

MISSISSIPPI RIVER MEN:
LE CLAIRE, IOWA 1850-1880

Name: McCaffrey House
Address: 208 N. Cody Road
Owner: R.D. and Oty Iles Danico
Address: 1120 Lincoln Road, Davenport, IA
Legal Description: Lots 1 and 2,
Block 7, original town of Le
Claire
Acreage: approx. 1
UTM: 15/721380 4608440

Physical Description:

Two-story frame Italianate house on stone foundation. Exterior sheathed in narrow clapboards, with cornerboard extending to cornice level. Windows have curved wooden lintels and flat enframements, as does the main entrance, located to the right of the 3-bay main facade. The roof is a low hip, with plain, unbracketted wooden cornice. There is a two-story polygonal bay on the south side, with a bracketted cornice above the first story bay. Additions include a one-story screened porch on the south side, a large rock chimney at the rear. Located on a corner lot raised well above street level, with stone retaining wall on east and south sides. Built in 1870.

Significance:

John McCaffrey was, over his long career, a boat clerk, pilot, captain, and raftboat owner, as well as having interests in lumber and mining ventures. Born in Ireland in 1842, he came with his family to St. Louis when a child. He began river life at age 13, as a hand on a floating raft, and by 1864 was piloting on the Upper Rapids on a regular basis, his first boat being the "Alvira". He bought interests in the "James Means" and "Le Claire Belle", as well as other steamers and raftboats. Toward the end of his life, McCaffrey left LeClaire, and became a planter in Louisiana.

The house is a nice example of vernacular Italianate residential architecture, executed in wood and frame rather than in brick (which is more often the case in Iowa). Noteworthy are the arched window heads, the doorframe, with its dog-ear surround, and the imposing, elevated corner site which allows a good view of the Mississippi River to the east.

