

Catherine Zimmerman House

HABS No. OH-2425

240-42 Fair St.

African-American Historic District

Springfield

Clark County

Ohio

HABS
OHIO
12-SPRIE,
40-

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

MRS. CATHERINE ZIMMERMAN HOUSE

HABS No. OH-2425

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12-SPRIF,
40-

Location: 240-42 Fair Street, Springfield, Clark County, Ohio

Significance: The Zimmerman House is one of the neighborhood's oldest buildings, judging from its form, materials and styling. It is also notable as being a somewhat rare example of brick residential architecture in this part of the city, where most houses are of balloon frame construction. The house also displays its growth over the years as a vernacular combination of various wings. It is also somewhat unusual that the window spacing on the front elevation is divided into two distinct groupings.

Description: This house, set close to the street, rests on a foundation of rubble rock-faced limestone. A dressed stone water table shows on the front elevation only. From this foundation, massive walls of common bond brick rise to the top of the second floor. These brick surfaces have been painted. The off-center doorway is part of a cluster of more closely spaced openings on the west half of the front elevation. The windows on the north half are more widely spaced. The building has a full-width rear wing with a massive hipped roof that extends up above the lateral gable roof of the front section, featuring a small attic window facing the street. It appears as though this rear wing may have been lower in height. It has a continuous foundation with the front section, suggesting that its lower portion, at least, is original. A one-story frame lean-to rear wing seems like an addition. Chimneys accent the center of each end of the lateral gable roof and two more chimneys are near each of the rear corners of the hipped roof two-story section. A fifth chimney is near the center of the west end of the one-story lean-to rear wing. A shed-roof rear porch adjoins this rear wing and shelters two rear entrances. An aluminum awning shelters an east side porch, which also contains a doorway. A small aluminum overhang is atop the front door. A set of masonry steps leads down to the east from the front door. The windows have been altered in recent years and made shorter within their original masonry openings.

History: Mrs. Catherine (or K. as it appears on the water tap permit) Zimmerman had this house connected to city water lines in 1885. Desormoux & Sons of 70 South Market Street, were the plumbing contractors. Her name appeared in the 1887-88 city directory as the widow of Henry Zimmerman. He was listed in the 1882-83 directory as a machinist. Henry L. Zimmerman, who worked as a machine hand, lived at 171 Fair in 1887-88, as documented in the directory. He was perhaps a son of Mrs. Zimmerman. He lived down the street from here.

The house appears to date from the Civil War period and is one of the older houses in the neighborhood. It also is one of the few brick houses in this area. It is possible that the rear wing and hipped roof addition date from the time the water lines were installed.

CATHERINE ZIMMERMAN HOUSE, page 2
HABS No. OH-2425

By 1915 this was the residence of Osborne and Nancy Cole. He worked as a baggageman. The next year, Cora Cole, a dressmaker, lived here. Perhaps she was a daughter of the earlier Coles. It has had a series of owners over the years. From 1933-49 it was home to William and Alice Strader. The house was used as a duplex for some time, from about 1910 onward. It was a single-family residence throughout the 19th century.

Sources: 1882-83, 1887-88, 1915 and later Springfield city directories, Springfield city water tap records (1883). 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