

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**SENT TO D.C.**

4-18-05

**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 any 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 **Burnham, Anita Willets, Log House**

other names/site number **Schmidt-Burnham Log House**

**2. Location**

street & number **1140 Willow Road** \_\_\_\_\_ Not for publication

city or town **Winnetka** \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity

state **Illinois** code **IL** county **Cook** code **031** zip code **60093**

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Wendell L. ...  
Signature of certifying official

4-15-05  
Date

**Illinois Historic Preservation Agency**

State or 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 commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

\_\_\_\_\_  
American Indian Tribe

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

10-26-04

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 any 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 **Burnham, Anita Willets, Log House**

other names/site number **Schmidt-Burnham Log House**

**2. Location**

street & number **1140 Willow Road** \_\_\_\_\_ Not for publication

city or town **Winnetka** \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity

state **Illinois** code **IL** county **Cook** code **031** zip code **60093**

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William C. [Signature] / SHPO  
Signature of certifying official

10-19-04  
Date

**Illinois Historic Preservation Agency**

State or 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 commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

\_\_\_\_\_  
American Indian Tribe

**Burnham, Anita Willets, Log House**  
Name of Property

**Cook County, Illinois**  
County and State

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

**Domestic/single dwelling**

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

**Work in Progress**

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Other: log house**

**Other: Arts and Crafts**

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation    **Concrete**

Roof            **Wood**

Walls          **Log**

other

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

**See Continuation Sheets**

**Burnham, Anita Willets, Log House**  
Name of Property

**Cook County, Illinois**  
County and State

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

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I, hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register ___ See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register ___ See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain):	_____	_____

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**5. Classification**

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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)

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>  1  </u>	<u>  0  </u> buildings
<u>  0  </u>	<u>  0  </u> sites
<u>  0  </u>	<u>  0  </u> structures
<u>  0  </u>	<u>  0  </u> objects
<u>  1  </u>	<u>  0  </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register **N/A**

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

**N/A**

**Burnham, Anita Willets, Log House**  
Name of Property

**Cook County, Illinois**  
County and State

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### 8. Statement of Significance

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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.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a 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)

**Art**  
**Literature**

Period of Significance **1917-1955** Significant Dates **1917, circa 1917**

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) **Burnham, Anita Willets**

Cultural Affiliation **N/A**

Architect/Builder **Unknown**

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) **See Continuation Sheet**

**Burnham, Anita Willets, Log House**  
Name of Property

**Cook County, Illinois**  
County and State

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### 9. Major Bibliographical References

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(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 **Winnetka Historical Society**

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### 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property **less than one acre**

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing

1 16 4381192 4660989 3    \_\_\_\_\_

2    \_\_\_\_\_    4    \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

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

**See Continuation Sheet**

Boundary Justification

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

**See Continuation Sheet**

**Burnham, Anita Willets, Log House**  
Name of Property

**Cook County, Illinois**  
County and State

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title **Gwen Sommers Yant**

organization **Benjamin Historic Certifications**

date **July 26, 2004**

street & number **711 Marion**

telephone **847-432-1865**

city or town **Highland Park** state **Illinois**

zip code **60035**

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**Additional Documentation**

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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)

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**Property Owner**

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

name **Winnetka Historical Society**

street & number **411 Linden**

telephone **847-501-6025**

city or town **Winnetka** state **Illinois**

zip code **60093**

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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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Burnham, Anita Willets, Log House, Cook County, Illinois

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Description

SUMMARY

The Anita Willets Burnham Log House is located at 1140 Willow Road in Crow Island Woods, a preserve owned by the Winnetka Park District in Winnetka, Illinois. Recently acquired by the Winnetka Historical Society, it is the long-time home of the well-known Winnetka artist, writer and lecturer Anita Willets Burnham. The property is comprised of a c.1836 two-story hewn log house and a c. 1917 one-and a half story clapboard rear addition. The center entrance main house is punctuated by regularly spaced double hung windows and topped by a gable roof, while the lean-to addition is lighted by casement windows.

The simple plan of the main house is comprised of a single, open room on the first floor, with a pair of tandem bedrooms on the second floor and an open attic above. The building's structure is visible throughout in the main house, with the walls and ceilings being exposed logs and joists, respectively. The plan of the addition consists of a first floor studio, galley kitchen and powder room, and on the second floor, a balcony connecting flanking bedrooms and a bathroom. The interior walls and much of the ceilings in the addition are finished simply with board and batten, many being colorfully or artistically painted. Major significant interior features include a central double Arts and Crafts fireplace, two story studio space and simple built-ins—closets, cupboards and bookshelves being found throughout the house.

THE HOUSE

The Burnham Log House has a rectangular footprint measuring a total of 26'2" wide by 32' 1 1/2" deep. Its massing is irregular, the result of a lean-to addition attached to the rear of the 2-story rectangular main house. The main house, measuring 14 1/2' deep by 26'2" wide, is constructed of exposed, unstained, square-hewn, horizontal logs, the adz marks of which are clearly visible. The size of the logs gradually decreases in width from bottom to top with the bottom logs measuring nearly a foot in width. They are secured at the corners by square notching and the space between logs is filled with cement. The main house is topped by a side-facing gable roof.

The front facade, which faces northwest, is three bays wide with a center entrance that is skewed slightly east. The entrance is approached by a flagstone walk that leads to a high flagstone step banding the broad, rectangular flagstone stoop. A concrete threshold leads to the deeply recessed entrance door, with its simple wood fascia surround painted white. This wood plank front entry door has a large multi-pane, true divided light upper sash, and an apron below. Three long iron arrow-tipped strap hinges secure the door across the top, bottom and below the window and are attached with regularly spaced large round-headed iron nails. Paired rows of small decorative iron nailwork are found in the apron field near each of the hinges. Attached to the simple curve of the iron strap door handle is a rope that reaches up and feeds



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Burnham, Anita Willets, Log House, Cook County, Illinois

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through a hole at the top of the door's west side rail and lifts the latch on the inside. The main entry door is protected by an in-kind replacement of the existing exterior Dutch door. The vertical planks of the Dutch door are held together by z-bracing and the original door's iron strap hinges are attached to the upper and lower horizontal braces of both door sections. The badly deteriorated original exterior door is safely stored at the Winnetka Historical Society. Each half of the Dutch door is held open by long iron hooks, secured in the wall behind, that attach to eyes fastened on the front of the Dutch door. A light bulb above the center of the door is shielded by a single wood shingle fashioned to serve as a hood.

The front door is flanked by symmetrically placed double-hung windows on the first and second floors, many of which retain their c. 1830s glass.<sup>1</sup> The surrounds of these true-divided-light 6 over 6 windows are simple painted fascia boards secured by early square cut nails. A thin wood sill bounds the window bottoms. Flanking each of the front facade windows are vertical plank shutters painted silvery blue and held together with a strip of horizontal wood bracing at the top and bottom. Iron strap hinges across the face of the braces attach the shutters to the window surround, while short, matching iron straps function as shutterdogs and secure the shutters to the log wall. All strapwork is attached with regularly spaced round-headed nails.

The east (side) facade of the main house is comprised entirely of logs that gradually taper in width up to the roofline. The gable ends on both side facades are identical. They are supported by an exposed framework of hewn structural members backed by plank sheathing. A thin layer of cement covers the exterior surface of the sheathing. The side gable framework holds a small, centrally located, divided-light casement window. Aligned with the gable casement, on the first and second floors of the west side facade, are two double hung windows matching those on the front facade. The gable roof atop the house is covered with wood shingles and drained on the front facade by a wood gutter that pitches toward a wood down spout at the west end of the front facade. (Both the wood gutter and downspout conceals an aluminum gutter and downspout.)

The 1 ½ story rear lean-to, constructed c. 1917, continues the side wall planes of the existing log house. A shed roof, covered with new wood shingles that match those previously existing, tops this addition. The roof is continuous with the log house roof but of a shallower pitch. Centrally located at the junction of the house and addition is a tapestry brick chimney composed of two flues set perpendicular to one another. Each has a slightly different cap detail. The chimney parallel with the house ridge has a single course of projecting headers while a reveal at approximately the same level adds interest to the top of the other. The walls of the addition are sheathed with unpainted clapboard and are otherwise unornamented. The clapboard of the east and west facades is historic; that of the rear facade, which is not visible from the street, is an in-kind replacement necessitated by removal, preparatory to the building's recent move, of a

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<sup>1</sup> Site visit by Tom Vance, Site Manager, Lincoln Log Cabin Historic Site, Lerna, Illinois, August, 2000.

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Burnham, Anita Willets, Log House, Cook County, Illinois

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deteriorated two-story porch that was attached to the rear of the lean-to. (See Criteria Consideration B below for an expanded description of this alteration.)

Painted casement windows with true divided lights and simple painted fascia surrounds punctuate the wall surface of each of the addition's facade. Most of the casement windows are approximately square, divided with both muntins and mullions, and are sunk slightly into the wall plane. Square casements comprise all the fenestration on the first and upper floor of the west facade, and the upper floor of the south and east facades. The remaining windows are ribbons of vertical, rectangular casements of two sizes. Slightly larger, multi-light vertical casements are located on the first floor of the east facade. Smaller, horizontally divided casements flank the double French doors located in the center of the south facade first floor. Copper lantern sconces flank the French doors of this rear facade. All windows are historic, with the exception of the rear facade ribbon casement in the kitchen (i.e. west of the French doors). This ribbon and its surrounding clapboard replaced two openings in the kitchen's rear wall—a doorway and opening for the refrigerator—associated with the removed porch. ( See Criteria Consideration B below for an expanded description of the alteration) Access to the rear entry French doors is by a concrete accessibility ramp, designed as a switch-back to fit the tight, 6' limit of allowable encroachment into the surrounding park. The walls of the ramp are sympathetically faced with random ranged, rock-face limestone blocks, atop which is a compliant metal railing. A single concrete crawl space supports the main house and addition, within which is located the building's mechanicals.

The plan of the structure is simple. The first floor space is almost equally divided horizontally between the main house and the addition. The main house portion is a single room (26' X 15') that connects to the addition by a single door almost on axis with the front door. The addition has a galley kitchen (5' X 10 1/2') and a powder room along the west wall; the studio (13' X 10') occupies the remaining space.

On the second floor, the main house portion is divided into two adjoining bedrooms, the smaller (9' X 14') being on the southwest side. The larger bedroom (14' X 14') contains the staircase to the attic along its northeast wall. The bedrooms are connected to each other by a central door in the shared wall. Second floor spaces wrap the addition's central open space and overlook the studio. These spaces are comprised of a single bedroom (16' X 8') along the east wall and along the west wall a bedroom (9' X 8') and a bathroom (5' X 6"). A balcony across the north wall connects these spaces and accesses the bedrooms of the main house.

The third floor is an open, unfinished attic (26' X 15') with c. 1830 hewn rafters<sup>2</sup> of unfinished round logs that are pegged together. The roof boards are unusually wide and show telltale marks of a reciprocal saw.<sup>3</sup> A patch at the center of the attic roof near the ridge clearly shows the position of the original

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

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Burnham, Anita Willets, Log House, Cook County, Illinois

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chimney. The floor is plank. A trap door in the floor accessing the stairs is held open by a millstone suspended by a rope and pulley.

Access between the first floor and attic is provided by steep, narrow, open stairs along the northeast wall of the main house at each floor. Access between floors in the addition is afforded by a ladder next to the studio fireplace that leads to a small trap door in the balcony floor. The crawl space is accessed by a door between the studio and kitchen.

Fireplaces are located in the main house living room and in the studio. The living room fireplace is almost centrally located on the southeast (back) wall. The body of the fireplace is constructed of the same tapestry brick as the chimney and the fire opening is framed with irregular, rock faced stone. A limestone slab on the east side of the fireplace that projects into the stone hearth provides a natural seat. A square iron strap-hinged door sealing the oven is located on the west side of the fireplace. A broad, thick wood slab mantle extends across the top of the fireplace and adjacent built-in cabinet, to the room's southwest wall. Above the mantle, centered over the firebox is the triangular hood parged with cement, at the top of which is stenciled "The Lord Will Provide", one of Anita's favorite phrases. The simpler studio fireplace backs the main fireplace. It is narrow, constructed of whitewashed brick and has a low, arched opening to the inner hearth.

On the interior of the building, walls, trim and ceilings differ in the main house and addition. In the main house, the walls are whitewashed, exposed square hewn logs. The ceiling rafters of the main house are also exposed. Both the ceiling boards and rafters are whitewashed on the second floor; only the ceiling is whitewashed on the first floor, however blue paint highlights the bottom of each rafter. Three light bulbs with small, pierced metalwork shades light the perimeter of the living room. Trim in the main house is limited on the first floor to painted window surrounds of simple fascias topped by wood brackets supporting curtain poles. Painted fascia boards also flank the doorway joining the main house and addition; on the second floor trim is limited to simple baseboards.

In the addition, trim is mainly comprised of simple fascia casings surrounding the windows and the French doors; narrow fascia baseboard and quarter round are found on the second floor. Trim throughout the addition is painted, as are the studio's balcony railing and interior structural members. The perimeter walls of the addition are board and batten, either colorfully painted or stained. The log wall facing the interior of the addition, however, is exposed and whitewashed. The addition's ceilings are primarily painted wood strips, the most spectacular being the studio's upper ceiling with its blue field, silver stars, central crescent moon and painted batten border. A brass, 6-arm candelabra (non-electrified) hangs from the center of the moon by a long brass chain. The limited areas of ceiling on the studio's first floor have exposed rafters.

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Burnham, Anita Willets, Log House, Cook County, Illinois

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The house floors are exposed concrete poured over a c. 1917 wood floor on the first floor and painted wood strip flooring on the second floor. Doors are vertical plank with z-bracing on the inside. Simple built-ins (closets, cupboards, or shelves) are found in almost every room. They are generally painted plank or board and batten, with strap hinges and simple, carved wood fasteners. The most complex built-ins are found in the main house living room. They are (1) a northwest corner cabinet with a pair of plank doors below and shelves above<sup>4</sup>, (2) a south corner plank cabinet integral with the fireplace, that extends to the west wall, and (3) the nook below the open staircase of the east wall, with its hewn log frame, stairs at the front (north) end, simple shelves at the opposite end, a deep seat-height platform in between and a built-in drawer below the platform. This room also contains a storage cubby with a door over the south corner closet and bookshelves flanking the fireplace. Unadorned built-in closets and cupboards faced with planks or board-and-batten comprise most of the storage in the bedrooms and all the storage in the kitchen and bathrooms. In addition to the front room, built-in shelves are found flanking the windows on the northeast wall of the studio and in the downstairs bathroom. A built in bookcase perpendicular to the studio fireplace, combined with the built in seat tucked between it and the fireplace made for a cozy reading nook.

The small, galley kitchen, located at the northwest end of the addition is virtually unchanged from approximately 1917. Its inside wall, flanked by doorways, was cleverly created by adding a built-in cupboard to the pitched end of the enclosed basement stairway, located between the kitchen and studio. (The basement door is brightly painted with abstract forms punctuated by Anita's son Bud's footprints.) The resulting triangular, open, multifunctional cupboard even contains a marble baking slab. A hinged table leaf is installed beside it on the kitchen side of the stairway wall. A small amount of additional storage is provided on the other walls by a few simple upper cabinets with plank doors. An enameled double wall sink, a shelf above the windows and a cantilevered shelf on the outside wall complete the room's accoutrements.

Adjacent to the kitchen in the west corner of the addition is one of the building's two bathrooms. Actually a powder room, the 4' x 4' room contains matching, c.1960s fixtures and a small, shallow built-in on the southwest wall containing open shelves. The second floor bathroom is located at the northwest end of the balcony. The room measures 4' x 4 1/2' and contains its historic wall sink, medicine cabinet, claw foot tub (the exposed pipes for which front the exposed log wall) and a simple built-in shelf with towel bar.

## RELOCATION

The Burnham Log House is located in the northeast quadrant of Crow Island Woods a 17-acre preserve in southwest Winnetka owned by the Winnetka Park District. The park is bounded by Willow Road on the north, Crow Island School on the east, and residential neighborhoods on the west and south. The

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<sup>4</sup> During Anita's lifetime, there was a divided light casement door protecting the shelves.

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Burnham, Anita Willets, Log House, Cook County, Illinois

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survival of the house depended on its removal, to there in 2003, from its previous site a little more than a mile north at 1407 Tower Road in Winnetka.

The new site, with its mixture of meadow, marsh and woodland is part of the same marsh system as the Tower Road site, and thus conveys the feeling of the open yet sylvan environment the Log House enjoyed when the Burnhams first moved it there in 1917 from its original site in south central Winnetka. The Log House is one of only two structures in the park, the other being a picnic shelter. It is deeply set back from Willow Road, and is oriented northwesterly, with distanced, unobtrusive, winding, handicapped accessible gravel paths leading visitors from the parking lot or street to the house. The front facade faces the meadow and marshland while the remaining three sides are surrounded by woodland similar to that captured in historic photographs of the Tower Road site.

