

**By Barbara Schleppebach**

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It isn't unusual for people to seek a change of scene, but nowadays we don't expect houses to pack up and move to a new location.

In 1900, however, the Kingman house was lifted from its site on the northeast corner of 18th and Maine and deposited at its present location at 120 N. 18th.

Current owners Lacinda and Junior Mena have been told that the original owners planned to build a larger home for themselves on the vacated corner, reserving the original home as servants' quarters.

"They must have run out of money," Lacinda surmises, because that idea did not materialize. But the Menas couldn't be happier with the existing Kingman home, which made the dramatic move without a hitch because the layouts of the three floors lined up perfectly.

"They have the same floor plan, so there's not a hint of sway," she says.

According to materials on file at the Gardner Museum of Architecture and Design, the home was built for

real estate dealer Lucius Kingman in the early 1840s. The two-story Federal style home remains one of the earliest structures listed in the East End Historic District.

An excellent example of its style, the building features Doric columns on the porch, three dormers with dentil molding below the cornice, and shuttered windows throughout. Its tall clean lines led to its inclusion in the volume *Beautiful Homes in Illinois* in the 1950s.

When the Menas encountered the structure 18 years ago, they already had experience with rehabbing older houses, living in one apartment while renting the other section of the homes they renovated.

"My husband found this one and thought there were some possibilities here," Lacinda recalls. "He's an industrial arts teacher, and woodworking is fun for him to do."

Both of them had grown up in older homes, so choosing one as the perfect spot to raise their family was second nature.

Since both are teachers, they appreciate the chance to tackle a "to do" list during summer breaks from

school — although professional workshops and other obligations increasingly limit such opportunities.

"We plan for at least one or two projects a summer," Lacinda says.

"Some years we have been too busy, and boy, do you pay for those."

She adds that "every seven or eight years you've made the rounds and start over. Each year we find new cracks, so there's always something to do; with white woodwork, you're always painting."

Some larger challenges faced them over the years.

The installation of central air conditioning and a new bathroom were major improvements. At some point in the past, the home's back stair had been closed off; Junior and his dad opened it as part of an effort to enlarge the kitchen area.

"It was originally a tiny servants' kitchen," Lacinda says.

A skillfully designed expansion now links the ample cooking area with a dining room that formerly served as a den. The addition does not detract from the home's essentially symmetrical plan, with two nearly square rooms on each side of a central hall.

Each of those rooms has a fireplace, and they are positioned in back to back pairs in order to share a chimney.



**A finely crafted staircase leads to the upstairs from the front foyer.**



**The carriage house at the rear of the property serves as a great gathering place for family and friends.**

The past is never far away in this gracious home, and the Menas — who keep a vintage Underwood typewriter next to a laptop and a personal computer — welcome its presence.

Two tombstones from a cemetery formerly located nearby were discovered during remodeling, and the marble stones forming the patio came from the old courthouse. A stone and wood carriage house now serves as a snug and spacious area for gatherings of friends of both generations.

Time moves on, and sometimes houses do the same. But the Menas plan to stay right where they are and spend the sunny days on their favorite summer projects.