

PH 0662429

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY **DATA SHEET**
RECEIVED **FEB 8 1978**
DATE ENTERED **AUG 11 1978**

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

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Okauchee House
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
34880 Lake Drive
CITY, TOWN
Okauchee
STATE
Wisconsin 53069
VICINITY OF
COUNTY
Waukesha
CODE
055
CODE
133 ✓
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Ninth
NOT FOR PUBLICATION

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Mr. and Mrs. Terrence Elliott
STREET & NUMBER
34880 Lake Drive
CITY, TOWN
Okauchee
STATE
Wisconsin 53069
VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Waukesha County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
515 West Moreland Boulevard
CITY, TOWN
Waukesha
STATE
Wisconsin 53186

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Historic American Buildings Survey
DATE
1936
DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS Library of Congress
CITY, TOWN
Washington
STATE
D. C. 20540
 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built ca. 1850-1851, the Okauchee House is a large two-and-one-half story Greek Revival stagecoach inn with a two-story back service wing. The central door bay is asymmetrical on the otherwise symmetrical five-bay facade. Eyebrow windows light the third story rooms. Returns, a wide frieze, and molded cornices embellish the eaves. Early photographs reveal that all traces of a porch had vanished by the 1870's. A cement block ice house is attached to the rear of the service wing. In the late 1930's the owners tacked on asbestos siding, added a sunroom west of the dining room where a woodshed used to be, and installed a hood over the front door.

Still extant under the siding are wide, simply fluted, corner pilasters with molded capitals supporting the molded architrave. A fluted lintel, fluted pilasters and molded corner and center blocks trim the main doorway. Narrow sidelights trimmed with a Greek key design grace the doorway. Originally a similar doorway led to the second floor hall but it was converted into a window when the exterior was renovated. However the door, sidelights, and all of the trim are still extant and are stored in the basement. Also, a side door located between the two right-hand windows and originally leading to the men's taproom was blocked up in the renovation but one can see on the interior that the jambs are intact. Much of the beautifully rippled hand-blown window glass remains, especially in the second and third floor windows. In the 1960's the roof was reshingled over the original shakes.

The original interior of the main block of the building is virtually intact. Stepping into the entrance hall one is greeted by a gracious black-walnut stairway decorated with hand-turned spindles of a refined Green Revival simplicity and foliated scrolls. To the left is the ladies' lounge which features simply-molded window architraves and a very old plate rail. Corner cupboards were added in 1910. To the right of the entrance is the men's taproom. Two smaller rooms adjoin it but it is uncertain whether or not they are original. Straight through the hall is the office, and in the back corner behind the ladies' lounge is the dining room. Converted into a kitchen at an unknown time, it is in the process of being reconverted to its original use.

The second floor contains nine bedrooms, some tiny closets (known by the succeeding owners as "darkrooms") and a cheerful sitting room above the ladies' lounge which features window trim similar to the lounge and which receives the warm afternoon sun. A curved walnut staircase is tucked between bedrooms and leads to the third floor ballroom above which a plastered segmental vault rises into the rafters. Four sleeping or storage rooms line each side of the ballroom.

The interior of the service wing has been altered to accommodate living quarters for the owners. However, most of the original walls have been retained (see floor plan).

Wood stoves on the first floor heated the house; small vents on the second floor gave outlet to heat from the first floor stoves. One stove remains and has been moved to the service wing and rejuvenated for heating the family living quarters. The floors of the entrance hall and barroom are oak, elsewhere they are random pine boards 1-1/2" thick.

The full basement contains several rooms which were finished off with plastered walls and ceilings and a brick floor. The trap door leading from the service area down into

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED FEB 8 1978

DATE ENTERED

1978

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

DESCRIPTION (continued)

a large fieldstone cistern which still exists. At the foot of the basement stairs is a 10' x 10' red brick oven in which a huge iron cauldron is imbedded. The large unfinished log sleepers and basswood lathing are visible in the basement.

The clapboard siding of the house has been removed in the icehouse to reveal the most interesting feature of the inn--8" x 2" oak planks laid one on top of another between the load-bearing timbers, and secured by wooden dows and hand-wrought nails. This construction, which creates a solid 8" thick oak wall, was used for all of the exterior walls of the Okauchee House.

