

House information

810 N. Linn, Iowa City

The Stebbins House

Frank K. Stebbins was the longest serving mayor of Iowa City, 1897-1905, 1917-1919 (8 terms).

In 1906 he built the house at 810 N. Linn. Brown Street was on the edge of the city in the original plat. The 800 block of Linn Street was the first suburbs of Iowa City. The house was a "Sears house" with the wood, plaster, nails, glass... arriving on the railroad. Sears officially began selling Sears houses in 1911, so the 1906 Iowa City house was a precursor. Mayor Stebbins lived in the house with his two maiden sisters who likely took very good care of their brother.

The Linn Street house is in the Northside Historic District. Most of the streets in the area are brick. At the turn of the century Brown Street and Linn Street were the only streets that received snow removal. Removing the snow on these streets allowed dead bodies to be transported to Oakland Cemetery.

The original house did not have a kitchen, but rather a back yard cooking porch. There were no plumbing and no electricity in the house. All the lighting was gas. The kitchen and two baths were added in the 1920's. There was a coal furnace, and coal was delivered through a chute into the basement. There were two coal stoves in the house. There was a large 6-foot cistern in the back yard where rainwater was collected; it was eventually covered over. It was discovered under the back yard around 2005 and again covered over.

The pocket door between the living room and the dining room still works. Most of the original plumbing and electricity have been replaced. The flooring in the attic has been enhanced with thick insulation to assist with heating and to discourage bats. At one point most of the upstairs was an apartment and the area off the upstairs bath was an upstairs kitchen. When we purchased the house, it still had a large, decorative iron bathtub upstairs. This house has obviously received a lot of love and attention since 1908. It has also provided a wonderful, nurturing environment for its inhabitants over the years.

Donna Hirst

810 N. Linn, Iowa City

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