

Whistler House Museum of Art
Moody-Francis-Whistler House
ca. 1825

Building History

Built ca. 1825, the Moody-Francis-Whistler House is probably the most intact architectural example from Lowell's earliest period of industrial development. In this house, built by the Locks and Canals Company for corporate engineering managers, lived Paul Moody, George Washington Whistler, and later, James B. Francis, all major contributors to American civil and mechanical engineering practice in the nineteenth century. Whistler's famous son, artist James McNeil Whistler, was born in the house in 1834.

This late Federal style structure is the sole survivor of once many wood frame houses built by Lowell's earliest industrial corporations during the 1820s along Worthen and Dutton Streets. The few exterior changes that have taken place over the years consist primarily of the addition of an entrance canopy, probably constructed in the 1850s, a second story on the rear ell, and a large dormer on the back slope of the roof.

The Lowell Art Association acquired the building in 1908 and has maintained it as an art museum ever since. Their outstanding stewardship of the property continues to this day. In 2012, the building underwent historically-sensitive energy efficiency upgrades as part of the City of Lowell's Better Buildings Program in addition to repair and painting of exterior siding, trim, windows, and installation of period appropriate wood shutters. Several interior rooms also continue to be restored including a period kitchen. The Whistler House is a model of good sustainability and preservation practices.



The Whistler House as seen in 1924 (Photo – Lowell National Historical Park)