



Local Landmark Application

**Michael Lyster Property
612 Elmwood Avenue
Oshkosh, WI 54901**

Formerly 12 Elm Street

S 50 FT OF LOT 6 L L WRIGHTS SUBD OF S1/2 OF LOT 84

*Research by Austin M. Frederick
1/9/18*

2017 City Assessor Map



1903 Sanborn Map



The first time the address 612 Elmwood Avenue (formerly 12 Elm Street) is mentioned in an Oshkosh city directory is in *Bunn's Oshkosh City Directory 1898-99* on page 211. William C. Cowling is listed at the address, along with a domestic servant named Barbara Jungwirth.

The collection of Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Oshkosh available on the Wisconsin Historical Society website shows the location, addresses, dimensions, and materials of structures. The only maps available of fire insurance maps of Oshkosh online are the 1890 and 1903 editions. This the home at 612 Elmwood does not appear on the 1890 map, but it is shown on the 1903 map. When comparing the two maps it is apparent that the southern fifty feet of Lot 6 of L.L. Wrights Subdivision of South ½ of Lot 84--**today 620 Elmwood Avenue (formerly 22 Elm Street)**--was broken off to make this new lot that the house currently stands on.

Scott Cross of the Oshkosh Public Museum checked the City of Oshkosh tax rolls from the 1890s. He discovered that in 1895 Charles Curtis sold the southern portion of lot 6 to William Cowling. The taxes at 22 Elm (Curtis) and 12 Elm (Cowling) were amended to reflect the division of the property and both properties were appraised at nearly the same amount. Cowling married Charles Curtis' daughter, Nettie, in December 1894. The Cowlings are only listed at the residence in the 1898-'99 directory, but do not appear to live there after that. From 1900 to 1912 they are listed at either 22 Elm Street or 217 Cherry Street before they moved from Oshkosh to Milwaukee in 1913.

The Winnebago County Chain of Title Index for the property also shows that parcel being transferred from Curtis to Cowling on September 5, 1895. Was transferred to an M.E. Barnett in 1899 and back to Cowling in 1901, and then it was sold to S.W. Hollister in 1902. These were names and dates found Winnebago County Chain of Title Index for **L. L. WRIGHTS SUBD OF S1/2 OF LOT 84**. Additional information can be acquired by looking at each document associated with this parcel at the Winnebago County Register of Deeds office.

Cowling had interesting career in various fields. He was born and raised in Oshkosh. One of his first jobs was the editor of the *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern* for a several years and then resigned to serve as the first Clerk of Municipal Courts in Oshkosh in 1895. While serving as the Clerk of Courts, he pursued a law degree, and he was admitted to the bar in 1897. He also served as city attorney under the mayorship of John Banderob. In 1902 he ran and was elected to the Wisconsin State Assembly. Cowling was a partner in the Oshkosh law firm Quatermass & Cowling, but he later quit and moved to Milwaukee to run a freight auditing bureau.

In October 1913 he was arrested on embezzlement charges and disbarred in 1914. Soon after, Cowling moved out to Detroit, Michigan, and worked at the Ford Motor Company for over 20 years. He resigned from the Ford Motor Company and served as

the Vice President of Willy's-Overland Motor Company and publisher of *Automobile Topics* magazine. Cowling died on November 10, 1956

ODN Oct 1, 1913 pg 1

ODN Aug. 27, 1898 Pg 8

COWLING IS JAILED. FRAUD IS ALLEGED.

THE FORMER OSHKOSH MAN IS
NOW FACING A SERIOUS SIT-
UATION AT THE CITY
OF MILWAUKEE.

HE SPENDS NIGHT IN DURESS.

Once Assemblyman and City Attorney. It is charged that he has misappropriated the funds of a number of Cream City clients who entrusted their money to him—Details of Proceedings and Sketch of Career.

