

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**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 Kennicott Grove - The Robert Kennicott House

AND/OR COMMON The Grove

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Milwaukee and Lake Avenues

CITY, TOWN	Glenview	___ VICINITY OF	10th	___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION
STATE	Illinois	CODE	17	COUNTY
				CODE
				Cook 031

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
___DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _PUBLIC	___OCCUPIED	___AGRICULTURE ___MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _UNOCCUPIED	___COMMERCIAL ___PARK
___STRUCTURE	___BOTH	___WORK IN PROGRESS	___EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _PRIVATE RESIDENCE
___SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	___ENTERTAINMENT ___RELIGIOUS
___OBJECT	___IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _YES: RESTRICTED	___GOVERNMENT ___SCIENTIFIC
	___BEING CONSIDERED	___YES: UNRESTRICTED	___INDUSTRIAL ___TRANSPORTATION
		___NO	___MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Glenview Park District and others

Open space

STREET & NUMBER 2320 Glenview Road

CITY, TOWN Glenview VICINITY OF STATE Illinois

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, COUNTY RECORDERS OFFICE
 REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER 118 North Clark Street

CITY, TOWN Chicago STATE Illinois

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE National Register of Historic Places

DATE 1974 _FEDERAL ___STATE ___COUNTY ___LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, NPS

CITY, TOWN Washington STATE D.C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<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

The present day Kennicott Grove consists of about 70 acres of woodland, marshland, and thicket, and of about 70 acres of open land within a triangle formed by Milwaukee Avenue, Lake Avenue, and the Chicago and Northwestern railroad tracks. There are approximately a dozen homes within the grove of which one is the Robert Kennicott House.

Historically Kennicott Grove was a typical example of a prairie grove. It consisted of about 250 acres of wooded, heavily vegetated land with several natural ponds. After Dr. John Kennicott moved to the grove in about 1837, he planted numerous fruit trees, laid out vegetable and flower gardens, and in other ways cultivated the grove.

The Robert Kennicott House was built in approximately 1856. The following architectural evaluation of the house, which applies today, was prepared in 1974.¹

The plan of the Kennicott house is unusual and without any very obvious governing principle. Original plans were not available during the examination and a sketch plan of the exterior and of the first floor were prepared for study purposes only. Copies of sketches will be available. Plans of this character are usually the result of gradual additions to an original core structure and remodelling from time to time. We are relatively certain that this was the case in the Kennicott house. The sequence of growth can be, for the most part, only surmised at this early stage of examination. The Gothic room on the north is presumably the latest addition. Otherwise the house has three distinct parts: main rectangle, south room, and kitchen wing. Unless some research is done in family papers and other records, and/or by partially dismantling and probing in the building, it is unlikely that the order of construction can be determined exactly. The east wall of the south room is dated by inscriptions to earlier than 1878. The porch that surrounds that room appears to date from about 1920 judging from inscriptions on the shutters covering the inscribed siding of earlier date.

Besides the board and batten siding which is probably not original, the only destructive architectural details occur as patterns around the second floor windows and in the treatment of eaves. The vertical board and batten siding is rare in Illinois and gives the house a special architectural interest especially if it, or its original part, dates from as early as 1854.

Wilbert R. Hasbrouck, FAIA, and Paul E. Sprague, Ph.D., "Preliminary Evaluation of Kennicott Grove Property with Special Emphasis on the Structure Known as the Kennicott House," in Open Lands Project, "A Proposal for Intergovernmental and Citizen Group Agreement for Acquisition, Development, and Maintenance of the Grove, (Chicago, 1974).

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(Continued)

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 checked="" 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 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		

SPECIFIC DATES 1856-1886

BUILDER/ARCHITECT none

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Robert Kennicott, naturalist and explorer, was born November 13, 1835, in New Orleans. Shortly after Robert's birth the family moved to Northfield, Illinois, a small community eighteen miles north of Chicago. Robert's father, John Kennicott, was a physician who, like many doctors of the period, was also interested in natural history. After moving to Northfield the elder Kennicott turned his full attention to the study of horticulture and to promoting the agricultural potential of the region. In time he became a leading horticultural expert and also edited a periodical called "The Prairie Farmer." At his home in Northfield Dr. John Kennicott turned a typical prairie grove into a horticultural laboratory. He carefully classified the types of plants, flowers, trees, and vegetables in the grove.

