

# THIS OLD HOUSE

100 YEARS AT  
2246 SCUDDER

DAVE AND NANCY HEALY





## MY HOUSE IS SMALL AND MORE THAN

a hundred years old. Inside,  
the oaken posts and beams  
make the living room seem  
like a glade. When friends  
pronounce it comfortable,  
it's 1910 that comforts them,  
and nothing I have done.

There must be a room  
in the human heart  
that's older than the body.  
And it's good to be there  
in that foursquare cathedral  
where nothing has changed  
since before we were made.

— Todd Boss



# EPIGRAPHS

Keep the young generations in health,  
And bequeath them no tumbled house.

– George Meredith, “The Empty Purse”

A house is much more to my taste than a tree,  
And for groves, oh! a good grove of chimneys for me.

– Charles Morris, “The Contrast”

The house of everyone is to him as his castle and  
fortress.

– Sir Edward Coke, *Semayne’s Case*

From that home has come so much life that it ought  
never to die or fall into ruin.

– Pearl Buck, *My Mother’s House*

There’s nothing ill can dwell in such a temple:  
If the ill spirit have so fair a house,  
Good things will strive to dwell with it.

– William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

It takes a heap o' livin' in a house t' make it home,  
A heap o' sun an' shadder, an' ye sometimes have t' roam  
Afore ye really 'preciate the things ye lef' behind,  
An' hunger fer 'em somehow with 'em allus on yer mind.

– Edgar Guest, “Home”

Do you know what I mean by a home? I don't mean what other people mean when they speak of a home because I don't regard a home as a place, a building of wood, bricks, stone. I think of home as being a thing that people have between them in which they can nest, rest—live in, emotionally speaking.

– Tennessee Williams, *The Night of the Iguana*

Once there was a way to get back homeward.  
Once there was a way to get back home.  
Sleep pretty darling do not cry,  
And I will sing a lullaby.

– The Beatles, “Golden Slumbers”

Home is the place where, when you have to go there,  
They have to take you in.

– Robert Frost, “The Death of the Hired Man”

By wisdom a house is built,  
And by understanding it is established;  
And by knowledge the rooms are filled  
With all precious and pleasant riches.

– Proverbs 24:3-4

While civilization has been improving our houses, it has not equally improved the men who are to inhabit them.

– Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

Poets claim that we recapture for a moment the self that we were long ago when we enter some house or garden in which we used to live. But these are most hazardous pilgrimages, which end as often in disappointment as in success. It is in ourselves that we should rather seek to find those fixed places, contemporaneous with different years.

– Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*

Old houses have their wisdom.

– Barbara Kingsolver, *The Lacuna*





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# THE STREET

Scudder Street received its name in 1885. Rev. John L. Scudder, who was pastor of First Congregational Church in Minneapolis, may have had a financial interest in the property on the street.

Scudder Street is home to some of the oldest and most prominent houses in St. Anthony Park. Three Queen Anne style homes, all designed by architect W.A. Hunt, were built by the St. Anthony Park Company. One of those was for the company's vice president, Anson Blake. The other two were occupied by Andrew R. McGill, a former governor, and his secretary, Joseph Moore.

These three structures were representative of the vision that St. Anthony Park's first developers had for the area, which at the time was considered a suburb of St. Paul. That vision proved impractical, and Scudder Street, along with the rest of the neighborhood, was eventually filled in with less grandiose buildings.

Guaranteed Prices-No Extras



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Architectural Firm No. 107

## Particularly Attractive Two-Story Home

For Plans of This Home, See Last Page

Read Pages 10-12 for Full Description of Features



First Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan

For plumbing, heating, lighting for this home, see last pages of book

### NOTE THE WORKMAN'S VALUE

When you buy a house, you are not only buying a structure, but also a home. The workman's value is in the quality of the workmanship. A well-built home is a home that will last. The workman's value is in the quality of the workmanship. A well-built home is a home that will last.

For Plumbing, Heating, Lighting for This Home, See Last Pages of Book

# THE HOUSE

The house at 2246 Scudder St. sits on land that was purchased from the St. Anthony Park Company in 1909 by Edward C. Hall. Hall was born in 1848 in England. His family emigrated when he was three years old, settling in New York. He married in 1879, and he and his wife, Jennie, had six children. The first two were born in Rochester, New York, and the last four in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Hall was a furniture maker in Rochester, and in 1885 he and his family moved to St. Paul, where he joined Charles Pratt at the St. Anthony Park Furniture Company. The family lived at 981 W. Bayless Avenue, in south St. Anthony Park.

Later, Hall, like Pratt, got involved in real estate. He had an office in the Northwest Furniture Expo Building, on the southeast corner of University and Raymond avenues. Hall bought several properties on Scudder Street, including the one at 2246. His certificate of title was registered on September 11, 1909.

The house that was built on that lot was most likely based on a plan like the one pictured here, which was available through the Gordon-Van Tine

Co. Many other companies sold house plans, including Sears Roebuck, which in 1909 began offering plans and complete materials for house construction. Eventually, some of these companies provided precut lumber, and by the 1910s it was possible to purchase what were in effect pre-fabricated houses.

St. Paul's Department of Public Works approved a building permit for the property at 2246 Scudder St. on June 8, 1911. The estimated cost of the structure was \$3,500. James Costello registered his title on August 18, 1911.

