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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DEC 5 1978

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

JAN 29 1979

**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

Weston-Babcock House

HISTORIC

Thomas Weston House

AND/OR COMMON

Weston-Babcock House (preferred name)

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Main Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Necedah

VICINITY OF

Sixth

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Wisconsin

55

Juneau

057

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

Raoul Sevigny

STREET & NUMBER

Box 53

CITY, TOWN

Necedah

VICINITY OF

STATE

Wisconsin 54646

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Juneau County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Mauston

STATE

Wisconsin 53948

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

1978

___FEDERAL STATE ___COUNTY ___LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

CITY, TOWN

Madison

STATE

Wisconsin 53706

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

CHECK ONE

CHECK ONE

EXCELLENT

DETERIORATED

UNALTERED

ORIGINAL SITE

GOOD

RUINS

ALTERED

MOVED DATE _____

FAIR

UNEXPOSED

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Prominent on the main street of a quiet, rather poor village, the Weston-Babcock house is a stately two-story frame building with a low, hipped roof covering the main block. The rear wing is also two stories in height with a hipped roof which is slightly lower than that of the main block. Attached to this is a small one-story wing. To the north of the main block is a one-story, flat-roofed chapel added probably after 1945. The chapel was designed sympathetically, incorporating columns, windows, and cornices similar to those on the main block.

When it was built by Weston, the house was a "palatial mansion" in the Italianate style. Its basic configuration was the same as today -- a slightly projecting gable-roofed central pavilion on the main (east) facade and on both side elevations. The main and south pavilions were embellished by recessed porches on the second floor level behind Ionic arcades. Double round-arched windows at the second level and two polygonal first-floor bays flanked the center-front pavilion.

The Babcocks remodelled the Victorian mansion in the late 1910s or early 1920s into a majestic Neo-Classical Revival house. The original wide eaves supported by elaborate brackets were replaced by shallow Classical moldings. Boldly projecting hoods over the front second-story windows were cut down. The large cupola was removed, and Neo-Classical porches with grouped fluted Doric columns, half-round projections, dentils and balustrades along the eaves replaced delicate Victorian verandas at the front entrance and along both sides of the house (the balustrades on the side porches have since disappeared). The arcade in the south pavilion was filled in and the wood house in the rear was demolished at the same time.

The interior layout is the standard Victorian plan with a central stair hall flanked by a parlor and kitchen on the north side and two small rooms on the south side with a large dining room in the southwest corner. Interior decor is a combination of the earlier Italianate style and later Neo-Classical Revival. The dining room is the most elaborate with Neo-Classical wainscoting and a decorative frieze of egg-and-dart, dentils and floral ornament.

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 type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> association with Locally-important persons

SPECIFIC DATES ca. late 1860s

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Weston-Babcock house is a visual symbol to the people of Necedah of the history of their community. Its history is interwoven with the industrial and economic history of the town. Thomas Weston, founder of Necedah and its leading lumberman, built the house in the late 1860s. Charles Babcock, heir to Weston's business and founder of the local bank, bought the house and remodelled it in 1913. Its massive scale and sumptuous detail make it stand out as the finest structure remaining in the once bustling but now sleepy little community.

History

Weston and his partners founded Necedah, and their company dominated the economic life of the community for many years. Weston was born in Vermont in 1818. After travelling extensively as a young man, he settled in Grand Rapids (now Wisconsin Rapids) and engaged in logging, milling, and lumber-dealing. In 1848 when the area around Necedah was opened to white settlement by the Treaty of Lake Poygan, Weston and J. T. Kingston immediately claimed the site of the present village of Necedah, and, with two other men, formed the Thomas Weston Lumber Co. The following year they built a mill and Necedah quickly became a thriving milling and shipping point for the lumber industry. Among the early enterprises of Weston's company were a dry goods store, a grist mill and several logging and milling operations in and around Necedah; it also operated a postal service. When the Town of Necedah was formed in 1853 Weston was elected its first chairman. According to an 1892 biography, Weston "was for many years the most prominent man on the [Necedah] scene" and his obituary recalled that he had "done more for the town than any other man."¹

In 1881 Joseph Weeks Babcock moved his family from Iowa to Necedah. Babcock had worked for several lumber concerns in Iowa, including one in which Weston was a partner. Babcock eventually became a partner in that firm and subsequently purchased a controlling interest in T. Weston and Company of Necedah. After moving to Necedah, Babcock reorganized the Weston Company into the Necedah Lumber Company; Weston served as a director until his death in 1887.

By this time the center of the timber supply had moved northward but Necedah and the Necedah Lumber Company maintained their prosperity by changing their emphasis from the raw lumber to the manufacture of secondary wood products. Babcock's son, Charles, entered his father's business in the early 1890s. Shortly thereafter his father was elected to Congress and handed the management of the business over to his son.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.9 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Necedah

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 734840 4878300
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet.