Presently, the structure itself looks very much the way it did when it was moved from the Tower Road site except for the rear facade, which is not visible from the street. An unstained wood, two story, unheated porch was added at the rear. This glazed porch was found to be too deteriorated and unstable to be moved<sup>5</sup>. While it was being dismantled, evidence from numerous changes to the rear facade at access points to the lean-to indicated that the porch was probably a later addition<sup>6</sup>. These changes to the tertiary facade have also been removed and are described below. The house, like its site, now reflects its c. 1917 appearance.

Specific differences in the rear facade between the Tower Road and present site are as follows. At the Tower Road site, the end of the roof across most of the existing rear facade's second floor had been raised slightly to form a shallow wall dormer. Evidence of this alteration was the change of wall material in the two rear bedrooms at the line of interrupted pitch. Then-existing doors at either end of the roof dormer provided access from each of the two rear bedrooms to the porch. The door from the bedroom over the kitchen accessed a deck that was located above the first floor porch and cantilevered out from its side. The door from the bedroom over the studio accessed a glazed and screened sleeping porch that also had an exterior door accessing the deck. Between the bedroom doors, at the roofline was a long panel with a small, square, double-hung window at each end and a hatch door in between. Tellingly, the hatch opened awning-style to reveal the shingled lean-to roof below. Because restoration plans called for the house's return to its 1917 appearance, and because the later porch could neither be moved, nor rebuilt on the new site because of the moving agreement's limitations placed on the building's encroachment into the park, the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor doors accessing it were removed, as was the dormer between them.

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<sup>5</sup> This determination was made by former State Historian and restoration specialist Ron White in 1998, and architect Ken Behles and housemovers Nuelfeldt and Sons in 2002.

<sup>6</sup> That the porch is a later addition is also implied by a 1942 Winnetka Talk article that states, "Since [the house was moved from its original site] there have been two sizeable additions and two fireplaces added". E.G.T. "Historical Society View "Hut" Which May Some Day Be Home". Winnetka Talk, June, 1942.

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Burnham, Anita Willets, Log House, Cook County, Illinois

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The first floor porch was located directly below that of the second floor and projected about 8 feet from the existing rear facade. The rear porch extended from the second window of the studio's (now east) ribbon casement, across almost all of the back of the house. The innermost casement window of this ribbon had been removed and replaced with shelves to mask the framing of the perpendicular porch side wall directly behind. In the present house, this window has been replaced with a custom-milled casement identical to those of the others in the ribbon. .

The porch's first floor was glazed on all three sides with tall, true divided light casement windows. Large squared timbers formed its frame and spandrel area. Hewn log exposed rafters supported the wood floor above; the ground level floor was concrete. Timber braces at the outside corners of the first floor supported the cantilevered ends of the porch's second floor. A pair of centered French doors on the porch's rear facade accessed a small concrete patio. This door was sheltered by a pent roof supported by angled boards flanking the doors. An underground one car concrete garage, with a pair of beadboard strap-hinged garage doors, served as the foundation of the unstained wood porch above. Its concrete ceiling doubled as a floor for the porch. The garage accessed the house's adjoining brick basement through a door in the party wall.

At the Tower Road site, the rear wall of the kitchen was largely occupied by two openings: a door accessing the porch and beside it, an opening that allowed the refrigerator to protrude into the porch but have its door accessible to the interior of the tiny kitchen. No photographic or other evidence documents the historic appearance of the kitchen's original rear wall. In the present location, these two openings at the former porch have been replaced by clapboard and a casement ribbon matching that flanking the other side of the French doors.

Before the Log House was moved in 1917 by the Burnham family to Tower road, it was located on its original site about 2 ¾ miles southeast, on a farmstead on the west side of the Church Street ridge, about 300-400 feet south of Winnetka Avenue<sup>7</sup> and adjacent to the Indian Hill Golf Course. The Log House was sheathed with clapboard, had a wood shingle roof, no shutters, a tall, narrow central brick chimney, simple front and rear porches with roofs supported by square posts, and a rear clapboard lean-to addition with double-hung windows that projected past the end of the house far enough to accommodate a doorway. Although the log house portion was always two stories, the ceiling of each floor had been raised about a foot.

The Burnhams moved the log house-- without the lean to or chimney-- to Tower Road and subsequently added a new clapboard lean-to, double fireplace, interior built-ins, a pergola across the front and back (which were removed during Anita's lifetime), and eventually the rear two-story porch above the garage.

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<sup>7</sup> (Frank Windes caption on back of picture of house on its original site)

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They also added minimal hardscaping: in the front, a concrete front stoop with side steps fronted by a flagstone patio and flagstone steppers to the street; in the rear, a concrete patio.

The Log House was gifted by the last surviving child of significant artist/author Anita Willets Burnham, per the publicly expressed wishes of her mother, to the Winnetka Historical Society in 2001. The gift was conditioned on moving the house so that the lot could be sold by the estate. The gift was accepted and the condition was honored by moving the house to the only site that was available in the built-out community of Winnetka--Crow Island Woods, approximately one mile south. The move was made possible through the cooperation of the Winnetka Historical Society, Winnetka Park District (which owns Crow Island Woods), Village of Winnetka, and the Winnetka School District, which owns the National Register-listed Crow Island School, which is situated on a wooded property directly east of Crow Island Woods.

Like the Tower Road site, the Log House at Crow Island Woods faces a major east-west Winnetka street largely consisting of single-family homes. An extension of the Skokie Swamp lies to the west, much like the early Tower Toad neighborhood. And like the Tower Road lot, the house sits on a slight rise, is nestled in the corner of a woody backdrop, is fronted by a tree-studded lawn, approached via a winding flagstone path, and viewed from the street through open trees. The house was deeply set back on its lot, an illusion that was made all the deeper by foreground trees. This sense remains in the new location. The absolute distance of the setback is greater at the present site, however, because of the existing location of the mature backdrop trees in Crow Island Woods. The present setback enables the house to be nestled against a woody backdrop, just as it was on Tower Road. Handicapped accessibility was both desired and a requirement, and an ADA-compliant ramp was constructed at the rear of the Log House. Because it needed to be designed to fit within the tight, six-foot limit of encroachment beyond the perimeter of the Log House that had been negotiated between the Winnetka Historical Society and the Winnetka Park District, the ramp snakes along the rear façade and thus is large relative to the size of the Log House. The skewed (northwesterly) orientation of the building hides almost all of the ramp as viewed from the street. Augmented planting is planned to further make the house look as it did at the Tower Road site in 1917. Ironically, Anita Willets Burnham moved the Log House to Tower Road that year under circumstances similar to its present relocation-- the land beneath it was purchased for a news use.

Despite its life-saving move and the removal of the post-1917 alterations to the rear facade (which is not visible from the public way in its present location) the Log House has excellent integrity—on both the exterior and interior--related to its appearance during the productive years of artist, author and lecturer Anita Willets Burnham. The imprint of Anita's life and work on the interior of the house, and the strength of her association with the structure, is only enhanced by the Winnetka Historical Society's Burnham Collection of original furniture, paintings, a large number of interior artifacts, and voluminous papers. The Historical Society's sizeable collection of archival photographs, and its commitment to preserve the structure's historic integrity, have underlain and continue to guide the responsible restoration of the house to its 1917 appearance for the education and enjoyment of Winnetka residents.

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Statement of Significance

SUMMARY

The Anita Willets Burnham Log House in Winnetka, Illinois has local significance and meets Criteria B for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Its period of significance dates from 1917 (when Anita Willets Burnham purchased and moved the Log House from south central Winnetka to the edge of the Skokie Marsh in northwest Winnetka), until 1955, the fifty-year cutoff for significance to the National Register.

The house meets Criterion B as the property most closely associated with Mrs. Burnham during her career as a well known artist on the local and state levels and later, as a widely traveled author and lecturer known on the local, state and national levels. Anita Willets Burnham lived and worked at the Log House, which served as her home and studio, for 41 years. Not only was The Log House the residence she occupied the longest, it was the locus of much of her artistic creation and teaching, a focus of her art and was an integral part of the subjects of her widely disseminated literature and lectures.

The property also meets Criteria Consideration B, "A building or structure removed from its original location but which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event." The Log House is documented to 1841 but historic newspapers strongly suggest that it dates to 1836 or before. The Log House was moved by Anita Willets Burnham in 1917 from its original location in south-central Winnetka to 1407 Tower Road, at the edge of the Skokie marsh in northwest Winnetka. The Burnhams immediately added the existing rear lean-to and sometime later, a two-story wood porch with deck supported by an underground garage. It remained in this location for 86 years.

Anita Willets Burnham highly valued the Log House for its historical and architectural importance as a rare survivor. She foresightedly preserved it within the context of prevailing artistic and cultural values, and enthusiastically shared its early history with village residents and famous guests during her lifetime. Her fondest wish-- for its legacy to be perpetuated under the stewardship of the Winnetka Historical Society— was realized in 2000 after the death of her daughter, Ann Hibbard Burnham Smith, the house's last Burnham family resident. The house was gifted to the Winnetka Historical Society and moved approximately 1 mile south to its present site in 2003, as the only alternative to demolition. Because of severe deterioration, the post-1917 two-story porch was unable to be moved. The building is being returned to its 1917 appearance, with the present marshland site carefully chosen to evoke its 1917 setting.



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EARLY HISTORY

Anita Willets was born in Brooklyn, New York on August 22, 1880. She was the 6<sup>th</sup> of 8 children born to Joseph Hewlett Willets (1840-1911) and Marie Louise Nichols (1839-1894). Her lineage on both sides of the family traced its American roots back to the early colonial period, a fact of which Anita was very proud and which later, may have been among the factors that attracted her to the Log House. Family names were passed on to her own children—for example eldest daughter Caroline Louise and only son Willets. Ancestral luminaries on the Willets side included William Washburn, the joint purchaser of Oyster Bay, Long Island in 1653, and George Hewlett, one of the judges who sentenced King Charles I to beheading in 1648 and who emigrated to America a year later, only to have his first house destroyed by Indians.<sup>1</sup>

Anita's girlhood diaries and drawings<sup>2</sup> reveal an intellectually curious, artistically gifted child, characteristics that would define her throughout her prolific life. The family moved to Chicago in 1883<sup>3</sup>, after her father, Joseph Willets had himself resided there a year while he was employed by F.A. Fletcher and Co. The following year his business is listed in the Chicago Directory as Willets, Usborn and Phelps. After living briefly at 147 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 3241 Michigan Avenue the Burnhams settled down in 1886 at 2804 Indiana Avenue<sup>4</sup> and Anita was educated in the Chicago public schools.<sup>5</sup> The family appeared in the Blue Books in the 1890s, and was definitely living in Chicago in 1893, the year of the most artistically important event between the first quarters of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the World's Columbian Exposition, held just 4 ½ miles south of her own house.

Held to celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Christopher Columbus' discovery of America, the Columbian Exposition also showcased the rise of the broad-shouldered city that, just 20 years before, had been reduced to ashes by the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. Its planners, led by Chicago's acclaimed architect Daniel Burnham (Anita's future cousin-in-law), were determined not only to outshine the last world's fair held in Philadelphia in 1876 in celebration of 100 years of American independence, but to show that Chicago had "arrived" culturally as well. It was into this cultural milieu that Anita would soon become actively involved.

They succeeded-- spectacularly. The fair was attended by almost ½ the people of the nation. Goods were brought from every corner of the world. For the 13-year-old, future globe-trotter Anita, it must have been dazzling. More significantly for the budding artist, art played a role of unprecedented importance, with the fair's Palace of Fine Arts (today's Museum of Science and Industry) displaying the "most

<sup>1</sup> Willets Family Tree. Anita Willets Burnham (AWB) Collection, Winnetka Historical Society (WHS).

<sup>2</sup> Winnetka Historical Society, AWB Collection. Unaccessioned diaries.

<sup>3</sup> *Lakeside Annual Directory of the City of Chicago*. Chicago: The Chicago Directory Company, 1883.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 1881-1893

<sup>5</sup> *Whos' Who in Chicago and Illinois, 1946*. (Chicago: Marquis Co.)

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complete exhibition of art ever assembled under one roof<sup>6</sup>, including contributed by acclaimed artists who would be her teachers. The American retrospective section alone occupied 15 rooms containing “2,000 oil paintings, 200 water colors, and proportional displays of pastels, drawings, prints and sculpture.”<sup>7</sup>

Thus, the 1893 World’s Fair is a window on the art world Anita would soon enter as a student and whose values she would absorb. Those values, shared by the public, were distinctly traditional and realistic. In the realm of art, the effects of the Columbian Exposition were long lasting. “The Fair reinforced the prestige of European art as the standard by which the native product should be measured. The Fair’s architecture declared this to all the world, and the artists of the next few decades did not gainsay it.”<sup>8</sup> In fact, “[the] traditional flavor ... imparted to the city’s art scene ...was almost totally undisturbed until the 1920s”<sup>9</sup>.

#### ART SCHOOLS

Six years after the Fair, Anita, proud of her ancestral pedigree, set about building a artistic pedigree of which she could be equally proud, beginning with education.

Anita’s talent gained her entry into four of the country’s most important art schools—in Chicago, the Art Institute (1899-1903, 1905, 1906)<sup>10</sup>, in Philadelphia, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (1903<sup>11</sup>, and in New York City, both the Art Students League<sup>12</sup> and the National Academy of Design (1904)<sup>13</sup>. At these institutions, and later, in Paris, she trained under many of the most prestigious teachers of the day. The style and principles gained during the course of her student training account, in large measure, for the subject matter, style, media and quality of the art she produced during her long, versatile, prolific career.

The Art Institute of Chicago, incorporated under an Act of the Legislature of Illinois in 1879, had developed into a nationally important art school by the time of Anita’s student tenure at the turn of the

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<sup>6</sup> Esther Sparks. “A Biographical Dictionary of Painters and Sculptors in Illinois, 1808-1945”. Ph.D. dissertation. Northwestern University, 1971. p. 114.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*-

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p 121-2.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p99.

<sup>10</sup> School of the Art Institute Archives. Chicago, IL. Student record card.

<sup>11</sup> E-mail 3/1/04, Cheryl Leibold, Archivist, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, “She was a student...1903-04. Her address at the time was given as 2804 Indiana Avenue, Chicago, IL”.

<sup>12</sup> Chris Petteys. Dictionary of Women Artists: An international Dictionary of Women Artists Born Before 1900. Boston: G.K.Hall and Co. no date) p.109.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Marshall Price, Assist Curator, NAD, New York City, 3/17/04, “admitted 1904...address 78 W. 106<sup>th</sup> St., NYC”.

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century. “In the first decade of its existence, the Art Institute became the center of art in Illinois and the most important institution between Cleveland and St. Louis. Its school was the most important between New York and San Francisco before the turn of the century. Its annual exhibitions of American artists rivaled similar events at the National Academy of Design.”<sup>14</sup>

The school was directed from 1879 until 1914 by Harvard-educated William M. R. French (brother of the celebrated sculptor Daniel Chester French), who played a major role in determining the School’s educational policies, and probably its early European bias.<sup>15</sup> An important change at the School that occurred around the time of Anita’s attendance as a student, and one from which she undoubtedly benefited, was “the gradual development of practical ability on the part of the students.”<sup>16</sup> Thus, for example, in response to well-paid job opportunities for illustrators in the developing magazine and book markets, illustration education was expanded with courses on lettering and cartooning, as well as opportunities to carry out actual commissions. Anita took both illustration and lettering and would later apply these skills. The field of mural painting also offered a means of synthesizing the practical and the academic, a field Anita would also enter to a limited degree.

The school continued to grow in size and stature during the course of Anita Willets Burnham’s long affiliation as an instructor, but never wavered from its mission of “the active encouragement of individual creative growth through methods which avoid the spectacular and superficial, but which are progressive in the best sense of the word, and are based on the mature experience of a distinguished faculty”.<sup>17</sup> Anita would take these words to heart.

Beginning at the Art Institute, Anita studied with some of the finest artists and teachers of the day—a necessity for aspiring artists. From them she learned not only the technical, aesthetic and philosophical aspects of art as a profession, but the career steps necessary to succeed as one. As was expected, these luminaries studied at the oldest, most prestigious art schools in America, and even more importantly, trained in Europe under German masters or particularly under masters in one of the Paris Academies.

One of the most important of Anita’s instructors while a student at the School of the Art Institute was John H. Vanderpoel (1857-1911). Painter, teacher, muralist, illustrator and writer, Netherlands-born Vanderpoel trained at the Chicago Academy of Design and at the prestigious Academie Julian in Paris. Although his early paintings concentrate on Dutch genre scenes, his style, like so many noteworthy artists and teachers of the period, was formed in France.<sup>18</sup> Disabled by a fall as a teenager and later, losing the

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<sup>14</sup> Sparks. p. 95.

<sup>15</sup> Roger Gilmore, ed., *Over a Century: A History of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 1866-1981*. Chicago: The School of the Art Institute, 1982. p.70 .

