

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Price-Prather House
other names/site number Price, James, R. House; Prather, J. Frank, House
"Village Park"

2. Location

street & number Main & Elkhart Streets
city, town Williamsville,
state Illinois code IL county Sangamon code 167 zip code 62693

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private (checked)
Category of Property: building(s) (checked)
Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 2, Noncontributing 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.
Signature of certifying official: William L. Whaley, SHPO
Date: 3-28-91
State or Federal agency and bureau: ILLINOIS HISTORIC PRESERVATION AGENCY

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official:
Date:
State or Federal agency and bureau:

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
[ ] entered in the National Register.
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register.
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[ ] removed from the National Register.
[ ] other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

## 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

Work in Progress

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

foundation Brick

walls Brick

Wood

roof Slate

other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

### DESCRIPTION SUMMARY (See Photo #1)

The Price-Prather House was built in the Italianate style in Williamsville, Illinois around 1868 for a prominent livestock breeder, James R. Price. It was later owned by the Prather family, who were noted cattle breeders and business leaders in the area. The 12 room, red brick house is located on the northeast corner of Main and Elkhark Streets (just off the boulevard) near the central business district of the community. The two story dwelling is irregular in shape, with a series of hip and gable roofs covered with multi-colored slate tiles. The cornice, with its heavy ornate brackets and dentils, extends around the main house block. There are three wood porches, a large porch that wraps westward around the front block of the dwelling, and one each on either side of the rear (kitchen) wing. The flat porch roofs have dentils. Most of the windows in the house are double hung 2/2 or 2/1 with segmental arched heads and simple brick hood molds. There are also two suspended bay windows, one on the front of the house and one on the east side. The house has three wide brick chimneys with corbeled caps.

The house contains approximately 4,500 sq. ft. of space on its two main floors. The attic is floored and is expressed through a series of rectangular frieze windows framed by the wood cornice brackets. A small hip roofed summer kitchen is located at the rear of the main house and is connected to the house by a frame porch with latticed sides. The house has a full basement.

Just east of the summer kitchen is a one story, brick building (14'x31') that was originally used as an ice house. The remaining buildings sit on a large corner lot of approximately one acre. There are about 20 trees on the lot, which has an iron fence on the front and west sides.

Around 1910, the front part of the house was altered with a one story extension to the front block, the merging of two front porches, and the installation of two large, rectangular 1/1 double hung windows on the west side; these windows replaced narrower, arch headed windows. The house is presently being completely restored by its new owners.

### ELEVATIONS

Front Elevation: (See Photos #4 & 5)

The front elevation of the house features four vertical divisions, with an extension of the front porch on the west and the suspended bay window on the east. The major elements of the front elevation are (1) the wrap-around, one story front porch with its bracketed square wood columns, flat roof with bracketed cornice, low wood railing with turned

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balusters, and wood floor and ceiling; and (2) the two prominent bay windows, one on the front to the right of the porch and the other one extending from the east side of the house. They each have three 1/1 segmental arched windows. The front block of the house is supported by a brick foundation containing three segmental arched basement windows with 2 lights each. The front porch is accessed by two sets of wide concrete steps resting on brick foundations. The front porch is supported by brick piers. In addition to the two suspended bay windows at the first level, there is one 2/2 window on the west at the rear of the wrap-around porch, and two large 1/1 windows to the left of the double leaved, paneled front doors. The front doorway has a glass overlight decorated with black and gilt paint. At the second level are six windows, five with 2/2 lights and one large one over the main entry with 1/1 lights. Two of the windows are paired over the lower front bay window. All of the windows have segmental arched heads and brick hood molds. Above the windows at the second level are six attic windows (hinged on the side). Below the attic windows is a horizontal wood molding, which also extends around the entire main house block.

West Elevation: (See Photo #3)

The west elevation is divided into four vertical sections, plus the extension to the rear. This extension is a one story brick building (14'x16'6") that formerly served as the summer kitchen. It is connected to the main body of the house under a hipped roof that also covers the open part with its paneled wood and latticed sides. At the first level, there are two, one story masonry extensions. One is just north of the central section of the house (dining room) and the other is at the southwest corner of the house under the front porch roof. On the west side of the rear wing is a small porch with square wood columns with decorative capitals that support the carved cornice brackets. The wrap-around front porch is also a prominent part of the west elevation. It has square shaped wooden columns with decorative capitals and a cornice with brackets. The front porch is accessed by two sets of wide brick and concrete steps, one set on the front and one on the west side.

At the lower level of the house, there are five double hung windows, three 2/2 and two large ones in the front section with 1/1 lights. The large windows were added in a c. 1910 remodeling. All windows have segmental arched heads. At the upper level, there are seven 2/2 windows. The four in the three front vertical sections of the elevation have attic windows above them. There are three basement windows visible in this elevation, two under the rear porch and a segmental arched one in the center section of the house. The window sills are limestone and there is a limestone belt course at the first floor level.

Rear Elevation (See Photo #2)

The rear elevation of the main body of the house contains four vertical sections, with a one story extension to the rear - a brick summer kitchen connected to the house by an open, brick floored porch with latticed sides. The summer kitchen and porch are under one hip roof. At the lower level can be seen the suspended bay window that extends to the east, the two square columned side porches on either side of the rear kitchen wing, and the back of the similarly styled front porch.

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Rear Elevation (cont.)

There is a wood paneled door with an upper glass light and wood paneled transom that opens onto the east porch off the kitchen wing. In the rear of the summer kitchen there is a 6/1 double hung window with a brick, segmental arched head. At the upper level of the main house block are two 2/2 windows with segmental arched heads, one on each side of the rear kitchen wing. Directly over these two windows at the attic level are two frieze windows.

