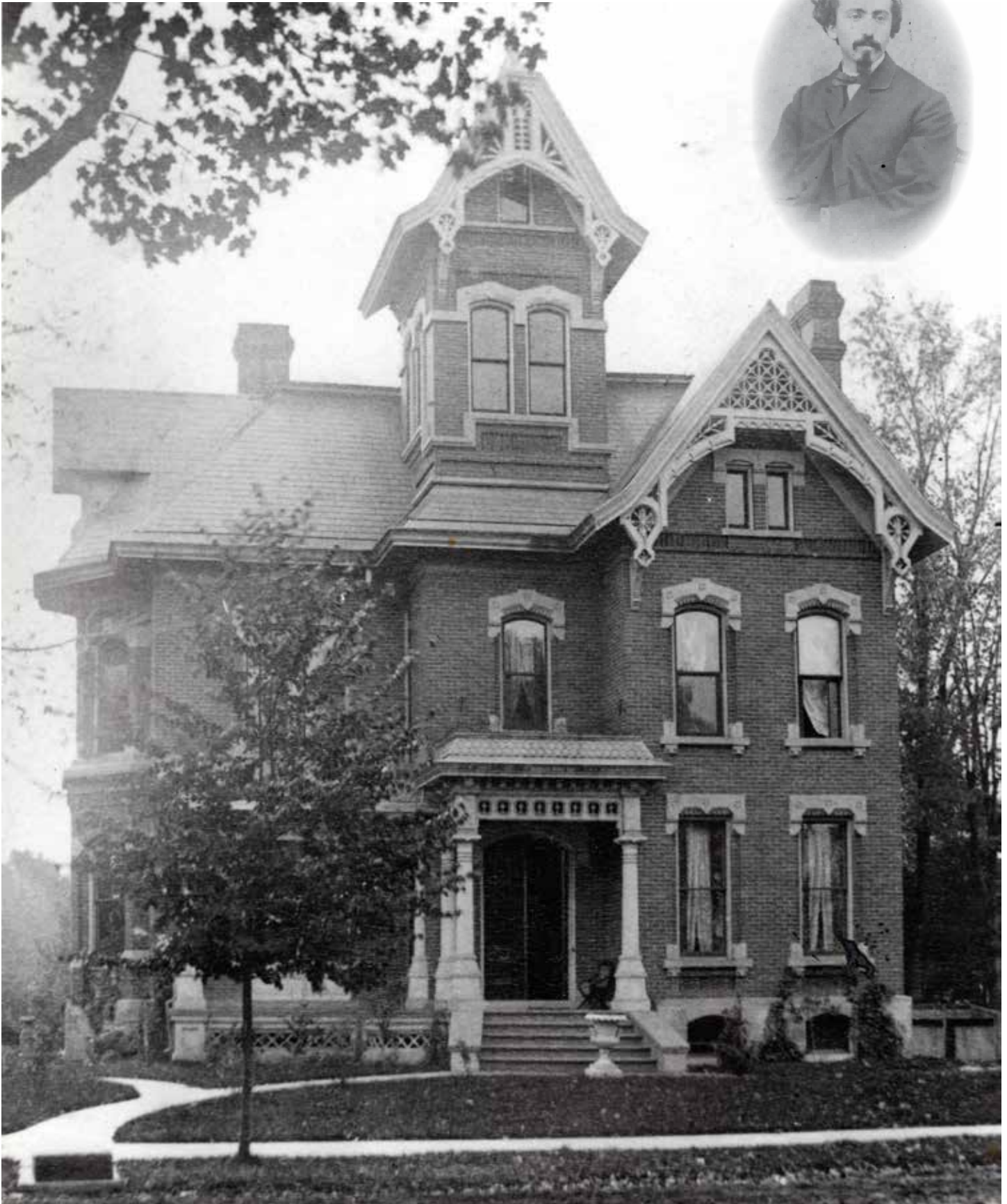
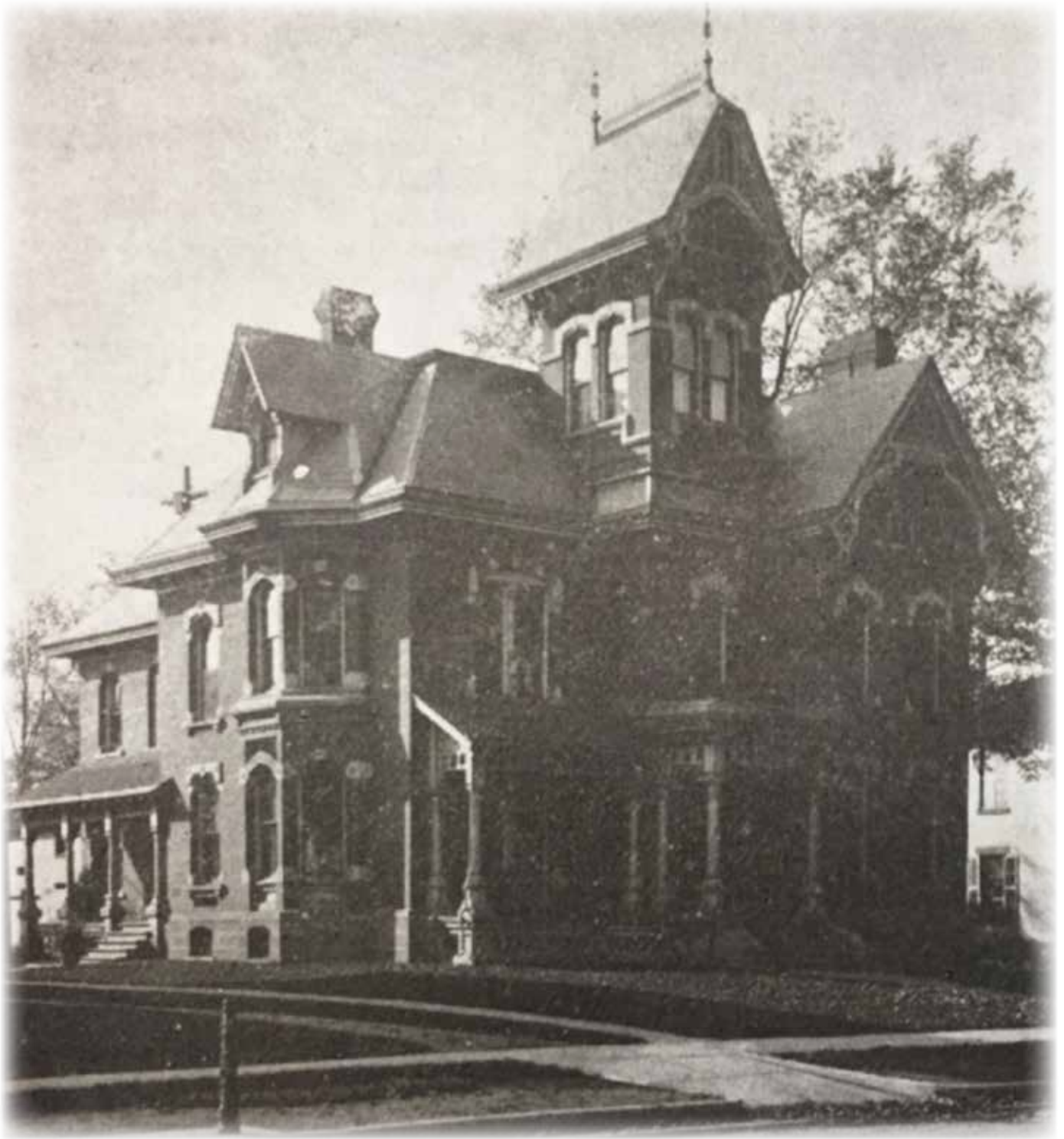


# **The Kalamazoo House Bed and Breakfast: The History and Legacy of The David Lilienfeld House**



compiled by Stephen Gibson





Kalamazoo House B&B / David Lilienfeld House, Photograph as featured in *Progressive Kalamazoo*, 1904 (Kalamazoo Public Library)



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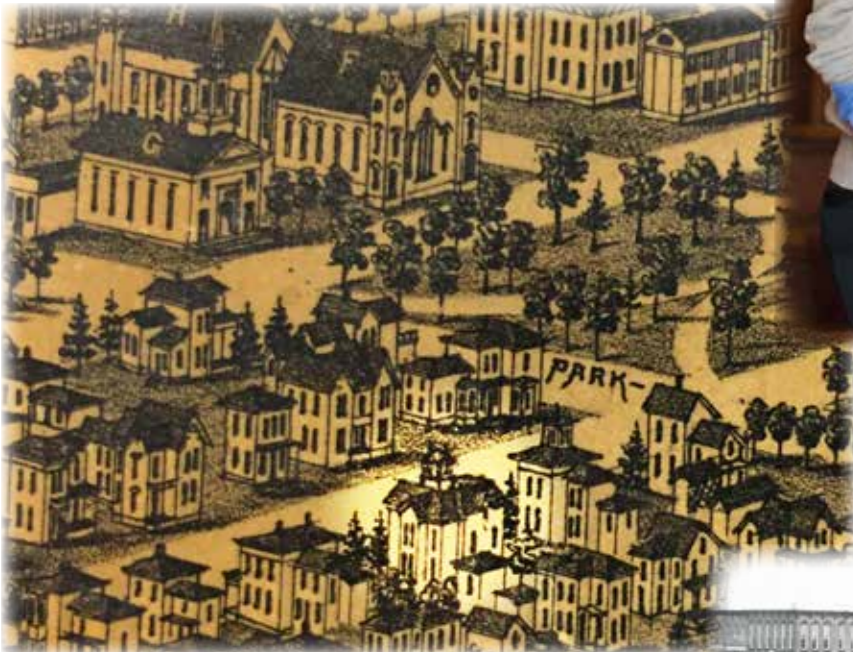




1874 bird's eye map showing South Street and the previous dwelling. Bronson Park in the upper right. (Courtesy Kalamazoo Public Library)



Steve Gibson & Stephanie Nelsen



1883 bird's eye map showing South Street and the Lilienfeld Victorian dwelling. Bronson Park in the upper right. (Courtesy Kalamazoo Public Library)



Downtown looking Southeast to Michigan/Kalamazoo Mall. Olde Peninsula Brewpub now at corner in background. Circa the time of construction for the 1878 Victorian (Courtesy Kalamazoo Public Library P164)



## Preface and Welcome

Welcome to the magnificent Victorian home built in 1878 for David Lilienfeld and his wife Amelia. We hope you enjoy the experience of staying in this nationally registered, historic treasure. It's a chance made possible by not only by the bold, entrepreneurial spirit and ruggedness of the nineteenth-century builders and craftsmen in the American Midwest—who like the Lilienfelds traveled far and endured much—but also by twentieth- and twenty-first century dreamers and conservators who more than once spared this work of art from the ravages of time, and the human desire to toss out the old to make way for the new—or in this case for Joni Mitchell's paved paradise of a parking lot.

