Heating Facilities

The rooms in the house were separated by walls pretty much in the shape of long, narrow boxes of about two feet wide, and in height from floor to ceiling. The depth was the depth of the wall. As in the case of the oven, the front, narrow part of the box (which was at the threshold between the two rooms) had an opening at about three feet from the floor. This opening had a flat brick or iron bottom at a level with the lower part of the opening, and a door of the size of the opening with hinges on one side and a swinging iron bar on the other side. In the frame opposite this bar was a hook into which this bar was latched for closing the door. The door had a handle in the center and movable slat which were closed when not needed for draft purposes. This opening was as deep as the wall except for that part in the rear (about 18 inches by 18 inches) which was taken up for the chimney. I was in this opening that I burned wood for heating purposes. Before starting a fire, I cleaned this opening, as and when necessary, of all ashes and coal. By this method the two rooms which were separated by this wall were heated because each room had a hot wall to warm it, and the center room had two such walls.

In one wall of these built-in warming places was another opening about four feet from the bottom and 18 inches square. This opening also had a flat, iron floor which was heated from the lower opening. The door to this opening was the same, and opened and closed the same, as the door to the lower opening in the front, except that this door had no slats for draft purposes. This opening was always clear of ashes since it had no contact with the coal, and it was used to heat or boil water, soup, and other foodstuffs.

By David B. Schreiber

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