

MISSISSIPPI RIVER MEN:
LE CLAIRE, IOWA 1850-1880

Name: George Tromley Sr. House
Address: 806 N. Cody Road
Owner: Carl B. Elverd
Address: 806 N. Cody Road 52753
Legal Description: Lot 2 Block 4
Town of Parkhurst of the City of
Le Claire
Acreage: less than one
UTM: 15/721300 4609240

Physical Description:

House was built in two sections, the first, according to local tradition, c. 1840, although a mid-century date is more likely. The house is two stories, with a low-pitched hipped roof. The older section is constructed of brick, now painted white. The three-bay front has main entrance to the left, sheltered by a small gable-roofed porch on square posts which is probably a rather late addition. Windows have lintels with nearly flat pediments. The later section is of frame construction, with windows set in flat enframements topped with narrow cornices. In the angle formed by the two sections (south side) is a one-story porch with pentroof, supported on slender turned posts. On the south side of the older section is a two-story rectangular bay, a small pentroof separating the stories. A similar bay, though polygonal, is found on the southeast corner of the later section.

Significance:

George Tromley Sr. began his career on the floating log rafts common before the Civil War. After the war, Tromley and a local engineer, Thomas Doughty, took the small steamer "Le Claire" upriver, to conduct an experiment involving the use of a steamboat to push a log raft. Although the "Le Claire" was not powerful enough to control the raft, this venture set an example for Samuel Van Sant, who in 1870 built a boat sufficiently large and powerful to "tow" a log raft. The Doughty/Tromley experiment was thus a precursor of a major development in the transportation of logs from the northern forests to the mills.