Looking back after the death of Amelia Lilienfeld in 1908, *The Kalamazoo Gazette* said of the Lilienfelds that they had “built the residence at 427 West South Street, and before the death of Mr. Lilienfeld it was a social center for Kalamazoo society people.” Without question the home holds a special place in Kalamazoo history, and we like to think it still holds a special place in the hearts of many who regularly find enjoyment, retreat, relaxation, adventure, inspiration, love, and productivity inspired within them by being here.

Although documents may say otherwise, we view our role not so much as owners of this home, but as stewards and caretakers thereof. At the same time we also attempt to curate a contemporary experience for our guests as well, one that is chocked full of comforts, is casual in style, and embraces modern innovations—in a way that the Lilienfelds would surely have pioneered if they could, and we guess would certainly have celebrated for you.

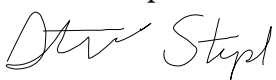
It's our sincere hope that you enjoy this mix of old and new as much as we do. Whether you came to The Kalamazoo House for work, a couple's retreat, or simply to enjoy easy walking access to great breweries, art, culture, museums, or cuisine—by all means enjoy the house! Smell the proverbial roses, dance like nobody is watching, and live life. We won't get in the way with formal tours, group events, or such barriers to your effort to make your stay exactly as you wish it to be. That said, we would wager that from time to time you will feel a twinge, or pull, from an intriguing connection to this dwelling—built by the region's earliest purveyors and importers of great ales and spirits, owners of a patent on the modern keg tap, creators of a world-class cigar manufacturing business whose successors exist to this day, and community-minded citizens who were true pillars of the community, and integral forces behind a thriving American city.

On the other hand, if the rich history brought you here, or pulls you in, we welcome you to join us through this document and/or your questions, in getting to know both the dwelling and the Lilienfelds a bit more intimately.

The following historical information has been combined from various scrapbooks, clippings, local historians, notes from previous owners, as well as a good deal of our own research from 2016-2017. We are not academics or professional historians; we're simply passionate about the richness of this city, its history, and the role of David and Amelia Lilienfeld therein. This is our attempt to preserve and grow the knowledge base surrounding the house and the family. Although this remains a “draft” and “work in progress,” with many people to thank—including The Kalamazoo Public Library, The Kalamazoo Valley Museum, and a broad range of city history buffs and authors whose work gives us context and important facts—we hope we have made some in small steps toward our goal of sharing and preserving the great legacy of the David Lilienfeld family. Welcome and enjoy!

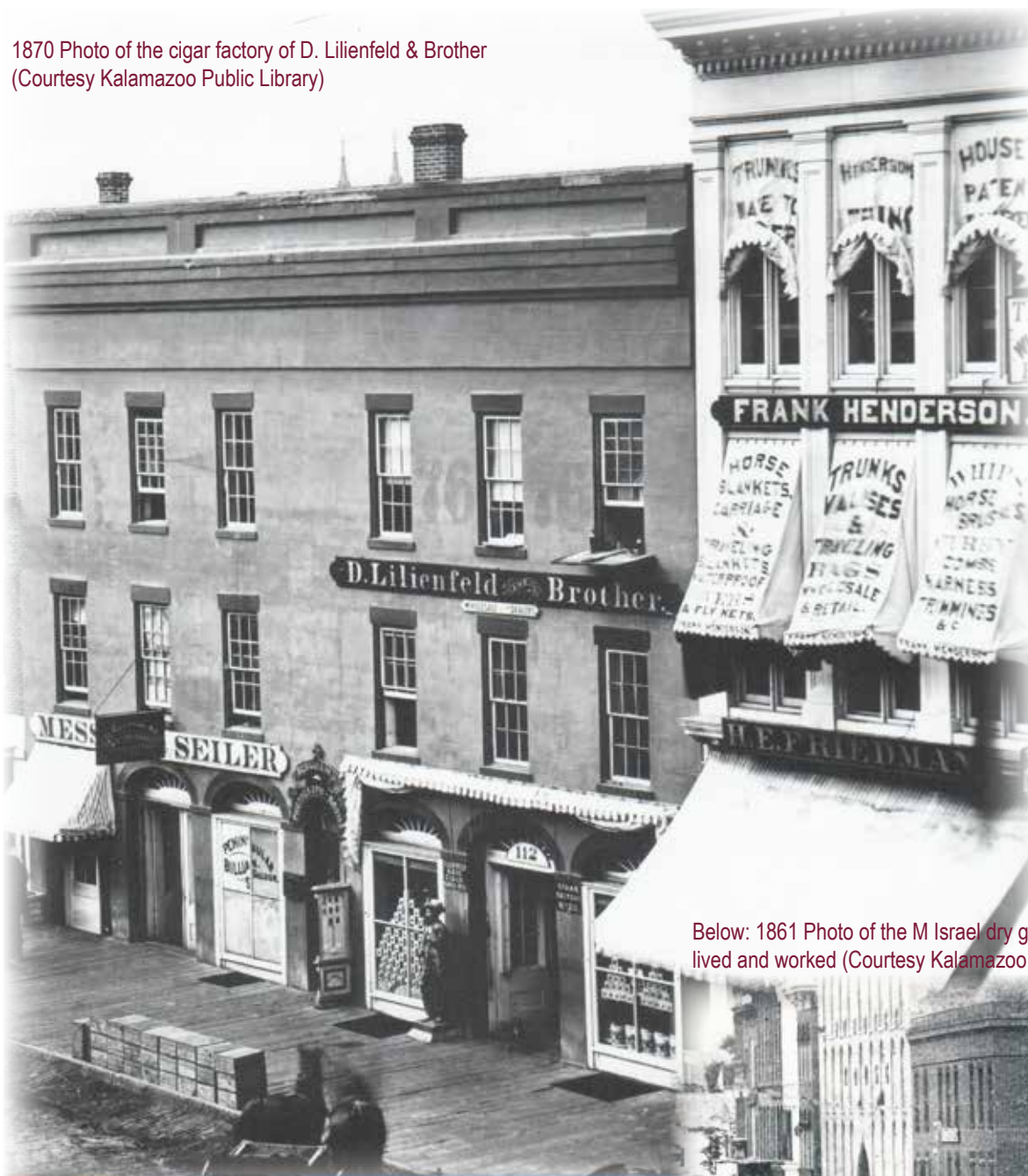
Sincerely,

Steve & Stephanie Gibson

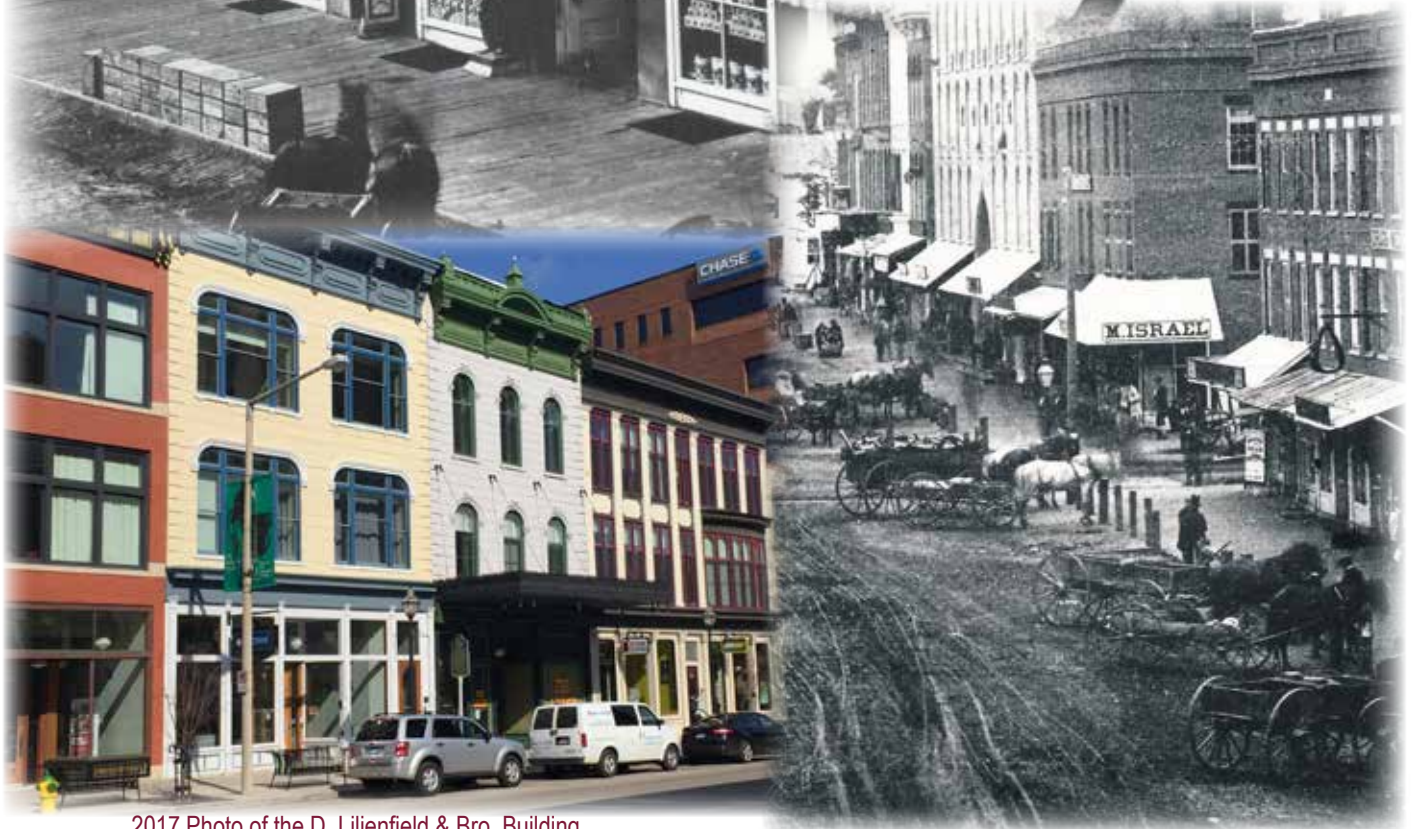




1870 Photo of the cigar factory of D. Lilienfeld & Brother  
(Courtesy Kalamazoo Public Library)



Below: 1861 Photo of the M Israel dry goods store where David lived and worked (Courtesy Kalamazoo Public Library, P168)