# THE OWNERS

1911-1928	James and Genevieve Costello
1928-1930	Albert Middleton
1930-1940	James and Jennie Nelson
1940-1943	Hugo Nelson
1943-1965	Glenn and Edna Prickett
1965-1969	Carl and Jean Reidel
1969-1990	Tom and Joan Duke
1990-2011	Dave and Nancy Healy



1911-1928

JAMES AND GENEVIEVE COSTELLO

James Costello was born in 1884 in Ontario, Canada. When he was a year old, his family emigrated to Wisconsin, and in 1888 they moved to St. Paul. At age 12, James and his family relocated to Hinckley, and later he worked as a farm laborer there. By 1910 he had moved back to St. Paul, where he was employed as a publishing house solicitor.

When he moved into the new house at 2246 Scudder, Costello was single, but two months later he married Genevieve Kempe, a St. Paul native. Eventually, James got a job as a brokerage salesman. After selling the Scudder house to Albert Middleton in 1928, the Costellos moved to Los Angeles, where James worked as a security salesman. Genevieve died in 1951 and Jim in 1957.

1928-1930

ALBERT E. MIDDLETON

Albert Emery Middleton was born in 1878 in New Britain, Connecticut. He worked for the John A. Dunn Co., a furniture manufacturer, and in 1904 he was transferred to St. Paul, where he eventually became the company's sales manager.

In *History of St. Paul and Vicinity*, published in 1912, author Henry Anson Castle described Middleton as “a man of great executive ability . . . and inherent business acumen.” Castle declared that Middleton “is active in advancing the interests of St. Paul” and labeled him one of the city’s “most highly esteemed young business citizens.” Middleton was a Mason and a member of the Elks Lodge and the Midway Commercial Club.

Before buying the house on Scudder Street, Middleton rented a room at 765 Raymond Ave. He also owned the building at 958 Eustis St., where he rented out rooms. Middleton never married, and he died in 1941.

1930-1940

JAMES AND JENNIE NELSON

James B. Nelson was born in 1857, and his wife, Jennie A. Nelson, was born in 1860. Both were from Iowa. James worked as a file clerk. When they bought the house on Scudder, it was valued at \$5,500.

The Nelsons had three children, two of whom, Hugo and Hazelle, lived in the Scudder house as adults. Hazelle was a teacher.

James Nelson died in 1938. Later that year, a garage was built on the alley behind the house. Jennie continued to live in the Scudder house until she died, in 1940. Her son Hugo then took over the house.

1940-1943

HUGO E. NELSON

Hugo Nelson worked as a manager at the Art Publishing House. After purchasing the Scudder house from his mother, he rented it to the Dynan family, who had recently relocated from Harriet, South Dakota.

Daniel and Margaret Dynan had been school teachers in South Dakota. Daniel got a job with the IRS in St. Paul, and the family moved in 1941. Patricia Dynan, who was six at the time, went to Guttersen School for first and second grade. She had two younger siblings: Mary Lou and Bob.

Margaret Dynan's sister, Lucille Kane, also lived with the family for a time. She had been recently divorced, and moving in with the Dynans enabled her sister to help care for her young daughter, Helen. Lucille worked at Children's Home Society on Como Avenue. Later, she and her daughter moved to an apartment on Knapp Street.

In 1943, the Dynans moved to a house on Eustis Street in what was then Rose Township (now Lauderdale). Later, they built a new house on Eustis. Margaret Dynan moved to RosePointe, a residence for seniors, in 1996 and lived there until

her death in 2009. Daniel Dynan died in 1979.

Today, Pat Dynan Curtis lives in St. Paul. Mary Lou Dynan Carufel lives in Osceola, Wisconsin, and Bob Dynan lives in Minneapolis.

1943-1965

GLENN AND EDNA PRICKETT

The Pricketts were from Morris, Minnesota, where Glenn was an instructor at the West Central School of Agriculture, which later became a branch campus of the University of Minnesota. He came to the St. Paul campus in the spring of 1943 and started work in the 4-H Department in Coffey Hall.

Glenn and Edna were pleased to find a house close to the campus. Glenn began living there immediately, and he worked on the yard, planting trees and shrubs, before the rest of the family moved from Morris on July 1.

Glenn and Edna had three children: Russell, born in 1932; Gordon, born in 1935; and Joyce, born in 1939. Gordon and Russ delivered the Minneapolis Star Tribune in the St. Anthony Park neighborhood for eight years.

When the Pricketts moved into the Scudder house, the kitchen had no cabinets. Glenn commissioned two woodworkers from Morris to build a set. They took careful measurements, constructed the cabinets in Morris, brought them to St. Paul, and installed them. The workmen tried to be unobtrusive because, as nonunion employees, they

feared retaliation from St. Paul's powerful carpenters union.

World War II was on when the Pricketts moved to St. Paul, and the wallpaper they added to Gordon and Russ's room (the back one) had airplanes and patriotic symbols. Years later, Russ painted over the wallpaper with a mix of brown and cream paint that he imagined would be tan but that turned out almost purple.

In Joyce's bedroom (at the top of the stairs), the painter had to remove several layers of wallpaper. As he removed each layer, he would sing a song based on the pattern. One such tune was "Bye Bye Blackbird." The Pricketts also removed the oak woodwork from the living room archways and added plaster arches.

