

Register of Old Buildings
Macon County Historical Coordinating Council

Address: 321 W. William St.
Legal description:
Western Addition
W82 1/2 E 162' of Block 13
Plat H/103

Date of original construction: 1887.

Name of original owner: C. M. Caldwell.

History:

1. A partial chain of titles to the land on which the house stands follows. Source - records in the Macon County Recorder of Deeds Office.

June	5, 1845	David Davis to Gustavis A. Smith.
Sept.	11, 1876	Gustavis A. Smith to Gouverneur M. Bruce.
Nov.	4, 1876	Gouverneur M. Bruce to Pernell S. Outten.
Oct.	8, 1885	Pernell S. Outten to Luther Ferriss.
May	25, 1887	Luther Ferriss to Robert R. Montgomery.
May	27, 1887	Robert R. Montgomery to Charles M. Caldwell.
Jan.	24, 1923	L. Nettie Caldwell (widow) to Frank and Viola Harpstrite
March	8, 1954	Frank Harpstrite (widower) to Carl P. and Martha Sue Birk.

2. A variety of occupations is represented by the occupants of the house at 321 W. William.

a. The 1874-75 city directory lists Gouverneur M. Bruce, res. south side of William, east of Edward, as a member of the firm of Hays and Bruce, dry goods.

b. The 1877-78 city directory lists Pernell S. Outten, farmer, res. south side of William, west of Church.

c. The 1885 directory lists Luther Ferriss, res. 321 W. William, of the L. L. Ferriss Co., Wholesale Boots and Shoes, 148 E. Main and 117 N. Water. (In 1885 C. M. Caldwell lived at 370 W. Main).

d. No 1886 directory is available, but the 1887 directory lists C. M. Caldwell, res. 321 W. William. He continued to live in the house for 34 years, or until his death, June 9, 1921. The following is from the obituary:

"He had been in the livery business from 1871-1919, most of the time on West Main on ground later purchased by the YMCA for an annex.... At one time his livery business was so good that he kept fifty head of horses and kept them busy. In addition, he sometimes boarded fifty more horses."

Herald and Review file June 9, 1921.

Present owner: Carl P. Birk, M.D. and Martha Sue Birk, wf.

History Cont'd.:

2. d. Cont'd.

Decatur's centennial history puts it this way:

"Charles M. Caldwell started a livery business in 1871 which he continued until 1919. Most of that time it was located in the 100 block West Main Street. In the halcyon days of the livery business Mr. Caldwell always kept as many as 50 rigs busy. Caldwell's barn was known for many miles around."



C. M. Caldwell, Livery.

p. 288 Centennial History of Decatur and Macon County 1829-1929
by Mabel E. Richmond
1930
Decatur Review, Publisher.

Pictures from Progressive Decatur, published by the Review Printing and Stationery Co., Decatur, Illinois. Date not given. Estimate, 1899-1902.

- e. The 1905 city directory includes the Caldwell's daughter, Evelyn Caldwell Bradley and her husband, Bernard, as occupants of the house along with her father and mother, C. M. and Nettie Caldwell, and a Mrs. Mary Murphey.

Bernard Bradley, son-in-law of C. M. Caldwell, is mentioned in the Centennial History of Decatur, 1930, by Mabel Richmond, first (on page 379) as a member of the Decatur citizens committee (in 1900 to raise \$100,000 to match that of James Millikin, for the purpose of founding a university in Decatur, and second, (on page 388) as a director in 1901 of the Business Men's Association, predecessor to the Chamber of Commerce. Bradley Brothers Store (dry good) is also mentioned (page 329) as one of several new business enterprises being established in Decatur in the 1880's.

- f. Mr. Frank Harpstrite lived in the house for 21 years, 1923-1954, his later years as a widower. The 1930 city directory lists him as in the real estate business; otherwise, his occupation is unlisted.
- g. Sometime after 1954, Dr. Carl Birk began to use the west side of the first floor for his offices. In 1974 his son, John, began use of the east side of the first floor for his law offices. The second floor contains four apartments.

3. History Continued:

In a telephone interview with Mrs. Carl Birk, August 30, 1974, she recalled a talk with Mrs. Bernard Bradley (Evelyn Caldwell) who lived and was married in the house. At the time of the conversation Mrs. Bradley was quite elderly. Mrs. Bradley recalled:

- her marriage in the bay window on the east side of the house.
- that the east side of the house was the older part.
- that the side porch (east) was the main entrance.
- that an apple orchard extended east to Church Street.

Mrs. Birk also stated:

- that there are three fireplaces, one on the east, which now stripped to the natural wood, has a mantel of cherry.
- that the exterior is much as it was originally, except that a two-story porch on the southwest was enclosed to become a kitchen for an apartment on the second floor, and another examination room for Dr. Birk on the first floor.
- The grape arbor is the original,
- A flower bed with cannas (on the east) is one laid out by Mr. Harpstrite, who after his wife's death, neglected the house, but nurtured a beautiful garden.
- the cannas have never been replaced since Mr. Harpstrite's day, but bloom each year. They are near heating pipes which sometimes keep them green much of the year.
- the interior walls are of brick and the circular staircase with bannister of walnut is choice.
- all woodwork is of walnut, but much of it is painted over.

