

Supplementary Listing Record

NRIS Reference Number: SG100001566

Date Listed: 9/7/2017

Property Name: Bryant, Francis E., House

County: Piatt

State: IL

This Property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation


Signature of the Keeper

9-7-17
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 7, Description of Shed

The Frances E. Bryant House nomination consists of two buildings, the house (contributing) and the shed (non-contributing). The wood -framed, board-and-batten shed was constructed outside of the period of significance for storage. It is one-story tall and measures approximately 10 by 12 feet . The roof has a front facing gable, with the northern slope longer than the southern side. The entrance, which is on the west elevation beneath the roof's peak, is also board and batten with strap hinges. Noncontributing.

Site Plan of Bryant House

Frances E. Bryant House



Shed



The ILLINOIS SHPO was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

56-1566

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Bryant, Francis E. House

other names/site number Bryant Cottage State Historic Site

Name of Multiple Property Listing N/A

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

2. Location

street & number 146 East Wilson Street not for publication

city or town Bement vicinity

state Illinois county Piatt zip code 61813

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance: national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

[Signature] 7-14-17
Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. 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] 9-5-17
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

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

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		site
		structure
		object
1	1	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic/single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Recreation and Culture/ museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other/Hall and Parlor

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Brick pier
walls: Plaster and lath
Wood/weatherboard
roof: Cedar shingles
other: _____

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity).

Summary Paragraph

The Francis E. Bryant House is located at 146 East Wilson Street, Bement, Illinois, approximately one block east of North Macon Street and one block north of the railroad. The lot on which the house sits is level and is approximately 0.3 acres. The dwelling was built by local carpenter Aaron Yost in the fall of 1856 or the spring of 1857. The house was owned and lived in by Francis E. Bryant and his family. The house sits off from East Wilson Street approximately 20 feet and faces the railroad to the south. A small outbuilding shares the lot with the cottage, but is a shed for maintenance tools and is non-contributing. The property is in excellent condition, since it has been administered by the State of Illinois since 1947.

Narrative Description

The house is a four-room, one story, wood-framed, Hall-and-Parlor-style, single family dwelling with a side-facing gabled roof with a split-pitch, clad in wood shingles. It is approximately 26 feet by 31 feet. There is one center chimney. The house sits upon a brick pier foundation that has been reinforced and is not visible from the exterior as wide boards extend below the sill to cover the piers.

South Elevation (Front)

The front façade is slightly asymmetrical, the door being nearly centered and a window on either side. The entry door is wood with four wood panels and has a wood frame. A porch is attached to the front of the house, which measures approximately 13 feet by 5 ½ feet and was added between 1893 and 1898.

There are two windows on the front façade, one on either side of the door. They are double-sash, six-over-six windows with plain wood sills and wooden lintels. Louvered shutters are on either side of each window.

West Elevation

The west elevation has, like the front façade, two, six-over-six wood double-sash windows with plain wood sills and wooden lintels. Shutters, too, frame each window. The gabled roofline reveals a change in roof pitch from an 8/12 pitch to a 4/12 pitch on the back part of the building. The north wall is two feet shorter than the south wall, giving the northern third of the building a shallower sloped roof.

North Elevation

The rear of the building has one entry door set to the far left, and three windows, patterned the same as the others: six-over-six wood double-sash windows with plain wood sills and wooden lintels, complete with a set of shutters for each window. The door is wood with four panels with a wood frame. The door opens onto a small stoop that measures approximately 5 feet by 3 feet. An L-shaped, poured-concrete handicap ramp with a cast-iron railing abuts the stoop.

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East Elevation

The east elevation is similar to the west elevation in that it has the same roof pitch. There are three windows on the gabled end, paired four-over-four double sash windows with a single sill and lintel, and one set of shutters for the pair. This set is located near the northeast corner of the building. The third window is the same as the others previously described: six-over-six wood, double-sash window with a plain wood sill and wooden lintel.

Interior

The house has plaster walls that have been wall-papered, and has rough pine board floors that are carpeted. The floor plan is a variant of the Hall and Parlor. There are four rooms, rather than the typical two found in that building type, due to a later addition. The back (north) two rooms are the kitchen and a bedroom with a small hallway separating them. The main entry door leads into a small entry way that is 4 feet wide by 5 ½ feet deep with a small closet. A door to the right leads into the living room and a door to the left leads into the parlor.

The living room is the largest of the four rooms. The ceiling height is 9 feet, 10 inches. There is no fireplace, but a wood stove is tied into the chimney via a flue. The living room is asymmetrical in that it has a small alcove that is located directly behind (to the north of) the entryway closet. There are two windows in the room: one located on the east wall and another nearly centered on the south wall.

The entrance to the kitchen into the small hallway is on the kitchen's west wall. The space in the hallway houses a staff restroom and an enclosed area to house the furnace, along with a cabinet for administrative supplies. The original spatial dimensions were 4 feet, 2 inches by 9 feet, 7 ½ inches. One window is in the restroom, on the north wall of the structure.

A door leads directly west out of the small hallway into the bedroom, the smallest of the rooms in the cottage. The ceiling is sloped, as in the kitchen, and is approximately 11 feet, 8 inches by 9 feet, 7 ½ inches. Two windows are in this room, one centered on the north wall of the bedroom and the other on the west exterior wall.

The door into the parlor is in the southwest corner of the bedroom. This is the room where it is believed Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas met to discuss their senatorial debate schedule in 1858. The room is 12 feet, 2 inches by 15 feet, 3 inches. The ceiling height, like the living room, is 9 feet, 10 inches. There are two windows in the room, one on the west wall and the other centered on the south wall. The door in the southeast corner of the room leads back into the small entryway to the main entrance of the cottage.

The plaster walls in the home are painted or wall papered in period appropriate colors and patterns for a middle class family in 1858. The carpeted areas also reflect attention to historical detail. The parlor carpet was created in a Brussels weave while a single loop carpet is used in the bedroom and sitting room.

Integrity

The Francis E. Bryant House has sufficient integrity for listing in the National Register. As a state-owned property since 1947, it has been well maintained. Exterior photos included in the HABS survey taken in 1935 show how little the home has changed in the past 90 years. The Historic Sites Division of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency has compiled the following a chronology which indicates the alterations and restorations made to the home since its construction:

1882 House moved from original site to Block L

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- Later owners, Jack Lonnon and J.F. Knapp, of the house added one room and put a porch on the front.
- 1925 Cottage moves back to original foundation and grandson of Francis Bryant restores the building.
- 1947 July 29th House is donated to the Village of Bement.
State takes ownership of the cottage. The structure is repainted, kitchen is repainted, paper is removed and bathroom walls painted.
- 1954 April: Removal of rear porch, defective foundation boards, metal roof of front porch, composition roofing of main structure, flue above roofline. Installed: Clear 16" cedar shingles to main building, new 40lb terne plate metal roof to front porch, two coats of metallic green paint, copper base and counter flashing to junction of new roof and flue.
May: Construction of new flue from roof line to present height using "old fashioned" brick and mortar containing yellow oak; install new copper eave trough and copper down spouting on house and porch and install foundation boards and replace deteriorated clapboards, install window glass as needed, paint building with two coats of white lead and oil.
- 1955 New flag pole installed
Interior repainted and repapered with authentic design of the 1850s
Antique ingrain carpet laid in living room, dining room and bedroom.
Concealed lighting system and furnace installed.
In February, under the direction of Dr. Hagen, partition changes were made to the bed alcove and pantry made to create a hallway to accommodate visitors during the 1955 Bement Centennial Celebration.¹ The floor plan was later restored to the HABS documentation.
- 1995 Wheel chair accessible ramp added.
- 2004 CDB project 104-011-001: Dismantling and rebuilding foundation piers in original locations; replace much of front porch, add/return decorative brackets to front porch, switching metal roof for wood shingles; replacing exterior wood elements as necessary; exterior paint; asbestos abatement; interior plaster repair, repaint, repaper as necessary.