East Elevation (See Photo 5.a)

The east elevation of the main body of the house is divided into four vertical sections, which are capped by a series of hipped roofs with a cross gable over the central section. Prominent features in this elevation are the end gable roofed central wing with its suspended (bracketed) polygonal bay window, and a wood columned, flat roofed porch on the rear wing. The flat roofed, wood columned wrap-around porch extends to the south.

On the first floor level can be seen the east side of the front bay window, the wide east bay window, and three other segmental arched 2/2 windows in the dining room section of the house. The window on the left is a narrow one that provides light to a closet off the dining room. Opening onto the rear porch is a wood paneled door with two upper lights and a segmental arched glass transom; there are two 2/1 windows, one on each side of the door. There is also a 2/1 window in the east wall of the summer kitchen. At the upper level, there is a segmental arched 2/2 window above the wide bay window, and two similar type windows each in the two rear vertical sections. There is a smaller, rectangular window in the dining room section. At the attic level, there are small windows below the cornice on the section with the bay window, and at the basement level are five windows with two lights each.

Interior Details: (See Photos #6-#12)

The irregularly shaped first floor plan has four main rooms (two parlors, dining room and kitchen), a front hallway and vestibule, bathroom, butler's pantry off the dining room, and a small pantry off the kitchen. (See Exhibit A). There is also a summer kitchen connected to the main part of the house by a brick floored porch. The c. 1910 oak paneled main staircase runs to a wide landing with a window seat, and turns to reach the second floor. This stairway replaced an earlier curving walnut stairway at the rear of the hall when the front part of the house was remodeled. The original stairway was moved to the second floor to provide access to the attic. The rear wall of the hallway is curved where the old staircase was located. The walls of the vestibule have panels of oak wainscoting with rough plaster walls above. The walls of the two front rooms, dining room and front hallway are wallpapered.

With the exception of the c. 1910 oak woodwork in the first floor hall and the kitchen woodwork, all of the wood trim in the house is painted. There is a pair of large, paneled oak pocket doors between the front hallway and the east parlor. Most of the floors in the house are hardwood, with the exception of the pine floors in two of the bedrooms. The beaded wainscoting in the kitchen is formed of alternating sections of pine and

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Interior Details (cont.)

walnut. The north wall of the 36' long dining room has a built-in cupboard with doors containing glass lights. Between the dining room and living room (flanking the living room fireplace) is a pair of French doors.

A narrow, enclosed stairway off the butler's pantry connects the kitchen and dining room. This stairway leads to the second floor. Behind this stairway, off of the kitchen, is an enclosed stairway to the basement.

There are two fireplaces in the house, both on the first floor. The east parlor fireplace has a white marble mantel with its original, ornate gilt mirror. The fireplace in the west parlor has a wood, neoclassical style mantel. A large bookcase reflecting the same style as the fireplace is located between the two large windows in the west wall of the west parlor. This bookcase was used by Mr. Prather to house his cattle breeding records and other farm books.

All of the solid brass and silverplated lighting fixtures in the house have been refinished. There are 25 wall sconces and several chandeliers with glass shades. The chandeliers and sconces in the dining room are silverplate over solid brass.

On the second floor there are five bedrooms and three bathrooms. The bedrooms are wall-papered. The house has a floored attic with brick kneewalls with sloping wood walls and ceiling above. The basement is divided into five rooms. In addition to the interior basement stairs, there is an exterior stairwell to the basement on the east side of the house. (See Exhibit B for the second floor plan.)

Out Building (See Photo #2)

Directly east of the summer kitchen is a 14' x 31' one story, brick building. A part of the building has a recessed floor area which formerly served as an ice house. The roof of the building is missing and it is generally in a dilapidated condition.

At one time, the farmstead also contained two large barns, one built of brick in a style similar to the house, with a patterned slate roof; a carriage house, a large shed, and a windmill. None of these structures remain.

