

Sent to Washington
9-22-92

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Stevens House

other names/site number Springer's Folly

2. Location

street & number 140 East Main not for publication

city or town Tiskilwa vicinity

state Illinois code IL county Bureau code 011 zip code 61368

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William L. Lohr, SHPO 9-22-92
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s), district, site, structure, object

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, and Total.

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

- Domestic/single dwelling, Domestic/secondary structure

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

- Domestic/single dwelling, Domestic/secondary structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

- Classical Revival, Greek Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation: Brick, walls: Brick, roof: Asphalt, other: Wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1842-1910

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Matson Library, Princeton, Illinois

Stevens House
Name of Property

Bureau County, Illinois
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	1	6
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2	9	0	1	6	0
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4	5	7	3	9	8	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3

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Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael Springer

organization N/A

date May 5, 1992

street & number 140 East Main

telephone 815/646-4531 or
312/348-7834

city or town Tiskilwa

state Illinois zip code 61368

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Michael Springer

street & number 140 East Main

telephone 815/646-4531 or
312/348-7834

city or town Tiskilwa

state Illinois zip code 61368

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Stevens House

Located in the town of Tiskilwa (Called the "Gem of the Valley")¹, the Stevens House sits on a large double lot at the intersection of Main and High streets at the east end of the business district. This grand and imposing structure, which fills the entire southwest corner, contains some 18 rooms. It has a massive front porch, a carriage house, an ice house, a decorative fish pond and a hitching post.²

The main part of the house was built in 1842.³ The outline of the original building can be seen in the sections that have a full basement under them. It was constructed of bricks that were made at the Stevens' brick yard. This yard was located on a hill south of town and was operated by John Schmidt. The yard also furnished the bricks used in the Methodist Church, Opera House, Union Hall and the other two Stevens homes in Tiskilwa.⁴

The building presently has a brick foundation and brick walls. The walls are 24 inches thick at the ground level and 10 inches on the upper floor. Four chimneys are present. The east chimney was blown off during a storm in 1983 and has been capped. The center one is presently used for the heat plant. The south one was for kitchen, as it is on an outside wall. It extends some eight feet above the roof line. The west one is still operable for its fireplaces. There is a fifth chimney in the northeast corner. It has been removed to the level of the attic floor and the roof built over it. This hipped roof is part of the 1900 renovation and covers the whole building. The original sections of the roof are visible from the attic. They are built of 1 inch by 16 inch lumber. Newer sections are constructed from 1 inch by 7 inch lumber. The gambled end of the original main building separates the attic into two areas. The roof over the solariums is flat.

A cornice comes down two feet from the roof and goes around the entire house. At its very top is sawtooth fretwork. This fretwork is made up of reversing triangles which are jigsawed into single pieces of wood. Similar cornice lines are on all the porches. A second brick cornice line is on the rear section between the first and second floors. It is from when that part of the building had no second floor. The second cornice line matches the one on the carriage house which matches the original profile of the building.

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Stevens House

The north facade is the main entrance. It is designed to give a feel of grandeur as one walks the 80 feet from the street to the front porch. The front porch is 900 square feet, built on a brick foundation with facing stone. The deck is 1-1/3 inch planking. The porch roof is supported by three massive rectangular (two feet by five feet) stone columns at its corners; three octagonal wood pillars with Classical decoration toward the top are in between. Leading from the interior to the front porch is a large picture window (twelve feet by nine feet) with smaller side windows (three feet by nine feet). These side windows originally opened to allow access to the porch in warm weather. To the west of the picture window is the front door. At four feet by nine feet it is an imposing entrance. It is flanked on either side by squared off columns. They have Classical style capitals which match the capitals of the other porch columns. Vertical side windows one foot wide and a large glass door insert give light to the front hall. These side windows are of leaded glass with a design that matches the windows on the second floor. The west wing has a rounded wood bay that extends two feet outward. Three windows are set symmetrically on each floor. These windows, as all others (except the leaded glass), are two-over-two and match those on the east side. Two story pillars matching the octangular ones on the front porch separate the window casements. These windows have flat rather than curved glass. While the front door is slightly off center, symmetry is achieved by the dormer with its circular window at the top of the building. This feeling is further enhanced by the leaded glass arched windows on the second floor. "Decorative lions on the side of the dormer were added at the request of Mrs. Alden Stevens, whose maiden name was Romelia Lyons."⁵

The panel between these two windows is the marking point between the original 1842 building and the west wing addition of 1900. It is a rectangular panel, made of wood and lines up with the center of the dormer. It is inset with an irregular rectangle which makes a distorted cross. This panel is the centerpoint and draw the eyes as one looks at the front.

The west wall is set behind trees and not presently visible from the street. It has no ornamentation; its windows are two-over-two and match those on the east side. A door in the southwest corner of the west wing gives those outside access to a washroom. The door is Classical Revival. Midway back on this wall is the

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Stevens House

solarium addition. It is made of wood with swing-out casement windows. This is the last addition the Stevens family made to the house (1910).⁶ A small deck of treated wood was added to the southwest corner in 1985.

The south facade is the narrowest in the complex. Its windows are two-over-two, but narrower than the rest of the building because they have been fitted around and through (in the first floor) the massive kitchen chimney. The east room features two narrow windows next to each other. This is the only such arrangement in the building. The small screened-in servants' porch to the southeast is also here. Made of matching brick on a concrete foundation, it is also the service entrance from the carriage house. The Classical Revival styled rear door has five panels. A cistern for catching rain water is to the west of this porch. Unused today, it still has its piping for a hand pump.

The east wall was made to be seen from the street. At 76 feet long, it is an imposing fortress-like edifice. The south part of the wall has asymmetrical window placements. Short two-over-two windows denote the bathroom. A brick line above the first floor marks where the second floor was added (1900). The north part windows are symmetrical. This is the older part of the building. There is a side (carriage) porch, the smallest of the three porches. Its trim of sawtooth fretwork and Ionic columns matches that of the main porch, denoting it as a family entrance.

