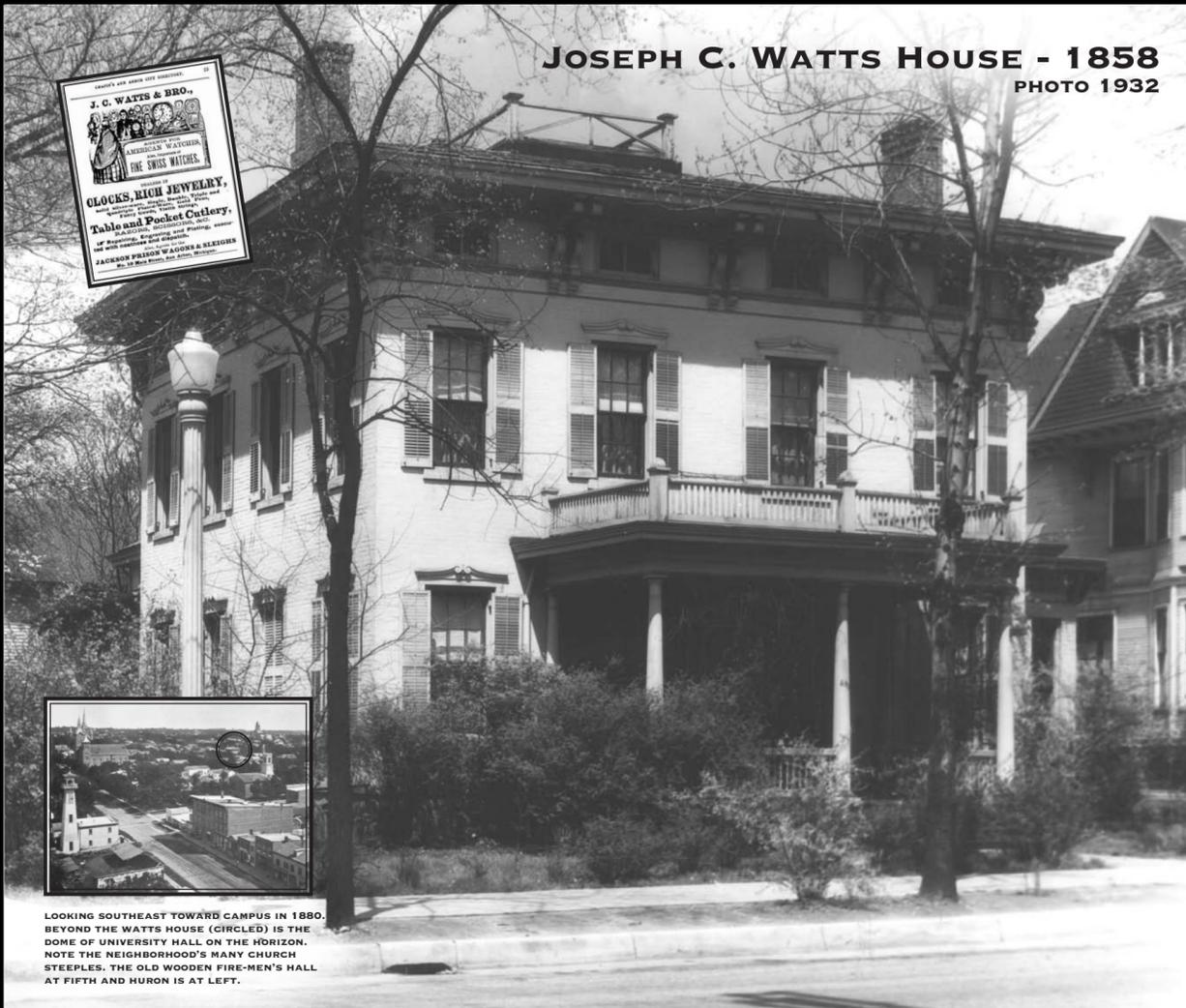




RESIDENTIAL LIFE IN MID-19TH-CENTURY ANN ARBOR



JOSEPH C. WATTS HOUSE - 1858
PHOTO 1932

LOOKING SOUTHEAST TOWARDS CAMPUS IN 1880. BEYOND THE WATTS HOUSE (CIRCLED) IS THE DOME OF UNIVERSITY HALL ON THE HORIZON. NOTE THE NEIGHBORHOOD'S MANY CHURCH STEEPLES. THE OLD WOODEN FIRE-MEN'S HALL AT FIFTH AND HURON IS AT LEFT.

In 1858 Main Street jeweler Joseph C. Watts built his large brick home on the northeast corner of Liberty and Division within easy walking distance of his Main Street shop. Multiple fireplaces, a roof-top widow's walk, and ornate trim in the fashionable Italianate style proclaimed his success. The earliest settlers and most prominent citizens built their houses near the center of town. At first, crude, dirt-floored log cabins were clustered near Huron and Main. Single-family frame, brick, and stucco dwellings rapidly

spread east to what after 1837 became the University of Michigan campus.

On the opposite corner to your right stands druggist Emanuel Mann's 1850 house of brick covered with stucco scored to resemble stone. This style was so popular that Ann Arbor was referred to as "the little stucco village." In 1829 Mann's parents had been the first German family to settle in Ann Arbor. Next to the park is the 1853 Greek Revival home of Henry Dewitt Bennett, local postmaster and later

secretary of the university. In 1970 the house became a city-owned museum honoring Reuben and Pauline Kempf. They bought the home in 1890 and taught piano and voice in the parlor for more than fifty years.

The town's major churches were also part of the neighborhood. University students rented rooms and took meals in nearby homes. The neighborhood remained residential until after World War II, when its prime location between Main Street and campus led to its transformation to commercial uses.



REUBEN AND PAULINE KEMPF, ON RIGHT, DAUGHTER ELSA, AND A FRIEND ENJOY THE KEMPF FRONT PORCH IN 1890. THE LYRA GESANG VEREIN (INSET AT RIGHT) POSED WITH FOUNDER/CONDUCTOR REUBEN KEMPF AND ELSA, THEIR MASCOT. MEN'S SINGING SOCIETIES WERE ESPECIALLY POPULAR WITH ANN ARBOR'S GERMAN AMERICANS.