waterloo residential designs were located in the prestigious Prospect Hills neighborhood. At the time of his LaPorte City commission, Ralston had his office in the Syndicate Block, 23 Bridge Street, in Waterloo.

There has been insufficient study of Ralston and his designs to provide any sense of how the Gingrich residence design compares to the architect's previous and subsequent design work. What is known is that this commission was a most creative design transition in terms of styles. Ralston was clearly experimenting with Prairie School influences and these dominate the design.

## Bibliography:

J. G. Ralston, Architect, Specifications Of The Material and Labor To Be Furnished By Contractor For Residence To Be Erected For C. B. Gingrich At LaPorte Iowa

J. G. Ralston, Architect, Plans, Residence of C. B. Gingrich, May 1915

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, LaPorte City, Iowa, October 1913, March 1927.

## Property Abstract

1910, 1920 Federal Population Censuses, LaPorte City, Iowa, 1915, 1925 Iowa Population Censuses, LaPorte City, Iowa.

Obituary, "Death Calls C. B. Gingrich," LaPorte City *Progress Review*, June 6, 1935.

LaPorte City *Progress Review*, February 11, April 8, 15, 22, June 24, July 8, 29, August 5, 19, 26, November 11, December 23, 1915, January 6, February 10, May 11, 18, June 8, 1916

*Waterloo Daily Courier*, August 1956, obituary, John Ralston.

Long, Barbara Beving, Waterloo The Factory City (Waterloo; 1987), pp. 45-6.

Architects In Iowa File, J. G. Ralston, State Historical Society of Iowa.

History of Black Hawk County, (1910), pp. 77-78.

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Clement B. Gingrich House

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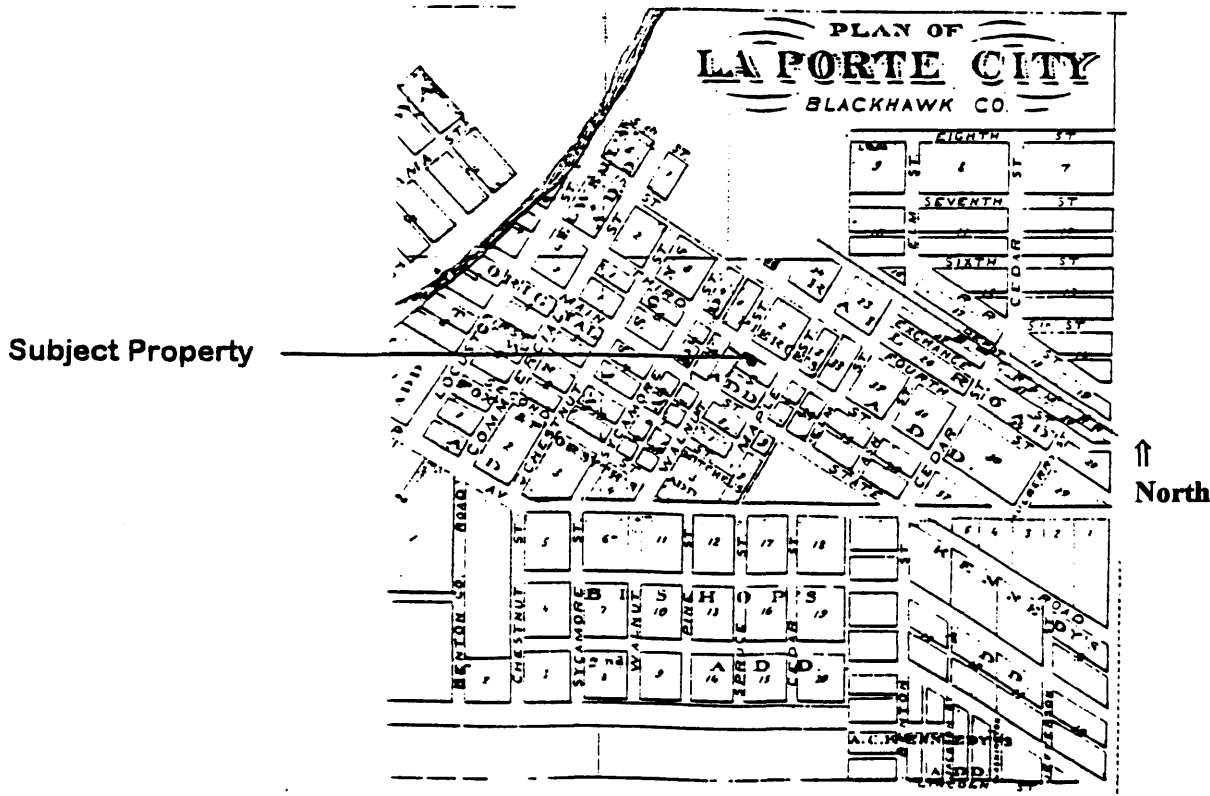
**Verbal boundary description:**

Northwesterly 66 feet of Lots 7 and 8, Block 5, Pierce's Addition, City of LaPorte, Iowa.

**Verbal boundary justification:**

This parcel contains the house and its associated garage and yard and is the parcel historically associated with same.

**Sketch Map of Property Location:** (refer also to Sanborn Maps, page 7-10)



Andreas Historical Atlas of Iowa, 1875