

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUN 25 1979 AUG 7 1979
DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Beebe House

AND/OR COMMON

Johnson House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

390 West Adams Street

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Platteville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

3rd

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Wisconsin

CODE

55

COUNTY

Grant

CODE

043

3 CLASSIFICATION**CATEGORY** DISTRICT BUILDING(S) STRUCTURE SITE OBJECT**OWNERSHIP** PUBLIC PRIVATE BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION** IN PROCESS BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS** OCCUPIED UNOCCUPIED WORK IN PROGRESS**ACCESSIBLE** YES: RESTRICTED YES: UNRESTRICTED NO**PRESENT USE** AGRICULTURE COMMERCIAL EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT GOVERNMENT INDUSTRIAL MILITARY MUSEUM PARK PRIVATE RESIDENCE RELIGIOUS SCIENTIFIC TRANSPORTATION OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mrs. Margaret McKinley

STREET & NUMBER

390 West Adams Street

CITY, TOWN

Platteville

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Wisconsin 53818

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Register of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Grant County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Lancaster

STATE

Wisconsin 53813

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

1976

— FEDERAL — STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

State Historical Society, Historic Preservation Division

CITY, TOWN

Madison

STATE

Wisconsin 53706

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Victorian Gothic house is set on a hill in a spacious, wooded lot, east of Platteville's business district. It is based on a cross gable plan with a lattice porch in the northeast ell and a 1 1/2 story shed roofed addition at the northwest ell. The house, two stories tall with a full basement and attic, is built of handpicked brick from Grindel's Brickyard, a Platteville establishment. Although the house was once painted a cream color, much of the paint has worn away to expose the delicate pink shade of the brick. Darker brick at the quoins and window arches provides an element of contrast. The steeply pitched gable roof, once covered with hexagonal tiles of muted colors, now has asphalt shingles. The gable ends feature overhanging eaves with molded rake boards, supported by symmetrically placed scroll brackets.

Round-arched sash windows with brick sills surround the house. Gable ends of the cross wings have paired windows on both the first and second story. The attic is illuminated by a single window in each gable end. The southwest and southeast ells each have one window on the first and second story, while the northwest ell has one window at the first floor of the west wall. A first floor window in the east wall of the southeast ell is bricked in. Glass in all second story and attic windows is original.

The south facade features a centrally placed elliptically arched entrance with side lights and fan lights. A single wooden door with a stained glass, leaded window opens into the lattice porch in the northeast ell. A chimney with decorative corbeling rises through the roof of the north wing. Decorative elements are provided by scroll brackets and contrasting brick quoins and window arches. Louvered shutters accent the windows; the unusual quarter round shutters framing the attic windows are original. A wrought iron fence surrounding the house, originally from the Greenwood Cemetery, was erected in 1960.

A major feature of the interior of the house is a handsome walnut spiral staircase located in the front entry hall. The hall also boasts a glass chandelier. The plan for the first floor includes two living rooms, two bedrooms, a dining room and a kitchen. The kitchen, located in the northeast corner, has never been remodeled. Four bedrooms are located on the second floor, which is bisected by a wide hall. Hardwood trim on the second floor remains unpainted. Much of the trim on the first floor has been painted. The walls are plastered, and most are papered. The house is currently furnished with many fine antiques.

Three original outbuildings, all in poor condition, remain close to the house. A board and batten gable roofed shed is located 17' from the northwest corner of the house. North of this shed is a clapboard barn with a modified saltbox roof. To the east of the barn is a very small clapboard shed. A carport, built recently of salvage from an old house, is found east of the house. Of these four structures, only the carport is now in use.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Association with historically significant person	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1870¹

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Beebe House is a rare and unaltered example of Victorian Gothic architecture, seldom found in southwestern Wisconsin. It was built in 1870 by Capt. William Beebe, a lawyer and leading citizen of Platteville, and a colorful figure in Grant County history.

ARCHITECTURE The Beebe House, significant as an unusual interpretation of Gothic forms in domestic architecture, is the only structure of its type in Platteville. It is set well back and high above the street, providing a dramatic focal point. The setting retains much of its original integrity; the large lot still appears park-like. The nearby homes of Beebe's prominent neighbors, Judge Evans and Major Roundtree, also remain unaltered.

HISTORY William Homer Beebe, a native of Genesee County, New York, came to Platteville in the spring of 1845. At the outbreak of the Civil War, Beebe mustered Grant County volunteers to form Company K of the 44th Regiment of Wisconsin volunteers. After serving a three-year term he reenlisted and was promoted to the rank of captain. Beebe resigned his post in 1864 to study law and shortly afterward opened an office in the city of Platteville. He built his home in 1870, after his practice was well established, and lived there until his death in 1910.