In addition to the above, the stoop on the rear of the house is not original. The precise date of this addition is unknown, but it is known that it was added after the HABS documentation was completed in 1936, but before 1966. The furnace is housed in a small closet across from the front door. In 1991, a fire which effected the south west corner of the parlor resulted from a heat gun being used to prepare the house for repainting. The damaged areas were repaired and restored to historical standards.

The changes that have been made to the property after 1858 have not adversely affected the property's integrity. The porch was rebuilt based upon the HABS documentation. While the porch is a later addition, the house is still recognizable as the meeting place between Lincoln and Douglas, nor does it affect the design of the Hall and Parlor floor plan. More recent renovations were completed to make the home accessible to visitors. As a property maintained by the State of Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, the work has been done in a manner which preserves the historic and architectural integrity of the site.

¹ "Bryant Cottage Chronology of the Site's Evolution," Bryant Cottage State Historical Site, Bement, IL.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Politics/Government

Architecture

Period of Significance

Criterion A: 1858

Criterion C: circa 1856

Significant Dates

1858

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation (if applicable)

Architect/Builder

Yost, Aaron

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations).

The Francis E. Bryant House has statewide significance under Criteria A for politics/government as the meeting place of Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas on the evening of July 29, 1858, where they discussed and finalized the schedule and format of seven planned senatorial debates in each congressional district in Illinois. These debates later became known as “The Great Debates of 1858” and are credited with elevating Lincoln to a national political stage and forming the earliest political foundations for a presidential bid. Through the series of debates, Lincoln, as the Republican challenger, was able to express his views on a national stage regarding popular sovereignty and states’ rights as they pertained to the issue of slavery against the incumbent Democrat Douglas, also known as “The Little Giant.” Though Lincoln lost to Douglas in the senatorial race, the established debate platform showcased his oratory skills, bringing him national recognition due to the well-attended debates and the widespread newspaper coverage. This contributed greatly to Lincoln’s ability to win the Republican nomination for president four years later. These debates influenced the state’s political process at the time, Lincoln’s political future, and the national conversation regarding slavery.

Additionally, the property has local significance under Criterion C as a good example of the Hall and Parlor style of architecture. This folk architectural type is typical of housing popular at the time of the town’s founding. The materials with which it was constructed demonstrate the economic implications of railroad expansion. Since the property was returned to its original location on its original piers, it does not need to meet Criteria Consideration B for moved properties.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A: Event

Francis E. Bryant, a politically active businessman and store owner, moved from Schuyler, Co., Illinois to Bement in 1856.² His was the seventh family to locate to the newly establish village. The Great Western Railroad had just laid tracks through the town. Bryant started buying and selling grain, lumber, coal, and salt.³ His business was very successful and he purchased land only 100 feet from the railroad on which to build his house. Due to his service as a member of the Illinois legislature representing Schuyler County (1853-1854), he became political allies and friends with Illinois State Senator Stephen A. Douglas. Two years later, Bryant was a part of a statewide group of business owners whom Douglas counted on for support around the state. The Stephen A. Douglas Papers collection at the University of Chicago Library holds a letter from Francis E. Bryant to Douglas listing potential supporters in Piatt County. His connection to Douglas is additionally affirmed through his position as Postmaster, a politically appointed post. He was replaced in October of 1858 during a political purge of Douglas supporters in Illinois by the Buchanan administration.⁴

Abraham Lincoln was named the Republican challenger for Douglas’s senate seat. Both candidates began canvassing the state making campaign speeches. Most times, Lincoln listened in the audience as Douglas delivered his speech. Then Lincoln would deliver his own speech to refute Douglas.⁵ This practice was called “concluding on.” Democratic newspapers declared Lincoln used Douglas to gather audiences for him, and was afraid to face questioning by Douglas. This is reflected in the German language paper, *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung*, as journalist Henry Villard writes on Lincoln’s conduct prior to the agreement to a series of debates, “The attempt to capitalize on these celebrations, which were solely held to welcome and honor Douglas, did certainly not indicate discreteness on behalf of Lincoln. The realization of the tactlessness of his behavior, but much more Douglas’ merciless castigation of his political creed on every occasion, seems to

² Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. *Bryant Cottage Chronology*, 6.

³ Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. *Bryant Cottage Chronology*, 6.

⁴ U.S. Post Office Department, “Record of Appointment of Postmasters,” vol. 20A, on microfilm reel 30: “Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1832-Sept. 30, 1871.

⁵ Jim Fay, “Lincoln & Douglas at the Bryant Cottage,” *Lincoln Herald* 100, no. 1 (Spring 1998) 13.

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have made him change his manners.”⁶ Lincoln penned a letter to Douglas, proposing a series of debates. Douglas received the letter and replied with a set of proposed locations and sent it via messenger back to Lincoln. The letter was not received until July 29, at which time Lincoln answered it, then boarded a train from Springfield to Bement to hand-deliver his reply to Douglas, who had a scheduled speaking engagement in Monticello.

On the afternoon of July 29, after Douglas gave his speech, the Douglas-Bryant team left Monticello, heading back to Bement, the local railhead. They met Lincoln who was going north, about a mile south of Monticello. The parties stopped and spoke briefly. Lincoln was invited back to Bement to the Bryant house where he and Douglas could discuss the particulars of the debates of which the two had been corresponding. Lincoln had a brief speaking engagement in Monticello but said that he would return to Bement and call upon Douglas at the Bryant home. That evening, Lincoln returned to Bement and, as agreed, conferred with Douglas in the Bryant parlor, where they went over the details of their planned debates. Lincoln then took the midnight train back to Springfield. Douglas wrote a letter the next morning, July 30, confirming the arrangements made the night prior. This letter was penned at Bryant Cottage before Douglas left that day.⁷

The Lincoln-Douglas debates are considered to be a watershed series of events in the political life of Abraham Lincoln. Prior to his entering the senatorial race in 1858, he had a local-level career as a politician. He served four terms in the Illinois House of Representatives, one term in the U.S. House of Representatives, and lost a U.S. Senate bid in 1855. Mark Neely states in *The Abraham Lincoln Encyclopedia*, that “many presidential campaigns in American history are less well known than the 1858 campaign for Senator from Illinois.”⁸

