

THE CRAWFORD HOUSE
WYOMING, PENNSYLVANIA

H.A.B.S. No. Pa. 234

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Pennsylvania

Historic American Buildings Survey
Thomas H. Atherton, District Officer
306 Dame Bank Bldg., Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

HABS
PA
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THE CRAWFORD HOUSE
WYOMING, LUZERNE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

Owner Attorney James M. McQuade, Bennett Building, Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

Date of Erection Built in 1851.

Builder Dr. John Barclay Crawford

Present Condition Well preserved. Some departure from original appearance. Most of the flooring is original, modern door, Wing on the left has been remodelled, wing on right was either built at a later date or has been remodelled, an enclosed porch in this wing is modern.

Number of Stories Two and one-half.

Materials of Construction Stone foundations, exterior walls, frame and siding; interior walls, frame, lath and plaster. Roof is pitched and wood shingled. Flooring is white pine, random widths.

DW 10/17/40

THE CRAWFORD HOUSE
Wyoming, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania

The history of Wyoming Valley----civil, political, and military----has been written at various times, each succeeding writer adding a new chapter of annals, or treating his subject from a different viewpoint. Such history however, splendid as it is, is principally concerned with what has been accomplished by the people in a mass and takes little note of individuals, except those pre-eminent as leaders, and little interest of the homes in which they lived. Hence, it follows that it would be interesting as well as important, for us to devote some time to this particular phase of the History of Wyoming Valley.

In superficial areas, Wyoming, Pennsylvania is one of the largest boroughs in Luzerne County. It was chartered as a borough in June, 1835. Wyoming Avenue, on which the old Crawford House still stands, passes through the length of the borough. It is substantially the old road from Wilkes-Barre to Pittston, called the Wyoming Road, passing in front of the monument erected in tribute to the memory of the patriots who fell on the battlefield July 3, 1778. As soon as peace had been assured after the Revolution, settlers began to return and others to migrate there. New Troy was the name by which Wyoming was originally known.

The Crawford House was built in 1851 by Dr. John Barclay Crawford, physician and surgeon. He was born in Crawford, Orange County, New York in 1828. He was reared near Havana, Schuyler County, New York, where he received an academical education. His medical training being obtained at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York City.

In 1850, he began the practise of his chosen profession at Holly, Wayne County, New York. In 1851, he located at Wyoming and erected his home. He remained here, with the exception of three years during the Civil War, when he was surgeon of the fifty-second Pennsylvania Volunteers, until 1870, in which year he removed to Wilkes-Barre on North Franklin St. Dr. Crawford was the seventh president of the Luzerne County Medical Society which was established in March, 1861. He was also a member of the Pennsylvania State Medical Society and American Medical Association. He was consulting surgeon of Wilkes-Barre General Hospital Staff of which there were then only six members. There are now sixty-four. He served as President of the United States Pension Examining Board, and one term as Coroner of Luzerne County.

It is believed that Dr. Crawford did not attend medical school until he was at an advanced age. Before he began his practise he studied with an older doctor called his preceptor. This was often the case with some of our earlier physicians.

Rev. Abel Barker, subsequent owner of this house, was born in 1811, the son of William Barker, nephew of Benjamin Pierce, who was a captain in the Revolutionary Army, Major General in the War of 1812, Governor of New Hampshire, and father of Franklin Pierce, President of the United States. He was married to Phoebe Ann Brown, his second wife, shortly before moving to this house. Their daughter, Isabella was married to William Hancock in the Crawford House on September 25, 1873. Rev. Barker died here in 1886.

The following is from a letter written by Peter Ashelmanof, Plains, Pa., to Charles Linskill of Wyoming, Pa.: "He was born in Kingston and educated in the old Kingston Academy. At twenty-five years of age he joined Oneida Conference and became a member of Wyoming Conference upon its organization. During his pastorate at Honesdale, he was compelled to cease work for a time.

While living in Honesdale, Rev. Barker invented a mine pump, the right of which he sold for a large sum." This was patented in both England and America. "He was also the patentee of several other useful inventions. During the later years of his life he was employed as a special agent and overseer of train service on the Bloomsburg Division of the D.L. & W. R. R."

His pastoral record is as follows: 1836-Canaan; 1837-Pittston; 1838-Skinner's Eddy, Pa., 1840-1841, Newfield, Pa., 1842-Condon; 1843-1844, Binghamton, N.Y., 1845-1846, Honesdale, Pa., 1847-1853, Syracuse, N.Y. 1854, presiding elder of Honesdale District; 1856-1857, Carbondale, Pa.

The Crawford House, built of wood siding, has two stories and an attic. It is built square with a wing on either side. The wing on the right side of the house is two stories high; the wing on the left, one and one-half. There are four ionic columns with decorated caps, supporting the roof. Three double hung windows extend across the front of the second story. Two double hung windows extend across the front on first floor, with modern panels below windows. There is a large Colonial entrance on the right side of front porch with modern door. The flooring is white pine of random widths. Dining room floor is the only modern one.

The wing on the right has entrance door and windows on first floor. Two windows on second. Wing on left is used as Antique Shop. There is an entrance and one window. There are two ionic columns supporting the roof on both wings. The main roof is gabled and shingled. The porch roof on both wings is straight and flat and above the porch, the roof is gabled.

The right wing has been remodelled. A large window has been cut out and a small window at top of stairs has been placed, (see photographs). The right wing has an enclosed porch made of louvre shutters. This is modern. Rear elevation has two windows on first floor and two on second floor.

From the front entrance there is a reception hall with Colonial stairway leading to the second floor. Steps are narrow. Baluster is plain. The original newel is at the second floor landing. The one at first floor landing is plain, modern. To the left of the main hall is the large front parlor which is square in design. Hand hewn Pennsylvania walnut is used here and throughout the entire house. The fireplace is closed. There is a plain wood mantel. There are columns from mantel to floor on either side. Solid wood doors separate this parlor from the back parlor, which is oblong in shape. There is also a fireplace here which is closed and is similar to the one in the front parlor. There is only one window in this room. Originally, there were glass french doors which led to the lawn. There is now a door leading into the Antique Shop. The shop has been recently remodelled. This was formerly the study. From the shop is a door leading to a closed-in addition, which is modern.

A door leads from the back parlor to the dining room, which is square, in design. There is one large window facing the rear. The original kitchen leads off the dining room. There is a corner chimney cupboard with small opening leading to a secret "relic" cellar. This cellar has a flagstone ceiling which is at present grade level. The walls and floor are concrete. There is a passage-way six feet in length, leading from the main cellar but this was not in existence originally. Entrance was made through a trap door in the floor of the back porch. This is now closed. There was formerly a large open fireplace with plain mantel in the kitchen. A large coal range has been placed in the opening.

On the second floor, there are four bedrooms, a small sewing room and bath leading off the main hall. The bath is modern. From the bath is a door with original hardware, leading to a small gabled storage room with stairs to inside porch. The door to the third floor or main attic has the original hardware. The bath was probably at one time, a bedroom.

Author...

Approved...

Date...

Bette Paul Marrison
Thomas H. Alton
 April 7, 1938

Historic information received from following sources: "Hist. of Certified Township of Kingston", "History of Luzerne County"; "Hayden's History of Wyoming and Lackawanna Valleys", Luzerne County Medical Society; Dr. Delbert Barney; Wyoming Valley Historical Society and Mrs. J. Frank Smith, grand-daughter of Rev. Abel Barker.