2017 Photo of the D. Lilienfeld & Bro. Building



## Timeline of 447 W South Street

- 1867-1878:** With their business in alcohol and tobacco sales (wholesale and retail) and growing cigar manufacturing driving their success in 1867, David Lilienfeld and wife Amelia purchased a modest home situated where the lovely Kalamazoo House Victorian now stands. The purchase came shortly after the birth of their daughter Hattie. The home also housed business partner and brother, William. For a very short spell another brother, Theodore, resided there as well. A son Edward would complete the household in June of 1869, just two years later.
- 1878-1899:** The Lilienfelds built the lovely Victorian home now known as The Kalamazoo House in 1878, the namesake of which was the original hotel and focal point of the city's early days. After having the original house moved from the lot by a buyer in May, the family finally had the prominent home worthy of their accomplishments. Brother William would reside in the new house for its first three years, until moving to expand the business to the Chicago market. Some histories of the house show the home vacant after 1897, though with daughter Hattie and many friends remaining in Kalamazoo, it seems plausible that the house was occasionally still visited by the family until David's death in 1899.
- 1901-1907** Eugene and Virginia Cook owned the residence after the Lilienfelds. They owned Cook's Railway Appliance Company, located at 317 East Kalamazoo Avenue.
- 1908-1919** Albert M. and Dora Gates were newcomers to Kalamazoo. He was president of C. H. Dutton Company—manufacturers of engines and boilers at 816/830 Grace Street.
- 1921-1931** Frank P. D'Arcy owned the house in the roaring twenties, as well as the D'Arcy Chinaware Company at 152 W. Michigan Avenue. In 1925 the house number changed from 427 to 447.
- 1932** Leslie and Margaret Dewitt briefly owned the property.
- 1932-1985** Margaret Stack is shown as owning the property, and it was leased to John Donovan, who subsequently formalized the purchase for his ongoing and longstanding funeral parlor. After John's passing in 1955, nephew Charles Donovan and wife Catherine—who had been in residence with their family since 1950, formally took the helm. The business later became the Betzler-Donovan Funeral Home after Charles sold to Roy and Mary Jane Betzler in 1977. They moved the business to the West Side of Kalamazoo in 1985, where it remains.
- 1985-2000** Louis and Annette Conti purchased the home in December 1985, saving it from planned demolition to make way for parking space. The Contis performed a thorough and skilled restoration of the house, and transformed it into an inn, and later a restaurant, before financial difficulties again endangered the house around the turn of the millennium.
- 2000-2002** The home was vacant, was flipped by Robert Heiskamp, and owned for some time by the City of Kalamazoo. It had fallen into serious disrepair with water damage and broken pipes resulting from neglect and improper shutdown.
- 2004-2007** Brian and Dottie Hill (Feb 2004 to July 2007) painstakingly repaired very substantial damage and neglect, while balancing a busy life with young children, and living in the home. They in many ways restored the Conti restoration, and restarted the inn as a bed and breakfast. Brian and Dottie remain in the Kalamazoo area.
- 2007- 2014** Terry and Laurel Parrott moved to Kalamazoo to purchase, operate, and further re-establish the inn as a B&B, in July 2007. Terry worked a full time job in construction management while helping Laurel further grow the B&B's book of guests, until both were ready to fully retire in 2014.
- 2014- present** Steve Gibson and his wife Stephanie Nelsen acquired the inn from Terry and Laurel, whom they'd known through a mutual friend.



Draft 186241  
[FORM FOR NATURALIZED CITIZEN.]

No. 13488 Issued Jan. 2, 1885.

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

State of Michigan  
County of Kalamazoo

David Lilienfeld, do swear that I was born in Germany, on or about the 15 day of June 1837; that I am a NATURALIZED AND LOYAL CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES, and about to travel abroad; and further, that I am the Identical Person described in the Certificate of Naturalization herewith presented.

I was sworn to me this 29 day of December, 1884.  
Thompson Clerk of the Circuit Court.

**Description of David Lilienfeld**

Age: <u>47</u> years.	Mouth: <u>small</u>
Stature: <u>5</u> feet, <u>2</u> inches, Eng.	Hair: <u>black</u>
Forehead: <u>retreating</u>	Eyes: <u>gray</u>
Eyes: <u>gray</u>	Complexion: <u>fair</u>
Nose: <u>Roman</u>	Face: <u>long</u>

David Lilienfeld, do solemnly swear that I will support, protect, and defend the Constitution and Government of the United States against all enemies, whether domestic or foreign; and that I will bear true faith, allegiance, and loyalty to the same, any ordinance, resolution, or law of any State, Convention, or Legislature to the contrary notwithstanding; and further, that I do this with a full determination, pledge, and purpose, without any mental reservation or evasion whatever; and further, that I will well and faithfully perform all the duties which may be required of me by law. So help me God.

I was sworn to me this 29 day of December, 1884.  
Thompson Clerk of the Circuit Court.

Applicant desires passport sent to following address:  
David Lilienfeld  
Kalamazoo  
Michigan

Circuit Court Kalamazoo County Mich.  
Feb. 19, 1875.

Lewis George W., carpenter, res. College, bet. Cedar and  
Lewis J., carpenter, res. corner Elm and Main  
Lilienfeld David, clerk, M. Israel, bds. same  
Limpracht Fred., German saloon, Fireman's Hall Building  
Lincoln C.D., student, res. corner Water and Church

1860-1861 Kalamazoo City Directory (KPL)

Lewis George W., carpenter, res. College, bet. Cedar and  
Lewis Jeremiah, carp., h. 234 Main.  
Lilienfeld David, (D L & Bro.) h. 42 S Bardick.  
Lilienfeld D & Bro., (David & William,) tobacco & cigars, 112 Main.  
Lilienfeld Theodore, clerk, bds 49 Main.  
Lilienfeld William, (D L & Bro.) bds 42 S Bardick.  
Linberger John, lab., h. 45 Portage.  
Lincoln Shubert, A. h. 8 N Church.

1867-1868 Kalamazoo City Directory (KPL)

Leys Johanna, h. 62 Pitcher.  
Lheureux Samuel H., (Leavitt & L.) bds. 9 S. Rose.  
Liefers John, laborer, bds. 87 Portage.  
Lilienfeld D & Bro., (David & William,) cigars and tobacco, 112 Main.  
Lilienfeld David, (D. L. & Bro.) h. 43 South.  
Lilienfeld Hannah, domestic, 37 S. Bardick.  
Lilienfeld Theodore, clerk, bds 43 South.  
Lilienfeld William, (D. L. & Bro.) bds 43 South.  
Limprecht & Foegel, (Frederick L. & George F.) saloon and  
Linton, 12 S. Bardick.

1869-1870 Kalamazoo City Directory (KPL)



First-known photo of David Lilienfeld to modern historians, located and donated by Claire Lilienfeld-Riser in 2018. Claire's great grandmother was the daughter Hattie Lilienfeld.

George W. Taylor & Wife } Received for Record the 31 day of July 1867, 11:20 o'clock A.M.  
David Lilienfeld } H. H. Riser Registrar.

**This Indenture**, Made this Twenty Ninth day of June 1867, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-seven.

George W. Taylor of the County of Kalamazoo & State of Michigan parties  
David Lilienfeld of the same place party

of the first part, and  
of the second part:

That the said party of the first part,  
Forty five Hundred for and in consideration of the sum of 45 Dollars  
has in hand paid by the said party of the second part, the receipt whereof is hereby confessed and acknowledged, have granted, bargained

Deed conveying title of the South Street land and predecessor home to David Lilienfeld in 1867



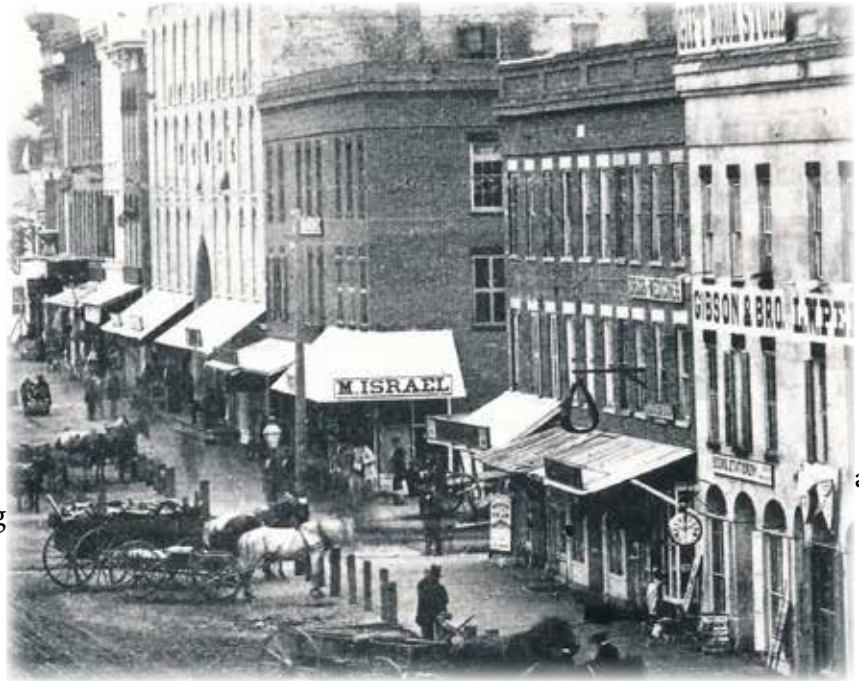
## The Story Behind The House

447 West South Street, Kalamazoo MI 49007

It's difficult to imagine whether or not David Lilienfeld was prepared for his new life in Kalamazoo in that spring of 1859, as he began his long journey from Diepenan, in Hanover, Germany. Being of relatively wealthy German-Jewish heritage, it still seems quite likely that trepidation had led the twenty-three year old to think long and hard about the risks and opportunities in the growth areas of the Midwest United States. But how much could the very early settlers before him, like Mannis Israel, have truly prepared him for the things he would encounter on the dusty streets of a city not yet thirty years of age itself.

