

SAMUEL B. CLEMENS HOUSE
African-American Historic District
724 S. Center St.
Springfield
Clark County
Ohio

HABS No. OH-2424

HABS
OHIO
12-SPRIF,
8-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Great Lakes Systems Office
Department of the Interior
1709 Jackson St.
Omaha, Nebraska 68102

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SAMUEL B. CLEMENS HOUSE HABS No. OH-2424

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8-

Location: 724 S. Center St., Springfield, Clark County, Ohio

Significance: The building is a representative example of late 19th century residential architecture that survives with its basic form and many features intact. It is also notable for its association with Samuel Clemens, who was featured prominently in the city directory of 1883 in reference to his Dry Air Refrigerator. Without this reference, the house would appear to be a working class dwelling.

Description: This is a simple two-story residence that rests on a limestone foundation, is of balloon frame construction, has a shiplap-siding exterior and is capped by a front-facing gable roof. The house has a simple full-width front porch with a shallow-pitched hipped roof that is supported by wood corner posts. Windows are generally symmetrically arranged on the exterior. The building shows no major signs of alteration. The house has a curious open rear wing addition, which may have served as fuel storage. It has larger drop siding, indicating it was probably added. It is an example of late 19th century vernacular frame housing stock in the city.

History: This building, whose original address was 316 S. Center St., was connected to city water lines in 1883, with Ralph P. Willis and John S. Willis serving as the plumbing contractors. Willis & Sons Plumbers was located at 10 S. High Street and Ralph Willis lived at 143 S. Mechanic. S. B. Clemens was listed in the 1883 city directory at this address, with his name in boldface type. He was listed as the manufacturer of the Dry Air Refrigerator, patented November 20, 1880. An illustration of this appliance appeared in the city directory for that year. Eva S. Clemens, presumably his wife, was also listed at this address. The business address for Mr. Clemens was listed at 22 West Jefferson. According to Ellen Hoover, this house dates from 1874.

From 1915-1932 this was the residence of Leslie and Maude Hamilton. Mr. Hamilton operated a second hand store at 43 West Washington in 1915. From 1933-56 it was listed as the home of Maude Hamilton, widow. From 1958-94 it was home to Mildred Brooks, widow.

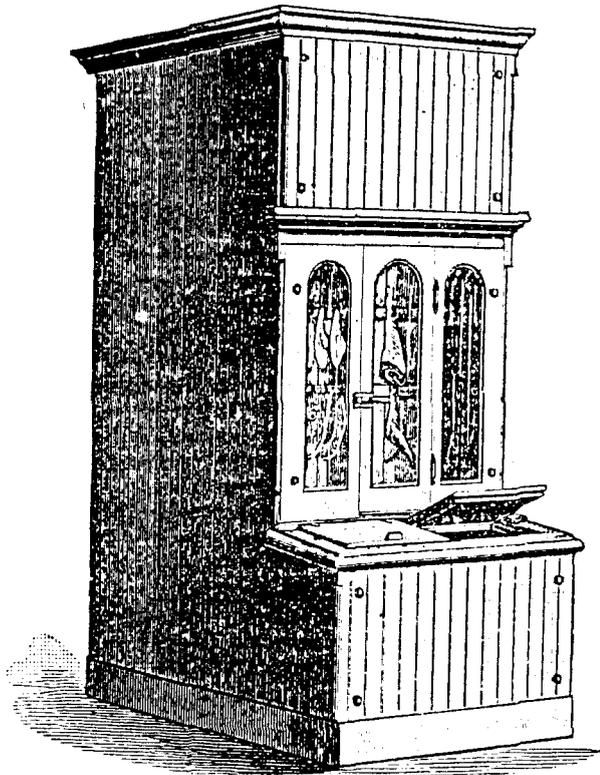
Sources: 1883, 1915 and later Springfield city directories, Springfield city water tap records (1883). Ohio Historic Inventory form, 3-82. The building stands within a proposed African-American Historic Preservation District, which has been determined as an area potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places by the Ohio State Historic Officer. Copies of information used to make this determination of eligibility for National Register status are at the Springfield Department of Planning and Development and the Ohio Historic Preservation Office.

Historian: Steven McQuillin, preservation consultant to the City of Springfield, 1997

SAMUEL B. CLEMENS HOUSE
HABS No. OH-2424, Page 2

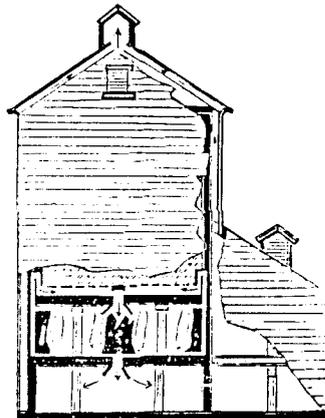
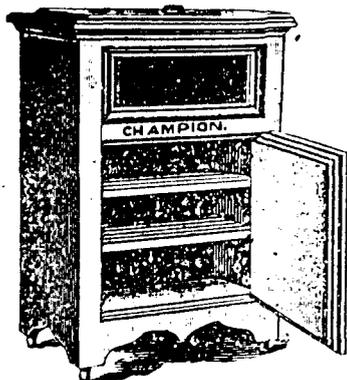
S. B. CLEMMENS' DRY AIR REFRIGERATOR

FOR DAILY MEAT MARKETS,
Hotels, Restaurants, and Grocers.



ESPECIALLY ADAPTED TO
KEEPING FRUIT of all kinds,
BUTTER, EGGS, POULTRY, &c.

Patented November 20, 1880.



22 W. Jefferson Street, SPRINGFIELD, O.

FROM 1883 SPRINGFIELD CITY DIRECTORY