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* p. 76.

<sup>17</sup> School of the Art Institute of Chicago Archives *Catalogue*, 1938-9. p1.

<sup>18</sup> Sparks. p. 105.

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sight of one eye, he nonetheless became a highly influential teacher at the Art Institute from 1888-1916, twenty years of which he served as head instructor. Renowned artist Georgia O'Keefe, in fact, praised him as "one of the few real teachers I have known."<sup>19</sup> A firm believer in disciplined drawing, he "[brought] a significant emphasis on draughtsmanship to the School of the Art Institute curriculum"<sup>20</sup>. His teaching method was based on careful observation from life, which he underscored in class with an amusing anecdote about a teacher in Paris who ridiculed him for being the only pupil to put six toes on a drawing---until the teacher realized the model's actual foot matched the drawing<sup>21</sup>. In addition to teaching at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (AIC) he taught, classes---both indoors and outdoors---at various locations in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan and authored the classic art instruction book The Human Figure. The dynamic Vanderpoel founded the Chicago Art League in 1880 and was a founder and long-time president of the important Chicago Society of Artists ( which Anita later joined), in addition to other important memberships.

In 1913, this award-winning artist was memorialized by his former neighbors in the affluent Chicago neighborhood of Beverly Hills with the founding of the John H. Vanderpoel Art Association and Memorial Art Collection, both of which continue to thrive. To the latter were donated works solicited from many of the artist whose lives he had touched. Mrs. William R. French, friend and neighbor of Vanderpoel and wife of the Art Institute's director, was one of the energetic organizers of the collection. It was in response to her personal solicitation that Anita confirmed a donation with one of her signature "artistic postcards" ---of the Log House, in fact, and gave two pieces, a watercolor titled "Lumber: Seattle" and an oil painting titled "Reflections", both of which remain in the collection<sup>22</sup>. Anita is known to also have participated in at least two of the Association's annual exhibitions<sup>23</sup>.

At the Art Institute she also studied with portrait, figurative and landscape painter Lawton S. Parker (1868-1954). Trained at the Art Students League in New York and in Paris at both the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and Academic Julian, this widely-exhibited, award-winning artist taught at several American art schools, in addition to establishing his own academic in Paris.<sup>24</sup> An outgrowth of his extensive Parisian academy involvement, during Anita's student tenure Lawton introduced a competitive system of "Ateliers" (studios) and "concours" (competitions) that eventually replaced the AIC school's academic diploma by 1906 in most disciplines (excepting architecture, design and education). The change was

<sup>19</sup> Peter Hastings Falk, ed. *Who was Who in American Art: 1564-1975, Four Hundred years of Artists in America*. Madison, CT: Sound View Press, 1999. p.3384.

<sup>20</sup> Sparks. p.106.

<sup>21</sup> Gilmore. p. 71.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Sydney Hamper. Vanderpoel Art Collection. Chicago, IL.,3/15/04.

<sup>23</sup> Undated catalogues (2) , John H. Vanderpoel Memorial Art Gallery/Art Association, Longwood Drive, Beverly., Burnham Family Collection.

<sup>24</sup> Falk. *Who was Who in American Art: 1564-1975*. p. 2523.

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grounded in the dual philosophy that competition motivated student effort and that “graduation” in art was a fallacy.<sup>25</sup>

The influence of the Munich ateliers was also felt at the AIC and reached a crest in the 1890s with the return of the award-winning painter and etcher Frederick Warren Freer (1849-1908), with whom Anita studied. “The Munich ateliers taught a style of painting...combining the rich dark tonalities of the Dutch Masters with an admiration for [Gustav] Courbet’s realism. The ‘Munich Style’ put a premium on spontaneity, eliminating the discipline of line in favor of direct “drawing” with a heavily-loaded brush.”

<sup>26</sup> A rigid formula was not preached during Anita’s student tenure, however---Freer and many other Royal Bavarian-trained artists having also traveled to Paris. Thus, “the outlook was broad enough to absorb.. ,[John Singer] Sargent, [James Mc Neill] Whistler and other [ French] influences without a feeling of contradiction.”<sup>27</sup> Freer is best known for his genre scenes, interiors, portraits and figures, and worked primarily in oil and watercolor. A native of Chicago and son of the president of Rush Medical College, he was the winner of medals at many major expositions, taught at the Art Student’s League in New York, was elected an Associate of the National Academy of Design in 1887 and after serving for more than a decade on the faculty of the AIC, was appointed director of the Chicago Academy of Design in 1906.<sup>28</sup>

Danish-born John Christen Johansen (1876-1964) completes the list of Anita’s primary teachers at the School of the Art Institute. Trained at the AIC under Vanderpoel and Freer and in Paris under several masters, including James McNeill Whistler, Johansen is best known for his portraits, landscapes, genre and interior scenes, and employed a combination of luminist, tonalist and impressionist styles.<sup>29</sup> A trip to Venice taken by Johansen in 1905, the year of Anita’s return to the AIC, resulted in a group of much praised work. Trips abroad would serve as impetus and inspiration for much of Anita’s future *oeuvre* as well.. While a student, Anita taught at the AIC to earn her tuition.<sup>30</sup>

In 1903, Anita moved to Philadelphia to study at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts (PAFA) in Philadelphia. Founded in 1805, it is America’s first art museum and school of the fine arts, and remains to this day, one of its most distinguished. Anita studied there under the distinguished portrait, landscape and still-life painter William Merritt Chase (1849-1916). Internationally acclaimed as one of America’s greatest Impressionist masters, his European peers in Gilded Age salon portraiture included Anders

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<sup>25</sup> Gilmore. p. 74.

<sup>26</sup> Sparks. p. 103.

<sup>27</sup> Sparks. p. 105.

<sup>28</sup> Margaret Bullock, Biography of Frederick Warren Freer, Ask Art, [www.askart.com/biography.asp](http://www.askart.com/biography.asp)

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Who’s Who in Chicago and Illinois*, 1946, p 136

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Zorn and the American expatriate John Singer Sargent. The talented Chase was also one of the country's most influential teachers, with many of his pupils going on to become famous artists in their own right<sup>31</sup>. The genial, Indiana-born Chase founded the first school of open-air painting in America at Shinnecock, New York.

While a student at the PAFA, the 24-year-old Anita also taught there<sup>32</sup> and transcript records indicate that two of her works were shown at the PAFA's 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition of Water Colors, Prints, and Drawings in 1907, "Market Day in Chicago Ghetto" and "Git Your Bargains, Ladies: Chicago Ghetto."<sup>33</sup>

The following year, 1904 Anita enrolled at the Art Students League (ASL) in New York City. Established in 1875 it quickly rose to become one of America's most important art schools—so important, that many art schools in major cities offered scholarships to study there.<sup>34</sup> At the Art Students League Anita studied with Frank Vincent Du Mond (1865-1951), one of the school's most influential teachers. Du Mond was a renowned painter of luminous Impressionist landscapes as well as an illustrator, genre, portrait, landscape painter and muralist. Trained at the ASL and in Paris at the Academie Julian, he became a member of many organizations, including the Society of Mural Painters and exhibited widely, winning prizes at several major expositions.<sup>35</sup> In addition to teaching at the Pratt Institute in New York, he was appointed the director of the Lyme, Connecticut Summer School of Art, one of the foremost outdoor summer art schools in the country.<sup>36</sup> Open-air painting would play a major role in Anita's career as a mature artist. Her listings in multiple Who's Whos also record that she studied at the ASL with etcher Ralph M. Pearson (1883-1958), who was also trained under John Vanderpoel at the AIC.<sup>37</sup>

While in New York the same year (1904) Anita attended the National Academy of Design. There she took two classes—Antique (drawing from antique casts) and Painting. She is listed as living at 78 W. 106<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>38</sup> Founded in 1825 by such leading artists as Samuel F. B. Morse, Asher B. Durand and Thomas Cole, the National Academy of Design contains the oldest school of art in New York City. Modeled after the British Royal Academy, eminent professional artists elected as Academy members by their peers served as instructors of the school. Academicians both past and present encompass many of the nation's leading painters, sculptors, architects and printmakers and include Frederick E. Church, Thomas Eakins, Winslow Homer, John Singer Sargent, Frank Lloyd Wright, Jasper Johns, I.M. Pei and Frank Gehry. Its mission, "to promote the fine arts in America through instruction and exhibition," has been steadfastly advanced not only through the quality of its instruction, but also through the exhibitions held

<sup>31</sup> Falk: *Who was Who in American Art: 1564-1975*, p.

<sup>32</sup> Catalogue, Marshall Field and Company Picture Galleries. "Exhibition and Sale of Oil Paintings and Water Colors by Anita Willets Burnham". March 17-29, 1913. Winnetka Historical Society, AWB Collection, unaccessioned.

<sup>33</sup> E-mail, Cheryl Leibold, Archivist, PAFA, 3/1/04

<sup>34</sup> Falk, *Who was Who in American Art*. (Madison, CT.:Sound View Press) p 22

<sup>35</sup> Falk, *Who was Who in American Art, 1564-1975*. p.977.

<sup>36</sup> Ask Art. Frank Vincent DuMond biography, [www.askart.com/biography](http://www.askart.com/biography)

<sup>37</sup> Falk. *Who was Who in American Art, 1564-1975*. p.2554-5.

<sup>38</sup> Marshall Price, Assistant Curator, National Academy of Design. Telephone interview, 3/17/04

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annually since its inception and exposure to its museum, which, to Anita's benefit, houses one of the largest and broadest public collections of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century American art in the country.<sup>39</sup>

Finally, Anita-- like so many other American art students whose numbers swelled from the 1870's through the 1920-- sought to improve her technique, increase her acquaintance with emerging art forms and elevate her stature by studying at a European academy, particularly a Parisian one. In Paris, during the 1921 European trip she immortalized in her book, Round the World on a Penny, she studied with renowned Spanish painter Claudio Castelucho (1870-1927) at the Academie de la Grande Chaumiere, one of the five principle Parisian academies that were attended by Americans. Castelucho, a highly sought-after teacher of American art students, also served as director and master instructor at his own academic, Academie Castelucho, in the Montparnasse section of Paris<sup>40</sup>

In Paris, she also studied with Philadelphia and Paris academy -trained Cecelia Beaux (1855-1942), one of the country's most important women portrait painters of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The great William Merritt Chase, glowingly characterized her as not only "the greatest living woman painter, but the best that ever lived"<sup>41</sup> From 1895 to 1915 Beaux was appointed as the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts' first full-time female instructor, but frequently returned to France. She remained a prominent member of the national and international art community, being a member of important societies (such as the Societe des Beaux-Arts, Paris), winning prestigious prizes (such as a medal at the 1915 Panama Pacific Exposition in which Anita also exhibited), becoming part of premier art collections (including the Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy) and attracting commissions from such important sitters as Henry James and Theodore Roosevelt.<sup>42</sup>

#### EARLY CAREER

Her training concluded, Anita launched herself as a professional artist--joining prominent art societies, teaching, and exhibiting in venues commensurate with the quality of her education. Primarily a painter, the body of her adult work was executed largely in watercolor. However over the course of her long career, the versatile Anita would practice in a variety of media-- oil, charcoal, pastels, crayon, pen and ink and at least one known mural. Her wide-ranging subject matter included portraits, landscapes, nature studies, genre scenes and streetscapes.

Reflecting the times and her academic training was the realism that remained the basis of Anita's painting and drawing style throughout her life. Realistic painting, in fact, dominated the Illinois art scene

<sup>39</sup> National Academy of Design, <http://www.nationalacademy.org/school/history.html>.

<sup>40</sup> Falk. *Who's Who in American Art*. pp. 35-6.

<sup>41</sup> Judith A Barter, Kimberly Rhodes and Seth A. Thayer,. *American Arts at the Art Institute of Chicago: From Colonial Times to World War I*, New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1998. p.280.

<sup>42</sup> Falk. *Who was Who in American Art: 15641975*. p. 252.

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through the mid-1930s, underlain by the sincere conviction of established artists, mainstream critics and the respected art societies alike “that traditional standards of realism were worthy of honor.”<sup>43</sup> Anita developed her distinctive painting style early in her career, a style well summarized by a c. 1942 newspaper review of a watercolor exhibit at the AIC, “...she is a genius for composition and color, putting touches of humor here and there and more than a few touches of sentiment”.<sup>44</sup> Characteristically, the ebullient artist and teacher shared her passion with readers encouragingly adding that “anybody can paint.”

Like most of the conscientious realists in the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and for much of her career, Anita sketched and painted out of doors. In fact, it was during one of many painting expeditions in Winnetka that she discovered the Log House in 1914. A combination of market forces, training and personal preference may account for her *plien air* propensity. In the period “from the Fair to WW I landscapes filled the exhibitions and won the prizes”<sup>45</sup>, and even continuing into the period between the wars “[r]ealistic landscape painting formed the staple of exhibitions and teaching outside of Chicago”<sup>46</sup>. Esther Sparks further posits contemporary art influences that would have attracted Anita and other artists working in the period in this direction: “Impressionism’s enduring influence and concern with natural light” (transmitted to Anita by some of the finest French-trained American Impressionist artists and teachers including Beaux and Chase), “a liberation from accurate representational drawing provided by Munich-trained teachers” (such as Freer), and “a growing awareness of the American landscape tradition as well as interest in native locales”<sup>47</sup>, that was fueled nationally by the nativist sentiments of World War I<sup>48</sup>. In the Chicago area these sentiments grew locally out of the Prairie School and especially the Prairie Landscape movement, the latter lead by neighboring Ravinia, Illinois landscape architect, Jens Jensen.

In addition to being a painter, the prolific Anita Willets Burnham was an illustrator and etcher. A large number of original plates exist for the bookplates, logos and personalized cards she designed for numerous important individuals such as Lake Forest resident Mary Shedd Reed (whose father’s family established Chicago’s Shedd Aquarium is named), and Max Adler (the founder of Chicago’s Adler Planetarium), as well as for institutions such as Vassar College Library and organizations such as the National Sculpture Society<sup>49</sup>. The material, style and subject matter of the plates was equally diverse and demonstrated both the breadth of her artistic knowledge and her technical proficiency. Wood block, cardboard, linoleum cut and copper plates depict a variety of subjects including architecture, landscape,

<sup>43</sup> Sparks. p. 182.

<sup>44</sup> “Mrs. Burnham’s Exhibit Opens”. Newspaper clipping (no source or author). Winnetka Historical Society. AWB Collection. Untitled c.1942 scrapbook (unaccessioned).

<sup>45</sup> Sparks. p. 138.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, p. 185.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*. p. 138.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*. p.183.

<sup>49</sup> Winnetka Historical Society. AWB collection.



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interiors and crests in styles drawing from Arts and Crafts, Art Deco, Japanese prints, cartoon and primitive influences.

Anita's boundless imagination spilled over into weaving and crafting as well.<sup>50</sup> Enormously creative, her voluminous notes--which fill every square inch of many scrapbooks or are hastily penciled on any available scrap of paper-- are bursting with ideas for everything from woven reed baby rattles, to recycling old shirts into towel rolls, to a jig-sawed row of wooden flowers which charmingly, but effectively serve as a guard rail for one of the children's bedroom windows in the Log House.

Marriage and Family

Besides being a gifted artist, Anita was a dedicated one. Thus, when she met and fell in love with Chicagoan Alfred Newton Burnham (1878-1957), his proposal of marriage left her torn between her heart and her art. His witty retort, "Why can't you have a baby and paint one too?" proved irresistible and they were married in her parents' house on April 18, 1906.

Like Anita, Alfred was a descendant of colonial stock that dated back to the very beginnings of this country in the 1630s. Burnham ancestral luminaries held large tracts of land in colonial Massachusetts, were seated in the General Court, founded the state of Vermont and included his cousin, the renowned Chicago architect and city planner, Daniel Hudson Burnham (1846-1912).<sup>51</sup> Burnham, IL was named for Alfred's investor father. Alfred, a graduate of the University of Chicago, followed many of his ancestors into the law and became associated with the major corporation Chicago Title and Trust Company.<sup>52</sup> He and Anita shared an artistic spirit, and his complementary interests in poetry and printing produced many recreational collaborations. Alfred wrote poetry for Anita's arts organizations, and printed her "artistic postcards". In 1920, they were awarded the top prize for two carved dolls they jointly entered in the an AIC exhibit showcasing the progress of beauty in the design of American toys.<sup>53</sup>

After living in Chicago at 28 E. 44<sup>th</sup> Place, they moved to the city's suburban North Shore in 1910, residing at 125 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Wilmette, IL. Two years later they had moved two suburbs north to 1255 Asbury in the northerly Hubbard Woods section of Winnetka, IL.<sup>54</sup> Their union produced four children, Caroline Louise (also known as Carol-Lou or Kee, 1908-1997), Florence Adele (also known as Flo or Sis, b. 1909), Willets McIntyre (also known as Bud, b. 1911), and Ann Hibbard (1920-2000)

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<sup>50</sup> . Winnetka Historical Society. AWB Collection. Unaccessioned engagement book 1930-33, Typed biography (undated) lists "-painter, etcher, craftsman"

<sup>51</sup> Charles Moore. *Daniel Burnham, Architect Planner of Cities, Vol I*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company 1921. pp 1-12.