The furnace burned coal until 1950, when it was converted to natural gas. At that time, Gordon cleaned out the coal bin and converted it to a photographic darkroom. With the help of two friends, he wired the room, added running water, and installed countertops and a sink.

In the main part of the basement, the Pricketts had a clothesline that they used in the winter, as well as a ping-pong table. There was also a clothesline in the backyard, along with a vegetable garden, where tomatoes were the main crop.

Edna Prickett did laundry on Monday and hung the clothes to dry, then ironed them on Tuesday. She canned vegetables from the garden and stored them in a fruit cellar off the laundry area in the basement. In the summer, Glenn cut Russ and Gordon's hair on the back porch.

Glenn hung a swing from one clothesline post, and Joyce swung there when no clothes were hanging. He also built a sandbox for her at the back end of the clothesline.

All three children attended Guttersen School through grade 6, and Murray Junior and Senior High School for grades 7 through 12, graduating in 1950, 1953, and 1957.

Gordon received a a springer-cocker spaniel for his ninth birthday in 1944. Lassie lived in the house until December 1960, when Gordon and Jean took her to their home near Quonset Point Naval Air Station in Rhode Island.

Russ Prickett lived in the house until June 1956, when he got married and started Harvard Law School. Gordon moved out in June 1958, when he graduated from the U of M and reported for duty aboard a Navy destroyer as a newly commissioned ensign.

Edna Prickett died in 1959. In 1961, Joyce graduated from the University of Minnesota, and



nine days later she married Charles Kirk at St. Anthony Park Methodist Church. It was a warm March day, and she walked to the church in her wedding gown.

Glenn Prickett remarried in 1962, to Alice Tollefson, and moved out of the house. Joyce and Charles moved back and lived there while he finished graduate school at the U of M. They moved to Washington, D.C., in June of 1963, and Gordon and his family moved back to the house from North Kingstown, Rhode Island, while he went to graduate school. In the summer of 1965, Gordon and family (wife, Jean, and daughters Karen and Laura) moved to Lake Bluff, Illinois. Carl and Jean Reidel purchased the house from Glenn Prickett that year. He died in 1983.

Currently Gordon lives in Aitken, Minnesota; Russell is in Austin, Texas; and Joyce lives in Reston, Virginia.

1965-1969

CARL AND JEAN REIDEL

Before moving to St. Paul, Carl and Jean Reidel lived in California, Nevada, and Utah, where he worked as a forest ranger for the U.S. Forest Service. They moved to Minnesota so that Carl could begin a doctoral program in forest policy at the University of Minnesota.

Carl painted and wallpapered most of the Scudder house, and he installed a front cobblestone sidewalk and steps made of railroad ties. Carl and Jean's son, Jonathan, was born in 1968. He joined sisters Ingrid and Kristin.

After Carl finished his Ph.D., the Reidels moved to Williamstown, Massachusetts, where he was a professor of political science at Williams College. He finished his career at the University of Vermont. Now retired, Carl lives in a Vermont farmhouse that predates the Scudder house by over half a century. Built in the 1840s on a 30-acre farm, it served as a pony ranch around 1900.

Jean Andrews is retired and lives in Burlington, Vermont. Carl and Jean's son, Jonathan, is a senior communications officer at the University of Vermont and lives in Burlington, Vermont. Their daughter Ingrid is a graduate student living in

Newburyport, Massachusetts. Their daughter Kristin is a public school teacher in Hurricane, West Virginia.

1969-1990

TOM AND JOAN DUKE

Tom and Joan Duke almost didn't get the house at 2246 Scudder St. Despite the fact that in 1969 St. Anthony Park was a seller's market, they offered the Reidels \$2,000 less than the asking price for a house that wasn't yet officially on the market. Quickly realizing that the sellers had the upper hand, the Dukes increased their offer and the deal was sealed.

When they moved into the house, their first, Tom was teaching part-time at Luther Seminary and pastoring a Lutheran church. Joan was managing two-year-old Karen, who was followed the next year by sister Laura.

The Dukes made several changes to the house. In 1975, Joan refinished the woodwork in the entryway and stairway. They added paneling in the basement, which became a playroom for Karen and Laura—except when Tom, and later Joan, appropriated the northwest corner as a study. Both wrote their dissertations in the basement.

In 1976, the Dukes made what remains the biggest change to the house when they had an addition built on the back. They contemplated running it across the entire width of the house and

even making it a two-story affair, but budget constraints limited it to a 12' x 11' room with windows on two sides.

Tom did the finishing work on the addition himself. When it was complete, he used some of the wood salvaged from the old back entry to build a shed on the end of the garage.

In 1978, the Dukes lost the large elm tree in the front yard, and Tom replaced it with a green ash. He also added an attic fan, and they had the house sided with yellow vinyl.

The Dukes had a good relationship with their immediate neighbors: the Hilmanowskis to the north, and the Kanivetskys to the south. Mr. Hilmanowski had an Edsel that Tom admired. Roman and Svetlana Kanivetsky's daughter, Lisa, played with the Duke girls. Tom practiced Russian with Roman, and the two men jointly owned a power lawnmower.

After the Dukes sold the Scudder house to Dave and Nancy Healy, they moved to Lauderdale. Currently, Joan lives on Valentine Avenue in St. Anthony Park, and Karen is also in the neighborhood, on Doswell Avenue. Tom lives in St. Paul, as does Laura.

