

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation 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** Clarke, Bascom B., House

historic Clarke, B. B., House

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 1150 Spaight Street not for publication

city, town Madison vicinity of congressional district 2nd

state Wisconsin code 55 county Dane code 025

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name Andrew D. and Sonja H. Weiner

street & number 1150 Spaight Street

city, town Madison vicinity of state Wisconsin 53703

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dane County Courthouse

street & number 210 Monona Avenue

city, town Madison state Wisconsin 53701

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Wisconsin Inventory of  
Historic Places

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1977  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin

city, town Madison state Wisconsin 53706

## 7. Description

**Condition**

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered

altered

**Check one**

original site

moved

date \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The B. B. Clarke House, constructed of clapboard, is basically a two-story rectangle, with an irregular third-story attic consisting of three joining "wings" (created by projecting bracketed gable roofs of asbestos) and added picturesque appendages such as bay windows, dormers, and a segmental tower near the southeast corner. From the westernmost of the gable-wings extends a small dormer that is part of the front (south) facade. The entrance is in the far east end of the front facade, which is sheltered by an open porch. The porch is covered by a shed roof supported by small rectangular Tuscan columns and braces. Three lancet windows alternating with thin pilasters are set into the south and east attic-story gables; pointed-arch overlights over rectangular windows in the east bay create a lancet effect. All other windows are rectangular. At one time a small decorative porch was placed at the junction of the south and east third-floor wings, but structural decay led to its removal.

The interior of the house has remained in excellent condition, with only minor alterations. The original dark oak woodwork remains in the ceiling moldings; doorways, window frames, and open dogleg stair. Although part of the fireplace in the parlor has been rebuilt with newer glazed brick, the oak chimneypiece and flanking enclosed bookcases remain. Leaded glass in the doors of the bookcases (of Prairie School character) and in the lancet windows in the bays is still in place.

# 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 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 significant person
<b>Specific dates</b> 1899 <sup>1</sup>	<b>Builder/Architect</b> Claude & Starck <sup>2</sup>			

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

An early work of Madison architects Claude and Starck, this house was for thirty years the residence of Bascom B. Clarke, one of Madison's leading citizens. A dabbler in a wide variety of ventures, Clarke made his enduring mark in agriculture and communications, particularly journalism.

Born in Virginia in 1851, Bascom Clarke was made a refugee by the Civil War until he was literally adopted by the 2nd Indiana Artillery battery: the first in a lifetime of instances in which Clarke was able to constantly impress people.<sup>3</sup> After the war, Clarke moved to Indiana and before he was twenty years old became the publisher of a local newspaper. During the next several years, he invested in and promoted the production and sale of threshing machines, and made a sizeable fortune in the process.<sup>4</sup> In 1890, Clarke moved to Madison, Wisconsin to extend his interests to the farm areas of the state. In Madison, he also continued his interest in communications. In 1895, he, together with Robert M. LaFollette and others, organized the Dane County Telephone Company, which extended service to many rural areas for the first time.<sup>5</sup> Three years later, Clarke began the American Thresherman, a magazine devoted primarily to farming, but that gained a large readership from the non-farming population as well. This was due to Clarke's own wit and his wide-ranging column; the aphorisms of "Uncle Silas" were the magazine's most popular feature.<sup>6</sup> A notable authority on agriculture, Clarke gave most of the space in his magazine over to the development and use of farm machinery. The Thresherman was at the time the only agricultural journal to give its primary attention to the increasing mechanization of farm operations, and this played an important role in the modernization of the farm industry. Readers were advised, for example, on the best types of machines for particular tasks, on the ways to select the right machine for the right job, and so on.<sup>7</sup> This naturally enabled Clarke to have influence over the manufacturing interests (of which he was a member with his threshing machine investments) as well as the rural community. The Thresherman was purely Clarke's own; after his death in 1929, his family chose to discontinue it.

Clarke once referred to his first residence in Indiana as "furnished with a borrowed table and borrowed bedstead."<sup>8</sup> The like could hardly be said of the residence he died in. Constructed in 1899, the B. B. Clarke House cost \$4,500.<sup>9</sup> Clarke employed the firm of Claude & Starck to produce the design. Versatile designers who were accomplished in the Prairie School mode, architects Louis Ward Claude and Edward F. Starck practiced together from 1898 until 1929. One of the firm's earliest works, the B. B. Clarke House is a transitional design conceived as a Gothicized version of the then-current Queen Anne Style, with elements indicating the future course of the firm. Publication of a photograph of the house in the Inland Architect and News Record in 1901 indicates that the imposing house was also considered to be noteworthy in its day.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Inland Architect,  
Madison, Past and Present, Madison, 1931.  
Milwaukee Sentinel,  
Charles E. Whelen, Bascom Clarke, Madison, 1913.  
Wisconsin State Journal.

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**  
**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1/4  
 Quadrangle name Madison East, Wisconsin

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

**UMT References**

A	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>3</u> <u>0</u> <u>7</u> <u>6</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	B					
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing		
C				D					
E				F					
G				H					

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

All of lot 10, of Block 181, of the original plat of Madison, 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 Terry L. Shoptaugh, Historian, Historic Preservation Division  
 organization State Historical Society of Wisconsin date March 31, 1980  
 street & number 816 State Street telephone (608) 262-3390  
 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Richard M. Curney

title Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin date 10/14/80

**For HCERS use only**  
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Carol D. Shuck date 11-28-80  
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Linda Flint McClelland date 11-28-80  
 Chief of Registration

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B. B. Clarke House, Madison, Wisconsin

Continuation sheet

Item number 8 & 11

Page 1

8. SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

NOTES

1. Inland Architect, Vol. 36, no. 6, January, 1901. This issue features a photo plate of the house.
2. Wisconsin State Journal, January 2, 1900.
3. Clarke's early life is detailed in a biographical novel by Charles E. Whelan, Bascom Clarke: The Story of A Southern Refugee, (1913).
4. Wisconsin State Journal, June 23, 1926.
5. Ibid., October 7, 1923; Madison, Past and Present, p. 217.
6. Madison, Past and Present, p. 211; Milwaukee Sentinel, March 18, 1929. A partial collection of the Thresherman is in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin collections.
7. Wisconsin State Journal, October 7, 1923; Thresherman issues in Society collection.
8. Ibid., June 23, 1926.
9. Ibid., January 2, 1900.

11. FORM PREPARED BY (continued)

Diane H. Filipowicz, Architectural Historian, Historic Preservation Division  
State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
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