

William Harrison Briggles House



In addition to being a mining camp where gambling and drinking occupied many a man's evening, Breckenridge also was a Victorian town where gentlemen and ladies socialized at each others' homes. One of the largest and best-appointed houses was owned by socialites William and Kathleen Briggles. In 1898, they bought a circa-1896 one-room log cabin and immediately enlarged it by six rooms downstairs and three rooms upstairs, and then clapboarded the entire structure.

William Briggles came to Breckenridge from Canton, Ohio, to work as the cashier at the Engle Bros. Exchange Bank. He soon became involved in politics, serving as mayor in 1903 and 1905. At the time of his death in 1924, he was a county commissioner. Katie, an accomplished musician, played five instruments and taught piano lessons. Her love of music is reflected in the front parlor, which is well positioned for the many concerts held there. A piano, accordion and mandolin occupy one corner of the room, while a sheet-music-filled music cabinet occupies another. Other signs of the wealth of the times, which may or may not have been present in the actual Briggles House, include the heavy, velvet, puddled draperies, a volume-jammed barrister bookcase, a stereoscopic viewer, a crazy quilt, Victorian hair art, brass chandeliers and large, framed, salted photographs.

The exterior of this Romanesque Revival house also signifies wealth and prominence. Dark-green trim represents dollar bills; silver, incorporated into the primer, lies underneath the white clapboard. Large windows in the dining room and front parlor resemble bank windows. Inside are extravagances that further differentiated the Briggles from most townspeople. At a time when closets were taxed as rooms, the couple had a dressing room that contained three closets! Visitors see dresses, suits, shoes and hats that still fill the closets. They also see what Katie's neighbors envied most - her cold pantry. Really two rooms, the inner room has a gravity-pull sink and well-stocked shelves of kitchenware; the outer room served as a refrigerator.

Directions: Briggles House is located at 104 North Harris Street, Breckenridge, near the intersection of Lincoln and Harris. From Blue River Plaza in the center of Breckenridge, proceed north on Main Street (toward Frisco) for one block to the stoplight at Main and Lincoln. Turn right (east) and proceed three blocks to Harris. Briggles House is located in Milne Park on the northeast corner of the intersection and is the largest and northern-most of three houses in the Park.