1990-2011

DAVE AND NANCY HEALY

The Scudder house is the second owned by Dave and Nancy Healy, who moved with their two children from St. Paul's Midway neighborhood. The Healys had looked at many houses, but only a few in St. Anthony Park, when they saw a newspaper ad for one in the area that was for sale by owner. They made an appointment to look at the house and submitted an offer the same day.

When the Healys moved in, Dave worked at the University of Minnesota's General College as director of the Writing Center, and Nancy taught at Eisenhower Elementary in Blaine. That fall, Matthew started first grade at Capitol Hill Elementary, and Benjamin was in sixth grade at Hancock Elementary. Although the Healys had moved out of Hancock's attendance area, they obtained permission for Ben to finish his grade-school career there.

One of Matt's first paying jobs was painting the garage. He and Ben helped Dave build a deck at the back of the house, and during the last summer he lived at home, Matt replaced and painted the front-porch screens.

Dave painted and wallpapered all the rooms in

the house, and he completed the refinishing work on the downstairs woodwork that Joan Duke started. He finished off the basement area that already housed a toilet and shower, adding a vanity to make that a complete bathroom, and he built a separate laundry room.

Dave and Nancy added a boulevard garden and some other plantings in the front yard. The backyard sports shade-tolerant annuals and perennials. They have had limited success growing tomatoes in pots on the deck.

Ben, a professional musician and piano teacher, lives with his wife, Atsuko, in Brooklyn. Matt, who also lives in Brooklyn, works for Foursquare, a social networking site. Nancy and Dave currently run a memoir writing business, *Of Shoes and Ships and Sealing Wax*.

# STORIES

Oftentimes I can give the truest and most interesting account of any adventure I have had after years have elapsed, for then I am not confused, only the most significant facts surviving in my memory. Indeed, all that continues to interest me after such a lapse of time is sure to be pertinent, and I may safely record all that I remember.

– Henry David Thoreau  
*Journal* (March 28, 1857)



I loved the front screen porch. When we first moved there, I'd sit on the porch and every time someone went by, I'd say "Hi." If they replied, I'd run in the house tell my mother, "We know them now, don't we. I have a friend." Years later, I liked to sleep on the day bed on the front porch on hot summer nights.

—Joyce Prickett Kirk

When we moved in at 2246 Scudder St., it was a three-bedroom, one-bathroom house. By the time our two girls got to be teenagers, there was a lot of pressure on that upstairs bath. Tom solved the problem by creating a basement bathroom.

A small freestanding shower was installed in the laundry area and a mirror was hung over the tubs. There had always been a toilet under the stairs, but I hung a plastic shower curtain there for privacy, and the basement bathroom was open for business.

It was cold on winter mornings before a person got into the shower. And sitting on the toilet, it was easy to wonder what lurked in that dark hole behind you and what might crawl out. All in all, though, it was perhaps the most well-used improvement we made to the house.

— Joan Duke

**M**y sister, Mary Lou, and I loved to have our parents take us to Langford Park to play. There was a slide, a swing set, and a large sand box very close to Scudder.

One day my sister (age 3) followed some older kids to the park, climbed the slide, and fell off, breaking her collarbone.

— Pat Dynan Curtis

Once upon a time a “live birth” occurred in the middle of the living room floor at 2246 Scudder. Well, it was “live” in the sense that the “birth” was enacted by a live person, a very interesting fellow in fact. His name was Frank Lake, a British psychiatrist and theologian, who our friend Professor William Smith, of Luther Theological Seminary, had brought to Luther to lecture and lead retreats for students interested in the field of pastoral care.

Frank Lake had written and published a tome, about three-and-a-half inches thick, entitled *Clinical Theology*. It was based on his theories about how influential the circumstances of one’s birth experience, which often amounts to trauma, are on one’s later psychological and spiritual well-being.

Lake had experimented, before Timothy Leary, using LSD to help patients (and himself) recall and relive their birth experience (trauma) in a loving and supportive environment in order to diminish the post-traumatic effects of the original experience. He later came to believe that the LSD wasn’t necessary and that the power of suggestion could accomplish the same effects for a willing subject.

While Lake was visiting at Luther, Bill Smith and I decided to invite a group of students over to the house one evening to have Lake demonstrate

his technique. I still recall us sitting in a circle around the living room and seeing him in the fetal position on the floor, talking nonstop about his theories, while acting out his own birth process with all its pains and eventual delights.

I don't think anyone else volunteered to do the experiment, but we enjoyed the evening, the lecture, and the intense experience.

– Tom Duke

My dad was determined to have a good lawn and so every spring would arrange to have manure trucked over from the St. Paul campus and spread in our front and backyard. I was always embarrassed that it smelled like a barnyard.

In front of the bushes in front of the porch, Dad always planted red salvia and white petunias. Initially we also had a vegetable garden in the left section of the backyard. Dad always planted a dozen tomato plants, and it was often my job to take tomatoes to the neighbors.

One day I took some tomatoes to the upstairs neighbor next door, Mrs. Swain, who exclaimed what beautiful tomatoes they were. I'm reported to have said, "My dad says we have the juicy manure to thank for that."