Yes, the young village of Kalamazoo had earned a reputation, even internationally, as the next great Midwestern city. But the fact remained it was as young as the small-framed David Lilienfeld was. Though an emerging political figure, Abraham Lincoln, had spoken in Kalamazoo's Bronson Park just a few years earlier, and an energy was clearly present, nobody could predict what struggles were mounting for the emerging nation—nor that the grey-eyed Lilienfeld, whose 5' 2" stature was small even for the day, would someday host another of the era's Presidents to smoke cigars in his very own cigar factory "block" on Main Street. But behind David's gray eyes and Roman nose housed a kind ambition that would make a lasting mark in this land of unending opportunities. Despite the coming pains the United States would endure, entrepreneurship—and the chances to be part of a great Westward expansion—would enrich and reward the dedicated young David for his diligence.

Upon arrival, David settled immediately with Mannis Israel, boarding in the space above the M. Israel dry good store right on Main Street—at the bustling corner of Burdick Street, where the Radisson Hotel's restaurant "Burdick's" now sits. (Main Street is now called Michigan Avenue, and Burdick Street is known as The Kalamazoo Mall.) David would earn money as clerk at the thriving dry-goods store, which would later meld into the equally well-known Rosenbaum and Speyers operation. The fair-skinned, energy-packed young David would live on site, toil away for long hours, and hone his interest and contacts in tobacco and cigars to the point where he would eventually hang out his own shingle, initially within the bounds of the store.



The M. Israel Dry Goods Store in 1861, where Burdick's restaurant now sits at Burdick and Main Street (Courtesy of The Kalamazoo Public Library)

Mannis Israel had likely played a role in recruiting young David Lilienfeld to Kalamazoo, as his wife was the cousin of the sweet young woman who would later become David Lilienfeld's beloved wife Amelia, though in those early years she remained back in Germany while the young David explored and sought to build a life. But David was not alone in the effort, as he was soon joined by his brother, William, who would initially work for M. Cohn, another name well known to Kalamazoo historians.

Just before the outbreak of Civil War in 1861, David and William officially launched their cigar business, which would also include wholesale liquors and imported beers: aptly named D. Lilienfeld & Bro. The business thrived and grew under their care, despite the dark Civil War that had erupted. Within a few years of the humble beginnings with M. Israel, they'd established a prominent, Main Street location of their very own.



The historic space once occupied by the Lilienfeld business was renovated only recently, in the first decade of the 21st century. At the start the location was known as 112 E. Main Street, though later it became 109 East Main Street when in 1883 Kalamazoo adopted the Philadelphia system for addresses. (Most property addresses along Main changed radically as the zero point was moved from the east end of town to downtown at the corner of Burdick and Main Streets; but coincidence of geography had it that the Lilienfeld property would barely change under the new system, simply from 112 to 109). Modern changes to buildings and occupancies later meant the Lilienfeld space would be known as 119 East Michigan, where currently a vacancy awaits a business tenant to occupy the historic building's ground level, above which the factory floors once buzzed with great activity.



An 1870 photograph of the D. Lilienfeld and Bro. site just east of Kalamazoo Mall on Michigan Ave (courtesy Kalamazoo Public Library)

By the end of the war in 1865, David returned to Germany to marry his early love—and the cousin of Mannis Israel's wife—Amelia Israel. They quickly returned to Kalamazoo and settled in various rental apartments, mostly along Burdick street in the blocks close to their Main Street endeavors.



Amelia Lilienfeld (courtesy Claire Riser-Lilienfeld family)

Before long, David Lilienfeld and wife Amelia purchased a home situated where the lovely Kalamazoo House Victorian now stands, shortly after the birth of daughter Hattie. The humbler predecessor home was then addressed as 43 South Street, and was no doubt a much-celebrated achievement, driven by the booming business in alcohol and cigar sales (wholesale and retail). Though not as big as the lovely Victorian they would subsequently build, the residence nonetheless housed business partner and brother William, and for a very short spell another brother, Theodore, though Theodore would quickly move the East side of Michigan and establish a young family there. David and Amelia's son Edward David would complete the household on June 12th of 1869, two years after moving in to the original South Street home. By 1869 David was showing a very healthy income of \$1,047.

## A Landmark is Born



The Lilienfeld house is well represented in this 1883 Bird's Eye Map of Kalamazoo

After continued expansion of the cigar, tobacco, and alcohol business, and successful growth in actual manufacturing of cigars—David Lilienfeld decided to build the house of their dreams in 1878—a magnificent Victorian worthy of their status and means, and emblematic of the times. The new home marked a dramatic upgrade from the more modest dwelling on this same spot. These were heady years. Business was booming, with well over forty employees. The city was growing, and the world seemed to agree that “more was better”.

The house that had previously occupied the family parcel at 43 South



Street was not demolished to make way for the new Victorian, but rather was moved! A man named J. Parsons purchased the previous dwelling, and had it moved by Andrew Pfeiffer to a lot near the Frank Street School on the north side of town. *The Kalamazoo Telegraph* said Pfeiffer was “a good hand at moving buildings, having a full set of tools” (May 22, 1878).

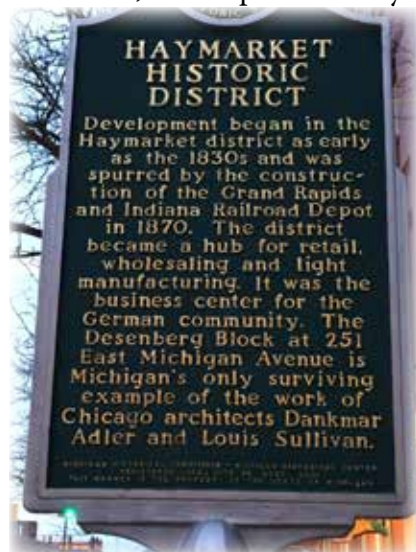
With a grand new Victorian home, a lovely young family, and a robust income, the family had just about everything—perhaps except perfect health. Mr. Lilienfeld suffered from Rheumatoid arthritis. The year the home was built, in fact, David and Amelia had both spent time away from home recuperating from illness. Amelia’s unnamed affliction would eventually retreat, but David would spend most of his adult life in a good amount of discomfort.

Still, it was a house of warmth, love, and charity. With the well-behaved young children nonetheless bouncing about underfoot, Brother William would continue to reside in the new house for its first few years, until moving to expand the business to the Chicago market in 1880.

The D. Lilienfeld and Bro. cigar brands gained broad appeal, with names like Carolina, O.P., Espanola, Figaro, Henry Clay, and Pride leading the way. Along with their good friend Julius Goldberg, D. Lilienfeld & Bro. owned and marketed a cigar brand called Lilies. Though for some years Julius Goldberg would relinquish his interests therein, eventually their Lilies brand would be the blockbuster that would become the flagship name of the Lilienfeld operation.

Notably, the Lilienfelds were exclusive agents for the relatively new tobacco house called Lorillard, which remains prominently in existence to this day. With that relationship behind it, the Lilies brand would not only become wildly successful, some years later it would be actively managed—and ultimately owned again—by none other than the sons of dear friend Julius Goldberg, the man and his family who for decades were extremely close with the Lilienfelds, both personally and in business.

The German-Jewish community in Kalamazoo was indeed a vital, close-knit, and important early force in the city. Names like Desenberg, Goldberg, Lilienfeld, Israel, and Rosenbaum are common ones on state- and nationally-registered historic sites and plaques throughout the city, and back then were prominent in the social pages of historic newspaper accounts of daily life. As it would turn out, young Hattie would later marry the Desenberg boy Morris, just five years after the dream Victorian replaced the more humble structure.



**Note:** You can find a historic plaque about The Desenberg Block on the 200 block of Michigan Avenue. Meyer Desenberg worked for the same M. Israel store as David Lilienfeld several years before David in the 1850s, and built a major grocery store after a few years of exploring California. Young Hattie Lilienfeld married Morris Desenberg in 1892. For more information about the prominent history of early Jewish settlers in Michigan, see “Michigan Jewish History,” published by the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, Vol. 44, Fall 2004, Tishrei 5765.



Many works of art were produced in Lilienfeld marketing materials, such as this postcard advertisement for the Lilie's Cigar Co. (From the collection of the Kalamazoo Valley Museum.)



Production was beyond robust, with popular brands like Carolina, Pride, O.P., and Lily. The latter brand would be one of the most famous and enduring, and eventually become the name under which the firm and its successors would operate well into the 20th century.

The brothers were also accomplished in the business of importing and wholesale trading of beer, wine, and liquors. London Porter and Edinburgh Ale were common among them in the 1870s. They also purchased a prominent patent for the Noll's Portable Pneumatic Beer Faucet at a "fine figure." This revolutionary invention allowed beer to remain fresh and foamy through the time it was on draft, even for weeks, making large beer pumps obsolete, reducing waste, and negating the need for recorking of vessels (*Kalamazoo Telegraph*, May 11, 1881).



In an esoteric newspaper account, former President Ulysses S. Grant visited the Lilienfeld cigar factory in 1877. He was known to be a devoted fan of cigars. Perhaps not ironically, he died of throat cancer in 1885.

