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Property Information

Heirloom Home



811 Pine St W

Architect Designed?

For all the many old distinguished old houses in Stillwater, there are very few that were designed by architects--or at least, very few that are known to have been designed by architects. This house was built in 1886 for William and Nora Long, and according to a building permit application, it was designed by the Orff Brothers (Fremont and George) of Minneapolis. The Orffs were notable architects of the period, and there are several mentions of them in the Twin Cities architectural history books. One of the brothers, under the firm name, Orff and Joralemon, designed Stillwater's Nelson School in 1897, which remains today as condominiums at 1018 South First Street.

(The curious thing about this house is that the two houses to the east of it, 801 and 717 West Pine Street are almost identical. In fact, the three houses are called the Three Sisters and appear to be a standard pattern book house. One would think the architect would make each house distinctive.)

The contractor building the Long's house was listed in the building permit application as August Jackson, who lived at 814 South Third Street. The 1887 tax assessor's records list the house and property as having a value of \$3,150--a substantial amount of money in those days.

William Long first appears in the 1860 U. S. Census of Stillwater. He is recorded as an 18-year-old laborer, living with his parents, Pierce and Ellen Long, and seven siblings.

According to the 1870 U. S. Census, William, age 28, a lumberman, is living in Stillwater Township with his mother, Ellen, age 57; his wife, Nora, age 24; his sister, Bridget, age 19, a school teacher; a brother, Andrew, age 17, a lumberman; a brother, Perry, age 13, who is attending school; a brother, Michael, age 10; and a daughter, Ellen (Nellie), age 1. The older members of the family were all born in New Brunswick; Nora, William's wife, was born in Ireland.

By 1880, William had formed a lumber business partnership with John G. Nelson, a prominent lumberman in the St. Croix Valley. Moreover, it was probably to his business advantage that William's wife, Nora, whom he married in 1869, was a member of the Kilty family, a prolific Stillwater family, which has descendants in Stillwater even today.

The business must have gone well, for in 1880, William has his own household on Myrtle Street with five children: Nellie, age 11; George, age 8; Mary, age 6; Elizabeth, age 3; and Charles, age 1. There is also a boarder living with the family, Maggie Kilty, age 18. These would have been the family members who moved into the new house at 811 West Pine six years later.

By the time the U.S. Census for 1900 was taken, the household at 811 had diminished considerably. Nora was listed as the head of the household; living with her were her daughters, Mary, age 23, a stenographer; and Agnes, age 18, a student. The census record also notes that Nora had 9 children, of whom 6 are still living. William's location was unrecorded.

By 1910, the U.S. Census lists William Campbell, age 43 and the manager of a shoe factory, as living in the house along with his wife, Nellie, age 41 (William's daughter?). Also living with them are William's father and mother: William, Sr. and Sarah Jane, and Therese Fischer. Joining them are William Long, Nora, and their daughter, Mary, a stenographer in a law office.

After 1910, the Long family moved West and to Alaska, where William pursued his mining interests. In January, 1913, William was returned to Stillwater and placed in the City Hospital. A few months later, he was moved to the Soldier's Home in Minneapolis where he died January 28, 1914.

The new occupants of the home at 811 West Pine were Charles W. Morton, born in Lawler, Iowa, in 1879. In 1901, Charles married Iva Huber of Ellsworth, Wisconsin. In 1917, the family moved to Stillwater where Charles was a Vice-President and a Director of the Consolidated Lumber Company. The Mortons had two daughters, Mary and Maureen, who were raised in the home.

The 1930 U.S. Census lists the value of the house at \$10,000, a very large sum in the time of the Great Depression. Charles and Iva are living in the house along with their daughter, Mary, age 22, a private nurse; and Maureen, age 20, unemployed. Also living at that address was Alice Murdock, age 65, paying \$40 a month in rent, and with Alice, Margaret [illegible last name], a 23-year-old boarder, who was a public school teacher.

Charles Morton lived in this house until his death on October 2, 1940.

During his tenure, Morton made several changes to the house. In July and August of 1918, he converted the barn into a duplex at a cost of \$2,000. He spent another \$1,500 on the house itself installing new floors and altering the porches.

This house is representative of a number of Stick Style houses built in Stillwater in the late 1880s. The steeply pitched cross gable roofs, the decorative truss at the apex of the front gable, the horizontal and vertical bands raised from the wall for emphasis, and an open front porch with spindle work are all characteristics of the Stick Style.

Source(s): Date and value is from the original annual tax assessors' rolls, 1885-1887 (on microfilm in the St. Croix Collection, Stillwater Public Library); there is also a Stillwater building permit application #75 for building a barn on the property and I have assumed the same builder and architect designed and built the house. The U.S. Census from 1860-1930 supplied much of the information about the inhabitants of the house. There are three other building permit applications: # 2196 (garage), # 1696 and #1694. Morton's obituary is in the Stillwater Daily Gazette, October 3, 1940. There is a mention of Nora Kilty in Easton: History of the St. Croix Valley, page 300.

Washington County Parcel Identification Number (PIN): 2803020340062

Common Property Name: Long, William and Nora

State Historic Preservation Office Inventory Number: [WA-SWC-1717](#)

Construction Date: [1886](#)

Builder: [August Jackson](#)

Architect: [Orff Brothers?](#)

Architectural Style: [Stick](#)

Property information and narrative was compiled by: Donald Empson, Empson Archives - 1/2/2009

