

Register of Old Buildings  
Macon County Historical Coordinating Council

Address: 308 West Main.

Date of original construction: 1888.

Name of original owner: W. H. Linn.  
(a founder of Linn & Scruggs  
Department Store)

History:

- 1888 - Built by W. H. Linn.
- 1922 - Dawson and Wikoff purchased the house from Mrs. M. A. DeForest, daughter of W. H. Linn, for a funeral home.
- 1928 - Decatur Woman's Club.



1972 - picture, courtesy of H. Lynn Bohon.

Present owner's name: Decatur Woman's Club.

The W. H. Linn Residence  
The Splendid Residence Which The Merchant Will Occupy Today  
From the Decatur Morning Herald of June, 1889

W. H. Linn and family will occupy their new brick residence on West Main Street today. The great house is at last completed, furnished in every detail and ready for the occupants. It is remarkable in its architecture, in its finish throughout, in its ornamentation, and its completeness in every detail. It will be a source of pride to all the workmen who had a hand in its construction and its finishings, and it cannot fail to satisfy Mr. Linn and his family.

From the front the great house has the appearance of a castle. The tower at the southwest corner, the massive brick and brownstone porch, the slope of the roofs, and the massive veranda on the east, give one the impression of a castle. The house is of red pressed brick, laid in red mortar, with brownstone trimmings. Entering the front, between massive pillars of brownstone, you go through the vestibule with its tile floor, to the hall. The front doors are of oak, handsomely carved and finished in antique oak. The cathedral glass panels are very beautiful. The great hall is ten feet wide. To the right is the parlor and behind it the staircase hall. To the left is the morning room, and back of it is Mrs. Linn's bedchamber with bathroom in the rear. Behind the great staircase is the large dining room. The kitchen, pantries, storeroom, and the rear hall are still farther back. On the second floor to the west and in front are the apartments to be occupied by W. H. Linn, with bathroom attached. On the east side is a room for W. S. Grubbs. Over the dining room is the room for Linn Blackstone. Back of the rear hall are two good sized rooms to be occupied by the two domestics who have been in the family for years. A stairway leads to the third floor and there is ample space there for six large rooms but only the room in the tower has been finished.

The great hall below has its woodwork all in oak, finished in antique style. The wainscoating has plain but handsome panels, and above it to the border of the ceiling reaches lincrusta paper in corresponding design and of a like finish. The massive front doors carved in elegant fashion, and the cathedral glass panels are very beautiful. There are two rows of oak woodwork across the ceiling at points even with the staircase hall, and while these are apparently for support, their real effect in ornamentation is very noteworthy. The staircase hall leads out to the veranda on the east and the antique oak door is a handsome piece of work. The staircase from the newell post to the top is beautiful. There is one landing. The steps are of oak, and the balustrade as a whole is such a handsome combination that it takes the eye at once. The ceiling has a pretty ingrain paper, with just enough relief work to give a most pleasing effect. There is a splendid Wilton carpet on the halls and stairway.

The parlor is a magnificent apartment. It is twenty-six feet long. The large circular window in front has cathedral glass on the sides, so that the square inscribed inside the circle is one heavy plate glass. It is flanked on either side on the west and east fronts with windows of ordinary size. The woodwork is all cherry with antique finish. The mantel frame is of the same wood. Two Corinthian columns support it. A part of the front and the floor before the grate is of English tile. A beautiful bevel plate glass mirror is above it. The paper on the walls of this room is hand pressed paper. It is all relief work. There is a magnificent Wilton carpet with quiet tints of color on the floor. The ceiling is covered with an ingrain paper, with relief work here and there. The woodwork about the windows and doors is handsomely carved.

The morning room has a circular front with three windows, each containing curved glass panes. The woodwork is cherry with antique finish. The sliding doors connecting it with Mrs. Linn's apartment are also of cherry. The wood on the mantel is of the same material, the mirror above is bevelled plate glass, and the mantel below is in colonial style. The floor has a covering of heavy body Brussels of a neat pattern.

The dining room has a large elevated window to the north, surrounded by cathedral glass transoms, giving a pretty effect. It is a spacious apartment. The woodwork is oak with the same handsome finish. The ingrain papering of the walls is so arranged and ornamented that it gives one the impression of fine fresco work. The floor is covered with a handsome pattern of a body Brussels carpet.

William W. Linn's apartments are on the second floor on the west side of the hall. The room in front has octagonal finish and three windows. The woodwork and the mantel and sliding doors are of cherry in antique finish. To the rear is a bathroom supplied with an instantaneous heater and other conveniences. No expense has been spared in the decoration of the walls. No furniture has been placed in the room, it being the design of Mr. Linn to leave that entirely to his son's direction.

Across the hall the room designed for Mr. Grubbs is finished in cherry, well appointed in every way, provided with a mantel. The carpet is of body Brussels.

The hall on the second floor is pine in the natural color of the wood. The woodwork is made to correspond in a general way with that in the hall below. It is large, airy, well lighted, and perfect in finishing.

The room for Linn Blackstone is in general style like those on the second floor.

