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Henry C. Bowen's house, located on 320 Dennis Street, was built in the showy Romanesque Revival Shingle style in 1897, when the city of Adrian was in transition economically. He was a prominent man in Adrian, a civic-minded businessman, and the style of the house suited his position. The architectural style of this house originated from three other architectural styles, and is rare to find outside of coastal New England. Over the 110 years since the house was built there have only been a handful of owners.

The Bowen house is hard to miss when a person walks by, because of the elaborate, asymmetrically arranged exterior surfaces. Growing out of the roof, centering the porch, there is a rounded tower. The tower's roof is a triangular gabled roof. The outside of the tower has a rough-cut cedar shingled wall. The first layer of the cedar-shingled wall is pale pink in color and has a Palladian shaped door. Surrounding the door, are two half rounded arched windows. This

door represents the second story of the house. In a row, on the top part of the tower, there are four half-rounded arches that peer into the attic. This is the third story of the house. On each side of the tower, there is one dormer window with a hipped roof. These windows grow out of the gabled roof. The outside walls that are not covered by the gabled roof on the second and third stories are covered in rough-cut cedar shingles. These shingles are painted in pale pink. On the first floor, the porch is “L” shaped and has two entrances. The porch is made of wood and has stone Romanesque columns. The windows on the first floor of the house are a mix of rectangular double hinge windows and double hinge windows with half rounded arches. The corners of the house on the first floor are made up of stone coins. The first and second stories of the house are separated by a belt course. The long gabled roof hangs down to the top of the porch and creates a central focal point on the house.

When a person first walks into the Bowen house from the front porch, they will see an asymmetrical floor plan. When you are looking into the house from the front door, there is a large family room in front of you, a grand staircase across the room slightly to the left of the front door and another family room when you walk to the left past the stairs. When you turn left from the stairs you look at a large fireplace surrounded by ceramic tile. To the right of the fireplace there is a door that leads into the kitchen and farther to the right there is a door that leads into a half bathroom. This bathroom is a long rectangular shape and has an outside wall. Walking out of the bathroom you face a large living space, which extends past the fireplace. Looking at the fireplace there is a sliding door to the left that leads into a formal dining room. This formal dining room is painted blue and has a glass window decoration topping the double hinge windows. In the back of the dining room, there is a door leading into the kitchen.

Walking into the kitchen from the living room there is a staircase to your left. This

staircase leads to the second level of the Bowen house. When you get to the top of the staircase, you face a door. Behind this door, there is another set of stairs leading to the attic. On the top of the first stair case you must turn left into a hallway. When you start walking down the hallway there is a small purple room to your right and a full bathroom to your left. To the right of the bathroom there is another bedroom. To the right of this bedroom is the grand staircase. Going further down the hall, next to the purple room, there is a bright yellow room. This room is called the round room, because part of the room contains the rounded tower above the porch. There is a door in the rounded wall, this door leads out to a small porch. Going further down the hall past the yellow room you walk straight into the large master bedroom. This room takes up a large corner of the second story of the house. There is the rounded off corner across the room to the far left. The windows in this room include both double hinge windows and dormer windows.

I thought the attic was the best part of the Bowen house. When you walk up the stairs into the attic, you run into a wall and can only turn right. When you turn right you can see the round room right in front of you. Before the round room, directly to the left there is a long rectangular room. Both the round room and the rectangular rooms have to be entered through a door. The rest of the attic follows the same asymmetrical floor plan as the rest of the house.

The architectural style of the Bowen house is typical of the shingle style, which originated from three other architectural styles; the Queen Anne Style, Colonial Revival style and the Richardsonian Romanesque style (*A Field Guide to American Houses* pg. 290). From the Queen Anne, Bowen's house borrowed wide porches, shingled surfaces on the outside and asymmetrical forms. The Colonial Revival influenced the architectural style of the Bowen house because of the adapted gambrel roofs and the Palladian windows. The Richardsonian Romanesque architectural style is perhaps the most influential style of the Romanesque Revival.

The architectural traits that influence the Bowen house are stone lower stories, emphasis on irregular floor plans, sculpted shapes and the Romanesque's arches.

The Bowen house's architectural style is found scattered throughout the country, but compared to the Queen Anne style it is relatively rare. It was most popular in Coastal New England, and rarely suited urban plots. People in the 18th and 19th century usually ordered the plans for a house from a mail order architect. The asymmetrical plan of the Bowen house required an unusually large lot and the assistance of a professional architect, which made the house more expensive to build. According to Virginia and Lee McAlester, the shingle style "never gained the wide popularity of its contemporary, the Queen Anne style, and thus Shingle houses are relatively uncommon except in coastal New England" (290).

