

1980's  
HISTORICAL HOMES TOUR

1. 303 Clay Street

CEDAR FALLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY HOME

This home has been known as the Barnum or Bryant or Dempster home, as these were the families that lived here the longest.

A.D. Barnum built this home in 1862. He is also known as the contractor of the first building on the U.N.I. Campus, the Soldiers Orphan Home, which became Iowa State Normal School.

The home has 18 inch walls and the cupola atop the roof was build as an Indian look-out. The original inside shutters that are vertical and not horizontal are an interesting feature of this home. The inside stair rail has been striped of approximately eight coats of paint to its original wood. The servants quarters upstairs and to the rear of the home are two steps below the level of the rest of the upstairs. There is also a back stair leading to the kitchen from those quarters.

The home was purchased in 1962 by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Clay to establish a Historical Museum.

2. '224 W 3rd Street

CEDAR FALLS WOMENS CLUB HOUSE

This home was built in 1867 by J.T Knapp and Edward Townsend. They were partners in a banking firm of Townsend and Knapp. They also married sisters and shared this home. These two families occupied this home until the death of the two wives within a year of each other. Mr. Townsend moved and later Mr. Knapp left the city after the failure of his bank.

The Pfeiffer family of New York City offered to give \$10.000 toward the purchase of this building as a Women's Club if the city would match those funds. The auditorium was added in later years and the Women's Club was dedicated in 1929 in the honor of Emma Pfeiffer Merner.

3. 809 Washington Street

WISE HOUSE

The French Mansard roof on this house allowed room on the third floor for a study for Mr. C.A. Wise. He came to Cedar Falls in 1863 and worked as a drug clerk. In 1893 he had saved enought money to purchase the drug store which he renamed C.A. Wise and Sons. Several years ago this house was extensively damaged by fire. Since that time, Ms. Laura Loveland has repaired and refurbished the house, showing much of its original grandeur.

4. 822 Washington Street

PETER MELENDY HOUSE (second house)

This home was the second home buit by Peter Melendy, the first being at 1107 Washington Street. In the early 1880's Mr. Melendy left Cedar Falls for a few years but returned in 1886 and built this home. During his residence here he was Mayor of Cedar Falls for six years, clerk of the Session in the Presbyterian Church, and found time to write a history of Cedar Falls. This was his home until his death. Mr. Melendy's first wife died in 1866, he then married a widow, Mrs. Mary McFarland of Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

5. 903 Washington Street

GILKEY HOUSE

This house still has the original siding. There is a stone foundation and a stone porch. Inside are three usable fireplaces. The area on the third floor was once a ballroom. The floors are of hardwood.

This house has been occupied by the Board of Education, therefore walls have been moved, pillars removed, and dividers replaced.

Can you include Andrew Mulvaney house?

6. 1017 Washington Street

TOWNSEND HOUSE

The ceilings in this home are almost eleven feet above the parquet floors and there is a fireplace located in almost every room. Some of the special features are the milliner's mirror, the walnut staircase, circular marble topped radiator in the living room, a horizontal window in the kitchen and a stained glass window above the staircase. Pottery rosettes decorate the high ceilings. Tall windows contain hand-blown glass panes and the original interior shutters covers the top portion. Door knobs and hinges in the house are of carved brass in a variety of patterns, with figures and birds and water fowl. The door knobs are highly decorated and tiny covers swing down to cover the keyholes.

A small sink in the hall which once served the stable entry is hinged, dropping down from the wall to reveal faucets which are also turned against the wall when not in use. This huge home has been remodeled to include an upstairs apartment, plus a mammoth attic.

*Home  
Club  
House*  
Mr. Townsend built the home at 224 West 3rd Street in partnership with J.T. Knapp. Mr. Townsend and Mr. Knapp married sisters and lived in this home until the sisters died within a year of each other. Mr. Townsend dissolved his partnership in the banking firm and entered the milling business, which ultimately became the Townsend-Merrill Lumber Company. Mr. Townsend served one term as mayor and was active as a member of the School Board, Board of Supervisors, State Senate and the Board of Trustees of the State Normal School

After his death the house was owned by the Jetmore, Morgan, Johnson and the Willoughby families.

7. 1107 Washington Street

MELENDY HOUSE

Originally this lot held a story and a half house built by Melendy in 1859, and in which the family lived for 17 years before it was moved to the corner of 20th and Franklin Streets. Much of the ornate gingerbread typical of the period is missing from the structure. There were 5 fireplace, one in each of the living rooms, dining room, and bedrooms. The chandeliers descend from circles of carved plaster. There is a twisting stairway with mahogany railing and a newel post. In the wall at the top of the stairway is a curved arch which could be used for a bouquet of flowers, a lamp or statue, but these niches were formally used as a casket niche.

