

## ILLINOIS HISTORIC SITES SURVEY INVENTORY

DK-H-61

305157

1. Name of Site: Gunler HouseCommonHistoric

2. Location:

Street and Number 205 Pine StreetTownshipSectionCity or Town DekalbZip Code 60115Range1/2 SectionCounty Dekalb3. Classification:

Category (check one)

Integrity (check one)

District  Building  
 Site  Structure

Altered  Unaltered  
 Moved  Original Site

4. Ownership:

Status (check one)

Private (Gunler Heritage Assoc. - a  
not for profit corporation)  
 Public

Occupied  
 Unoccupied  
 Preservation work in progress

Access to Public

Yes  Restricted  Unrestricted  No

Present Use (check one or more)

Agricultural  Industrial  Religious  
 Commercial  Military  Scientific  
 Educational  Museum  Transportation  
 Entertainment  Park  Other  
 Government  Private Residence

5. Ownership of Property:Owner's Name Gunler Heritage AssociationPhone Number (815) 756 4259Street and Number 419 Garden Rd.City or Town De Kalb, IllinoisState IllinoisCounty De KalbZip Code 601156. Description:

Excellent  Good  Fair  Deteriorated  
 Ruins  Unexposed

Is there a program of preservation underway?  Yes  No

7. Historical Themes: (check one or more of the following)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeological Site        | (Pre-Columbian)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeological Site        | (Post-Columbian to 1673)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> French Influence           | (1673-1780)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Frontier          | (1780-1818)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Early             | (1818-1850)   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illinois Middle | (1850-1900)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Late              | (1900-present)  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Famous People   | (give names & dates), <i>George Gurdler</i><br><i>prominent in dairy industry</i> |

8. Specific Date: 1857

Areas of significance (check one or more of the following)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal (historic)     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal (pre-historic) | <input type="checkbox"/> Military            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture               | <input type="checkbox"/> Music               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication             | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation              | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industry                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Invention                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture    |  |

Brief statement of significance: (include all names and dates)  
Use additional sheets if necessary. *attached*

9. Form prepared by:

Name and Title: *Helen Merritt, President* Date: *June 15, 1978*  
Organization: *Gurdler Heritage Association* Phone: *756-4259*  
Street and Number: *419 Garden Rd.*  
City or Town: *Dekalb, Ill.* County: *Dekalb* Zip Code: *60115*

During the course of the Survey we often find it necessary to search for a particular site. When filling out the Survey form, please list according to the following example, published references to the site for which forms are being completed. If a bibliography can be compiled, it will greatly deduct from the Survey's task.

