

THE SWEETS, AFTER THE TRIALS

TRIALS OF OTHER KINDS

The Sweet family wanted a nice house in which to raise a family. But on September 9, 1925, their second night living here, white mobs surrounded their home. The violence, arrests, and trials that followed affected their lives forever.

The Sweets never returned to their home together.

Gladys and Iva became sick with tuberculosis. Gladys believed she contracted it while in jail. Without Ossian, Gladys and Iva moved to Arizona, hoping to regain their health in a drier climate. But Iva died shortly after her second birthday, in 1926.

In 1928, Gladys returned to Detroit and died soon after. Ossian's brother, Henry died of tuberculosis in 1940.

Ossian paid off the house in 1950, but he faced ongoing personal and financial difficulties. He fell behind on the tax payments. In 1958, he sold the house to family friends William "Herbert" and Ruby "Inez" Baxter. Ossian would sometimes visit.

Ossian Sweet died by suicide in 1960.

The home – still owned by the Baxter family – is now on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Sweets' sacrifice earned us rights we can take for granted today. Discrimination and racism persist, but the Sweet legacy bent the arc of American justice closer to the ideal of equality.



The house at 2905 Garland Avenue is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Photo: Detroit Public Library