The Bowen House was built in 1897, a decade of economic transition for Adrian. The decade was nicknamed the "gay" 90s according to Charles Lindquist and his book, *Adrian the City that Worked*. Even though this decade was considered the "gay" 90s, the worst depression in American History up until that time took place from 1893-1897. This depression had many positive and negative effects on Adrian. Adrian Furniture, Adrian Brick and Tile, and Adrian Straw were the biggest industries in Adrian, going into the 1890s. By the end of the 1890's these industries were gone. The 1890s were also the end of Adrian being a railroad town. The Lakeshore and Michigan Southern railroad companies were both weakened during the 1890s. The ending of these companies caused 300 jobs to be taken away.

Still, from 1890 through 1900, Adrian increased in population by 10 percent since new industries in Adrian were creating new jobs (Lindquist, chapter 6). Although there was a great depression, Adrian's industry was increasing and many physical changes to Adrian were taking place. Adrian was the commercial center of Lenawee county. The Woven Wire Fence industry

was the main source of jobs, the banks were doing well despite of the depression, Adrian Telegram began in the early 1890s and the telephone business picked up. Cobblestone roads being replaced by brick and parks beginning to develop in Adrian are some examples of the physical changes to Adrian (Lindquist, *Adrian the City that Worked*).

Henry C. Bowen was a prominent man in Adrian during his lifetime. The *Portrait and Biographical Album of Lenawee County* described Henry Bowen in the following way, “Mr. Bowen keeps himself well posted upon matters pertaining to this important safeguard of life and property.” He was retired from the railroad in 1883 and then purchased the interest off of his father’s ice business. He ran Adrian’s Ice Company with his brother. Henry C. Bowen was also the Chief of the Adrian Fire Department. As Chief, he managed four stations. Henry C. Bowen was married to Miss Louise Wies in the spring of 1883.



Fire Chief Henry Bowen around the turn of the century, courtesy Lenawee County Historical Museum

There have been eight owners of this property since it was built in 1897. According to the Adrian city directories, the Bowen family occupied their home on Dennis Street for 47 years (1897-1944). Both Henry C. Bowen and his first wife died before 1944. However, his second wife occupied the house from 1936 until 1944. Seven owners have occupied the Bowen home since 1944. Louis Duchane lived in the house from 1946 until 1948. Jas W. Templeton lived in the house possibly from 1948 until 1953. Seaton Warren lived in the house from 1953 through 1961. Ropt L. Hodapp lived in the house from 1962 through 1996. Gleason Finley and Chuck Nadrigal owned the Bowen house from 1997 until 2000. Philip and Janice Enns owned the house from 2001 until 2004. The current owners are Mr. and Mrs. Myers-Pinkel, and they have owned the old Bowen house since 2005.

Very few changes were made while the Hodapp family lived in the house. In a telephone interview with Mrs. Hodapp she said that they learned that the house was sinking in, because the windows were being difficult to close. To fix this problem, they filled the basement with cement. They also discovered the sliding door between the living room and dining room. The door was jammed into the wall. Although Mrs. Hodapp said she enjoyed living in the Bowen home, she found only having one and a half baths being very inadequate.



Photograph of 320 Dennis Street c.1910, courtesy of the Lenewee County Historical Museum

Mrs. Hodapp said that her children's favorite part of the house was the round room in the attic and the small room at the top of the stairs. The round room in the attic has a mystery about it. Mrs. Hodapp heard that there may have been a fire in the round room before they moved in. There is also German writing written in chalk on the walls surrounding the round room. Mrs. Hodapp said that German men had worked on the room after the fire and the writing is from them.

Mrs. Hodapp and the present owners Mr. and Mrs. Myers-Pinkel both said that their favorite part of the Bowen home is the spacious living room. Mrs. Hodapp liked the living room because of the front window. Her family would put their Christmas tree there. Mr. and Mrs. Myers-Pinkel like the living room because of the fireplace and they said they also like spending their summer evenings on the spacious porch.

In excellent condition for being over 100 years old, the Bowen house is more than just a house. Its shingle architectural style is one of a kind for the city of Adrian, and it stands as a symbol of the success of Adrian's civic history and former industrial prosperity.

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