

Cramer House

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Cramer House - 332 Elm - 1868 - Italianate

In the spring of 1868 there were many who scoffed at the idea that the government would put a tax on whiskey. They said "It's agin the law, the people won't stand for it". For more than fifty years the making of whiskey had been free and there were thousands of persons who thought that the right to make whiskey was the same as the right to make bread. "Corn pone for the skillet and corn juice for the still" was the cry of the times.

The argument for twenty-five cent whiskey was the inalienable right of the populace to get drunk in its own sweet way; and the working men were up in arms saying they had the right to buy a pint of whiskey for a dime.

The partners operating the Cedar Creek Distillery, who were Wm. C. Cramer and Ludwig Fries, staked their entire worth that the government would pass the tax. So to escape it the partners made all the whiskey they could, double-shift, storing whiskey all over the town in whatever buildings they could rent for storage, cellars, attics, etc., even mortgaging his wife's cookstove to produce more stock. Finally the pair owned thousands of barrels and July 1 the government declared \$1.25 per gallon tax on all whiskey produced after that date. Each man made about \$75,000 extra on the gamble.

Both decided that a portion of their new found wealth should go into new homes, and so they bought back-to-back lots on Vine Street (now College) and Elm Streets on the west side of Fourth Street. Glimpses of the Mississippi can be seen from the two high-banked lots. The Italianate, rather austere home on Elm was built by Cramer and his family with a semi-circular drive at the rear of the lot running between the carriage house and the rear of the home. The carriage house remains as an apartment.

The spacious parlors of the first floor and the dining room have original pine filled and painted woodwork, had 12-foot ceilings which were originally stencilled. The only woodwork which varies in the house is the original walnut stairway bannister.

A shallow Italianate, the main house has two rear wings for dining room, kitchen, summer kitchen-laundry, and upstairs servants quarters. The pride of north Quincy is maintained in the lovely landscaped lot and neat external appearance of the Cramer House.

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