<sup>52</sup> Obituary, "Alfred N. Burnham". *Winnetka Talk*. 4/25/57.

<sup>53</sup> "The Toy Exhibition". *Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago*, January 1920, p. 8-9.

<sup>54</sup> Peter Hastings Falk, ed. *The Annual Exhibition Record of the Art Institute of Chicago, 1880-1950*. Madison, CT: Sound View Press, 1990.

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Affiliations

*The gauntlet through which artists must run in order to achieve recognition has not changed since the mid nineteenth century. The stages that have served to launch artists' careers have been the art galleries, artists' clubs, competitions, and the important salon-type exhibitions at museums. Without these venues and the concomitant exposure by the critics, an artist's chances of being discovered and gaining lasting recognition in his or her lifetime are remote. For women artists, those chances are even more remote.*

----Peter Hastings Falk, "On Rediscovering Forgotten American Artists and the Role of the Sound View Press", Who was Who in American Art, pp40-1

Consistent with her education and areas of artistic interest, Anita affiliated with the city's respected clubs and arts societies. These specialized organizations, formed by the artists themselves, drew artists together, provided a forum for the dissemination of ideas, sponsored exhibitions and facilitated commissions. Many such organizations had been started between the Chicago fire of 1871 and the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, and a few notable groups, such as the Arts Club of Chicago, were added in the period up until WW I. The Art Institute, the epicenter of Chicago art, served as headquarters for many of the major arts societies, such as the Chicago Society of Artists Society of Etchers, Western Art Association, and the Art Students League. The AIC provided space for the regular exhibitions and receptions they and other art societies held there into the 1930s<sup>55</sup>

Anita is known to have belonged to many of the city's major arts and arts-related organizations, beginning as a student with her membership in the Art Student's League (ASL)\*. The ASL, organized in 1893 and incorporated in 1911, was the oldest honor society at the School of the Art Institute, with admission being based on the quality of work submitted. The organization offered annual juried exhibits at the AIC and an auction.<sup>56</sup>, with Anita winning the ASL first watercolor prize in 1903 and 1907. Anita was awarded the AIC Goodman Prize in 1916<sup>57</sup>. Subsequent memberships included the venerable Chicago Society of Artists\* organized in 1888 largely by distinguished AIC faculty members<sup>58</sup>; Artists Guild of Chicago\*, established 1881<sup>59</sup>; Art Fellowship Association of the AIC\* ; Water Color Society of America, founded in New York in 1866 and sponsor of annual juried exhibitions at the AIC, many of which Anita participated in, and the Chicago Water Color Club<sup>60</sup>. Clubs of which she was a member include The Arts Club of Chicago\*, which opened in 1916 and held regular exhibitions at the AIC until 1922, focusing on Illinois artists<sup>61</sup>; the McDowell Club<sup>62</sup> and the Cordon Club. The latter, was founded in

<sup>55</sup> Sparks. p. 96.

<sup>56</sup> AIC Archives. *Catalogue, School of the Art Institute*, 1935-6.

<sup>57</sup> Sparks. p. 314.

<sup>58</sup> Sparks. p. 101.

<sup>59</sup> Sparks. p. 102.

<sup>60</sup> Marshall Field and Co. Exhibition Catalogue, 1913.

<sup>61</sup> Sparks. p 135.

<sup>62</sup> *Who's Who in Chicago and Vicinity, 1931*. (Chicago, IL: A.N. Marquis Co.)

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1915 by women with studios in the Fine Arts Building, the center of Chicago's fine arts community and located just south of the AIC. Anita was a charter member of this club "created to foster independence and to 'guard and protect self-expression beyond domestic bounds' <sup>63\*</sup>

Art societies were formed in several locales around the state of Illinois as well. The more important groups, such as the Rockford Art Association (founded 1913), the Decatur Art Center (founded 1917), and the Aurora Art League (founded 1919) sponsored regular exhibitions, lectures and classes and brought in quality paintings from Chicago, New York, and other cities.<sup>64</sup> Anita would exhibit at several of these locales, including the Rockford Art Association in 1934<sup>65</sup> and become a charter and lifetime member, as well as a director, of the North Shore Art League, founded in 1924.

### Exhibitions

For Illinois artists, the Art Institute's annual Exhibition of Chicago Artists (changed to Chicago and Vicinity Artists in 1913 to more correctly recognize its regional nature) was the best opportunity to present their work to the public. Reflecting prevailing taste, representational art was the norm. A few avant-garde canvasses testifying to the new developments in European abstraction were admitted in the 1920s, but overwhelmingly these exhibitions were dominated by conservative juries until at least the mid-1930s.<sup>66</sup> Anita participated in the Chicago and/or Vicinity Artists shows eight times between 1903 and 1926, and again in 1946 for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary exhibition.<sup>67</sup> She was a frequent exhibitor at the Art Institute at a variety of other shows, with many different organizations, through the early 1930's. These included American Water Colors, Pastels and Miniatures Exhibitions<sup>68</sup> in 1907, 1908, 1910, 1912, 1914, 1917, 1918, and 1919<sup>69</sup>; International Water Color Exhibition in 1923, 1925, and 1931; with the Art Student's League in 1903, 1907, 1910, 1914, 1916, 1917, and 1923; American Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions in 1918, and 1931<sup>70</sup>; an American Oils Exhibition in 1907; with the American Society of Etchers in 1915; and the Society of Western Artists<sup>71</sup> in 1906 and 1907. In total, Anita is known to have exhibited at the AIC in 1902, 1903, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1912, 1914, 1915, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1931, and 1946.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> University of Illinois Chicago, Library, Special Collections  
[www.uic.edu/depts/lib/specialcoll/services/rjd/findingaids/Abirminghamb.html](http://www.uic.edu/depts/lib/specialcoll/services/rjd/findingaids/Abirminghamb.html)

<sup>64</sup> Sparks. p.135.

<sup>65</sup> Winnetka Historical Society. AWB Collection. Unaccessioned Clipping .

<sup>66</sup> Sparks. p. 168.

<sup>67</sup> AIC Archives, Artists and Exhibitions card file

<sup>68</sup> Sparks. p. 314.

<sup>69</sup> AIC Archives, Artists and Exhibitions card file.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

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In the years before acquiring the Log House, she exhibited in other respected venues as well. World's Fairs, being international showcases for art, were an important addition to the exhibition record of

artists in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Anita exhibited in the last of the great fairs comprising "the golden age of expositions" the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco in 1915, where she was awarded 3 prizes for water colors<sup>73</sup>. Later, she would not only work as a staff member at the 1933 Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago, but exhibit her literary and art work there as well.

Galleries were also beginning to come into their own, with middle class buyers purchasing an increasing share of the merchandise. Between the wars, the overwhelming majority of paintings sold were in the conservative, representational style and while American work was beginning to sell, in general, galleries sold few paintings by local artists.<sup>74</sup> Anita Willets Burnham, however, exhibited solo at two of the great Chicago department stores. In 1913, the Picture Gallery at retail giant Marshall Field and Co held an "Exhibition and Sale of Oil Paintings and Water Colors by Anita Willets Burnham", March 17-29. Forty-nine works were offered. An undated clipping from the Lake Shore News about the exhibition (pasted to the back of the catalogue) noted, "Mrs. Burnham is a former student and teacher at the Art Institute and her many friends and pupils in Glencoe are glad of this opportunity to view her excellent work". Anita's entry in the 1946 Who's Who in Chicago and Illinois notes that the great Carson Pirie Scott and Co. department store also held a "One-Man" exhibition of her work (no date is noted, however). Later, she would also be part of a group show at the Mandel Brothers Department Store Galleries.

## ACQUIRING THE LOG HOUSE

### Discovery

Sustaining a busy career and a growing family defined Anita's life for most of the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Fortuitously, her creative multi-tasking led Anita to discover the Log House-- then sheathed with clapboards and located just west of the ridge near the intersection of the present Hill Road and Church Streets in Winnetka-- while on a Spring painting expedition in 1914. With her three small children, perambulator (doubling as storage for scavenged firewood) and painting paraphernalia in tow, she was inspired to capture the romantic image of the "tumble-down house"<sup>75</sup> framed by an orchard of apple trees (her favorite) in bloom. Having "always longed to live in the shade of an old apple tree"<sup>76</sup>,

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<sup>73</sup> *Who's Who in Chicago and Vicinity, 1931*

<sup>74</sup> Sparks. p. 176.

<sup>75</sup> Anita Willets Burnham, "Winnetka's Old Log House" A lecture given by the author at the meeting of the Winnetka Historical Society held in her home, June 7, 1942, p.1. Winnetka Historical Society. AWB Collection .

<sup>76</sup> Anita Willets Burnham, *Round the World on a Penny*. New York: Covici, Friede, 1937. p.9.

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inspiration quickly turned to desire when the house's renter invited her in to rest and told her that the house under the apple trees was a log cabin more than 100 years old.

"To possess it possessed me."<sup>77</sup>

History of the Log House to 1914

The log construction that so captured Anita's imagination was introduced to America's eastern seaboard in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by western Europeans whose prehistoric ancestors had developed the techniques.<sup>78</sup> It is theorized that as settlement of the continent progressed, log construction technique differed regionally, depending on the country of origin of the settlers. Late in the 1600s, the "Pennsylvania Germans" (who emigrated from the present day Czech Republic and Switzerland as well as Germany) brought a building type called the "continental log house", which was characterized by horizontal logs secured at the corners by one of several types of notching. English settlers, by contrast, continued their tradition of heavy timber framing.

The most current physical and archival research<sup>79</sup> on the Winnetka log house reveals that the location Anita first discovered it was the original site, that the structure was probably built before 1836, was of the single pen (room) plan and that it had always been a two story log house, not an enlarged log cabin. The latter distinction is important. Whereas log cabins were generally small, impermanent, one to one-and-a-half story structures and hastily constructed with unfinished round logs, log houses were larger, more permanent dwellings constructed of hewn logs, of one to two stories, and of more complex notched construction.<sup>80</sup> Thus, the log house Anita eventually acquired measured 16' X 25', whereas the typical log cabin was 16' X 18'.

The logs comprising the Burnham house are roughly hewn (ax marks are clearly visible) on all four sides everywhere but in the attic, and are held together at the corners with the square notching technique that required a moderate degree of skill to execute<sup>81</sup>. By locking the log ends in place, notching provided much of the rigidity and stability of the building. As was typical, this log house was clad with clapboard siding not too long after initial construction.<sup>82</sup>, since settlers aspired over time to ever more refined housing. Log construction expert Tom Vance confirmed during an August, 2000 site visit however, that the house

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<sup>77</sup> Burnham. "Winnetka's Old log House". p.2.

<sup>78</sup> E. Duane Elbert and Keith A. Sculle, "Log Buildings in Illinois: Their Interpretation and Preservation", *Illinois Preservation Series*, Number #, Illinois Department of Conservation, Division of Historic Sites. p. 2.

<sup>79</sup> Over 1000 hours have been invested since March, 2000 by the Winnetka Historical Society staff and assistants investigating the origins of the log house. Sources consulted include the National Archives, Chicago Title and Trust, the Newberry Library, other historical societies and a variety of experts.

<sup>80</sup> Elbert and Sculle. p. 2.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* p. 3.

<sup>82</sup> Site visit by Tom Vance, Site Manager, Lincoln Log Cabin Historic Site, Lerna, Illinois, August, 2000.

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was originally constructed with the intention of having the logs exposed, reasoning that if the house were intended to be immediately sheathed with clapboard, the logs would have been set farther apart and less well finished. That the logs remained exposed for several years is also evident by the pattern of wear on their exterior.<sup>83</sup>

The first documented owner of the Log House was Peter Schmidt, who purchased it in 1841 from John Malter, probably a land speculator, who acquired it from the U.S government only days before.<sup>84</sup> Records of ownership do not exist before that time because the land was not available for sale by the U.S. government until 1841. Schmidt family lore has it that the house was already on the property when the earliest family members arrived in Chicago after emigrating from Koblenz, Germany in 1826. This tale appears to be borne out, in part, by a March 12, 1836 advertisement in the weekly newspaper the Chicago American:

*For Sale*

*A valuable Claim situated on the Milwaukee [sic] Road, about two miles [word obliterated] of "Mr. Patterson's," and sixteen miles from Chicago, all timber, consisting of Burr, White and Red Oak, with Bass and Poplar. The Improvements are a Log House (now occupied [sic] 4 acres Cleared, fit for Ploughing--. The soil is of superior quality, well watered, and a living spring adjoins.*

*The above will be sold a great bargain at private sale. Apply to  
W. Montgomery, Auctioneer*

This description is significant in many respects, beginning with the correlation of material. Testing confirms that the lower courses of the Burnham house are comprised of white oak logs.<sup>85</sup> Chestnut, white oak, cedar and fir were desirable because these trees could provide long, straight, rot-resistant logs. Woods were often mixed, with the harder, heavier, rot-resistant wood such as white oak being used for the foundation "sill log" and lighter, more-easily hewn wood such as yellow poplar for the upper log course<sup>86</sup>

The year 1836 would date the Log House to the earliest period of Winnetka history, which began in 1830 with the arrival of pioneer farmers such as Simon Doyle<sup>87</sup>, followed in 1836 by the arrival of North Shore pioneer Alexander McDaniel. The Erastus Patterson mentioned in the advertisement above also arrived

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> Tract Index Search. Chicago Title Insurance Company. July 19, 2000.

<sup>85</sup> Testing of the lower courses of logs was conducted by Bob Przewlocki of Preservation Trades. Interview with Joan Evanich, Executive Director, Winnetka Historical Society, July 20, 2004.

<sup>86</sup> Bruce D. Bomberger, "The Preservation and Repair of Historic Log Buildings", *Preservation Brief #26*, U. S; Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, Preservation Assistance, p.6.

<sup>87</sup> Caroline Thomas Harnsberger, *Winnetka: The Biography of a Village*. Evanston, IL: The Schori Press, 1977. p. 249.

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in 1836 and built a two room log house on the section of Winnetka's lake bluff now named Lloyd Park<sup>88</sup>. Significantly, as in the advertisement, the Patterson site is located approximately 2 miles northwest of the original Schmidt log house site.

Indeed, the entire lakeshore north of Chicago was characterized in the 1830s by this pattern of "scattered, isolated, and unplanned" development and habitation, according to North Shore historian Michael Ebner.<sup>89</sup> Chicago itself possessed a population of merely 150 when it was incorporated as a town three years earlier (1833)<sup>90</sup>; Cook County was created only two years before Chicago. The end of the Blackhawk War, its concluding Treaty of Chicago and the consequent removal of the area's Native inhabitants west of the Mississippi shortly after Chicago's incorporation enabled the town to blossom quickly thereafter. An early product of this bloom was Green Bay Road, also known as "the Milwaukee Road" that was referenced in the above advertisement. The Log House was constructed along the road. Around it was centered the "scattered, isolated, unplanned" habitation pattern of the early North Shore. So named because it followed an old Indian trail running due north from Chicago along a ridge parallel to Lake Michigan and passing through Milwaukee to its terminus at Green Bay, Wisconsin, the Green Bay Road served as the infant North Shore's primary land connection with burgeoning Chicago.

The North Shore's "scattered, isolated development" of the 1830s included some known log residences (demolished), notably Simon Doyle's log cabin near Lake Michigan at the present Winnetka-Kenilworth border, and the log cabin of Antoine and Archange Ouilmette, farther south in present Wilmette. Today, it is important to note however, that while settlement patterns in Illinois were such that "log structures of almost every type were built [well past mid-century], and no style is unique to Illinois", log structures were more rare in the upper third of Illinois.<sup>91</sup> Unlike southern and central Illinois, it was largely settled after the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 by New Englanders whose English heritage did not include the use of log construction. The invention of balloon frame construction in Chicago in 1833 also may account for the early eclipse of log construction in this area. The Burnham log house is thus a rare survivor of a relatively rare building type in northeast Illinois.

The Log House passed to Peter Schmidt's son of the same name, who raised a family of 10 children there. Five more owners subsequently held title to the property—Michael Schafer (1870), Clariet Aldrich (1875), Walter Fant (1884), Carl Waldron (1911) and Charles Joy (1913).<sup>92</sup> By the Civil War, residents of log structures considered their homes primitive and collectively, the previous owners improved the

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.* p.2.

<sup>89</sup> Michael Ebner. *Creating Chicago's North Shore*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988. p. 12.

<sup>90</sup> Harnsberger. p. 1.

<sup>91</sup> Elbert and Sculle. p.2.

<sup>92</sup> Tract Index Search, Chicago Title Insurance Company, July 19, 2000. Winnetka Historical Society, AWB Collection.

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house Anita purchased with clapboard siding, porches at the front and rear<sup>93</sup>, raised ceilings,<sup>94</sup> plastered interior walls and the addition of a rear lean-to.

