

CORNELL HOUSE

Lucien Lucius Nunn, the father of alternating electrical current, built this house in 1891. This was one of the first homes in the country built with alternating electrical current. Starting in 1902, Nunn housed the “Telluride Institute” in this building, where students from Cornell University in New York could come to learn the practical application of electrical engineering. Meanwhile, they served as skilled labor for his power plant. The institute moved in 1923, but this building is still referred to as the Cornell House.

Nunn paid his students \$30 a month plus room and board, and gave them the opportunity for a western adventure. They were involved in all aspects of the development of the Ames Power Plant, including construction. Nunn kept track of his students using a pin on a map to represent each student-employee. This led to the group becoming known as the “pin heads”, and the house being referred to as the “Pinhead House”.

This is an example of Gothic Revival architecture, with the vernacular wood frame, and a front gabled structure with wide overhanging eaves. Note the original two-story bay tower with a hipped roof, and fixed glass windows. The open entry porch also contains a hipped roof with fixed glass and wood post supports, a decorative frieze, and a balustrade. The narrow double-hung windows above the front door and on the sides of the house are original.