

Washington

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Plainfield Halfway House

and/or common Halfway House

2. Location

street & number 503 Main Street ___ not for publication

city, town Plainfield ___ vicinity of congressional district 17th

state Illinois code 012 county Will code 197

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. Levi Brockway

street & number 503 Main Street

city, town Plainfield ___ vicinity of state Illinois

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Will County Courthouse

street & number 14 West Jefferson Street

city, town Joliet ___ vicinity of state Illinois

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Inventory of Historic Landmarks
in Will County has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date February 1974 ___ federal state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Department of Conservation, Historic Sites Division

city, town 405 E. Washington, Springfield ___ vicinity of state Illinois

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check on:
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The original section of the Plainfield Halfway House as it stands today is a two story ell-shaped frame house built in 1836 in the Federal style. A one story addition was made to the back of the house in 1850, utilizing the same siding, window framing, and gable roof as the original. A second one story addition was made on the west side in 1907, and a porch was added to the main entrance in 1880. (See diagrams on the Evolution of the Plainfield Halfway House).

The foundation sill is of handhewn oak beams, partially covered by cement for preservation and stability. The building framing is of oak and walnut utilizing mortise and tenon joints fastened with wood pegs. The house is sided with black walnut boards painted white, with thin corner boards.

The south facade contains the main entrance. Sidelights frame the original oak door with its crisscross panels and original iron lock. Rectangular double sash windows with 12 over 8 lights glazed with lead are symmetrically placed on the south, east, and west facades. Smaller double sash windows, varying from 6 over 6 to single pane, are located in the rear portion and west addition of the house.

The east-west portion of the ell-shaped building has a simple pedimented gable roof. The north-south portion of the ell and the 1850 addition also have a simple gable roof. The original roofing material of walnut shingles has been replaced by asphalt roofing. Exterior chimneys are located on the west and north facades. Two attic window vents are located in each of the east and west gables.

Interior trim is of black walnut painted white. The flooring is oak covered in most places by carpeting or tile. One solid oak beam joist is exposed in the dining room. (While all the other original framing members remain, they are covered by wallpaper). The first floor originally served as the tavern, dining room, and kitchen for the Inn. The existing usage includes a 27 X 11 foot living room, an adjoining 16 X 15 foot music room, and a 25 X 10 foot dining room. The original tavern floor lies beneath floor tile in the 17 X 15 foot kitchen. Adjoining the kitchen is a sun parlor, half bath, and storage room. An entrance hall contains a solid oak staircase that leads to the second floor. The ballroom/meeting room measures 27 X 16 and now serves as the master bedroom. Three additional bedrooms (sleeping rooms for the Inn) and a full bath complete the second floor plan. The attic was originally used for cheaper accommodations, but now serves as storage space. Here the original framing is exposed, and there is evidence of fireplaces at either end.

The Plainfield Halfway House, with the exception of new roofing material and the 1907 west addition, looks much the same as it did when it served as a tavern, inn, and stagecoach stop between 1836 and 1886.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1836-1886 Builder/Architect Mr. Mathews

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SIGNIFICANCE

The Plainfield Halfway House played an important role in the settlement and development of Plainfield and Will County. Built in 1836 as a tavern and inn, it marked the halfway point on the Chicago to Ottawa Stage Line. The building soon became a center of activity, serving as a militia headquarters, town meeting hall, social center and gathering place for the surrounding area. It was also the home of the first practicing physician in the Will County area, Dr. Erastus Wight. Still in use today as a private residence, it retains the spirit and appearance of its pioneer origins.

HISTORY

The property on which the present Halfway House stands was owned by Squire L.F. Arnold, Plainfield's first postmaster. On this site in 1834 he built a one story frame building to serve as a combination post office and stagecoach stop. (This building was adjacent to the present Halfway House and was used by the House's owners until the 1940's when it was torn down).

In 1836, a Mr. Mathews bought the Arnold property and built the present two story frame building to serve as a combination tavern, inn, and stagecoach stop. The name Halfway House came into use at this time, as Plainfield marked the halfway point on the Dr. Temple Stage Line between Chicago and Ottawa.

By 1837, Halfway House had been rented to Dr. Erastus Wight, the first practicing physician in the Will County area. Dr. Wight came to Illinois from Philadelphia in 1831, and in those early years his monthly circuit took him from Plainfield to Bourbonnais Grove to Chicago Heights, back through Western Springs and occasionally as far west as Rock Island. The Doctor lived at and managed the House until his death in 1845. His family continued to run Halfway House, and in 1850 it was purchased by his son, Dr. Roderick Wight.

Between 1836 and 1886, Halfway House served the community in a variety of ways. Because of its size and public access, it was used as a town meeting hall, with many Cook-Will County land grants administered there. Halfway House was an ideal place for social gatherings, with many dances and entertainments taking place in the second floor ballroom. Prior to the Civil War, it served as the militia headquarters and artillery park for the Plainfield Light Artillery, organized by Dr. Roderick Wight and Edward McCallister in 1856. Add to this the steady influx of travelers, settlers, and stages, making Halfway House the center of activity in the growing Plainfield area.

In 1886 the tavern and inn was closed, but the house was maintained as a private residence by succeeding generations of the Wight family. In 1956 it was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Levi Brockway, who reside there today.

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Continuation sheet

Halfway House

Item number 9

Page 2

Major Bibliographical References

Will County Recorders Office, Land Grants and Deeds

Interview, Ruth Rouse Brockway, Owner, Halfway House, April 1978

9. Major Bibliographical References

Will County Historical Society Illinois Sesquicentennial Publication,
John Schauer, December 1967, Joliet, Illinois

Early History of Plainfield, Alice Graves Brown, October 1926, Plainfield

10. Geographical Data

Cont'd.

Acreage of nominated property 1.5

Quadrangle name PLAINFIELD, ILL

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	6	3	0	9	6	6	0	4	6	0	7	1	3	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B

Zone	Easting				Northing									

C

Zone	Easting				Northing									

D

Zone	Easting				Northing									

E

Zone	Easting				Northing									

F

Zone	Easting				Northing									

G

Zone	Easting				Northing									

H

Zone	Easting				Northing									

Verbal boundary description and justification Lot 4 and the Northeasterly 5 feet of Lot 3 in O.L. Gaylord's Subdivision of part of Lot 10 of Arnold's Subdivision of part of the Southeast quarter of Section 9, Township 36 North, Range 9 of East of Third Principal Meridian

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	1. Ed W. DeMarco, Director of Parks and Recreation		
	2. Michael Ward, National Register Assistant		
organization	1. Plainfield Township Park District		date
	2. Department of Conservation		
street & number	1. P.O. Box 294	telephone	1. (815) 436-2200
	2. 405 E. Washington		2. (217) 782-3775
city or town	1. Plainfield	state	1. Illinois 62544
	2. Springfield		2. Illinois 62706

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Dir. Ill. Dept. of Conservation date 6/30/80

I hereby certify that the property is included in the National Register

and that the property is included in the National Register

Received by _____

Accepted

date

Checked

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE ILLINOIS

Date Entered SEP 29 1980

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Plainfield Halfway House	Plainfield Will County
Shriver Farmstead	Virден vicinity Macoupin County
Freeman, Clarkson W., House	Springfield Sangamon County
Evanston Lakeshore Historic District	Evanston Cook County
Fort Sheridan Historic District	Highland Park vicinity Lake County

Also Notified

Honorable Charles H. Percy
Honorable Adlai E. Stevenson
Honorable George M. O'Brien
Honorable Paul Findley
Honorable Abner J. Mikva
Honorable Philip M. Crane
Mr. Francis B. Roche, DOD
Mr. Leo H. Price, Department of the Army

For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.

JUL 1 1981

ILLINOIS HISTORIC SITES SURVEY INVENTORY

Wi-H-3

20307

1. Name of site:

Common Brockway House & Marker

Historic Plainfield House (or Halfway House)

2. Location:

Street and number
503 Main Street

Township
36N

Section
10

City or Town Zip Code
Plainfield

Range
9E

1/4 Section
W

County
Will

3. Classification:

Category (check one)

- District Building
- Site Structure

Integrity (check one)

- Altered Unaltered on exte
- Moved Original Site

4. Ownership

- Private
- Public

Status (check one)

- Occupied
- Unoccupied
- Preservation work in Progress

Access to Public

- Yes Restricted Unrestricted No

Present Use (check one or more)

- Agricultural Industrial Religious
- Commercial Military Scientific
- Educational Museum Transportation
- Entertainment Park Other (specify)
- Government Private Residence