4. Macon County Assessor's Office data follows:

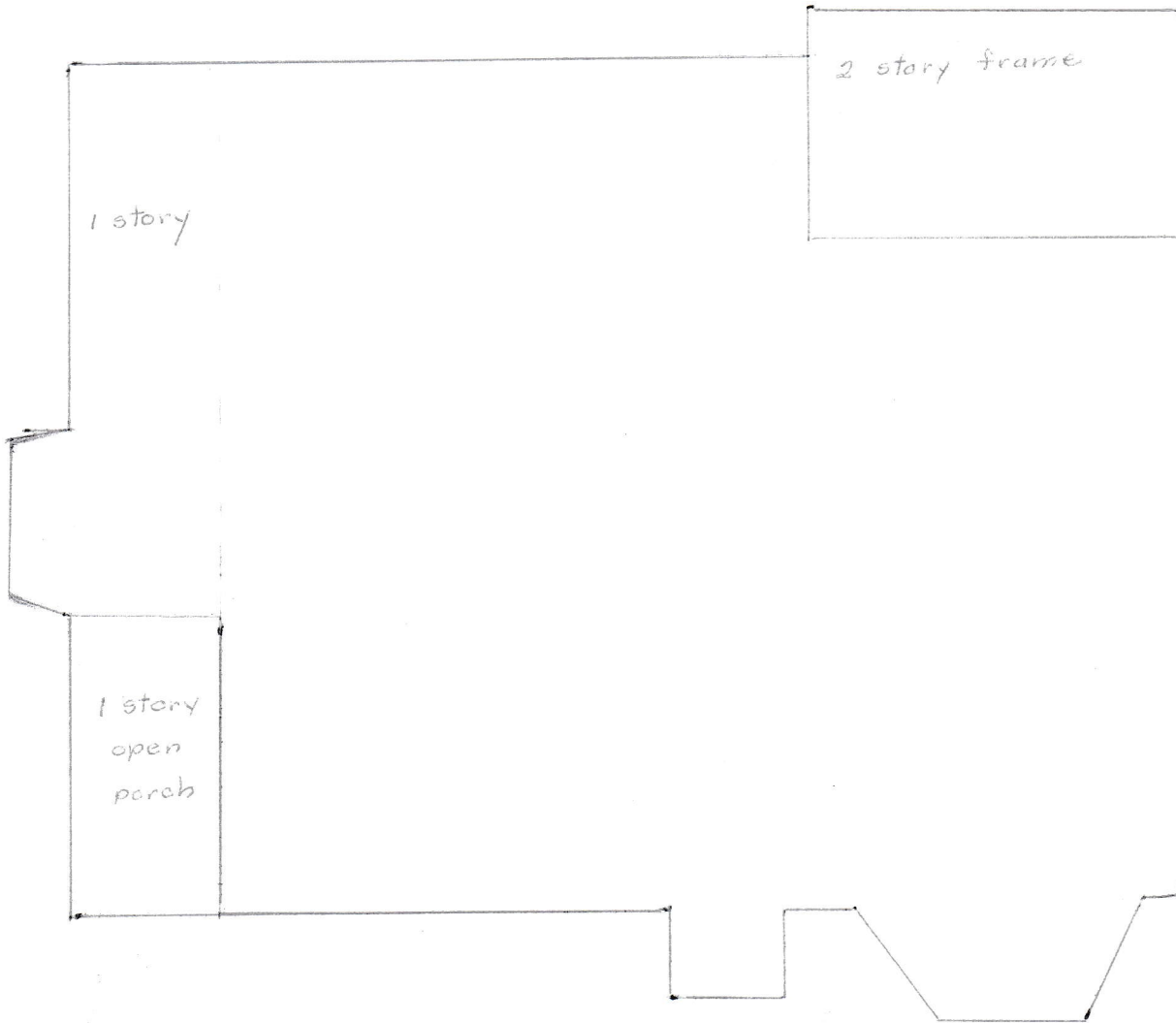
Estimated year built - 1890. (They stress that this is an estimate only)


Remodeled - 1955.

5 apts	2 toilet rooms
13 rooms	4 bathrooms

- Macon Co. Assessor's data cont'd.:

Masonry construction - brick.
Mansard roof - low pitch.
3 porches - 2 - open.
 1 - closed.
Hardwood floors in 4 rooms.
Pine floors in 9 rooms.



