

Van Frank House

Van Frank House — 337 Chestnut — 1881 — Eastlake — architect unknown

The warmth and charm of butternut woodwork is nowhere found in more abundance or stated as more a major interior component than in Quincy. Of the many treatments given butternut trim by the mills, from stark austerity to carpenter's lace, none suits the subtle beauty of this wood so much as lightly applied Eastlake ornamentation, such as found in the Van Frank house.

Upon entering the house one finds the characteristic stoutness of the turnings of the period in the balustrade. The front door is a laminated oak exterior to butternut interior. Unusual in this house is the fact that Van Frank had butternut used throughout the house instead of just on the first floor, as was most often the case. Even in the second floor rear maid's quarters, where the wood trim is pine, the doors are butternut. In addition, the cast hinges are the same throughout the house. Inset black walnut rosettes punctuate the simple butternut trimming in the parlor and dining room. The lovely fireplaces are all different; the dining room mantel has a hidden shelf. The only stained glass in the house is in the transom for the parlor window.

A most liveable second floor apartment was accomplished with only minimal alteration: the shutting off of a rear hall with a small wall. The original master bedroom and dressing room now serve as living room/bedroom in a most charming way, a delightful one as to the versatility of the original design floor plan and trimming of the rooms. Of special interest are the slanted portions of the upper walls as they meet the ceiling.

On the first floor, rear of the kitchen, is the den/study of James Hainig and his wife, Michalea Moore, owners of the house. This was originally the summer kitchen. Just outside and to the rear of this room is a most unusual attached "necessary house," suitable for double occupancy. The carriage house is original.

One of the finest "family living" floor plans we've seen, the house reflects the interest and needs of its builder, Carnahan D. Van Frank, operator of the large and important Gen City Ice Company on Front Street. A vital business in its day, the ice company also sold fresh local fish and oysters, when the packet boats brought them from the south or when the trains brought them from the east.

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