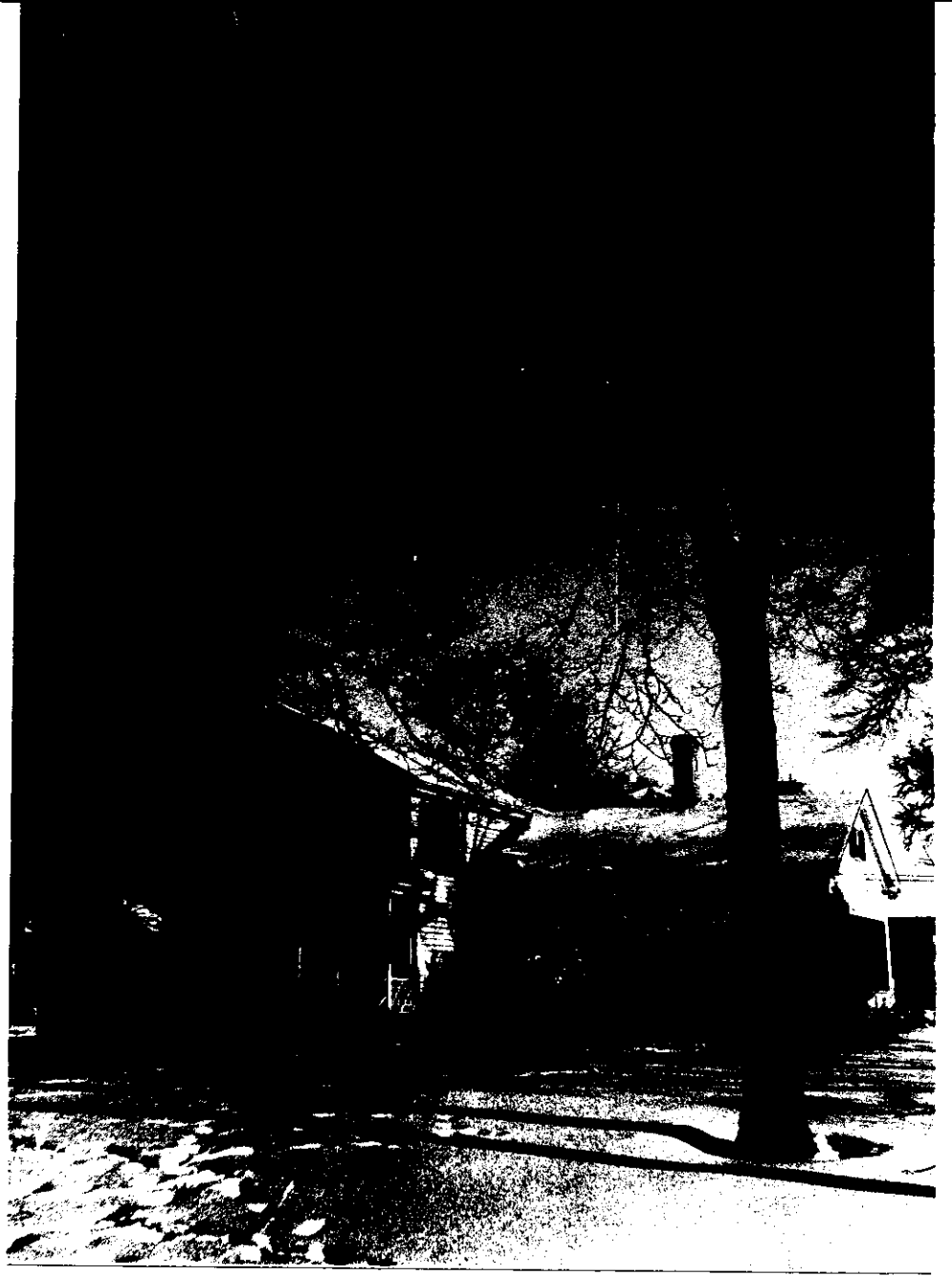
Bibliography

Robertson, Robert, Of Whales and Men. New York, Alfred K. Knopf, Inc., 1954.

This is an 1857 residence, still in excellent condition, beautifully situated among large maple trees near the center of DeKalb. The house was built by a Mr. Waymen of Sycamore in 1857. It was bought by George Gurler in 1893 and was occupied by his family until Sept. 1977. The house has an extension on the back which was added in 1940, but aside from that it appears on the exterior very much as it did in a photograph published in the 1899 Illustrated Souvenir Edition of the DeKalb Chronicle. Information on the Gurler family is attached.

nch  
7/6/78

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BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE GURLER FAMILY -  
WITH EMPHASIS ON GEORGE HOPKINS GURLER

The Biographical Record of DeKalb County, Illinois. Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1899. Long, detailed account of the activities of Henry B. Gurler in dairying.

DeKalb Chronicle Illustrated Souvenir, 1899, \*1900. This souvenir edition includes a useful map of DeKalb showing Gurler Street, and the property the Gurler Brothers owned there; a photograph and article on Robert Newett (George's father-in-law); and the only photograph used by the Souvenir editions of George Gurler's on Pine Street and H. B. Gurler's house at 4<sup>th</sup> and Franklin Streets; and a history and pictures of the Clover Dairy. Note that these two editions are almost identical except for the advertisements. The Souvenir, 1894 also shows the same picture of the George Gurler House on Pine, photographs of the two brothers and information and pictures about the creamery.

"George Gurler Is Summoned," DeKalb Chronicle (August 1, 1940), 1. Obituary gives information about George Gurler not found elsewhere.

Gross, Lewis M. Past and Present of DeKalb County, Illinois, 2 vols. Chicago: The Pioneer Publishing Co., 1907. The most useful guide after the souvenir editions of the DeKalb Chronicle. Includes auto-graphed, steel engravings (portraits) and lengthy articles about George Hopkins Gurler and Henry B. Gurler. Much information is given also about the roots of the family in New England.

Portrait and Biographical Album: DeKalb County, Illinois. Chicago: Chapman Brothers, 1883. Separate articles on Henry and George Gurler. The article on George Gurler gives the best chronological listing (however, no exact dates are given) of his business activities until entering the creamery business.

\*The Voters and Taxpayers of DeKalb County, Illinois, 1876. Chicago: H. F. Kett & Co., 1876. Benjamin Gurler (the father) owned 168 acres, Sec. 32 in DeKalb Township, valued at \$10,000. The entry for Henry Gurler includes a biographical sketch. It describes him as a farmer who owns 235 acres in Afton Township valued at \$13,000. He is a school director and trustee. G. H. Gurler is entered as a merchant of DeKalb, a Republican and originally from New Hampshire.

