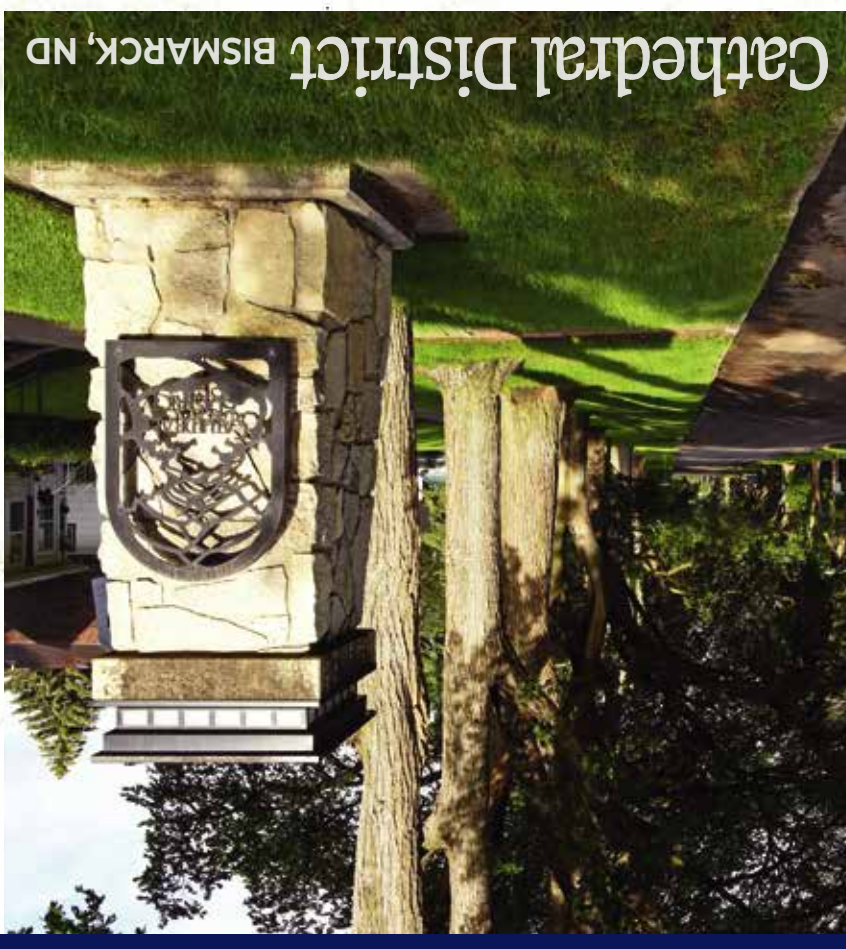


The Cathedral Area benefits from the many trees planted in the boulevards. They were a feature planned in the teens and 1920s to beautify the growing community of Bismarck. Today, the mature trees visually, physically, and economically enhance and help to define the Bismarck Cathedral Area Historic District. American Elms are the dominant landscape feature of the district. Hundreds of them form canopies along the streets. The average spacing of the trees is approximately twenty feet.

In 1906 Clarence B. Little, an attorney, First National Bank president, and founder of the Provident Life Insurance Co., purchased property on the hill overlooking Bismarck's early commercial core and built a stately home for himself. His Queen Anne and Shingle Style turreted mansion at 304 W Avenue A set the trend for other well-to-do Bismarck residents, who quickly bought up lots along Avenues A and B. The neighborhood, now known as the Cathedral Area because it includes the 1945 Art Moderne Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, has retained much of its historic character. Remarkably intact, these homes look much the same as they would have when they were first constructed by a



progressive-minded era of North Dakotans. There existed an uncommonly democratic mix of residents, income ranges, and architectural styles indicative of the economic nature and social development distinguishing Bismarck's early growth and settlement from 1905-1949. Many of the homes built in this neighborhood were designed by architects like Arthur Van Horn, Frederick W. Keith, W.F. Kurke, Ashelman and Gage, and Purcell, Feick, and Elmslie, adding not only to the historic significance of the area, but to its eclectic aesthetic and charm. Its boundaries capture a variety of architectural styles, from modestly-sized Storybook and Tudor Revival bungalows to handsome Craftsman homes and Regal Colonial Revivals. The area served as the area of residence for many of the most prominent and influential figures of early twentieth-century Bismarck, several of whose fame extended far beyond North Dakota's boundaries. NorthWashington Street, the major thoroughfare that transects the neighborhood, was thoughtfully re-designed in recent years to move traffic efficiently while simultaneously preserving the integrity of the Cathedral Area. The area was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 and is Bismarck's first historic district.



