



# PLYMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2017

Winter

## *Corn Belt Cube Farm Houses*

Sears Catalog Homes (sold under the Sears Modern Homes name) were catalog kit houses sold primarily through mail order by Sears, Roebuck and Company. Sears reported that more than 70,000 of these homes were sold in North America between 1908 and 1940. More than 370 different home designs in a wide range of architectural styles and sizes were offered over the program's 32-year history. Sears homes can be found across the continental United States. While sold primarily to East Coast and Midwest states and one of the most popular styles in the Midwest was called by the popular names of Prairie Box, Four Square or Corn Belt Cube homes.

There was another company called Aladdin Company to Bay City Michigan started in 1906 and manufactured homes up until 1981. During that time they manufactured more than 75000 homes. Their catalogs are preserved on line at CMU - University of Central Michigan. The catalogs give a wonderful glimpse into the past where a prospective buyer could peruse the catalog and pick the light fixtures, heating system, wood work, built in cabinets, etc.

In Plymouth we know of two Corn Belt Cube homes still standing, shown below in the pictures. Based upon historic photos of farm homes that were cleared for development, it was a popular way to construct a house. There are probably other homes in Plymouth that were kit homes but may have been completely remodeled so that it is difficult to tell. There was such a wide variety of kit homes available.

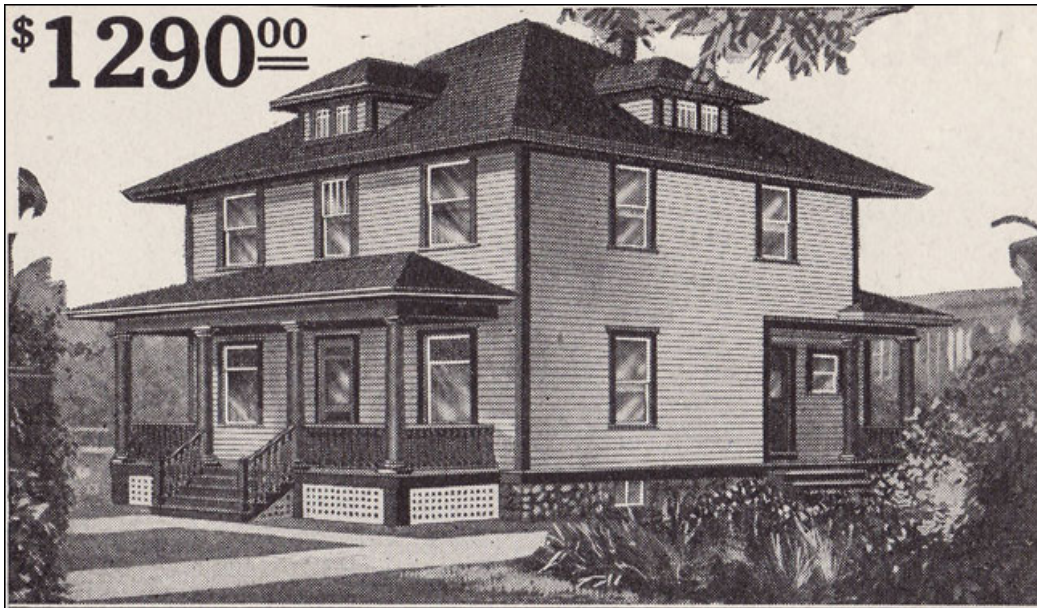


The following example was in the Sears 1916 catalog.