The historical building as it appears in its earliest photographs (about 1860)⁷ was about half the floor space of today. Missing are the west wing, the solariums and the south portion of the second floor. What details appear in the enlargements are now gone. Many of the six-over-six double sash windows with shutters are now covered by the additions. At least two of the window openings are now interior doors. The three cellar windows still exist but now they look out into crawlspace. The northern most still has its trim work. There was a front porch much narrower than the present one. It appears to have five rounded columns. Outside the rear of the building (south end) there appears to be a trapezoid shaped screened-in porch. There is a picket fence along the property line and sparse foliage. There is no second floor, although marks in the plaster on the north wall of the family parlor show a finished attic room existed at one time.

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Stevens House

According to the 1895 photograph, much had changed.⁸ The front porch pillars had been replaced with gingerbread columns. A one-and-one-half story west wing was added. Above the northeast corner the two chimneys, that are now missing, are standing majestically. The house still has shutters and six-over-six window sashes. A picket fence can be seen on the property line.

The 1925 historical photograph⁹ shows the house after the 1900 additions, as it looks today. Gone are the gingerbread columns and the picket fence. The windows are now shutterless and two-over-two. A second floor has been added to the south and west wing. From this point on, the structure of the house did not change.

The carriage house seems to be the same vintage as the house. Constructed of brick, the high roofline would have lined up with original profile of the south wing. The cornice does not match that of the main building. This is not surprising, as it was not expanded with the addition of 1900. A brick belt line matches between the two buildings. Made of three rows of brick, the top row juts out four inches. A single six-over-six window gives light from the north wall of the carriage house. As this window is difficult to reach, it most likely is original. Having only one floor, it is divided into two rooms. The north side still has the horse stall area. The rest is poured concrete. This building is currently used as a garage and is a contributing building.

The ice house is wood construction with clapboards. It was built in 1907 to take advantage of the ice harvested from the newly opened nearby Hennepin Canal. It has hollow walls ten inches thick. Originally, the walls were packed with sawdust for insulation. Single pane windows on the west and south walls were added when it was used as a tool and storage shed. It is a contributing structure.

Thirty-seven feet west of the ice house is the fish pond. Made of poured concrete, it is four feet square and three feet deep. A four foot square cement patio is to the east of it. Records of fish deliveries show it in use during the 1920s. Currently, its walls are cracked and it is filled in with dirt. It is a contributing object. The hitching post to the east is also a contributing object.

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Stevens House

The Stevens house was always intended by the owners to make a statement. One enters through the oversized front door into a foyer wainscoted with cherry wood to a height of six feet. Through the interior door to the downstairs hall, it is wainscoted in matching oak trim. At ten feet wide, the front hall is virtually a room unto itself. Going straight would lead to the staircase. The effect of this hallway is to say the "interior is very formal and planned."¹⁰ This part of the building is the oldest. It sits on a large center beam (ten inches). This beam was squared off by hand. It is visible in the cellar and the ax marks can still be seen. Cut or square nails are used in the older section; wire nails are in the newer section.

A music room is to the left of the front door. It is this room that the picture window leads to. The east wall contains a chimney. This is sealed and has no mantel. As this is the older part of the house, the woodwork is painted. The window trim in this part of the house is Greek Revival in style.

Pocket doors separate the music room from the sitting room to the south. It is a large and comfortable room. The fireplace is the center focus of this room. Its classically inspired mantel is mahogany. The mahogany framed mirror above it is 55 inches in diameter and has a 1-1/2 inch bevel. The side family entrance is to the south of this fireplace. It is an 8 foot door with a 6 foot glass insert.

The next room south is the dining room. Large and stately, it has a brass and crystal oil chandelier. Bay windows to the east make the room bright and airy. The anteroom leads to the solarium which has a western exposure and brings light into the dining room for the whole day. The swinging door to the south leads to the kitchen. If the Stevens family wished to eat without being disturbed, there is a pass-through from the main pantry.

The lower solarium has swing-out casement windows. Inside screens are made of a white cloth material to further brighten the room. It also has a quarry tile floor. Double French doors allow light to pass through to the rest of the house.

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Stevens House

The formal parlor in the northwest end is a dignified room. Trimmed in cherry wood, it has a picture rail. It also has a separate alcove with a window seat. The fireplace has a cherry mantel with a yellow and green tile hearth. Corinthian columns of cherry wood flank the inset mirror above the hearth. This room has cornices which match the window seat and a brass and crystal electric chandelier.

The rear of the house contains the servants' work area. These rooms are smaller and plainer. The kitchen was rebuilt in the 1920s after a fire.¹¹ As a safety feature, it is built with plaster right over the four brick walls. A three foot pine wainscoting surrounds both this and the laundry room. The servants' stairs and the cellar stairs also are in this room. There are two pantries with large built-in cabinets, counterspace and a pie safe.

The grand staircase in the front of the house reflects the taste of the period in which it was built. Made of oak, it is designed to give a large, open impression while taking up little floor space. It has a bannister six inches wide which is supported by turned, tapering spindles. These are squared at both ends. The taper begins on the bottom and sits upon a turned sphere. The balustrades are rectangular and contain a laurel leaf carving around a convex sphere. Its 16 steps leave no doubt as to the social standing of the people who built it. Wide and imposing, its lines are graceful and flow from the front hall as if carved from one piece of wood. Over the staircase is a massive 9 foot by 7-1/2 foot arched leaded glass window. This large opening is oriented to the late afternoon sun. It bathes the whole area in golden light. A balcony leads to the rear of the house. This was added when the maids' quarters were built. Paint marks on the plaster show that the banister once went all the way east to the wall.

There is no library room in the Stevens house. However, the ample space of the upstairs hall is used as such. Its built-in oak bookcases along with the small arched leaded glass window make it a comfortable, bright place for reading.

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Stevens House

The master bedroom to the northwest was originally meant to be a ballroom. The doorway was most likely one of the windows in the 1860 photograph. Done in Mission Oak style, large window seats make the room warm and inviting. A dressing/cloak room with high hooks also once held extra chairs.

The two bedrooms on the east side show a more modest detailing. Spacious and bright they both had fireplaces (only the one in the south room still exists). The south room has wide pine floor boards (six inches) and a plate rail around its perimeter. The outline of a marble sink can be found on the south wall. It had been connected to a cistern for collected rainwater that was in the attic. The sink then drained into the basement. Only the soft lead piping for this system is still in place. A maid's closet with the original Victorian wallpaper is off this room. The doors (four paneled) in these rooms are built with pegs. These rooms contain simple early Greek Revival woodwork.