\*Northern Illinois University Library Archives  
George H. Gurler, Manuscript. Detailed lament for the passing of the carrier pigeon. Archives also includes his personal papers with copies of his Civil War discharge papers and his soldier's pension document (\$72.00/ month dated July 21, 1924). Newspaper

clippings tell of the attendance of the Gurler brothers at a Dairymen's Association meeting in Chicago in 1925, of the death of Mrs. Zilla Gurler (February 7, 1936) and of the death of George Gurler (obituary editorial, August 2, 1940)

Note: Other than the one photograph of the George Gurler House, the only other references to the house in the two libraries consulted were the newspaper account about the pastel portrait of George Gurler's daughter, Beatrice, painted by a local artist, and the reference to George Gurler's fine stuffed animal and bird collection in his study described in his obituary in the DeKalb Chronicle (August 1, 1940).

The Archives has extensive material on Henry Gurler, including information about his dairy farm in Mississippi; also there are detailed family tree diagrams of the Gurler family.

All sources are located in the DeKalb Public Library with the exception of those marked with an asterisk. Those sources are located in the Northern Illinois University Library Archives.

Priscilla Frampton, Librarian

## GEORGE GURLER, PIONEER IN THE DAIRY BUSINESS

Although DeKalb is remembered as the town where barbed wire was developed and manufactured, few people realize that the Gurler brothers became nationally and internationally recognized for their pioneer work in establishing standards for dairy herds and milk production. George Gurler was more interested in the business aspect of the Clover Farm (founded in 1881) while his brother, Henry, devoted himself to the practical problems. Chicago doctors in the early 1890's were calling for safer milk to give babies and invalids. Henry sought to fill that need, gradually weeding his herd of various breeds into a select dairy herd free of TB. He developed immaculate dairy barns, and demanded that his barn workers follow a strict regime of hygiene before milking. The Clover Farm sent out perhaps the first certified milk in the U.S. This farm had the distinction of winning a gold medal at the Paris Exposition in 1900. The raw milk sample sent did not sour until the 21<sup>st</sup> day! The brothers were instrumental in setting standards for a consistent percentage of butter fat in milk and cream. These standards were adopted throughout the country. The Gurlers with H. H. Hopkins established creameries at Lee, Shabbona Grove and Hinckley. By 1899 there were seven<sup>distributing</sup> agencies in Chicago and two deliveries in DeKalb.

Gradually as the brothers bought more creameries in northern Illinois and eastern Iowa their areas of concentration changed. Henry bought George's interest in<sup>the Dairy</sup> Clover<sup>in</sup> 1896. Henry also served as<sup>school</sup> dairy consultant for the early agriculture<sup>at</sup> the University of



Wisconsin and agriculture schools at the state universities in Vermont and Pennsylvania. He wrote a treatise, Gurler's American Dairyman, in 1894 that was considered a classic for many years. George Gurler, however, continued to acquire more dairies, and in 1907 went into a stock company with his son, Charles, and A. J. Borth of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. This company was known as Gurler, Borth Co. It has been estimated that the annual output of Gurler's creameries was two million pounds in the period between 1893 to 1908, and the products were distributed widely.

George Gurler continued his interest in the dairy business for the rest of his life. He was president of the Illinois Dairy-men's Association for five years and was president of the Elgin Board of Trade for twelve years. The Elgin Board of Trade established the price of butter for the region, sometimes influencing butter prices in neighboring states as well. George Gurler was also instrumental in helping to establish the Farm Bureau, where he was recognized as an authority on agribusiness problems.

After exploring the less well-known contributions of the Gurler brothers, a brief summary of the Gurler family background places the family in their DeKalb setting. The Gurlers were one of the pioneer families in DeKalb coming from Keene, New Hampshire in 1856. Benjamin Gurler had heard about the better economic opportunities in Illinois from his four sisters who had previously immigrated to the state. The elder Gurler prospered as a farmer and as an augar and bit manufacturer. His sons, Henry and George, served in the Civil War soon after coming to DeKalb. In 1867 George married Zilla Newett, who represented another pioneer family in DeKalb.

A niece of George Gurler, May, married Erwin Perry Ellwood, youngest son of Isaac Ellwood. George Gurler lived until he was 96, having the distinction of being DeKalb's last surviving Civil War veteran. He is a part of DeKalb's heritage, and his house is a symbol of the contribution of the Gurler family to DeKalb.