— Joyce Prickett Kirk

I slept in the back bedroom. My friend Alison Krinke, from across the street, and I would arrange all the boxes in the big closet and pretend that was our bedroom. The rest of the room was our apartment. The living room downstairs was where we went to college. I think we actually slept in the closet bedroom once or twice. We wrote our names and pledged our lifelong friendship on the wall in pencil in that closet.

I remember feeling like we were very rich and fancy people when Dad put in wall-to-wall carpeting in Laura and my bedrooms. (Mine was pink shag.) No more hard wood floors! In the bathroom, he put in Dijon-mustard-colored carpet. We were so cool: a carpeted bathroom!

— Karen Duke

I put glow-in-the-dark stars on the ceiling of my bedroom, which was the one at the back of the house. There was a sticker for each planet, orbiting the light at the center of the room. Above the head of my bed I made a rather narcissistic constellation spelling out my name. I later decided it was too blatant and removed some of the stars, though if you know where to look it's still quite obvious.

Not long after my room was given new wallpaper, I covered most of it with posters of movies and musicians. I may have been inspired by the wallpaper's subtle pattern of dots, which made it easy to line up the edges of a poster to hang it straight.

I loved having two large closets in my room. They were full of books, games, toys, baseball cards, and clothes. Unfortunately, I grew too tall to comfortably fit through the doors to those closets. Many poorly chosen words were spoken upon banging my head on the way to picking out a shirt for the day.

— Ben Healy



One Thanksgiving we were hosting dinner for my extended family, and when we went to put the turkey in, the oven wouldn't come on. What do you do on Thanksgiving with no oven?

I figured most of our neighbors would either be gone for the day or else making full use of their ovens. Our best bet, I decided, was our elderly next-door neighbor, Mrs. Hilmanowski.

I went next door and knocked. There was no response. I waited for a minute or two and was just about ready to head back home when I heard someone stirring. The door opened a crack. I explained our predicament and asked if we could possibly borrow her oven—if she wasn't using it.

"You're certainly welcome to the oven," she said, "but I don't know how well it works. It hasn't been used in quite a while."

I said I was willing to give it a try. She said she'd turn it on, and I went back home to get the bird. When I returned, I went to the back door. My hands were both occupied, so I had to knock with my foot. Mrs. H came to the door again. I stood there holding the roaster. There was no way she'd be able to carry that turkey into the kitchen and put it in the oven. She was going to have to let me in.

Though we'd lived next door to Mrs. H for six

or seven years by then, none of us had ever been in her house. I wondered how long it had been since anyone besides her immediate family had been inside. She hesitated for a moment, then slowly opened the door. I stepped inside.

The kitchen was small. The stove and refrigerator had the rounded corners of a bygone era. There was a microwave; otherwise, the furnishings reminded me of my grandmother's kitchen in Emery, South Dakota.

Mrs. H seemed embarrassed. "It's kind of a mess," she said. There were a few empty Meals on Wheels containers on the counter.

"You should see *our* kitchen right now," I said. I thanked her, then hurried back home to finish getting our house ready for guests.

When I figured the turkey would be done, I went back to Mrs. H's door and knocked. This time there was no pause, and I wondered how long she'd been waiting just inside.

"We really appreciate this," I said. "You know how it is on Thanksgiving—all kinds of people coming—I don't know what we would have done without an oven."

"I'm just glad it worked," she said.

I stood in Mrs. H's kitchen holding the roaster. Next door was a house full of people and activity

waiting to re-enfold me. She stood in front of the sink. I thought about her being alone on Thanksgiving. I wondered how my family would react if I brought a strange old lady home for dinner. I wondered what she would think of all of us. I turned to go. She held the door. Then she closed it behind me and shut herself back in.

— Dave Healy

In 1987, I was a senior at Central High School and captain of the swim team. In keeping with tradition, I was to host the entire team for a sleep-over at the end of the season.

I didn't want to do just the average sleep-over, so we decided to rent a hot tub for the party. It came on a trailer and was wheeled up Mrs. Hilmanowski's driveway and pushed up to the north side of the front porch.

To get in and out of the hot tub, we climbed over the porch railing. It all went pretty smoothly except for one glitch we hadn't anticipated: the ice that developed on the porch from all the water overflow. (Did I mention that it was late November?)

It was dangerous to say the least, but we teenage girls didn't care. At some point in the wee hours of the morning, everyone fell asleep. There were girls asleep on every horizontal surface on every floor of the house. A party to remember for sure.

— Laura Duke Lundgren

I remember lying on the floor in the living room, listening to the Lucky Strike Hit Parade. In summer, I often played chess on the front porch with Jim Hilmanowski from next door. In the fall, we'd listen to U of M football games on the radio (they used to win) and go out in the front yard to play catch with the football during halftime. In the alley, we played baseball catch with Dad. I never learned to throw a curve!

— Russ Prickett

Despite being only a block away from Langford Park, with its indoor and outdoor basketball courts, it was important for us to have a basketball hoop mounted on the garage. I seem to remember the neighbors back there putting up a little fuss. Undeterred, we learned to accommodate the uneven pavement, overhanging branches, and power lines. Being able to shoot a few hoops while still near enough to be called in for dinner was worth the effort.

– Ben Healy

One of the cedar trees back by the garage had a branch that grew down from the main trunk to about 10 feet off the ground and then looped back up. It made a perfect “U” shape and a perfect spot for us to sit and, well, pretend it was a toilet. But we didn’t always just pretend, and I think we may have gotten in trouble once.

