

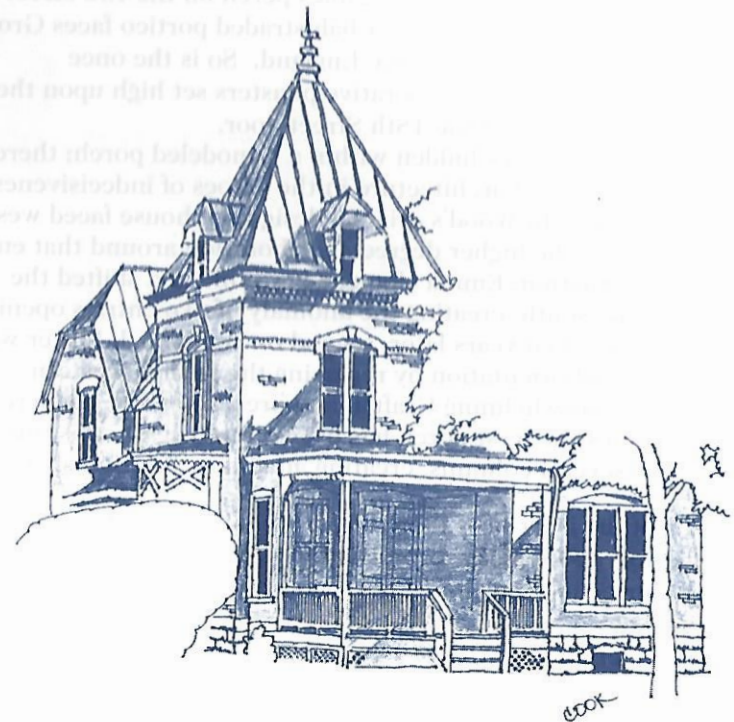
J. Seymour Castle graduated from Knox College in 1870, the same year that D. L. Musselman bought Gem City Business College. He was aiming for a career in law, but failing hearing led him back to his father's foundry and stove manufacturing business. On T. H. Castle's retirement in 1877, Seymour took over and immediately put up this house. It combines several of the styles popular in the late 1870s. The massive corner tower and pierced vergeboard suggest a Gothic Villa, the stone window hoods are a variant of the Italianate Style, and nearly all of the wood detailing is in the Stick Style. High style, though no one style in particular, even finds its way to the basement, with its prominently arched windows. The only period style not present is the Queen Anne, which had not yet come to Quincy and whose early examples were in fact part of a movement (which it would soon betray) to simplify architectural form.

The Stick Style features of the design are particularly worth noting, as they occur in unusual abundance for a masonry house. The front gable is supported by simple, heavy brackets and terminates in a false truss. Around to the west, similar brackets support an abbreviated porte cochere, while the kitchen porch to the northeast attaches the brackets to heavy posts. Even the paneling above the western bay is in the Stick Style, for its central feature is a heavy cross-bar.

The Maine Street entry is through heavily molded, ornately sawn twin leaf doors. The tiny vestibule originally yielded only to the parlor at the right; it has since been opened up into the sitting room and a tiny bric-a-brac or plant niche. Behind the parlor is a dining room which is almost its mirror image. Both have butternut woodwork, now painted except for the sliding doors that divide them. The sitting room to the west is finished in quarter-sawn oak with a mildly parqueted floor.

The stair hall is surprisingly placed off of the porte cochere rather than the front entry. It divides the sitting room from a small music room at the rear. The latter is particularly interesting for its gum and walnut floor and nearly octagonal shape, achieved by putting a fireplace, closets and a bathroom into its corners. There is an identical fireplace in the sitting room.

Originally, the staircase wound three quarters of a turn; this has been straightened to half a turn, with entries into the rear bedrooms modified accordingly. The rear bedrooms are also two steps below those in the front, the natural consequence of lower ceilings in the first floor service area of the house. The most intriguing feature of the house is the single finished third floor room. Occupying the tower, it can only be entered by walking through the unfinished attic.



J. Seymour and Carrie Castle House
1877 Maine
Eclectic, 1877
architect unknown

current owners: Chuck and Sue Mahon

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS
OCTOBER 15, 1994