To the south and up two steps is the family parlor. A place for the children to play,¹² it is a room of simple trim. Originally, this was the end of the second floor living area as the maids' quarters were isolated from the family and only accessible from the kitchen stairs. A door was added in 1989 to make these rooms part of the regular floor plan. The maids' quarters are adequate, but simple. Their trim work is very plain. Not having closets, simple wardrobes of tongue and groove lumber were built into the corners. Only the one in the east room remains. The rooms are bright and warm, but not meant to be part of the family experience. They contain two rooms and a bath.

The Stevens house was well built and meant to last. Over the years as fortunes declined, owners changed. Out of love or indifference, nothing was done to change the integrity of the building. As a time capsule, the interior is as the builders left it. The house was never broken into apartments or left vacant. Memories are strong here. From ghost imprints of missing woodwork to the tombstone¹³ in the cellar, the building lives as it always has. For 125 years (1842-1967) it was in the Stevens family. Now in 1992, it is being restored to its former glory (circa 1900). The Stevens house, hopefully, has a long future as a testimony to the people and forces who built and lived in it.

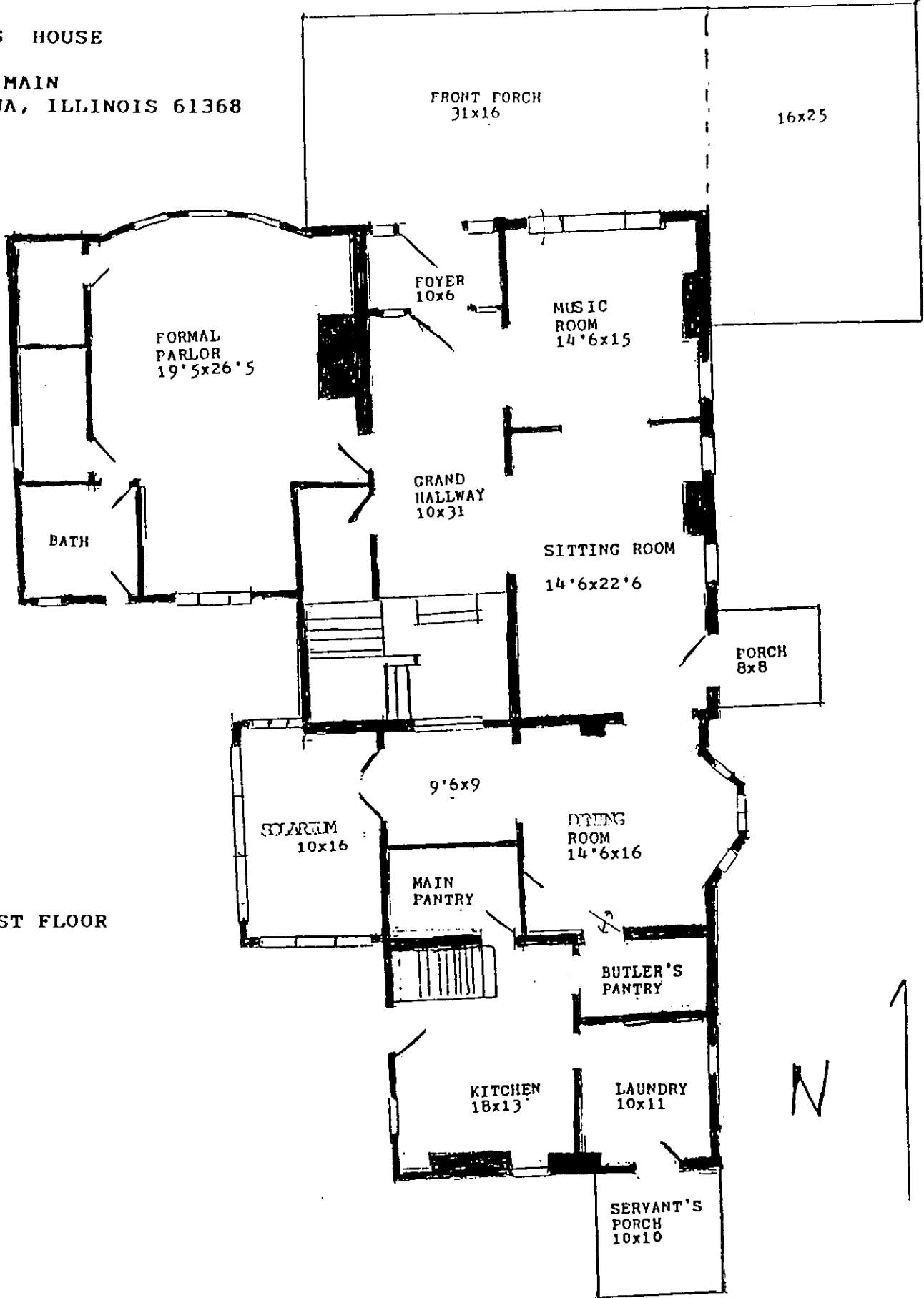
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1. Mary B. Steimle, When Tiskilwa Was Young, pg. 53
2. "A structure of special distinction, having special merit and deserves immediate attention." Illinois Department of Conservation. Inventory of Historic Structures in Bureau County Illinois Historic Site Survey, 1972.
3. Mary Lurena Stubbs The Stevens Family in America Bureau County Historical Society.
4. Mary B. Steimle When Tiskilwas Was Young pg. 33 & 37.
5. Tiskilwa Bicentennial Committee. Tiskilwa: Pictures Past and Present. Bureau Valley Chief, 1976, pg. 13.
6. Wayne Madsen, past owner. Interviewed 5-88.
7. Carol Workman Collection (granddaughter B.N. Stevens II) Actually glass photograph of Methodist Church to west of house. The church was built in 1855. Due to Church's weathering shown in photograph and full petticoated style of women's clothing, picture appears to be circa 1860.
8. IBID. The 1892 county platt book in the Matson Library in Princeton, Illinois shows the outline of the west wing. That along with tree growth gives the approximate age of this photo.
9. Photo found in house. Age comes from truck in lower left corner and fashions worn by unknown people.
10. Tiskilwa Bicentennial Committee, Tiskilwa: Pictures Past and Present, Bureau Valley Chief, 1976, pg. 13.
11. The fire was started when Ellen Stevens Lawton (daughter of B. N. Stevens) threw her sparkler. Ellen Stevens Lawton, Carol Workman, personal interviews 5-90.
12. Ellen Stevens Lawton. Interview 5-90.
13. Tombstone reads "Infant Child of A.N. & R.L. Stevens". The will of A.N. Stevens mentions a still-born daughter. There is such a grave in Mt. Bloom Cemetary in Tiskilwa. It is surmised that this is the original stone brought here after a newer one was set up to match her parents.