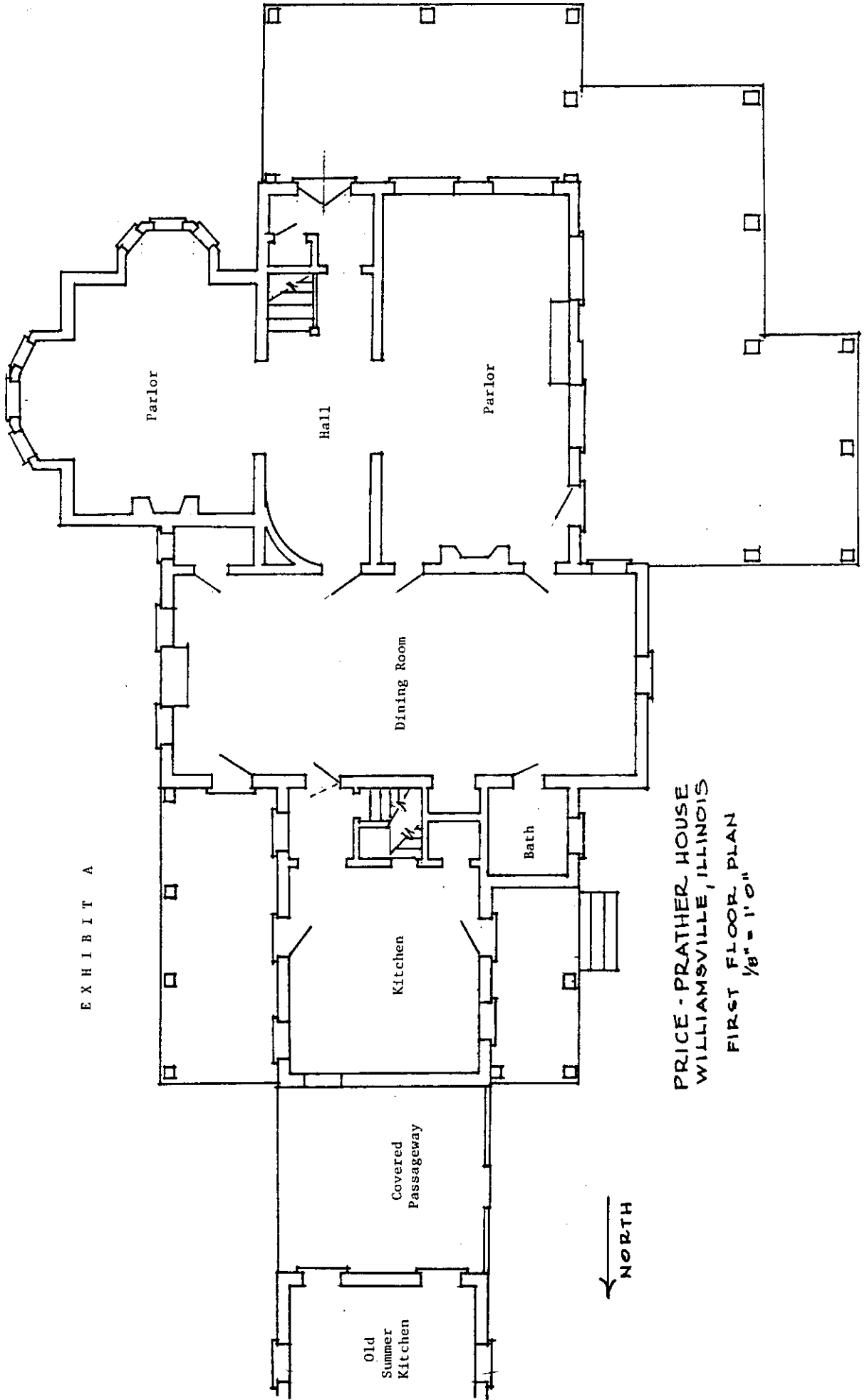
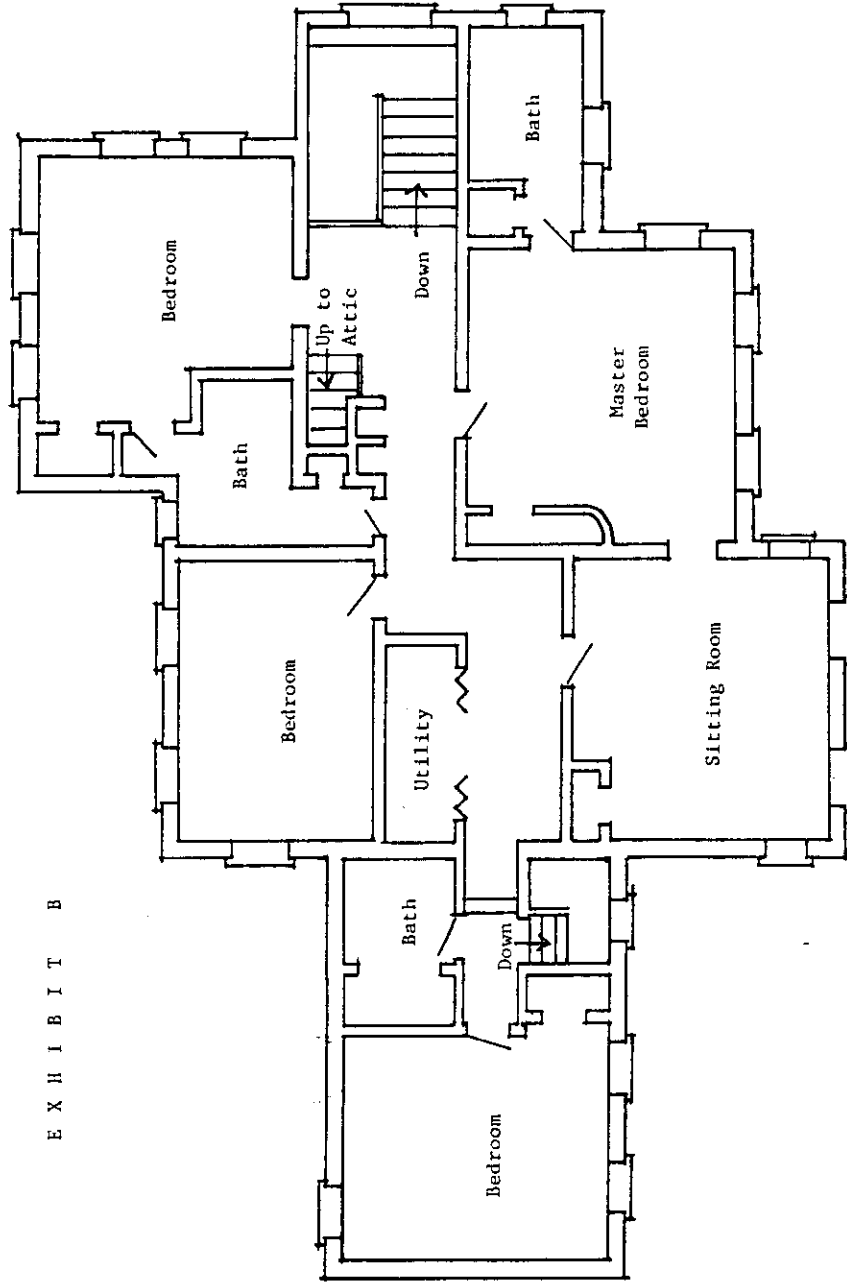


EXHIBIT A

PRICE - PRATHER HOUSE  
WILLIAMSVILLE, ILLINOIS  
FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
1/8" = 1' 0"

NORTH

EXHIBIT B



PRICE - PRATHER - HOUSE  
WILLIAMSVILLE, ILLINOIS  
SECOND FLOOR PLAN  
1/8" = 1'0"

## 8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture  
Architecture

Period of Significance

1882-1927  
1868

Significant Dates  
1882

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A

Significant Person

Prather, John Frank

Architect/Builder  
N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

### SUMMARY

The Price-Prather House is significant in the areas of agriculture and architecture. It meets National Register criterion B - "Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past." It is significant due to its association with J. Frank Prather (1859-1927), who was an important early breeder of, and authority on, Shorthorn cattle in the U. S. For 22 years he served as a director of the American Shorthorn Association of which he was, at one time, president. He was instrumental in the improvement of the breed throughout the U. S. and Argentina. He also served for many years as director and treasurer of the Illinois State Board of Agriculture. His accomplishments as a major Shorthorn breeder were honored with a portrait in the prestigious Baronial Hall of the Saddle and Siroloin Club at the Stock Exchange in Chicago. The house meets criterion C - "embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type and period..." It is significant architecturally, in a local framework, as the best example of the Italianate style in the Village of Williamsville, Illinois, and as a good representation of a large, stylish home of a prosperous gentleman farmer-businessman of the era.