—Gen. Grant arrived in town last evening, and took up his headquarters at D. Lilienfeld & Bros'. cigar store, on Main street. He was given a seat in the show window, where he sat all unmindful of the great crowd which gathered about, drawn thither by their curiosity to get a peep at the great junketer, and as if in a reverie of thought, perhaps dreaming over again his balmy days in the White House, or still farther back, his deeds of heroism in war, he quietly smoked his cigar.

In an obscure 1877 story, General Grant appeared at the D. Lilienfeld and Bro. company (*Kalamazoo Telegraph*, Oct 3 1877)

### The Chicago Connection

With that success behind the brothers, in May of 1880 William decided it was time to move to Chicago and take on the massive market opportunity there. Whether it was a Kalamazoo rumor or actual intent is unclear, but initial reports in papers showed fears that David and William were planning to take manufacturing with William to that city, although what transpired was a prosperous cooperation that seemed to only grow the Kalamazoo factory, well past the turn of the 20th Century.

The Kalamazoo factory hummed. It had produced over 15 million cigars since it opened in 1861. Also according to the *Kalamazoo Telegraph* (May 11, 1881), "The building where is located this great industry is one of the most pretentious in the city, is four stories in height, filled with merchandise for their trade from basement to roof." Employees were well cared for, and were provided excellent salaries: "\$2.50 per day plus entertainment, which often included being read to as they worked."

By 1890 Julius Goldberg's minority interests in the Kalamazoo factory were purchased for unknown reasons, though he remained a close friend and very actively in the employ of the Lilienfelds. In fact in December of that year Julius Goldberg and his wife celebrated their 25th anniversary, with Hattie Lilienfeld holding the "post of honor at the coffee urn," according to *The Kalamazoo Telegraph*.

Mr. Lilienfeld's suffering from Rheumatoid arthritis worsened, and he publicly claimed that as a reason for announcing that his part of the family would move to Chicago as well, in this case late in the fall of 1892; he would also attend to business interests there. The move was not immediate, however. With daughter Hattie having just married Morris H. Desenberg in May of 1892 (brother Edward was best man), they remained in Kalamazoo for two more years before moving to 21 Wabash in Chicago in 1894. It was presumed in 1892 that both the home, and the factory at 112 Main Street (now Michigan Avenue in the heart of the city), were to be put up for sale, but no such thing occurred. Family friend and long-time associate Isaac Gold-





berg managed the Kalamazoo operation through 1898 (his father Julius Goldberg had passed in 1894, shortly after that 1890 anniversary party). Note: Some histories of the house show the home vacant after 1897, though with daughter Hattie and many friends remaining in Kalamazoo, it is believed the house was held, if not occasionally visited, by the family until 1899 (citation needed).

Having been in the alcohol trade for many years, later in the company's evolution, somewhere around 1893, the D. Lilienfeld & Bro. Organization developed and co-owned a store-front bar at the street level of the factory, along with M.J. O'Neil. (Some accounts date the saloon in the late 1890s, though the city directories do not list it until 1893.) It was called the Brunswick, and would remain under family ownership, at least in part, until 1899. In the years that followed, the Brunswick would continue amidst increasing competition from what would become known as "Saloon Row," before prohibition put them all out of business by 1920.

### **The Century's End Brings Sad News**

News came quickly on that January day in 1899, and daughter Hattie and husband Morris Desenberg sprung into action. David Lilienfeld had died in Chicago, on January 6th 1899, at the age of 62, after suffering from poor health and rheumatoid arthritis since his late thirties. Hattie and Morris lived at 516 S Burdick (near the site of the Skyrise Apartments today—roughly across from the State Theatre), and they rushed down to the station and jumped on the first train to Chicago to go be by her mother's side. Amelia, Hattie and Morris, and two close friends (Joseph Speyer and Selig Stern) made the solemn journey back to Kalamazoo with the body on Saturday for the service and interment on Sunday. The funeral was held at Hattie and Morris' home. It was a standard practice at the time to hold a funeral at one's home—which is where the term "funeral parlor" is said to originate.



An 1875 view of the business before the lower level changed from retail and wholesale tobacco and alcohol sales, to a saloon called the Brunswick (Courtesy Kalamazoo Public Library, P168)



—

## David Lillienfeld's Last Will and Testament



## Kalamazoo's Rip-roaring 'Saloon Row' Famous at Turn of the Century

market a  
valued  
by any Br

The Gazette will pay three dollars for each picture used in this column. Send them to the Kalamazoo-Gazette with as much information as possible about the picture. Make sure your name, address and telephone number are enclosed with the picture. All photos will be returned as soon as an engraving can be made.

I would be

The young women clad in black and red—the only members of the gentler sex to ever venture within a saloon's door in those days—always received generous contributions. "O. I. D."

In 1895 he returned to Germany and married his early love, Miss Amelia Israel, a cousin of Mrs. M. Israel of this city. They lived in Kalamazoo until five years ago, when they removed to Chicago, where he continued to enlarge his business. For 25 years he had been a sufferer from rheumatism, which eventually caused his death Friday morning, Jan. 8. He leaves a widow and two children, Mrs. Morris Desenberg of this city and Edward Lillenfeld of Chicago, who married Miss Jessie Livingston of Kalamazoo several years ago.

14



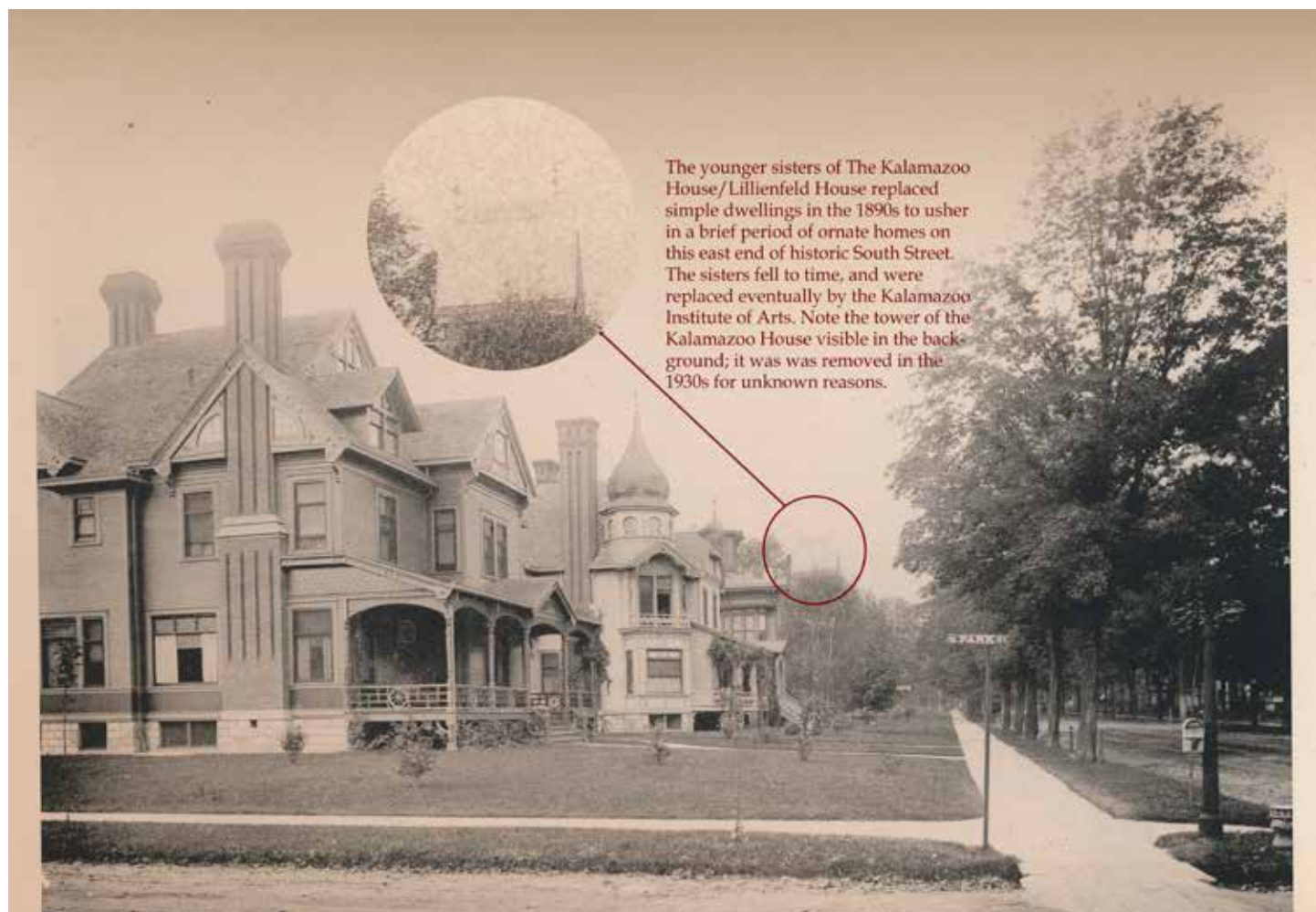
Consistent with his last will and testament, the family divested of most of the business and estate relatively quickly, including its remaining interests in the Brunswick to Mr. Michael O’Neil and Charles Seivers in March 1899.

The decades-long friendships and intertwinement between the Lilienfelds and the Goldbergs would by the close of the century result in the Goldberg family’s full ownership of Lilies. Isaac, who had managed Lilies for the Lilienfelds, would now own it in 1899. Sam would assist William Lilienfeld in huge growth of the Chicago market—topping 1.5 million cigars in that market alone during the year before.

In a little-known twist of fate, another prominent local businessman and contemporary of David Lilienfeld—who also owned a prominent residence—was memorialized just one day apart from David Lilienfeld, after passing January 3rd, 1899. The other person was Frank Henderson. Both were Masons, and both residences would become 21st Century Bed and Breakfasts in Kalamazoo. (Frank was also commander of the Knights Templar.)

### The Detroit Connection

As the century ended, on November 20th, 1900, Lilies Cigar Company moved to the southeast corner of Kalamazoo Avenue and Park Street, in order to expand. *The Kalamazoo Telegraph* of February 12, 1902 reported that under Ike Goldberg’s leadership the move had doubled their capacity, and it was now doubling again with construction that would span all the way to Church Street. They were making 165,000 cigars per month at this point, with 160 on the payroll in the company still known to be “practically identical with Lilienfeld Bros., and Company of Chicago.”



