

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 Durant House

AND/OR COMMON

Durant-Peterson House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Le Roy Oakes Forest Preserve

CITY, TOWN

St. Charles

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

13th

STATE

Illinois

CODE

17

COUNTY

Kane

CODE

89

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Kane County Forest Preserve District

STREET & NUMBER

Government Building

CITY, TOWN

Geneva

VICINITY OF

STATE

Illinois

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Kane County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Third and Campbell Sts.

CITY, TOWN

Geneva

STATE

Illinois

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Illinois Historic Sites Survey

DATE

1973

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Ill. Dept. of Conservation, Div. of Historic Sites, 901 Spring St.

CITY, TOWN

Springfield

STATE

Illinois

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input 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 DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The two-story brick front portion of the house was built in (ca.) 1843 by Brant Durant. There are three rooms downstairs and four bedrooms upstairs. The three rear wooden rooms were added around 1881 by a subsequent owner, Godfrey Peterson.

Mr. Durant was a bricklayer, having learned his trade in Massachusetts. The bricks with which he built his house were manufactured nearby and the lumber was cut from the surrounding land. The brick walls of the house are laid in an interwoven pattern for strength but also for a flow of air for insulation. The partitions are of full cut 2"x4"s set in sideways to make the partition as thin as possible. The rough lumber in the house is primarily oak, some pine, and even some walnut which was of too poor quality to use for finished lumber. The floors and sub-flooring are of pine.

The downstairs woodwork is made of walnut, no doubt cut from this property, and was discovered under seven coats of paint and varnish, which had been applied in the 1930's when the third owners of the farm were using the house as caretaker's quarters.

The walls have been replastered in as nearly the same plaster as is feasible with the materials available today. This was necessary because of the very bad condition of the old plaster.

The windows were replaced sometime after 1898 when the Peterson's owned the property. The original windows were 6/6. As one of the final steps of the restoration, panes like the original will be replaced with old glass.

The stairway never had a railing. The present one has been installed for reasons of safety. An appropriate railing from the 1840's period is now being sought to replace the current one.

The house has a basement with walls made of fieldstones. The dirt floor was recently covered with concrete when a new heating plant was installed. The original basement entrance was from the outside, but the present staircase descends from the keeping room which was added circa 1881.

There are no closets in the brick part of the house except for the fireplace closet. The shelves in this closet were installed and plastered afterwards, as the walnut woodwork.

The rear rooms were added to the north and west end of the house by the Petersons. The present kitchen and bathroom on the west are the original (ca. 1881) and have not been altered except to replace the corner floor of the kitchen where it had rotted and to remove a sink. There was a pump in the sink which hooked to the cistern just north of the kitchen door. The northeast room where the oven is located is entirely reconstructed, the original having been torn away and the space used for a garage. The interior is finished to resemble a shed-type room such as might have been there. The present flooring in this room is not appropriate, but will be changed.

The upstairs was replastered with only one coat of plaster. The plaster had never been painted. Two sections of the original plaster remain: one is in the hall and the other in the southeast bedroom. Wallpaper was not too commonly used in the prairie homes, but this home was not ordinary as Bryant Durant went to great lengths to make it more gracious. This, plus the fact that Bryant's brother had a mercantile store in Chicago, leads to the possibility that there could have been wallpaper in the upstairs.

The rear rooms are furnished with many pieces which are identical to the original since the descendants of the Petersons have evidences of the rooms' original appearance.

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

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
COUNTY	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

7. Description

The four acres of property includes three buildings. The only building to be included in the nomination is the main building, which is the easternmost building.

The other two buildings are services buildings probably dating from around the 1920's or 30's. They should not be considered as part of the nomination. One of the buildings is a frame, clapboard structure used for storage. The other is unidentified at this time.