### HISTORIC THEMES/CONTEXTS

The themes on which the historic contexts of this nomination are based are (1) the introduction of Shorthorn cattle to Illinois and the improvement of the industry in the era 1850-1925; and (2) the dominance of the Italianate style in American residential design during the era 1850-1880.

#### I. INTRODUCTION OF SHORTHORN CATTLE TO ILLINOIS AND THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE INDUSTRY<sup>(1)</sup>

##### The Origin of Cattle Breeds in the U. S.

Most contemporary breeds of improved cattle in this country originated in Great Britain. Norsemen introduced their polled and horned cattle, and others in black, red and white colors. Other breeds were brought in by the Angles and Saxons, which were ancestors of contemporary Red Polled breeds found in Suffolk and Norfolk. The Normans introduced

(1) Historic context material for Theme 1 is based on material from the following sources: At the Sign of the Stock Yard Inn, Alvin H. Sanders, Chicago Breeders Gazette Print, 1915; Cattle & Men, C. W. Towne & E. N. Wentworth, Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1955; and Dairy Cattle Breeds, Origin and Development, Raymond B. Becker, U. of Florida Press, 1973.

See continuation sheet



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multicolored cattle from Normandy after the defeat of King Harold by William the Conqueror in 1066. Then in later years, English cattle improvers and some of the Crusaders imported Flemish stock. The resulting mix of Norman and Flemish stock produced the primitive Shorthorn, English Longhorn and the Hereford. These and other strains from Europe were eventually brought to the new world by early settlers and became the basis for cattle breeding in the U.S.

The Beginning of the Serious Breeding of Livestock

The serious breeding of cattle and other livestock was begun in the mid-18th century in England, during a time when the livestock picture was a conglomeration of local varieties and nondescripts. The patriarch of modern day breeders was Robert Bakewell. It was he who discovered a short-cut to livestock improvement, according to Alvin Sanders, an expert and writer on livestock breeding.

Bakewell lived at Dishley, Leicestershire, where, in the face of preconceived opinion with respect to the production of farm animals, he became the first "to demonstrate the power of the principle of the concentration of blood elements as the most effective method of establishing and fixing desired characteristics."<sup>(2)</sup> He made great strides in the development of the long-wooled Leicester sheep and Longhorn cattle.

Bakewell was aware of the general prejudice that existed in his country concerning close breeding and carried out his experiments secretly. The progress with the Leicesters was faster than that with the Longhorns, but the Dishley Longhorn breed soon became the most popular type in all the surrounding area. King George III found out about Bakewell's efforts and honored him by asking about his new livestock breeding discoveries.

Bakewell's successes predated the creation of all the contemporary leading breeds. The key factors of his discovery were the secret of accentuating certain points and insuring their perpetuation. It was a principle that proved the basis for the universal improvement of all livestock types.

The Collings: Originators of Shorthorns

The two Englishmen credited with being the originators of the distinctive national British breed of Shorthorn were Charles and Robert Colling. While the Herefords and other breeds are also British products, the red, white and roan Shorthorn is the one type that was popular in every part of the United Kingdom and Ireland. The Collings maintained farms in the Valley of the River Trees near Darlington in the county of Durham. In the United States, Shorthorns are referred to as Durhams in certain areas.

Charles Colling visited Bakewell in 1783 to study the results of Bakewell's successes. In 1784, he bought the Stanwick Duchess cow and in 1789 a roan cow called the beautiful Lady Maynard. It was with this cow that he began to bring order from the breeding chaos in the area. One of Lady Maynard's daughters was mated with a bull produced by another daughter and was named Favorite.

(2) Alvin H. Sanders, At the Sign of the Stock Yard Inn, Chicago, Breeder's Gazette Print, 1915, p. 46.

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Sanders notes that "For years this bull was used almost indiscriminately upon his own offspring, often to the third and in one or two instances to the fifth and sixth generations, and with results that astounded all England and aroused even distant America. The get of Favorite were not only the most noted cattle of their day in all Britain, but his immediate descendants constituted a large percentage of the entire foundation stock upon which existing Shorthorn herd book records stand. He was even bred back to his own dam, the product being a heifer, Young Phoenix; and to still further test the power of Bakewell's scheme in dealing with such plastic clay this heifer was then bred to her own sire, the issue of that doubly-incestuous union being the bull Comet, the pride of his time and the first beast of the cattle kind to sell for \$5,000.(3)

Through the sale of Comet, as well as the reputation achieved through exhibitions in England of two of Favorite's progeny - "The Durham Ox" and "The White Heifer that Travelled," Collings' names and reputations became well known, as did their improved Shorthorns. This resulted in a steep decline in the popularity of Longhorns.

The noteriety of the Collins' Shorthorns was soon picked up in the blue grass region of Kentucky, and in 1816, Lewis Sanders of Grass Hills imported the first Shorthorn cattle into the Middle West.

Early Cattle Raising in the U. S.

