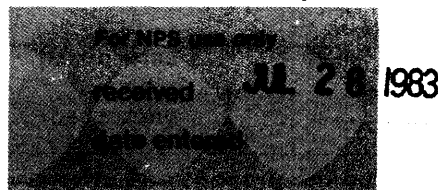


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**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 Harry W. Bolens House

and/or common Riehle House

**2. Location**

street & number 824 W. Grand Avenue not for publication

city, town Port Washington vicinity of Congressional district

state Wisconsin code 55 county Ozaukee code 089

**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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Dr. and Mrs. Eugene Riehle

street & number 824 W. Grand Avenue

city, town Port Washington vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state Wisconsin 53074

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Ozaukee County Courthouse

street & number 102 W. Main Street

city, town Port Washington state Wisconsin 53074

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1983  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 816 State Street

city, town Madison state Wisconsin 53706

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" 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

Nearly rectangular in plan and symmetrical in design, the former Harry W. Bolens House is a large two-story-plus-attic frame house with simple full-width porch and large dormers in the hipped roof. The front and side elevations (south, and east and west) are relieved by bay windowed projections, two stories tall to each side of the front door, rising full-height through the dormer on the west side, and limited to a stair-level oriel on the east side. Windows are rectangular with double-hung sash, and occur in twos or threes in the bays and dormers. The porch is composed of wood Doric columns spanned by balustrades, covered by a hipped roof. An ashlar foundation supports the building (and was matched to stone replacing the original wood porch skirt), and a corbeled brick chimney rises through the peak of the composition-shingle (originally wood) roof. The two-story board-and-batten carriage house nearly one hundred feet to the rear (north) of the house does not contribute to the nomination.

The interior plan is four rooms deep and two rooms wide. The first floor includes a formal parlor, stairhall with fireplace, study sitting room with fireplace, pantry, and kitchen. A north-south hall divides the bedrooms on the second story; at the north end of the plan, the former maid's quarters has its own stair to the kitchen below. Most of the woodwork is oak, including the stair and mantelpiece in the paneled hall and dining room. The sitting room, or second parlor, fireplace may be of curly maple or birch. The original hardware (of iron, brass, and bronze) is largely intact. Recent interior restoration work has included refinishing of woodwork, fabrication of stained glass for the stair oriel, installation of period wallpapers and plaster ceiling rosettes in the first floor rooms. (The original elements contribute to the integrity of the building; the total restoration, although academically correct for the period, does not accurately represent the interior during Bolens' term of residence.)

The house is located on a corner lot in a mixed nineteenth and twentieth century neighborhood, on a street which was developed from the rural area west of the village of Port Washington. Today, the street intersects a major traffic corridor through the city.

## 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 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 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)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		(Assoc. with significant person)

**Specific dates** ca 1900<sup>1</sup> **Builder/Architect** D. B. Stone<sup>2</sup>

period of significance: 1910-1944

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Harry W. Bolens House in Port Washington is significant as the thirty-four-year residence of the locally-prominent manufacturer, inventor, newspaper publisher, and state and local politician.

Bolens, born January 13, 1864 in Washington, Iowa, moved with his family to Janesville, Wisconsin in 1866, then to Juneau (1896), Madison (1875), Fond du Lac (1878), and finally to Port Washington (1879).<sup>3</sup> Except for six years spent in Sheboygan (1879-86), Bolens then resided in Port Washington until the end of his life. At age eleven, Bolens began to learn the printers trade in his father's office; from 1879-86, he assisted his father in publishing the Port Washington Star. After his father's death, Bolens founded the Sheboygan Daily Journal, selling out to publisher Wilbur M. Root after six years of operation, and returning to Port Washington to resume publishing The Star.<sup>4</sup> He organized the Milwaukee Automatic Printing Company, which invented and manufactured what came to be known as the Miehle Vertical Printing Press, and later sold the company to Miehle Printing Press Company of Chicago.<sup>5</sup>

From 1893 until 1941, Bolens was a driving force in the Gilson and Gilson-Bolens Manufacturing Company. John Gilson, who opened a foundry in Port Washington in 1850,<sup>6</sup> was the inventor of the adjustable chair iron (the support for revolving chairs), "the first of its kind;" with Bolens as secretary and principle stock holder, the equipment went into production at a new plant in Port Washington in 1893.<sup>7</sup> The business continued to grow "by leaps and bounds,"<sup>8</sup> and by 1902, the company was forced to build still another factory in Port Washington. In 1905-06 Gilson Manufacturing introduced a small water-cooled "Goes Like Sixty"<sup>9</sup> gas engine and for fourteen years subsequently, produced 780 annually.<sup>10</sup> Associated with that development, the company built five "Gibson" two-cylinder automobiles with exposed motors at the Port Washington plant.<sup>11</sup> In 1914, Harry Bolens bought out the remaining interest of the retired Gilson, and became company president until its sale to Automatic Products Company of Milwaukee in 1941.<sup>12</sup> In 1919, the company began producing two-wheel power-driven "takes the ache out of acres"<sup>13</sup> garden tractors, 7,000 of which were produced for the Beeman Tractor Company (Minneapolis) alone.<sup>14</sup> In 1931 the company name was changed to Gilson-Bolens Manufacturing; in 1939 to Bolens Manufacturing Company; and in 1941 to the Bolens Products Company, a division of Automatic Products Company of Milwaukee.<sup>15</sup> Bolens served as principle organizer of the Wisconsin Manufacturer's Association and was its first president from 1910-16,<sup>16</sup> and is credited with between one hundred patented inventions.<sup>17</sup> "His inventions are used by 120 agricultural colleges and experimental farms throughout the world...;" and the distribution of Gilson-Bolens engines ranges "... as far north as Alaska, and as far south as the Fiji Islands and New Zealand...."<sup>18</sup>

