

# 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

The Stone Cottage

AND/OR COMMON

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 363-365 Prairie Street

Elgin

NOT FOR PUBLICATION 13th

CITY, TOWN

Illinois 60120

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Kane

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

## 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 type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDEN
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. Kerry Witt

STREET & NUMBER

363 Prairie Street

Elgin

Illinois 60120

CITY, TOWN

STATE

VICINITY OF

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Recorder of Deeds

Kane County Governmental Center, 719 Batavia Ave.

STREET & NUMBER

Geneva

Illinois 60134

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Illinois Historic Sites Survey

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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 Stone Cottage is a two-story residence erected in 1849-50 for the family of James T. Gifford, founder of Elgin. The cobblestone walls are only one-story high; the second story is a frame mansard roof which overhangs a portico with unfluted columns. The mansard portion and what is now the north wing are later additions completed prior to 1871. Originally the property covered an entire city block, and deer once grazed on the extensive lawn. Servants' quarters and a carriage house--no longer existing--stood in the rear of the home.

In 1903 the home was remodeled for rental purposes. The original front of the building is now the west side, while the present front of the building is now the north side along Prairie Street. The home is now divided into five units: a town house at 365 Prairie, and two studio apartments and one efficiency at 363 Prairie. The town house has a full basement; living room, kitchen, and one-half bath on the first floor; and two bedrooms, nursery, and bath upstairs. The building occupies about 2,000 square feet of the present site of approximately 8,750 square feet.

There have been only two alterations to the exterior in the last century, neither of which substantially changes the home's appearance: (1) the cast iron cresting has been removed, and (2) the south portion of the portico has been enclosed.

The cobblestones consist of round, oval and odd-shaped water-rounded stones of different colors, but various shades of light and dark grays predominate. There are three types of stone placement. In the old front wall, now the west side, the stones are laid four courses to the quoin height. On the present rear wall, the stones are smaller in size and laid five courses to the quoin height. The cobblestones in the present front wall facing Prairie Street are larger and laid three courses to a quoin height.

Corner quoins are warm gray limestones with crudely tooled borders framed with an incised line. They are about ten inches high, five inches thick and fifteen inches long. Window openings have ten-inch high lintels and four-inch thick sills cut from the same stone.

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES 1849-50

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Edwin F. Reeves

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Stone Cottage combines a Mansard roof and Southern columns, but its architectural significance lies chiefly in its cobblestone construction, not its style. This type of masonry arose in New York state, and about 90 per cent of all cobblestone buildings are said to be found in a 60-mile radius around Rochester. After completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, the masons who had been employed in its construction applied their skills to building homes of cobblestones. Found in abundance in fields and along lake shores, they were cheaper than brick because they did not have to be shaped and kiln-dried. Although walls of small stones laid in horizontal rows have been erected for centuries, the New York masons embellished the mortar joints. This highlights the stones, and patterns of light and shade change during the day.

Based on entries in the original owner's ledger, the mason who built the Stone Cottage was Edwin F. Reeves (1822-1899), born in Wayne County, New York, who began working for a building contractor at the age of sixteen. He also constructed Old Main, another Elgin landmark, which is already listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Stone Cottage also illustrates the transfer to the pioneer West of practices developed in the East. Many of Elgin's early settlers emigrated from upstate New York, and they carried with them to Illinois their admiration of cobblestone houses. The Elgin area and Beloit, Wisconsin, are Midwest concentrations of this kind of construction.

James T. Gifford (1800-1850) was a town founder who apparently helped to establish Dundee in Yates County, New York, before he came West to found Elgin in Kane County, Illinois, in 1835. A devout Congregationalist, he named these communities after Scotch hymn tunes. Later he established Port Ulao, in what is now Ozaukee County, Wisconsin, returning to Elgin in 1849 to begin the erection of his Stone Cottage. Postmaster, foe of slavery, inventor-mechanic, and farmer, Gifford died soon after the house was completed, but it was occupied by his widow, daughter, and son-in-law for many years. On the broad lawn or in its spacious rooms were held the parties, church gatherings, and teas that were among the most remembered events of nineteenth century Elgin's social life.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Alft, E. C. Elgin Area Landmarks. Elgin: Elgin Area Historical Society, 1975, p. 4.  
 Gifford, James T. Ledger, entries of Jul. 18, 1849; Oct. 6, 1849; Nov. 15, 1849; Mar. 18, 1850; Apr. 12, 1850; and May 21, 1850.  
 Schmidt, Carl F. Cobblestone Masonry. Scottsville, New York, 1966, pp. 209-210 and picture on page 323.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY About .2 of one acre

