

PH 0661759

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JAN 31 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
Fisk, Joel S., House

AND/OR COMMON
Fort Howard Branch, Kellogg Public Library

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
123 North Oakland Avenue

CITY, TOWN
Green Bay

STATE
Wisconsin

___ VICINITY OF

CODE
55

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Eighth

COUNTY
Brown

CODE
009 ✓

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Library

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
County of Brown, Public Libraries, c/o Gerald Somers, Director

STREET & NUMBER
515 Pine Street

CITY, TOWN
Green Bay

___ VICINITY OF

STATE
Wisconsin 54303

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Brown County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER
100 South Jefferson Street

CITY, TOWN
Green Bay

STATE
Wisconsin 54301

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places

DATE
1975

___ 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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" 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 Joel S. Fisk house is a two-story cream brick building, Italianate in style, with a one-and-one-half-story wing at the right rear. The roof is a medium hip with a belvedere which has two bays of paired, round-arched windows on each side. The eaves are broad, boxed, and supported by paired brackets. On the side of the house near the southeast corner is a bay window on the first floor with three elliptically-arched windows. This is a wooden structure. Window and door surrounds of the rest of the house are rectangular, with stone lintels and sills. At the front is a small one-bay entrance porch with free columns at the outside and engaged columns at the wall. The porch corresponds in style with the bay window, and the arches between columns are elliptical. At the right front (northeast) corner is a paneled door, converted from a window, opening onto a plain cement extension of the porch floor, which has steps at the side.

In 1880, according to a photograph of that date,¹ the house had a higher hipped roof with numerous gable-roofed dormers, and chimneys, and the belvedere had a two-stage hipped roof surmounted by a finial. A balustraded widow's walk surrounded the belvedere. A balustraded, single-story veranda extended across the entire front of the house, most windows had blinds, and the windows, although rectangular, had shallow keystone-shaped hoods at the head. By 1898, the house had been altered to its basic current appearance. The major alteration during that period had been the rebuilding of the roof, belvedere, and front entry porch; removal of the ornamentation over window heads, leaving only plain, flush lintels exposed; and removal and walling-in of the single second-floor window above the bay window near the southeast corner. However, there were two chimneys on the south side of the roof, a balustrade on the front porch balcony, a colonnaded veranda across the south side of the rear wing, and numerous triangular anthemia on the rooflines of the bay window and belvedere. All of the latter features were still on the house in 1933³ but have since been removed, and there are no longer any blinds on the windows. The early-remodeled Fisk house has obviously received sympathetic treatment with respect to its architectural style and integrity as well as having been maintained very well. Its use as a library will undoubtedly be phased out in the foreseeable future, but the County of Brown hopes to sell it to the City of Green Bay with the expectation that it will continue to be used, preferably for a municipal function of some kind.⁴

In the early 1930s the Monday Shakespeare Club of Green Bay sponsored the creation of a formal Shakespeare garden in the southwest corner of the property. Various area residents donated hedges, flowers, a shelter house, and a sun dial, mostly in memory of members of their families. "Only those flowers which grew in Shakespeare's garden are planted here...In time, the club hopes to plant as much vegetation as can grow in this climate, which would then include almost all of Shakespeare's flowers..."⁵ The garden remains under the same sponsorship today, but Brown County maintains it with the help and guidance of the Shakespeare Club.⁶ The original layout of the garden has been preserved.

1. Photograph, exact date and source uncertain, published in the Green Bay Press-Gazette, Tercentennial Edition, July 18, 1934
2. Photograph, 1898, furnished by Dorothy Straubel Wittig, Brown County Historical Society
3. Green Bay Press-Gazette, May 24, 1933

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4. Somers, Gerald, telephone conversation, August 3, 1977
5. Green Bay Press-Gazette, May 24, 1933
6. Information from Dorothy Straubel Wittig, Brown County Historical Society

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Association with historically significant local family
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1865-67¹ 1926 1931 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Joel S. Fisk house is significant historically as the longtime home of members of a prominent early Green Bay family which contributed greatly to the commercial, industrial, and civic development of the community. It is significant architecturally as a fine Italianate house which is a landmark in the old Fort Howard area of Green Bay and one of the oldest and best preserved of that area's few surviving early houses. Because of its Shakespeare garden it is significant also in the area of landscape architecture.

History

Joel S. Fisk (1810-1876),² who built the house in 1865-67, first came to Green Bay in 1835, left briefly to go east for his family, and returned with them to settle in 1836--one of the early settlers of the Green Bay area. Fisk soon became "an active factor in the substantial development of the district...He established a general store in Green Bay and for many years was a prominent factor in the mercantile and lumbering interests."³ Along with his other interests and activities, he served twice as postmaster of Green Bay, 1837-40 and 1845-47.⁴ "In 1848 he was elected register of deeds in the land office at Green Bay and it was he who platted the city [originally borough] of Fort Howard, now a part of Green Bay."⁵ In 1849 he started the commercial fishing business in Green Bay when he established the first of the city's six major fishing companies.⁶

The Joel Fisks lived in the house in Fort Howard for only five years after its completion. "...because of its isolated location, Mrs. Fisk became lonesome, and another home was built..."⁷ Their eldest son, William J. Fisk, became owner of the original house and lived in it from 1867 until his death in 1909.