While livestock was an integral part of most early settlements in the U. S., it was not until around 1794 that two events stimulated west bound emigration and stock raising. One of these events was the Battle of Fallen Timbers near what was to become Fort Wayne, Indiana, which destroyed the Indian menace. The other event was the failed Whiskey Rebellion, in which U. S. soldiers succeeded in convincing farmers that they could not make corn "likker" without a federal permit, thus forcing them to raise cattle and hogs instead.

The first group of early settlers would clear a small parcel of ground for raising corn. They had a cow, horse or mule, and a few chickens, and hogs. They generally supplemented the meager resources from their garden and barnyard by hunting and fishing. A second group of newcomers were cattlemen from the Carolinas who brought a small number of ill fed livestock with them and raised them for food. The final group, which eventually superceded the others, farmed legally obtained acreage, built brick homes and large wood barns, raised and improved their livestock, and fattened them for market.

With the increase in numbers of cattle, there became a need to drive livestock to market in the east. The first efforts made to drive livestock overland were in 1802, with a major route being the one that eventually became U. S. Highway 40. By 1815, the hard-working settlers had achieved such a high level of production that outlets were required for surplus stock. Before this date, most east-bound cattle were usually ready for slaughter or needed only a short feed time. After this date, most cattle, primarily three year old steers, were grass fattened to a point, but not yet ready for butchering.

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(3) Ibid, P. 54

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The state of Ohio became an important area to fatten stock with grain before shipping them for slaughter. Cattle were generally enclosed in 8-10 acre lots. New York City received its first shipment of Ohio fed steers in June, 1817. The average pace for fattened cattle from Ohio was seven miles per day. This was 50 years before the first Texas Longhorns were driven north.

After Ohio, Illinois became the next center of surplus cattle production, but long after the successful ventures in Ohio. Settlers began pouring into Illinois before and after the Blackhawk War in 1832. Coming from New England, New York, Ohio and Kentucky, their cattle, combined with other herds from Indiana and Missouri, were sold to buyers who drove them to Ohio where they were fed as Ohio stock. The coming of the railraod changed all this and the Illinois cattle breeders became capitalists. Eventually, there were scores of prosperous operators in central Illinois, all owning over 2,000 acres. These included such well known cattlemen as Issac Funk, Jacob Strawn, John Buckles, William A. Scully, and John D. Gillet.

### The Beginning of Cattle Breeding in Illinois

The first Shorthorn cattle were brought into Illinois by Captain James N. Brown of Grove Park (near Berlin) in Sangamon County. Before moving from Kentucky with his father and brother-in-law around 1833-34 at the age of 28, he was active in the breeding of Shorthorns. Before his move to Illinois, he was awarded first prize for his two-year old Shorthorn heifer Helen Eyre, in competition with some of the most important cattle breeders in the area.

Brown obtained his first Shorthorns from his uncle, Capt. Warfield (an ancestor of Wallis Warfield Simpson, the late Duchess of Windsor). Observing the broad-backed, deep-ribbed milk cows in the Kentucky pasture, he decided that such stock would be valuable in settling the prairies of the west. So, he brought the red, white and roan cattle into Illinois. Other settlers followed his example and many Illinois fortunes were made based on Shorthorn breeding.

The serious efforts to improve the breed in Illinois began in the early 1850s when Capt. Brown went to Ohio and brought back a noted bull Young Whittington that was imported from England by the Scotia Valley Company. With his partner, Judge William Brown of Jacksonville, he also bought a number of fine cattle from key Kentucky breeders.

Due to Captain Brown's persistence and leadership, the concept of livestock improvement spread rapidly and in 1857, he was instrumental in the organization of the Illinois Importing Company, formed to bring fresh stock from England. In the same year, Brown outbid central Illinois breeders for Rachel 2nd at one of the importing company's early sales. His bid of \$3,025 (a large sum at that time) was the second highest ever paid up to that date for a Shorthorn female in North America. Brown and his sons were also involved in the foundation of the Chicago Fat Stock Show in the 1870s.

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The International Livestock Exposition

The initial meeting called to gain the support of the breeding interests in a proposed International Live Stock Exposition was held at the Chicago Livestock Exchange in November, 1889. Eventually, a great permanent building was built to hold the event. The main supporters of the exposition provided a guarantee fund of \$50,000 to be subscribed to by life members of a breeders' association called the International Live Stock Exposition Association. The amount was quickly subscribed and a contract for a large facility on Halstead Street was let. The building was completed in 1905.

At this time, DeWitt Smith of Boskymead (near New Berlin, IL) was president of the Association. Smith owned 800 acres south of Capt. Brown's Grove Park and also raised blooded stock, including horses, cattle, sheep and swine. He was also president of the Illinois National Bank in Springfield and for four years was president of the National Cattle Growers Association of the U. S.

In the baronial hall of the Saddle and Sirloin Club in Chicago, portraits of some of the great men of the American cattle trade were hung. Included were such luminaries as Capt. James N. Brown, Col. James Judy, Hon. Lafayette Funk, J. H. Pickrell, Col. W. A. Harris, Richard Bibson, N. P. Clarke, Henry F. Brown, Emory Cobb, John D. Gillette, George Harding, J. F. Prather (Williamsville), Charles E. Leonard, Lewis F. Allen, Ben F. Van Meter, and S. F. Stockridge.

John F. Prather and His Role in the Development of the Shorthorn Cattle Breed in the U. S.

John F. Prather, who was the owner of the property being nominated herein from 1882-1927, was born in Waverly, Ohio in 1859. His father, John, who was a farmer and stock raiser, drove cattle from Ohio to Philadelphia in the era before rail transportation. He was connected with a company which imported Shorthorn cattle to Ohio from England. The senior Prather came to Springfield, Illinois in 1867 with his family and then moved to Williamsville (8 miles north of Springfield). He acquired 2,200 acres of land in Sangamon County, 850 acres in Logan County, 2,200 acres in Kansas, and also owned his 1,400 acre home farm in Pike County, Ohio. He was also one of the first stockholders of the State National Bank in Springfield, Illinois.