Neil O. Churchill, former Bismarck mayor and founder of the best baseball team in the history of the state once said of his life, "If there was another side of the tracks, that is where I was born." Churchill was born in St. Croix Falls, WI. As a youth, he worked hard to support his family but baseball had become his true passion. He played every summer and in 1912 he was a star catcher on a Minnesota-Wisconsin interstate league with future major league Hall of Famer Burleigh Grimes.

Churchill came to Bismarck in 1918 and took a job with the Lahr Motor Sales Company, a career well-suited to his exuberant personality. A few years later he invested in the reorganization of Wickham Corwin's Bismarck franchise, forming Corwin-Churchill Motors, one of the largest dealerships in the state.

Maintaining his interest in sports, Churchill organized the Bismarck baseball team. A bold move at the time, Churchill hired star players from the Negro Leagues, creating an interracial team more than a decade before Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in Major League baseball.



**Bismarck's semi-pro baseball team.** From left to right: Joe Desiderator, Al Leary, Neil Churchill (manager), Dan Oberholzer, Ed Hendee. Standing: Hilton Smith, Red Haley, Barney Morris, Satchel Paige, Moose Johnson, Quincy Troupe and Ted Radcliffe. *Bismarck Tribune* August 9, 1935, page 8, *State Historical Society of North Dakota.*

**Sources for this information:**  
 United States Department of the Interior  
 National Register of Historical Places  
 National Park Service