William J. Fisk is known as a lumberman and banker, and for his civic interests and philanthropy. He received his elementary education in Green Bay schools and later attended college at Appleton for a time. "...at an early age Fisk became interested in the manufacture and sale of shingles. He later engaged in railroad construction and was interested in completion of several sections of lines operating in Wisconsin. In 1865 he was elected a director of the City National bank of Green Bay and became its president in 1870 and on Jan. 1, 1892, he was elected president of the Kellogg National bank to succeed Rufus B. Kellogg. He was interested in Green Bay's civic progress and was identified with most of the movements for its improvement..."⁸

William J. Fisk's widow lived in the house until her death in 1925. The eldest of his sons, Wilbur J., also prominent in banking and industrial interests, then moved into the house, but sold it to the city of Green Bay on February 13, 1926.⁹ It was opened as a library on April 16, 1926 and later became county property as part of the Brown County library system.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Commemorative Biographical Record of the Counties of Brown, Kewaunee and Door, Wisconsin (Chicago, 1895), 70-71
 "Fisk, Joel S.," in Tuttle Charles R., An Illustrated History of Wisconsin (Boston, 1875), 529, 779
 "Fisk, William J., 1833-1909," in Martin, Deborah Beaumont, History of Brown County, Wisconsin (Chicago, 1913), vol. 2, 40-42

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.51
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1,6	4,1,8,4,0,0	4,9,2,9,8,1,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

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

Donald N. Anderson, Historian & Registrar, Historic Preservation Division
 ORGANIZATION

DATE

State Historical Society of Wisconsin
 STREET & NUMBER

28 September 1977

TELEPHONE

816 State Street

608/262-0746

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Madison

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 R. Erney

TITLE Director
State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE 1/25/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

ATTEST:

Charles A. ...
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 8/1/78
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 DATE 8.1.78

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Architecture

The Fisk House is significant architecturally as a fine Italianate house, one of the few imposing homes of the 19th century which survive in the Fort Howard area of Green Bay. It has always been well maintained and is an important local landmark.

Landscape Architecture

When the Shakespeare garden was created in the southwest corner of the property in 1931, it became the eighth such garden in the United States. (There was another in Tomah, Wisconsin; one each in St. Louis, Evanston, Illinois, and Detroit; and there were three others elsewhere in the country.)¹⁰ As one of these few exact reproductions in miniature of the celebrated gardens of William Shakespeare in Stratford-on-Avon, it is considered significant even though it falls four years short of meeting the 50-year criterion. It has long been an integral part of the property, still maintained under the supervision of the Shakespeare Club of Green Bay and, along with the Fisk House itself, a source of community pride.¹¹

1. Green Bay Press-Gazette, Tercentennial Edition, July 18, 1934, Civic and Social Section, 39
2. Tuttle, 779
3. Martin, 40
4. Press-Gazette, July 18, 1934, Civic and Social Section, 9, 13
5. Martin, 40
6. Press-Gazette, July 18, 1934, Food Section, 14
7. Press-Gazette, July 18, 1934, Civic and Social Section, 39
8. Ibid., 20
9. Ibid., 39
10. Press-Gazette, May 24, 1933
11. Wittig, Dorothy Straubel, personal communication

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Green Bay Press-Gazette, Tercentennial Edition, July 18, 1934:

"Commercial Fishing Industry Carried on by Six Companies Here: Joel Fisk Opened First Business House Here; Started Trade in 1849," Food Section, p. 14

Clafflin, Bert, "Game Fish Abundant in Waters Near Green Bay Despite Record Catches," idem.

McClosky, Philip, "Fort Howard Had Colorful Political History from 1856 to Union With 'Bay,'" Civic and Social Section, p. 2

"Chicago and Green Bay Had First P.O.'s," ibid., 9, 13

"Five Banks Operating Here for Convenience of Green Bay Citizens: First Institution Opened in City Nearly 100 Years Ago by Morgan L. Martin," ibid., 20

"Green Bay Has One of Finest Y. M. Buildings Throughout Mid-West," ibid., 26

Emich, Howard L., "Kellogg Public Library Has Enjoyed Remarkable Growth Since 1888: From Modest Beginning Library Now Has 71,000 Books in Own Building," ibid., 29, 31

"Imposing Homes of 19th Century Fall With The Passing Years," ibid., 39

Somers, Gerald, Director, Brown County Public Libraries, telephone conversation with Donald N. Anderson, August 3, 1977

Wittig, Dorothy Straubel, letter, August 20, 1975, and conversations with Donald N. Anderson

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Commencing at the Southeast corner of Lot No. One (1) of Fisk's Addition to Fort Howard, now in the City of Green Bay; thence running Northerly along the Easterly Boundary line of said Lot one hundred forty-seven (147) feet; thence running Westerly parallel to the Southerly line of said Lot One hundred fifty-nine (159) feet; thence running Southerly parallel to the Easterly line of said Lot one hundred forty-seven (147) feet to the Southerly line of said lot; thence running Easterly along the Southerly line of said Lot One hundred fifty-nine (159) feet to the place of beginning; reserving and excepting therefrom the Northerly Six (6) feet of the above described tract for use as a private way for the joint use only of the owners and occupants of the tract of land, which includes the above described tract, described in the final judgment of the County Court for Brown County, Wisconsin, recorded in Volume 3 of Wills, pages 255 & 256, in the records of the Register of Deeds for Brown County, Wisconsin, and of the owners and occupants of the land adjoining said tract on the north, as provided in said judgment and the East one hundred (100) feet of Lot Two (2) Block B Gottfried Leidel's Addition to the city of Green Bay, Brown County, Wisconsin and lots 10, 11, and 12 Block 2, J.J. Nelson Add. No. 1 of lot 40 of Tanks P.C. 2-9.