Crystal Lake Historic Preservation Commission

Peterson House

200 W. Woodstock Street

Built 1907



The Peterson House was constructed in 1907 by John A. Peterson and his brother Lou Peterson. Lou died three years later, and John remained in the house with his wife Lena and other family members. The house was affectionately referred to by family members as "The Big House".

The home was constructed on the 127.5-acre Peterson Estate that was owned by the family and farmed with cucumber crops. The Peterson family revived the former Crystal Lake Pickling and Preserving Works Company that was closed in late 1870s. The Peterson family contributed positively to the economic, political, and physical growth of the City of Crystal Lake throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s.

John A. Peterson was first elected mayor of Crystal Lake in 1931. He was a popular mayor, as evidenced by the overwhelming re-elections. During his term of office, a $90,000 sewage disposal plant was constructed. During his tenth year of service, Mayor Peterson marched in a Crystal Lake Republican parade, pausing at Depot Park to listen to speeches. While standing at the edge of the sidewalk, Mayor Peterson fell forward to the street, dying suddenly of a heart attack.

The Peterson House is a Queen Anne-style home, which was popular from 1880 to 1910. Architectural features include a hipped roof with lower cross gables. The front gable is the most decorative on the house, featuring a variety of patterned wood shingles. There are several leaded-glass transom windows on the façade. Corner windows feature decorative spandrels and knob-like beads, which are common elements for a Queen Anne-style home. The front porch extends around the front and sides and is often referred to as a "wrap-around porch".