**SPONSORED BY:**  
 Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission

**PHOTOS:**  
 Alex Sakariassen, State Archives, Google Maps,  
 City of Bismarck – Justine Thompson, photographer

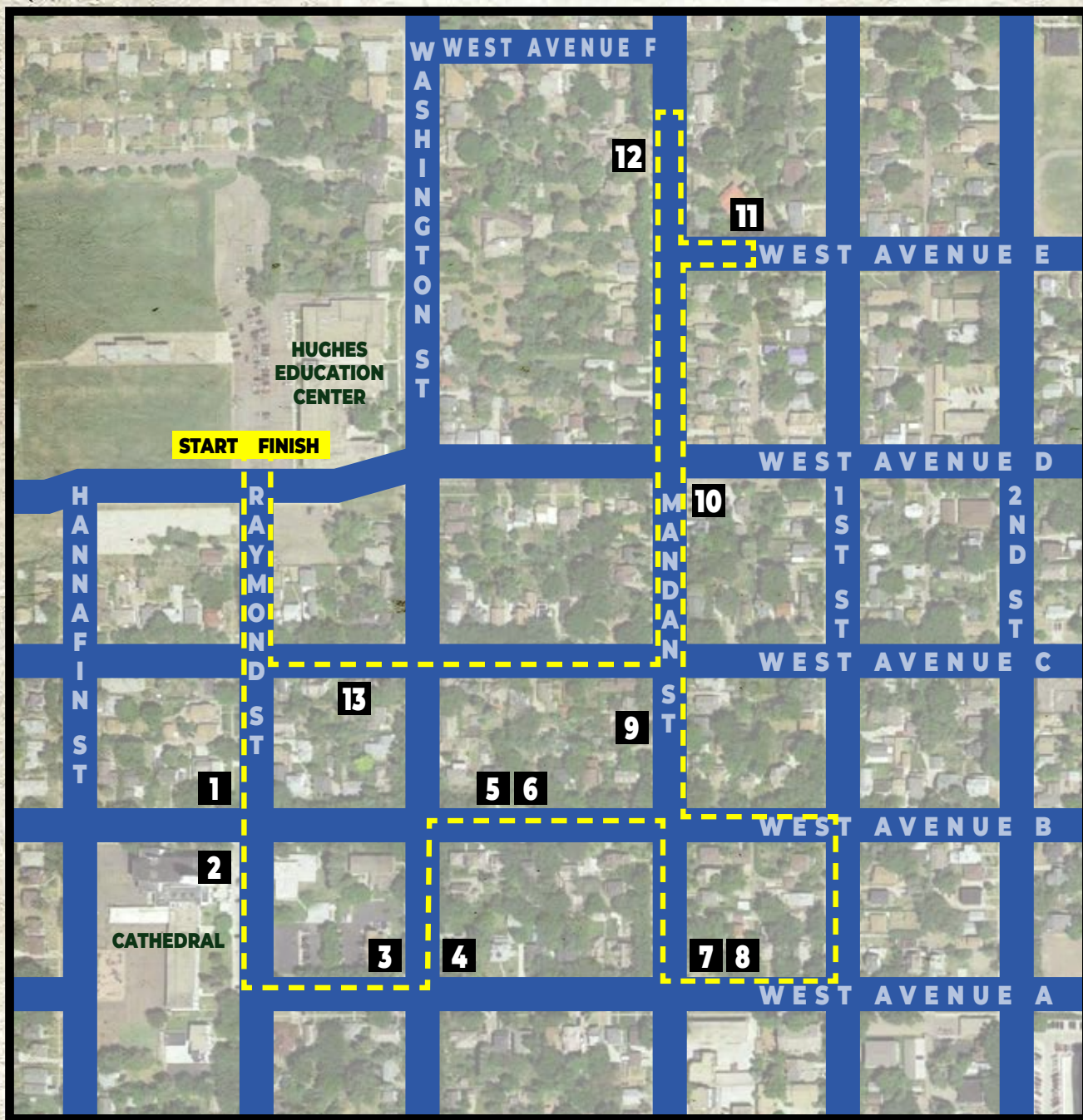


*This project was funded by the Historic Preservation Fund, National Park Service and the Department of the Interior. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Interior.*

**CATHEDRAL DISTRICT**  
 BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA

*Historic Neighborhood Walking Tour*





**8. 114 WEST AVENUE A**

Craftsman Bungalow 1906

**William Langer (1886-1959)**

"Wild Bill" Langer was elected N.D. Attorney General in 1916 as the newly-formed Non-Partisan League (NPL) swept to statewide victory. In 1932, he was elected N.D. Governor. Removed from office by the N.D. Supreme Court in 1934, he was later acquitted of fraud charges and again elected governor in 1936. Langer was elected as a Republican to the U.S. Senate in 1940 and served until his death in his fourth term. Throughout his career, he concentrated on making life easier for North Dakota farmers. In 1923, Langer purchased the Craftsman Bungalow at 114 West Avenue A and lived there until his move to the Governor's Mansion.



**9. 618 NORTH MANDAN STREET**

Tudor Revival 1928

**Neil O. Churchill House**

Neil Churchill served as mayor Bismarck from 1939 to 1946. During the height of his sports career, Churchill and his family resided in this home built by local contractor John Beattie. They later resided in a second house, also in the Cathedral Area Historic District, the Ervin H. L. Versperman House at 410 W. Avenue B.



**10. 723 NORTH MANDAN STREET**

Arts & Crafts — Storybook 1928

**Clifford R. McConoughty House**  
Architect: Herman M. Leonhard, Bismarck

The Arts and Crafts tradition in architecture originated in 19th century Britain in reaction to the impersonality of the industrial age. The architecture exhibits a whimsical quality, encompassing many individual styles such as Bungalow, Tudor and Storybook. It is often characterized by asymmetrical facades, rustic materials, and informal design elements such as stone-dressed doorways and windows, open porches, projecting eaves with overhanging rafters, and large windows with leaded-glass decoration.



**11. 112 WEST AVENUE E**

Spanish Colonial Revival 1949

**George F. Will (1884-1955)**

George F. Will was born in Bismarck to Pioneer Seed House nurseryman Oscar H. Will. Will studied at Harvard, and in 1905, conducted the first archaeological excavation at the Double Ditch Village site north of Bismarck. Will earned respect as a plant geneticist, climatologist, archaeologist, ethnologist, historian, outdoorsman, and conservationist. He served on the Bismarck School Board for more than 30 years and was president of the N.D. Historical Society and the Bismarck Public Library. In 1949, Will built an impressive Spanish Colonial Revival residence at 112 West Avenue E where he lived until his death.



**12. 912 NORTH MANDAN STREET**

Arts & Crafts 1935

**Clell (1900-1962) and Ruth (1906-1988) Gannon**

Clell Gannon, a talented artist and poet, is best known for the murals he painted in the Burleigh County Courthouse and the Bismarck High School library. Clell and Ruth Gannon designed and built their stone Arts and Crafts Norman Cottage "The Cairn" in 1935. It became home to a WPA-inspired poetry society and press, which they shepherded for many years. In 1948, Clell Gannon received a Citation Award, and was added to the Honor Roll of the American Artists Professional League. The Gannon Gallery in the library at Bismarck State College is named in their honor.