– Karen Duke

What is it about the prospect of moving a piano that convinces seemingly sensible adults that they are modern-day Atlases? When money is tight and you're young and invulnerable, you don't hire professional movers. Instead, you gather your unsuspecting or hopelessly naïve friends on moving day and approach the task with determination. Our crew included Dave and his father, along with friends Stuart, Dan, and Tim—with some assistance from Ben, 10, and Matt, 6. All were rank amateurs.

The instrument to be relocated was an oak-veneered Baldwin upright that had been in the extended Healy family for about 30 years and was probably 60 years old. Some of the veneer had chipped off in previous moves, and many of the ivories were yellowed or missing. The action needed rebuilding and a few of the hammers were undependable, but a tuner kept the piano sounding reasonably good, and all four of us played it.

After two previous experiences with moving, we had threatened to sell the house with the piano included but just couldn't bring ourselves to carry through. So there was no getting around it. The piano was coming with us to Scudder Street.

Getting out of our Chelton Avenue house was just the prelude in this suite for piano and



movers—not a difficult passage. Then came the real test of strength and skill. The Scudder house sits on a knoll, as do many residences in St. Anthony Park. At the time of the move there were five railroad-tie steps up the hill. These led to a cobblestone walkway that culminated in four more steps to the front porch. From the porch it would be clear sailing over the carpeted living room and into the Duke’s family room that would soon become the Healy’s dining room. There were thus at least four movements in this improvised composition.

The decision was made to back the truck up to the hill and unload the piano directly onto the front lawn, thereby avoiding the first set of steps and the cobblestones. This first movement, from the truck to the lawn, was accomplished without fanfare, and the band of volunteers was feeling pretty confident. The piano now sat in the front yard on two 2x4s. In a previous piano-moving event (yes, we had foolishly done this before), the carefully choreographed process of slide, rotate, slide had been successful. This enabled the movers to finesse the piano over the grass by shifting four 2x4s from one end to the other in an elaborate minuet, the second movement of the suite.

That, at least, was the plan—until, after one mighty push, the piano slipped off the boards and

sank into the lawn. Now the beast had to be persuaded to get back on track, but it wouldn't budge.

Several contrapuntal suggestions were offered. "Get a real mover" became "Leave it here and give outdoor concerts for the neighbors." Finally, Stuart—the young weight-lifting college student—said, "All of you, get out of my way. Dave, Tim, Dan, and Jer get on that end. I'll handle this one." While the older men stabilized the free end, Stuart single-handedly lifted the corner that was mired in the ground and returned it to the wooden platform. Cue the triumphal chords of success.

The third movement was the most difficult but continued uneventfully, with Stuart on the heavy end as the piano scaled the front steps to the porch.

The fourth movement, the coda, required minimal effort as the musical centerpiece of our home was nudged into the dining room and up against the wall and we all breathed a sigh of relief.

There is still a significant dent in the front yard. It should be regraded and reseeded, but it's become as much a part of the history of this house as the trees, the kitchen cupboards, and the drawings on the basement floor.

— Nancy Healy

**W**e inherited a piano when we bought the house. It had been painted olive green to match the woodwork in the front hall and stairway. (What were they thinking?) Dad completely stripped and refinished it, and now it's a beautiful oak piano—a Cable upright grand. I have it in my house on Doswell, and I hope my kids will learn on it like I did.

— Karen Duke

Sometimes when I'm sitting in my modest New York apartment, I think back to the home I grew up in. I think about how amazingly expansive it seems now, compared to the amount of space I can afford in this city.

I imagine most transplanted New Yorkers go through this line of thinking eventually. All the real estate discussions I overhear on the train, the aspirational articles I read in *New York Magazine*, and the supposedly casual inquiries everyone's always making about how much their friends are paying for their apartments, support this theory. We're all working our way up to a slightly more spacious living room, a marginally larger kitchen, space for a bigger dining table or a queen-size bed.

When we first moved to the Scudder Street house in Minnesota, though, it seems like what I wanted was the opposite. Despite the backyard, the big living room, and the huge park just a block away, I often found myself seeking out the smallest spaces in the house: the crawl space under the basement steps, the floor under the grand piano, the tool shed attached to the garage.

When friends came over, we'd sometimes hide out in my bedroom closet with flashlights, listening to Adam Sandler tapes on my Walkman, or sorting through my meager baseball card collection.

Sometimes we'd make a fort out of the tiny space between the head of my bed and the wall. There was a shelf there that served as a headboard, and the space under it was just enough for two kids to make a little hideout and stash candy and issues of Rolling Stone. I was tall for my age even then, but I still managed to squeeze myself down into that corner and sit there for as much as an hour, reading magazines. I loved being able to make those spaces my own. It was like having my own little apartment under that shelf, a domain I could be the master of.

The first time the four of us visited the house—before the sale was finalized and the Dukes moved out—I remember walking upstairs with my mom to have a look at the bedrooms, and knowing immediately which one I wanted.

Suspended above the bed was a loft, made of plywood and 2x4s, with a wooden ladder on one side. This simple piece of architecture divided what was an otherwise straightforward room into all kinds of interesting spaces. My childhood fantasy of living in a tree house was coming true, at least a little bit.

