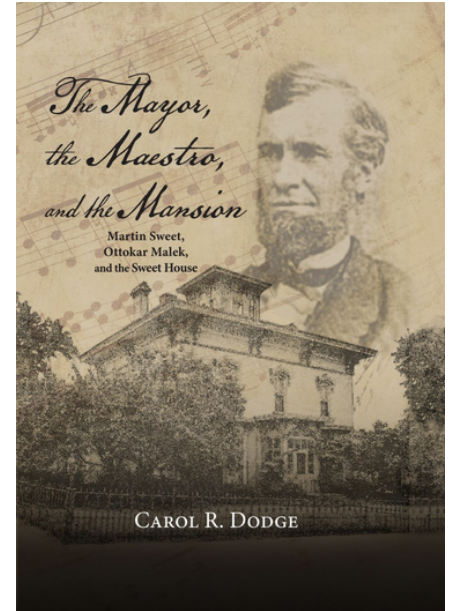


# THE MAYOR, THE MAESTRO, AND THE MANSION: MARTIN SWEET, OTTOKAR MALEK, AND THE SWEET HOUSE

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**“The greatest appeal is the realization that this house has been lived in and loved . . . cared for and embraced . . . filled and honored with incredible pieces of art and furniture that speak to its history . . . and used and enjoyed by the Grand Rapids people for generations to enhance not only their personal lives, but also the life of the community. After reading the book, I think of the Sweet House more as an historical art museum, personalized by Martin and Desdemona Sweet’s residency.” –Joan Niles, retired Tennessee realtor and author**



The Mayor, the Maestro, and the Mansion is a welcome addition to publications chronicling the history of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and an inside look at the mansion at 254 Fulton Street East in Heritage Hill. Martin L. Sweet served as mayor of the city in 1860. He was an entrepreneur who owned banks, flour mills, furniture factories, railroads, and plank roads. In 1869 he built a hotel at the intersection of Pearl Street and Monroe Avenue where the Amway Grand Plaza stands today. The Maestro, Ottokar Malek, operated a school of music in the mansion from 1914 to 1919. He was a concert pianist and founded the Grand Rapids Civic Orchestra, known today as the Grand Rapids Symphony. The mansion, built by Martin Sweet in the 1860s, was the home of the Women's City Club for 90 years from 1928 to 2018. The club hosted celebrities, entertainers, and politicians at its social and educational events and filled the house with art and antiques. In 2005 the Sweet House Foundation assumed responsibility for the preservation of this historic treasure. It is open by appointment for tours and events. This book closes the gap in the history of Grand Rapids which has largely omitted the legacy of Martin Sweet and Ottokar Malek. It establishes the importance of preserving the venerable Sweet House.

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