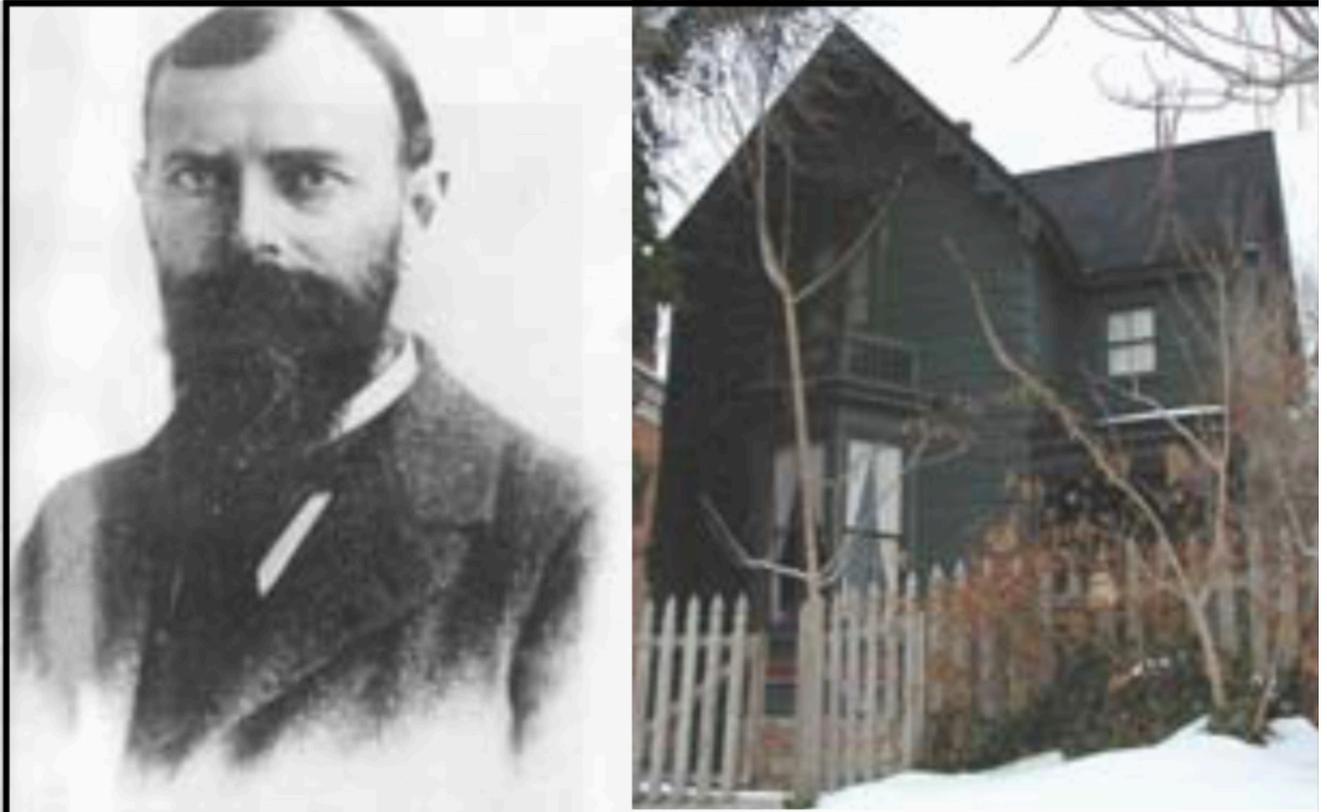


August & Mary Priscilla Carlson House

—378 Quince Street —

Author Unknown



*August Carlson and the home he
built in 1874 on Quince Street. For*

This month's subject sits in a commanding position at the top of 400 North and Quince Street in the Marmalade neighborhood. Now lovingly restored, it once looked like the neighborhood haunted house, and was filled to its ceilings with years of old newspapers, magazines, and other treasures.