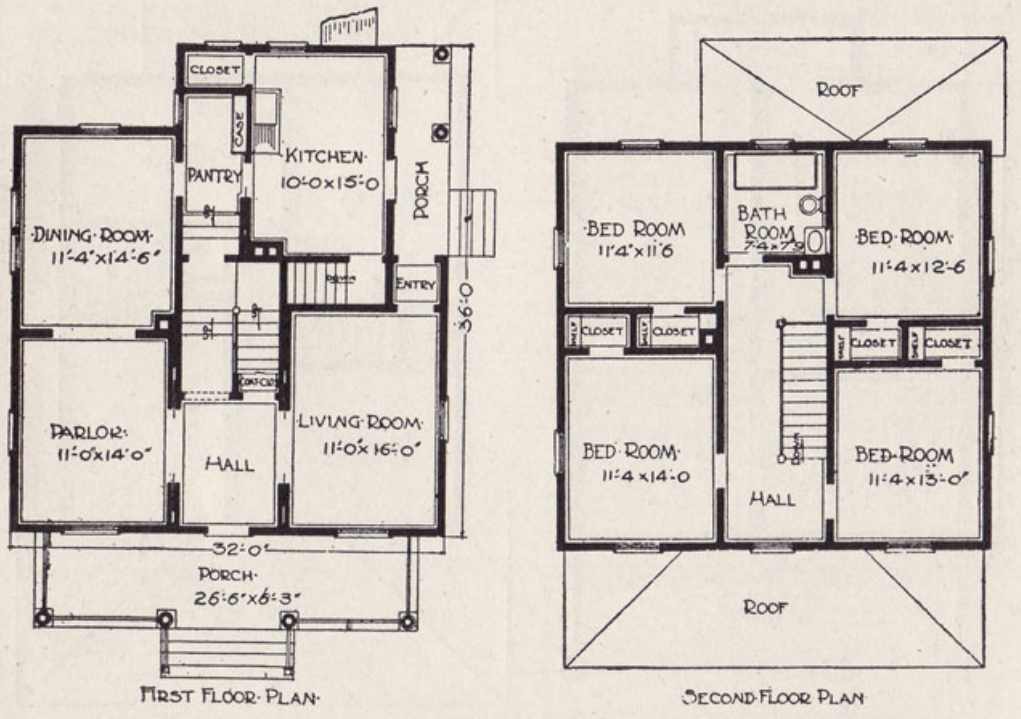
**1916 Sears Roebuck Modern Homes**

Best described as a Prairie Box, No. 264B102 (later named the Hamilton) is a large, practical house with simple lines and human-scale living spaces that were comfortable without being either oversized or too cramped.

It's an interesting floor plan. The kitchen accesses the dining room through a pass-through pantry, which also has a set of stairs leading to the staircase to the second floor. A covered back porch off the kitchen allows easy service access to the kitchen as well.



**MODERN HOME No. 264B102**



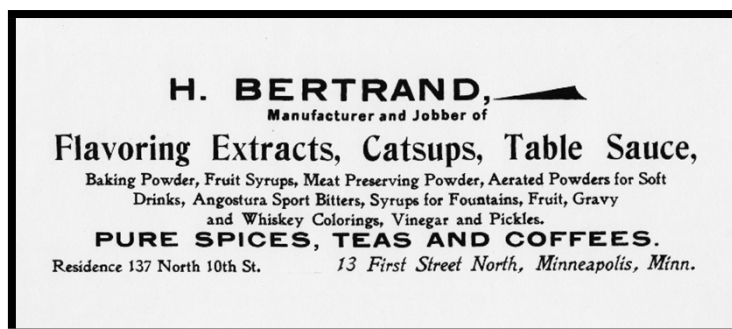
# *The Bertrands of Medicine Lake*

Henry L. Bertrand 1865-1957

Chemist, Pharmacist, Entrepreneur & Medicine Lake Pioneer

*This is the first in a series of three articles about the Bertrand Family-- early settlers of Medicine Lake. You will meet three generations of Bertrands who each built homes on the west side of Medicine Lake and worked in the family business--H. Bertrand Manufacturing Company. The story starts with Henry L., founder, continues with his son Victor and grandson Henry Richard. It is a story that spans the years 1865-1968.*

It starts with Henry L. Bertrand born in Copenhagen (June 25, 1865) on a farm near the Stromberg Castle overlooking the North Sea. He was proud of that fact and kept a postcard of the Castle after leaving his homeland at the age of 29. Henry found his way to Winnipeg after earning degrees in pharmacy and chemistry from the University of Copenhagen. He practiced pharmacy in Canada and met Hilda Rasmussen, a butter maker's daughter from Stockholm. They married in June of 1895 and made their way with Hilda's parents to Minneapolis. Henry L. became a United States citizen but was not fond of the licensing requirements he faced to practice pharmacy here, so he applied his knowledge of Chemistry to developing food and household products he might produce and sell.



Their home became laboratory and factory for H. Bertrand Manufacturing Company at 137 North 10th Street. His first products were aimed at the boarding house trade that overflowed with the appetites of laborers and factory workers, shop girls and dress makers. He blended mixes for pancakes, distilled extracts and flavorings, concocted spice blends, turned apples into vinegar. He developed cleaning products by mixing ammonia and bluing for laundry.



*Nell, Josephine, Victor, Robert, William, George Henry, Workers and Henry L Bertrand*

**Henry and Hilda remained at the large 10th Street house and welcomed four sons-- Henry George (Ike), Victor, Robert, William and two daughters-- Josephine and Nell. The entire family helped with the business whether it was mixing, bottling, billing or delivering the products in a horse-drawn delivery wagon.**

**Henry L. missed the view of water and the opportunity for fishing, boating, and picnics so in 1905 he looked for land away from the city. He purchased several lots the railroad was selling on the west side of Medicine Lake to build a summer home. It was appealing because it was at the end of the line of the Electric Short Line Railway (Luce Line) which would provide easy access to the city to work and for visitors to come out to the lake. He chose the lot on the corner of 23rd Avenue North and West Medicine Lake to build a two story home with big windows at the front, a sun porch upstairs and a tuck under garage with a grease pit to service his new car, a Buick. Modern amenities for 1915.**