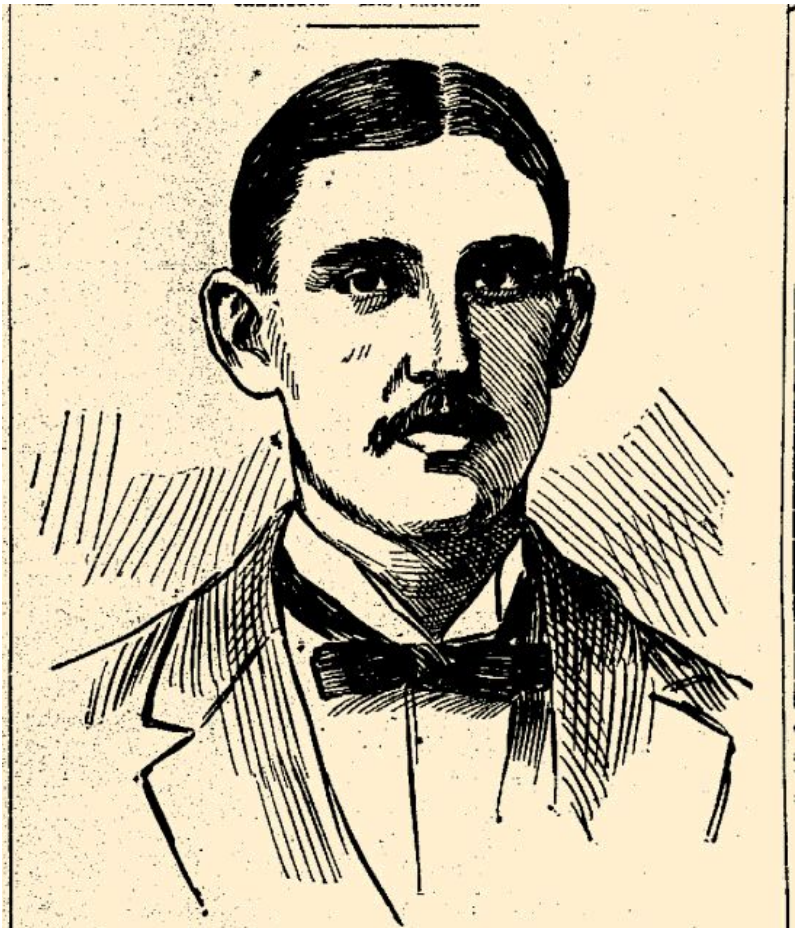
(Special to The Northwestern.)
Milwaukee, Wis., Oct. 1.—William C. Cowling, the former Oshkosh attorney and assemblyman, jailed last evening on a number of charges of misappropriation of funds, was unable up to a late hour to secure bail. After a consultation with his father, Cowling expressed confidence that he would be able to furnish bail and obtain his liberty before night.

Milwaukee, Wis., Oct. 1.—Ex-Assemblyman William C. Cowling, attorney, formerly of Oshkosh, arrested on the charge of misappropriation of funds, was arraigned before Judge Page in district court today, and, at the request of F.



W. C. Cowling.

(Former Oshkosh man who is the object of criminal prosecution at Milwaukee.)



William C. Cowling.

Among the several young men who are seeking recognition from the Republican party this fall is W. C. Cowling, clerk of the municipal court, who asks the nomination for clerk of the courts. Mr. Cowling was born in the town of Algoma and when very young he removed to this city with his parents, Alderman and Mrs. John Cowling. His education was received in the ward and High schools of this city, from which he graduated. When he finished school he entered the office of The Daily Northwestern, where he held the position of city editor for many years. He resigned this position to accept the office of clerk of the municipal court in 1895. In this last position he found time and opportunity

to pursue the study of law. He took the state examination, and was admitted to the bar in 1897. He was married in 1894 to Miss Nettie Curtis, daughter of C. H. Curtis, the well known traveling salesman. During his incumbency of the office of clerk of the municipal court Mr. Cowling has gained the reputation of being a faithful, competent and obliging official, and the work in that office eminently fits him for the duties of the office which he seeks. This work also has given him a wide acquaintance and enviable reputation among the people of the city and county. If he secures the nomination, Mr. Cowling will no doubt make a strong campaign, not only for himself, but will and strength to the Republican ticket.

FORMER OSHKOSH MAN OFFICIAL OF WILLYS-OVERLAND

Announcement Is Made of Se-
lection of W. C. Cowling
As Vice President of
Motor Corporation

Announcement was made in Toledo, O., this week by David Wilson, president of the Willys-Overland Motors, Inc., that W. C. Cowling, former Oshkosh man, has been named vice president of the Willys-Overland Company.

Mr. Cowling was former general sales manager of the Ford Motor Company and had been with that concern for 22 years. He resigned last November. For six and a half years he was general sales manager, directing both domestic and foreign sales. Previously he served for many years as executive head in charge of affairs for the Ford Company.

Mr. Cowling takes over his duties in Toledo on March 1.

WORKED ON NEWSPAPER

He began his career in Oshkosh as a reporter on The Northwestern. When he left to become the first clerk of the local municipal court, he was serving as city editor of this newspaper.

While clerk of the municipal court, Mr. Cowling studied law and after being admitted to the bar became a partner of W. W. Quattermass who was then district attorney.

Under the mayorship of the late John Banderob, he served as city attorney.

Leaving Oshkosh, Mr. Cowling went to Milwaukee where he opened a freight auditing bureau; then branched out to Detroit where he met Henry Ford and became a part of the Ford organization.

W. C. COWLING RESIGNS AS FORD SALES MANAGER

Detroit, Mich. —(AP)— The resignation of W. C. Cowling, sales manager of the Ford Motor Company, to enter private business, has been announced. It was effective Friday. Cowling, who has been with the Ford company for 23 years, said he had "definite plans," but declined to say what they were.

(Mr. Cowling was formerly of Oshkosh, being the son of the late Mr. and Mrs. John Cowling. He had a varied career in this city, having been reporter and city editor on The Oshkosh Northwestern, the first clerk in the Oshkosh municipal court, city attorney and partner of the late Dist. Atty. W. W. Quattermass. Quitting the practice of law he was head of a rate adjustment bureau with headquarters at Milwaukee and Detroit, through which activity he became associated with Henry Ford and the Ford organization.)

*** Additional Research That Could Be Done ***

- Further examination of Register of Deeds documents
- Check Tax Rolls for 1897-98
- Check *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern* 1897-1898 for info on home being built