Alexander Hesler’s

PICTURESQUE + EVANSTON

PHOTOGRAPHIC VIEWS

*Hesler’s + Photo + Art + Gallery.*

CHICAGO.

1887.

A. Hesler, Prop.
Alexander Hesler (1823-1895) was one of the most prominent regional photographers of his era. For nearly fifty years beginning in 1848 Hesler operated a succession of photographic studios and galleries in Madison, WI, and Galena, Chicago, and Evanston, IL. Hesler’s best known works include portraits of Abraham Lincoln and a panoramic view of Chicago taken in 1858 from the top of the city’s courthouse.

Hesler spent most of his career in the Chicago area, and after the 1871 Chicago fire operated a studio in his home in Evanston. His Evanston work centered on portraiture, but he also produced widely admired landscape photographs. His volume of photographs of Evanston buildings and streetscapes, *Photographic Views of Picturesque Evanston*, was published in 1887. Hesler died in Evanston on July 5, 1895.
This exhibit celebrates Evanston’s 150th anniversary with an evocative stroll through Alexander Hesler’s Evanston. The following pages offer a selection of images from *Picturesque Evanston* highlighting four different aspects of Evanston’s past: Homes, Streetscapes, School and church buildings, and the Northwestern campus. Photographs are identified by the location of the building, name of original owner or purpose, and current status.

Many of the buildings in the photographs are now gone (remaining structures include University Hall, the Frances Willard House, and the Methodist Church)--and many of the leafy street-corners are now busy commercial sites. But thanks to Hesler’s photography and the magic of technology, a slice of Evanston’s history is vividly brought back to life.
Homes
Residence of Dr. Bragdon

1887 location: West side of Chicago Avenue near Church Street

2013: A parking lot
Residence of
Henry A. Pearsons

1887 location:
West side of Chicago
Avenue just north of
Church Street

2013: A parking lot
Residence of
Frances E. Willard

Location:
1730 Chicago Avenue

House still stands; now the
Frances Willard House
Museum, a national
landmark
Residence of former IL Governor (1873-6)
John Beveridge

1887 Location:
Southeast corner, Chicago Avenue and Clark Street

2013: Evanston Place Apartments
Residence of William Deering

1887 Location: Southwest corner, Judson and Church Streets

2013: Deering home razed; replaced by another private residence.
Alexander Hesler’s

PICTURESQUE EVANSTON

HOMES

Residence of Illinois Lt. Governor (1877-81)
Andrew Shuman

1887 Location: Southeast corner, Davis and Hinman Streets

2013: The Mather Retirement Community.

[Image of a house with trees in the background]
Residence of G. M. Sargent

1887 Location:
Northwest corner, Hinman and Grove Streets

2013: Apartment building
Residence of Phillip Shumway

1887 location: Northeast corner, Hinman and Davis

2013: The Mather Retirement Community
Residence of H.H.C. Miller

1887 location: Northeast corner, Hinman and Church

House was moved to Library Place, then razed
Residence of Robert M. Cumnock (founder of NU’s School of Oratory)

1887 location: Northwest corner, Hinman and Clark

Burned down, April 1970
Residence of J.S. Kirk

1887 location: Northwest corner, Ridge and Lake
Residence of J.H. Kedzie

1887 location: Southwest corner, Ridge and Grove

Demolished 1967
Residence of L.D. Norton

1887 location: Northwest corner, Sheridan and Clark

2013: Remodeled, now serves as NU’s Alumni Center
Davis Street, looking East from Benson Street
Passenger Station
(Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway)

Site of current CTA station—Benson between Davis and Church
Chicago Avenue, looking south from NU campus gate
Alexander Hesler’s

PICTURESQUE
EVANSTON

STREETSCAPES

Northeast corner Chicago and Davis (Avenue House Hotel)

Now site of North Shore Hotel
Corner of Forest and Greenwood, looking south
Alexander Hesler’s

PICTURESQUE
EVANSTON

STREETSCAPES

Hinman Avenue, looking south from Grove Street
Alexander Hesler’s

Southwest corner
of Maple Avenue
and Grove Street

Site of current
McGaw YMCA
Churches & Schools
Congregational Church

1887 location: Hinman between Lake and Grove

Razed 1927 and current Congregational Church building constructed on the site
Dempster School

1887 location: Northeast corner Hinman and Dempster

Replaced by new building, renamed H.H.C. Miller School, 1898; now Chiaravalle Montessori School
Episcopal Church

1887 location: Davis Street between Ridge and Oak

Razed; St. Mark’s now located at 1509 Ridge
High School

1887 location: Southeast corner Dempster and Elmwood

Destroyed by fire after serving as High School until new ETHS opened in 1924
Methodist Church

1887 location: Southwest corner of Hinman and Church (nearing completion in this photo)

Second building & location for the Methodist church; current building replaced this one in 1911
Wesley Avenue School

1887 location: East side of Wesley Avenue between Davis and Lake

Replaced by David B. Dewey School at same address
Northwestern’s Campus
Alexander Hesler’s
PICTURESQUE
NORTHWESTERN

Campus in Winter
(University Hall in background)
University Hall

Built in 1869
Woman’s College

Later called Willard Hall (women’s dorm); became Music Administration Building in 1938
Memorial Hall

Also known as the Little Red Schoolhouse; built for Garrett Biblical Institute; used by NU’s Business & Journalism Schools until it was razed to become the site of today’s Jacobs Center.
Fayerweather Hall

NU’s Science Building until 1953; now the site of East and West Fairchild Halls
Heck Hall

Dorm for Garrett Biblical Institute students until it burned down in 1914; Deering Library built on the site in 1932
Life Saving Station

Housed boats and equipment for NU’s Life Saving crew; after 1932, used for men’s union; razed in 1954.

(Note Old College, first NU building, built 1855, in background.)
NU’s First Gym

Located north of Fisk Hall; paid for and built mostly by students. Used until replaced by Patten Gym in 1910.
Resources & Credits

Northwestern University Archives holds a copy of *Picturesque Evanston*, along with approximately 150 Hesler photographs from the 1870s-80s, including portraits of NU faculty and students, and images of buildings and student groups (see online finding-aid to the collection).

Evanston History Center holds additional Hesler photographs and biographical materials, including an annotated volume of *Picturesque Evanston*.

Enhance your journey through Evanston and Northwestern’s past with these digitized resources:

- interactive 1876 map of Evanston
- Evanston city directories (1880–1923).

Exhibit by Janet Olson (University Archives) and Erin Carney (NU Music 2014)

The curators thank NU’s Digital Collections and Library Technology Departments; NU’s Special Libraries Division; the Evanston History Center; and, of course, Alexander Hesler and his photographic eye.