Circa 1890s the glorious neighbors of the David Lilienfeld/Kalamazoo House are visible; only one will survive (Courtesy Kalamazoo Public Library) This view is looking west on South Street from Park Street, which is now the home of the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts



## Fun Facts about The Inn

Built .....	1878
President at time .....	R. B. Hayes
Age (in 2017) .....	139 years
#Dog Years/lives .....	980/20
#Generations .....	5-7
#Guest Rooms .....	10
Sq. Ft. ....	8,700
#Main House Rooms .....	29
#Bathrooms .....	13
#Sinks .....	23
#Commodes .....	15
#Porches .....	2
States in the U.S. ....	38
Property Taxes (current) .....	\$17,800
Utilities (current) .....	\$16,500
#Lifetime Owners .....	12
#Days with guests .....	360
#Flights to third floor .....	3
#Stairs to third floor .....	37
#Flights when you work in attic and have the wrong tool (three times)? .....	15
#Flights climbed by staff each day .....	9,747



June 20th, 1990 Kalamazoo Gazette photo

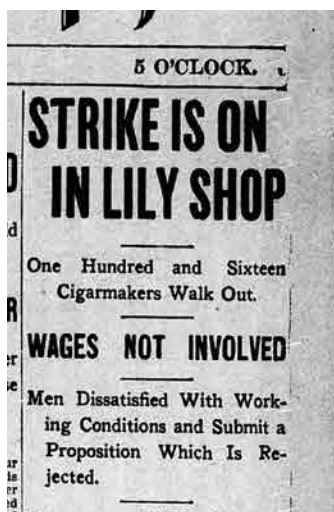


Kalamazoo House B&B inherited photograph (Date unknown)



Photograph as featured in *Progressive Kalamazoo*, 1904 (Courtesy Kalamazoo Public Library)





News stories from January of 1900 tell a bold tale of the Goldbergs accepting an offer to purchase their shares of Lilies, by a larger New York Trust. It was said that the Goldbergs had named an outlandish price for which they would sell their controlling shares, and that much to their surprise it was accepted (*Kalamazoo Gazette*, January 28, 1900). It was said that Sam Goldberg would join Isaac at the new firm, and actively manage the Lilies factory in Kalamazoo. In the end, however, it seems clear that this deal never happened, and that the Goldberg family maintained controlling interest for many more years, even up through a major event that would signal the end of an era for Kalamazoo's once-thriving cigar business.

A labor dispute arose in 1908. The workers blamed not an issue of salary, but poor working conditions and unreasonable shop rules, as well as tough new mandates from the

Goldbergs, now under Samuel's direction since gaining controlling interest on January 1 of 1908. The Goldbergs in turn charged that the main issue was poor performance and work ethic on the part of the workforce. Detailed records of the dispute exist in various newspaper documents from the time. Lilies was still at that time often referred to as the "Lilienfeld Factory," even in press accounts—further proof of the long and blurred lines between the Lilienfeld and Goldberg friends. In the end, however, after the work stoppage and strike the firm ultimately was moved by the Goldbergs to Detroit, in May of 1908. The existence, type, or nature of other mergers or outside investors at the time is unclear.

The intertwined legacies of the Lilienfelds and Goldbergs would live on in both Detroit and Chicago, but 1908 would symbolically end the Lilienfeld and "Lilies" era in Kalamazoo, and become a predictor of yet another element of its complete demise.

## The End of an Era

There was perhaps an even deeper way that 1908 brought the Lilienfeld era to a close for Kalamazoo. About the same time as the culmination of the strike brought an end to the Lilies Cigar Company's presence in Kalamazoo, Amelia Lilienfeld was living here in Kalamazoo with her daughter Hattie, though sharing time with her family and friends in Chicago. She had returned there to visit Edward, who was still managing a Chicago branch of Lilies. According to *The Kalamazoo Gazette*, she suddenly felt poorly on Saturday, rose briefly, but went back to bed. She died before a doctor could arrive to Edward's house—Saturday, May 16th of 1908. Son-in-law Morris received the word at their 516 South Burdick Street home in Kalamazoo (just across from what is now the Blue Dolphin Restaurant), and rushed to find Hattie, who was shopping on Main Street.

Surely with memories of having similarly done so upon David's death, they took the first train to Chicago, and returned with the body for burial here in the family plot at Mountain Home Cemetery (West Main hill). As was the case for David Lilienfeld, Amelia's funeral was held at Hat-

## FUNERAL OF MRS. LILIENFELD

Marked by beautiful and impressive services in keeping with the life of one whose kind and loving disposition had gained for her the love and esteem of all with whom she came in contact, the funeral of Mrs. Emilie Lilienfeld was held at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Morris Desenberg, south Burdick street, at 3 o'clock Tuesday afternoon.

Hundreds of friends in this and other cities paid their last tribute to the departed with beautiful floral contributions. Prominent organizations of this city were also represented by floral tributes.

With the death of Mrs. Lilienfeld Kalamazoo not only loses one of its most respected and prominent pioneer Jewish residents, but also a member of the community whose benevolent and charitable nature had accomplished an endless amount of good. Her life had been spent in doing for others. She preferred the quiet manner of giving and often times only those who were benefited were aware of the charitable acts. Her life has made a lasting impression on her host of friends who, by their frequent intercourse with the deceased, were able to comprehend all of the beauty of her life. Not alone was she kind and charitable, but she was appreciative. In this she may be said to have been almost childlike. The little kindnesses rendered were received with a gratitude which few ever forgot.

The funeral was attended by hundreds of friends, many of them being from out of the city. Rabbi Emanuel Kahn, of Grand Rapids, conducted the services which were beautiful and touching.

The floral tributes covered the casket and were strewn in profusion about the lower rooms of the house.

Among those who attended the funeral from out of the city were Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Lilienfeld, Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Shoninger, Mrs. J. Berolzheimer, J. Lowenthal and Richard Condon, all of Chicago, B. J. Desenberg, Miss Helena Stern, of Lawton and Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Goldberg and Sam Goldberg of Detroit.

*Kalamazoo Telegraph, May 20 1908*



tie's home on South Burdick Street. Hundreds paid their tributes with beautiful flowers, at a glowing service on Tuesday. She was deeply loved by her community. The Kalamazoo Gazette said of the family that among much kindness and many great deeds known and unknown, they had "built the residence at 427 West South Street, and before the death of Mr. Lilienfeld it was a social center for Kalamazoo society people." The paper also called her "one of its most respected and prominent pioneer Jewish residents," and said that through her "benevolent and charitable nature had accomplished an endless amount of good," through a life dedicated to service and giving to others.



Amelia Lilienfeld

Isaac and Sam Goldberg attended that day as well. The Lilies enterprise they managed would within weeks be in Detroit, and Sam would soon oversee the purchase of the Verdon Cigar company in Kalamazoo, just a year later in May of 1909. This move truly brought an end the Kalamazoo reign of large-scale cigar manufacturing, which had become the biggest in the "west".

Later located at 714 Forest, at the corner of Hastings and Forest in Detroit, the Lilies Cigar Company would boast nearly 650 employees by 1916. Ultimately it would merge into the Consolidated Cigar Corp. (Consol) in 1919, which is still in existence under the name of Altadis.

While some of William Lilienfeld's (David's brother who moved to Chicago) descendants are known, the only Kalamazoo connection that remained was daughter Hattie, who lived in Kalamazoo her entire life, until her death in 1949. The last known location of her successors was north of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Edward married in 1894, and continued in the family business, though it is believed that at some point he tired of it, and may have lived an unconventional existence outside of the US thereafter. His death date and location are not currently known.

## **The Donovan Residence and Funeral Home**

### A Half Century of Caring

Relatively little detail is known about the intervening decade between the end of the Lilienfeld era and the beginning of the roaring twenties, though it appears that the house remained both prominent and well cared for throughout. Then, in 1932 the house's legacy of caring and love would get supercharged, as it became both the occupied residence and caretaking business of a kind young funeral director named John Donovan.



David Donovan off to Peace Corps 1/1974

For nearly half a century the family would reside and come of age in the house, complete with all that life entails for a large family. We've had the opportunity to visit with some of the children who grew up in the house, and hear stories of the changes made to the home in those years, the fun they had, and the unique life of serving families at the difficult time of death.

As we saw with the Lilienfelds, throughout Civil War times and the early decades after, funerals were held at home. Friends and family would visit, usually in the parlor of the home, and conduct services at the private residence (usually relatively quickly, as embalming was only then coming into common practice). Thus is the origin of the term "funeral parlor," which endured in the era where professionals began to manage the entire undertaking of services surrounding death and burial.



The Donovan family is now spread throughout the country from the East side of Michigan for siblings Kathy and David, to Patrick in South Texas, and Mike—who worked with Charles in the funeral parlor business beginning in 1968—remaining in Arizona since leaving the business in 1975.



### On a Personal Note

Stephen Gibson spent ten years producing “look back in the life” type memorial video tributes, and artistic print collages of photographs and graphics products for funerals, on behalf of a wide variety of funeral homes. He had a great deal of direct contact with funeral directors and bereaved families, and saw up close the kindness, loving support, and genuine caring services that this profession offers to so many. It’s truly a gift of love, he says, and his associations with the industry greatly elevated the profession in his eyes. It provided him great appreciation for the families like the Donovans, who build their own days and lives around such meaningful and positive work.

*So maybe this is a good time to address the question that many innkeepers hear rather often ...*

### Is the House Haunted?

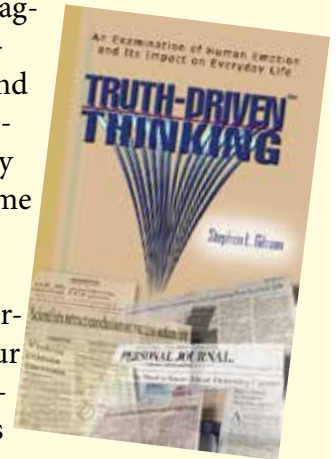
In short, I would like to offer my opinions on the question of haunting, from three perspectives: as a skeptic for many years; from what we hear from past owners and guests; and finally from an angle on “believer’s” logic.