**The car brought another opportunity. The idea of commuting--having the healthful and idyllic lake life and city life both. Henry and the boys started making the trip in 1918 to the factory in Minneapolis each morning and coming home to the lake home each evening. It was a bold idea, considering the condition of winter roads (the major route being what is now Highway 55) and the necessity of long days of production during the busy summer months. There were cots at the factory where Henry L. and the boys were said to have napped after taking lunch and could be used in an emergency when travel home was not possible.**



Fermented foods were much more common in the pre-refrigeration era diet. And the Bertrand's affinity for Danish standards like open-faced sandwiches of herring and cold cuts with pickles got them thinking of adding to the product line. They already made vinegar, why not pickles? Pickles took the business in a new direction and required a new factory to be built in 1934 at 701 North 4th Street (near the early location of Holy Angels Academy) to make room for equipment and machinery of all kinds. There was a cooper that fastened hoops on to oak barrels that held the brine-covered pickles while they fermented outside in the yard. H Bertrand Manufacturing became known for their dill pickles and were distributed across the country.



The pickle factory continued to thrive and provide livelihood. Henry L. turned the business over to his four sons in 1936, but made daily trips in to the factory, seated at his large wooden desk in the office.



I don't remember Henry L. He died when I was an infant, but I have seen him in family movies sitting on the second story sun porch of the house he built, enjoying a the view (that he claimed to be the best on the entire lake) and taking a shot of aquavit. He told stories of dancing around the Christmas tree placed at the center of the room at the house on 10th Avenue with his wife Hilda and the children, how he used to live next to a castle as a boy on the North Sea. He held a great-grandchild on his lap to sing a song in Danish at his 90th birthday party at his cherished place on Medicine Lake. He died a year later on June 20, 1957.



**Debra Bertrand Palmquist**  
**January, 2017**

*Debra is a fourth generation Bertrand who grew up on the west side of Medicine Lake and continues to make her home in Plymouth. Henry L is her great grandfather.*

## *Plymouth Historical Society Accessions Database*

The Plymouth Historical Society has embarked on digitizing the accessions records in a digital database. This will eventually allow easy access to historical items that are under the care of PHS. When items are donated a physical record is completed of the item, description, donated by, date, etc. It will not replace the current physical document but augment and digitize the records being kept. Eventually there will be a link in the database to a photograph of the item when appropriate.

This project was made possible by the generous donation the last couple of years from the Plymouth Lions Club. The software, computer along with printer/scanner has been procured by PHS. If only the people that started the Plymouth Historical Society back in the mid 1970's could see the progress that has been made to preserve Plymouth's History they would be very pleased knowing their early efforts have paid off.

## *Old Fashioned Xmas*

This year was the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Old Fashioned Christmas Event sponsored by the Plymouth Historical Society and the Plymouth's Park & Rec Dept. When the children saw Santa, the reindeer, took a hayride, roasted a marshmallow for a S'More, candy canes, and cookies was worth it when you saw the twinkle in their eyes and smiles on their faces. Here are a few pictures of the event.



The wonders of Christmas and the hopes their wishes will coming true.



Hay Riders with Armstrong singers watching



Y.E.S Elves making their wishes known

## Website

The Plymouth Historical Society website is:

[www.plymouthmnhistoricalsociety.com](http://www.plymouthmnhistoricalsociety.com)

### *Check us out!*

Note: All past newsletters dating back to 1986 are available on-line in PDF format for viewing or printing.

## Donations

Donated by: Birchview School

- \$100

Donated by: Visitors at OFC

- \$101.67



## Meetings

The Museum is also open the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month in the afternoon from 1:00 to 3:00 PM during the Spring, Summer and Fall.

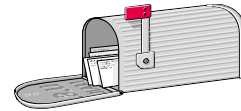
The monthly business meetings are held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Plymouth Historical Society Building, located at 3605 Fernbrook Lane North, Plymouth, MN.

Open by special appointment in January, February & March.

## Current Officers

The following are the present officers:

President	Dennis Jacobson	763-972-0988
Vice President	Kay Bertrand	763-249-0138
Secretary	Betty Jacobson	763-972-0988
Treasurer	Gary Schiebe	763-473-4889



## Mailing and Membership List

If you are not a member and want to sign up or if you have any questions, please call:  
Kay Bertrand, 763-249-0138.

The 2017 annual dues are:

Individual	\$10.00
Family	\$15.00
Individual Lifetime	\$100.00
Family Lifetime	\$150.00

If you would like the newsletter delivered via E-mail please notify Kay Bertrand or send an e-mail to:  
[info@plymouthmnhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@plymouthmnhistoricalsociety.com)

If you do, it is a plus for both of us. When you receive via e-mail it will be in color. When sent by mail it is in black and white and costs PHS about \$2.00 per copy to print and mail