



HISTORIC CHICAGO BUNGALOW ASSOCIATION



For North Park residents Jon and Tatiana Bergbom, their Chicago bungalow is more than a home—it’s a family tradition. Jon is the fourth generation of his family to live in the light tan bungalow on N. St. Louis Avenue. “My great-grandfather, Carl Flagstad, was the original owner of our bungalow,” Jon explains. “This house is an important part of our family’s history.”

The history of the Bergboms’ bungalow begins in September of 1923, when Alexander Olsen and C. Larson hired architect Ernest N. Braucher to construct the bungalow on N. St. Louis Avenue. Braucher, a prolific designer of Chicago bungalows, gave the house a low hipped roof, a square front bay with a modest corner porch, and a generous gabled dormer. In January of 1924, almost three months before it was completed, Olsen sold the bungalow to Norwegian immigrant Carl Flagstad. Flagstad, a painter and artisan who worked on numerous public buildings in Chicago, had immigrated to the United States in 1882, where he met and married his wife, Lana, in the late 1890s. The Flagstads moved from an apartment on N. Sacramento to their new bungalow in the spring of 1924. Carl and



Lana’s two children, both in their twenties, moved into the bungalow to live



with their parents. Carl wasted no time in putting his artistic mark on the house, installing wood paneling in the dining room and brightening the utilitarian attic space with stenciled designs and a decorative plaster ceiling.

Harry Flagstad continued to live in the bungalow after his parents died in the 1940s. In 1985, the bungalow passed to Jon Bergbom. The bungalow was more than roomy enough for Jon and his wife, and the neighborhood was a big draw—“like an island in the city,” Jon says. Although family connections brought him into the home, Bergbom has come to

appreciate the unique aspects of living in a Chicago bungalow. “I feel like I’m living in a boat. It’s long and narrow, like a galley. My uncle used to say that walking back and forth in the house gave him all the exercise he needed.” The house has changed little in eighty years, and the Bergboms plan to keep it that way. “I wouldn’t change a thing. The



plaster work, the interior finishes are special touches that my great-grandfather put in when he moved here. They’re still here, and it’s a nice reminder of what the house meant to him.” The Bergboms registered their bungalow with the Historic Chicago Bungalow Association in 2003, and plan to take advantage of the incentives to do some electrical work in the future. For now, the couple is content to maintain the bungalow that Carl Flagstad purchased eighty years ago.