**13. 313 WEST AVENUE C**

Tudor Revival 1938

**Dr. Engrebretson House**

Two-story stucco and timbered building with a steep roof with cross gable construction. Second floor timbered gable projection overhangs above front door and garage. Long main facade wall set with five casement window panels of 8 vertical panes. In timbered second floor gable end a 6-over-6 window is centered. A diamond-shaped paned window is just to the left of doorway. Doorway is framed with tortured timbers as is garage entry. Exposed sculpted stucco chimney rises at east gable end.



**1. 402 WEST AVENUE B**

Prairie Style 1910

**Timothy R. Atkinson (1896-1937)**  
Architects: William Gray Purcell & George Elmslie, Minneapolis

Timothy R. Atkinson arrived in Bismarck in 1905 and served as N.D. State Engineer 1906-1914. He is credited with the extensive development of engineering projects in communities throughout western North Dakota. In 1910, Atkinson built a visionary Prairie Style home at 402 Avenue B West.



**2. 520 NORTH RAYMOND STREET**

Art Deco 1945

**Cathedral of the Holy Spirit**  
Architect: William F. Kurke, Fargo

Art Deco is an architectural style that rose to prominence during the Jazz Age between the World Wars. Sometimes referred to as Art Moderne, it fuses bold, futuristic, streamlined shapes with clean geometric decorative elements.



**3. 304 WEST AVENUE A**

Shingle Style 1902

**Clarence Belden Little (1857-1941)**

"Colonel" Little came to Bismarck in 1882. An attorney and leader in finance and politics, he was a founder and president of the First National Bank and Trust and Provident Life Insurance companies. Little served in the N.D. State Senate 1889-1909. His shingle style mansion and carriage house set the bar for residential development of "The Hill" neighborhood. For many years, it served as a convent for the Sisters of St. Benedict and now houses the N.D. State Bar Association.



**4. 232 WEST AVENUE A**

Tudor Revival 1910 remodeled 1931

**George D. (1879-1936) and Stella (1892-1973) Mann**  
Architects: Bugenhagen & Molander, Minot

George and Stella Mann were owners and publishers of North Dakota's oldest newspaper, The Bismarck Tribune. Mann came to Bismarck in 1914 as editor and turned the run-down newspaper into a highly respected publication. Stella Hilleboe Mann served as publisher following her husband's death in 1936 until 1962. Under her direction, the Tribune received a Pulitzer Prize in 1937. In 1931, the Manns remodeled the original 1910 Foursquare house into a grand Tudor Revival.



**5. 226 WEST AVENUE B**

Classical Revival — Colonial 1916

**Frank E. Shepard House**  
Architect: Arthur Van Horn, Bismarck

Classical Revival architecture is a stylistic interpretation derived from ancient Greek and Roman Classical orders. Its most popular form in America is the Colonial Revival. It is characterized by balanced symmetrical facades, formal lines, and such classical decorative details as colonnaded entrance porches, pedimented doors and windows, dentils, quoins, and pilasters.



**6. 220 WEST AVENUE B**

Tudor Revival 1914

**Clyde L. (1877-1967) and Rosa (1877-1962) Young**

Clyde L. Young was Bismarck's city attorney 1923-1933 and general counsel of Provident Life Insurance Company 1916-1962. Young is known as the "father of the Bismarck Public Library," which he founded with C.B. Little and George F. Will in 1916. His wife, Rosa Christie Young, was a charter member of the Bismarck Park Commission and served from its inception in 1927 until 1950. Rosa Young Park is named in her honor. In 1914, the Young's built a stately Tudor Revival at 220 West Avenue A which they occupied until Rosa's death in 1962.



**7. 120 WEST AVENUE A**

Prairie Style 1912

**Patrick Byrne House**  
Architects: William Gray Purcell & George Elmslie, Minneapolis

Prairie Style is an architectural form original to the American Midwest and can be credited directly to the genius of Frank Lloyd Wright during his years in Oak Park, Illinois. Common features include broad eaves, cantilevered terraces, low hipped or gabled roof lines and ganged windows, often incorporating art glass design.