Part of the building's haunted house aura may perhaps lie in its architecture style: the Gothic Revival. No black makeup or frilly shirts to be found here, however. The Gothic Revival Style was one of the picturesque architectural styles popularized throughout the United States between the classical architectural styles of the early 19th Century and the Victorian styles of the late 19th Century. As noted in Tom Carter and Peter Goss' *Utah's Historic Architecture 1847-1900*, the Gothic Revival style

was a "vertically oriented architecture imported from England that is characterized by pointed arches, steeply pitched roofs, and the elaborate saw-cut ornament often called 'gingerbread' today." Asymmetrical massing and elaborate color schemes also were common elements of this style.

The August and Mary Priscilla Carlson house at 378 Quince Street exhibits all of these elements. Like the neighboring Thomas Quayle house at 355 Quince Street, the building is a two story, wood frame structure, with a front bay window topped by a small balcony. The steeply pitched roofed is decorated with gingerbread detailing at the eaves. Other gingerbread is found on the one story porch. A two-story barn stood on the lot until the 1970s, along with an outhouse that had similar décor.

The house's first owners, August Carlson and Mary Priscilla Spencer Carlson, were well known throughout Capitol Hill and late nineteenth-century Salt Lake. August was born in 1844 in Karlskrona, Sweden. He abandoned a planned career in the Swedish Royal Navy to join the LDS Church, and emigrated to Salt Lake City in 1871. In 1872, he married Mary Priscilla Spencer. They soon built this home in 1874. The Gothic Revival was at the height of its popularity in Utah, so the Carlson House, though modest in size, stood out from the less-fashionable classical-styled older dwellings in the Marmalade District. By that time, August was an up-and-coming financial mind for Z.C.M.I, so this must have suited the Carlsons well.

August eventually rose to treasurer of the Z.C.M.I. system. He also became a director of the Zion's Benefit Building Society, director of the State Bank of Utah, and the director of the Deseret National Bank.

He served as a member of the Boards of Regents of the University of Deseret (forerunner to the University of Utah) and was a member of the Salt Lake City Council. In addition, Carlson was a member of the High Council of the Salt Lake Stake of the LDS Church, and was a counselor to two bishops of the LDS 19th Ward. He translated the Book of Mormon into Swedish and traveled to his home country with his wife almost yearly.

As noted by Capitol Hill historian Hermoine Jex, "he was a man that people greatly loved, and he had the kind of a disposition that made no enemies. He was known as a peacemaker, and cared for all people."

Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, less is recorded about the life of Mary Priscilla Carlson. An English convert to the LDS Church, Mary Priscilla may have met her husband in Liverpool, where he was serving as an emigration agent. A 1978 oral history by Alpha Johnson, a long-time neighbor, noted that the Carlson's garden was large and elaborate and tended by Mary Priscilla. The history also notes that Johnson's mother would often visit Mary Priscilla to keep her company on August's meeting nights.

Throughout their obviously busy lives, the Carlsons remained in their house on Quince Street. They had no children. On a visit to Santa Barbara in 1911, August had a heart attack on a hotel veranda and died shortly thereafter. Hermoine Jex notes that "his death was very difficult for Mary Priscilla to adjust to, and she lived alone for 21 years in the same home he had built for her as a bride."

Mary Priscilla died in 1933. Clifford Johnson, a member of the Johnson family that were longtime neighbors of the Carlson, purchased the house in 1935. Johnson lived in the house until the 1970s. Late in his life he was in ill health, and wasn't able to maintain the property. He also took to not

throwing anything away. Eventually, the house was filled to the rafters with stuff, with only narrow paths allowing passage between rooms.

The house was renovated in the 1970s and now is one of the showplace historic buildings along Quince Street. A new, compatible rear addition provides more living spaces for the house's current owners. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Salt Lake City Register of Cultural Resources as part of the Capitol Hill Historic District.