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Property Information

## Heirloom Home



**214 Stillwater Ave W**



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### *He Was in Hot Water*

In December of 1877, a 22-year-old Prussian-born machinist named August Jesse purchased two lots on the northwest edge of the city in Wilkin's Addition. The following year, he married Anna Jordel, and by June of 1880 they were comfortably ensconced in their new \$550 home at 214 West Stillwater Avenue. August apprenticed with David Swain, a well known Stillwater foundry man who crafted engines for the steamboats. After learning the trade, August established his own Stillwater Foundry and Machine Shop on Fourth and Olive Streets.

Around 1900, as the Jesse family grew to include five children plus Anna's father, the household moved to another home on the south hill closer to the foundry.

August worked at his business until he was in his early 80s. Besides his own business, he also served as a state boiler inspector under Governor John A. Johnson. After retiring, August lived on for another decade, before dying in 1946 at age 90.

The smallish house at 214 West Stillwater Avenue is quite unusual in Stillwater because it is a broadside. Instead of the narrow gable end with the second story windows facing the street which is typical in a city setting with its narrow lots, this house faces the street with its broader side, and there are no second floor windows facing the street. This type of house has a central front door with windows symmetrically placed on either side. Usually when you enter the house, you encounter a room on both the left and right side, and often the stairway to the second floor will be in line with the front door. From the old maps, we can see that when the house was built, it had a one-story addition on the rear which served as the kitchen. Like all houses of this period heated by stoves, there are two chimneys: one on a central wall to heat the front rooms, and one at the rear of the kitchen to serve the kitchen stove.

To the west of the house is a picturesque old shed (once a chicken coop) with a satellite dish mounted on it, providing a house that is over 125 years old with the latest technology. The current owners, Don and Emily Greeley, have been improving the house and maintaining its historic character since 1984.

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**Source(s):** Building date and value is from the original annual tax assessors' rolls, 1878-1880 (on microfilm in the St. Croix Collection, Stillwater Public Library). Book 1 of Deeds, page 621 describes the purchase of the property. Both the 1880 and 1900 U.S. census show the family's growth. The 1879 Bird's Eye View Map of Stillwater shows the original form of the house. The 1924 Sanborn Insurance atlas gives

a footprint of the house at that time. The 1884 and 1887 Stillwater City Directories list August living in this house. August's obituary is in the Stillwater Evening Gazette, February 25, 1946.

**Washington County Parcel Identification Number (PIN):** 2103020340087

**Common Property Name:** Jesse, August & Anna

**State Historic Preservation Office Inventory Number:** [WA-SWC-1712](#)

**Construction Date:** [1879](#)

**Builder:** \_

**Architect:** \_

**Architectural Style:** [Broadside](#)

**Property information and narrative was compiled by:** Donald Empson, Empson Archives - 12/27/2008