STEVENS HOUSE

140 E. MAIN
TISKILWA, ILLINOIS 61368

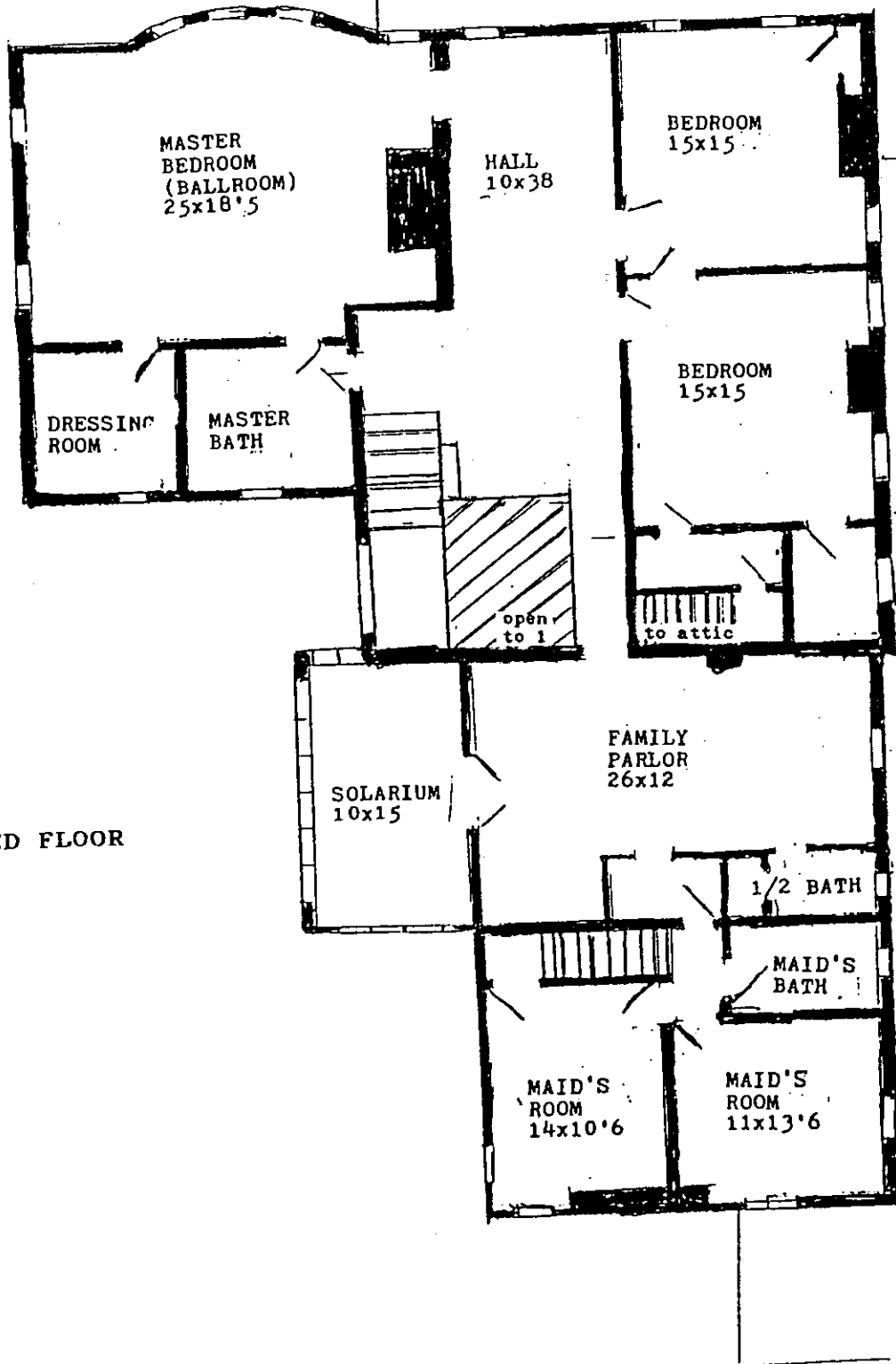


FIRST FLOOR

STEVENS HOUSE

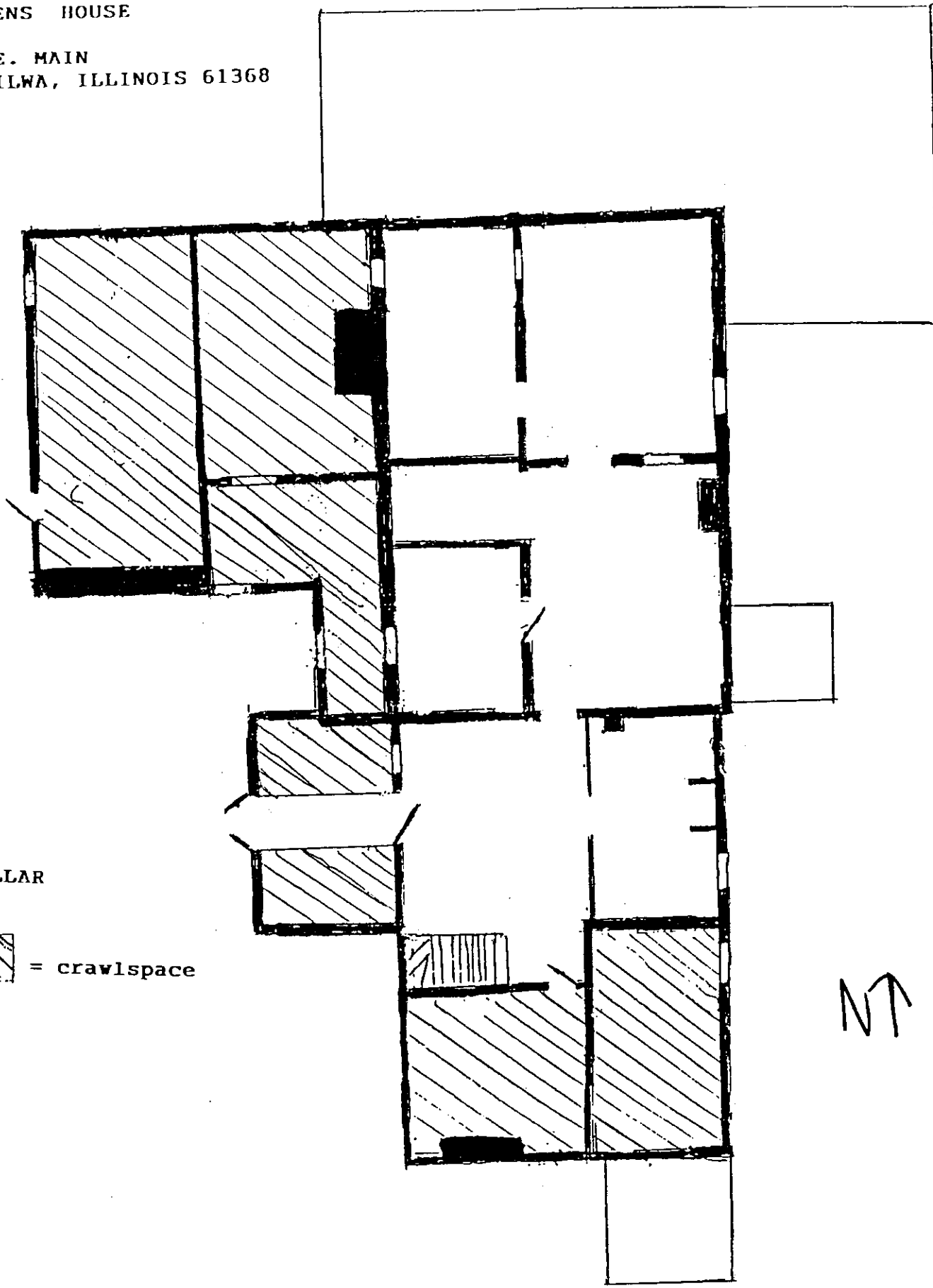
140 E. MAIN
TISKILWA, ILLINOIS 61368

SECOND FLOOR




STEVENS HOUSE

140 E. MAIN