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

Katherine E. Hundt, Architectural Historian

DATE

ORGANIZATION

June 28, 1978

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

TELEPHONE

STREET & NUMBER

608-262-2970

816 State Street

STATE

CITY OR TOWN

Wisconsin 53706

Madison

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 Haney

DATE 11/21/78

TITLE Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE 1-29-79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *Mary E. Funder* DATE 1-26-79

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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



CONTINUATION SHEET

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

However, by 1899 the timber supply had become even more remote from Necedah. The late 1890s were years of economic crisis for the community. The mills shut down, many millworkers moved to the Dakota prairielands, and repeated fires devastated the industrial and commercial sections of town. In 1899 the junior Babcock dissolved the Necedah Lumber Company. With his proceeds he organized the Necedah Bank and opened a retail lumber yard in the village. Later he opened yards in several other communities; he also controlled extensive real estate holdings on farm lands and village property. Meanwhile, Necedah developed into serving as a small commercial center for what had become an agricultural area. The Babcocks are remembered in the community for their lavish lifestyle, many servants and elaborate parties, but more importantly, it was Charles Babcock whose "faith in the future of this community and his encouragement and financial assistance had largely to do with the rebuilding of Necedah's business section" after fire destroyed it in 1915.² Babcock died in an automobile accident in 1926.

Architecture

Weston built his stylish Italianate mansion probably in the late 1860s. One of Weston's partners built a French Second Empire house of similar grandeur across the street, but the site is now an empty tree-shaded lot. Charles Babcock bought Weston's house around 1913. A few years later he remodelled the Victorian house into a majestic classical mansion, retaining the massive scale, elegance, and design scheme of the original but changing the details. Although the Neo-Classical Revival style might have been considered passé in more advanced parts of the country, it blended well with the structure's Italianate details and was striking and avant-garde for the small rural town.

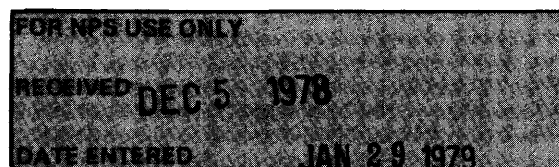
By 1945 the Weston-Babcock house was sold because of tax delinquency. It was purchased by the Franciscan order to serve as a convent. In 1963 the current owner acquired the house. It is now known as "Harbor House," a Catholic group home. A cursory survey of the community reveals that the Weston-Babcock house is probably the most architecturally significant structure remaining in Necedah. It stands among small frame houses and house trailers, an ironic reminder of Necedah's once-flourishing economy.

¹Biographical History of La Crosse, Monroe, and Juneau Counties, Wisconsin, Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1892, p. 744; and "Thomas Weston Dead," Mauston Sun, December 1, 1887.

²"Necedah Banker is Killed in Auto Wreck," Necedah Republican, July 8, 1926.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Biographical History of La Crosse, Monroe, and Juneau Counties, Wisconsin, Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1892, pp. 743-744.

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"In Memoriam of Charles E. Babcock," undated booklet, ca. 1926, in the collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

Kingsbury, Arthur Murray, Early Necedah, St. Paul: Northland Press, 1953.

Necedah Centennial, 100 Years, 1853-1953, La Crosse: Inland Publishing Co., 1953.

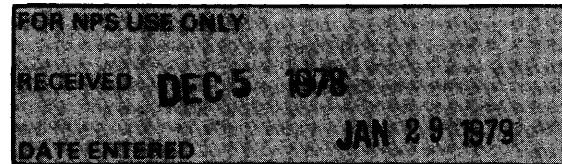
Safford, Bessie A., "Joseph Weeks Babcock," Vermonter, v. 7 (March, 1902): pp. 117-119.

Sanborn and Perris Maps for the Village of Necedah, 1885, 1891, 1898, 1909, 1916, 1927.

"Thomas Weston Dead," Mauston Sun, December 1, 1887.

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Verbal Boundary Description:

All of Lot Ten (10) of Block Fourteen (14) of the Original Plat of the Village of Necedah, excepting parcels thereof described as follows: (1) Commencing at the Southeast corner of Block 14; thence West 14 degrees and 15 minutes South, two hundred ten (210) feet: thence at right angles with last named line being the North side of Fifth Street, eighty (80) feet; thence East 14 degrees and 15 minutes North two hundred ten (210) feet to the West side of Main Street; thence along said West side of Main Street South 14 degrees 15 minutes East, eighty (80) feet to the place of beginning; (2) That piece or parcel of land commencing at a point on the North side of Fifth Street, that is West 14 degrees and 15 minutes South three hundred and thirty-four (334) feet from the Southeasterly corner of Block 14; thence northerly and at right angles to said Fifth Street a distance of Ninety (90) feet; thence Easterly and at right angles to the last mentioned course a distance of one hundred sixteen (116) feet; thence Southerly and at right angles to last mentioned course a distance of ninety (90) feet; thence Westerly and at right angles to last mentioned course a distance of one hundred sixteen (116) feet to the place of beginning, all of said lands being in the Original Plat of the Village of Necedah, Juneau County, Wisconsin.

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ITEM NUMBER 11 PAGE 1

David Donath, Historian
State Historical Society of Wisconsin
816 State Street
Madison

October, 1978
608-262-3390
Wisconsin 53706