The debates were remarkable in that never before had an incumbent senator agreed to publically debate his opponent.⁹ Douglas drew large audiences. When Lincoln challenged him to a debate, acceptance on Douglas’ part would nullify some of the advantage of his fame.¹⁰ However, Douglas did not want to be called a coward. His agreement to the series of debates lifted Lincoln to a new political echelon. The crowds in attendance were immense, “for example, over 10,000 in Ottawa, a town of only some 6,000 population.”¹¹ The spectacle of debate day overtook the towns which hosted the candidates with people, food, music and commerce.¹² The influx of wagons kicked up so much dust that the town would appear completely engulfed.¹³ During the debates, stenographers would record the oratories with short hand. Don Fehrenbacher notes in his book *Prelude to Greatness* that, “The decision of the *Chicago Times* and the *Chicago Press and Tribune* to print complete stenographic reports of the seven debates constituted a landmark in political journalism.”¹⁴

From the debates, Neely concludes two major conclusions can be drawn. First, Douglas was unable to portray Lincoln’s view on slavery as radical.¹⁵ Lincoln, instead was able to draw a moral line regarding slavery which helped to differentiate Douglas’ approach of popular sovereignty from Republican thinking.¹⁶ Fergus Bordewich, author and historian, in his article, “How Lincoln Bested Douglas in Their Famous Debates,” quotes Lincoln making a broader argument against the institution of slavery during the debates saying, “It is the same spirit that says, ‘You work and toil and earn bread, and I’ll eat it.’ No matter in what shape it comes, whether from the mouth of a king who seeks to bestride the people of his own nation and live by the fruit of their labor, or from one race of men as an apology for enslaving another race, it is the same tyrannical

⁶ “Illinois Politics” in *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung*, 8/3/1858. Translation provided by Prof. Allen Guelzo, Gettysburg College.

⁷ Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, *Bryant Cottage Chronology*, 18.

⁸ Mark E. Neely, *The Abraham Lincoln Encyclopedia*. (New York, N.Y.: Da Capo Press: 1984), 79.

⁹ Fergus M. Bordewich, “How Lincoln Bested Douglas in Their Famous Debates,” *Smithsonian.com*, September 2008.
<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/how-lincoln-bested-douglas-in-their-famous-debates-> (accessed April 21, 2017).

¹⁰ Mark E. Neely, *The Abraham Lincoln Encyclopedia*, 80.

¹¹ Mark E. Neely, *The Abraham Lincoln Encyclopedia*, 81.

¹² Don E. Fehrenbacher, *Prelude to Greatness: Lincoln in the 1850’s*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press: 1962), 102.

¹³ Don E. Fehrenbacher, *Prelude to Greatness: Lincoln in the 1850’s*, 102.

¹⁴ Don E. Fehrenbacher, *Prelude to Greatness: Lincoln in the 1850’s*, 98.

¹⁵ Neely Mark E. Neely, *The Abraham Lincoln Encyclopedia*, 80.

¹⁶ Neely Mark E. Neely, *The Abraham Lincoln Encyclopedia*, 80.

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principle."¹⁷ Secondly, Lincoln did not have to win the debates to win the debates. In terms of public opinion, he simply had to make a respectable showing and not lose embarrassingly.¹⁸

The election was a close but unsuccessful ballot for Lincoln, but the "campaign of 1858 proved to be a contest without a real loser."¹⁹ Douglas proved to be a worthy opponent against whom Lincoln could sharpen his political tools. Lincoln emerges from the race a more prominent political figure in the state of Illinois and across the country. Prior to this senatorial nomination, many wondered if Lincoln was able to lead the party. Afterwards, "Illinois Republicans began to tout him for the Presidency in 1860."²⁰ Without these debates, Lincoln would probably have fallen by the wayside, lost in the shuffle of great themes and conflicts embracing the country at that time. Fehrenbacher contends that, "the results of the Illinois election compelled Republicans everywhere to take a respectful look at this new party leader who had arisen on the Western prairie. The popular vote indicated that the state hung in the balance for 1860 and would require special attention, perhaps even a place on the national ticket. And Lincoln had proved himself a match for the leading Democratic contender."²¹

The Bryant House had changed hands since its association with the historic meeting between Lincoln and Douglas. In 1882, Bryant built a larger house on the lot and the cottage was moved one block west of its original location to Lot 9, Block L. Subsequent owners of the cottage Jack Lonnon and later J.F. Knapp are said to have added a room and a front porch to it.²² In 1925 Bryant's grandson, John F. Sprague acquired the property and moved the cottage back to its original site and foundation. That year the cottage was dedicated to the Village of Bement in 1925 as a memorial to Lincoln and Douglas.²³

In 1946, C.C. Burford of Urbana contacted the Illinois State Historical Library regarding the Bryant Cottage and published the story of the Lincoln-Douglas meeting at the site in several newspapers.²⁴ Shortly after that, University of Illinois Professor and leading Lincoln scholar, James G. Randall wrote to the director of Public Works and Building for Illinois to argue the importance of the Bryant Cottage. In the letter, Randall recommended the state acquire the site as a place of historic interest connected to Lincoln.²⁵ On February 8, 1947, Lilly M. and Bryant P. Sprague deeded the cottage to the state of Illinois for \$1.²⁶ It is dedicated in July of 1947 at a ceremony and remains under state ownership to the present day.

The Lincoln-Douglas meeting at Bryant Cottage had been an event of some debate among scholars. There was a lack of conclusive historical evidence for confirmation of its occurrence and local legends had added false details over the decades which have fostered suspicion of the claim. Approximately seven years after the state acquired and began interpreting the site as the meeting place of Lincoln and Douglas, historian Richard Hagen called the claim into question. At that time, the furniture in the home had been interpreted as the very pieces present during the meeting. Hagen's research indicated that the pieces had not been constructed until 1868.²⁷ Due to the lack of evidence regarding the meeting and the erroneous claims regarding the furniture, Hagen concluded it could only be stated that Douglas spent one night at the cottage. As a result of this critique, the state began to interpret the site as an example of a middle-class life in mid-nineteenth-century Illinois.

¹⁷ Fergus M. Bordewich, "How Lincoln Bested Douglas in Their Famous Debates."

¹⁸ Neely Mark E. Neely, *The Abraham Lincoln Encyclopedia*, 80.

¹⁹ Don E. Fehrenbacher, *Prelude to Greatness: Lincoln in the 1850's*, 120.

²⁰ Neely Mark E. Neely, *The Abraham Lincoln Encyclopedia*, 81.

²¹ Don E. Fehrenbacher, *Prelude to Greatness: Lincoln in the 1850's*, 143.

²² Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. *Bryant Cottage Chronology*, 24.

²³ Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. *Bryant Cottage Chronology*, 25.

²⁴ Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. *Bryant Cottage Chronology*, 26.

