

Then and Now on Main Street: 250-252 Main Street

By: Karen Ferguson, Town of Kirkwood Historian

The next property in the “Then and Now on Main Street” series started out as researching the property at 252 Main Street. I was contacted by the new owner because she was told her house was once the Town Hall and wanted to learn more. I also heard that so I was anxious to look into its history. In doing so, I realized my article would be incomplete without involving some history about 250 Main Street at the same time.

Let me start by saying the Town of Kirkwood’s first official Town Hall was built in 1940 and is the home of the current post office. However, I thought maybe the house had been a host of one of the original town meetings which were held once a year in February and rotated to allow more people to be involved. Hosts of these meetings were George Jones, Jerome West, the “Kirkwood House” (a hotel owned by George Jones), James S. Sweet, Ansel Bourne, Alanson Weld, School #4, School #3, H.P. Alden, Alanson Wildey, and Francis Robbins. Many of these individuals and sites hosted multiple meetings. In 1883, the annual meeting was hosted at Kirkwood Grange Hall #96 which used to be located at the NE corner of Ostrum and Hwy 11. From that point on, the Grange became the host of most yearly meetings.

With that information complete, I then conducted a deed search to discover the history of all the owners of 252 Main Street to see if any of these people were hosts. The following is the list of owners dating back to 1844:

Tracy Allen	November 2025 to present
Dennis & Sue Neish	December 1977 – November 2025
Pratts	1976-1977
Hilda Hays Williams	1951-1976
Raymond Truesdale	1949-1951
Freda Hawley (benefactor)	1949
John & Lena Cole	1916-1949
Charles D. Jones	1864-1916
Charles & Clarice Woodruff	April 1844- May 1864
Stephen Farnum	Unknown to April 1844

When comparing the list of hosts to the list of owners, I concluded that this house did not serve as a town meeting host site. Also of note, the host site homes or establishments were much larger in size since they would have to accommodate a large number of citizens that attended.

However, there is one name on the property owner's list that stands out and that is Charles D. Jones. I remember seeing his name listed in the Business Directory from 1861 as a local Merchant and there used to be a store on his property (*which was subdivided and became 250 Main Street*).

Since Charles D. Jones was a merchant, I looked to see if he held a position in Town government. He did. Charles D. Jones served as the Town Clerk in 1870, 1871, 1873 and 1874. Since he was the Town Clerk, he most likely would have had the Clerk's office in his storefront.

Now to tell you a little bit about the house itself at 252 Main Street. The new residents, Terry and Gavin, gave me a wonderful tour and allowed me to explore the house in its entirety. It is a lovely home. From the porch, you enter into a small foyer with a staircase to the upstairs. Immediately to the left is a living room and to the right is a primary bedroom with a full bath.

As we entered the living room, there were two openings: one connects to a dining room to the left and the other connects the kitchen toward the back, creating a roundabout type of setup. Also in the living room is a door leading downstairs to the basement.

As we were touring, I expressed that I felt the back of the house where the kitchen is seemed like the original part of the house and not an addition as first thought. It felt like it was a standalone cabin. I pointed out the pine walls, the wooden beam, and other features which were customary for smaller cabins that early settlers would have built so they had a place to stay while building a larger structure. I felt that the dining room was an addition, as was the first-floor bedroom.

From there I went upstairs. It was obvious the staircase and handrails were original to the house. At the top of the stairs to the left was a full bath (which wouldn't be original). To the right was a wraparound hallway leading to two more bedrooms. If the primary bedroom downstairs was an addition, the upstairs bedroom that was over the first story bedroom would have been built at the same time. Directly across the hall was a third bedroom which is over the living room. It had a crawl space. The crawl space was over the addition of the dining room. There was a hole in the wall of the crawl space that allowed me to see that I was correct in my assumption of the kitchen. I could see the entire roofline of that original cabin. It is completely encased in the new roofline of the addition to make it appear seamless. From there I went to the basement. The basement is only under the living room and staircase, further leading me to believe my instincts are correct about the additions.

To put an exact date to the house is a mystery that I don't know I can solve. The foundation stones around the perimeter have been set beautifully to match the stack stones of the original basement foundation. It is possible that either Charles Woodruff or Charles Jones added onto the house throughout the years that they owned it, with the exception of the dining room.

The window and door frames throughout the house all match. Many of the floors are not original so it is hard to distinguish timelines from them. The porch has been altered slightly relocating the stairs from the left side to the right side for easier access to the driveway.

As for the store, Mr. Jones operated it until his death. When the Cole family bought his house in 1916, they also owned this property, even though it was subdivided when Charles Jones died. It appears as though the Cole family kept it as grocery store until Mrs. Lena Cole's death in 1949. Just like the house, it was deeded to Freda Hawley (Lena's sister) who sold it to Raymond Truesdale. At some point it was turned into a small restaurant. When the Rifenburg family owned it in the 60s, it had a lunch counter and served ice cream. They also had a pinball machine and possibly a pool table. Eventually the restaurant closed and the building was used for storage. This structure no longer stands. According to a demolition permit in the Code office, it was taken down in 1970.

There is a house on the current property at 250 Main Street. Although the GIS record says it was built in 1864 there is no record of a home in that location at that time. Even the Plat map records from 1908 do not show a house, just the store. The house would have been built between the years 1916-1970.

If anyone has memories of the store or restaurant, I would love to hear them so I can document them. A special thank you to Terry and Gavin for welcoming me into your home so that I could research this historic property.



252 Main Street (Now)



Partial view of store on right