

WASHINGTON

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

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

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

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received
date entered

1. Name

historic *Stearns-Wadsworth House*

and/or common *Lake Run Farm*

2. Location

street & number *1 South 570 Bliss Road*

N/A not for publication

city, town *Batavia* vicinity of congressional district *13th*

state *Illinois 60510* code *012* county *Kane* code *089*

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" 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 residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<i>N/A</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name *George H. Alexander, Jr. & Barbara H. Alexander*

street & number *1 South 570 Bliss Road*

city, town *Batavia* vicinity of state *Illinois 60510*

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. *Kane County Court House*

street & number *719 South Batavia Avenue*

city, town *Geneva* state *Illinois 60134*

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title *Midwestern Vernacular Farm Structures in Kane County* has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date *December 1979* federal state county local

depository for survey records *Kane County Urban Development Department*

city, town *Geneva* state *Illinois 60134*

7. 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
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Stearns-Wadsworth House is a two storey, wood-frame, residential building consisting of two attached rectangular structures, constructed in the Victorian Italianate Style.

The north portion is cubic in form with a hipped roof that was originally capped with an enclosed belvedere. All but the structural wall base of the belvedere was removed in 1920. Plans for its restoration are underway now that a section of the original has been located on the property. This portion of the house is four over four in plan with a central stair, terminating at the base of the belvedere; and contains the sleeping and living functions therein.

The south portion is a longer and narrower rectangle, covered by a gable roof, with a bedroom on the second floor and the kitchen and laundry (originally a pantry) functions of the house on the first floor.

There are five uniformly spaced pairs of Italianate brackets on each facade of the north portion; and four pairs, equally spaced on the east and west facades of the south portion; all located under the eave, as part of a typically wide cornice.

The original wood-sash, double-hung, six over six windows are framed with graceful straight-sided arch moulding; and, are positioned symmetrically on the north and east facades of the house, facing the road. The original and replacement windows on the back, or west facade, of the structure are also wood-sash, but with only nominal frame moulding detail and straight lintels. The front entrance retains its original door and arched transom. Together, they are simply trimmed with a wood braid in the frame moulding.

Since its construction in 1868, several generations of open and/or enclosed lean-to type structures have been added and/or removed from the south and southwest facades of the house. These have been stabilized with new floors, walls and roof; and the spaces have been integrated into the interior floor plan.

The original Italianate design porches that covered the length of the east side of the house were removed in 1962 by the previous owner and replaced with smaller inappropriate porches. One of these porches has been already removed by the current owner, and the remaining porch at the front entrance is to be removed so that a remake of the original can be constructed next summer.

The interior wood-work of the door, window and stair mouldings, appropriately scaled to the large rooms, remains virtually intact throughout the house. Interior alterations were made in the 1940's when "modern" plumbing and bathroom facilities were placed in the pantry and kitchen. In 1979 two bathrooms were added in place of closet space upstairs, and the pantry/bath and kitchen areas downstairs were completely renovated.

No structural changes have been made to the original building. The farmhouse is now in excellent condition since the present owners have undertaken the refurbishing and restoration of the structure; all of which is complete on the interior, and most of the exterior.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1868 Builder/Architect George N. Stearns, builder

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Stearns-Wadsworth House is historically and architecturally significant because of the contributions made by George N. Stearns, its builder, and Edgar D. Wadsworth, its second owner, to the establishment of the unincorporated village of Bald Mound, to the development of agriculture and commerce in early rural Kane County; and because the house itself is a noteworthy example of the rapidly disappearing rural vernacular architecture of the nineteenth century.

George N. Stearns was born in Jefferson County, New York in 1829 into a family whose progenitors, immigrating from England, originally settled in Vermont. George and his parents, four brothers, and five sisters moved to Kane County in 1844, merely eleven years after the last Indian treaty in Illinois was signed with the local Pottawatamie Tribe. Henry and Emily Stearns (George's parents) purchased these farm lands in 1845.

In the Census of 1850, George was listed as living in a hotel in Batavia, five miles from the farm. By 1858 he and his wife, Electa M., had purchased Section 23 of the farm from his parents. The original horsebarn and adjoining shed (both extant) were constructed in conjunction with the first dwelling (not extant) which was moved across the road to the north, making way for the new house. When it was built in 1868, to house his family including three children, George N. Stearns was the largest single landholder in the Township. This ample residence, an elegant Italianate, was a testimony to his leadership position in the area.

After George died in 1870, the house and barns were depicted in the Kane County Atlas of 1871 as the residence of his widow, Electa M., and as the most prominent structure in Bald Mound.

A map of Blackberry Township, also appearing in the 1871 Atlas, indicates that the school house and the post-office/general store served the handful of residents that had settled in across the roads from the Stearns homestead. This active post-village was located at the base of a treeless geological promontory, a landmark visible for miles; and, at the intersection of two major transportation routes, connecting the Fox River industrial towns of Batavia and Geneva with the rural villages of Kaneville and Sugar Grove.

Electa M. Stearns died in 1876. The homestead was managed by the heirs when Edgar D. Wadsworth began tenant farming in 1881; and, by 1885 he had completed his purchase of the farm from the Stearns estate. One year later, he initiated plans for the Bald Mound Creamery Company located just to the north of this house and barns. He leased it to P.D. Van Arsdale to operate as a cheese/butter factory and residence until 1903.