(continued)

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Holmes, Fred L., editor, Wisconsin, 5 vols., Lewis Publishing Co., Chicago, 1946.  
 Gregory, John G., Southeastern Wisconsin, S.J. Clark Publishing Co., Chicago, 1932.  
Ozaukee Press, July 28, 1960.  
Sheboygan Press, October 24, 1944.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Port Washington West, Wis.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UMT References

A 

1	6	4	2	8	1	3	0	4	8	0	3	9	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The south 1/2 of the W 83.50 feet of the S 252 feet of Lot 1 Block 1, Boerner's plat of the city of Port Washington, Ozaukee 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 (continued)

name/title Diane H. Filipowicz/Architectural Historian

organization State Historical Society of Wisconsin date January 1983

street & number 816 State Street telephone 608/262-2732

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 *Kathleen Murney*

title Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin date 7/20/83

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the National Register

date 8/25/83

*J. Alonzo Byas*  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

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received  
date entered

Harry W. Bolens House, Port Washington, Ozaukee County, Wis.

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Harry Bolen's political career began with two-year service as Port Washington alderman in 1897-98.<sup>19</sup> From 1904-06 and 1908-12 he served as mayor of Port Washington, during which time he oversaw the establishment of a municipal light plant and water works, sewer system, street paving, and bridge and sidewalk construction.<sup>20</sup> He was also elected supervisor and chairman of the Ozaukee County board. On the state scene, Bolen's first position was that of proofreader in the state assembly in 1890.<sup>21</sup> Beginning in 1932, Bolens was elected to two terms as state senator from the twelfth district (Ozaukee and Sheboygan counties); during his second term, he was named president pro-tem.<sup>22</sup> In 1938 Bolens was a sacrifice candidate for the office of governor. At the time of his death in 1944, the former "Dean of the Wisconsin Senate"<sup>23</sup> was a candidate for his former senate seat. A staunch Democrat, Bolens was an outspoken opponent of the La Follette administration during his political career.

Among his many civic services were Bolen's activities with the military infantry in the Spanish American war and World War I; service on a number of World War I citizen committees; and affiliation with a great number of fraternal and civic associations.

"He was a home man and enjoyed having his friends drop in for a social call. His home was more than partitions and hallways. It was a castle of his own building, and it housed books and documents, many of a historical nature, that entranced him as he delved for information. He knew history as few men did...."<sup>24</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tax Assessment Rolls, City of Port Washington.

<sup>2</sup> Stone's signature appears on many pieces of interior building fabric. "E.B. Stone, Contractor and Builder" advertised in the undated publication Port Washington, in which illustrations of the George Henry House and Gilson Manufacturing Company also appeared.

<sup>3</sup> Sheboygan Press, October 24, 1944

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.; Fred L. Holmes, editor, Wisconsin, Vol. V, Chicago, 1946, p. 433 (hereafter cited as Wisconsin).

<sup>5</sup> Prepared statement dated December 22, 1938, in the Harry W. Bolens Collection, State Historical Society of Wisconsin Archives (hereafter cited as Dated statement).

<sup>6</sup> Ozaukee Press, July 28, 1960.

<sup>7</sup> John G. Gregory, Southeastern Wisconsin, Vol. IV, Chicago, 1932, p. 104.

(continued)

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Footnotes (continued)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Prepared statement, undated, in the Harry W. Bolens Collection, State Historical Society of Wisconsin Archives (hereafter cited as Undated statement).

<sup>10</sup> Undated statement; Ozaukee Press, July 28, 1960.

<sup>11</sup> Ozaukee Press, July 28, 1960.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Dated statement.

<sup>14</sup> Ozaukee Press, July 28, 1960.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.; Dated statement.

<sup>17</sup> The 1933 Dated statement in the Bolens Collection claims 100; Bolen's obituary in the Sheboygan Press of October 24, 1944 claims 200.

<sup>18</sup> Undated statement.

<sup>19</sup> Wisconsin, p. 434.

<sup>20</sup> Dated statement; Sheboygan Press, October 24, 1944.

<sup>21</sup> Wisconsin, p. 434.

<sup>22</sup> Sheboygan Press, July 28, 1960.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ozaukee Press, July 28, 1960.

<sup>25</sup> Wisconsin, p. 434.

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Form Prepared By

Research Assistance By: Dr. and Mrs. Eugene Riehle  
842 W. Grand Avenue  
Port Washington

April 1981; January 1983  
414/284-2662  
Wisconsin