



MCHS BUILDING HISTORY

417 West 4th Street - Edwardsville, IL

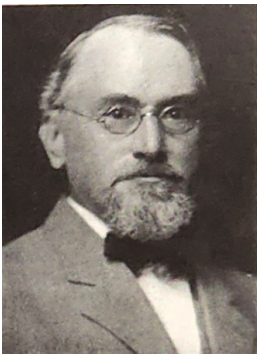
By Cindy Reinhardt, 2026

The Ernest Delicate House

Two people could not have grown up under more different circumstances than Ernest and Minna Delicate, the couple who commissioned the house at 417 W. 4th St. in 1908.

Ernest was the son of English immigrants, Henry H. and Harriett (Bunny) Delicate who came to America in 1865. Henry was a minister and soon joined the Southern Illinois Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. It was not a lucrative profession, so he supplemented the family income by painting houses. Even so, in 1885, when Ernest was four years old, the family was so badly in debt that his parents had to sell everything they owned at public auction. When Ernest was seven, his father died of scarlet fever. Three years later, his mother married Jabez Dennis, an old friend from England whose wife died at about the same time as Henry Delicate. Jabez also earned his living as a house painter, and although not a preacher, his stepson Ernest called him "the most God-like man I knew."

Rev. Henry and Harriett Delicate had five children, but only two sons, Ernest and Jessie, settled in the Edwardsville area. Ernest and Minna's son, William Delicate, and Jessie's son, Henry Brinkman Delicate, both became physicians. There are many today who still remember the two Dr. Delicates.



William H. Krome

Minna Krome Delicate, as mentioned, had a very different upbringing. She was the daughter of William H. and Lucy Medora "Dora" (Gillham) Krome. Her father was an attorney who at various times served as president of the Bank of Edwardsville, a state senator, a county judge, and the second mayor of Edwardsville. To say the family was wealthy is an understatement.

Minna's mother's family were Illinois pioneers. Her great grandfather, Isham Gillham, is said to have arrived in Illinois on the last day of 1799. He was the first Madison County sheriff, serving from 1812-1818. Shadrack Bond Gillham, Minna's grandfather, succeeded his father as Madison County sheriff in 1818. In 1837, Shadrack married Harriet Barnsback who came from another pioneer family. Minna's grandparents were both born in Illinois before 1820.

When Dora Gillham married William H. Krome in 1875, they built a beautiful two-story brick mansion with mansard

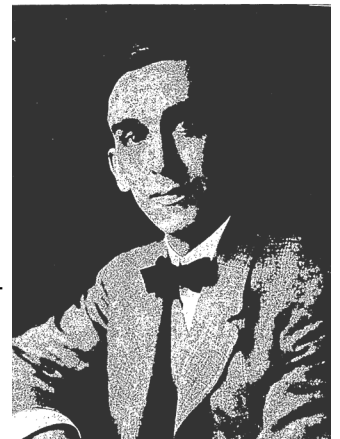


The house built for Ernest and Minna (Krome) Delicate, except for changing the color from white to grey, looks very similar to when it was built. (Reinhardt)

roof on a large piece of property at the corner of 4th and High Streets. It's where they raised their family of seven children. Shortly after William's death in 1917, Dora built a colonial cottage next door at 411 W. 4th St. It was completed in 1918, just in time for Christmas. Minna's sister, Nora, and her husband, Robert George, moved into the original corner house at 405 W. 4th St. When Dora died in 1928, the old mansion was torn down (replaced now with a modern house) and Robert and Nora George moved into her mother's cottage.

Ernest and Minna Delicate were married in 1900 and initially lived in a house on South Buchanan Street. The house at 417 W. 4th St. was built for them in 1907-1908. It was built on Lot Four of Krome's Place, part of Minna's parents' acreage. It was just two lots away from Minna's childhood home. The large four-square house with a full porch across the front was designed by architect Thomas Kistner of Granite City.

As soon as the floors were completed, but before the house was done, Minna's unmarried sisters, Annie and Nora, gave a dance party for a few dozen friends. It was the first of many entertainments to come.



Ernest Delicate, 1912

Despite growing up in financially poor circumstances, Ernest and his siblings did well. After graduating from high school in Nebraska City, Nebraska, one of many communities where he spent his childhood, he came to Edwardsville where he worked under Dr. Edward Fiegenbaum for a year. He then spent several years in St. Louis working for drug companies before returning to Edwardsville in 1900 where he bought a half-interest in Harnist Drug Store which became Harnist & Delicate, and later, just “Delicate Drug Co.” He had a drug store for 35 years before going into the insurance business in his later years.

Their home was an active one. Minna was heavily involved with the Presbyterian Church, the Monday Club, and a constant flow of visitors as Ernest’s siblings and hers visited often. She hosted many card parties and teas, but fortunately they usually had a live-in maid to assist. Two of Minna’s siblings lived in Florida so there were many trips, usually by train, to the South where Ernest especially enjoyed days of deep-sea fishing.

Ernest and Minna had two children, William and Harriet. William, who along with his cousin Henry was one of the Dr.



Harnist and Delicate , “The Rexall Store,” at the corner of Hillsboro and Main Street in Edwardsville.

Delicates of Edwardsville, established a home on St. Louis Street with his wife, Helen Scott Delicate. Harriet Delicate moved to Ohio in 1930 after her marriage to Robert Shore. Minna Krome Delicate died in 1953, and her husband Ernest in 1971 at the age of 96. Their beautiful home on 4th Street has had only three owners since it was built over a century ago.



THE OTHER KROME FAMILY HOMES ON WEST 4TH STREET



These two homes next to the Ernest and Minna Delicate house were both built for the Krome family. Minna grew up in the house at right (405 W. 4th St.). The house on the left (411 W. 4th St.), was built by Minna’s mother, Dora Krome, after the death of her husband William. When Dora moved to her new house, her daughter Nora and her husband, Robert George, moved to the original family home. After Dora’s death, the Georges moved into her mother’s home and had the older house razed. (MCHS)