Full disclosure: Long before we became innkeepers, I was the author of a couple of books focusing on evidence, reason, and the origin and nature of knowledge, and what are good and not-so-good ways to “know” anything. The fancy word for this area of inquiry is “epistemology”. In part of my open-minded journey, I spent many hours interviewing some of the leading paranormal investigators in the world—including the famous James “The Amazing” Randi (See Netflix documentary *An Honest Liar*) who famously offered a \$1 million prize to anyone who could demonstrate skills or abilities proving occult, paranormal, or supernatural/magical capabilities or phenomena. I also extensively interviewed Joe Nickell, who was the inspiration behind

(and worked with Hillary Swank on) the movie *The Reaping*. In the interest of intellectual honesty I admit my bias. While I would love otherwise, and while there absolutely *might be* such things as ghosts, a broad review of the evidence to date does not allow me to be moved back to such beliefs.

That said, the inn has enjoyed visits from ghost hunters and believers, and I enjoy hearing their views. With a few notable exceptions, our predecessors report the same as our experience—namely a very comfortable, warm house, with an almost surprising complete lack of any negative feelings or “energy”. In fact they reported some investigators (ghost hunters) brought equipment in, and found nothing. That said, as you might expect, a few noteworthy dissenters (a handful at most) have indeed reported phenomena that they quickly identify as not having earthly causes or explanations. I often say that I hope I can be convinced that doors closing, or a locking/unlocking after jarring closure—aren’t from natural causes (note that automatic door closures are required), but rather are the result of hauntings. Honestly, we think it would be great for business.



Levity aside, with some ghost believers I have listened to input about where and why a spirit, if they exit, might “haunt”. While perhaps the Lilienfelds may still reside here, the consensus seems to indicate hauntings would most frequently happen at the place of one’s death, or where one lived at a time of death, etc. If this is so, we are unaware of any deaths at this location. (It would follow, I note, that all hospitals and many private residences should be common sites of hauntings.) To the contrary, this has been a house of love, community support, and caring consolation and rejuvenation throughout all of its known history. So whatever our personal views, it seems likely we can all agree this is a safe and warm place. We hope you’ll agree.



## Restoration History:

Louis and Annette Conti rescued the house from the pending plans of a parking structure in September, 1985. The following year was spent developing the plans for the project, applying for National Register certification, and arranging financing. With the aid of limited partnerships, Michigan legislature, and the ITC of 1981, the Kalamazoo House became an escalating reality.

In January, 1986 the extensive restoration project commenced, for the grand opening in early August of that same year. The restoration costs (prior to the later restaurant) topped \$600,000 (over \$1.3 million in 2017 dollars), and was funded from tax-free revenue bonds and limited partnership shares sold to investors for \$20,000 each. There were also federal tax credits for rehabilitation of nationally-registered sites, and freezes on local taxes obtained in those early years.

Beginning with the third floor attic space, five rooms with baths were created in 1986. The design concept for this floor included reproducing all wood moulding and doors. Ceiling and wall surfaces were decorated with glazing and stenciled patterns from the Victorian era (some of which remain). Dormer windows were added in two rooms for additional light, duplicating an existing dormer in every detail. The floor plan ensured that no two rooms would share a common wall of a sleeping quarter (in other words, private bathrooms would provide additional sound insulation between guest rooms, to ensure privacy).

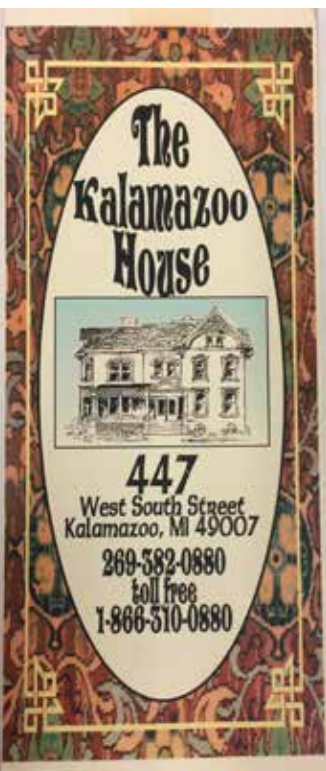
Extensive restoration of the first and second floor followed. The original floor plan had been altered somewhat in 1930, by the Donovan family. With the Conti restoration, ceilings, wall surfaces and woodwork were transformed by artisans experienced in Victorian decorative arts such as wood graining, glazing, and stenciling.

Wall coverings, furnishings, and appointments were chosen for appropriateness and authenticity. The exterior of the house was originally hard-pressed brick and had been coated with stucco in 1930. Because this process could not be reversed, the building was painted in a three-color Victorian color scheme that was later brightened and shifted, but largely remains. A balustrade fence for the front yard completed the project.

## About the Architecture and Structure

“Lilienfeld built the 427 W. South Street structure in the Italianate-Queen Anne motif with Eastlake influences - this could also be interpreted as German Renaissance.”  
— “A Hotel of Recaptured Elegance” From *The Greater Guide*, August, 1986

The house itself is a combination of the Queen Anne and Italianate styles. The Italianate influence can be seen in the front windows, which are long and narrow and have the typical Italianate stone window hoods and sills, the tiled mansard roof, exquisite pierced wooden gables screens, and a fine wooden front porch. The Queen Anne influence can also be seen in the high pitched roof, the decorative gingerbread in the cornice of the roof, and the decorative elements on the porch.





When the house was originally built, it had a square tower that extended from the roof directly above the entranceway. There is a photograph of the house, with this tower, hanging to the right of the bar area in what is now the parlor (picture to the right). The tower was taken down many years ago and the bricks from the tower were used to build a small addition to the back of the house. In the 1980s this addition remained, and was described as being used for a first floor guest room, though it is unclear if that was removed when the commercial kitchen was added to the inn during the 1990s.



The house itself is 2 ½ stories and is constructed of brick, with sandstone window detail, and wood cornice and gingerbread. In the 1930s, the brick was covered with stucco. When the house was purchased in the mid-1980s by Lou and Annette Conti, the exterior needed very little restoration work. It has since been painted in less muted tones, with extensive roofing and exterior maintenance, including new porch deckings and sub-structure improvements in 2016-2017.



The concealed gutters are a lovely design feature of the house, though a maintenance challenge. As the V-shaped gutters have aged, the bottoms leak directly into the soffits, causing water damage and virtually assuring restoration and replacement was due in 2015, with ongoing regular care, painting, and monitoring.

The front fence is a 1980s addition; it was made from poured concrete in molds that were made by Mr. Conti and his brother. The fence resembles the style of the porch railing and carries the design of the house from the porch to the sidewalk. The fence was repaired and restored in 2016 by the Gibsons.

### **Entrance to House**

The tile in the front vestibule is known as encaustic tile. The wall covering on the top half of the vestibule is an oriental pattern popular in Victorian homes. The bottom half of the wall is covered in Lincrusta, an embossed wall covering made from linseed oil, created by Frederick Walton in England (he also created Linoleum). It is still manufactured using similar techniques to the period, which resulted in an elegant look ranging from leather, to carved wood appearance. These are not original, but are authentic restorations for the period.

The glass in the doors that separate the vestibule from the hall is the original, clear-etched panels, which were removed in the 1930s. When the house was bought by the Contis, they found the original etched glass in the attic and reinstalled it in the doors. The wood in the interior doors and throughout the entire downstairs is made of pine, or a similar soft wood. It has been faux painted (a.k.a. “wood grained”) to resemble oak and other hardwoods. This woodgraining was done in 1986 by itinerant grainer Rock Headley. This technique involves laying down primer, a basecoat and an undercoat, and finally the paint he would streak to look like wood grain. Three coats of varnish then followed. When it was originally built, the house is reported to have had false wood graining. Such techniques were commonly used in the period to mask the appearance of inferior or non-uniform wood species.



## First Floor/Central Foyer

The carpet throughout the first floor is a wool Axminster, which was made on a 100 year-old loom at Mohawk Mills in the Southern United States. This design is somewhat similar to a Persian rug. The colors in the design were selected by Annette Conti. The elegant staircase (and newel post) to the upstairs that is located at the back of the house, was originally located in this foyer. It was moved in the 1930s to open up the foyer.

## Parlor and Bar Space

This large room, which is located on the right as you enter the house from the front, was originally two rooms. A drawing room was located in the front, toward the street, and a dining room was located in the back portion. The bar itself was originally used as a butler's pantry for the dining room, and was connected to the dining room with a door. In the middle part of the 20th century it was converted to a main floor bathroom, before the restaurant modifications to the inn during the early 1990s converted it into the bar area (pictured below).

The walls are painted in a technique called “wall glazing,” in which a base coat of paint is applied to the wall and then a second, glazing coat is applied over this with the use of a sponge. This produces a translucent top coat, under which the lower coat glows through. The wood in the doors, archways, and in the wainscoting has all been artificially wood grained to make the woods resemble walnut and oak. If you look carefully at the woodwork, you will see that the graining effect has been achieved through careful application of paint and similar materials. Wood graining was commonly used in homes of the period in order to give common soft wood the appearance of much more expensive hardwoods.

The stenciling at the top of the walls is hand painted from antique patterns. It was common to find stenciling in Victorian homes, where it would accentuate the high ceiling and cornice molding. The light fixtures in this room are reproductions of period pieces. The rosettes, on which the light fixtures are mounted are copies of originals that were in the house. The fireplace mantel along the wall, was added by the Contis. It is made of cast iron and has an original marbleized finish. The lower mirror in the fireplace (commonly removed and placed behind the sofa) is commonly known as a petticoat mirror, and would have been used by a woman in the 1880s to check and determine if her petticoat was showing under her dress.

The draperies are reproductions, similar to those used during the Victorian era. The drapery fringe was imported from Florence, Italy, and the lace curtains were purchased in Austria.



