

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Wisconsin	
COUNTY: Walworth	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	FEB 23 1972

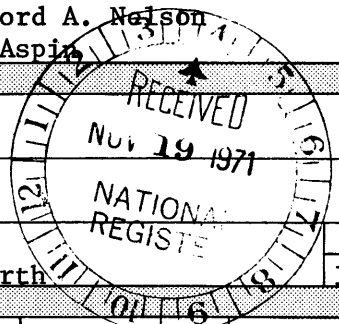
**1. NAME**

COMMON: Webster (Joseph P.) House  
AND/OR HISTORIC: Rep. Les Aspin

Congressmen to be notified  
Sen. William Proxmire  
Sen. Gaylord A. Nelson

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER: 9 East Rockwell Street  
CITY OR TOWN: Elkhorn  
STATE: Wisconsin 53121  
CODE: 55 COUNTY: Walworth CODE: 127



**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME: County of Walworth  
STREET AND NUMBER:  
CITY OR TOWN: Elkhorn STATE: Wisconsin CODE: 55

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Walworth County Courthouse  
STREET AND NUMBER:  
CITY OR TOWN: Elkhorn STATE: Wisconsin CODE: 55

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
DATE OF SURVEY:  Federal  State  County  Local  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
STREET AND NUMBER:  
CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Wisconsin  
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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Note: although this building is not on the original site, it was moved long before its occupancy by the person for whom it is named. In the sense of being the Joseph P. Webster house, it is on its original site.

The Webster house is a small, 1 1/2 story frame house of ~~Greek Revival~~ Greek Revival architecture. It was originally erected in the Elkhorn public square in 1836 as the local land office, It was abandoned in 1840 and later moved to its present site. Alterations consist of addition of a kitchen wing at the rear (south) and a single story ell on the west side. Another addition is an L-shaped porch which extends across the front and along the west side of the house to the ell. The roof of the porch is hipped, concave, and unique in having the roofing held in place by slender wood battens which are arranged vertically or at right angles to the outer edge of the roof. It is supported by pierced tracery wood columns, quite delicate in effect. Under the eaves is an ornamental scalloped trim. Another notable feature is a pair of slender, round-arched ruby glass lights in the front door. Webster is known to have installed these.

The interior contains Joseph Webster's piano and a few other family items but is otherwise furnished with period pieces.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

## SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal     | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric    | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture    | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art            | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce       | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Music       |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation   |   |  |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Joseph Philbrick Webster (1819 - 1875) became a musician early in life and was proficient on the violin, flute, fife, and drum during his childhood. At sixteen or seventeen he began to teach music, and at twenty-one he went to Boston as a pupil of the best teachers of music at that time. In 1843 he moved to New York and became a concert singer, touring with the famous tenor Bernard Covert. About six years later, however, Webster's singing career was ended by an attack of bronchitis. He then turned to composing, the career in which he won his greatest fame.

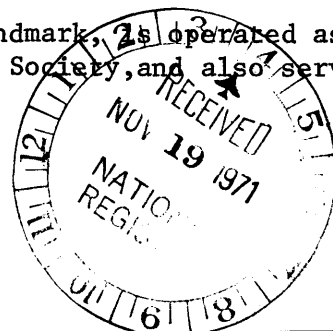
After living for a time in New Orleans to regain his health, Webster felt forced to leave the south because of his strong opposition to slavery. He lived for a time in Indiana and came to Wisconsin, finally, in 1859, settling in Elkhorn, where he lived until his death.

Webster was a successful and prolific composer and during his career wrote some 1000 songs, many of which were popular ballads and hymns of the day. His fame as a composer, however, rests mostly on two compositions. The first is "Lorena," which was a popular camp song during the Civil War. Although it was sung by soldiers on both sides, its popularity was greatest, ironically, among the Confederates. "Lorena" is seriously said to have made many men so homesick that they deserted. A music critic viewing the song-writing field in the mid-nineteenth century commented, "'Suwanee River' is second only in popularity to 'Lorena.'" The haunting love song itself is most noted as the theme music of the great motion picture "Gone With the Wind." It was also sung by a character in Joy Street, a novel of the 1800's by Frances Parkinson Keyes.

Webster's best-known composition, however, is the "Sweet By and By." It was written in 1868 and remains popular today both as a well-loved hymn and a favorite song with barbershop quartets.

The Webster House, a Wisconsin Registered Landmark, is operated as a site and museum by the Walworth County Historical Society, and also serves as that organization's headquarters.

1. Milwaukee Journal, November 4, 1955
2. Wisconsin Then and Now, 4(1):3
3. Idem



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Beckwith, A. C., History of Walworth County, Indianapolis, 1912, v. 2, 1152-57  
 Draper, Lyman C., ed., Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 1876, v. 7, 465  
Dictionary of Wisconsin Biography, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 1960, 368  
 "How the Beautiful but Sad Lorena Came Back to Her Wisconsin Home," The Milwaukee Journal, November 4, 1955.  
 "Lorena's Creator," Wisconsin Then and Now, 4(1):3, 1957  
 "A Home of Its Own," Wisconsin Then and Now, 2(6):2, 1956

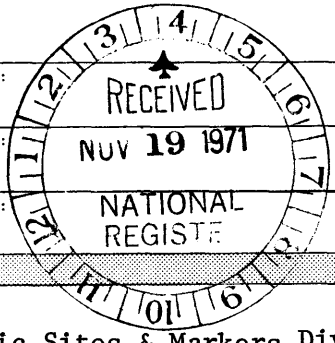
**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		N 32° 40' 06.5"	W 88° 32' 33.3"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		42°		
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 0.25

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
Donald N. Anderson, Asst. Director, Historic Sites & Markers Division  
 ORGANIZATION: State Historical Society of Wisconsin DATE: October 21, 1971  
 STREET AND NUMBER:  
816 State Street  
 CITY OR TOWN: Madison STATE: Wisconsin CODE: 55

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:  
 National  State  Local

Name: James Morton Smith  
James Morton Smith  
 Title: Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
 Date: NOV 12 1971

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.  
Ernest C. Connelly  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ATTEST:  
William M. ...  
 Keeper of the National Register  
 FEB 11 1972  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS