

EXP. 12/31/84

WASHINGTON

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Matthew T. Scott House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 227 1st Avenue not for publication

city, town Chenoa vicinity of congressional district

state Illinois code 012 county McLean code 113

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Elizabeth Stevenson Ives

street & number 1316 E. Washington St.

city, town Bloomington vicinity of state Illinois

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. McLean County Recorder of Deeds

street & number 105 Courthouse

city, town Bloomington state Illinois

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Buildings of McLean Co. has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1977 federal state county local

depository for survey records Illinois Department of Conservation, Historic Sites Divi

city, town Springfield state Illinois

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Matthew T. Scott House is a structure composed of two elements of two distinct periods. The rear structure, built in 1855, is a post and beam I cottage. The front structure, built in 1863, is a true balloon frame, 5 window I house. The rear structure is set on Joliet Limestone foundation laid in a coursed ashlar manner. Hand hewn 6"x6" sills form the bottom plate, fir wall studs are on random 16" to 24" centers. The building's roof is salt box in form with a shed roof carrying over the kitchen area. The first level floor system is carried by 3"x6" fir joists laid on random 24" centers. A 6"x6" intermediary girder bisects this level. 2nd floor joists are carried from an intermediary plate. Oak floor boards are random 6" tongue and groove. The interior wall and ceiling finish is plaster laid on sawn lathe. Exterior finish is 1" x 10" sheathing with half and half sawn weather board laid 4" to weather. The roof was finished by hand split sheathing with white cedar shingles laid 5" to weather. The room layout was two rooms down with a central open stairway and one room up. On the East facade was a door and window headed by attic story windows set in a wide plain frieze. A small porch extended over this area. The South facade featured three 6 light windows down and two 6 light windows up. West facade featured one door with a 9 light window in it. North facade had three windows and one window up. A chimney stack bisected the South gable end and served a fire place.

The front structure built in 1863 is set on a Joliet Limestone foundation laid in a coursed ashlar manner. Sawn 6"x6" fir sills form the bottom plate. The wall studs on random 18" to 24" centers run a clear 22 ft. to the top plate. There is no intermediary plate. Second floor joists are scabbed to the studs and blocked for extra strength. Floor boards are random 6" pine and walls and ceiling are plaster on sawn lathe. Interior room arrangements are two rooms down and two rooms up with a central hallway. The three lower rooms had plaster ceiling medallions and the south room has plaster crown ceiling molding. Exterior finish was 1" x 10" sheathing finished with white cedar shingles laid 5" to weather. The east facade features four 100" windows with 6 over 9 lights and a central doorway with transom and sidelights on this first floor. The second floor features five windows with 6 over 6 lights and is thematically linked to a lunette ventilator set in a front pedimented gable. Together they form a vague reference to the palladian style. North and South facades are identical with one window down and one window up, both with 6 over 6 lights and soffit returns. An interior chimney bisected the gable end and projected from the roof line. The West facade where exposed is weatherboarded.

The two structures are connected with three interior passages, one up and two down. There is an 18" holiday between the structures which is closed off with weatherboards.

Deterioration of the structure is currently being remedied by a restoration which is in its second phase. All structural deterioration has been corrected. The current phase is remedying deterioration on the facades, including windows and door. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Rehabilitation are an integral part of the specifications and contract.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1855, 1863 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Matthew T. Scott House is significant in two areas: Agriculture and Architecture. Scott's agricultural activities mark the change from timber/prairie farming to prairie farming. The structure is significant for it is the best preserved example of the vernacular type's evolution to a more formal architectural type.

Matthew T. Scott was a key figure in the development of agriculture in this portion of Illinois. He was the first to enter significant amounts of prairie land in northern McLean County; he actively recruited settlers for this area and worked hard, both in the press and in person, to persuade farmers of the possibility of farming lands where timber was not immediately available; he financed the breaking of hundreds of acres of prairie sod, and continued for many years to be an active manager of very extensive agricultural holdings. Scott was particularly important for his experimentation with new and flexible forms of agricultural leases designed to encourage tenant improvement of rented lands. He is perhaps best known as the founder and lifelong promoter of the town of Chenoa, which has become the largest agricultural shipping point and service center in northern McLean County.

Margaret Beattie Bogue devotes twenty pages in Patterns From the Sod to the agricultural activities of Matthew T. Scott. These can be briefly summarized as follows. Scott was born in 1828, the son of a well-to-do Louisville banker. After graduation from Centre College in Danville, Kentucky, he came north to manage the family's Ohio farmlands. Since 1836 the Scott family had also owned land in Central Illinois. Between 1848 and 1859 various Scott family combinations bought over 45,000 acres of western land, much of it in Central Illinois. Matthew T. Scott soon came west to take charge of the holdings. The core of Matthew T. Scott's personal holding came to be a 5,700 acre tract of land, primarily purchased from the federal government, near the present town of Chenoa.

In 1855, at the point where the Chicago and Alton Railroad would be crossed by the new Peoria and Oquaka road, Matthew T. Scott platted the town of Chenoa. Here he established the first trackside grain storage and shipment depot in northern McLean County. Promotion of the town remained one of Scott's chief activities for many years. In his advertisements for the town he told prospective buyers that the absence of local timber could be balanced by cheap coal carried by rail from Indiana and stressed that the railroad crossing would provide farmers and merchants with an unrivaled competitive position. He dug a cistern, offered to take a quarter interest in a steam powered mill, donated land for church and burial sites and advertised extensively.

During 1855 Scott began the development of his land. He hired prairie breakers, blacksmiths, carpenters and general laborers and spent thousands of dollars on livestock, wagons, farm machinery, fruit trees, seed, lumber

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Continuation sheet Matthew T. Scott House Item number 8 Page 1

and fencing. During 1855 ten or twelve houses were built by Scott and 2,000 acres of prairie were broken. In the following years these investments continued. By the early 1860s Scott had broken and fenced some 5,000 acres in Central Illinois, much of it in Chenoa Township. He experimented with many kinds of fencing and with many drainage techniques and brought much farm machinery into the area. By 1890 some fifty tenants were farming 8,000 of Scott's acres, most of them in central Illinois.

Matthew T. Scott experimented with many forms of lease and crop sharing agreements. He soon developed and followed a policy of furnishing tenants with materials, letting them perform all or part of the labor and then paying the tenant for part of their labor. Helen Bogue reports:

"The policy seems usually to have worked to the satisfaction of both parties. Little evidence of discord over such matter remains...."

Litigation between Scott and his tenants seems to have been quite rare.

Between 1867 and 1888 Scott began to sell some of his holdings, but throughout his life he remained by far the largest landowner in northern McLean County. In his later life he continued to finance improvements in local farmland as well as widening his field of investment. In the 1880s he invested heavily in tile drainage. In 1885 plans were made to lay 26 miles of tile on 3,600 acres of central Illinois land. In 1891 shortly before his death, Matthew T. Scott could report with pride that he had had made from 275 to 300 miles of hedge fence, had caused 250 miles of ditch to be dug, had built between 160 and 200 houses, had tiled 5,000 acres, and had caused the breaking of 16,000 acres of prairie land in Illinois and Iowa.

For the activities from 1855 to 1870, the house in Chenoa remained the center. Many people who were to be important in the development of McLean County and the nation have been associated with this house. Perhaps the best known are: Adlai Stevenson I, Vice-President of the United States 1893-97, who courted and married Letitia Green, Scott's sister-in-law, at this house and whose wedding was celebrated there. Their son, Lewis Green Stevenson, was born there in 1868. L. G. Stevenson was later to manage the Scott Farms and serve as Secretary of State of Illinois 1914 thru 1917. He was also the father of Adlai Stevenson II.

The Green sisters, Julia and Letitia, were to achieve national prominence in that they both served as Presidents General of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the only two sisters ever to do so.

Julia Green Scott's daughter, Julia, married Carl Schurz Vrooman, U. S. Asst. Secretary of Agriculture 1914-16, and so from 1924 through 1950 the house served, at various times, as the home for the brothers,

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Continuation sheet Matthew T. Scott House Item number 8 Page 2

Frank Buffington Vrooman, a Christian Socialist, Progressive, and Economic Geographer published by Oxford University Press and widely in the midwest, and Hiram Greely Vrooman, who was to introduce Swedenborgian Philosophy to listeners throughout the midwest via his show over WCFL Radio in Chicago. The three brothers' literary works number over 100 books, pamphlets and articles concerning their various political, social and religious beliefs.

The Matthew T. Scott Home is architecturally significant because it is an exceptionally well preserved example of a type of building important in the development of central Illinois. The home also has considerable inherent merit as an architectural design. The preservation of a great deal of mid-19th century exterior and interior features in this home is important because, while other examples of similar buildings do exist in the county, most have been severely altered. The home is also important because it shows in a unique way how this type of house frequently seems to have evolved.

The home is an example of the central hallway I-House, or five window house. This form represents a compromise between the vernacular house types, which in McLean County were generally derived from the Upland South, the more formal Georgian designs which by the middle of the 19th century had become symbols of educated taste and gentility. The folk forms excellently represented in the rear portion of this house, generally featured simple floor plans, lack of exterior ornamentation, passage rooms, and open staircases. By the 1850s such homes were almost exclusively heated by stoves. What Deitz and Glassie refer to as Georgian forms featured symmetrical floor plans, classically inspired exterior details, central hallways, and open formal staircases. Upon the recommendation of architectural writers they frequently retained fireplaces in the more formal portions of the house. All of these later features are evident in the front part of the Matthew T. Scott home.

The linking of formal and folk trends seen here is common in mid-19th century houses in McLean County. Often, as here, two distinct building episodes are represented; the rear part of the house being erected on vernacular designs to fulfill the immediate need for shelter, the classically inspired front soon being added to make a statement about the owner's social position and artistic taste. In this house this blending of intentions is uniquely illustrated because of the foot and a half interior gap between the two parts of the house, in which the original facade of the rear part of the building is preserved.

The oldest surviving house of this type in McLean County that can be dated with some accuracy is the Presley T. Brooks Home south of Stanford, Illinois, built in 1842 or 1843; it is, however, a considerably smaller home and lacks the architectural detail of the Scott home. Similarly

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Continuation sheet Matthew T. Scott House Item number 8 Page 3

simple, but closer to the Scott Home in size, is the 1845 Elijah Priest home northeast of Hudson, Illinois; here the building appears to have been constructed at one period and the main facade has been considerably altered by the addition of a porch. The Henry West home, 1851, in West Township, McLean County, Illinois, and the John R. Benjamin home, 1855, in Dawson Township, McLean County, Illinois, were probably much like the Scott home during the 19th century, but both have been considerably altered. In many homes of this type there seems to have been a recent tendency to strip away original porches and exterior details, to replace original windows with new thermal units and to add aluminum siding. The Scott home has been exceptionally fortunate to escape all of these improvements.

The general architectural merit of the design is best evident from the photographs. It should be remembered that Scott was very anxious to attract settlers to his town of Chenoa, one of the first to be established in the county out of sight of natural woodland. He was also anxious to demonstrate to prospective buyers and tenants the prosperity of the nearby prairie soil. The house should thus be viewed as a symbol and as an advertisement. The general design is balanced, restrained, and classical, but the corner pilasters, porch columns, and front gable add vertical elements which emphasize the height of the facade. Likewise, the open interior of the central hall and the ornamental ceiling plasterwork stress the height of the formal rooms in the front of the house and contribute to the sense of elegance which the socially active Mrs. Scott was, no doubt, anxious to achieve.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bogue, Margaret Beattie. Patterns from the Sod: Land Use and Tenure in the Grand Prairie, 1850-1900. Springfield, Illinois State Historical Society, 1959.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property LESS THAN 1

Quadrangle name COLFAX, IL

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References

A 16 354090 4511020
 Zone Easting Northing

B
 Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

"East Chenoa, the South 1/2 of Lot 2, and all of Lots 3, 4 and 5 in Block 5, City of Chenoa, McLean County, Illinois."

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

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Greg Koos/ Archivist; Dr. William Walters/Geographer, Illinois State University

organization McLean County Historical Society date

street & number 201 E. Grove telephone 309/827-0428

city or town Bloomington state Illinois

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature David Fenney

title Director date 12/23/82

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet Matthew T. Scott House Item number 9 Page 1

Glassie, Henry. Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: A Structural Analysis of Historic Artifacts. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975.

Kniffen, Fred. "Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion," Annals of the Association of American Geographers (1965) 547-577

Walters, William D. Jr and Floyd Mansberger, "Two Houses of the Lower Illinois River Valley," Western Illinois Regional Studies (Spring 1981) 25-36).

Deetz, James. In Small Things Forgotten: The Archaeology of Early American Life (Garden City New York: Anchor Books, 1977).

Gates, Paul W. Landlords and Tenants on the Prairie Frontier. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1973.

Paulson, Ross E. The Vrooman Family and American Social Thought, 1837-1937, Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press 1968.



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

FEB 16 1983

The Director of the National Park Service is pleased to inform you that the following properties have been entered in the National Register of Historic Places during the week beginning February 6, 1983 and ending February 12, 1983. For further information call (202) 272-3504.

STATE, County, Vicinity, Property, Address, (date listed)

- ARIZONA, Maricopa County, Phoenix, U.S. Post Office, 522 N. Central Ave. (02/10/83)
ARIZONA, Pima County, Tucson, U.S. Post Office and Courthouse, 55 E. Broadway (02/10/83)
CALIFORNIA, Humboldt County, Eureka, U.S. Post Office and Courthouse, Fifth and H Sts. (02/10/83)
CALIFORNIA, Merced County, Merced, U.S. Post Office, 401 W. 18th St. (02/10/83)
CALIFORNIA, San Diego County, San Ysidro, U.S. Inspection Station/U.S. Custom House, Virginia and Tijuana Sts. (02/10/83)
CALIFORNIA, San Joaquin County, Stockton, U.S. Post Office, 401 N. San Joaquin St. (02/10/83)
CALIFORNIA, Stanislaus County, Modesto, U.S. Post Office, Twelfth and I Sts. (02/10/83)
ILLINOIS, Bureau County, Princeton, Skinner, Richard M., House, 627 E. Peru St. (02/10/83)
ILLINOIS, Cass County, Beardstown, Park House, 200 W. Second St. (02/10/83)
ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, King, Patrick J., House, 3234 W. Washington Blvd. (02/10/83)
ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, Singer Building, 120 S. State St. (02/10/83)
ILLINOIS, Lee County, Dixon, Nachusa House, 215 S. Galena Ave. (02/10/83)
ILLINOIS, Logan County, Mt. Pulaski vicinity, Buckles, Robert, Barn (Round Barns in Illinois TR), SE of Mt. Pulaski (02/10/83)
ILLINOIS, McLean County, Chenoa, Scott, Matthew T., House, 227 1st Ave. (02/10/83)
ILLINOIS, Peoria County, Norwood Park vicinity, Christ Church of Lower Kickapoo, W of Norwood Park on Christ Church Rd. (02/10/83)
ILLINOIS, Pike County, Summer Hill, Scott, Lyman, House, U.S. 54 (02/10/83)
ILLINOIS, Sangamon County, Springfield, St. Nicholas Hotel, 400 E. Jefferson St. (02/10/83)
INDIANA, Monroe County, Bloomington, Blair-Dunning House, 608 W. 3rd St. (02/10/83)
KANSAS, Ford County, Dodge City, Sacred Heart Cathedral, 903 Central Ave. (02/10/83)
KANSAS, Gray County, Cimarron, Cimarron Hotel, 203 N. Main St. (02/10/83)
KENTUCKY, Christian County, Hopkinsville, Dalton, Monroe, House (Christian County MRA), 713 E. 7th St. (02/10/83)
KENTUCKY, Jefferson County, Harrods Creek, Nitta Yuma Historic District, 5028, 5040, 5044, and 5051 Nitta Yuma (02/10/83)
KENTUCKY, Taylor County, Campbellsville vicinity, Hiestand, Jacob, House, W of Campbellsville off KY 210 (02/10/83)
KENTUCKY, Taylor County, Campbellsville, Campbellsville Historic Commercial District, Roughly bounded by Columbia Ave., Broadway, 1st, Hotchkiss Sts., Central Ave. (both sides), and RR tracks (02/10/83)
MICHIGAN, Chebovgan County, Cheboygan, Newton-Allaire House, 337 Dresser St. (02/10/83)
MICHIGAN, Wayne County, Detroit, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church Complex, 1345 Gratiot Ave. (02/10/83)

ILLINOIS HISTORIC SITES SURVEY INVENTORY

1. Name of Site:

Common Scott Cottage

Historic Matthew T. Scott Home or "Keepsake"

2. Location:

Street and Number

227 1st Ave.

Township

Section

City or Town

Zip Code

Range

¼ Section

Chenoa

County

McLean

3. Classification:

Category (check one)

() District (X) Building
 () Site () Structure

Integrity (check one)

() Altered (X) Unaltered
 () Moved (X) Original Site

4. Ownership:

(X) Private
 () Public

Status (check one)

(X) Occupied
 () Unoccupied
 () Preservation work in progress

Access to Public

() Yes () Restricted () Unrestricted (X) No

Present Use (check one or more)

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

5. Ownership of Property:

Owner's Name

Phone Number

Street and Number

City or Town

State

County

Zip Code

6. Description:

Condition:

() Excellent (X) Good () Fair () Deteriorated () Ruins
 () Unexposed

Is there a program of preservation underway? () Yes (X) No

SITES ASSOC. W. NATIONAL OF STATE FIGURES



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

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Archeological Site | (Pre-Columbian) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Archeological Site | (Post-Columbian to 1673) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | French Influence | (1673-1780) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Illinois Frontier | (1780-1818) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Illinois Early | (1818-1850) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Illinois Middle | (1850-1900) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Illinois Late | (1900-present) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Famous People | (give names & dates) |
| | Adlai E. Stevenson I | |

8. Specific Date:

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 checked="" 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 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. See over.

9. Form prepared by:

Name and Title: _____ KS _____ Date _____
Organization: _____ Phone: _____
Street and number: _____
City or Town: _____ County: _____ Zip Code: _____

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.

Chenoa Community Centennial, 1954. p. 154_155.

The home was built in 1859 or shortly before and was often visited by Adlai Stevenson I and his cousin James S. Ewing (later minister to Belgium, 1894-1897). Stevenson courted Letitia Green, step-daughter of Matthew T. Scott. in this home. They married in 1866.

The Rev. Hiram Vrooman, an expert on Swedenborg, occupied the home from 1924 to 1959 and called it "Keepsake".

NAME OF SITE: Matthew T. Scott Home (ML-H-45).

LOCATION: 227 1st Avenue, Chenoa.

OWNER: Unknown

OCCUPANT: Unoccupied

POINTS OF INTEREST: Home of the founder of Chenoa and important developer of land in central Illinois.

DATE: 1859

BUILDER: Matthew T. Scott, Jr. was the archetype of the nineteenth century land speculator, but unlike many such men he had the reputation of seeing his projects through to completion. He was born in Kentucky in 1828, the son of a wealthy Lexington banker. During his education at Centre College, in Danville Kentucky, he became well acquainted with Rev. Lewis W. Green the president of the college and later married his daughter.

After graduation in 1846 he was sent to Ohio to take charge of the family land investments. Soon his attention turned to Illinois where his father had earlier been involved in land dealing in a small way. Between 1848 and 1859 Scott and his business associates entered over 45,000 acres of land in the state. Matthew Scott had Chenoa platted in May of 1856 and launched the most extensive advertising campaign yet seen in central Illinois to promote

the development of the town. Upon the death of Rev. Green Letitia, the younger sister of Scott's wife and her mother came to live in Chenoa.

In December of 1866 this house was the scene of the wedding of Letitia and Adlai Stevenson, then a lawyer in Metamora, later to become Vice President of the United States. Like Scott, Stevenson had been a student at Centre college. About 1870 the home was sold, but in 1924 it was purchased by Matthew Scott's daughter, Mrs. Carl Vrooman, and named "Keepsake."

STRUCTURE: This home differs only slightly from from other five window homes. The central window on the second story at the front of the house is slightly larger than the others; above this window is a shallow gable with a semi-circular light. The 1954 Chenoa Centennial book states that the rear portion of the house was built first and the two story portion added later (p. 154). Perhaps true, but the form of the house is so much like other five-window houses that it is difficult to believe the entire unit was not planned as a whole. The roof projects a substantial distance beyond the ends of the house, the cornices are returned, and the chimnies are interior.

REFERENCES

Margaret Beattie Bogue, Patterns from the Sod: Land use and Tenure in the Grand Prairie, 1850-1900 (Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library XXXIV, Land Series, Volume I; Springfield: Illinois State Historical Society, 1959) 90-97.

Chenoa Community Centennial: A Century of Co-operation
(Chenoa: Chenoa Centennial Committee, 1954)
154-155.

Hist., 1879, 500-503.


