



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Cole Woodcox, department chair of English and Linguistics, said the "Castle" is the high style of Victorian architecture and that Kirksville is surrounded with Victorian architecture.

"Castle" built in Victorian style



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

The "Castle" on Franklin Street is a home to the members of Phi Kappa Theta despite the numerous amount of previous owners.

BY SHANNON WALTER
Staff Reporter

Royalty does not reside in the house known as "Castle" on 502 Franklin Street, but several proud members of Phi Kappa Theta treat the house as their castle.

Since its erection, the Castle has had many owners and residents. Samuel M. Pickler (the namesake of Pickler Memorial Library) built the Queen Anne style house circa 1880 with his second wife, Ida Martin Fowler, according to "The History of Adair County" by Eugene Violette.

Pickler was born in Indiana in 1846, and he moved to Kirksville in 1866 to study at the Normal School (now Truman), according to Violette. When the school became a State Normal School, he became a regular member of the faculty as an instructor of Elocution, Logic, Book-keeping and Math until 1873. He then turned his attention to journalism as owner and editor of the Kirksville Journal, which is when he built the house, according to Violette.

Cole Woodcox, department chair of English and Linguistics, said many of the high style Victorian houses built in the late 1800s surround the area where the house is.

"Victorian style was popular in 1880 to 1890," Woodcox said. "Kirksville has a number of those — many of them torn down — up along Franklin Street."

The Victorian style is much different from the early 20th century style houses built after the Castle in the early 1900s.

"These [Victorian style] houses have much more confined spaces, very large rooms, but they don't com-

Historical Places

municate as openly with each other, flowing the living room into the dining room into the hallways," he said.

During this time period, entertaining was not a high priority, so Pickler built his house to fit his practical needs. Pickler was busy as editor of the paper but handed over the position to the Link family in 1891, according to Violette. Subsequently, he managed a mercantile store on the north side of The Square, Pickler's Famous, which Kirksville city councilman Todd Kuhns is attempting to reopen. In 1906, Pickler constructed another

house across the street and sold the house to Judge Solomon Stahl, according to the 1986 Historic Inventory.

Stahl was born in 1851 in Bethel, Mo., and moved to Adair County in 1866 with his family, according to Violette. He lived outside of town and participated in several small-town businesses as a mercantile agent and coal developer until moving into town in 1882, according to Violette. He moved to Bentonville, Ark., for several years and returned in 1906 to be president of the Kirksville Savings Bank and purchased the Castle.

The house had several other residents before being split into three, three-bedroom apartments occupied by six members of Phi Kappa Theta and three other Truman students.

Senior Pat Myers has lived in the house for the past two years and said members of his fraternity have occupied the house for the past two decades.

"The defining feature, the reason we call it Castle, is the turret on the right side of the house that appears to be castle [like]."

Pat Myers
Senior

"The first thing the alumni do when they get into town is stop at the actual fraternity house on Osteopathy and then come to Castle," he said. "The house is really important to us. Every year we take a picture of all the people living in the house on the roof, and the pictures span more than two decades."

Myers said the house is known as the Castle because of the exterior, but the interior of the house no longer represents any historical features.

"The defining feature, the reason we call it Castle, is the turret on the right side of the house that appears to be castle[like]," he said.

Myers said the fraternity plans to fill the entire house next year and reside in the house as long as possible.

"You can definitely tell it's an old house," he said. "It appears to have been modernized in the 1970s. All the walls are matching wood paneled throughout every apartment."

Landlord Nancy Mihalevich has owned the house since 1982. She said Phi Kappa Theta members have lived in the house since she started renting it out, but they have not always filled all the apartments.

She said that when she purchased the house it already was split into apartments, but she has updated the house frequently.

"I have done regular updates on the house, and I've remodeled since I've owned it about three times," she said.

Although the house is historic, it has mostly been updated to accommodate college students rather than present its historic beauty, but Mihalevich said she has discovered historic features in the past while working on the house.

"When I replaced the siding, they took the old siding off, and there was a lot of neat work that has been covered for years," she said. "There are a couple of windows that still have the original lead glass."

Local helps immigrants

hometown Heroes

BY HANNAH DOUGLAS
Staff Reporter

He drives to meet them when they need a friend, and he listens when they are uneasy, but most importantly, he is their translator.

Axel Fuentes, organizer for the Center for New Community, is a Guatemala native who has helped immigrant workers in Kirksville and Milan, Mo., by bringing their concerns into the community.

Fuentes moved to Kirksville in 2007 to find better working conditions for himself and ended up dedicating his time to fighting for improved conditions for others.

"I think people need someone who they can trust to help them," Fuentes said. "I'm helping [immigrants] to develop better community."

As a part of the Center for New Community, Fuentes works with more than 1,600 immigrants in Milan, the majority of whom are from Latin America. He said many of the immigrants he knows are afraid to voice their concerns to their employers.

"I'm helping the most vulnerable group in this country, which are immigrants," Fuentes said. "My main goal is just to teach them to stand up for themselves."

Fuentes has coordinated various training programs for immigrants in Milan and Kirksville. Some of the programs inform immigrant workers of the rights they have as immigrants and as members of the labor force. Others tutor immigrants in English.

Fuentes said he helped to

develop a midnight soccer league for Kirksville immigrants that lasted throughout the summer. With the league, they could join a game after their shift, which normally lasted more than 12 hours each day, Fuentes said. He said the games were beneficial while the warm weather lasted.

"I think that was a relief of stress and anxiety for them," he said. "Since we are not playing now, their attitude is different."

Fuentes said he also is working to educate other organizations in Milan about immigrants in their area.

"I'm not saying I'm the only one that can do this job, but it is difficult to work with immigrants in an isolated place like Milan," he said.

With projects like the Milan Ministerial Alliance, Fuentes said he has met with pastors of most of the church congregations in Milan. Those congregations are now supporting the immigrant community and

addressing issues that pertain to immigrants, such as food pantries or housing, Fuentes said.

"Working with congregations can make a big impact in society," he said. "They are supporting the immigrant community more now than in the past."

Fuentes said many Milan immigrants do not have the means to get to work each day, unless they walk. So he established a free transportation system which travels from a church in Milan to Kirksville two to three times each week.

Fuentes said he is beginning to see change among workers with this collaboration.

"It's taking me time to organize the people and I know they are still afraid, but I can see it is growing," he said. "I see people speaking up more."

Lorena Flores, a Milan worker, said in a translated interview that there are a handful of changes that need to be made at her work and Fuentes



Amy Vicars/Index

Axel Fuentes is a native of Guatemala who came to Kirksville looking for improved working conditions.

is addressing them.

"To my knowledge, there haven't been other people interested in my concerns, especially those concerns of immigrants," Flores said.

Flores said she used to be required to purchase her lunch at work, but with the help of Fuentes, she and the rest of the workers are now allowed to bring their own lunch.

"A lot of people at work complain, but [employers] never pay attention," Flores said, expressing how she appreciates Fuentes' involvement.

Jaime Diaz, Hispanic American Leadership Organization

President, said she does not know of anyone else as active in the community of immigrants as Fuentes and has worked with him a lot in the past.

"He's gotten [H.A.L.O.] more involved in Milan, and we've gotten him more involved at Truman," Diaz said.

Diaz said she has accompanied Fuentes to teach English to immigrants in Milan during the summer, and she could see how closely knit the immigrant community is.

"It was so rewarding to be able to work with them," she said. "It was very touching to hear each of their stories and to get to know them."