Captain Beebe served the community in a number of public offices. He was justice of the peace for two years, in 1873 and again in 1875. Beebe was elected district attorney of Grant County and served from 1877 to 1880. He was the third mayor of Platteville, holding that office from 1883 to 1886. He was also instrumental in the organization of Platteville's first fire company and one of the founders of the Platteville Loan and Building Association.²

Beyond gaining local prominence as a lawyer and a public servant, Beebe was regarded as somewhat of a genius and an inventor. He is credited with erecting the first long distance telephone line in Grant County.³ Particulars of the long distance line and Beebe's early experimentation with telephones are revealed in a letter written by Beebe's daughter, Lillian, to Mr. C. H. Gribble in 1931.

1. Tax records for Platteville in the Collection of the Area Research Center, UW-Platteville,
2. History of Grant County, Wisconsin, p. 697,
3. Gregory, 46.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Boettinger, H. M. The Telephone Book, Chicago, IL., 1977, p. 64.
 Gregory, John G. Southwestern Wisconsin; Old Crawford County, Chicago, IL., 1932
 Volume 1, p. 553.
Here and There in Grant County. Grant County Historical Society, September 1972,
 Volume V, VI.
History of Grant County, Wisconsin. Chicago, IL., 1881, p. 499, 622, 697, 712
 (continued)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .33

QUADRANGLE NAME Platteville, Wisconsin

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,5 7,0,6 2,6,0 4,7 3,4 6,4,5
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lot 44, except south 7.5 feet, and Lot 45, Covell addition, City of Platteville, Grant County, Wisconsin

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Patricia Mueller, Preservation Assistant

ORGANIZATION

State Historical Society, Historic Preservation Division

DATE

April 2, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

816 State Street

TELEPHONE

(608) 262-8904

CITY OR TOWN

Madison

STATE

Wisconsin 53706

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Richard Harvey

TITLE Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE

5/7/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

8-7-79

ATTEST:

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

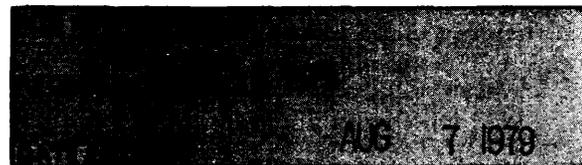
DATE

8-7-79

Conna Sue Saxe
 Regional Coordinator

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8. SIGNIFICANCE continued

As early as 1875 Beebe had direct communication between his home workshop and downtown Platteville office. This early line made use of an acoustical phone which functioned on mechanical principles. In the same year Beebe began work on an electrical telephone practical for use over longer distances. By 1877 he had achieved success. Through his efforts a line seventeen miles long was erected from Platteville to Lancaster. In comparison, Beebe's more famous counterpart, Alexander Graham Bell, completed his first long distance line in 1876. The Bell Company's first permanent long distance line, one from Boston to Providence, was erected in 1880.

Beebe's telephone line, originally met with skepticism, soon came to fulfill a crying need for communication between Platteville and the county seat.¹ In 1849 a telegraph line had connected the two cities, but it was abandoned year later. The building of the Milwaukee and Prairie du Chien Railroad in 1856 brought the telegraph only to those towns bordering on Crawford County; the interior was wholly without. Once the success of the telephone line had been established, Beebe extended it to Beetown, Bloomington, Cassville and other villages. After the expiration of Bell's most important patents in 1894, new lines were erected throughout most of the county. Beebe's line was still in use in 1896 when the Grant County Telephone Company was organized.

Captain Beebe died in 1910. Shortly afterward, Beebe's family moved out of the home they had occupied since 1870, leaving much of his telephone apparatus to lie in obscurity in the attic. What remained of his experimentation was covered in the mid-1900s when the attic was insulated. Telephone lines running to the Beebe House are now of the conventional type. John Paller bought the Beebe House in the 1910s, and lived there for eight years. A Platteville veterinarian, Dr. E.A. Johnson, purchased the house in 1920 and for many years raised race horses in the spacious yard. Today the house is owned by Mrs. Margaret McKinley, Dr. Johnson's daughter.

1. Here and There in Grant County, September 1972.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES continued

Holford, Castello N., History of Grant County, Wisconsin, Lancaster, WI,
1900, pp. 74-75, 474

MacMeal, Harry B., The Story of Independent Telephony. Chicago, IL, 1934,
pp. 55-56

Platteville Tax Records, in the collections of the Area Research Center,
UW-Platteville.