Mr. Melendy lived in this home for only three years after which he sold it to I.D. Gilkey. In a few years the Gilkeys 'sold or swapped' houses with Roger Leavitt who had property at 9th and Washington Streets

Roger Leavitt rented the house called the Lawrence house, formerly the Session house at the corner of eleventh and Clay Streets. Early in 1889 he bought the lot and built a home at 1022 Washington Street. In 1897 he bought the C.C. Knapp house on the corner of ninth and Washington. In 1903 he 'sold or swapped' the property at ninth and Washington with Mr. Gilkey for property at 1107 Washington Street.

8. 601 West 12th Street

HARRIS HOUSE

It is rather likely the two-story porch or portico on the front of the house is of later origin. It is a Queen Anne style house with a Gothic watch tower. The third floor had a large ballroom and the orchestra played from the third floor of this watch tower.

When this house was built it occupied the whole of the 600 block on West 12th. The parquet pattern in the entrance hall plus a beautiful curved staircase to the third floor make this a stately mansion. There are five different types of woodwork in this home.

Norman Harris was the guiding spirit of Harris and Cole, a company which made wooden pumps. The first factory was located on the mill race west of Main Street..

This home was sold to Frank Cotton, the builder of the Cotton Theatre (now Regent Theatre). It later was converted into apartments and then to the Christy Convalescent Home.

9. 1021 Clay Street

SESSION HOUSE

This is one of the few Gothic Revival homes in Cedar Falls. This home was built by Fitzroy Sessions in 1867. The family lived in the home for an unknown number of years. It then became the home of another prominent citizen of Cedar Falls, Roger Leavitt. Fitzroy Sessions was born in Warren, Massachusetts, 1830, later he was an officer in the State militia. He enlisted in the Civil War in 1861 and became Adjutant of the regiment.

10. 603 Clay Street

SARTORI HOUSE

This is an imposing red brick structure and still stands as a monument to the memory of Mr. Sartori. The arches over the windows are made of iron although normally they would be made of stone and are fitted so carefully they look like wood.

The original entry hall is graced by a black walnut curving staircase. The floor is of oak, accented with a parquet pattern. The home has been converted into four apartments.

Mr. Sartori was a young German mason and stone cutter who came to Cedar Falls at the age of 24 years. He soon established himself as a fine contractor and did all of the brick mason work on the house himself.

11. 521 Clay Street

WILSON BOARDING HOUSE

This house became famous as the Wilson Boarding House and was originally owned by A.G. Thompson, who operated the Thompson Hardware Store for many years. As a boarding house the meals were considered the best in town. Mrs. Wilson insisted upon a high level of respectability among her boarders to match the quality of her food. Men were required to wear coats in summer as well as in winter. The Wilson's Boarding House was particularly famous as a "match factory", where many area young people met and later married.

12. Fifth and Parkade

ROCK ISLAND DEPOT

The Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Railroad came into Cedar Falls in 1870 and built this depot. After standing vacant for a number of years, it was purchased and turned in to a restaurant.

13. State Street

RAAB POTTERY WORKS LOCATION

The parking lot between Dalton's Plumbing, Heating and Air Conditioning and the Bernina Sewing Machine Shop was the original location of the Raab Pottery Shop. John and Johanna Raab came to the United States in 1874 and moved to Cedar Falls in 1875. They purchased the John White Pottery and Terra Cotta Works, where they produced crocks, jars, jugs, clay pipe and terra cotta whimseys. The Rebecca Jug, in miniature may be purchased at the Historical Society that he produced. It was an item sent to dignitaries, personally from Mr. Raab. The pottery was operated until 1940.

14. 115 Mill Street

BROOM FACTORY

Built in 1862 by G.M. Overman as a corn starch factory, it stood in a row of grist mills. In 1875 it housed Harris and Cole Pump Factory and in 1886 it was sold to the Forrest Milling Company--the original Quaker Oats Company. It has been a washing machine factory, a pickle factory and the broom factory in 1905. It is now a restaurant and has been placed on the Historic Register.

15. 402 West Second Street

FOX HOUSE

This home was constructed in 1863 by Sheldon Fox. Mr. Fox was one of the first promoters of the Cedar Falls Mills Company and helped build the first mill on East Second Street. Fox augmented his income by making long term loans. Tragedy came to this house in 1916 when Mrs. Fox and two of her daughters died on the same day as a result of an epidemic.

The original porch has been removed as has the cupola. Partitions inside the house have also been removed and an open winding front stair case has been replaced by the present stairs. The home has 14 foot ceilings.

This house is now the home for the I.O.O.F.