TISKILWA, ILLINOIS 61368



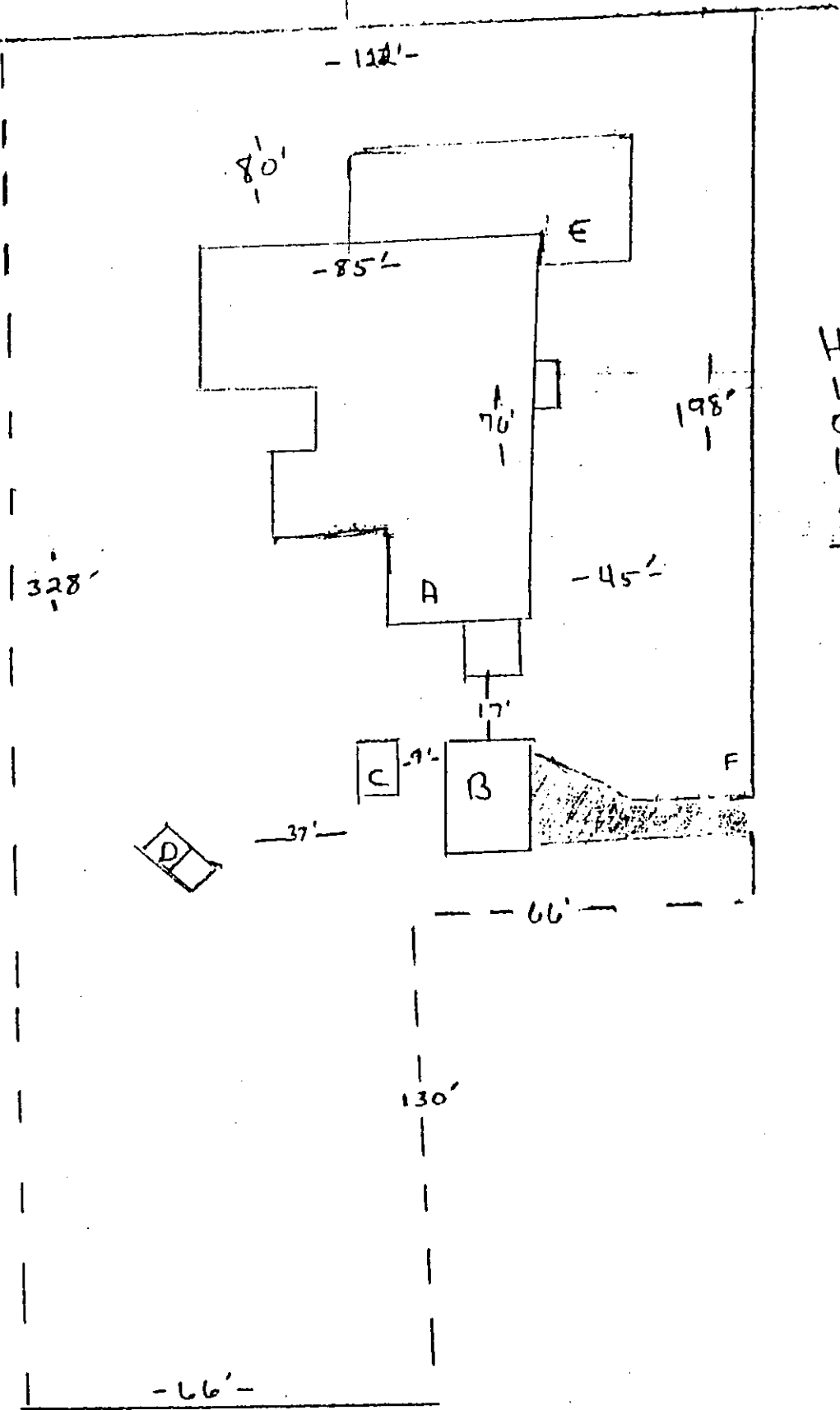
CELLAR

 = crawlspace

NT

STEVENS HOUSE

Main St



- A- STEVENS HOUSE
- B- CARRIAGE HOUSE
- C- ICE HOUSE
- D- FISH POND
- E- FRONT PORCH
- F- HITCHING POST

HIGH ST.

