

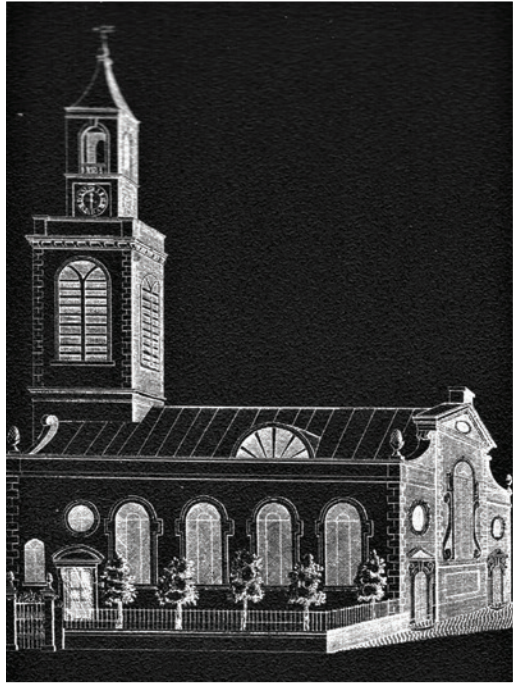


Sir Christopher Wren's St. Mary the Virgin, Aldermanbury at America's National Churchill Museum on the campus of Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri.

How Our **EARLY** **BUILDINGS** *Shaped Us*

*A Journey Through Barrington's Eclectic Building Heritage
from the 1850s to the 1950s*

STORY BY **BARBARA L. BENSON**



A 1793 etching of St. Mary Aldermanbury Church.



The Porter Schoolhouse in the 1890s. It was a balloon frame one-room school, on Porter, now Buckley Road. (*Tales of Old Barrington*)

SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN'S *Influence in Early America*

IN THE MISSOURI TOWN OF FULTON, there stands a church, one of 51 churches designed by an architectural icon in world history, Sir Christopher Wren. St. Mary Aldermanbury was a parish church in the City of London first mentioned in 1181, and destroyed by the Great Fire of London in 1666. (This came after the Great Plague of 1665.)

In my schooldays we sometimes learned history through pithy little verses: “In sixteen hundred and sixty-five, not a soul was left alive: In sixteen hundred and sixty-six, London burned like rotten sticks.”

Christopher Wren rebuilt St. Mary the Virgin, Aldermanbury after the fire, using Portland (Dorset) stone. In 1940, the church was gutted during the blitz, leaving only the four walls standing. Many Wren churches were destroyed or badly damaged during the blitz, including St. Paul’s Cathedral. But Wren’s legacy was infinite, and when he died in 1723, he was buried in St. Paul’s Cathedral. The Latin inscription on his gravestone translates as: “If you seek his memorial, look around you.”

In extraordinary circumstances the Wren legacy would grace the heartland of America. In 1946, Winston Churchill, at the invitation of the Trustees of Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, gave the most consequential speech of the post Second World War period. “The Sinews of Peace” became better known as the Iron Curtain Speech. In the ensuing years distinguished men and women, on both sides of the Atlantic, supported the creation of the Sir Winston Churchill Memorial and Library in the United States in this Missouri town. By 1962, the idea had emerged that the centerpiece of this Memorial should become the restored Church of St. Mary Aldermanbury.

Scheduled for destruction, for the second time in its ancient history, the

church would rise from the ruins after the painstaking work began of numbering and crating the four surviving walls of Portland stone and shipping them across the Atlantic. Westminster architects and Wren scholars, with the support of an Anglo-American fundraising campaign, accomplished its rebuilding on the plains of America. By 1968, its story and simple beauty, and its commemoration of the life of another iconic figure in world history, would draw scholars and admirers of Sir Winston Churchill to Fulton.

Long before a Wren church was rebuilt in America, his influence and style for places of worship were brought to these shores by the pilgrims and emigrants from the British Isles. Simple, rectangular structures at first, as communities became established, many denominations added steeples, bell towers, spires, and architectural embellishments to the basic church building. The Wren influence would find its way deep into the new country.