The elder Prather bought the house being nominated in 1877 from James R. Price, and lived there until 1882 when he deeded it to his son, John Frank for \$1.00 and "natural love and affection." He acquired the house and 300 acres of land from Price for \$24,000. Price, whose father was born in Herferdshire, England, was born in Ohio in 1835 and came to Williamsville in 1861. It is believed that he built the Price-Prather House shortly thereafter. He bought and sold cattle, and after selling his house to John Prather, imported the first herd of Hereford cattle from England to central Illinois in 1883. During the years 1884-1885, Price and his son, Ned, won nearly 100 prizes at the leading cornbelt fairs and fat stock shows.

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Building on his father's interest in Shorthorns, John F. Prather became a prominent figure in the Shorthorn breeding world. In addition to his familiarity with the breed due to his father, since they were a relatively new breed in this part of the country Prather probably realized that he could establish a successful position in the market. In addition to being a source of outstanding beef, Shorthorns were also acceptable for dairy purposes. It was also a matter of status at the time to become successful with a new breed of livestock.

Prather's Shorthorns were maintained on his home farm, Village Park adjoining Williamsville, according to an account of his death in the May 27, 1927 issue of Shorthorn World. He also maintained his Shorthorn breeding records and other related farm books in his house at Village Park. These were still in the large bookcase in the front room of the house when its present owners purchased it in 1989. It was from here that he directed his extensive involvement in the Shorthorn breeding industry, as well as his other farm interests. The nine acres around the Price-Prather House and other Prather lands are still owned by a trust established by Prather's heirs.

By 1888, Shorthorn cattle from Scotland were being imported for cross breeding purposes with American-bred cows. In his book, Shorthorn Cattle, Alvin H. Sanders notes that "J. F. Prather of Village Park, Williamsville, Illinois, took out Mephistopheles at \$300" at a sale of Scottish cattle.(4) Sanders says that at this time, "Prices of all classes of cattle were still upon a very moderate basis." He said, "It must be borne in mind that these calves had been weaned at a comparatively early age in Scotland, shipped 4,000 miles and offered before opportunity had been had for putting them in condition. Had they been fed for six months or a year, they would doubtless have averaged double the money."(5) Following this account in Sanders book is a photo of J. F. Prather.

For a time in the latter part of the 19th century, the importation of Shorthorns from England declined due to the trade conditions at that time. J. F. Prather was one of those who helped to revive the interest in Shorthorn importation to the U. S. Sanders states in his book that "Attention may be called to the importation in 1891, personally selected in Scotland by Mr. C. B. Dustin for account of himself and Mr. J. F. Prather. This importation was chiefly notable as including the splendid sire Baron Cruickshank 106881, and the Musie cow Maria 10th, by Field Marshall. This bull was used jointly for a time by Messrs. Dustin and Prather, but latterly was the sole property of Hill Farm. He was a richly fleshed, robust roan, and left much good stock. Mr. Prather's imp. Duke of Hamilton 2d 107363, of this same importation and also of Mr. Duthie's breeding, a mellow-handling red, also left a valuable progeny at Village Park."(6)

Sanders says that "One of the most valuable importations was personally selected in Great Britain by Mr. S. J. Forbes, Henry, Ill., in the summer of 1898." It included a dozen females and some bulls, one from the herd of Her Majesty, the Queen of England. Sanders says, "At the same sale, Mr. J. F. Prather, Williamsville, Ill., took the handsome home-bred cow Golden Venus at \$850 and the heifer Rosemary 201st at \$825.(7)

(4) Alvin Sanders, Shorthorn Cattle, Chicago, Sanders Pub. Co., 1918, p. 705.

(5) Ibid, p. 705

(6) Ibid, p. 739

(7) Ibid, p. 740

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Price-Prather House

It was during this time that Prather was elected president of the American Shorthorn Breeders' Association and became well known throughout the country as an authority on the breed. The prominence of J. F. Prather with respect to the improvement of the Shorthorn breed of cattle is attested to by Frank D. Townson, Lincoln, Nebraska, in an article in the March 10, 1927 edition of The Shorthorn World and Farm Magazine. In his article titled "Shorthorn Men Whom I Have Known", Townson states:

"What an interesting review it would be to trace briefly the experiences and the relations of their life work to the development of Shorthorn interests of every Shorthorn breeder whom I have known; that is, everyone who contributed to the breed's progress. But such a review would require many issues for its publication and would of necessity overlap. There are many who are outstanding because of the value of their services rendered. A few days since I had a letter dictated by J. F. Prather, Williamsville, Illinois, whose name has been identified with Shorthorn interests for forty nine years. He is a banker, a land owner on a considerable scale, a businessman of rare ability, and always rated high in Shorthorn circles as a breeder. He used to be associated through some partnership arrangement with C. B. Dustin, Summer Hill, Illinois who was a skillful breeder of Shorthorns. As I remember, they owned imp. Baron Cruickshank, a massive roan that left his mark as a sire..... I have mentioned these two gentlemen in connection because generally their acquaintances always thought of them as being associated. They were great friends, both were students of the problems that related to the business, both inclined to conservation and both held a large circle of friends because they were true friends. Both were foundation forces in Shorthorn affairs."

In J. F. Prather's obituary, which appeared in the May 25, 1927 addition of Shorthorn World, it is noted that "His Shorthorns were sent to all parts of the country and to Argentina and they exerted a marked influence for the improvement of the breed."