Originally the inn property contained several barns. A cement block garage which is not important to the nomination rests on the site of a three-sided horse shelter. Of the original outbuildings only the six-seat outhouse remains behind the inn. The owners are in the process of restoring the inn for eventual use as a museum and as a study center for the history of costume.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
FEB 8 1978
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED AUG 11 1978

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

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 6

PAGE 1

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (continued)

Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places
1973 State
State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Madison Wisconsin 53706

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES ca. 1850-1851¹

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Okauchee House is one of only a handful of intact stagecoach inns remaining in Wisconsin. It is a visible reminder of an early transportation era--the days of the plank road and the heyday of the stagecoach in the rapidly developing midwestern frontier. As far as is known, its construction of laid-up horizontal planks is unique in the state and it is a fine example of the vernacular Greek Revival style.

History: Israel McConnell and his family came to Wisconsin from New York State in the 1840's. In 1847 McConnell bought Reed's Mill on the southwest shore of Okauchee Lake and much of the land around it. In 1848 McConnell bought 70 shares of stock in the newly-formed Madison, Watertown and Milwaukee Plank Road, which was scheduled to run close by his mill. In the newly-settled lands plank roads were sorely needed, as exclaimed by the Watertown Chronicle of November 1, 1848:

The stage road for some weeks past should form a powerful appeal to farmers and traders in favor of the plank road from this place to Milwaukee. The going has never been worse. The road from one end of the line to the other is lined with fragments of wagons, barrels of flour, boxes of goods, etc. The price of freight has more than doubled.²

In the same year, construction of the plank road began. Much of the oak planking for the road was supplied by McConnell's Mill.³ At the same time as the road was completed to Watertown (the longest plank road in Wisconsin), McConnell and his son-in-law, Homer Hurd, opened the doors of their new inn, the Okauchee House.⁴

The plank road was highly successful in its first years. On a trip over the road in 1853, "General King of the Milwaukee Sentinel tallied 363 teams going east, 283 carrying about 14,000 bushels of wheat."⁵ However, "not only did haulers benefit from the new road, but stage travel increased threefold and tolls from pleasure vehicles were reportedly enough to pay upkeep."⁶

The Okauchee House was one of sixty inns in Waukesha County which profited from the new ease of travel. As local historian Lacher states, "since the immense traffic to and from Milwaukee passed chiefly through Waukesha County, it contained more taverns than any other territory of equal size."⁷ The Okauchee House was one of eleven inns in Waukesha County on the Watertown Plan Road. However, also because of the proximity of Waukesha County to Milwaukee, the Okauchee House is one of a very few stagecoach inns which still survive in the rapidly suburbanizing county.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.3
 UTM REFERENCES

A

1	6
---	---

3	8	2	9	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	7	7	4	0	7	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lot 4 in the plat of Gietzen's addition to Okauchee.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Katherine E. Hundt, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE

September 28, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

816 State Street

TELEPHONE

608/262-2970

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 X

LOCAL

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 A. Emery

TITLE

Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE

10/27/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

ATTEST:

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

8/1/78

DATE

8-1-78

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED FEB 8 1978

DATE ENTERED AUG 11 1978

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

The glorious days of the plank road were short. The Milwaukee and Watertown Railroad, completed in 1855, made it obsolete. It is doubtful that Israel McConnell's inn benefited much from having the railroad pass through Okauchee south of the plank road; a depot did not appear in Okauchee until 1875. But the plank road itself suffered. By 1863 it was "broken and dilapidated" and "dangerous to drive over." In 1887 it was transferred from private to public ownership.⁸

Israel McConnell died in 1871 at the age of 75. His wife, Vesta, continued to operate the inn until 1874, after which she apparently lived in the structure until her death in 1893. After protracted probate battles, Fred Faulkner bought the vacant structure in 1911 and reopened it as a resort hotel. Faulkner's hotel registers end in 1929, after which the old building reverted to a private residence.

A small unincorporated community has grown up around the inn. In 1851, Albert McConnell, Israel's rakish son, opened the first post office. In the 1870's the community became known as Okauchee Station, alluding to the importance of the railroad. The near-by lake attracted resort-goers in a county famous from early on for its lakes and springs. Okauchee is now a growing suburb with houses, cottages, grocery stores and gas stations tucked between criss-crossing highways.