I immediately made it clear that this was the bedroom I wanted. I don't remember my brother arguing the point much, but I suspect that being

the demanding six-year-old worked to my advantage, especially since Ben was four years older and just starting to hit that age where he had to begrudgingly start acting like a role model.

Lying in my bed, the bottom of the low-hanging loft enclosed me in a cave, where I could safely see out into the world. I pasted little glow-in-the-dark stars to the bottom of the loft to make it feel even more like my own little universe under there. From the top of the loft, I could imagine myself miles up in the air, where the pedestrians roaming the halls below couldn't see or hear me.

Sometimes after my parents put me to bed, I'd climb up there and feel like I was falling asleep somewhere totally different from where I'd just been, a bit like I was on a camping trip in my own room.

I took a class in college on environmental psychology and the design of public spaces. Most of it was way over my head (I was an art major), but there was one idea that really stuck with me. A British geographer named Jay Appleton proposed a concept he called "prospect-refuge." The idea is that we have a basic desire to be able to see the outside world (prospect), while remaining hidden and protected (refuge).

The idea makes some obvious sense from an

evolutionary perspective. You can see why it would appeal to a caveman to be protected from the elements while still being able to see if there were any sabre-tooth tigers coming (that's probably why they're called cavemen and not outsiders). It also seems like a natural tendency for a child to have. The world is big when you're a kid, and sometimes it's nice to make it feel a little bit smaller.

Still, I don't think I've lost that preference as I've become an adult. Looking out the window of my apartment onto the street, I find a certain comfort in having a small space that belongs to me. It's a reminder that even if I do one day end up in a spacious house of my own, it's the smaller spaces inside that will make it feel like a home.

— Matt Healy

I remember what I considered a long walk to Guttersen School—probably five or six blocks. Several of us in the neighborhood were in the same class, and we walked together—to school in the morning, home for lunch, back to school, and then home again at the end of the day. No school lunch or bus service in those days.

— Pat Dynan Curtis



After we had an addition built on the back of the house, my dad constructed a shed on the back of the garage for bikes, tools, and the lawn mower. We did put our bikes in there, but the shed and its roof were also great hang-out spots. As we got more daring, we tried going from the shed roof to the garage roof, but that was too scary.

Our climbing and exploring were part of elaborate games of Charlie's Angels that I played with my older sister, Karen, and our neighbor Lisa. Our adventures also took place in a half-built apartment building across the alley. Lucky for us, whoever was building that apartment was not in a hurry; it seemed to sit half-built for years.

– Laura Duke Lundgren

I had a 100-pound sack of rock salt in the garage that I'd "liberated" from the ice factory where I'd worked during the summer. That winter I carried it up to the house to use for melting ice on the sidewalk. It had frozen solid and was really uncomfortable on my shoulder.

When I came in the side door, I couldn't face heading down the basement stairs with it, so I gave it a mighty heave. But it didn't make it all the way to the basement floor, instead clipping the bottom step and chipping off a piece about 18 inches long and an inch or two wide. Dad wasn't happy.

— Russ Prickett



# REFLECTIONS

We think of the house as home and place, but enchanted images of the past are evoked not so much by the entire building, which can only be seen, as by its components and furnishings, which can be touched and smelled as well: the attic and the cellar, the fireplace and the bay window, the hidden corners, a stool, a gilded mirror, a chipped shell.

— Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place*

My love affair with old houses began with my grandparents' two-story, turn-of-the-century clapboard house on Wheeler Street in St. Paul. As a young minister, my father moved his family several times, but it was Grandma's house—with its wide front porch, brass knobs, pocket doors, and beautiful woodwork—that we always came back to. I began to associate St. Paul with that house. St. Paul was home, and when I came back in 1970 to attend Bethel College, I was here to stay.

I have lived in four old houses, if you count Grandma's—and I do. I have caressed the banisters, reclined on the porches, adorned the walls, and plumbed the soul of each one. Letting go is painful.

My second love was the old Lutheran parsonage in Yankton, South Dakota. It was also a two-story clapboard house with a wide front porch, an oak banister, four bedrooms, a formal dining room, and a large country-style kitchen. We lived there during most of my elementary school years, driving to Grandma's house in St. Paul for holidays and summer vacations. Both homes enfolded me with a sense of security and belonging. The parsonage sat next door to the church and thus shared a sacred space. My best friend was a block away, the elementary school was within walking

distance, and the front sidewalk was smooth enough for roller skating. I could bike around town or walk to the public library. Many of my fondest memories of family life are contained in that house.

When Dave and I began looking for our own home in 1977, I wanted another old house. I half-heartedly agreed to visit some newer bungalows in Roseville and Arden Hills, but nothing measured up to Grandma's house, which, ironically, was also for sale at the time. It was difficult for me to turn my back on the house on Wheeler, but it was out of our price range, too far from my workplace, and needed major renovations.

The smaller one-and-a-half-story house on Chelton Avenue we found after much searching was a more appropriate starter home. Like my previous loves, it had a front porch, an oak banister, leaded-glass windows, a dining room, and a large eat-in kitchen. We moved in during the summer, and Dave painted, wallpapered, remodeled, and landscaped for the next 12 years. It became home to our two sons and a cat. But eventually we outgrew that house and decided to find another. Moving on was difficult, but we hoped the new owners would take good care of our old house.