In addition to his role in the breeding and improvement of Shorthorns, he was active in other agricultural circles. He was elected a member of the State Board of Agriculture in 1896 and reelected in 1898, 1900 and 1902. He served as treasurer of the board and during State Fair periods was in charge of the beef breeds of cattle. He was also on the State Fair Building Committee and was instrumental in the development of the Women's Building, the Dairy Building, and the Coliseum at the fairgrounds. He was also a leading businessman and civic leader in his community. In 1890, he organized the Williamsville Bank of J. F. Prather & Co., serving as president. He and his associates also bought a bank in Elkhart, Illinois. He was in the grain business with Harold C. Groves (the husband of his stepdaughter, Nelle) and these two were responsible for bringing the first electric lights to Williamsville in 1913.

In the late 1920s, Prather guaranteed loans for area farmers and others. Following his death in 1927, his estate was required to make good on loans totaling \$250,000 from the Williamsville and Elkhart Banks, as well as the Illinois National Bank in Springfield, of which Prather served as a director from 1901-1927. In a brochure used to promote a sale of Prather's Village Park Shorthorns to help settle his estate, it was noted that:

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Price-Prather House

"It places on the market a line of breeding which heretofore has not been for sale - a line of breeding that has given years of satisfaction in meritorious production...The blood of the good red imported bull, Gainforth Rotheo Prince, is quite pronounced in this lot of cattle and this is worth much...."(8)

While there were other noted Shorthorn breeders in the State during the 50 years that Prather devoted to the industry, such as Gov. Frank S. Lowden, Oregon, IL, no other breeder in Sangamon County - with the exception of Capt. James N. Brown and his heirs - were ever as prominent in Shorthorn breeding as was J. F. Prather at Village Park. As noted herein, leading experts in the field attest to his role in improving the Shorthorn breed throughout the U. S. and in other countries such as Argentina. His prowess, along with others, helped to insure that the Shorthorn is one of three cattle breeds (the others being the Hereford and Aberdeen Angus) that always win the grand championship at the International Livestock Show in Chicago, which is considered the world series of cattle competition.

## II ITALIANATE STYLE IN AMERICAN RESIDENTIAL DESIGN

The Italianate style of architecture had its genesis in England where the Picturesque movement was launched during the latter part of the 18th century. This design trend was based on a reaction to the classicism that had been in vogue in art and architecture for the previous two centuries. Another architectural style that was born during this era was the Gothic Revival.

The model most used for the Italianate form of residential architecture was the informal Italian farmhouse, which usually had one or more square towers. This model formed the basis of the characteristic Italian villa form of dwelling. Other categories of Italianate design were the palazzo or Renaissance townhouse, and North Italian Romanesque - the former which was most often used for town houses in larger cities, as well as for commercial buildings in nearly every business district in the country, and the latter for churches.

During the period between 1850 and 1880, the Italianate style was a very popular one in American residential architecture. It was often favored in the growing Midwestern cities, as well as in the older cities in the East. Another city where the style was popularized was San Francisco, where many frame versions still exist today.

The informal rural Italianate model was the most popular form to be used for residences in this country. Italian farmhouse designs were adapted and shaped into an indigenous form. The less popular Renaissance townhouse style dwellings were usually more austere than the Italian villa, and were square in shape with few decorative details with the exception of formal window crowns and simple cornice moldings. Generally the townhouse version was built of masonry with belt courses and corner quoins.

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Price-Prather House

It was during the 1830s that the first Italianate residences were constructed in the United States. The use of this style was heavily influenced by Andrew Jackson Downing, who published pattern books on the Italianate and Gothic Revival styles of architecture in the 1840s and 1850s. Most of the Italianate style residential examples still standing today were built between 1855 and 1880.

As a result of the financial panic of 1873, the Italianate and the related Second Empire style began to decline. The ensuing depression resulted in a significant downturn in the construction field and less money was available for extravagant residential designs. By the time the depression ended toward the latter part of the 1880s, new architectural styles, including the Queen Anne style, began to come into vogue.

Characteristic Features

Italianate houses were generally two, or sometimes three, stories with low pitched roofs with wide overhanging bracketed eaves. In some examples there was a square tower or cupola. If a tower was used it was sometimes centered on the front facade; in other cases it was placed where a wing met the main part of the house. Tower roofs were generally hipped, but sometimes were finished in a Mansard style.

There are several subtypes of the Italianate house including; the square or rectangular shape with a hipped roof, those with a front centered gable; asymmetrical compound-plan houses with cross hipped or cross gabled roofs, the towered form, the simple square front gabled, and the town house form.

The key design foci in Italianate houses were the cornice, the doorways and windows, and the porches. Windows were often 1/1 or 2/2, or a variation thereof - usually with full or segmental arched heads. Often they were found in pairs or in tripartite form. Window hood molds, as well as bracketed or pedimented heads were often used, as were decorative bay windows.

The cornice line of Italianate houses featured carved, bracketed eaves in a variety of shapes and forms. They appeared singly and in pairs.

The Italianate villa house generally had one story porches, some of which were small entry versions with others being full width or wrap-around style. The porch roof supports were usually square with beveled sides, and the porch cornice was often bracketed with a balustrade above.

Single as well as paired doorways are found in Italianate houses, with the same type of enframements as found on windows. Rather than sidelights, doors often had a large upper panel of glass with wood paneling below.



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Price-Prather House

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The Design of the Price-Prather House

As described in Section 7, the Price-Prather House is a two story brick dwelling, asymmetrical in form, with a series of cross hipped and gabled roofs, and several one story porches. It most closely relates to the asymmetrical, compound-plan subtype mentioned previously.

It has many typical Italianate design elements, including low pitched roofs with paired cornice brackets, 2/2 windows with segmental arched hood molds, the one story porches with square wood columns and bracketed cornices, and paired entry doors with large glass lights and a segmental arched transom.

Around 1910, the house was remodeled with the front (southwest) room being enlarged and its narrow windows replaced by wide 1/1 windows that flood the room with light. At this time, the front porch was connected to the west side porch to provide a wrap-around veranda; two central rooms were made into one large 36' long dining room, and the front hallway with its rear curving walnut stairway was remodeled in a style more in keeping with the times. An oak staircase was installed toward the front of the hallway and the older curving staircase was relocated to the second floor to provide access to the attic.

