



MCHS BUILDING HISTORY

402 Circle Drive - Edwardsville, IL

By Cindy Reinhardt, 2026

The Wolf Farm

On July 14, 1926, the *Edwardsville Intelligencer* announced that “Emma Wolf has a new residence east of Leclaire.” The simple announcement didn’t mention that this was a special bungalow. The house, located at what is now 402 Circle Drive, was a kit home, a #612 Gordon-Van Tine to be exact. Fortunately, the house retains all the charm that was there when it was new.

Gordon-Van Tine kit homes were sold by the U. N. Roberts Company of Davenport, Iowa. Roberts was a lumber wholesale company. Kit homes included pre-cut lumber, screws, hardware, cabinets, and everything else needed to build a house (some assembly required). It was usually delivered in two railroad cars. Although Sears kit homes became more popular, the first Gordon-Van Tine catalog was issued in 1910, six years before Sears. The company began selling Wardway homes for Montgomery Ward in 1917 that were near duplicates of houses in the Gordon-Van Tine catalog. Another distinction from Sears is that, for a time, if you lived within a reasonable distance of the Quad Cities, you could pay for their “Assembly Service” instead of building it yourself or hiring a local carpenter. It is unknown which option was taken by the Wolfs.

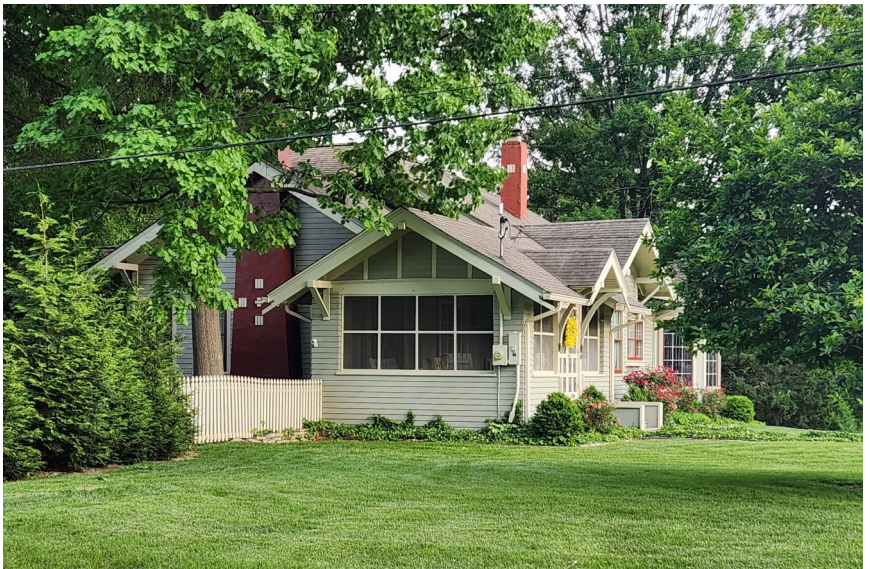
Although Emma Sophia Wolf was credited with building the house on Circle Drive, it was a family affair. Her adult children, Florence and Erwin Wolf, bought the land it was built on, and her mother, Emma Buettemeier also shared the house and likely contributed financially.

Emma Sophia (nee Buettemeier) Wolf (1884-1972) was the daughter of German immigrants, C. F. Gottlieb Buettemeier (1839-1924) and Emma (nee Seib) Buettemeier (1854-1931). When Emma Seib married Gottlieb, he was a widower with four children. Together, they would have seven more. The family lived on a farm near Hamel.

Emma Sophia, in 1901, married Charles Ernest Wolf (1878-1954) who was also the son of German immigrants. Charles’ father, Ernest, was a merchant with stores in several local towns, and Charles also went into this business, working stores in Hamel, Worden, and Prairietown. Emma and Charles had two children, Florence, born in 1903 and Erwin the following year. In 1911, Charles opened a new store at the corner of Main and Hillsboro in Edwardsville. It must have seemed like everything was going their way. The store didn’t last long though, and there were financial problems. In 1919, Charles was hospitalized at the Alton Asylum and a few months later taken to what was then called the Jacksonville



Two views of the home at 402 Circle Drive in Edwardsville., 2026.
(Reinhardt)



State Hospital. Charles spent the rest of his life there, 35 years. Emma Sophia never divorced him.

In the 1920 federal census, Emma Sophia and her daughter are living with her parents, Gottlieb and Emma Buettemeier at their home on Emerson Avenue in Leclaire. The Buettemeiers had retired from farming in 1912-1913 and moved to a new house in town. Erwin Wolf, 16, was living with his father’s widowed mother in Worden. Emma Sophia was working as a housekeeper, and Florence was a secretary at the shirt factory.

Emma Sophia and her children likely received significant



Gordon-Van Tine Home No. 612

A Striking Three-Bedroom Bungalow

For Prices on This Home, See First Page.

Read Pages 12 and 13 for Full Description of Materials.



Floor Plan

PAINT—Unless otherwise instructed we will furnish seal brown paint for the body and white paint for the trim of this home.

THERE is an unusual air of hospitality about this home. The big porch extending outward invitingly and the substantial air of it, makes this fine residence uncommonly attractive. The design of the roof with three intersecting gables is unusual and remarkably effective in this type of home. The broad eaves supported by timber brackets, the wide 8 inch siding and the craftsman barge boards serve to enhance the low hanging lines of this true bungalow.

The porch with its solid rail can easily be screened and makes a wonderful outdoor living room as it is exposed on three sides.