The two rooms for the domestics are complete in their way, and supplied with steam heating.

In many respects the house is uniformly furnished. All the rooms are steamheated, the steam coils all being bronzed in handsome style, and surmounted by Tennessee marble caps. With the exception of the rooms for the domestics, all the apartments have a southern exposure, and all have mantels and grates in colonial style. All the rooms are furnished with very beautiful chandeliers which may be used either for gas or incandescent lighting. The gas burners may be lighted electrically by merely touching buttons some distance away. All the incandescent lighting will be likewise under control from one station. One remarkable feature of the house is the excellence of its painting. All of the woodwork in the interior has a finish as complete as that we see on the finest furniture. All of the windows are of French plate glass. The rooms are extraordinarily large and there is ample room everywhere. The ventilation is perfect and the house is complete in all particulars.

The preceding article from a Decatur Herald of June, 1889 is included, courtesy of Mrs. Grace Middlesworth, a member of the Decatur Woman's Club.  
June 20, 1974.

## A PAGE FROM YESTERYEAR

# DECATUR WOMEN'S CLUB HAS LONG HISTORY OF SOCIAL ACTIVITY

By James M. Dedman

Women have always been great "joiners," probably even more so than men. Man's daily work throws him more in contact with other men, so women in the past resorted to things like "quilting bees" and usually found some means of getting together.

In the early days of the rapidly growing city of Decatur, it was natural that women should form a club, so on May 31, 1887, 150 women gathered at the chapel of the First Baptist Church, then on the southeast corner of Water and William streets, to form the Decatur Women's Club. These 150 women became charter members of the club, which is one of the oldest women's clubs in the state outside of Chicago.

The Decatur Women's Club was the outgrowth of an earlier Sorosis Club, which itself grew out of the Hillside Club, a group of women who lived on E. Eldorado in the vicinity of Jackson St.

Mrs. Mary Haworth, the first president of the club, is credited with being its founder. Other officers elected at that time were Mrs. M.M.M. Randall, vice president; Mrs. James M. Johns, secretary, and Mrs. Carrie Gastman, treasurer.

The motto adopted at that time was "Truth, Justice, and Honor." The object of the

club read: "The object of the Decatur Women's Club is to form an organized center by means of which we may secure the best practical methods for the promotion of the educational, industrial and social interests of women." Their emblem was a four leaf clover and the club color was yellow.

The Decatur group became charter members of the General Federation of Women's Clubs in 1891 and of the State Federation in 1895. They did not become incorporated until 1913.

The club met in various places for several years until finally several of the women formed a stock company, under the leadership of Laura Wikoff (Pahmyer), and erected the building that is still standing at the northwest corner of North Park and North Franklin streets in 1889. The club used part of the building and rented the balance to business concerns.

This was the first building erected by women for the use of a women's club in the United States. They used the building from 1890 to 1909, though they sold the building in 1904, because it became unprofitable to operate.

In 1909, they moved to the YWCA and were there for several years. Later, they moved to the Powers Building, on the corner of S. Main and E. Main streets. Later they moved again to the Congregational Church.

