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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The McCoy Memorial Library stands prominently on the southwest corner of the public square in McLeansboro, Illinois. The building is two and one half stories, red brick on a high rusticated stone foundation. The mansard roof contains heavily ornamented gable dormers and is topped with decorative iron cresting. The house boasts a three and one half story central tower in a plan corner. The tower is terminated with a pyramidal cap with a double windowed gable on each side. All detailing on the house is heavily scaled Eastlake Style. Windows are elongated double hung sash, topped with decorative flat window hoods. The front facade contains a three bay entry porch with a railing across the top. A large semi-circular bay bellies cut from the front facade, also topped with a railing. Five of the original seven chimneys remain; one fell in an earthquake and another was damaged and finally removed. Six attic windows have been bricked in, three on west side of building, one on south, and two on north. Other than these minor alterations the house is in excellent condition.

The plan is not unlike other large houses in Illinois of the 1870's with a parlor and drawing room on either side of the entrance, a stair hall opposing a library in the center and the dining room and kitchen at the far end of the hall. This first floor has been used as a library since 1922. The second floor, reached by a modern stairway and entrance on the south side, was after 1922 used as offices and is currently being restored for use as museum and historical and geneological library. The original, elaborately carved grand staircase located at the mid-point of the floorplan serves as an auxiliary route to the second floor.

The house contains nine fireplaces, four on the main floor and five on the second floor. Fach is uniquely crafted from a different wood or marble and decorative tile. The parlor fireplace is birds eye maple with inlaid tile featuring a scene with exctic birds and an extensively ornamentated overmantel.

The library fireplace is black walnut with decorative tiles depicting historical events. The fireplace in the dining room is the most unusual with a split flue surrounding a window. The mantel and decorative over mantel surrounding the window is chestnut. Other fireplace mantels are made from red cherry, mahogany, quartersawn oak and white marble, most with decorate tile surrounding the firebox. Fireplaces on the second floor are not as elaborate as those on the first floor, yet still are quite heautiful.



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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This impressive structure was constructed in 1884 by Aaron G. Cloud as a family residence. Mr. Cloud was a banker and was also responsible for the 1882 construction of the Cloud State Bank, a Second Empire gem immediately north of the house. Architects for the house were the Reid Brothers of Evansville, Indiana and the contractor was R.A. Stanley.

The structure is far from stylistically pure but instead is significant for its provincial colecticism. The house combines elements of Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anno and Eastlake. The exterior Hastlake detailing is outstanding as is the interior Queen Anno detailing. Few examples of this scale, quality, and integrity exist in Hamilton County and in Illinois.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

History of Gallatin, Saline, Hamilton, Franklin, and Williamson Counties, 1887, pg.685.

Cloud Manuscripts - Construction Day Book

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