5. Ownership of Property

Owner's name Levi C. Brockway

Street and number

Phone Number

City or Town

State

County

Zip Code

6. Description 2-story frame with additions in rear & State cast-metal historical marker.

Condition

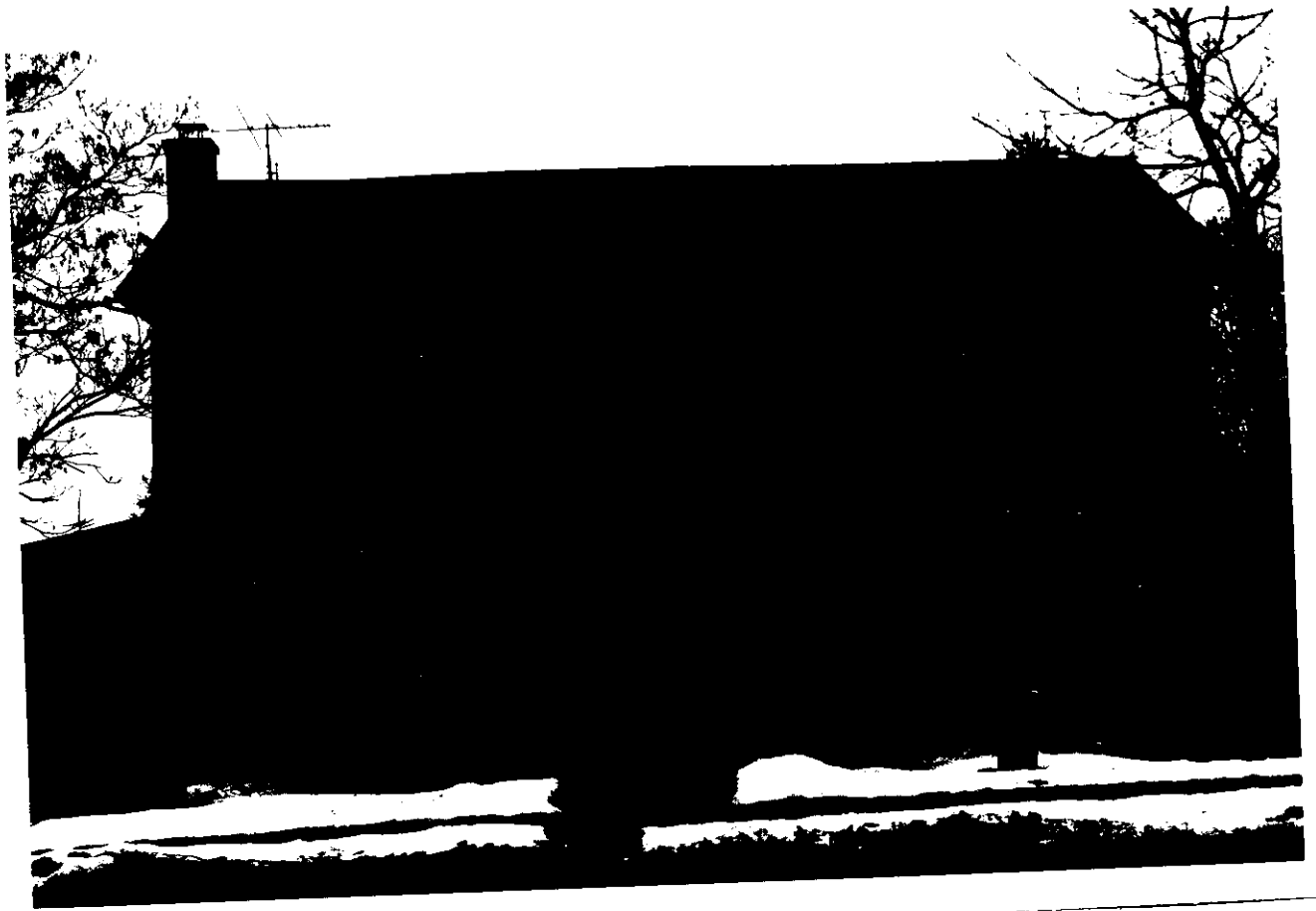
- Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Ruins Unexposed

Is there a program of preservation underway? Yes No

7. Historical Themes: (check one or more of the following)

- Archaeological Site (Pre-Columbian)
- Archaeological Site (Post-Columbian to 1673)
- French Influence 1673-1780)
- Illinois Frontier (1780-1818)
- Illinois Early (1818-1850)
- Illinois Middle (1850-1900)
- Illinois Late (1900-present)
- Famous People (give names & dates

TRANSPORTATION



8. Specific Date: 1834

Areas of significance (check one or more of the following)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal (historic) | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal (pre-historic) | <input type="checkbox"/> Military |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Music |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Political |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | |

Brief statement of significance: (include all names and dates.) Use additional sheets if necessary. Stage stop on Chicago-Ottawa Rd. Also used as post office & supposedly an underground railroad station. State historical marker in y

9. Form prepared by:

Name and title: T.H. Date: _____

Organization: _____

Street and number: _____

City or town: _____ County _____ Zip Code _____

Phone Number: _____

During the course of the Survey we often find it necessary to search for references for a particular site. When filling out the Survey form, please list according to the following example, published references to the site for which forms are being completed. If a bibliography can be compiled, it will greatly deduct from the Survey's task.

Bibliography

Robertson, Robert, Of Whales and Men. New York, Alfred K. Knopf, Inc., 1954.