²⁵ Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. *Bryant Cottage Chronology*, 26.

²⁶ Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. *Bryant Cottage Chronology*, 27.

²⁷ Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, *Bryant Cottage Chronology*, 30.

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However in 1998, Jim Fay argues in an article written for the *Lincoln Herald* that the lack of evidence is evidence in itself that the meeting did occur at the Bryant Cottage. What can be proven; Lincoln's concluding on of Douglas, the travel to Monticello by both men via Bement, the meeting on the road, and the letters exchanged, contain enough historical evidence to hypothesize the meeting in the Bryant Cottage not only happened but may be the ultimate testimony to the wit and cunning of both men.

Lincoln's letter, written on July 29 in Springfield, argued against the accusation that he has been concluding on Douglas.²⁸ However, he adds a post script in which he says he will no longer conclude on Douglas. Lincoln rarely used postscripts.²⁹ When he did, it was usually to add information about where he could be reached or tangential comments. This more substantive post script with a message contrary to the body of the letter indicates a meeting occurred which altered their dialogue.³⁰

Handbills had been printed and posted indicating that Lincoln would speak in Monticello but historical record indicates that he did not give a speech by the usual standards.³¹ He read the letter he intended to give Douglas sans the postscript and made an excuse that he had to leave in order to catch a train. It is not known if Lincoln had even written the post script at that point. Lincoln was ridiculed in the papers for bowing out of the speech and making excuses for his quick departure.³² When examined more closely, there was no reason for Lincoln not to give a proper speech, he had plenty of time to catch the midnight train back to Springfield and no engagements the following day. However, if he needed to return to Bement in enough time to meet with Douglas and catch the departing train; that would necessitate amending his speaking engagement.

The meeting on the road south of Monticello which is documented by eye witnesses, might seem mundane on the surface but it contains evidence to support the conference in the Bryant Cottage. In this conversation, Douglas provides Lincoln with his location and the time period which he can be found there.³³ Lincoln, despite handbills indicating otherwise, promises that he does not intend to give a speech in Monticello.³⁴ Using subtext, Douglas provides a meeting time and place while Lincoln confirms his intent to attend. This is accomplished while surrounded by supporters and reporters who remain unaware of the true meaning of the exchange. Doing so enables Lincoln and Douglas to meet one on one, without outside distractions or interference, to format and schedule the series of debates which have come to define the highest level of political discourse. Fay's argument bolsters certainty that the meeting in the Bryant Cottage not only occurred but that it is evidence of Lincoln and Douglas' intellectual and political savvy. An inside joke between the two men that the rest of world is just realizing, well over a hundred years later.

Even if one does not embrace Fay's hypothesis, the first account of the meeting emerges only twenty years after the event. Printed in a pamphlet, *History of Bement Piatt County, Illinois From Its Earliest Settlement to the Present Date*, as well as local newspapers; the *Bement Independent*, and *Monticello Bulletin*, all published in 1878, the story emerges while key figures are still alive to dispute it. This early record of the meeting is as follows:

"On coming in close proximity, they came to a halt. Passing the usual salutation, Mr. Douglas says to Mr. Lincoln, "Did you receive my letter?"

Mr. Lincoln replied affirmatively.

Mr. Douglas then asked him what he thought of it?

Mr. Lincoln said he thought favorable of it at the same time asking him where he could see him upon his return from Monticello (as he also had a call from his political friends to speak at that place.)

Mr. Douglas replied that he would meet with him at Mr. Bryant's at Bement.

²⁸ Jim Fay, "Lincoln & Douglas at the Bryant Cottage," *Lincoln Herald* 100, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 14.

²⁹ Jim Fay, "Lincoln & Douglas at the Bryant Cottage," 15.

³⁰ Jim Fay, "Lincoln & Douglas at the Bryant Cottage," 15.

³¹ Jim Fay, "Lincoln & Douglas at the Bryant Cottage," 16.

³² Jim Fay, "Lincoln & Douglas at the Bryant Cottage," 16.

³³ Jim Fay, "Lincoln & Douglas at the Bryant Cottage," 15.

³⁴ Jim Fay, "Lincoln & Douglas at the Bryant Cottage," 15.

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Mr. Lincoln then proceeded with the procession which had arrived from Monticello to meet him and escort him to the place of appointment. At the conclusion of the speaking Mr. L set out for Bement to meet Mr. Douglas. On arriving at Bement he called at the place appointed and was cordially received. They repaired to the parlor, and entered into a conversation which led to great results in the future.”³⁵

Additionally, fifty years following the event the Piatt County Historical Society erected two concrete pyramidal monuments one on the original site of the house and the other marking the spot along the road where Lincoln and Douglas met in passing.³⁶ This was done as part of a statewide project to mark all the locations Lincoln lived and worked.³⁷ The monument was removed later so that the house could be moved back on top of its original foundation.

Until recently, guides interpreting the site were instructed to preface the story of the Lincoln-Douglas meeting with the words “according to Bryant Family tradition.” However, shortly before his retirement Dr. Richard S. Taylor, Chief Historian, IHPA, determined that enough time had passed since Hagen’s critique to uncover the rest of the story. Since nothing had been discovered which denies the local story, he declared, “some history is local, and we cannot deny local history.”³⁸ Guides no longer qualify the claim of the meeting when giving tours of Bryant Cottage.

Since the Chicago papers and the Republican Committee had suggested a series of debates between the two men, it is likely that they would have occurred anyway, regardless of the private meeting at Bryant Cottage. They might have met elsewhere or continued to make arrangements via letters. However, the chance meeting on the road between Monticello and Bement with Mr. Bryant offering his parlor away from the prying eyes and ears of the newspaper men, allowed the schedule to be created immediately, with debates starting in August in Ottawa, Illinois, and continuing through October 15, in Alton, Illinois.

Criterion C: Hall and Parlor

Hall and Parlor is an example of folk architecture that originated in Britain and spread most predominantly through the Tidewater and Midland regions of the United States as functional and affordable housing for families of modest incomes.³⁹ In frontier regions, Hall and Parlor homes were built with logs, sod, and hewn frames.⁴⁰ The expansion of the railroads between 1850 and 1890 allowed folk housing, like Hall and Parlor homes, to be built of distantly produced materials while still retaining their distinctive elements.⁴¹ The simple side-gabled, rectangular floor plan, two rooms wide and one room deep, could now be built with light framing techniques. Variants emerged and included options regarding the location of the chimney, rear extensions which provided more interior space, and the addition of front porches.⁴²

The village of Bement is very much a product of railroad expansion. Surveyed by agents of the Great Western Railroad and platted in 1854, the town soon grew as farmers and business men moved in to take advantage of the railway. Bryant, as one of those businessmen, built his Hall and Parlor house one block from the tracks. The wood framed four room variant is consistent with the architectural type in its side gabled, rectangular floor plan. The central chimney and rear extension are examples of common adaptations for this

³⁵ George L. Spear, *History of Bement Piatt County Illinois, From Its Earliest Settlement to the Present Date* (np: 1878), p. 8.