Acquisition

After a three year courtship of the log house's owner (a Mr. Charles Joy residing on Wilson Avenue in Chicago) with visits and "home-made artistic postcards"<sup>95</sup>, she determined Mrs. Burnham was able to buy the house, but not the land which was sold to the adjoining Indian Hill Country Club. Anita paid Mr. Joy the \$25 prize money she had earned for one of her paintings, struck a bargain with the Log House renter to continue payments to her for several months (whereby she recouped her investment) and closed a \$100 dollar deal to remove it with Glencoe house mover Mr. Eisenberger.<sup>96</sup>

"Pick[ing] it up from its foundation of logs and sand",<sup>97</sup> Mr. Eisenberger's team of horses slowly moved the house, on rollers, over the course of three days<sup>98</sup>, north on Green Bay Road (then Church Road) and west on Tower Road (then North Avenue) to the outskirts of Winnetka where the Burnhams had purchased a small wooded lot at the edge of the Skokie Valley marsh, to what is today the northwest corner of Tower Road and Vernon Avenue. The house was placed on a new brick foundation and Mrs. Burnham, aided by the neighborhood children, promptly began removing the deteriorated exterior shingles and interior plaster, eventually revealing the log structure within and without. The tale of this transformation was endlessly recounted by Anita, who ironically ended it with Mr. Eisenberger incredulously asking the frugal Mrs. B. whether she realized that her contract specified additional time and cost for a guarantee not to crack the plaster!

The house's new setting had one shortcoming—the name of its street. Consequently, the gregarious Anita soon initiated a petition to change unimaginative "North Avenue" to lofty "Tower Road". The new name was suggested by her neighbor and friend, the eminent attorney Laird Bell, and inspired by the towers flanking the mile-long street-- the water tower at the East, and the Techny towers "rising so Maxfield Parrish-like west across the Skokie."<sup>99</sup>

The house, too, was soon imaginatively yet sympathetically improved with a clapboard, two-story rear addition lean-to which gave them two bedrooms, a bath, and a balcony on the second floor and a studio, kitchen and powder room on the first floor. Sometime not long thereafter, a two story screen porch with

<sup>93</sup> Winnetka Historical Society. Anita Willets Burnham Collection, Log House photographs.

<sup>94</sup> Vance site visit

<sup>95</sup> Burnham. "Winnetka's Old Log House". p. 3.

<sup>96</sup> Harnsberger. p.66.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.* p. 7.

<sup>98</sup> Burnham. Round the World on a Penny. p. 10.

<sup>99</sup> Burnham. "Winnetka's Old Log House". p. 7.



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upper deck was added. While the addition's architect and/or builder is currently unknown, its concept probably originated with Anita. In her book Round the World on a Penny, she recounts convincing her reluctant husband to live in the coveted log house "by painting word pictures" of the improvements that soon were realized:

*—a big open fireplace, a balcony, a modern lean-to tacked on the cabin, and the feel of romance that a hundred years of service had weathered into the very fibre of those humble logs. "We would have a cement floor, too," I told him. "A cement floor has no upkeep, and is nice for the children to skate on"<sup>100</sup>*

Anita furnished the house with sturdy antiques, rustic built-ins and simple floor and window coverings.

## RUSTIC INFLUENCES

### Interest in Log Architecture

While year-round living in an authentic, historic log house was unique on the North Shore in 1917 (the family continued to cook in the open hearth throughout its residence and central heat was not installed until the 1940s), nonetheless nationally, the general level of interest in both rustic architecture and simple living during the period was high.

Interest in rustic architecture between the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century produced three principle types of specifically log structures—summer house compounds, large hotels and cottages. The earliest of these, the well known and publicized "Great Camps" built in the Adirondack Mountains of upstate New York date back to the 1870's. Over a hundred of these complexes of log structures were constructed, through the 1930s, on vast tracts of land by wealthy New York industrialist and financiers as private get-aways, far from the city, as part of a quest for healthy recreation. Although characterized by the use of log and stone construction sympathetic with their unspoiled natural surroundings, the log residences comprising the great camps—unlike the Burnham log house--were generally grand and supported a luxurious life style.

At the turn of the century, log buildings both large and small received exposure at the 1893 Columbian Exposition. Memorable among these log buildings were the massive Idaho State Building and the tiny Hunter's Cabin on the Wooded Island.<sup>101</sup> Contemporary with the World's Fair, and perhaps inspired by

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<sup>100</sup> Burnham, *Round the World on a Penny*. p. 10.

<sup>101</sup> Hubert Howe Bancroft. *The Book of the Fair: An Historical and Descriptive Presentation of the World's Science, Art and Industry, as Viewed through the Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893, Vol 1*. New York: Bounty Books, 1894 p.9. and J. R. Burroughs and Company, "Arts and Crafts Movement Furniture for the Idaho Building at the Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893" [www.burrows.com/founder/furnitur.html](http://www.burrows.com/founder/furnitur.html)

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the Great Camps, is a unique local example of a large log home just two suburbs (approximately 7 miles) north of the Log House, that was lived in during the period of Anita's residence on the North Shore. Constructed in 1893 for the Sylvester Millard family at 1623 Sylvester Place in the Chicago suburb of Highland Park<sup>102</sup>, this home, listed on the National Register, was designed by the significant Chicago architect W.W. Boyington.

Log architecture on a grand commercial scale was constructed in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the railroads and by the National Parks. Great log hotels began to be built in the west in the country's first national parks, enabling the public to comfortably enjoy recreational experiences in the wilderness. Among the earliest and most famous of these was the Old Faithful Inn (1903-4), constructed by the Northern Pacific Railroad at Yellowstone National Park. Private resort hotels constructed of logs were also built, especially in Minnesota and Wisconsin, during this period, as were compounds of rustic getaways built by associations of wealthy individuals.<sup>103</sup> Smaller log structures and other rustic buildings were also built for utilitarian public purposes in the National Parks.

For the individual family, the log getaway cabin was a period phenomenon that reached a peak of popularity in the 1920s. A bibliography on "The Second log house Revival, 1890-1950" compiled by Martin C. Perdue, for example lists nine books and 93 articles published between 1908 and 1934 (20 on a variety of subjects. The publications printing articles on log cabins included The Craftsman, House and Garden, Country Life in America, Better Homes and Gardens, Sunset, Harper's Bazaar, and Popular Mechanics, indicating the subject was of interest to a wide range of readers.<sup>104</sup> Throughout most of her adult life, Anita Willets Burnham compiled snippets about log homes from such magazines or newspapers into scrapbooks.

Closer to home, six years before Anita purchased the Log House, her friend and fellow artist, the famous impressionistic painter Adam Emory Albright (father of famous twin artists, painter Ivan Le Lorraine Albright and sculptor Marvin Marr Albright) went a step further. In 1911 he built-- as a combined year-round residence and studio-- a rambling 8-room log house in the sparsely inhabited northwest corner of Hubbard Woods, at 1258 Scott Avenue, [demolished 1970].<sup>105</sup> Anita's first Winnetka residence on Asbury Street was located not far away, and the Hubbard Woods site to which she would eventually move the Log House--- that would also serve as her studio--- was only 1/4 mile south of the Albright log home and studio.

<sup>102</sup> Philip Berger, ed. *Highland Park, American Suburb at its Best: An Architectural and Historical Survey*. Highland Park, IL: The Highland Park Landmark Preservation Committee, p49.

<sup>103</sup> Susan Benjamin. "Edward L. Ryerson Area Historic District". National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, November 1, 1994, p. 32

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.* p. 33.

<sup>105</sup> Barbara Joyce. "Ivan Albright: Portrayer of Darkness and Decay". p.1. Winnetka Historical Society, [www.winnetkahistory.org/Gazette/Winnetkans/ivan\\_albright.htm](http://www.winnetkahistory.org/Gazette/Winnetkans/ivan_albright.htm)

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The Arts and Crafts Movement

Anita's formative years as an artist at the turn of the century through World War I coincide with the height of the Arts and Crafts movement in America, a movement whose principles significantly influenced the Burnhams' lifestyle and the design of the Log House addition. This nationally popular movement's dedication to such principles as simple living, truth in design, quality of life, individual expression, handcraftsmanship and harmony with nature paralleled Anita Willets Burnham's own artistic, philosophical and domestic instincts. Caroline Harnsberger, in her history Winnetka: The Biography of a Village, in fact, characterizes Anita Willets Burnham as "a fine artist ... and full of enjoyment over the simple things in life."<sup>106</sup> This, combined with the Arts and Crafts "respect for locality and humility towards old buildings"<sup>107</sup> lends insight into her choice of the Log House as a home and the life she created inside it for over four decades.

Begun as a reaction to the degrading effects of industrialization, the Arts and Crafts Movement sought to improve people's lives through both design and social reform. The movement's philosophy originated in England in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century writings of John Ruskin (1818-1900) wherein he lauded the virtues of good craftsmanship, honesty in the use of material, and the morally uplifting effects of living amidst simple, honest beauty. Ruskin's philosophy was influenced by the Pre-Raphaelite movement that believed because the medieval world was a simpler time and associated more closely with nature than the post-Renaissance world, its artistic forms were more pure. From this, Ruskin argued that handcrafted production of art was morally good, as this art was nature directly expressed through man. Ruskin's ideas influence the movement's founder, William Morris (1834-1896), who both wrote about them passionately and applied them as a craftsman to the design of fabrics, wallpaper, rugs and tapestries produced by his company Morris and Company beginning in 1861.

Although the Arts and Crafts style was introduced to America during the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, its widespread popularity in this country dates from the 1890's. An important bridge was Charles Robert Ashbee (1863-1942), an English architect and disciple of Morris who popularized the Arts and Crafts movement across America with lectures during his frequent trips here. In Chicago he met Frank Lloyd Wright, and they became lifelong friends. Wright was one of many famous people who visited at the Log House<sup>108</sup>. Like Anita, he was active exhibiting and involved in organizations headquartered at the Art Institute in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was one of the founding members of the Chicago Arts and Crafts Society (1897), the second oldest such society founded in the United States.

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<sup>106</sup> Harnsberger, p. 67.

<sup>107</sup> Peter Davey. *Arts and Crafts Architecture*. London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1995. p.244-6.

<sup>108</sup> Anita, and later her daughters, kept guest books that visitors were always asked to sign, including the firemen who came to extinguish a 1943 chimney fire (Source: Interview with granddaughter Susan Varne March, 2004). Wright's signature is among those of family and friends on an embroidered signature cloth from the Log House (Winnetka Historical Society, AWB Collection. Anita's son Willets is purported to have apprenticed with Wright for a time. (Susan Varne interview).

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The Arts and Crafts movement quickly became popular in the Midwest, with Wright, as the father of Prairie Style architecture becoming one of its best-known leaders. Through the Chicago and North Shore arts community Anita knew many of Chicago's Prairie School architects including Dwight Perkins, Lawrence Buck, and Thomas Tallmadge.

On the popular level, the public, like Anita, became familiarized nationally with Arts and Crafts design and philosophy through publications such as The Craftsman, Ladies Home Journal and the Chicago-based House Beautiful, which lauded harmony with the landscape, use of natural materials, simplicity and functionality of form, open floor plans, cozy hearths, and built-in furniture as conscionable, desirable characteristics for residential architecture. Proof positive that Anita was influenced by Arts and Crafts philosophy and design is that all of these characteristics appear in many of the clippings that Anita compiled in her scrapbooks of ideas for the Log House. One large, particularly significant scrapbook, for example contains photos of interiors by C. R. Ashbee, published sketches of medieval European houses, articles on built-in furniture by Prairie School architect Charles E. White, Jr., and an article by fellow artist and Prairie School architect Lawrence Buck about the simple cottage he designed and built as his home among the trees and ravines in the idyllic nearby Highland Park neighborhood of Ravinia, Illinois.  
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Variations on aspects of these scrapbook plans and photographs collected from Arts and Crafts-inspired publications became directly incorporated into the Log House and its addition. These included the design for the massive rustic main fireplace, the open floorplan of the addition with its overlooking "mission" balcony, the studio's high backed inglenook seat, and the kitchen cabinetry. Other Arts and Crafts inspired aspects of the structure include its handcrafted front door with strap- and nailwork, a fireplace as focal point of the main rooms, continuity with the landscape, which was further enhanced by pergolas and porches, incorporation of built-ins, use of casement windows, the sensible concrete floor (advocated in particular by Stickley) and the Ruskin-like concept of family, work and leisure activities centered in a combined home and studio.

This scrapbook's frontispiece, an article from The Craftsman<sup>110</sup> entitled, "The House of the Democrat" (with the word "Democrat" crossed out and "Humanity" penciled in above in Anita's handwriting) captures well the approach to life lived within the Log House:

*"...its doors shall be wide and unbarred....It shall be set in a place of greenery, for the world is a large place and its loveliness mostly a wilderness; it shall be far enough way from its next for privacy and not too far for neighborliness;...it shall grow as the family grows; it shall have rooms enough for the privacy of each and the fellowship of all.*

<sup>109</sup> Burnham family collection

<sup>110</sup> *The Craftsman*. Vol. XXI, no 2. It is one of the few clippings with a source included.

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*Its walls shall be the quiet background for the loveliness of life, hung over with a few records of our own and other's growth made in the playtime of art.."*

With their simplicity, honest expression of construction, exposed beauty of material and feeling of integration with nature, log construction fit perfectly under the Arts and Crafts ideological umbrella. Gustav Stickley, publisher of The Craftsman, designer/manufacturer of Craftsman brand furniture, and one of the nation's leading figures of the movement, not only included log houses among the house plans he regularly published in his magazine, he lived in a widely published log house he designed and constructed in 1910 on his self-sustaining arts colony Craftsman Farms in Morris Plains, New Jersey. Stickley was attracted to log houses because of their primitiveness, simplicity, and association with early American life. Excerpts from a 1911 article published in The Craftsman<sup>111</sup> about the Stickley log house give color to pertinent Arts and Crafts sentiment prevailing at the time that Anita was so captivated by the Log House:

*"What is there about a log cabin that seems so alluring and full of the suggestion of romance? The new log house at Craftsman Farms seems to visualize this question, for it is a log cabin idealized...[It] has the charm of the more primitive dwelling and creates the same suggestion of simple and natural living and kinship with the outdoor world, While retaining its dignity of architecture it invites a sense of informality, of intimacy. Here the visitor feels instinctively and immediately at home...."*

*To the strength, the courage and the honest effort typified by the primitive log cabin, art has here added the grace of beauty, and science the requisites of comfort."*

Early Preservationist

An additional lure of log cabins, well articulated by the author of the same article, was their association with early American life and the essence of the American spirit:

*"To us in America the log cabin seems a near friend. For many of us it was the home of our immediate ancestors and it forms a vital part of the life of the white man in this continent. What a train of historical reminiscence the mere thought of a log cabin awakens: the landing of the first settlers, the unbroken wilderness of the primeval forests, the clearing of the ground, and the building of the first homes..."*

*Since the log house has played so important a part in our history, its development into a definite and characteristic type of architecture might give us something national, something peculiarly American in suggestiveness."*<sup>112</sup>

<sup>111</sup> Natalie Curtis. "The New Log House at Craftsman Farms: An Architectural Development of the Log Cabin". *The Craftsman*, 21 November 1911. Contained in David Cathers, ed. *Gustav Stickley's Craftsman Farms, A. Pictorial History*. Turn of the Century Editions in association with The Craftsman Farms Press, 1999. p. 58-60.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

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Anita would use similar historic and patriotic imagery over the many years she spoke or gave one of her innumerable tours of the Log House. Although certainly sympathetic to the tenets of the Arts and Crafts movement, Anita valued the Log House perhaps even more highly for its association with early Winnetka and American history than its rustic charm. Thus she furnished it, not with the popular Arts and Crafts-inspired Mission furniture but with early 19<sup>th</sup> century antiques “ferreted out of shops and attics through the country.”<sup>113</sup> The provenance of several of these pieces purportedly traced back to important figures in American history, such as a “leather covered arm chair which once belonged to Daniel Webster, and a chest lined with newspapers dated April 11, 1814, which is thought to have belonged to General U.S. Grant.”<sup>114</sup> Thus, it is not surprising that the same scrapbook containing Arts and Crafts-related clippings is equally full of photos, articles and postcards of early American building interiors and exteriors, such as Philadelphia’s William Penn house, Boston’s Paul Revere house and many buildings in Salem, Massachusetts.

Steeped in period sentiment, national pride, and her own ancestry, Anita immediately declared “It must be preserved”<sup>115</sup> upon learning in 1914 of the true identity of the rare Winnetka house she had stumbled upon. Her motivations place her in the context of both the romantic and “educational, reformist strain” of the early historic preservation movement that held the conviction that “the public could be educated and regenerated by exposure to homes symbolic of the virtues of the past”<sup>116</sup>. Her steadfastness acting upon this conviction over the next four decades was also an important milestone in the preservation of log structures on the North Shore.

