

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED NOV 14 1979 JAN 17 1980
DATE ENTERED

**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 Whitman-Belden House (preferred)

AND/OR COMMON
Belden House

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 108 N. State Street
CITY, TOWN Rochester VICINITY OF First
STATE Wisconsin CODE 55 COUNTY Racine CODE 101

CLASSIFICATION

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

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Robert A. and Georgann Belden
STREET & NUMBER 108 N. State Street
CITY, TOWN Rochester VICINITY OF STATE Wisconsin 53167

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Racine County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER 730 Wisconsin Avenue
CITY, TOWN Racine STATE Wisconsin 53401

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places
DATE 10/75
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS State Historical Society of Wisconsin
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 Whitman-Belden House, a dignified Greek Revival structure, stands in an ample and wooded lot in the heart of the village of Rochester. The two story home faces east, with a square, one-and-a-half-story shed roof addition at the west side.

The frame of heavy 12x12 hand hewn oak timbers rests on a fieldstone foundation and is clad in pine clapboard, with horizontal board siding at the first story facade. Asphalt shingles now cover the original cedar shake roof.

Greek

The five bay facade features a single story portico supported by six/Doric columns. A balcony above has a low balustrade with a molded upper rail, turned balusters and heavy square pedestals.

Symmetrically placed six over six sash windows surround the main block of the building. Windows in the addition are smaller, but also original. Greek Revival doorways with narrow sidelights are centrally located at both levels of the facade. The deeply recessed doors have narrow panes of glass. Two other doors in the south and west walls of the addition provide access to a kitchen and storage area.

Of the three original brick chimneys only one at the south gable end remains visible. The north chimney was shortened and roofed over during the late 1920s. A kitchen chimney at the north wall of the addition was removed in 1960 after being damaged.

Decorative elements of the home-- the wide frieze, slim corner boards and molded cornice and returns--are typical of the Greek Revival. Dark softwood shutters flanking each window are both functional and original. Other than the alteration of the two chimneys, no changes have been made to the exterior of the house.

In 1960 interior renovation was undertaken. A wall between two first floor bedrooms was removed to create a large living and dining room area and a small pantry was converted to a bathroom. At this time signs of previous alterations were discovered. Most notable was the removal of a partition between two small first floor rooms.

The interior wooden trim, as well as the doors, is all original. Beneath modern linoleum and carpeting are floors of wide pine and maple boards. All hardware, with the exception of the front doorknob and lock, is also original. Plumbing and lighting fixtures were replaced during the 1960 remodeling. Although first story ceilings have been replastered, other interior surfaces show their original horsehair plaster treatment.

In 1975, a carriage house, contemporary with the home, threatened to collapse. A careful reconstruction of the building resulted in the current garage. This garage, located just off the northwest corner of the home, is the only other structure on the property.

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 type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		Association with historically prominent persons

SPECIFIC DATES 1847-49¹ BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Whitman-Belden House is significant for its architectural integrity and for its association with historically prominent residents of the Village of Rochester and Racine county. The house is an excellent example of the Greek Revival and a refined specimen of frontier architecture. Rochester, an old village settled primarily by Yankees, shows a high concentration of Greek Revival structures. Among these, the Whitman-Belden House is exceptional for its purity of detail, proportion and balance.

The house was built from 1847 to 1849 by Abial Whitman, a clothing merchant from Vermont who settled at Rochester in 1847. Although Whitman himself met with an untimely death, his widow, Aurilla, owned the house and lived there with her second husband, Squire Ezra Brown, and two step-daughters for many years.

Two judges of Racine county, grandfather and grandson, are both associated with the Whitman-Belden House. Philo Belden, a speculator and early settler in Rochester, originally owned the lots on which the house now stands, as well as much additional land in the area. One of the most influential and progressive members of the settlement, Belden owned and operated a sawmill, flouring mill and a foundry. Belden later served as an assemblyman, state senator and county judge.

Ellsworth Burnett Belden, the son of Emily Brown and Capt. Henry Belden, was born in the Greek Revival home in 1866. Although his parents lived in Milwaukee, where his father engaged in the printing and bookbinding business, Ellsworth Belden spent the majority of his youth in Rochester. There he was cared for by his step-grandmother, Aurilla Whitman Brown. Upon her death in 1876, Aurilla willed the house to Belden, who was 10 years old at the time.

Ellsworth Belden received his preliminary education at the Rochester Seminary, from which he graduated in 1883. A year later he entered the University of Wisconsin law school. He graduated with B.S. and LL.D. degrees in 1886, and was admitted to the bar in that same year. For a short while he worked in the office of the state attorney-general and in 1887 entered the office of his grandfather, Philo Belden, then county judge of Racine county. When his grandfather died three months before the expiration of his term, Belden was appointed by Gov. Hoard to fill the vacancy.

Belden was duly elected county judge of Racine county in 1889. At the age of 23 he was the youngest man ever to serve in that position. He was re-elected twice and served until 1902. In that year he was elected circuit judge of the First Judicial Circuit of Wisconsin, comprising Racine, Kenosha and Walworth counties. By repeated elections, the last in April, 1937, he occupied that post until his death.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See attached.

UTM NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.13 Quadrangle Name Rochester, Wisconsin
 UTM REFERENCES " Scale 1:24000

A	<u>1, 6</u>	<u>3, 9, 9, 5, 7, 0</u>	<u>4, 7, 3, 2, 6, 8, 0</u>	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 1 and 2, the North 1/2 of Lots 3 and 4, Block 13, in Section 2, Town 3 North, Range 19 East, Village of Rochester, Racine 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 DATE
 ORGANIZATION State Historical Society of Wisconsin June 6, 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

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 Kenney

TITLE Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE 10/16/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

W. Ray Luce DATE 1/17/80
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 ATTEST: Emma Pro Sza DATE 1/16/80
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
Regional Coordinator

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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Significance (continued)

Throughout his entire career Belden was regarded as one of Wisconsin's outstanding jurists. He held court in every circuit in the state, and most of the counties, presiding over many of the state's most important jury cases. His record of affirmances on appeals in the state supreme court was the highest of any judge in the state, and he was credited with presiding at more naturalization hearings, some 40,000 in number, than any judge in the mid-west.²

Belden was also active in civic affairs. He served as president of the Racine YMCA, the Racine County Council of the Boy Scouts of America, and as trustee of Racine College for many years. Although much of his time was spent away from Rochester, the family home is the structure most closely associated with his productive life. After Belden's death in 1939 the house was passed down to his sons and, later, his grandsons. The elegant Greek Revival home now shelters the sixth generation of the Belden family.

Footnotes

1. Tax Rolls, 1846-1852, Racine County Land Records at the Racine County Court-house.
2. The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, 1951, New York, vol. 37, p. 144.

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Major Bibliographical References

Belden, Stanley R., The Family History of Judge Ellsworth B. Belden, and Collateral Lines, 1969, manuscript in the collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

Commemorative Biographical Record of Prominent and Representative Men of Racine and Kenosha Counties, 1906, Chicago, p. 296.

National Cyclopeadia of American Biography, 1951, New York, vol. 37, pp. 144-145.

Racine Journal-Times Sunday Bulletin, Oct. 28, 1956, sec. 2, p. 1.

Racine Shoreline Leader, March 18, 1976, p. 5.

Tax Rolls, 1846-1852, Racine County Land Records at the Racine County Courthouse.

The History of Racine and Kenosha Counties, Wisconsin, 1879, Chicago, p. 633.