³⁶ Molly McKenzie. “How Bryant Cottage Became a State Historic Site.” *Historic Illinois*, Vol. 3 No. 6. (Spring 1981), Illinois Department of Conservation Division of Historic Sites. Springfield, IL. 3.

³⁷ “Lincoln Douglas Memorial Monument” Postcard, Art View Post Card Company. New York.

³⁸ Email communication from Marilyn Ayers to Amy Hathaway, May 24, 2017.

³⁹ Virginia Savage McAlister, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Knopf, 2015), 136.

⁴⁰ Virginia Savage McAlister, *A Field Guide to American*, 135.

⁴¹ Virginia Savage McAlister, *A Field Guide to American*, 135.

⁴² Virginia Savage McAlister, *A Field Guide to American*, 140.

Francis E. Bryant House
Name of Property

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style as is the front porch which was added later. The materials with which the home is constructed, typify the resources made available by the expansion of the railways. Therefore, the property is locally significant to local history and community tradition under Criterion C as an excellently maintained example of the Hall and Parlor folk architecture.

The Bryant Cottage was the only Hall and Parlor house identified in the Illinois Historic Structures Survey. For purposes of this nomination, a windshield survey of Bement was conducted to determine whether there were any similar properties to the Bryant Cottage. Several one-story, side gabled houses had the same massing and bay divisions. All were clad with non-historic siding and none had sufficient integrity to be eligible for individual listing in the National Register.

Francis E. Bryant House
Name of Property

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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- Fehrenbacher, Don E. *Prelude to Greatness: Lincoln in the 1850's*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1962.
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- Villard, Henry. "Illinois Politics" in *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung*, 8/3/1858. Translation provided by Prof. Allen Guelzo, Gettysburg College.

Francis E. Bryant House
Name of Property

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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 # ILL-223
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage; enter "Less than one" if the acreage is .99 or less)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>N 39.923313</u> Latitude	<u>W 88.572121</u> Longitude	3	_____ Latitude	_____ Longitude
2	_____ Latitude	_____ Longitude	4	_____ Latitude	_____ Longitude

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)
Lots 7 and 8 of block M of the original addition of the village.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the property and land currently owned by the Illinois State Historical Society.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	<u>Daniel E. Bacon</u>	date	<u>12 May 2016</u>		
organization	<u>University of Illinois</u>	telephone	<u>217-828-2025</u>		
street & number	<u>355 Mc Divitt Avenue</u>	email	<u>dbaco2@uis.edu</u>		
city or town	<u>Lincoln</u>	state	<u>IL</u>	zip code	<u>62656</u>
name/title	<u>Kara Pecoraro</u>	date	<u>12 May 2016</u>		
organization	<u>University of Illinois</u>	telephone	<u>217-971-8411</u>		
street & number	<u>712 Molly Lane</u>	email	<u>Kpeco01s@uis.edu</u>		
city or town	<u>New Berlin</u>	state	<u>IL</u>	zip code	<u>62670</u>

Francis E. Bryant House
Name of Property

Piatt, Illinois
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **GIS Location Map (Google Earth or BING)**
 - **Local Location Map**
 - **Site Plan**
 - **Floor Plans (As Applicable)**
 - **Photo Location Map** (Include for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map and insert immediately after the photo log and before the list of figures).
-

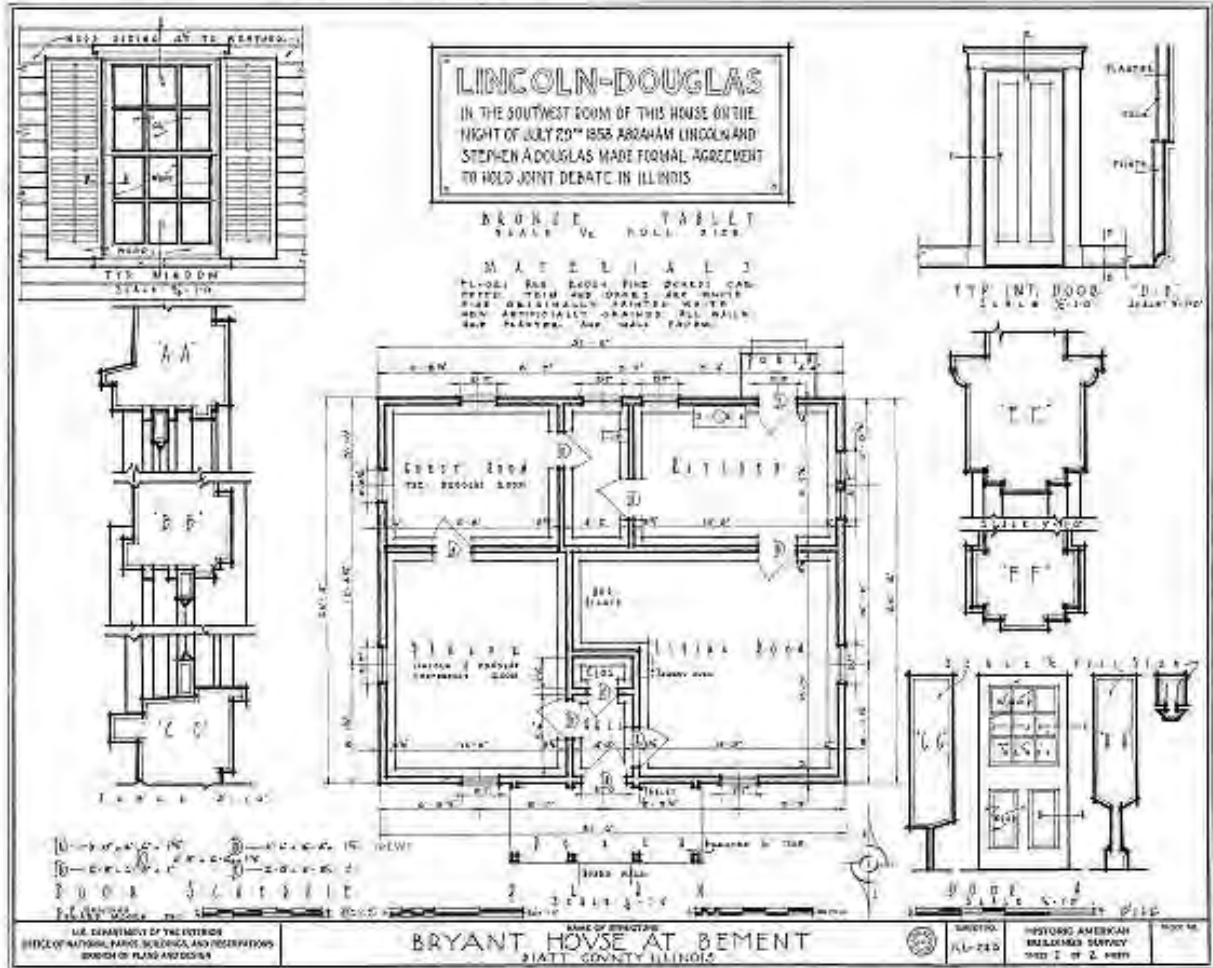


Bryant Cottage State Historic Site
Bement, Piatt County, Illinois
39 55'23.04" N 88 34'19.09" W

Francis E. Bryant House
Name of Property

Piatt, Illinois
County and State

Floor
Plans



Francis E. Bryant House
Name of Property

Piatt, Illinois
County and State

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 pixels, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Bryant Cottage State Historic Site
City or Vicinity: Bement
County: Piatt **State:** IL
Photographer: Dan Bacon, Kara Pecoraro
Date Photographed: Exterior: 9 May 2016/Interior: 2 June 2017

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo 1 of 12: Front of Cottage (taken looking north)

Photo 2 of 12: East side of Cottage (taken looking west)

Photo 3 of 12: Rear of Cottage (taken looking south)

Photo 4 of 12: West side of Cottage (taken looking east).