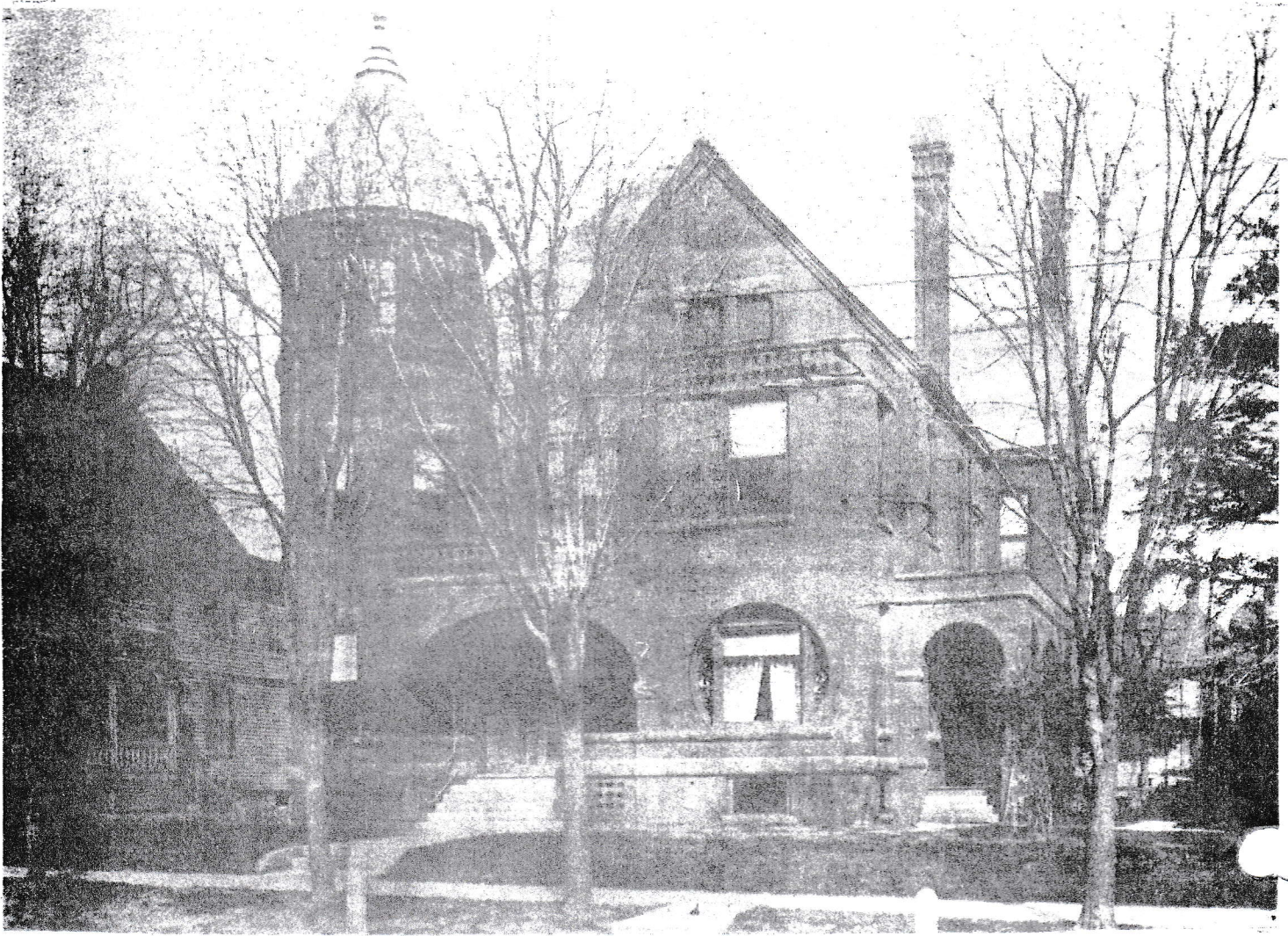
In 1928, the club bought the Dawson & Wikoff Funeral Home building at 308 W. Main St. for \$21,000. This had been originally the home built by W.H. Linn, one of the founders of Linn & Scruggs, in 1888. Dawson & Wikoff secured the building from Mrs. M.A. DeForest, a daughter of W.W. Linn, son of the founder of Linn & Scruggs, in 1922.

Today, the club has three divisions, Civic, Fine Art and the General Club. Years ago it had a number of divisions, such as, Art and Literature, Psalemas, Sorosis, Shakespeare, Child Study and Musical.

Over the years the club has sponsored many things such as educational courses and lectures, sewing classes for girls (in the days when the schools didn't think much of sewing as a course), and had many regular study meetings. They have done a lot of civic and charitable work in the community. They took over the selling of the first Red Cross seals.

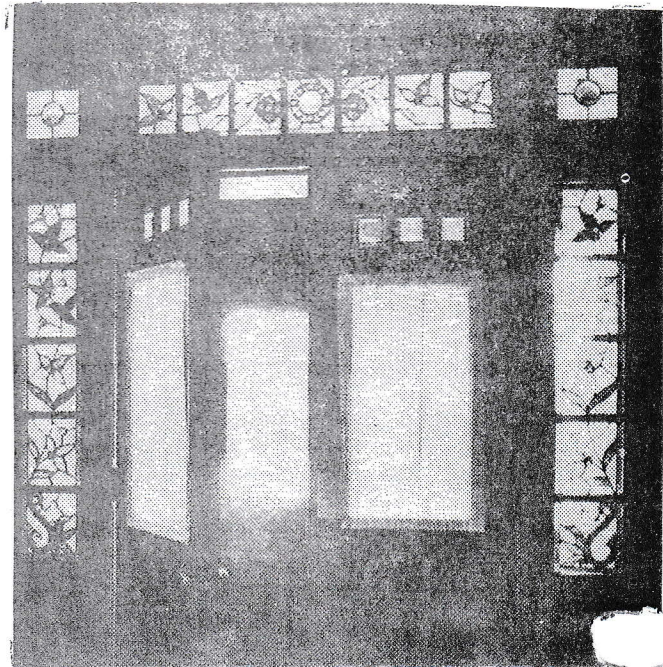
Today, they give three scholarships, one for music, one for art, and one for conservation to worthy students each year.

Their home on W. Main St. is a well-preserved house of some of Decatur's bygone grandeur. The present club membership is about 140 women.



Home of W.W. Linn in 1896, before it became the Decatur Women's Club, Inc. clubrooms.

*Decatur Tribune* 11/10/71



2/15/70

*Sunday Herald and Review*

The brick building at 308 W. Main St. originally belonged to W. H. Linn, one of the founders of Linn & Scruggs Co. In 1927, it was purchased by the Decatur Woman's

Club is like a comfortable home to its approximately 150 members, says Mrs. Roger B. Harris, the president of the

Squares of original colored glass decorate the main entrance of the headquarters, which introduces the solid oak hall area where the table with lamp, vase and mirror are