

match for Ison

By Ruth Hultz

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When Jerry and Cathy Ison were looking for a house, they had no idea what a Craftsman bungalow was.

But once they stepped into the V.G. and Leila Musselman house at 2220 Hampshire, they knew a bungalow was what they wanted.

"We liked it instantly," Jerry said. "It just felt right. It was 'home.'"

The Isons say they are settled in for good — even if they win the lottery.

However, Cathy quickly added she'd make some minor changes like finishing more upstairs bedrooms.

She has put personal stamp on theme rooms throughout the house, using wood colors and collections.

Cathy isn't the first woman to fall in love with a bungalow.

When the bungalow craze began, they were heavily marketed to women who would in turn convince their husbands to build one, said Sherry Lang, director of the Gardner Museum of Architecture and Design.

When bungalows were introduced, women were expected to be the "home economist" and keep the house clean and sanitary. So bungalows were specifically designed to make the work of a home economist "effortless."

Ads for bungalow house plans emphasized their easy-to-clean ceramic tile and special kitchen and bathroom fixtures.

House plans were sold in magazines such as the Ladies Home Journal and Better Homes and Gardens.



Above: Jerry and Cathy Ison moved into their house at 2220 Hampshire in 1997 and painted it in colors from nature-popular bungalow colors. V.G. and Leila Musselman's early bungalow has knee braces and exposed rafter tails under the eaves. Top: The living room and dining room of the house.

H-W Photos/ Justin Sagarsee

The main bungalow movement in Quincy was during the 1920s and 1930s, Lang said.

Besides the availability of mail-order house plans, the bungalow boom was fueled by the advent of installment buying, Lang said.

"This was the first time people were encouraged to buy their house on 'time,'" Lang said.

A photo of the Ison's bungalow hangs in the Gardner Museum's current exhibit, "The American Dream and the Bungalow."

Lang said the house is noteworthy because it is "one of only a handful of bungalows that Quincy architect Martin Geise designed."

Throughout the house, there are touches that mark the difference between a house built from mail-order plans and one designed by an individual architect.

The reception hall is large for a bungalow and it has a cozy window seat. The living room and master bedroom each have a diagonal wall, which is an unusual feature for a bungalow. The bedrooms each have large walk-in closets — a special luxury in the early 1900s. The front porch treatment, with its closed railing and decorative carpentry work in the opening, is special.

However, other aspects of the house are typically bungalow, like the living room fireplace with bookcases and the high windows flanking it.

The house features a large dining room that was the center of family life when bungalows were built and is the center of the Ison family today.

The house has the usual, splendid front porch which the family enjoys seven months of the year, and the back porch is great for summer breakfasts.