First St.

NOT TO SCALE

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Stevens House

The Stevens House meets Criterion C for architecture for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. It is a fine example of Classical Revival architecture with some earlier 1840s Greek Revival features. The period of significance dates from 1842 to 1910. It is one of the best examples in the Tiskilwa area to demonstrate the earlier use of Greek Revival blended with the later overlay of Classical Revival design. It is a combination not only in building styles, but a reflection of the ideas of the people who resided there. Each generation of the Stevens family had their own ideas of what their home should be. They also had a constant supply of money to make their ideas reality.

In the United States from the 1800s to the early 1900s it was fashionable for the well-to-do to have houses built based on earlier architectural styles. A variety of styles were popular, not only for new home designs, but often existing homes were added to and dramatically changed to incorporate new and more fashionable styles. By accepting the validity of all past styles, architects and designers chose to base their designs on principles which governed all periods of architectural expression. By doing so, they hoped that an authoritative and beautiful architecture appropriate for late 19th century America would emerge. This was the era of the Industrial Revolution and Manifest Destiny. For the people who lived in the Stevens House, the world had changed before their eyes more than for any of their ancestors and, in some ways, more than for their descendants. Only six years before the house was built, the area was a Pottowatomie village.¹

John Stevens was there and saw these changes. He built his house not as a static monument, but as a home that would grow and change both with the times, its residents, and their resources. One cannot easily compare the Stevens house with others in the town of Tiskilwa. It is both one of the oldest (1842) and one of the youngest (last major renovation 1900). Originally it was built with a Greek Revival design.

Greek Revival architecture was the dominant style of American domestic architecture from about 1830 to 1850. Inspired by the archaeological investigations of the late 18th century which emphasized Greece as the mother of our civilization, Greek Revival began and ended in this country with public buildings. The style was spread by carpenters guides and pattern books. The most familiar stereotypes of this style are the full-colonnaded plantation houses of the deep South.²

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Stevens House

It is easy to see why John Stevens chose this style for his house with its columned full width porch. It left little doubt as to the status of the people who lived there. Greek Revival design has a gable or hipped roof of low pitch. Most have porches supported by square or rounded columns. A wide band of cornice trim is an almost universal feature of this design. Window sashes in this style most commonly had six-pane glazing and small frieze-band windows were sometimes set into the wide trim beneath the cornice. All of these elements are present in the oldest surviving photographs of the Stevens House. With its two stories in front, one in back, and the brick walls uninterrupted for the entire length of the building presented a strong contrast with the log cabins that were common in town at the time. Times changed and the Stevens fortune grew. The town prospered and the house kept up with the pace. By 1895, its columns were gone. In their place was gingerbread porch which wrapped around to include both the front and side entrance. Open space on the surrounding ground gave way to planted rows of mature trees. Its long walls and straight perimeter now had the added space of a west wing.

After 1900, the house became Classical Revival in style. The front porch again had columns, but its support was now shared with the plain square end supports. It still wrapped around as it did, but not as far as the side entrance. A single hipped roof covered all the additions to bring them together as one massive building. Its interior was also empty of the elaborate Victorian detail (which was in the other "newer" Stevens House in town). In its place were the clean open lines and open interior spaces. The house currently contains 6,320 square feet of living space.

Classical Revival was an extremely influential style throughout the first two decades of the twentieth century and was responsible for the fad of adding classical ornamentation and detail to existing structures, in addition to building completely new structures in the style. The revival of interest in classical styles dates from the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 which presented a classical theme in buildings designed by leading architects of the time. A mania for classical inspired houses with classical porches and details followed.³

Elements of the Classical Revival style added to the Stevens House in 1900 were the classical inspired porch and bay columns, the low-pitched hipped roof, front facade dormer, and the decorative cornice and frieze line.

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Stevens House

The architect of the renovations in 1900 is unknown. Stylistically, the work on the house appears to have been inspired by the designs of George W. Maher. Such elements as the sawtooth fretwork, front dormer, panel, and even the lions heads are all elements used in his other works in the Chicago area. Having worked with Frank Lloyd Wright, George Maher in the 1890's and 1900's experimented with a variety of styles including Classical Revival. This work brought together with features that signify the Prairie School made George Maher enormously popular for designing residences. "[His work] will have a style of Architecture American but not Colonial. The lines are classic, the surfaces broad and the ornamentation centralized. The style betokens comfort and home in every line."⁴ "So successful was the design that within a few years architects throughout the Midwest were building dozens of houses based on Maher's...types, even today they may be seen in virtually every Midwestern City."⁵

As a family of comfortable means, the Stevens wanted the latest style of the day to show off their wealth and stature in Tiskilwa. Numerous issues of newspapers of the time tell of the Stevens's many trips to Chicago. One issue mentions that a Chicago architect was hired to do the remodeling by the Stevens. With their connections to Chicago by rail, the Stevens were well aware of the latest in architectural design and trends, and chose the very popular Classical Revival style for the large additions and updating of their home.

The Stevens family came to America when William Stevens emigrated to Massachusetts in 1638.⁶ John Stevens, who built the Tiskilwa house, was born in Canterbury, New Hampshire in 1785. He married Submit Newcomb in 1810 and homesteaded on land purchased from Daniel Webster. (The deed with Daniel Webster's signature is still in the family's possession.)⁷ They had eight children, all of whom immigrated to Illinois. Submit Newcomb died in 1825.

In 1835, John came to Tiskilwa, joining his brothers Thomas and Moses who had come to Illinois in 1820.⁸ John was a man of extraordinary energy and tireless activity. He, in company with his sons, established a profitable mercantile business in both Princeton and Tiskilwa.⁹ John acquired much land in the county and in 1842 built "a very fine mansion."¹⁰

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Stevens House

John remarried in 1829 to Mary Campbell Sawyer. No children were born of this union. From his previous marriage one son, Justus, would go on to be the first mayor of nearby Princeton, the seat of Bureau County.

John continued to have a prosperous mercantile business for a number of years. "He used his private means and also his influence to secure the building of the Rock Island Railway through Bureau County and was member of the first Board of Directors of that road."¹¹ John would live in the house "until his death at a very old age."¹² He died on July 8, 1869. His second son, Bradford Newcomb Stevens took possession of the house.