Interest in preserving old buildings is almost as old as our nation. It was the first preservation successes however—the saving of Washington’s Revolution-era headquarters in Newburgh, New York in 1850, and shortly thereafter Ann Pamela Cunningham’s successful and enormously influential rescue of George Washington’s home—that set the pattern of historic preservation for most of the remainder of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. the romantic focus on saving “buildings in which great men had lived or great events had taken place”<sup>117</sup> for the purpose of operating them as historic museums for the patriotic inspiration of visitors<sup>118</sup>. The focus shifted to the more scientific and architecturally documentary only following WWI, and especially after 1926 with the restoration of Williamsburg.

The interest in preservation of buildings associated with great men naturally dovetailed with American’s long fascination with log cabins. As a symbol of the qualities that enabled great men to rise from humble

<sup>113</sup> Sylvia Cassell. “Lives in a 134 Year Old Log House”. *Chicago Tribune*, April 14, 1954. Winnetka Historical Society. AWB collection. Unaccessioned scrapbook.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> Burnham. “Winnetka’s Old Log House”. p. 1.

<sup>116</sup> Charles B. Hosmer, Jr. *Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States Before Williamsburg*. New York: C.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1965, p. 300.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.* p. 8.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.* p. 11.

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beginnings, endure adversity and succeed, these structures, as a type, became indelibly associated with the promise of America as the land of opportunity. Such cabins were one of the most profitable displays at several of the large expositions held around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St Louis in 1904 had no less than four of them, respectively associated with Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant, Theodore Roosevelt, and Patrick Henry.<sup>119</sup>

The most famous log cabin in the country was the traditional birthplace of Abraham Lincoln. The spirit of Lincoln and its association with log construction, in fact, pervaded the national consciousness during the period coinciding with Anita's rescue of the Winnetka log house. The rocky road to the preservation of the Lincoln birthplace and the badly neglected Lincoln family farm in Kentucky was followed by readers nationwide, particularly in Colliers, over the years 1895 through 1916. Publicity for the project, which included a nation-wide fundraising drive, was both powerful and pervasive. "All over the nation, people wrote and talked about the Lincoln birthplace", activity that eventually resulted in both house and farm coming under Federal protection with the creation of the national park at Hodgenville in 1916.<sup>120</sup> In Illinois, it also led to the eventual reconstruction, in the 1930s, of the log buildings of Lincoln's early home town, New Salem, Illinois. The reconstruction began in 1906 with the donation of the site to the State of Illinois by national newspaper owner and publisher William Randolph Hearst.

Locally, examples of surviving early 19<sup>th</sup> century North Shore log residences are scarce, with only a few examples of horizontal log construction remaining in the entire upper third of the state.<sup>121</sup> In addition to the Burnham Log House only three applicable North Shore log structures, are known---the Stupey Log Cabin in Highland Park, Illinois, and in the neighboring suburb of Deerfield, the Caspar Ott House and the E. Luther/Brand House. All three are located in neighboring Lake County and were preserved largely around the time of the Bicentennial in 1976. Like the Burnham Log House, they have been moved. In their current locations they serve as museums.

The one story Stupey Log Cabin was constructed in 1847. It was used as a storage shed on the grounds of Highland Park's Exmoor Country Club before being given to the City as a Centennial gift and moved in 1969.<sup>122</sup> Both the Ott and Luther houses were located on Saunders Road in Deerfield and were in residential use before being moved to Deerfield Historic Village, in 1970 and 1976 respectively, to save them from demolition. The one story Ott house, constructed in 1837, was indiscernible under extensive additions; the one and a half story Luther house, constructed in 1847, was covered with clapboard siding.<sup>123</sup> All three Lake County structures have been restored.

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<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.* p. 141.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.* p.146.

<sup>121</sup> Elbert and Sculle. p. 3.

<sup>122</sup> Berger. p. 45.

<sup>123</sup> Telephone interview with Tom Roth, Architect, Deerfield Historical Society board member. 7/12/04.

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Thus Anita's preservation of the Log House, more than half a century ahead of any effort to save a comparable vestige of early North Shore settlement, was as much a pioneering feat as the building she rescued. The Burnham Log House is the largest and, if the pre-1836 date is accurate, the oldest of these surviving log structures. Even accepting its documented date of 1841, the Burnham house is the North Shore's second oldest log residence. In the context of its own county, Cook, the Burnham house is the oldest log residence, the oldest continuously inhabited residence and perhaps the oldest extant residence. The oldest documented house in Cook County is the landmark Widow Clarke house, located in Chicago and constructed in 1836, but of heavy timbers rather than log construction. Interestingly, its original owner, successful hardware store owner Henry B. Clarke, moved to this house from a log cabin near the center of the city.<sup>124</sup>

#### WORLD TOURS

The log house moving adventure only four years behind her, Anita embarked on yet another audacious adventure that would profoundly affect both her life and work. In 1921 an offhand remark to "come over" tossed out by Anita's adopted sister as she bade farewell on her way to Paris, stimulated Anita to do just that. After again convincing her reluctant husband, the entire Burnham family—including the four children aged 13, 12, 10 and 9 months--packed up and toured Europe, returning the following year. With the goal of "a sketch a day", the family painted and drew its way across the continent, capturing locales in countries including France, Spain, , Belgium, as well as England and North Africa. Often traveling at night to save on hotel bills, the frugal family efficiently ferried their suitcases with the then-novel addition of wheels. Adventures abounded, as did a substantial body of work executed along the way. While in France, Anita added the prestigious professional distinctions of not only studying at a Parisian academy, but being chosen and exhibiting at one of the Spring Salons there.<sup>125</sup> Her 13-year old eldest daughter Carol-Lou was also selected to show, establishing a record of being the youngest artist ever chosen for such an honor.

Seven years later, the family finished their circumnavigation of the globe with a trip to the Far East. Starting from Seattle in 1928, they traveled to Japan and made their way east toward Europe through exotic locales including Siam, Korea, China, the East Indies, India, and Egypt, eventually returning home, two years later. Again, sketches abounded and adventures included losing 19-year old daughter Florence in marriage to a dashing archeologist while traveling in Jerusalem.

The breadth of their travels is charmingly documented in an etching, organized like a patchwork quilt, with alternating squares being filled by scenes from their travels and location names. Pointedly, the

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<sup>124</sup> Harold M. Mayer and Richard C. Wade. *Chicago Growth of a Metropolis*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969. p. 24.

<sup>125</sup> Burnham. *Round the World on a Penny*. p. 44.



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travel scenes begin with the globe and end with night falling at the Log House. Dated May, 1930, the etching lists the following places organized in blocks as follows:

Yokohama, Tokio, Kyoto, Nara, Migijama, Shimonisiki, Fusan, Seoul, Mukden, Darien/  
Tientsin, Peking, Shanghai, Soochow, Hongkong, Saigon, Angkor, Bangkok, Penang/  
Calcutta, Benarcs, Muttra, Agra, Delhi, Jaipur, Bombay, Suez, Cairo, Jerusalem/  
Haifa-Megiddo, Damascus, Ballbeck, Beyrouth, Cypress, Athens, Olympia, Crete, Constantinople,  
Salonika, Belgrade/Budapest, Bienna, Salzburg, Munich, Nurnberg, Rothenburg, Cologne,  
Brusels, Bruges, Ostend/Dover, London, Oxford, Ashford, Southampton, St. Malo, Dinan, St.  
Michel, Paris, Spain/Carsonne, Barcelona, Madrid-Telodo, Sevilla-Granada, Gibraltar, Morocco,  
Algiers, Balearic Isles, Riviera, Geneva, Paris, London, HOME <sup>126</sup>

CAREER CONTINUED

After moving the Log House, Anita's art career was as busy as ever—maintaining her existing professional affiliations, beginning new ones, teaching at the Art Institute and at her studio, working, and always looking for new avenues of exposure in the Chicago area, across the state, around the nation and abroad <sup>127</sup>. Her travels to, and paintings of, daily life in exotic lands added an extra element of romance to her work. "To the most liberal art critic living in Chicago, C.J. Bulliet, these seekers after 'real life' were better than the artists who made 'pointless, amateur, and ignorant' copies of Cezanne, Picasso, et al." <sup>128</sup>. Interest in such new subjects, in fact, ran high in the period between the wars and while realism continued to reign, "eclecticism was the rule" with canvases showing a variety of influences including the Munich school, Impressionism, "Ashcan" and Mexican [mural] stylization. "Bulliet concluded that there was little European influence in Chicago, little surrealism and abstraction. There was instead, "The American Scene", rendered with spontaneous feeling rather than exactitude. The trend continued into the 1940s." <sup>129</sup>

Having studied with many fine muralists, and given the popularity of murals as an adornment for public buildings and schools during the Progressive and WPA eras (i.e. from the Columbian Exposition that spawned them until World War II), it is not surprising that the enterprising Anita tried this artistic avenue as well. Although listed as a muralist in successive Who's Whos, only one work is known to date,

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<sup>126</sup> Winnetka Historical Society, AWB Collection, Unaccessioned. Also, printed in Anita Willets Burnham, *Round the World on a Penny* (1936 edition), p 246.

<sup>127</sup> Many more exhibitions in which AWB participated remain to be uncovered as her voluminous papers, most still unaccessioned, continue to be read and catalogued.

<sup>128</sup> Sparks. p 187.

<sup>129</sup> Sparks. p. 187-8.

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a European Market Scene, executed c. 1925<sup>130</sup> for the George B. Armstrong Chicago public school on the City's north side, near the Evanston border.<sup>131</sup>

Hundreds of murals were executed in Chicago Public Schools between 1904 and 1943. Approximately 440 still exist, (including Anita's) constituting one of the largest mural collections remaining in the country. The subject matter of these school murals was carefully chosen to "educate, inspire, and edify students...[with] images that directly concerned their curriculum, especially American history, literature, social studies, and geography"<sup>132</sup>. The Armstrong School mural reflects the interest of both the Progressive Era—and Anita—in internationalism and is consistent with the trend of murals executed late in the period to be more flat, linear and colorful<sup>133</sup>. Most of the artists who painted the Chicago public schools' approximately 229 Progressive era murals were graduates of the School of the Art Institute and, like Anita, many of the mural artists were accomplished women. The celebrated architect and architectural renderer Marion Mahoney Griffin, in fact, executed two murals in the same public school as Anita's in 1932<sup>134</sup>. The school also contains a mural by the celebrated artist Frank C. Peyraud (c. 1920). The school's mural by Anita was cleaned in 1996 as part of the massive Chicago Public School Mural Preservation Project.

Exhibition/Collections

Anita continued to exhibit at the AIC and her record there includes the distinction of a one-man show mounted in collaboration with her eldest daughter. Entitled "Water colors by Anita Willets Burnham and Carol-Lou Burnham", the show ran from July 23- October 11, 1931. Other known one-man shows by Anita were held at the San Diego, CA Art Museum in 1935<sup>135</sup>, the Decatur, IL Art Center in 1938<sup>136</sup> and the Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, BC in 1940<sup>137</sup>

In this period women's clubs played an important role in the Chicago art scene, as attested by inclusion of the Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs and the activities of its Committee on Art, in the American

<sup>130</sup> Heather Becker. *Art for the People: The Rediscovery and Preservation of Progressive- and WPA-Era Murals in the Chicago Public Schools, 1904-1943*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2002. p. 119

<sup>131</sup> Given Anita's love of travel and children's education, it is interesting to note that the school has been renamed the George B. Armstrong Elementary School of International Studies in recognition of the more than 100 cultures represented by the neighborhood's student body.

<sup>132</sup> Becker. p. 2.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.* p. 67.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.* p. 61.

<sup>135</sup> Falk. *Who's Who in American Art*. p. 512.

<sup>136</sup> Chris Petteys. *Dictionary of Women Artists: An International Dictionary of Women Artists Born Before 1900*. Boston, G.K. Hall and Co, 1985. p.109.

<sup>137</sup> E-mail, Carol Dearborn (AWB granddaughter who is preparing an article for publication about her grandmother), 2/13/04.

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Art Annual's report of major Chicago arts organizations. Women's clubs educated and exposed not only their membership but the public at large to art, particularly through annual and traveling exhibitions. Anita was a member of the Women's Club of Winnetka<sup>138</sup> and is known to have participated often at exhibitions sponsored by the Woman's Club of Evanston. A November 3, 1933 Evanston News Index article reporting on a current exhibition at the Woman's Club specifically cites Anita as one of "three distinguished North Shore artists" showing, the others being Elizabeth Peyraud (wife of the distinguished painter Frank C. Peyraud) and Edna May Johansen, all of whom studied at the AIC. The article further states, "These well-known painters have exhibited in the annual spring exhibition of painting and sculpture held each year at the Woman's Club and have won many honors". Anita is known to have won the Evanston Woman's Club Prize in 1935<sup>139</sup>. Interestingly, Anita shared "honor guest" billing with Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs President Mrs. William F. Farrell at the December 8, 1933 meeting of the prestigious Municipal Art League at their AIC club room<sup>140</sup>

Libraries too played an important role in spreading knowledge and appreciation of art at this time, again through exhibitions. Always one to avail herself of contemporary avenues of exposure, Anita is known to have participated in a Graphic Arts Exhibit at the Art Center in the Evanston Public Library in 1933. As usual, she was in good company, with fellow exhibitors including accomplished Prairie School architects Dwight Perkins, and Thomas Tallmadge, Perkins' soon-to-be-legendary modern architect son Lawrence, and painter-sculptor James Cady Ewell.<sup>141</sup>

Today, Anita's work can be found in collections including the Winnetka Historical Society<sup>142</sup>, an extensive Burnham family collection, and the John H. Vanderpoel Memorial Art Collection in Chicago<sup>143</sup>. Her signed 1942 water color on paper entitled "Our White House, Washington, D.C.", which was given by Anita as a gift to Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, is one of the 450 works and prints that also comprises the White House Collection of Fine Arts in Washington, D.C.<sup>144</sup> This collection, which contains mostly American art, was assembled largely by gift, bequest, or occasional purchase and "...reflects the history of the residence and the personalities of the First families that have occupied it"<sup>145</sup> The collection is unified by three themes: art as historical documentation, decoration, and as a "vehicle for celebrating American values and achievements"<sup>146</sup>. New interest has also been taken in her work, as witnessed by its

<sup>138</sup> *Who's Who in Chicago and Vicinity, 1931*

<sup>139</sup> Sparks. p. 314.

<sup>140</sup> Winnetka Historical Society. AWB collection. Unaccessioned clipping .

<sup>141</sup> "Graphic Arts Exhibit Opens". *Evanston News Index*. 11/24/33.

<sup>142</sup> Winnetka Historical Society, 411 Linden, Winnetka, IL 60093

<sup>143</sup> John H. Vanderpoel Art Association Gallery, Ridge Park, 96<sup>th</sup> Street and Longwood Drive, Chicago, IL 60643.

<sup>144</sup> William Kloos. *A Nation's Pride: Art in the White House*. Washington D.C.: White House Historical Association with the cooperation of the National Geographic Society, 1992 . p. 299.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid*. p. 13.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid*. p. 23.

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being featured in a recent <sup>147</sup> exhibition at the prestigious Michael Fitzsimmons Decorative Arts gallery in Chicago.

North Shore Art League

One of the most important new affiliations Anita began after moving the Log House was a local one-- the North Shore Art League (NSAL)---of which she was a charter, life, and board member. Founded in 1924 at the Winnetka Community House, where its headquarters remain, the NSAL articles of incorporation defined its mission: "...to cultivate a higher appreciation of Art, by means of Exhibits, Lectures, and Social Activities within the North Shore towns" <sup>148</sup>

The 1920s produced many art societies outside Chicago and around the state. The NSAL however, was one of the best and most sophisticated, with programs by distinguished lecturers, classes by distinguished faculty (many associated with the AIC or Chicago Academy of Fine Arts) and a regular members' exhibition schedule. Members included some of Chicago's best known artists and architects (several of whom were also AIC regular or adjunct faculty members) including architects Alfred S. Alschuler, and Lawrence Buck, prairie landscape master Jens Jensen, artists Rudolph Ingerle, Allen Philbrick and Frank Payraud, AIC lecturer Dudley Crafts Watson and later, artists Ivan Alhright, George Buehr, Rudolph Penn, and even maverick Rudolph Weisenberg. In July, 1935 the Glencoe News would report that,

*The North Shore Art League is now listed among the twenty art bodies mentioned in the "Best Prints of the Year 1934," an annual published in London depicting the selected prints and listing the artists who have produced work worthy of mention in England and America. Among the twenty are such societies as the Royal Academy of London, the National Academy of Design in New York, the Chicago Society of Etchers and the North Shore Art League.*

*The artist responsible for the last two is a Ravinia etcher, Morris Henry Hobbs. ...a product of the Art Institute*<sup>149</sup>

The fun-loving Anita was active in the organization's social and program events and was a frequent exhibitor at the North Shore Art League's annual exhibitions held at the Winnetka Community House. Off site exhibitions were held as well, and through these Anita exhibited at many respected venues in conjunction with respected organizations such as the University Guild and Evanston Art Commission (1928), the Woman's Club of Chicago (1931), at the Century of Progress Exposition (1933), and Mandel

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<sup>147</sup> May 10-June 14, 2003.