Photo 5 of 12: Interior, Parlor (taken looking west.)

Photo 6 of 12: Interior, Parlor (taken looking northwest.)

Photo 7 of 12: Interior, Bedroom (taken looking west)

Photo 8 of 12: Interior, Bedroom (taken looking northeast)

Photo 9 of 12: Interior Kitchen (taken looking northwest)

Photo 10 of 12: Interior, Kitchen (taken looking west)

Photo 11 of 12: Interior, Sitting Room (taken looking south)

Photo 12 of 12: Interior, Sitting Room (taken looking northwest)

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

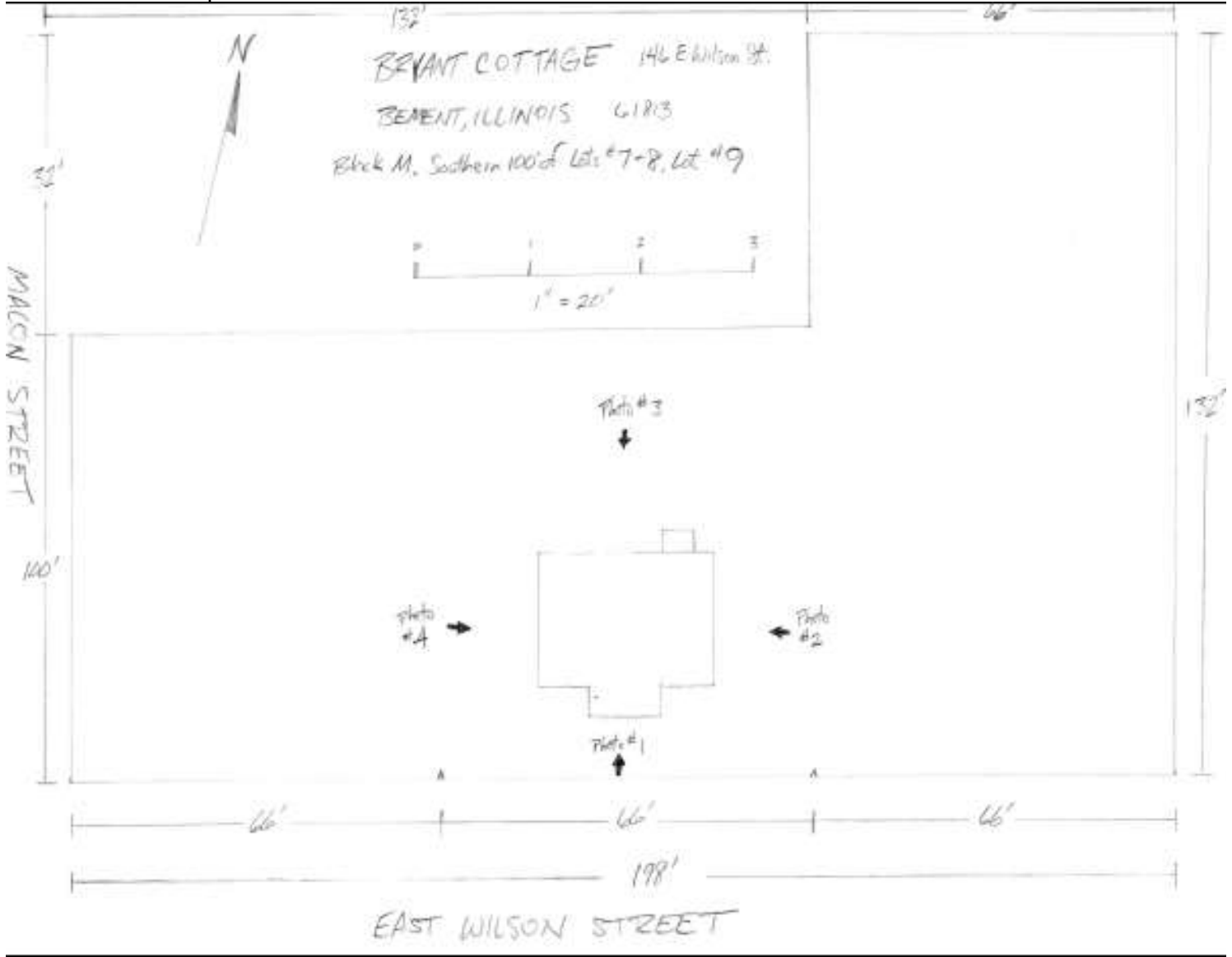
Bryant, Frances E. House
Illinois, Piatt County

List of Figures

(Resize, compact, and paste images of maps and historic documents in this section. Place captions, with figure numbers above each image. Orient maps so that north is at the top of the page, all document should be inserted with the top toward the the top of the page.

Figure 1.

Photo Location Map



Bryant, Frances E. House
Illinois, Piatt County

Figure 2

HABS Exterior Detail

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY PRINT BY HAWKIN'S STUDIO - PHOTOGRAPHERS -
PHOTO TAKEN ABOUT JULY 1935. VIEW FROM SOUTHWEST - Bryant House, 116 Wilson Street,
Bement, Piatt County, IL



Bryant, Frances E. House
Illinois, Piatt County

Figure 3
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY E.E. LUNDEEN, PHOTOGRAPHER JULY 10, 1935. VIEW
FROM NORTHEAST - Bryant House, 116 Wilson Street, Bement, Piatt County, IL



Bryant, Frances E. House
Illinois, Piatt County

Figure 4
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY PRINT BY HAWKIN'S STUDIO PHOTOGRAPHERS. PHOTO
TAKEN ABOUT JULY 1935. LINCOLN - DOUGLAS CONFERENCE (PARLOR) ROOM - VIEW FROM
NORTH - Bryant House, 116 Wilson Street, Bement, Piatt County, IL