Architecture: The Okauchee House is a fine example of a Greek Revival stagecoach inn, although most of the trim is currently hidden under later siding. The classic five-bay configuration of the facade is repeated in several other Wisconsin inns, Hawks Inn (NRHP), Wade House (NRHP), and the Dunkel Inn being among the most famous. The Okauchee House ranks with these, both in size and in the refinement of its detailed exterior woodwork.

The most significant feature of the Okauchee House is its construction. Only one other house in Wisconsin is known to have been built of planks laid one on top of another, the tiny Paraclete Potter house, referred to in the 1880's as a "floor-joist" house.⁹ It was built in Milwaukee and razed several years ago. In South Royalton in McConnell's native Vermont, only one house exists of this construction, another tiny structure built in 1780 after an Indian raid burned the town.¹⁰ The method was more common in non-domestic architecture; for example the first grain elevators in Milwaukee were built of "floor-joists," and the Chittendon Mills in Jericho, Vermont were constructed in this manner to alleviate the vibrations of the heavy mill machinery. McConnell's motives for using this method remain unknown but labor and materials were no doubt plentiful and cheap at McConnell's mill next door. The technique has proven to be a sound one since the hotel stands today sturdy and intact.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED FEB 8 1978
DATE ENTERED FEB 11 1978

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

¹Tax records dated May 1, 1850 show that no building had been erected on the site at this time. By Dec. 31, 1851 the inn was open for business as revealed in the following invitation:

Open Party

At the Okauchee House

New Years Eve., December 31st, 1851, at 6 o'clock

Your company is respectfully solicited

Homer Hurd

D. H. Rockwell...Room Mangers...D. Inglesby

Tickets \$2.00...Music by Carr & Parson Cotillion Band
(Starr's Print, Milw'k)

from Rev. Lincoln F. Whelan, "The Okauchee House," Wisconsin Magazine of History, XXXIII (Sep., 1949), 14.

²J. H. A. Lacher, "The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin," State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Proceedings, 1914, p. 132.

³Elizabeth Faulkner Nolan, Souvenir Album: 125th Waukesha County Jubilee, 1834-1959.

⁴Milwaukee County Historical Society, "Program for the Dedication of Historical Plaque Marking the Route of the Watertown Plank Road."

⁵Lacher, p. 136.

⁶Milwaukee County Historical Society, "Program."

⁷Lacher, p. 143.

⁸Milwaukee County Historical Society, "Program."

⁹James Buck, Pioneer History of Milwaukee, Milwaukee: Symes, Swain, and Co., 1881, v. II, p. 111.

¹⁰Historic Sites and Structures Survey, "Elias Stevens House," State of Vermont Division of Historic Sites, July, 1972.

¹¹Buck, p. 111, and letter from Eric Gilbertson, Assistant Director, State Historic Preservation Office, Vermont, to Katherine E Hundt, Sept. 19, 1977.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	FEB 8 1978
DATE ENTERED	976

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (continued)

Abstract of title for property in possession of owner.

Buck, James, Pioneer History of Milwaukee, Milwaukee: Symes, Swain and Co., 1881.

Elliott, Mary, owner, interview at Okauchee, August 22, 1977.

Gilbertson, Eric, Assistant Director, State Historic Preservation Office, Vermont, letter to Katherine E. Hundt, September 19, 1977.

Guth, Alexander Carl, HABS Data Report, 1927.

Historic Sites and Structures Survey, "Elias Stevens House," State of Vermont Division of Historic Sites, July, 1973.

Lacher, J. H. A., "The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin," State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Proceedings, 1914.

Lapham, Increase A., and Charles, Maps of the Lakes and Drives around Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, A Favorite Summer Resort, misc. dates between 1872 and 1908.

Milwaukee County Historical Society, "Program for the Dedication of Historical Plaque Marking the Route of the Watertown Plank Road," Tuesday, November 1, 1955.

Nolan, Elizabeth Faulkner, Souvenir Album: 125th Waukesha County Jubilee, 1834-1959 Waukesha: Waukesha Freeman, 1959.

"Okauchee House Has Seen the Village Grow," Waukesha Daily Freeman, centennial edition.

Tax records for the Town of Oconomowoc, 1848-1860, State Historical Society of Wisconsin Area Research Center, UW-Milwaukee.

Walling, H. F., Map of the County of Waukesha, 1858.