

Eicher Home/Grant Wood

Henri Eicher, one of many trained European silversmiths who came to live in Park Ridge in the early 20th Century, and his wife Asta, a silver designer and silversmith as well, lived in this house at 312 Cedar, just one block north of the Kalo Arts Crafts Community House where Henri headed Kalo's metal working staff. The Eichers also leased their barn—still standing, west of the house—to a series of silversmiths.

One of these was artist Grant Wood, who worked for Kalo owner Clara Barck Welles while studying at the Art Institute of Chicago. Wood returned to Iowa and became famous for his painting, *American Gothic*. After Mr. Eicher died, Asta was lured to West Virginia by a con artist professing romance in a lonely hearts correspondence. She and her three children came to a tragic end in a story that was the inspiration for the 1953 novel, *The Night of the Hunter*, and the 1955 movie of the same name. Now another novel, *Quiet Dell*, by Jayne Anne Phillips examines the tragedy again.