

Ed Cable and the Cable House



The house at 212 West Cass St., Bangor, MI, has a unique history. It was built sometime in the early 1870's and at one time was owned by one of Bangor's more interesting citizens, Ed Cable. A barber by trade, Mr. Cable came to this community in the early 1870's and became the first successful African-American businessman in town. He was highly respected and served his trade for almost 60 years. Shortly before 1910, an inappropriate racial comment was printed in the Bangor Advance newspaper. Mr. Cable responded and let his thoughts be known, at a time in history when African-Americans were usually afraid to comment on such matters. His letter to the editor was printed in the following week's edition of the local newspaper.

Mr. Cable reportedly came into a rather large sum of money about 1883, by receiving a commission from a lucky lottery ticket sold to the future president of the local bank. He then purchased his house on Cass St. from his business partner for the sum of \$550. In 1885 at the age of 32, he married Anna DeNoon, a white woman ten years his junior. The community response to their interracial marriage is not known, however, there is no evidence of any controversy.

The Cable Barbershop moved several times during nearly 60 years of service. In the Cable house there was a room set aside for people to come for haircuts by appointment. There are people still living that can testify to the quality and skill of this master barber at his residence. Mr. Cable retired in 1932, and died in 1939. Mrs. Cable continued to live in the house until her death in 1948.

The house appears to be two homes put together- a common practice when the family enlarged. The front of the house is Italian ornate (Italianate) and the rear is Greek Orthodox..

After Mrs. Cable's death, the house was sold and eventually was assigned to the State of Michigan due to delinquent taxes. In the early 1980's the house was given by the State to the City of Bangor, after members of the local Arts & Crafts Council expressed an interest in restoring the building as a museum and meeting hall. The Cable House Restoration Committee was created and several fund drives were formed. A little over \$10,000 was donated towards the project.

The restoration of the house included almost the entire exterior. New windows were replaced, patterned after the originals, and the house was painted. The foundation was rebuilt. A new furnace and air conditioner were installed and some internal electrical work was completed. Some old plaster was removed from the walls on the inside and one room has been drywalled. Work has been done stripping woodwork around the doorways. The roof was reshingled, although the original roofing were shakes. Much of this work was done by volunteers.

It was determined that another \$20,000 would be needed to complete the job in the mid 1980's. At least two grants were applied for to finish the project, but were turned down. People were willing to volunteer work, but without funds the vision of a community museum and meeting place was fading.

The vision has been restored and is strong as we pass into the 21st century. There is great desire and need for this project to be resurrected. Bangor is a very racially diverse community. The people of Bangor would like the uniqueness of Ed Cable, as a respected man of color in a predominately white community, to be remembered as a legacy to the citizens of this town and state.