Bradford was born in New Hampshire in 1813. He came to Illinois in 1843 to work in "...the management of the farming, milling and lumber interest of the family."¹³ "He was active and influenced the location of the first railroad in the county."¹⁴ In 1851, he would go to the state capitol to procure needed legislation for it. In 1861 he was elected a supervisor of the County Board for nine terms (one term as Chairman).¹⁵ In 1870 he defeated E. C. Ingersoll and was elected to the Congress of the United States.¹⁶ In Washington he "secured additional appropriations for the Illinois River and thus served his favorite cause of cheap transportation."¹⁷

A private citizen again, in 1873 he spent some time in Chicago (residing at 43 Oak Street).¹⁸ Then, "in 1877 he formed a partnership with John H. Welch and opened the Tiskilwa Bank."¹⁹ This bank would last until the Great Depression, closing its doors in 1933.

Bradford Newcomb Stevens was married to Lydia P. Alden of Lebanon, New Hampshire on September 16, 1839. Miss Alden was a "lineal descendent of John Alden and Priscilla Mullins."²⁰ Bradford and Lydia had two sons, Charles and Alden Newcomb. His last years were spent in retirement from active life and lived at the house in Tiskilwa. He died on November 10, 1885. The house passed to his son, Alden Newcomb.

Alden, who was born in 1846, "made farming his occupation and was managing the real estate interests of the Stevens family."²¹ "He lived and died in the house of his birth, the fine old brick Colonial home in Tiskilwa."²²

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Stevens House

On December 23, 1871, he married Romelia C. Lyons of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Alden and Romelia had the home remodeled in 1900 and the solarium added on in 1910. The lions on the dormer of the present structure are in honor of Romelia's maiden name.²³ Alden died on December 26, 1924. At that time, the old homestead in Tiskilwa passed on to his son, Bradford Newcomb Stevens II who was born in 1879.²⁴

In 1908, Bradford Newcomb Stevens II married Ruth Jackman, whose father, Wilbur Jackman, was dean of the School of Education at the University of Chicago.²⁵ They had two children, Bradford Newcomb III and Ellen. Bradford II would stay connected with the family bank, but would eventually give "his whole attention to the family estate,"²⁶ which by now consisted of town properties and a number of large farming parcels. It was Bradford II's death in 1966 which would lead to the sale of the Tiskilwa house. In all, five generations of the Stevens family would live there over a span of 125 years.

In that century and a quarter, the house made its impression on all who lived there. Those people, in turn, affected the house. The most sweeping of these changes was the 1900 renovation of Alden and Romelia. Romelia had wanted a residence that made a statement of the family's wealth and position in the community.²⁷ The family had to move out for a year as the interior was rebuilt while the additions were constructed. The test of time shows that the Stevens House is a strong classic statement. It shows the evolution of the house from a Greek Revival structure to a much larger Classical Revival structure.

So the house remains to this day. Those whose lives were spent here would recognize most of it. Those who live here today recognize it as an unique inroad to the past.

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Stevens House

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22. Dunne, Edward F. Illinois, Heart of the Nation. Chicago: Lewis Publishing, 1933.

23. Tiskilwa Bicentennial Committee. Tiskilwa, Pictures of the Past and Present. Princeton, Illinois: "Bureau Valley Chief," 1976.

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27. According to Carol Workman (granddaughter of B.N. Stevens, II), when it came time to build the front porch, Alden Stevens would only do so if he got his price for his cattle which were about to be shipped to the Union Stockyards in Chicago. As he got a very grand price, he built a very grand porch.

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Stevens House

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Stevens House

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 103, 104, 69, and the north 26 feet of lot 70, all in the original town, now the village of Tiskilwa, County of Bureau and the State of Illinois. Also know as 140 E. Main, Tiskilwa, Illinois 61368.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the city lots historically associated with the property.



United States Department of the Interior



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

P.O. BOX 37127

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20013-7127

IN REPLY REFER TO:

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. For further information call 202/343-9542.

WEEKLY LIST OF ACTIONS TAKEN ON PROPERTIES: 11/02/92 THROUGH 11/06/92

NOV 13 1992

KEY: State, County, Property Name, Address/Boundary, City, Vicinity, Reference Number NHL Status, Action, Date, Multiple Name

CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES COUNTY, Dewenter mansion, Guest House and Grounds, 6100 Brydon Rd., La Verne, 92001559, NOMINATION, 11/05/92

COLORADO, BOULDER COUNTY, Longmont Carnegie Library, 457 Fourth Ave., Longmont, 92001406, NOMINATION, 11/03/92

COLORADO, DENVER COUNTY, Palmer--Ferril House, 2123 Downing St., Denver, 92001408, NOMINATION, 11/03/92

COLORADO, EL PASO COUNTY, Black Forest School, 6770 Shoup Rd., Colorado Springs, 92001407, NOMINATION, 11/03/92

FLORIDA, DUVAL COUNTY, Woman's Club of Jacksonville, 861 Riverside Ave., Jacksonville, 92001505, NOMINATION, 11/03/92

ILLINOIS, BUREAU COUNTY, Stevens House, 140 E. Main St., Tiskilwa, 92001537, NOMINATION, 11/05/92

ILLINOIS, CHRISTIAN COUNTY, Kitchell Park, Jct. of Ninth and Kitchell Sts., Pana, 92001538, NOMINATION, 11/05/92

ILLINOIS, KANKAKEE COUNTY, Point School, 6976 N. Vincennes Trail, Grant Park vicinity, 92001539, NOMINATION, 11/05/92

ILLINOIS, MACOUPIN COUNTY, Anderson, John C. House, 920 W. Breckenridge St., Carlinville, 92001535, NOMINATION, 11/05/92

ILLINOIS, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, Freeman--Brewer--Sawyer House, 532 S. Main St., Hillsboro, 92001536, NOMINATION, 11/05/92

ILLINOIS, PUTNAM COUNTY, Clear Creek Meeting House, Address Restricted, McNabb vicinity, 92001534, NOMINATION, 11/05/92

LOUISIANA, WEBSTER PARISH, Minden Historic District, Roughly, Broadway, East/West St. and Lewisville Rd. bordering Academy Park and adjacent parts of Elm St. and Fort St., Minden, 92001527, NOMINATION, 11/05/92

MASSACHUSETTS, HAMPSHIRE COUNTY, Cushman Village Historic District, Roughly bounded by E. Leverett Rd. and Pine, Henry, Bridge and State Sts., Amherst, 92001553, NOMINATION, 11/05/92