The Kane County Atlas of 1892 indicates the Bald Mound Creamery. Wilder's plat (ca.1900) shows a blacksmith's shop on Lake Run Creek, just south of the Creamery. Both businesses were on Wadsworth's property, evidencing his role in the agro-commercial base of the village.

In 1903, the Creamery was converted into the Bald Mound Grist Mill which flourished until 1919. At the turn of the century, the Creamery/Mill was also used to house church services for the local residents.

Wadsworth sold his farm to Andrew Anderson, a dairy and grain farmer in 1920. Then Anderson's son, Edward, took over the farming in 1946, continuing the family operation until 1977. The property was then purchased by the present owners, George and Barbara Alexander, for use as a horse farm.

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Continuation sheet *SIGNIFICANCE*

Item number 8

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The businesses of Bald Mound no longer exist, but the structures they once occupied (with the exception of the blacksmith's shop) - the creamery/cheese factory/grist mill; the post-office/general store; and the school house - are used as residences today, having been altered beyond one's ability to recognize their original uses.

Even the mound itself, after which the village is named, has all but disappeared, subjected to the pressures of intensive gravel mining.

In summary, the Stearns-Wadsworth House is all that remains of a simple settlement that worked up until the wholesale abandonment of horse-drawn transportation early in this century. It was the germ of a town that never happened, and as such, the house is a true remnant of the 19th century and its dominant style of settlement, a style that has all but been eradicated.

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. *New Combination Atlas of Kane County, Ill.* 1871; Thompson & Everts, Geneva, Ill. 1872, pg. 34.
2. *Atlas of Kane County - 1892*, pg. 83.
3. *Atlas of Kane County, Ill. - 1904 (Twentieth Century Atlas of Kane County, Illinois)*

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 0.55 acres

Quadrangle name Sugar Grove, Illinois

Quadrangle scale 1:24 000

UMT References

A 16 383160 4633260
 Zone Easting Northing

B
 Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

That part of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 23, T39N, R7E of the 3rd PM in Blackberry Township, Kane County, Illinois, beginning approximately 500 ft. south of the intersection of Bliss Road and Main Street Road, at a fence corner on the westerly (see continuation sheet)

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title 1) Barbara H. Alexander 2) Deborah J. Kramp

organization date 1 October 1980

street & number 1) 1 South 570 Bliss Road
2) 727 South Fifth Street telephone 1) (312)879-2650
2) (312)892-1002

city or town 1) Batavia
2) Aurora state 1) Illinois 60510
2) Illinois 60505

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature David Perry

title Director date 1/2/81

For HCRS use only I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.	date
Keeper of the National Register	date
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

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Continuation sheet MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES Item number 9

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4. *The Past & Present of Kane County, Illinois - 1878*, Wm. LeBaron, Jr. & Co., Chicago, Ill
5. *Biographical & Historical Record of Kane County, Illinois; Vol. 2, 1888.*
6. *Abstract, Kane County Abstract Company, #141123, Geneva, Illinois, 1897-1941.*
7. *Derry, Vernon, "Our Vanishing Post-Villages", Thrift Corner Yarns, Aurora Federal Savings and Loan Assoc., Aurora, Illinois, Jan.-Feb.-Mar., 1973.*
8. *Wilder, George, plat drawn of Bald Mound, ca. 1900, notes by H.L. Wells, 1912, Geneva, Illinois.*
9. *Interviews with Edward Anderson, Batavia, Illinois (former owner) during Oct. 1977, July 1978, Nov. 1979 and Jan. 1980.*
10. *Interviews with John Thornhill, Registered Land Surveyor, Geneva, Illinois, during November 1977 and January 1980.*
11. *Interviews with Buell Hinds, owner of Bald Mound Stock Farm, Blackberry Township, Illinois, during January 1978.*
12. *Kane County - 1818 - 1968, Illinois Sesquicentennial Booklet, pg. 27.*

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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Stearns-
CONTINUATION SHEET Wadsworth House ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 2

right-of-way line; thence southerly along a picket fence line on the west side of Bliss Road, approximately 140 ft. to the corner of the same fence; thence westerly along a pasture fence approximately 170 ft.; thence northerly at right angles to the last fence line, approximately 140 ft. to a picket fence; thence easterly along the same fence approximately 170 ft. to the fence corner at the beginning.

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

STATE ILLINOIS

Date Entered MARCH 19, 1982

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Stearns-Wadsworth House	Batavia vicinity Kane County
First Methodist Church of Batavia	Batavia Kane County
Svea Music Hall	Rockford Winnebago
Rathje, H. A. Mill	Peotone Will County
Gale, Judge Jacob, House	Peoria Peoria County
Peoria Cordage Company	Peoria County

Notified

Honorable Charles H. Percy
Honorable Alan Dixon
Honorable Tom Corcoran
Honorable Lynn Martin
Honorable George M. O'Brien
Honorable Robert H. Michel

✓ State Historic Preservation Officer
Dr. David Kenney
Director, Department of Conservation
State Office Building
400 South Spring Street
Springfield, Illinois 62706

Midwest Regional Office, NPS