[This continuation sheet sent to NPS July, 1976]

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 checked="" 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 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	Pioneer settlement
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES ca. 1843; 1881

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Bryant Durant

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Bryant Durant and his twelve brothers and sisters were the seventh generation of Durants born in Massachusetts. Bryant was the eighth child, born at Ware, Massachusetts in 1808. At the age of 13 he became an apprentice bricklayer, an occupation he would follow all his life. By the 1830's it was becoming difficult for the Durant family to make a suitable living because of unstable economic conditions. In 1837 at the age of 29 Bryant left the East to go to St. Charles, Illinois, to work in the store his brother established a few years before. Sometime thereafter he purchased 195 acres of land from his brother and when he married Jerusha Shurtleff in 1843 he built the present house upon it.

Bryant Durant lived until 1899 but in 1881 he sold his farm to Godfrey Peterson and moved into St. Charles. Peterson added the rear rooms onto the house; this is why the house today represents two different periods: one from the 1840's when Durant built the house and the second from the 1880's when the Peterson's moved in a made additions. When Peterson bought the farm the buildings were in various states of disrepair, but Peterson did much to improve the place.

In 1934 the Durant-Peterson farm was sold to settle the estate of Mr. Peterson. Archibald and Fay Sheldon purchased the farm and lived there for thirty years. After the death of Mr. Sheldon, the farm was sold to the Kane County Forest Preserve District.

The executive board of the Forest Preserve District voted to restore the house. In May of 1970, the Thornapple Questers offered their assistance in the furnishing of the house. As other chapters became involved the restoration committee found it was necessary to incorporate as Kane County Restorations, Inc., which was accomplished in 1971.

The house is now maintained and operated by Kane County Restorations for the Forest Preserve District. It serves as a house museum representing the two periods mentioned above. At this time the restoration is about 85% complete. Of the portion completed, great pains have been taken to reproduce the appearance of the house as accurately as possible through a great deal of research and professional guidance.

The Durant-Peterson House is a house museum but it is not the type of house museum that comes to mind readily; it is not a large Victorian mansion stuffed with antiques. It is a fine restoration of a very typical, modest home from the late frontier period of Illinois history. It lives today to represent the lifestyle of the area's earliest settlers and the lifestyle of the rural community on the eve of the industrialization of the area. Its significance lies in the fact that it is nothing more than a very prosaic dwelling. Except for a few reproductions of log cabins in some surrounding counties in the Chicago area, the Durant-Peterson House is the only house museum in the whole region representing its period and social position. It is a public facility that is open free of charge every Sunday from May to October.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Biographical Record of Kane County, Illinois. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Pub. Co. 1898.

Materials from Kane County Restorations, Inc.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY One

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,6	3 88	2,9,0	4,6	4,23	6,0	B						
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING							
C				D									

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

To the nearest of miles, the area described here is bounded on the north by the Kane County line, on the east by the Kane County line, on the south by the Kane County line, and on the west by the Kane County line.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE

Theodore Hild, National Register Assistant

5 Sept 1975

ORGANIZATION

Div of Historic Sites, Ill. Dept of Conservation

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

839 1/2 North Eleventh Street

TELEPHONE

(815) 758-4993

CITY OR TOWN

De Kalb,

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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Anthony J. Dean

TITLE

Director

DATE

7-9-76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

K-H-52

ILLINOIS HISTORIC SITES SURVEY INVENTORY

NR

200724

1. Name of Site:

Common Le Roy Oakes Forest Preserve
Historic Bryant Durant House, built 1842

2.. Location:

Street and Number Dean St. & Randall Rd. Township St Charles Section 29
City or Town St. Charles Zip Code Range T9N R8E 1/4 Section NE

3. Classification:

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

4. Ownership:

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

Access to Public

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

Present Use (check one or more)

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

5. Ownership of Property:

Owner's Name Kane Co. Forest Preserve District Phone Number

Street and Number

City or Town

State

County

Zip Code

6. Description:

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

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

AGRICULTURE

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

8. Specific Date: 1842

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian |
| <input checked="" 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. Prominent St. Chas. politician, postmaster, brick in St. Chas. 1837-1890. Attended nomination convention when Lincoln nom. for Pres.

9. Form prepared by: Reputed underground RR stop.

Name and Title: Eve Johnson 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.

Kane Co. Biographical History, 1908