The Central Role of the Schoolhouse

The Barrington area’s early settlers in the mid-1830s were predominantly from New England with its English and European architectural heritage. At first, worship took place in the schoolhouses, log structures, like the early dwellings on the prairie. The first sawn lumber came from the sawmills in the river towns along the Fox, and when the Barrington depot opened in 1854, by rail.

As the population in the village and its surrounding farmlands increased, the number of schoolhouses required by the Land Ordinance Law of 1785 for lands west of the Appalachians, were built. Log and sometimes stone were used in the earliest ones, but by the 1850s, the one-room schoolhouses were mostly constructed of sawn lumber to balloon frame specifications. These schoolhouses were used for lessons, township meetings, and Sunday worship.



The churches built in Barrington Township in the late 1800s changed ownership as fast-growing religious denominations were changing. (Tales of Old Barrington)

Houses of Worship in the 1850s

The earliest churches in Barrington Township were the Barrington Center North Methodist Episcopal Church at Sutton and Dundee Roads, and the Baptist South Church at Old Sutton and Penny Roads, both built in 1853, the area known then as Barrington Center. Remarkably similar rectangular structures, with square bell towers, and sparsely furnished and decorated, they provided continuity and stability for their parishioners as they wrestled with their new environment.

The Village was founded in 1854 and incorporated in 1865. The first house of milled lumber was built by Edward Lamey on Franklin Street in 1855. Catholic masses were held there until they acquired a church. The Methodist Church and the Baptists from Barrington Center soon moved into newly built churches in the village, the Baptists at Lincoln Street, and the Methodists at Ela and Franklin Streets; that church sold in 1873 to the Catholic community.

Residences and stores sprang up on both sides of the County Line Road, a few moved from their earlier locations at Deer Grove near Palatine. Most men had some carpentry skills, and could build a basic frame, four-square, or L-shaped house. For those who hired to build, there were the pattern books to provide the designs and specifications.

In 2011, The Art Institute of Chicago presented an exhibition entitled

“Design Inspiration: 19th Century American Builders’ Manuals and Pattern Books.” Part of the exhibition’s introduction, read, “The builders’ manuals and pattern books of the 19th century were the do-it-yourself manuals of their era. These practical guides for builders, primarily carpenters, were important resources for construction techniques and design details until the rise of the professional architect in the latter half of the century.”

The Earliest Barrington Houses

Barrington grew steadily from that crossroads at the County Line Road and by the late 19th century was a busy market town. Houses were mostly of frame construction, very few of brick. The commercial district was largely frame structures, some with the false fronts used to increase their height. Several fires in the business district in the 1890s brought about a change in construction materials through use of brick. Now too, several church spires were visible landmarks from outside the village.

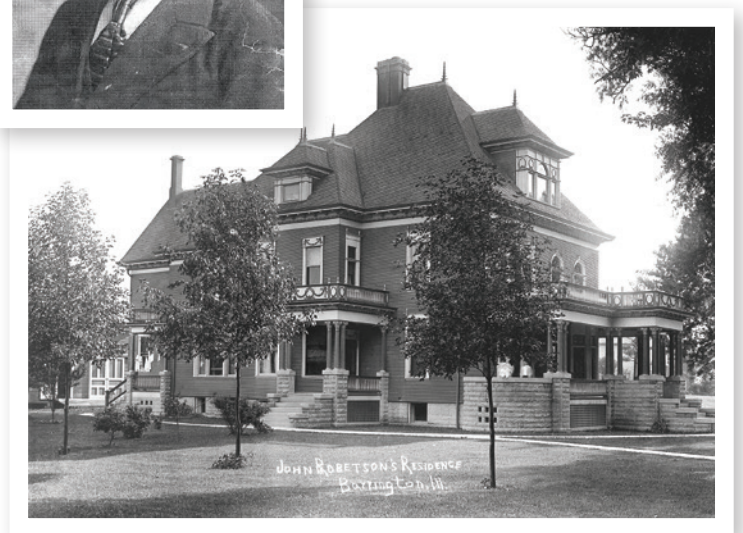
Fred Lines: Wizard of Lake Street

Beginning in the 1880s, the streets west of Hough Street and south of West Main opened to residential development. West Lake Street was the first, and one of its early residents was a man who changed the architectural face of Barrington. Fred Lines was a master carpenter living with his family in Mackinaw, Illinois. His wife Emma was the daughter of M.B. McIntosh, the first elected mayor of Barrington. Active in law, lumber, and real estate, by 1890, his West Lake Street lots were selling well. He asked the Lines family to come back to Barrington with the promise of free lumber for his son-in-law’s building projects.

