

Register of Old Buildings
Macon County Historical Coordinating Council

Address: 612 E. Condit St.
Lot 11, Block 2, Renshaw Addition.

Date of original construction: 1844.

Name of original owner: James Renshaw.
In 1829 - opened hotel-store-tavern Decatur -
first businessman.

History:

"What used to be an old log house is now being made over into a modern residence. The house is at 612 E. Condit and has been standing there since the late 1830's. It was first built by James Renshaw and was used as his residence on a quarter section of farm land. At that time the nearest building to the house was on what is now North Franklin Street.

"In 1844 the largest part of the brick house was added to the part that had already been built, and at this time the log house was torn down. In 1853 Mr. Renshaw sold part of the farm to Plant & Tuttle, two Illinois Central engineers who wished to lay out an addition to the city. This addition settled up fast, and in 1856 when Mr. Renshaw died he had sold almost all of his farm for additions.....The house has been bought and sold many times.

"At the present time, Theodore Fisher owns the house and is having it remodeled. The house when finished will be thoroughly modern....."

Brick Dwelling of 1844
Now Being Remodeled.
August 4, 1912, Decatur
Herald

Early Hotels:

"Renshaw's Tavern was Decatur's first place of business, started in 1829. The tavern was a log cabin, standing on the present site of the Lincoln Theater entrance. In connection with the tavern was conducted a store."

Centennial History of Macon
County

Mabel E. Richmond, 1930

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Renshaw's Store:

"At the beginning of the 1830-1840 decade the most pretentious building in town was Renshaw's Tavern and Store. It boasted two stories.

"This tavern was the first place in Decatur to provide accommodations for the traveler. James Renshaw, proprietor, familiarly known as "Uncle Jimmy" was a hospitable man, and his tavern was the center of village life.

(See reverse side)

Present owner's name: Since 1944 the owners have been listed as Solomon M. Schminck and wife Anna S. Schminck as Joint Tenants.
County Recorder of Deeds' Office
12/17/73.

Note: However, tax bills, according to the County Treasurer's Office, are now being mailed to Mrs. Anna S. Schminck at 441 Longview. 12/17/73.

"Renshaw's account book, still preserved by members of the family, gives a good idea of the business activities of that day, when cash was scarce and storekeepers took articles in trade.

"One of the first entries in that book shows credit given to William Hanks for 10 pounds of fresh killed pork, for which he was allowed one and one-half cents a pound.

"One day Lewis Ward brought in 55 pounds of deerskin, for which he was given credit at eighteen cents a pound.

"Samuel McKay was credited \$1.32 for seventeen pounds of beef hides.

"William King brought in two bushels of mortar broken meal, and was credited fifty cents for it.

"Many citizens came in to buy whiskey and rum, which they had charged to their accounts.

* "Thomas Lincoln, father of Abraham, was a good customer for 'barks' during the fall and winter of 1830.

"When Renshaw first started his business amounted to about \$10.00 per day. But as the town grew, his business increased. Often he would drive cattle down to St. Louis markets, and bring back loads of merchandise for his store. He made money, and bought land. He laid out an addition to Decatur, in the northeast section.

"After he retired from the tavern business, he lived in a log cabin at the corner of Condit and Broadway, until he built a brick home there. Mr. Renshaw died in 1860."

.....PP. 71, 72 - From Centennial
History of Decatur and Macon
County - 1829-1929.

Mabel E. Richmond
Published by the Decatur
Review - 1930.

* "The year which the Lincolns spent in Macon County (1830-31) was the hardest year in the history of the county. During the summer malaria was prevalent, and the winter was made memorable by the deep snow. No wonder Thomas Lincoln decided to move again. It is quite evident that he and his family suffered from the ague and fever, for Thomas Lincoln bought a good deal of "barks" at the Renshaw Store. Barks was a mixture of Peruvian bark and whiskey."

P. 59 - From Centennial History of
Decatur & Macon County -
1829-1929.
Mabel E. Richmond

612 East Condit



Photo, Margaret M. Meyer, April, 1974

612 East Condit St.



Taken by Margaret Meyer
April 29, 1974