The Price-Prather House is one of two masonry Italianate dwellings in Williamsville, it being the largest and in the best condition. While it was remodeled around 1910, the changes do not detract to any degree from the house's characteristic Italianate form; and it remains the best example of this type in the Williamsville area.

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Price-Prather House

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10. Tomson, Frank D., "Shorthorn Men Whom I Have Known," The Shorthorn World and Farm Magazine, March 10, 1927.
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to an iron pin in the E line of Elkhart Street; thence S 292.32 feet to the point where Elkhart Street intersects the Quarter, Quarter Section line in Main Street; thence E along said line 156.68 feet to the point of beginning.

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National Park Service**

Glencoe Chicago and Northwestern Railway Depot

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Chicago and Northwestern Railway Depot

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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4. Hastings, C. C., (Chairman) and Jones, E. R., (Advisor), Williamsville Centennial Souvenir Program, 1853-1953.
5. History of Sangamon County, Illinois, Interstate Publishing Co., Chicago, 1881.
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7. Sanders, Alvin H., At the Sign of the Stock Yark Inn, Chicago Builders Gazette Print, 1915.

See continuation sheet

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

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A 

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D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Pt. of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec. 4, T17N R4W of the Third Principal Meridian in the Village of Williamsville, Illinois described as follows:

Commencing at a point 243.92 feet West of the SE corner of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec. 4, T17N, R4W of the 3rd P.M., thence N 292.32 feet to an iron pin; thence W 156.68 feet

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the intact portion of the farmstead that has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Charles Kirchner  
 organization Charles Kirchner & Associates date December 18, 1990  
 street & number 522 East Monroe, Suite 701 telephone (217) 789-1330  
 city or town Springfield, state IL zip code 62701

The Director of the National Park Service is pleased to inform you that the following properties have been entered in the National Register of Historic Places. For further information call 202/343-9542.

HEELEY LIST OF LISTED PROPERTIES  
5/17/91  
INDIANA 5/17/91

MAY 24 1991

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

INDIANA

Madison County  
Hamilton Electric and Gas Company Plant, Old  
241 N. Third St.  
Madison 5/16/91 91000811  
The Pines  
SE corner of 5th St. and Cassiday Ave.  
Madison 5/13/91 91000594

MISSOURI

Lowrance County, Historic District  
Recently bounded by Clinton, Madison, Van Buren, Jefferson, &  
Jeffery, Tennessee, Monroe and Academy Sts.  
Clinton 5/13/91 91000593

MISSOURI

St. Clair County  
Kearney, Mo. 1890s  
Kearney 5/13/91 91000595

MISSOURI

Madison County  
Newport, Mo. 1890s  
Newport 5/15/91 91000544

MISSOURI

Madison County  
Clermont, Mo. 1890s  
Clermont 5/14/91 91000582

MISSOURI

Madison County  
Clinton, Mo. 1890s  
Clinton 5/13/91 91000588

MISSOURI

Madison County  
Holly Grove Presbyterian Church  
310 Second St.  
Madison 5/13/91 91000581

MISSOURI

Phillips County  
Phillips County  
Jct. of Pine and Curruin Sts.  
Newell 5/13/91 91000587

MISSOURI

Van Buren County  
Van Buren County Courthouse  
Clinton 5/13/91 91000584

MISSOURI

Madison County  
Newport, Mo. 1890s  
Newport 5/15/91 91000580

MISSOURI

Madison County  
Holly Grove Presbyterian Church  
310 Second St.  
Madison 5/13/91 91000581

MISSOURI

Madison County  
Holly Grove Presbyterian Church  
310 Second St.  
Madison 5/13/91 91000581

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Madison County  
Holly Grove Presbyterian Church  
310 Second St.  
Madison 5/13/91 91000581

MISSOURI

Madison County  
Holly Grove Presbyterian Church  
310 Second St.  
Madison 5/13/91 91000581

INDIANA

Greene County  
Greene County Courthouse  
15th Ave. S.  
Clinton 5/17/91 91000598

INDIANA

Logan County  
Housh, J. H., Elevator  
Atlanta 5/17/91 91000571

INDIANA

Spangman County  
Spangman County House  
Jct. of Main and Elkhart Sts.  
Milltown 5/17/91 91000574

INDIANA

Madison County  
Central High School  
3827 Academy St.  
Madison 5/16/91 91000606

INDIANA

Madison County  
Elm Hill Farm, Historic District  
Brookfield 5/16/91 91000600

INDIANA

Madison County  
Port Republic City  
Port Republic City 5/16/91 91000596

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INDIANA

Madison County  
Port Republic City  
Port Republic City 5/16/91 91000596

The following properties were also entered in the National Register but were excluded from a previous notice:

KEY: Property Name, Multiple Name, Address/Boundary, City, Vicinity, Reference Number, NHL Status

CALIFORNIA

San Diego County  
Rancho San Lucas  
San Lucas 5/06/91 91000530

CALIFORNIA

San Diego County  
Rancho San Lucas  
San Lucas 5/06/91 91000530

CALIFORNIA

San Diego County  
Rancho San Lucas  
San Lucas 5/06/91 91000530

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San Lucas 5/06/91 91000530

CALIFORNIA

San Diego County  
Rancho San Lucas  
San Lucas 5/06/91 91000530

CALIFORNIA

San Diego County  
Rancho San Lucas  
San Lucas 5/06/91 91000530

The following actions have been taken on the following properties:

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

INDIANA

Madison County  
Port Republic City  
Port Republic City 5/16/91 91000596

INDIANA

Madison County  
Port Republic City  
Port Republic City 5/16/91 91000596

INDIANA

Madison County  
Port Republic City  
Port Republic City 5/16/91 91000596