Quietly, Fred Lines went about his craft, and West Lake Street, including his own house at 130, later his son Arnett’s house at 126, and a house



for Jerome Kingsley who was a pioneer of Barrington Township, at 110, were the nucleus of his accomplishments all produced in the two-story workshop behind his own home. There is no inventory, and his best work was done before utilities came into the village.



The Robertson House designed and built by Fred Lines is today's Barrington's White House. This image is from 1904. The home was built in 1898.



The stunning entryway for the Hecht manor house, now Bellarmine Jesuit Retreat House, designed by architects Robert Work and David Adler.



A John Nyden Art Deco detail at Wakefield Farm.

You may only know him today by his work. For, in echoes of Christopher Wren, “If you seek his memorial, look around you.” And look on West Main Street at Barrington’s White House. Fred Lines designed and built this grand house for Mr. and Mrs. John Robertson in 1898. The social center of Barrington then, and its cultural and community center now, its completion came at the end of a century where the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago had a profound influence on architectural design in America. Fred Lines’ masterpiece is now recognized by its National Register of Historic Places listing.

Dreamy Country Estates

In the early 20th century, successful railroad entrepreneurs were introduced to the Barrington countryside by realtor Sanford Peck. Interested in creating gentlemen’s farms, they bought up large acreage around Barrington and set about building handsome residences, beautiful gardens, and profitable dairy farms. They commissioned well-known architects and landscape designers of the now renowned Chicago School to create their dream estates.

A Barrington resident and the area’s first sought after architect was Robert Work, who initially partnered with Howard van Doren Shaw, and for some years with David Adler. Work designed the Barrington Hills Country Club in 1930 after fire destroyed its first building. In 1926, Work and Adler drew up plans for the Hecht residence, now the original wing of Bellarmine Jesuit Retreat House, where the hallmarks of Adler’s elegant and classical style are lovingly preserved. His commissions for prominent Chicago families remain the most coveted of North Shore residences. His only documented commission in Barrington was for Dr. Paul Magnuson at Pond Gate Farm. But it was never built.

Notable remaining Robert Work residences in Barrington beside his own at 7 West County Line Road, are the residence at Brinker and Otis

Roads built in 1929 for Mr. and Mrs. William Morf, and known originally as Mid Oaks, 127 Oak Knoll Road, commissioned and built by Mr. and Mrs. Evan Evans in the mid-1920s. These are all brick, stately colonial Virginia style residences.

In 1907, Mary (*nee* Wakefield) and George van Hagen commissioned Swedish born architect John Nyden to design their Wakefield Farm on 300 acres along County Line Road. Although not famed as some of his peers in the Chicago School like Louis Sullivan, his career was prolific. Posthumously the van Hagen residence would add to his luster. After dedicated restoration by its owners, it is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Landscape Architect Jens Jensen

Many gracious residences were built in the Barrington countryside through the First World War and prior to the Second World War. Their architects have not been well documented, but in 1925, the revered landscape designer Jens Jensen was commissioned to bring his naturalistic style to Thomas Howell’s property at the southwest corner of Otis and Brinker Roads, a noted site for national retriever trials.

The Mail Order Kit Homes

In these years, the Village’s residential streetscape evolved from its 19th century blend of American four-square, Italianate, Greek Revival, and Queen Anne styles, and remarkably, a National Landmark Octagonal house, to absorb a new development in building—Sears and Montgomery Ward kit houses. Between 1912 and 1931 either as complete pre-designed, cut and numbered kits shipped to Barrington’s depot (the Chicago and Northwestern Railway then had a freight car) or built from purchased blueprints, several dozen have been documented in the Village. Notables are the Craftsman style bungalows, their wide front porches shaded by pitched gabled roofs.