## Breakfast Room (Originally the Parlor)

The most prominent feature in this room is the chandelier, which has been here since the house was first built. It was originally a gas light fixture, but was later converted to electricity. Though we ask that you not turn them (and thus pinch the wires), you can see the small valves that lie beneath each light bulb; these were the gas valves used for each flame. The wallpaper is a reproduction of a wallpaper from the 1880s, which is found in the Cooper-Hewitt Museum in New York. The trim colors in this room are ones that would have been used during the 1880s. Draperies are copies of those used during the Victorian era and were prepared based on photos from this era. The fireplace is original and is the only working fireplace in the house. It has been converted to gas. The fireplace and woodwork in this room, and the other rooms on the first floor, was created in the Eastlake or “Modern Gothic” style. Charles Eastlake, who popularized this style of decoration, was an English designer in the late 1800s.





### **The Inn's Office**

When the house was built, this room was used by Mr. Lilienfeld as a home office and library. Visitors wishing to see Mr. Lilienfeld on business could be allowed into the room from the side hall and entrance, without disturbing the family. The wallpaper on the top half of the wall is a reproduction made by Bradbury & Bradbury. The bottom half of the walls are covered with anaglypta. This is an embossed paper imported from England. It is typical of the type of wall covering that would be found in a house of this style in the 1880s.

### **Side Entrance and Staircase**

The staircase originally was located in the central hall and extended to the second floor from near where the front door is located. It was moved in the 1930s to the back of the house, in order to open up the center part of the house. The original side door was missing by the 1980s. The side door is a duplication.



### **Second Floor Hallway**

There are five guest rooms on this floor, the area of which held the original family



bedrooms. Mr. David Lilienfeld, his wife Amelia/Emily (Israel), their two children Hatti and Edward, and Mr. Lilienfeld's brother, William, all lived here (William only for two years). Most window treatments on this floor were designed by Annette Conti. The lace was imported from Austria, the fringe was purchased in Florence, Italy.

### **Third Floor**

The entire third floor was an attic with a stairway heading to a tower that rose two stories above the roof. It was removed in the 1930s.

During the 1980s restoration, the attic was partitioned off into five rooms with connecting private baths and a main hall. The wood floor was added and all doors and woodwork were built to replicate woodwork on the second floor. The third-floor light fixtures are not original to the house, and are either architectural salvage or reproductions.

### **Room 4**

This room was Mr. and Mrs. Lilienfeld's bedroom when the house was built. The light fixture is original. The reproduction wallpaper on the upper wall is "Willow" by Bradbury & Bradbury. The lower wallpaper is anaglypta, and embossed paper. The cove and ceiling are decorated in a gold leaf stenciled design. The loveseat is a reproduction, manufactured by Baker. The design for the window treatments came from an old photograph. The fringe came from Florence, Italy.



The bathroom in this room is the only original bathroom in the house. The tile floor is original. The ceiling has an antique stamped ceiling, which was added during the 1980s restoration. The wainscoting is a combination of walnut and maple. The antique sink cabinet was imported from Belgium. The light fixture was original to the house, and was found in the carriage house.

### **Room 5**

Room 5 was occupied by one of the Lilienfeld Children. During the middle part of the twentieth century, the wall to the hallway from room #5 was removed. The space was a family dining room for the Donovan family, with a kitchen located where the bathroom is, combined with room #2 around the corner (at the top of the first floor stairs). The reconstituted and restored bedroom has a reproduction Victorian wallpaper, imported from England. The Victorian walnut armoire was imported from Belgium. The light fixture is a reproduction.



### Room 6

Room 6 was occupied by one of the Lilienfeld children, likely Hattie. The light fixture is an antique gasolier (combination gas and electric) found in the house. The ceiling medallion is original. The bathroom was claimed from closet space.

### Room 7

When this room was constructed for the inn, two antique panels were found here in Room #7, which belonged in the vestibule doors on the first floor. They were in perfect condition and were cleaned and installed downstairs. The walls in this room have been decorated with a peach glaze on the upper wall and blue glaze on the lower half. Antique stenciled designs have been painted on top of the glazing and in the ceiling. The light fixture is a reproduction Victorian chandelier. Some furniture items were imported from Belgium. The fireplace also comes from Belgium and the fireplace screen came from Amsterdam (the fireplace is sealed due to fire code). The carpet pattern is similar to designs used in bedrooms 100 years ago.

### Room 8

This area of the house was the cook's room when it was an attic. Behind the electric fireplace is a one of the de-commissioned fireplace from the west chimney stack. In 2012, Room #8 was decorated as the first contemporary room in the house, by then-owners Laurel and Terry Parrott.

### Room 10

This part of the house was also attic space. The dormer window in this room and in room 11 were added when the house was restored in the 1980s, to match the dormer in room 7.

## The Restoration of the Restoration:

Lilie's Restaurant, named after the great Lilienfeld cigar brand and successor organization, was opened in the summer of 1994 after extensive additional investment (estimated around \$500,000). Necessary modifications to the rear of the house included a large commercial kitchen addition to the main level (with quarry tile throughout), and walk-in food freezers across from new restrooms in the now-expanded basement beneath. The addition replaced a garage that had previously been located at the back of the house. The carriage house remains, and is presumed to be original also.



Bar area ceiling, 2004

By September 1996, financial problems mounted for the Contis. Taxes were delinquent, and liens stacked up. Competition from a 1990 renovation of the what is now the Radisson complex, then called The Kalamazoo Center, was cited as one of many factors.

By 2004 when Brian and Dottie Hill again rescued the house from demotion, the parts of the restoration were badly damaged by broken pipes (the house appeared to be hastily abandoned, with water left on), neglect, and abandonment. With young



Office ceiling example of damage

children living at the house with them, their painstaking attempts to resurrect the idle inn were far from easy. It would take tremendous cost and effort from not only Brian and Dottie, but continuing care and love from Terry and Laurel Parrot, and even continuing repairs and replacements to the current day.

Terry and Laurel Parrott moved to Kalamazoo to purchase, operate, and further transform and re-establish the inn as a B&B, in July 2007. Terry worked a full time



Extensive wall repairs were needed—here outside room three.



job in construction management until 2013, while helping Laurel further reform and grow the B&B's book of guests until both were ready to fully retire in 2014.

Steve and Stephanie had met Terry and Laurel through a mutual friend, had shared some social time together with them, and had rented a lake property of theirs with that same friend. Over a locally brewed beverage early in June of 2014, the friend told Steve that the inn was for sale, and that she thought Steve and Steph would be perfect for the business, and ought to consider it. Steve was running a boutique limousine service between Kalamazoo, Chicago, Detroit, and Grand Rapids, and the idea intrigued him. "Steph would never go for it though," he thought out loud. He went home and mentioned it to Stephanie, and to his surprise she enthusiastically said "that'd be a great fit, let's explore it!"



Steve and Steph with Laurel and Terry Parrot in 2014

Within a few weeks the conversations were very serious. By September they were learning and collaborating, and by October they closed on the purchase.

The first year was grueling. Steph worked full time (as she still does). They still had two kids at home and two in college. They had a large house on well-maintained acreage, with a pool, creeks, and sand volleyball court—which had all been in Steve's family for four generations. Steve also ran a very busy 24x7 car business. They jumped in with both feet. For the first six months, they honestly feel that the guest experience was slowly improved—while their stamina and ability to work without sleep was seriously tested. Steve lived in the Carriage House Loft Apartment behind the inn, while bouncing home only occasionally to open or close the pool, mow grass, or do maintenance. It quickly became clear that the life consolidation plan couldn't wait a year or two for further information.

In early May of 2015 Steve had an idea: they should sell everything they own now, clear the barn, empty the four generations of stuff from the attic, sell every tool and piece of furniture, and move into a condominium right next door to the inn. Luckily, two were for sale. Thirty very difficult days later, while working the inn full time, the car business too, and selling everything they owned, they'd closed on the home and condo, and by July were finally settled in their new world. They've never looked back. Though the car business proved too much work to maintain, and was sold by fall of 2015, the move was at a perfect time. Now with just one senior in high school remaining at the condo, Steve and Steph are able to focus greatly on the inn, are always nearby, and absolutely love living in the "big city."

### The Kalamazoo House—our Namesake

The namesake of The Kalamazoo House Bed and Breakfast is actually a "tip of the hat" and reference to a magnificent, 90-room historic hotel in the city. It was located on Main Street (now Michigan Avenue), across from the "T" intersection with Portage Street (the location of Olde Peninsula Brewpub today). The hotel burned on March 27th, 1887. It was one of the oldest and most famous structures in town, and it's original predecessor was a 30-room hub of the city, built in 1832, as well as a 60-room replacement built in 1861 (Kalamazoo Gazette, November 21, 1948). The final structure was demolished in 1906.



The later iteration of the famous Kalamazoo House hotel (left side), which was a hub of early city development. Circa 1869-1870. Old Peninsula Brewpub today occupies the building on the right, where Portage Street historically dumped visitors from the south into the city center. (P169 Courtesy Kalamazoo Public Library).





(Courtesy Kalamazoo Public Library)



(Courtesy Kalamazoo Public Library)



Amelia, Edward, and Hattie Lilienfeld  
(courtesy Claire Riser-Lilienfield family)



## Works Referenced and Resources Used:

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### Documents & Resources:

- Kalamazoo Michigan: Multiple Resource Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 1983
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- Kalamazoo Public Library Local History Room: Vertical files, Photography files, maps files.
- Kalamazoo County Records.
- Kalamazoo Public Museum: photography files.
- Various notes and documents left and/or compiled over the years by Terry and Laurel Parrott, Louis and Annett Conti, Brian and Dottie Hill, and/or other commissions, tour groups, and entities.
- Ms. Claire Riser-Lilienfeld, great-great granddaughter of Hattie Lilienfeld (David's Daughter): the only known photos of David & Amelia Lilienfeld and their children.

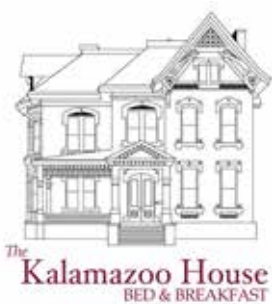
Special thanks also to The Kalamazoo Valley Museum, The Kalamazoo Public Library history room and staff, Sharon Ferraro and Kalamazoo's Historic Preservation Commission and Historic District Commission, Kalamazoo County Registrar's Office and land records staff.

Compiled by Stephen Gibson

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