MASSACHUSETTS, NORFOLK COUNTY, Scott's Woods Historic District, Hillside St. between Randolph Ave. and MDC Blue Hills Reservation, Milton, 92001528, NOMINATION, 11/05/92

NEW YORK, CHEMUNG COUNTY, St. Patrick's Parochial Residence--Convent and School, 515--517 Park Pl., Elmira, 92001561, NOMINATION, 11/05/92

NEW YORK, OTSECO COUNTY, South Worcester Historic District, Jct. of Co. Rt. 40 and Co. Rt. 39 and W along 40, South Worcester, 92001563, NOMINATION, 11/05/92

RHODE ISLAND, PROVIDENCE COUNTY, Whipple--Jenckes House, 2500 Diamond Hill Rd., Cumberland, 92001541, NOMINATION, 11/05/92

RHODE ISLAND, WASHINGTON COUNTY, Kenyon's Department Store, 344 Main St., South Kingstown, 92001540, NOMINATION, 11/05/92

RHODE ISLAND, WASHINGTON COUNTY, Washington County Court House, 3481 Kingstown Rd., South Kingstown, 92001542, NOMINATION, 11/05/92

VERMONT, CHITTENDEN COUNTY, Jericho Village Historic District, VT 15, Plains Rd., Mill St. and Old Pump Rd., Jericho, 92001533, NOMINATION, 11/05/92

WISCONSIN, DANE COUNTY, Ames, Francis Marian Farmstead, 221 US 14, Rutland, 92001555, NOMINATION, 11/05/92

WISCONSIN, DODGE COUNTY, Greenfield, Willard Farmstead, N-7436 WI Trunk Hwy. 26, Burnett Township, Horicon vicinity, 92001557, NOMINATION, 11/05/92

WISCONSIN, GREEN COUNTY, Blumer, Dr. Samuel House, 112 Sixth Ave., New Glarus, 92001556, NOMINATION, 11/05/92

WISCONSIN, PORTAGE COUNTY, Pomeroy, L A House, 203 Laconia St., Amherst, 92001560, NOMINATION, 11/05/92

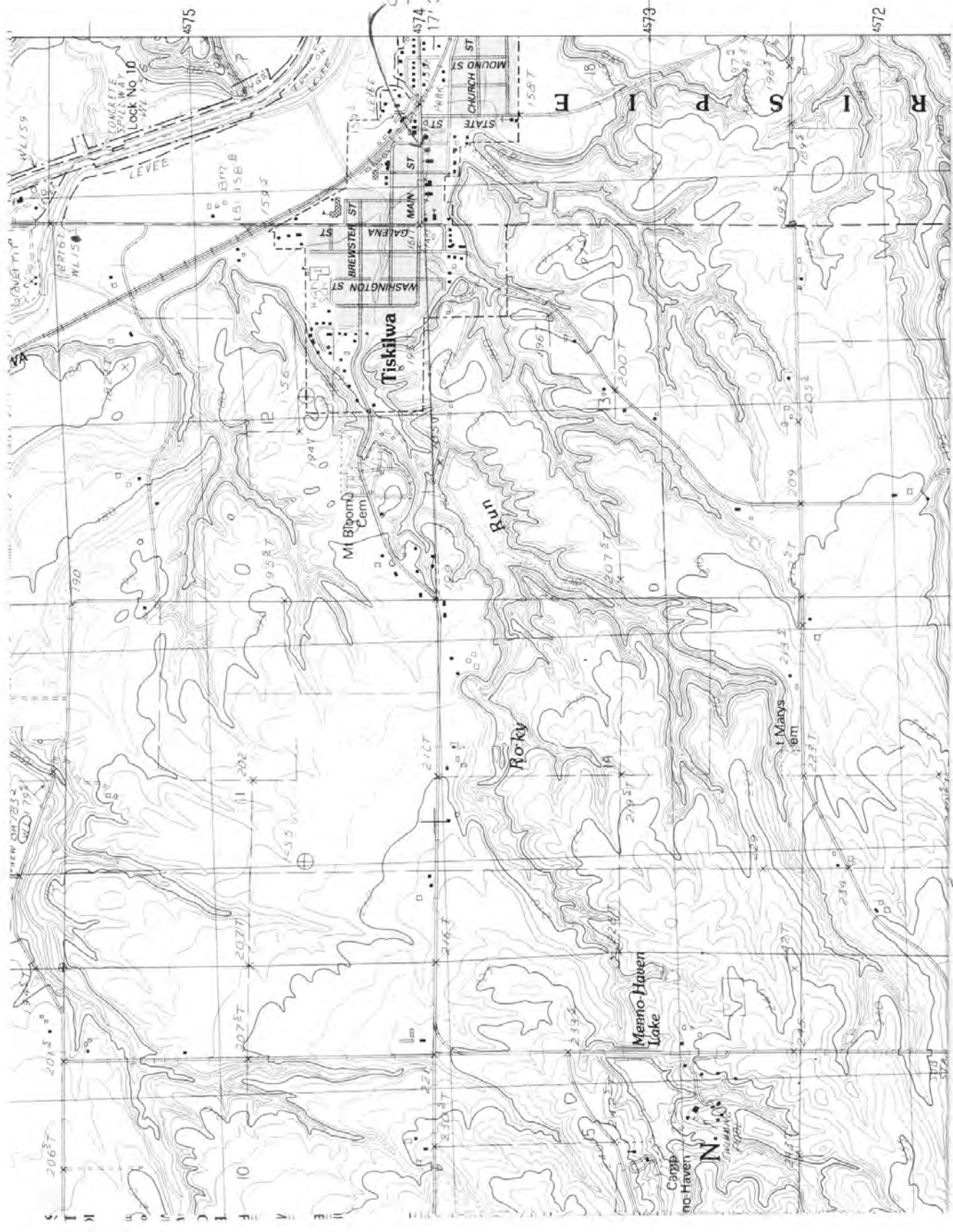
WISCONSIN, ROCK COUNTY, Prospect Hill Historic District, Roughly bounded by Eisenhower, Prospect and Alwood Aves., Milwaukee St., Parker Dr. and Centerway, Janesville, 92001558, NOMINATION, 11/05/92

STEVENS HOUSE

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