QUADRANGLE NAME \_\_\_\_\_ QUADRANGLE SCALE \_\_\_\_\_

UTM REFERENCES

A	_____	_____	_____	B	_____	_____	_____
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____	_____
E	_____	_____	_____	F	_____	_____	_____
G	_____	_____	_____	H	_____	_____	_____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION Lot 3 and the West 35.5 feet of Lot 4 of O. Davidson Heir's Subdivision of a part of Block 8 of J. T. Gifford's Addition to Elgin, known as 365-363 Prairie Street, near corner of Chapel.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE <u>Mr. E. C. Alft, Elgin Area Historical Society</u>	DATE <u>Jan. 12, 1980</u>
ORGANIZATION <u>1217 Mohawk Drive,</u>	DATE <u>(312) 742-0169</u>
STREET & NUMBER <u>Elgin</u>	TELEPHONE <u>Illinois</u>
CITY OR TOWN	STATE

# 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

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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DATE ENTERED

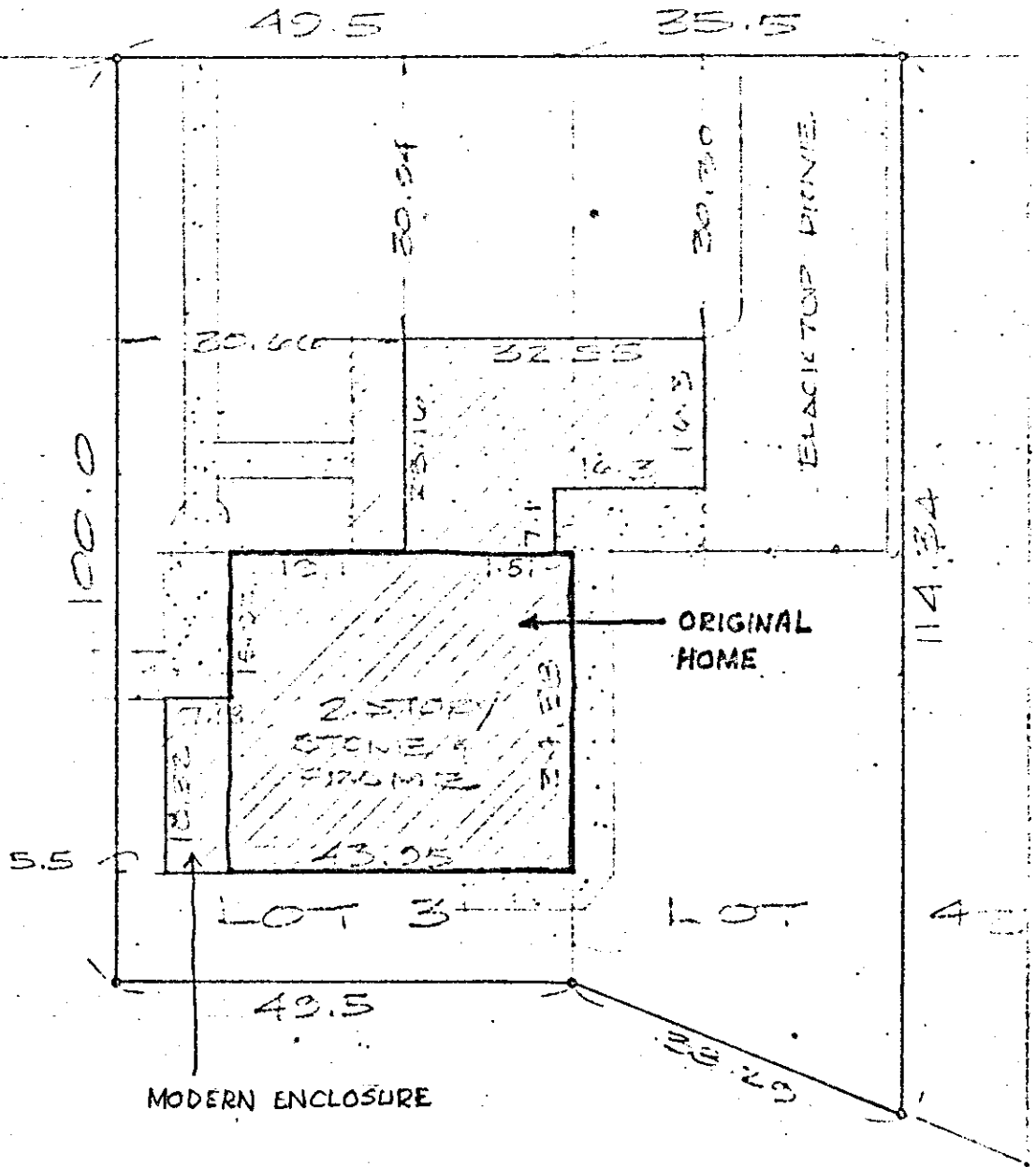
CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