The door into the living room opens at the side. This is a splendid big room, full 23 ft. by 13 ft. 3 in. inside measurements. The fireplace in the middle of the front wall is flanked on each side by two big windows and a large window in the side wall makes this an extremely sunny and pleasant room in winter and unusually airy and cool in summer. Notice also that there is ample wall space provided for

the usual pieces of furniture, without obstructing any opening. There is a closet for coats which opens from this room opposite the fireplace.

A big casied opening leads into the dining room which is perhaps the most attractive room in the house because of its splendid bay window. The proportions of this room are excellent and permit seating twelve to sixteen people at the central dining table without crowding.

To the rear of the dining room is the kitchen. Notice that a big built-in case (Type B—see page 15) is furnished with work table, which connects with the sink. Both sink and work table are placed under the twin windows making a sunny and pleasant place to work.

At the rear of the kitchen there is a recess which can be used as a breakfast nook if desired. We will be glad to quote prices on the benches and table, such as are shown in the color section, to properly fit this out if you will write us. Notice that there is a closet for brooms near the dining room door. The rear entry provides room for the ice box, above which is a built-in case of special design.

The central hall connects all three bed rooms and the bath room. Notice there is a linen closet at the end for which we furnish all shelves, drawers, doors, etc. Each bed room has its own closet and each is well lighted and opens from the central hall from which also opens the bath room, making it possible to reach the bath room or any other room in the house without passing through either of the other bed rooms.



Side view of No. 612

For Plumbing, Heating, Lighting for This Home, See Last Pages of Book

inheritances from both the Wolf and Buettemeier estates. Charles' parents were both gone by 1922, and Gottlieb Buettemeier died in 1924. They were all hard workers and invested well. One of those investments was multiple pieces of farmland east of Leclaire, including the two-acre plot where they built their home on what would become 402 Circle Drive. When built, there was no Circle Drive. If you wanted to go there you took Schwarz Street to Schwarz Road.

In the spring of 1926, Emma Buettemeier, now a 72-year-old widow, sold her house in Leclaire and moved to the country with her daughter and grandchildren.

Within a few years, Wolf's Hatchery and Poultry Farm was established. In the 1930 census, Emma Sophia is listed as a farmer, not so unusual when you consider she grew up on a large farm. Erwin is listed as a miller at a feed store. Florence and her grandmother Emma have no occupation listed, but on a farm, everyone works. By 1937, the hatchery had a capacity of 35,000 eggs, no small operation.

Grandmother Emma died at home in June 1931 after an illness of nearly a year. Life went on for the remaining family members. In 1941, Florence developed a subdivision on her portion of the farm and called it Fair Oaks. Like the development of Dunlap Lake, timing wasn't great. World War II created shortages of building materials so the sale of lots didn't pick up until after the war.

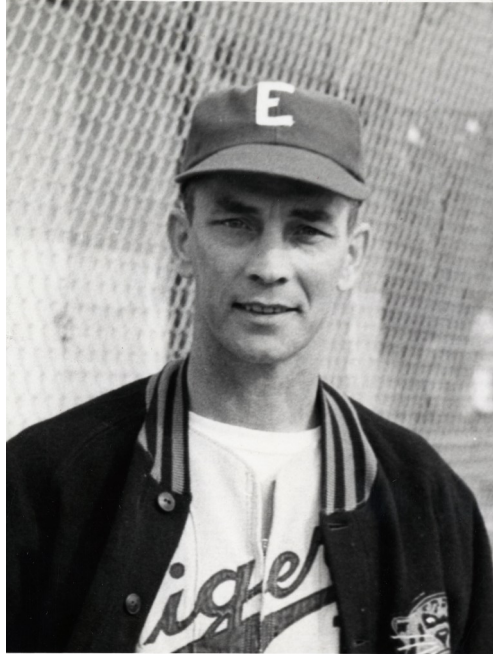
The mid-late 1940s brought change for the Wolf family. World War II ended so sales of lots and houses in Florence's Fair Oaks Subdivision improved. Her brother, 43-year-old Erwin Wolf, married Frances Sedlacek. And, the Wolf farm property, including the house at 402 Circle Drive was sold. Erwin moved Wolf Hatchery into town. The new two-story

brick hatchery, built in 1948 at what is now 110 E. Vandalia Street, included a second-floor apartment for his mother, Emma Sophia. (It's the brick building where Thrills Ville is now located.) At the same time, Solter and Kriege Hardware was being built next door (now Dewey's Pizza).

Florence was living in a house she had built in Fair Oaks, but in 1951 moved to California. She had often visited relatives there over the years. Erwin and his wife moved to what is now 424 Circle Drive. After a few years on East Vandalia and after her husband's death in 1954, Emma Sophia joined her daughter in California. Erwin followed in 1972, a few years after his wife Frances died in 1969.

The house and acreage at 402 Circle Drive was sold to an investor who subdivided it so there are just two acres remaining. In the 40s and 50s there were several short-term owners, but in 1961 it was purchased by Richard and Lauretta Hutton. Many locals will remember "Coach Hutton" who, after a 28-year teaching career, became a popular coach and trainer at Edwardsville High School from 1974-1990. Lauretta (Loretta) ran a licensed daycare center, Mother Goose Playschool, from her home.

The Huttons had three children and their youngest son, Joseph "Joe" Hutton bought the house three years after his 1983 marriage to Barbara Willard. The senior Huttons moved to a smaller house in the same neighborhood at 306 Circle Drive. Barbara is a lifelong educator, carrying on the tradition of educators in the Hutton family home, and Joe is a contractor specializing in historic preservation. Although there have been additions to the house, the wonderful architectural details of this Gordon-Van Tine bungalow have been beautifully preserved.



EHS Coach Richard "Dick" Hutton circa 1961 (MCHS)