<sup>148</sup> George Brodsky. *This House is Ours: The Story of the Winnetka Community House*. Winnetka, IL: The Winnetka Community House, 1993. p.35.

<sup>149</sup> North Shore Art League. Clipping Scrapbook Archives. Untitled article. July 26, 1935.

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Brother's Department Store Galleries (1944). She is known to have exhibited with the NSAL in 1926, 1927, 1928, 1930, 1931, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1940, 1941, 1944, and 1949<sup>150</sup> and won a NSAL prize in 1936<sup>151</sup>.

Teacher

Like so many artists, teaching was an important part of Anita's mature career, being rewarding financially as well as personally. She served as a part time instructor at the AIC over many years<sup>152</sup> teaching adults and children various subjects---among them sketching and tempera painting.

Caroline Harnsberger-- a fellow member of the North Shore Art League and friend of Anita--in her community history, Winnetka: The Biography of a Village gives an insight into the classes (for individuals and groups, adults and children) Anita conducted for many years at the Log House studio:

*Her enthusiasm during her painting classes was an inspiration and it was amusing to watch her create new interests and new ideas. ...As a cover for the fourth edition of her own book, Round the World on a Penny, she originated batik-dyed covers, and the painting class often gathered to help her make "dippies," by pouring paint of different colors on top of a trough of water, and briefly laying the covers on it. Each came out with a different swirling pattern, arresting to the eye, and gorgeous enough to elicit from Anita, "Lovely! Lovely!"<sup>153</sup>*

Outside Chicago, Anita listed teaching at a Tupelo, Mississippi, "School, Summers Workshop" [No.Date.] in her survey biography for the AIC archives.

1933: A SECOND CAREER

Writer

In the depth of the Depression, with a shrunken consumer market and the artistic tide beginning to turn from representation to abstraction, the resourceful Anita characteristically made lemonade out of lemons. She established both a new source of income and created a new market for her art by reinventing herself (at age 53) as a writer and lecturer. Cocooned in the Log House, she compiled her family's adventures during their two extensive trips abroad in the 1920's into a book titled Round the World on a Penny. In addition to its lively narrative, which cheerfully chronicled the succession of places visited--and artistically captured-- on the family's bohemian travels around the globe, the book was illustrated with

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<sup>150</sup> North Shore Art League. Clipping Archives.

<sup>151</sup> Sparks. p. 314.

<sup>152</sup> Employment records at the AIC are scanty during this period.

<sup>153</sup> Harnberger. p.67.

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original art work created during the trip by herself and various members of the family, including 2-year old Ann.

Round the World on a Penny was widely distributed and well received, as abundantly proven by the thick scrapbook<sup>154</sup> Anita maintained of newspaper reviews, letters, and orders from all over the country—from Brooklyn, NY to Santa Barbara, CA; from Saint Paul, MN to New Orleans, LA. Letters from librarians praise the book and promising to include it on their next order. The book, which begins with the purchase of the Log house and ends with the family's return to it, was first published in 1933 by the New York publishing firm of Covici Friede and sold for \$2.00 a copy. It went through seven editions by 1946, and was ultimately self-published.

Anita dove into her new career with the same energy, comprehensiveness and ingenuity she lavished on her art career, as well as the same basic strategy—exposure and affiliation. The combination of her gregarious nature and creativity made her a natural marketer, donating Round the World on a Penny for charity auction events and sending copies of the book to famous people for a hoped-for positive review that could be publicized. Soon after publication, the book was featured on the radio program "Voice of Hollywood" where it was read in half-hour installments each day.<sup>155</sup> From 1947 to 1953 Anita even tried, unsuccessfully, to get Round the World on a Penny made into a movie and T.V series.<sup>156</sup>

The choice of 1933 for publication was no accident. Round the World on a Penny was one of the books featured in the Story Cove of the Enchanted Island at Chicago's biggest attraction that year—the Century of Progress Exposition. An international library for children, the Story Cove offered children a cool, quiet spot to read books (donated by their publishers) about many lands, their children, and their ways of life. To the Story Cove came parents, librarians and teachers, "all those interested in children's reading, to become enchanted with the books on display and make lists for their own use".<sup>157</sup>

As she well knew from the art world, professional affiliations were important for networking and gaining status, exposure and commissions. In her new profession she, again, chose well-respected organizations both local and national. Locally, she was a member of the North Shore Writer's Guild. With a focus on poets, novelists and dramatists, the group included Lucy Fitch Perkins, wife of Prairie School architect Dwight Perkins and the author of a 26-book series that she also illustrated, and Josephine Blackstork, who published in both the United States and England and was the able manager of the Enchanted Island

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<sup>154</sup> Winnetka Historical Society. AWB Collection. Unaccessioned scrapbook .

<sup>155</sup> Winnetka Historical Society. AWB Collection. Anita handwritten note in untitled c. 1934 scrapbook (unaccessioned) containing clippings about *Round the World on a Penny*.

<sup>156</sup> Winnetka Historical Society. AWB Collection. Unaccessioned typewritten letter, June 30, 1953 .

<sup>157</sup> Winnetka Historical Society. AWB Collection. Unaccessioned newspaper clipping, 8/2/34 (no source or title).

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at the 1933 Century of Progress Exposition.<sup>158</sup> Anita was also a member of the National Federation of Press Women and the Illinois Women's Press Association.

Lecturer

Anita vigorously promoted Round the World on a Penny in the 1930s and 1940s, primarily through lively, entertaining lectures she delivered dressed in the same practical, artsy travel gear she wore on her trips—cork hat, long black cape (“What is underneath is nobody’s business), sketch bag slung over her shoulder and pulling her signature battered suitcase on wheels (then an oddity). The lectures were accompanied by slides of the artwork produced by herself or members of the family during the trips, and often by original trip sketches which she hung on the walls. Sometimes she sketched while she talked. The lectures ended with sales of the book—and sometimes the artwork, or orders for sketches, especially of homes.

She undertook numerous lecture tours around the country and delivered hundreds of individual lectures, including many in the Chicago area, through the 1950s. Her witty printed handbills, featuring original graphics and periodically updated with new locations and testimonials, also noted speaking engagements abroad, in cities including Shanghai, Jerusalem, London, and Paris.<sup>159</sup> Ever the multitasker, as Anita traveled she developed more programs, and where possible, exhibited her artwork. Anita always maintained that she was an artist first and a writer second. Over time, her repertoire of “clever and interesting” lectures grew to include “Round the World in North America or Mexico to Alaska”, “Art Pinned Down” and “Fourth of July in Old Mexico”. The latter program chronicled a 1935 trip to Mexico with her youngest daughter Ann, who was also an artist. Described to a reporter as “motoring to Mexico via Quebec” by Mr. Burnham<sup>160</sup>, the pair stopped along the way in San Diego to see the World’s Fair and mount Anita’s one-man show at the San Diego Art Museum. With the successful formula of Round the World on a Penny in mind, the summer trip spawned not only the lecture Anita delivered in the costume of the Mexicans among whom she lived, but a publication, Fourth of July in Old Mexico<sup>161</sup>

Newspaper articles of rave program reviews from cities around the country were conscientiously clipped and fill several scrapbooks. The lecture tours eventually became a circuit—east in October and November, south and west in January through March and the Midwest in between<sup>162</sup>. She developed her audience largely from interest spheres with which she was already associated, especially the national

<sup>158</sup> Winnetka Historical Society, AWB Collection, North Shore Writer’s Guild Directory of Member, 1934-5, in untitled C.1934 scrapbook (unaccessioned) containing clippings about *Round the World on a Penny*.

<sup>159</sup> Winnetka Historical Society. AWB collection. Unaccessioned, undated handbill.

<sup>160</sup> North Shore Art League. Clipping Scrapbook Archive.

<sup>161</sup> Falk, *Who was Who in American Art*. p. 512. “Comments: Auth./illus., ‘Fourth of July in old Mexico’”.

<sup>162</sup> Winnetka Historical Society. AWB Collection. Unaccessioned c. 1945 handbill that includes a listing of her circuit schedule.

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women's club network. Other major audience groups included <sup>163</sup> literary associations (such as the Women's Literary Society of La Porte, Indiana, where she showed sketches, pastels, charcoals, pen and inks), women's groups (such as the American Association of University Women and Women's Architectural Club to whom she mentioned that she lived in a log building, the oldest house in Cook Co.) and art organizations (such as the Fellowship of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and the Bloomington Art Association). A particularly memorable address to Chicago's Municipal Art League was followed by a train trip to Hubbard Woods and a guided tour of the Log House.

In addition to art and travel lectures Anita's speaking skill served her well as a Sunday school teacher and speaker on subjects of interest to her, particularly children's education and world peace.

#### DEATH

Although active into her 70s, Anita suffered a stroke in 1956 at the age 76. Anita Willets Burnham died two years later, on Monday, July 7, 1958 in a Wilmette, IL convalescent home. Fittingly, services were held in the Children's Chapel of the Winnetka Congregational Church (WCC), located across the street from the Church's Winnetka Community House, where she had been long involved. Equally fitting, her brief obituary included mention of Anita's legendary association with the Log House, "Her famed log cabin home, purchased years ago for \$25, was a meeting place for budding artists."<sup>164</sup>

#### WINNETKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ACQUISITION OF THE LOG HOUSE

From the very beginning of her ownership, Anita felt a strong obligation to ultimately entrust the care of the Log House to an organization that could continue the Burnham's tradition of sharing its story with the people of Winnetka. Even before making it into the "studio home—which I had really wanted all the time", <sup>165</sup> she offered her log house to the Winnetka Park District "to grace the stretch" of Winnetka's new, first park by the Railroad station. "Can't you see the quaint touch the dear old thing would make sitting in company with the old trees?" <sup>166</sup>

She publicly shared her "dream" that the log house's "final destiny" would be as a "home for the Winnetka Historical Society!" in a characteristically animated lecture entitled "Winnetka's Old Log House", presented at a 1942 standing-room-only meeting of the Society held in the Log House studio <sup>167</sup>, and reported to the public in the next issue of the Winnetka Talk<sup>168</sup>. Thus began again the search by

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<sup>163</sup> Winnetka Historical Society. AWB Collection. Unaccessioned misc. scrapbooks.

<sup>164</sup> "Mrs. Anita Burnham Rites to be Saturday". Obituary, *Chicago Daily News*. 7/10/58.

<sup>165</sup> Burnham. "Winnetka's Old Log House". p. 6.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>167</sup> Burnham. "Winnetka's Old Log House".

<sup>168</sup> E.G.T. "Historical Society View 'Hut' Which May Some Day Be Home". *Winnetka Talk*. 6/14/42



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Anita, and later by various family members, for a public steward -- a search that continued for fifty years.

After Anita's death in 1958 the log house was inhabited by her eldest and youngest daughters--Carol-Lou and Ann, respectively-- who were also artists and remained in the house until their own deaths in 1978 and 2000. In 1999 Ann, in consultation with the extended Burnham family, gave her approval for the house to be gifted to the Winnetka Historical Society upon her death, with the proviso that it be removed to an appropriate site so that the land could be sold. That site, in Crow Island Woods, was approved for donation the same year by its owner, the Winnetka Park District, in consultation with the Village of Winnetka and the Winnetka School District. The latter owns the adjacent property to the east, Crow Island School, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Fittingly, Crow Island School contains its locally famous "Pioneer Room", created at the school's inception, to facilitate students' understanding of the pioneer period. The agreement stipulated that the area in the park designated for the Log House be limited to the footprint of the existing house and lean-to addition plus six feet in all directions.<sup>169</sup>

The original Log House, with its connected lean-to addition, was moved on March 6, 2000 from 1407 Tower Road in northwest Winnetka to Crow Island Park in the southwest portion of the Village. Preparatory investigation revealed that the post-1917 rear porch addition was too deteriorated and unstable to survive the move. It was removed (however the porch's structural members were salvaged and stored by the Winnetka Historical Society) and open sections of the log house rear facade were boarded shut. The entire house was carefully documented before, during and after the move. In-situ photos of the house and site were taken prior to the move and the log house was videotaped during the preparation, move and its positioning on the new concrete foundation. As recommended in the National Park Service Preservation Brief 23, "The preservation and Repair of Historic Log Buildings", the building was moved from its original site only as the last resort to demolition, and it was removed in one piece, rather than being disassembled."

The choice of a marshland setting and the siting of the building in this new location was carefully planned to replicate the feel of the property when it was moved in 1917 to the edge of the then-isolated Skokie Marsh area. With the exception of the loosening of some chinking, the move did virtually no damage to the exterior or interior. The building was placed on a concrete crawlspace foundation, utilities were unobtrusively connected, an alarm system was installed<sup>170</sup> as was a sensitively integrated new heating system, with the mechanicals in the basement.

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<sup>169</sup> Interview with Joan Evanich, Executive Director, Winnetka Historical Society, July 24, 2004.

<sup>170</sup> A fire suppression system is scheduled to be installed this Fall.

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The restoration plan for the building is to return it to its 1917 appearance, when it was first moved by the Burnham family to Tower Road. Thus, the remaining post-1917 alterations made to the rear facade to accommodate the later rear porch were removed-- i.e. the dormer and flanking doorways accessing the removed porch on the second floor, and on the first floor, the refrigerator void and adjacent doorway on the west (kitchen) side of the central French doors. On the east (studio) side, the missing casement sash was installed in the window opening that had been converted to a bookcase to mask the perpendicular porch wall introduced behind it. The single pitch of the lean-to roof was restored and covered with wood shingles matching those on the main house

A new code-compliant handicapped-accessible ramp was designed as a switchback to fit in the six-foot perimeter of the house allowed by the moving agreement. The poured concrete ramp was faced with limestone blocks to facilitate its integration into the site and topped with a compliant railing. Appropriate landscaping is being planned to further facilitate integration of the house and ramp into the site.

#### CONCLUSION

*Whenever the name of Anita Willets Burnham is mentioned, most Winnetkans think immediately of the log cabin at 1407 Tower Road, a unique landmark which historians declare to be..the oldest structure in Cook County....[T]o think of the cabin apart from Anita is like thinking of a lighthouse with its light gone out.*

*-Caroline Harnsberger, Winnetka: The Biography of a Village*

Anita Willets Burnham was a well-known artist, writer, lecturer and teacher whose identity and significance are intimately linked with the Log House. In relation to Anita as an artist, the Log House was the place she conceived most of the multitude of her creative ideas. The house, its natural surroundings and her family's life within it were the inspiration for pieces executed in a variety of media. Also serving as her studio, it is where she executed much of her work and taught others to love the art of painting.

In relation to Anita as a writer and lecturer, it is the place she wrote her best-known work, Round the World on a Penny, a book that begins and ends at the Log House and revolves around the family she reared there. It is also the place she later executed the book's artistic covers and bound it by hand, wrote many of her lectures, and managed the business aspects of all her careers.

In relation to Anita as a Winnetkan, the Log House is a unique, tangible link with the earliest history of the Village. With foresight, she preserved and generously shared it with countless residents, especially children. It is a gift she gave to present and future generations when her fondest wish-- for the house to be stewarded by the Winnetka Historical Society-- was posthumously realized four years ago. It is fitting to both remember Anita and recognize the significance of this link by listing the Burnham Log House on the National Register of Historic Places.

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Burnham, Anita Willets, Log House, Cook County, Illinois

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION

In Blocks I & 10 in Vernamo, a subdivision of the NW  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the SW  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec. 20 and the E  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the NE  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec. 19 and in the Alles' Subdivision of the NE  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the SW  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec. 20, all in T 42 N, R 13 E of the 3<sup>rd</sup> PM, in Winnetka, Cook Co., IL

Boundary Justification

The nominated property consists of the Log House and a portion being 6 feet around the perimeter of the Log House located in Crow Island Woods, a 17-acre preserve owned by the Winnetka Park District. The preserve was formed over time through an aggregation of land parcels.