PRAIRIE STREET  
(# 363-365)

N  
↑



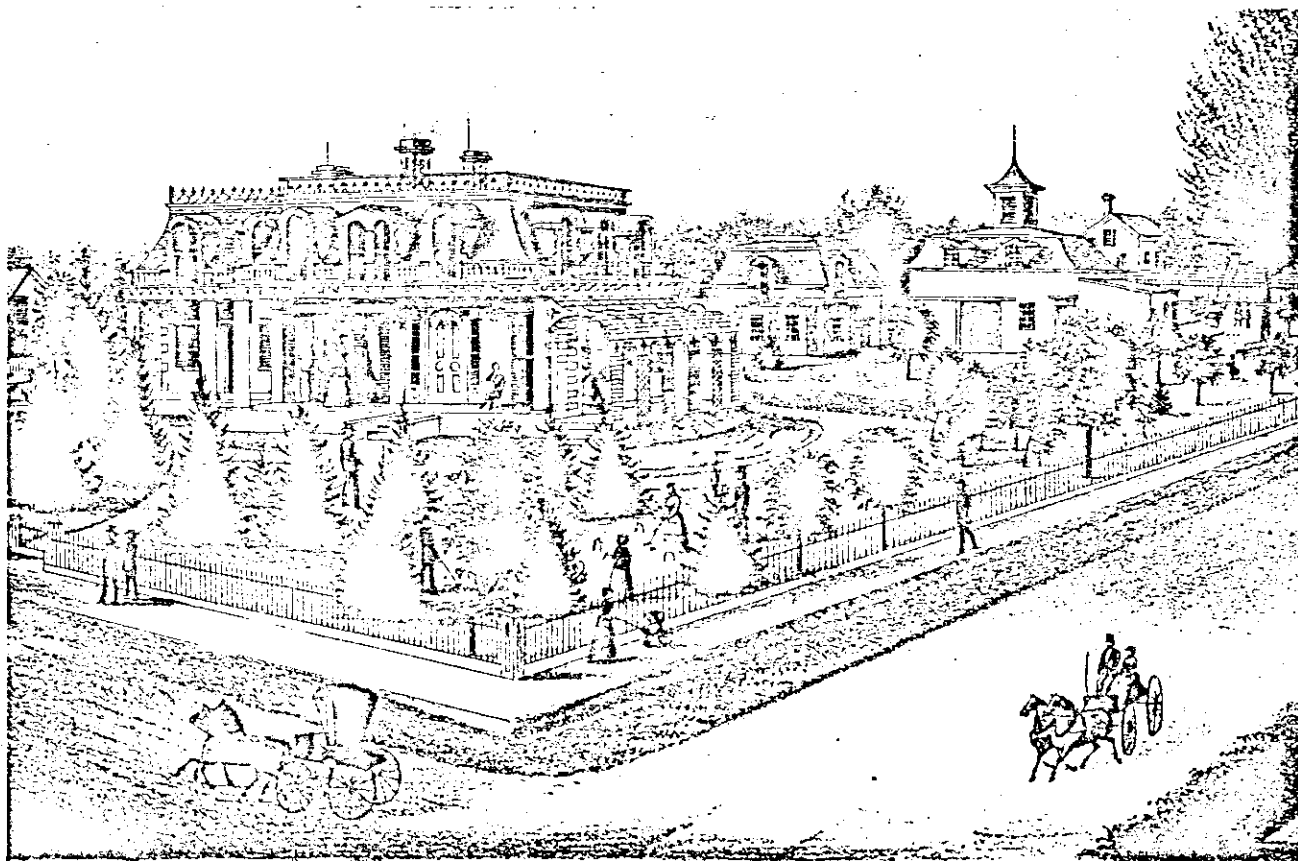
## 2. *The Stone Cottage*, 363 Prairie Street. COBBLESTONE

The James Gifford family moved from the log cabin into a brick home built about 1839 or 1840 on the southwest corner of Villa and Prairie Streets. The founder later left Elgin to start town-building all over again, this time along the Lake Michigan shore north of Milwaukee at a place he called Ulao. When this venture failed, he returned to Elgin and erected "The Stone Cottage." Its original design was inspired by Southern architecture he had admired during a sojourn in South Carolina as a young man. Shortly after the building was completed, he died of cholera on August 10, 1850.