This house on Scudder Street is now 100 years old. It, too, has a front porch, leaded-glass windows, hardwood floors, and beautiful woodwork. We've lived here for over 20 years and recently researched the house's history and learned about its owners.

This house has sheltered seven families and a single man. Three families, including ours, lived here for more than 20 years. Two families had daughters named Karen and Laura. At least eight residents had advanced degrees—professors, teachers, a minister, a psychologist, a writer. Twice the house sold before it was officially on the market. All of these facts are interesting, but they don't really explain the bond we and others feel to this house. The stories told by former owners give it life.

We've learned that the kitchen cupboards were custom-made by nonunion carpenters from Morris, Minnesota, who installed them under the radar to avoid confrontation with the St. Paul carpenters union. Many of the trees and shrubs in the yard were planted by a professor from the School of Agriculture at the University of Minnesota. When the furnace was converted to gas, the coal bin became a darkroom. There was a fire in the basement, and the blackened ceiling joists were

covered with plaster. Much of the interior work has been of the do-it-yourself variety, including wallpapering, painting, carpeting, wiring, loft-building, and tiling. Several dissertations and the local newspaper originated from the basement office. Children played in a sandbox, on a swing, even on the roof of the shed in the backyard. There were strong connections to the neighbors in an area of town where houses are named for their owners.

These stories tell of the soul of our house. They reflect a strong work ethic, an eye for beauty, a vision for the future, a delight in the comforts of home, a search for community, and a commitment to family and education. There's a lot of wisdom in old houses. That's why I love them.

We still occasionally drive by Grandma's house on Wheeler Street and our first home on Chelton Avenue, and I once visited the house in Yankton. I can see from the outside that the houses have been well cared for, and I'm thankful for that. But I've never been inside them. I want to remember those places as they were for me, with the same furnishings, wallpaper, paint, decorations, and memories.

— Nancy Healy



Dear Tom,

I took down the loft today. We'd been talking for a while about redecorating Matthew's room. I told him I'd have to take the loft down in order to wallpaper and that once I'd dismantled it I wasn't likely to put it back up. He gave me the go-ahead, but reluctantly.

Matthew hadn't used the loft much in the last year or two. He used to read up there quite often, but lately he was getting too big to fit very well, and so were his friends, who would usually sleep in the loft when he had someone stay overnight. So the loft wasn't really functional any more. Still, it was hard for him to give it up.

It turned out to be hard for me, too. In a society that lacks formal rites of passage, marker events tend to sneak up on you. Matthew was six when we bought your house; now he's twelve. When is your child no longer a child? I started out taking down Matthew's loft; I ended up feeling like I was dismantling his childhood.

I was also acutely aware that I was dismantling someone else's handiwork—yours. Calling it “dismantling” makes me think of the time my dad covered up the mantle over the fireplace in the house where I grew up. The mantle held the usual

collection of family photos and knickknacks. One day my dad decided to cover it up. He built an enclosure out of grooved plywood that went from the top of the fireplace all the way to the ceiling. He stained it mahogany. I suppose he was trying for a more modern look.

Before he nailed up the last piece of plywood, he put a slip of paper on the mantle. It said, "Remodeling work done by Gerald W. Healy, Aug. 8, 1962." I can identify with that gesture. We're always in the process of leaving our mark on the world, but we don't always know which marks will survive or whether we'll get credit for the marks we've made.

I don't know if that loft felt like one of your marks on the world when you built it. I do know that I could sense the care you took in constructing it. It was well-made, and it was one-of-a-kind—not something a person could put together from a kit. I can picture you planning the loft—drawing diagrams, going to Knox, and, if you're like me, going back to Knox when you realized you'd forgotten something. I can imagine your daughter's delight the first time she climbed the ladder and her excitement the first time she slept up there all night.

Robert Frost has a poem in which the speaker,

on a walk in the woods, comes upon an old woodpile, which sets him wondering about the person who cut and stacked the wood. I found myself doing the same sort of wondering about you as I took apart your loft.

I say “your” loft, though of course by the time I took it down it wasn’t yours any more. Or was it? When you sell a house, you have to sell the “fixtures” too. The loft was a fixture, so when we bought the house from you, that fixture became ours to do with as we pleased. We did, in fact, customize it somewhat. I added a railing on one side. My mother made a quilt that just fit over the foam mattress.

Still, when I took the loft apart, I knew I was undoing someone else’s work. And my undoing wasn’t like the wind and rain and decay that slowly undid the woodpile in Frost’s poem. One day the loft was there; the next it was gone. Yesterday there was still a bit of Tom Duke in that room. Now that bit is gone and with it another mark you had made.

It was about ten years ago when my parents sold the house I grew up in. I haven’t been in that house since then. I don’t know if the plywood enclosure is still over the fireplace, or if the ceiling in my old bedroom still has a scar from when my BB gun accidentally discharged, or if the upstairs

bathroom still has the carpet my sister put in.

We make our living place our own, and then we leave and other people make it their own. Our children are our own, and then they grow up and become their own selves. 1536 Simpson, where I lived for 18 years, is someone else's house now. 2246 Scudder, where you lived for 21 years, is our house now. The loft is gone. So is the girl you built it for.

Now, about these front steps made out of railroad ties . . . .

— Dave Healy

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