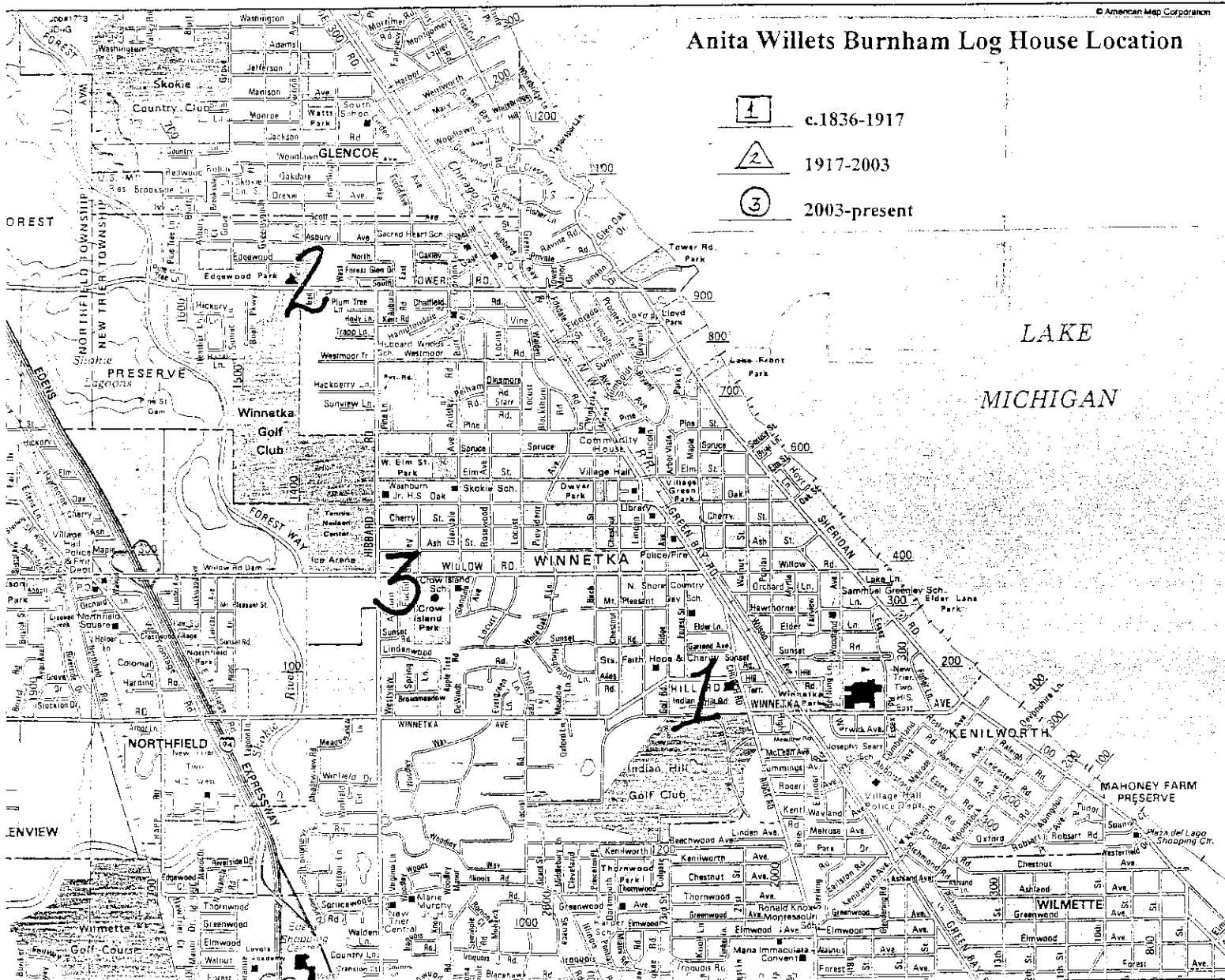


# VILLAGE OF WINNETKA

510 Green Bay Rd., Winnetka IL 60093

(847) 501-6000

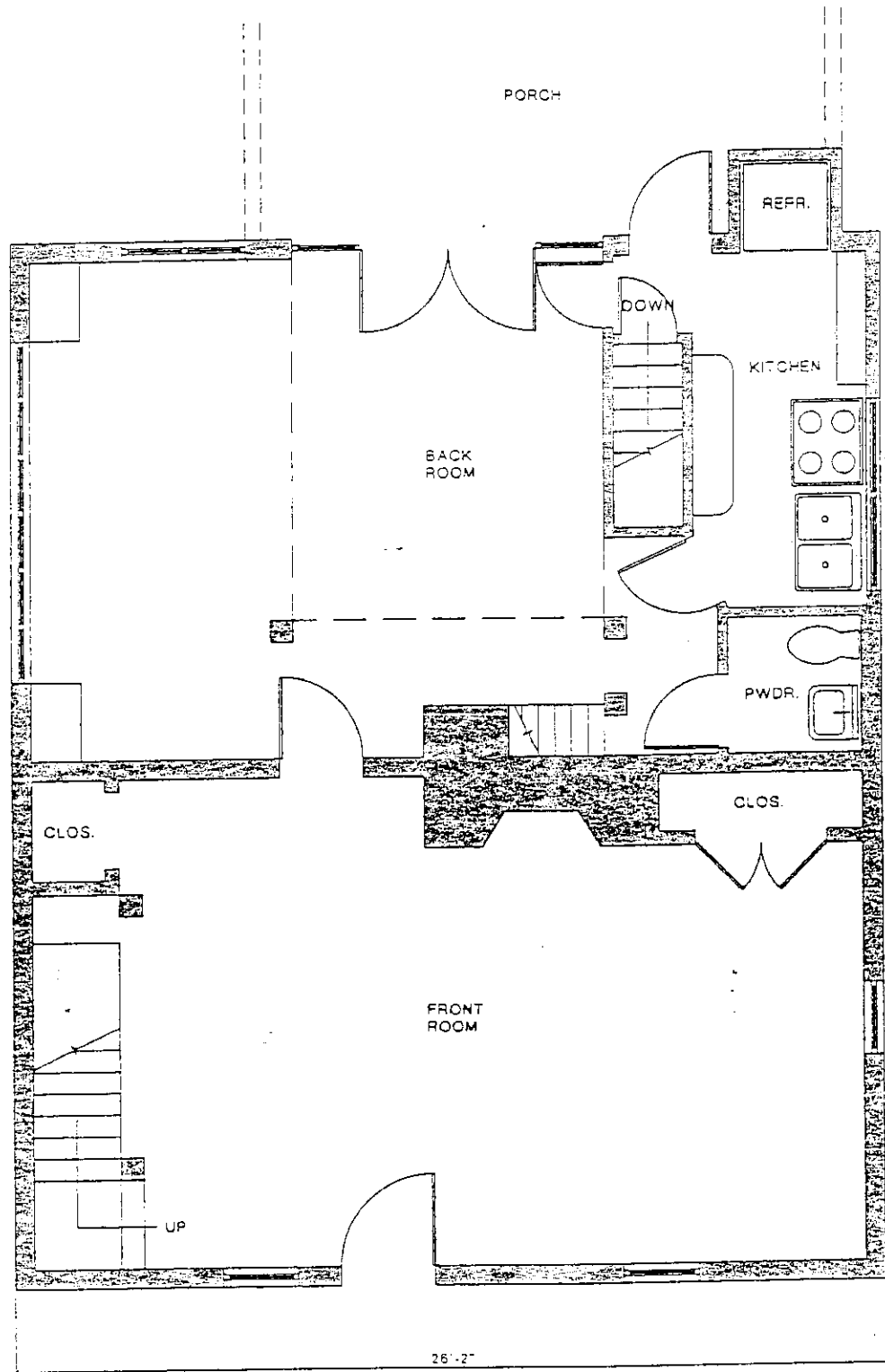
8 . 9 . 10 . 11 . 12 . 13



8 . 9 . 10 . 11 . 12 . 13

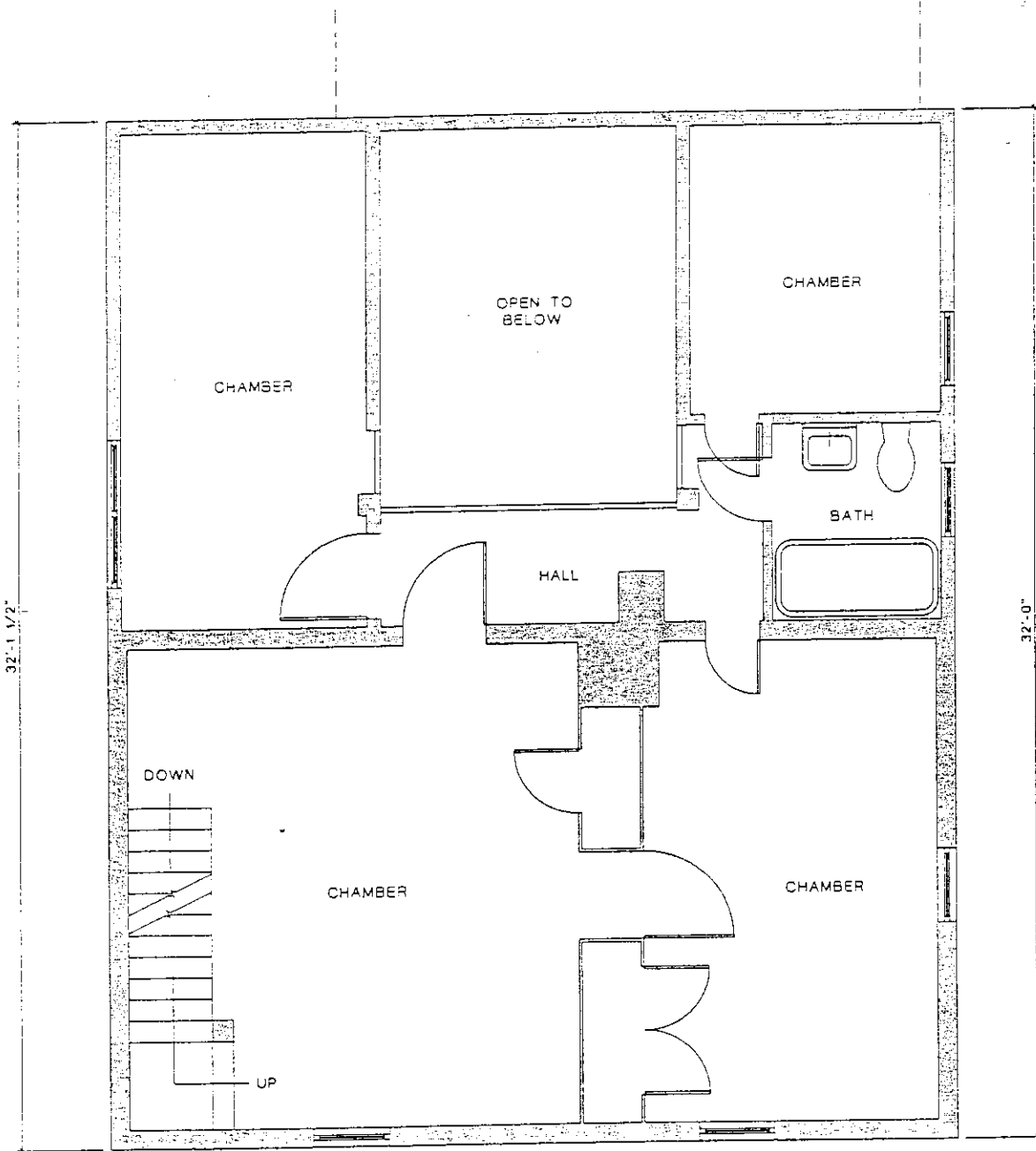
Anita Willets Burnham Log House  
Winnetka, Cook County, IL





**0101** FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
 3/16"=1'-0"

*Arita Willets Burnham Log House*



**0102** SECOND FLOOR PLAN  
 3/16"=1'-0"

200113 05.01.00

**A-01**

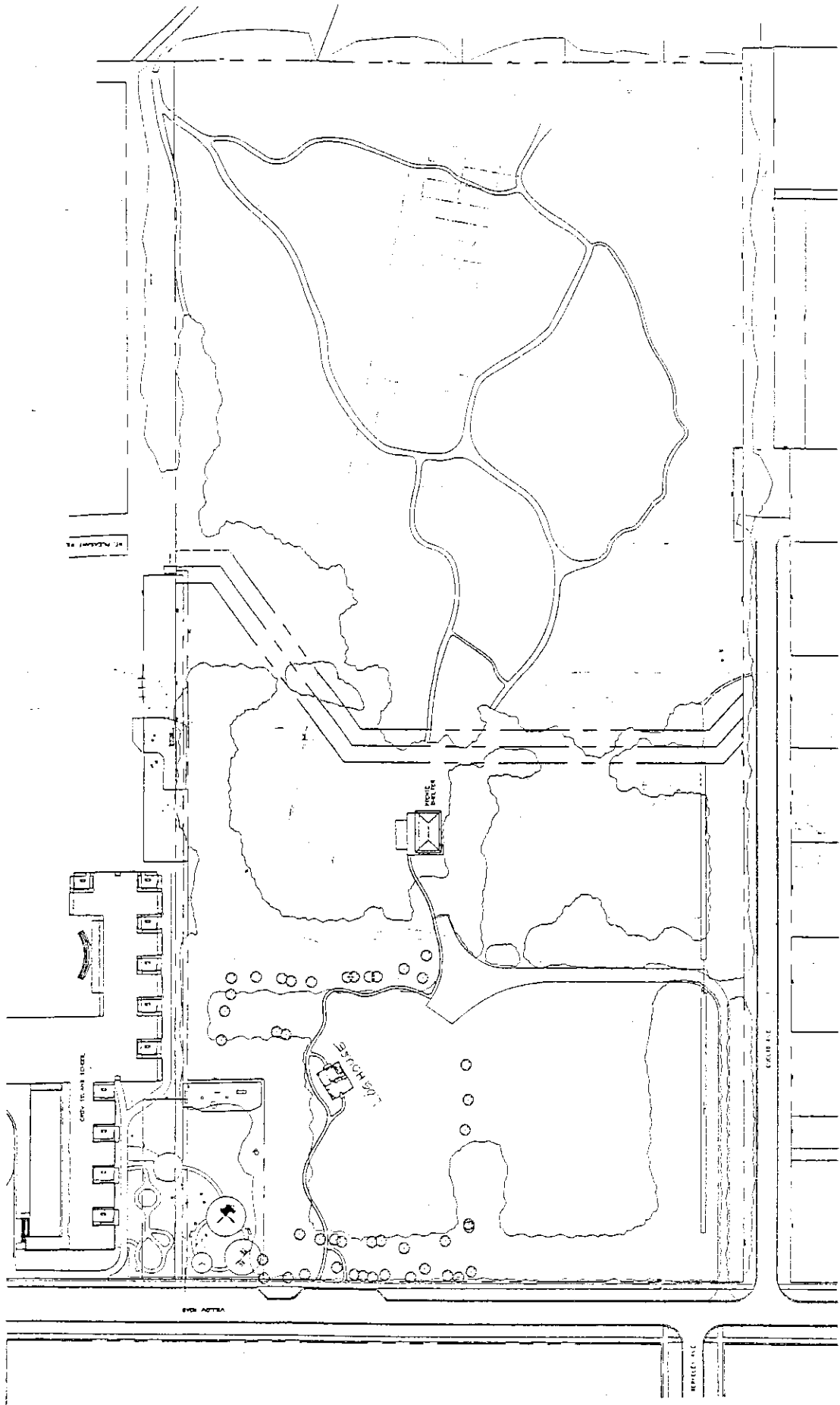
*Anita Willets Burnham Log House  
 Mansuetka Cook County Ill.*

**BEHLES &  
 BEHLES**

818 CHURCH STREET  
 EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60201  
 847.864.0440  
 847.864.0441 FAX

ARCHITECTS

INTERIOR DESIGN



SITE PLAN

Anita Willetts Burnham Log House  
 Winnetka, Cook County, IL

Center,  
Estes Park vicinity, 87001134,  
ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION APPROVED, 6/02/05  
(Rocky Mountain National Park MRA)

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA STATE EQUIVALENT,  
Glen Hurst,  
4933 MacArthur BLVD. NW,  
Washington, 05000336,  
LISTED, 6/01/05

FLORIDA, SARASOTA COUNTY,  
Bryson--Crane House,  
5050 Brywill Cir.,  
Sarasota, 05000501,  
LISTED, 6/01/05

\* ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY,  
Burnham, Anita Willets, Log House,  
1140 Willow Rd.,  
Winnetka, 04001297,  
LISTED, 6/02/05

LOUISIANA, CADDO PARISH,  
Lakeside Municipal Golf Course,  
2200 Milam,  
Shreveport, 05000504,  
LISTED, 6/01/05

LOUISIANA, EAST FELICIANA PARISH,  
1903 Clinton High School,  
11050 Bank St.,  
Clinton, 05000505,  
LISTED, 6/01/05

LOUISIANA, EAST FELICIANA PARISH,  
1938 Clinton High School,  
12525 Cedar,  
Clinton, 05000506,  
LISTED, 6/01/05

LOUISIANA, IBERVILLE PARISH,  
Plaquemine Historic District,  
57725 Court St.,  
Plaquemine, 05000507,  
LISTED, 6/03/05

MASSACHUSETTS, HAMPDEN COUNTY,  
Smith, Thomas and Esther, House,  
251 North West St.,  
Agawam, 05000217,  
LISTED, 6/02/05

MINNESOTA, HENNEPIN COUNTY,  
Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad Grade Separation,  
Parallel to 29th St. between Humboldt & 20th Aves. S.,  
Minneapolis, 05000508,  
LISTED, 6/01/05  
(Reinforced-Concrete Highway Bridges in Minnesota MPS)

MINNESOTA, ST. LOUIS COUNTY,