

**Historical Marker - S572B - Alice B. Cowles House / Alice B. Cowles House (Marker ID#:S572B)**



**Front - Title/Description**

**Alice B. Cowles House**

The Alice B. Cowles House, built in 1857, is the oldest building on the Michigan State University campus. Built as a "Farm Cottage" on Faculty Row from bricks made of clay from the banks of the Red Cedar River, it was originally the official residence of the president of Michigan Agricultural College. After 1874 it was used as faculty housing, as Department of Education offices, and as a residence for female students. In 1941 it again became the official home of the president. After World War II, it was remodeled using funds from the estate of alumnus Frederick Cowles Jenison and named for Jenison's mother, Alice B. Cowles. Jenison's grandfather, Albert Cowles, had been a student in the college's first class in 1857 and had helped gather the materials for the building.

**Significant Date:**

Statehood Era (1815-1860)

**Registry Year:** 1985    **Erected Date:** 1988

**Marker Location**

**Address:** 1 Abbott Road

**City:** East Lansing

**State:** MI    **ZipCode:** 48824

**County:** Ingham

**Township:** Lansing

**Lat:** 42.73336000 / **Long:** -84.48449300

**Web URL:**

**Back - Title/Description**

**Alice B. Cowles House**

Cowles House was centrally located on the campus of the nation's oldest land grant institution, Michigan Agricultural College. Constructed in 1857, it was one of four cottages, designed by architect J. J. Scott of Toledo, Ohio, to house college faculty and their families. Joseph R. Williams, president from 1857 to 1859, was its first resident. In 1874 a new house on the site now occupied by Gilchrist Hall became the president's residence and Professor William James Beal moved into Cowles House with his wife Hannah and daughter Jessie. A pioneer botanist, Beal is credited with the first documented account of hybrid corn experimentation. Due to the many modifications of Cowles House over the years, only the stone foundation and two walls of the original structure remain visible.