**Bryant, Frances E. House
Illinois, Piatt County**

Figure 5

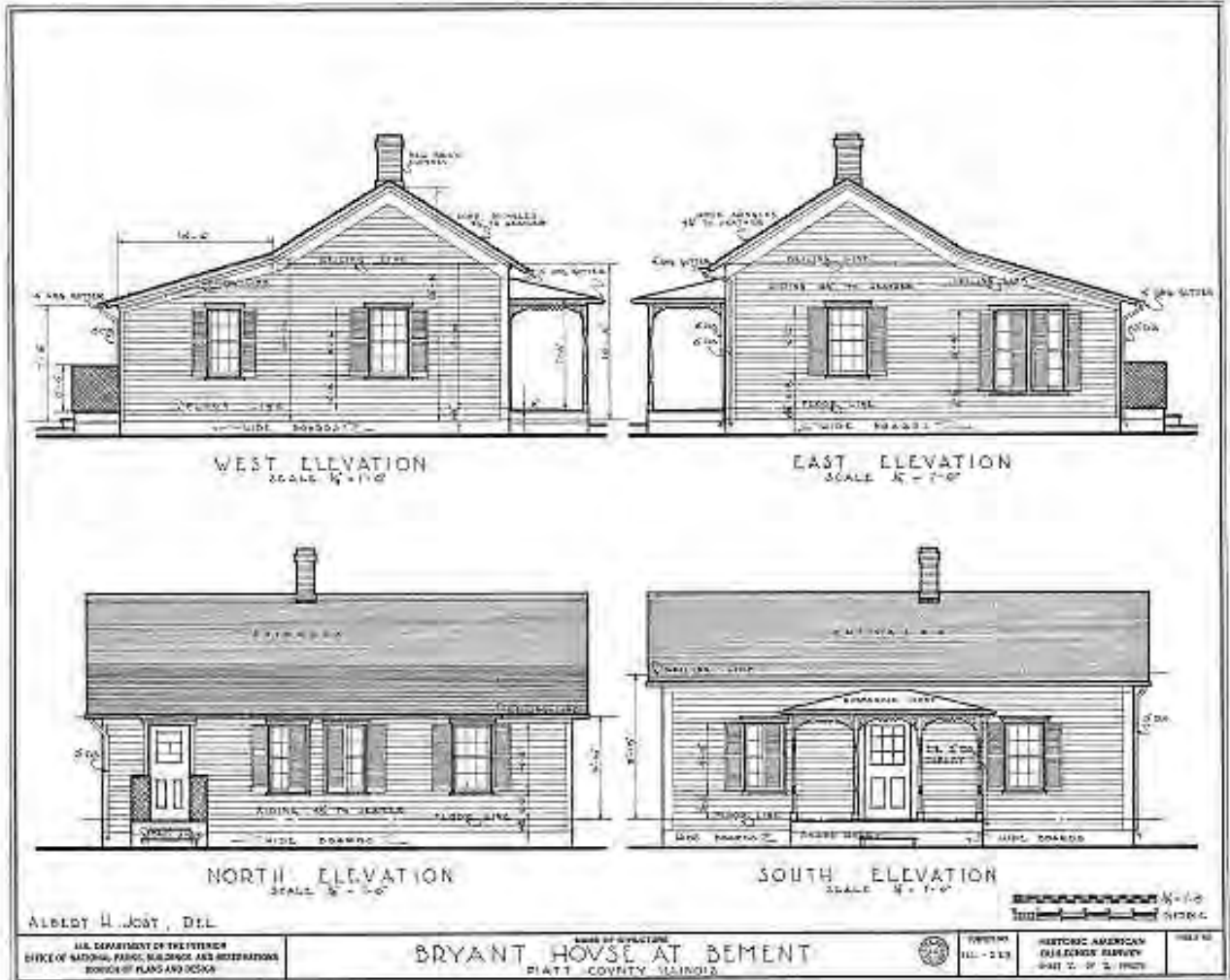
Marilyn Monroe visits Bryant Cottage during the Centennial Celebration of 1955. The tour guide is resting his hand on the chair which was originally interpreted as the one upon which Lincoln sat during the meeting at the cottage. That claim was subsequently proven false.

<http://www.pjstar.com/article/20150729/NEWS/150729152>



Bryant, Frances E. House
Illinois, Piatt County

Figure 6
HABS Exterior Detail



Figures 7 and 8
Douglas' letter to Lincoln from Bement.

Bement, Piatt Co. Ill.
July 30th, 1858

Dear Sir,

Your letter, dated yesterday, accepting my proposition for a joint discussion at one prominent point in each Congressional district as stated in my previous letter was received this morning.

The times and places designated are as follows:

Ottawa, LaSalle Co.	August 21 st	1858
Freeport, Stevenson Co.	" 27 th	"
Jonestown, Union Co.	September 15.	"
Charleston, Coles Co.	" 18	"
Julesburg, Knox Co.	October 7	"
Quincy, Adams Co.	" 13	"
Alton, Madison Co.	" 15	"

I agree to your suggestion that we shall alternately open and close the discussion. I will speak at Ottawa one hour, you can reply occupying an hour and a half and I will then follow for half an hour. At Freeport you shall open the discussion and speak one hour, I will follow for an hour and a half and you can then reply for

1101

half a hour. We will alternate in like
manner at each successive place.

