

Morgan—Wells House

Morgan—Wells House — 421 Jersey — 1860 — Italianate

The house we now refer to by the above-mentioned name should more properly be called the Norwood-Morgan-Wells House, and here's why: J. E. Norwood, a pork packer, built the original rear section of the house (what would now be the north wing) in approximately 1853. He then sold the property to Edward Wells from Boston, who had come to Quincy to engage in the cooperage business. Well's built the Italianate structure which is now the principle portion of the house. His partner in the cooperage, James D. Morgan and his family also lived in the house.

Wells died in 1892, having been active in civic affairs and an avid Unionist during the Civil War. Morgan died in 1896 with a similar local record and also having served in the Quincy Grays Rifle Militia during the War.

Following Morgan's death both families moved and the house passed into the hands of Lorenzo Bull, prominent banker. In 1901, Bull deeded the house to Cheerful Home Association for use as a settlement house. The gymnasium adjoining the rear of the house was constructed at this time.

The Young Women's Christian Association purchased the property in 1933 and has used it as a base of operations ever since. During the adaptive re-use of the house by the two social agencies many room rehabilitations have been done, and modernizations, but several rooms remain essentially unchanged. The east parlor, sitting room and bedroom above the west parlor remain original. All original compound molded door and window trim have pedimented lintels and are pine. Only original wood which is not pine is the mahogany stairway balustrade.

In the east and west parlors are Italian marble mantels, the east deeply carved elaborate fruit and vine and the west in regency border patterns. The east parlor and library ceilings feature deep plaster medallions from which chandelliers were suspended. The east bay of the library, plus the bookcases appear to have been added in the late 1870's or early 1880's. The mantel in the library is slate. Windows on the first floor facade are floor length, on the second floor nearly floor length.

Quincy can be proud of the YWCA for the adaptive re-use and year-after-year reason for this valuable house to look forward to a long and useful future.

Quincy Preserves!

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