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CM. CALDWELL is proprietor of a livery, feed and sale stable of Decatur. He began business in this city in 1870, and for fifteen years has occupied his present location. His stable covers 100x80 feet, and the barn and its contents are valued at about \$25,000. He keeps on hand twenty-five horses and a fine line of buggies and carriages; in fact, everything found in a first-class livery stable. From the public he receives a liberal patronage, which is justly merited.

The life record of Mr. Caldwell is as follows: He was born in Sandusky, Ohio, on the 10th of September, 1840, and during five years of his boyhood resided in Alma, Ohio. From a very early age he has made his own way in the world.

When a lad of ten he began driving a stage from Flint to Saginaw, Mich. His father had located in the latter place when the Indians were paid at that point. Throughout nearly his entire life our subject has been engaged in dealing in horses. For thirty-six years he has been engaged in the livery business, embarking in that enterprise in Saginaw, Mich., soon after the town was started. He afterward followed the same pursuit in Fentonville, Mich., and in 1864 located in Griggsville, Ill. At that place he engaged in breaking horses, which he sold to proprietors of circuses. There he remained until 1870, when he came to Decatur, as before stated. His brother, F. B. Caldwell, was in partnership with him during his residence in Griggsville, and the connection was continued in Decatur until 1883. He is now engaged as a dealer in carriages in Chicago.

In Griggsville, Ill., on the 2d of September, 1868, Mr. Caldwell was married, the lady of his choice being Miss L. Nettie White. She is a native of Massachusetts, but in her maidenhood went to Griggsville, where she remained until after her marriage. Their union has been blessed by the birth of a daughter, Eva Eliza.

In connection with his other business interests, Mr. Caldwell was also engaged in breeding thoroughbred "Wilkes" horses. He owns a farm of one hundred and twenty-four acres, five miles southwest of Decatur, where he has a fine "Wilkes" stallion and a number of standard-bred mares. He is an excellent judge of horses and a lover of the noble steed. He has not only sold many horses in the home market, but has shipped to various points. He was one of the incorporators of the Trotting Association, and continued his membership with the same until 1892.

In his social relations Mr. Caldwell is connected with the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, and in politics is a staunch Republican. He takes an active interest in political affairs and always keeps well informed on the issues of the day. He is now serving as Township Commissioner, a position he has filled for fifteen years with credit to himself and to the satisfaction of his constituents. He and two other members of the Board have entire charge of all the roads and

expend about \$15,000 each year on improvements in this line. In connection with D. A. Maffett and C. Amman, he laid out and platted Maffett's Addition to Decatur. He has also handled considerable other real estate. Mr. Caldwell is a public-spirited and progressive man and takes a deep interest in everything pertaining to the welfare of the city and its upbuilding.



*Portrait and Biographical
Record, Macon County,
Illinois, Lake City
Press, Chicago 1893*

pp 252, 253

321 West William

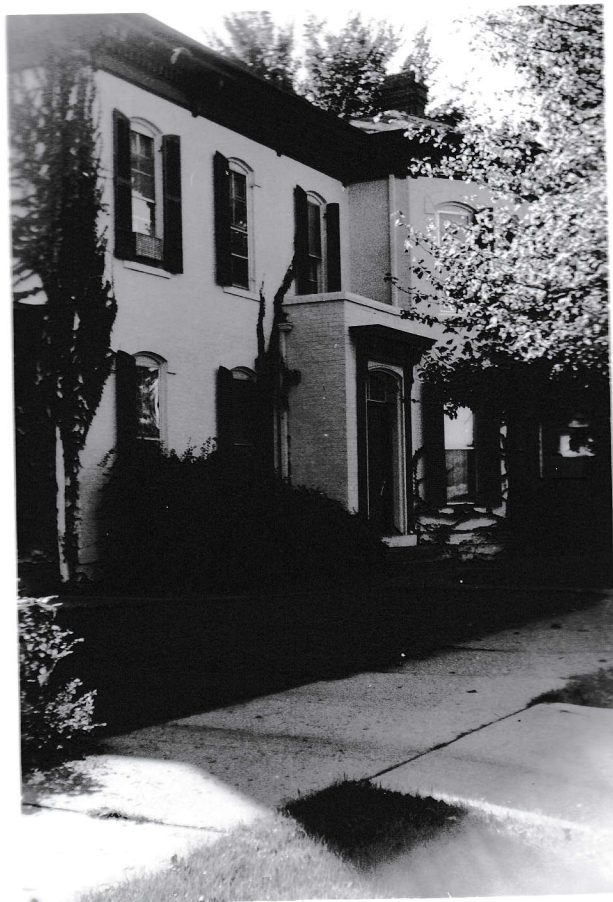


Photo - Margaret M. Meyer, Dec., 1974

321 West William



Photos, Margaret M. Meyer, Jan., 1975



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Photo - Margaret M. Meyer - October, 1973
321 West Williams
Caldwell House

Caldwell Livery Stable



Photo, Decatur Herald and Review
Date not given