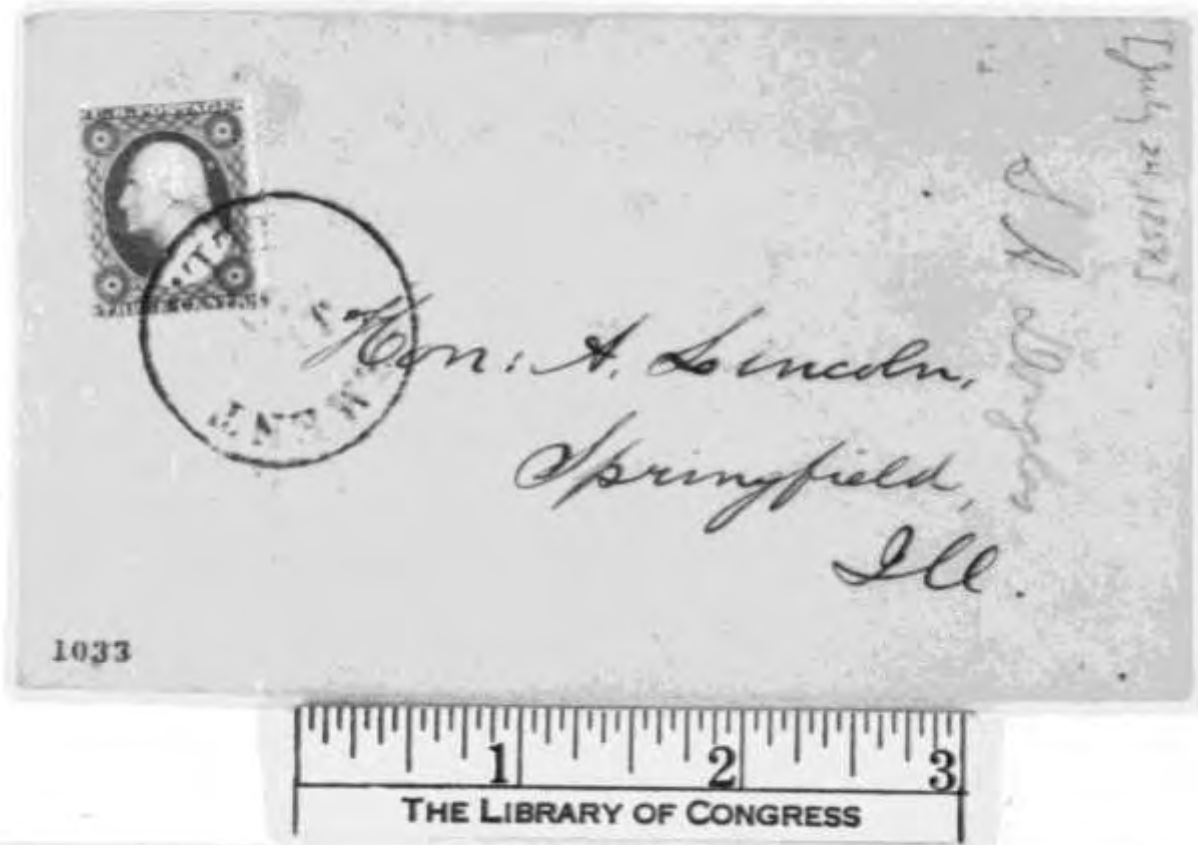
Very resp^{ly}

Yr obt^l Serv^t,
S. M. Reynolds

Hon. A. Lincoln
Springfield,
Ill.

Bryant, Frances E. House
Illinois, Piatt County

Figure 9
Envelope with Bement postmark

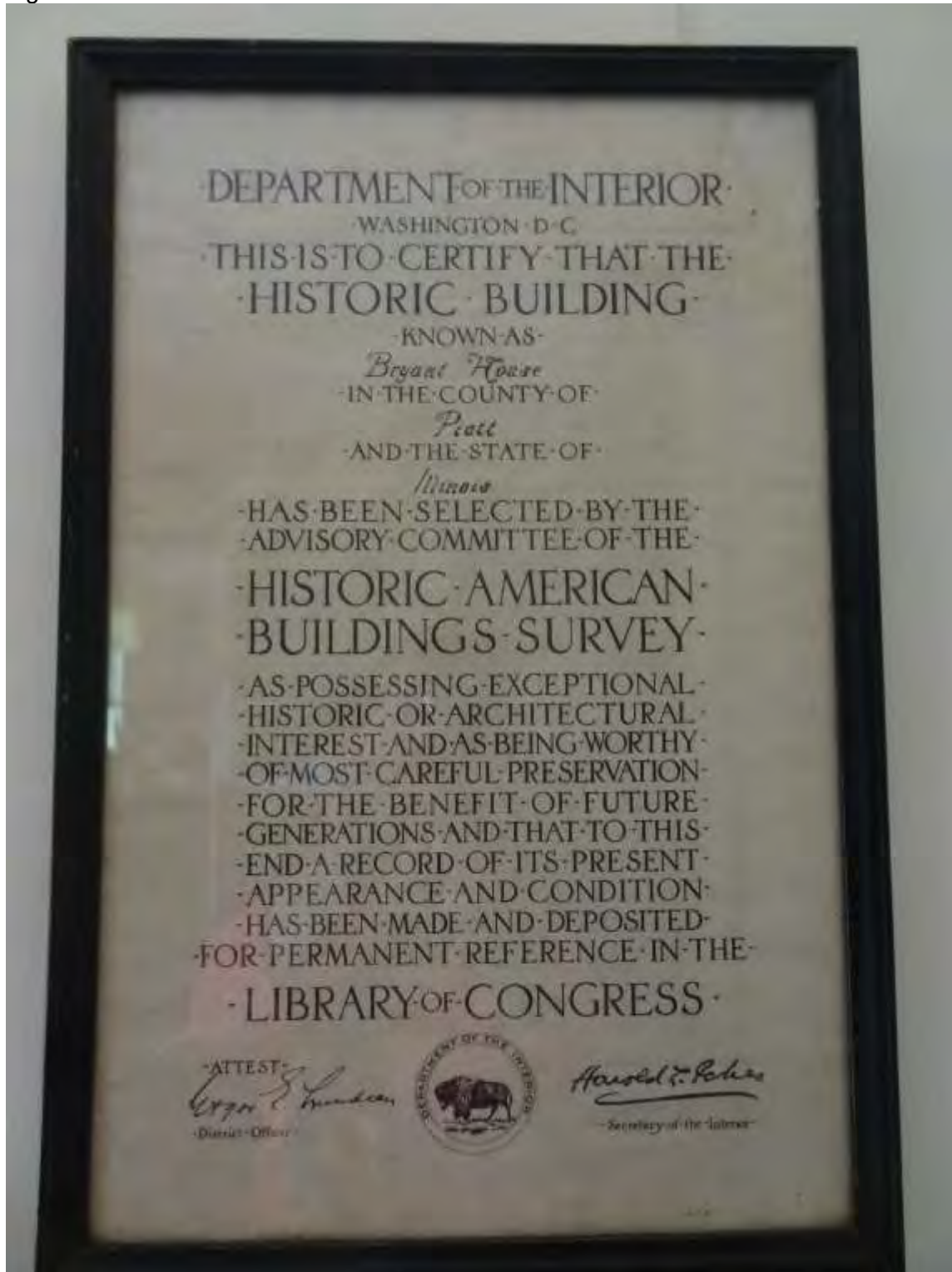


**Bryant, Frances E. House
Illinois, Piatt County**

Figure 10 Picture taken at dedication labeled with names of participants



Figure 11 HABS certificate



**Bryant, Frances E. House
Illinois, Piatt County**

Figure 12 Exterior photo from 1991 Fire



Figure 13 Photo of interior after 1991 fire



**Bryant, Frances E. House
Illinois, Piatt County**

Figure 14 Photo of exterior after 1991 fire









Auto Plus



















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 7/21/2017 Date of Pending List: 8/16/2017 Date of 16th Day: 8/31/2017 Date of 45th Day: 9/5/2017 Date of Weekly List: 9/7/2017

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 9/5/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Barbara Wyatt Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2252 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



July 18, 2017

Ms. Barbara Wyatt
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Wyatt:

Enclosed are the disks that contain the true and correct copies of the National Register nominations recommended for nomination by the Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council at its June 30, 2017 meeting and signed by the Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer:

Covent Hotel, Chicago, Cook County
John Lothrop Motley School
Shoreline Apartments
Granite City YMCA, Granite City, Madison County
Zenas Aplington House, Polo, Ogle County
Frances E. Bryant House, Bement, Piatt County

Please contact me at 217/785-4324 if you need any additional information. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Andrew Heckenkamp, Coordinator
Survey and National Register program
Illinois State Historic Preservation Office
Illinois Department of Natural Resources

enclosures

1 Old State Capitol Plaza
Springfield IL 62701

ILLINOISHISTORY.GOV