Orlando Davidson (1825-1899), a banker and husband of Gifford's eldest daughter, Caroline, bought out other heirs and moved into the home. The property originally extended from Chapel through to South Gifford and from Villa to Prairie. Live deer were once fenced on part of the grounds. To the combination of Southern columns and New York cobblestone, Davidson added a new wing and a mansard roof.

For many years the home was known for its charming hospitality. Here on the broad lawn or on the veranda or in its spacious rooms were held the large and small parties, the church gatherings, the afternoon teas and informal get-togethers that were among the highlights of Elgin social life. A strawberry festival became an annual event.

When Davidson's Home Bank failed in 1877, the Stone Cottage and other family property was pledged as security for the creditors. He was able to recoup his fortunes and retain ownership. After his death, the Stone Cottage with its grounds, carriage house, and servant quarters were sold to developers who parceled the area into building lots and divided the house into apartments.



K-H-25

200446

ILLINOIS HISTORIC SITES SURVEY INVENTORY

1. Name of Site:

Common Stone cottage  
Historic

2.. Location:

Street and Number                      Township                      Section  
363 Prairie St.                      Elgin  
City or Town                      Range                      1/4 Section  
Elgin  
County  
Kane

3. Classification:

Category (check one)                      Integrity (check one)  
 District     Building                       Altered     Unaltered  
 Site         Structure                       Moved      Original Site

4. Ownership:

Private                       Occupied  
 Public                       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                      Phone Number  
Street and Number  
City or Town  
State                      County                      Zip Code

6. Description:

Excellent     Good     Fair     Deteriorated     Ruins     Unexposed

Is there a program of preservation underway?     Yes     No

URBAN PLANNING / ARCHITECTURE

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illinois Early | (1818-1850)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Middle           | (1850-1900)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Late             | (1900-present)           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Famous People             | (give names & dates)     |

8. Specific Date: About 1850

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 checked="" 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 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.

9. Form prepared by:

Name and Title: Alft 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.

3rd home of James T. Gifford (1800-1850), founder of the City of Elgin. Good example of cobblestone construction of 40's. Mansard roof, southern columns. Elgin Courier, Jan. 14, 1905. Hazel Belle Perry, "Homestead Center of Past", Elgin Daily Courier-News, Aug. 17, 1965.





ILLINOIS HISTORIC SITES SURVEY INVENTORY

SURVEY USE ONLY

1. Name of Site: **Stone Cottage**

Common

Historic

- Archaeology
- Architecture
- History

2. Location:

Street and Number

**363 Prairie St.**  
City or Town

Zip Code

Township

**Elgin**  
Range

Section

1/4Section

**Elgin**  
County  
**Kane**

3. Classification:

Category (Check one)

- District
- Site
- Building Structure

Integrity (Check one)

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

5. Ownership of Property

Owner's Name

Street and Number

Phone Number

City or Town

State

County

Zip Code

6. Description

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)

- |                                     |                     |                          |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Archaeological Site | (pre-Columbian)          |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Archaeological Site | (post-Columbian to 1673) |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | French Influence    | (1673-1780)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Illinois Frontier   | (1780-1818)              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Illinois Early      | (1818-1850)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Illinois Middle     | (1850-1900)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Illinois Late       | (1900-present)           |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Famous People       | (Give names & dates)     |

8. Specific Date: **COMPLETED** about 1850

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 checked="" 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 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. **Third home of James T. Gifford (1800-1850), founder of Elgin. Good example of the cobblestone construction of the '40's**

9. Form prepared by: **Mansard roof, southern columns.**

Name and Title: E. C. Alft Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: Elgin Area Historical Society

Street and Number 1217 Mohawk Drive

City or Town Elgin County Kane Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

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Sources: **Elgin Courier, Jan 14, 1905**

**Hazel Belle Perry, Homestead Center of Past, Elgin Daily Courier News, August 17, 1965.**