



Darius B. Moon: The History of a Michigan Architect 1880-1910

James MacLean

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Darius Bartlett Moon was, in the truest sense, an embodiment of a Renaissance man. Born into an agricultural family in 1851, Moon left the farm and apprenticed as a carpenter. Eventually he attended classes at a local business school and began his career as an architect. In 19th century Michigan, an architect was not subject to the same requirements as they are today and many architects apprenticed under an established architectural firm to learn the trade. Darius Moon took a different path and became a self-taught architect. His years working as a carpenter and contractor enabled him to see firsthand the problems that poor architectural design could cause. Because Moon was self-taught, he was occasionally self-conscious about his abilities which lead him to be a demanding and ever present supervisor at construction sites. This is typically an uncommon role for an architect, and in Moons' day, resulted in several injuries at building sites. On February 8, 1877 Moon married the love of his life, Miss Ellen Sprague. They had four children who became the center of his world. Moon had a softer side not seen by the contractors with whom he worked, and also wrote on a daily basis, mostly poetry with a healthy dose of prose. Additionally, he engaged in property development and several business ventures. Moon's legacy includes several significant houses in Lansing and Michigan, many of which are still standing, including the Rogers Carrier home on the campus of Lansing Community College, the Woodbury home in East Lansing (now the Howland House, a student co-op), the Turner Dodge home and the Stebbins cottage overlooking Lake Michigan. There are also some that are lost to history including the Ransom E. Olds mansion, Henry Kositchek's house and the Homer D. Luce residence. SoloVerso Press is dedicated to the study and preservation of local history and culture.

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