

HISTORIC LANDMARK AWARDS

1903 - "**Montgomery House,**" 240 South Myrtle Avenue



This large Prairie style farmhouse was built c.1903 by developer Charles Heisen, and is among the earliest houses that he built in the Villa subdivision. The original owner, J. Graham Montgomery, was a Chicago banker. The Montgomery family lived in this house for twenty years. His son, Jack, ran away from home at age 13 to work on Canadian ranches, and as a movie cowboy extra. In 1915, Jack returned to Villa Park, and married Marian Baxter. As a couple they lived in this house with their two daughters who were both born at home. Soon this famous family went west to Hollywood. His youngest girl, born in 1918, became a very famous silent movie child star named "Baby Peggy," who started her acting career at the age of 20 months. In 18 months, she appeared in 150 two-reel comedies. After starring in three major films, she retired at age of ten. Because of her fame, she later changed her name to Diana Serra Cary and became a successful author. Her books are available at the Villa Park Library. Jack made many westerns possible with his daring stunts and "double rolls."

Over the years, particularly during the depression, this house has had many owners, among which are the Schumacher, Bargelt, Newton, Commare, Locascio families. The current owners, George and Marianne Kolak, have lived here since 1967.

Villa Park Historic Preservation Commission — Photograph by Carol Marcus