Robert Kennicott grew up surrounded by the concerns of science and especially natural history. Sickly as a child he did not attend the local schools but rather his father educated him at home. From his youngest days Robert explored the grove with his father studying its varied flora and fauna. He also talked with the visitors who came to the grove to talk with his father about natural history and horticultural subjects. By the time Kennicott was eighteen he had explored a large section of northern Illinois and had made a large collection of natural history material. His observations on the quadrupeds and birds of the region attracted the interest of Dr. J. E. Kirtland, a Cleveland naturalist and a friend of Dr. John Kennicott. In 1852-53 Robert studied with Kirtland in Cleveland. Kirtland advised him to begin corresponding with Spencer Baird of the Smithsonian Institution and to send him papers on natural history subjects. In 1853 Robert sent Baird a paper on the results of experiments on the effects of rattlesnake venom on animals. The paper was subsequently published in the "Smithsonian Reports."

In 1854 Robert went to Racine, Wisconsin, to study ornithology with Dr. P. R. Hoy, the leading amateur ornithologist in that region of Wisconsin. In 1855 Kennicott conducted a natural history survey of southern Illinois for the State Agricultural Society and the Illinois and Central Railroad. Some of his earliest papers described material collected during this survey. In 1856 Kennicott went back to Chicago and started attending lectures on medicine. At the same time he joined with others to found the Chicago Academy of Sciences. Midway through the year Kennicott became sick and was

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(Continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See Continuation Sheet)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY ~~240~~ 300

UTM REFERENCES

A	16	429050	4659700	B	16	429780	4658880
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	16	429300	4658270	D	16	428860	4658270
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

E 16 428160 4659200

Beginning at point A (UTM 16.429050.4659700) proceeding in a southeasterly direction 3,750' to point B (UTM 16.429780.4658880) then continuing in a southwesterly direction 2,450' to point C (UTM 16.429300.4658270) then continuing in a westerly direction 1,300' to point D (UTM 16.428860.4658270) then continuing in a northwesterly direction 3,900' to point E (UTM 16.428160.4659200) then continuing in a northeasterly direction 3,300' to beginning point A.

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

James Sheire, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE

August 1975

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE

202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C. 20240

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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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This is because of Downing and Davis' interest in the board and batten exterior during the years around 1850. It may be that the design, or concept, at least, came from one of Downing's pattern books. It is also a strong possibility that Downing actually was involved in the design of the original structure in view of his personal relationship with Dr. John Kennicott. The main block of the house seems a bit boxey and over-scaled, however, for a genuine Davis-Downing design. The relation of dormer to roof, batten size, and mass seems more akin to the 1850's in the south wing and interior wing. Again, a detailed historical study and interior probing inspection could probably answer these questions.

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forced to return to his home in Northfield. By 1857 he had recovered and, when Northwestern University asked him to make a collection of botanical and zoological material to establish a museum of natural history at the university, Kennicott accepted. Kennicott next spent the winter of 1857-58 at the Smithsonian Institution classifying and describing the material he collected for Northwestern. The following summer he again collected in the field and again spent the winter in Washington. This time his material went to the University of Michigan.

In 1859 Kennicott, supported by the Smithsonian and the Audubon Club of Chicago, made his first trip to northern Manitoba and western Ontario. This expedition lasted three years and Kennicott collected a very large amount of material. In 1862 he returned to the Smithsonian and spent the winter studying the collections. In that Chicago residents had helped finance the expedition, the Chicago Academy of Sciences received a part of the collection. In 1864 Kennicott transferred the collection to Chicago and was appointed its curator and a trustee of the academy.

In 1865 the Western Union Telegraph Company decided to construct a line that would cross the Bering Strait thus linking North America with Russia and Europe. Kennicott, who had acquired experience in exploring in the North, was chosen to lead one of the parties that was to survey a possible route up the Yukon. In addition the party was to collect natural history data and explore for natural resources. In 1866 Kennicott began his exploration of Alaska and explored much of the Yukon River. In May 1866, while making triangulations at the small Russian village of Nulato, Kennicott suffered a heart attack. On May 13, 1866, he was found face down on the shore of the Yukon with his compass nearby and bearings to the local peaks traced in the sand. Kennicott was dead at the age of 30.

Robert Kennicott's name does not stand in the first rank of American scientists. Although he published numerous papers on natural history subjects, he made no original contributions to knowledge. He is remembered as having helped convince the American government to purchase Alaska and also as an explorer, but as a scientist he was not a nationally significant figure. Robert Kennicott's significance in the history of science in America is twofold. First, his scientific activities illustrate an important aspect of scientific activity in the United States during the first half of the 19th century, and, second, as a founder of the Chicago Academy of Sciences Kennicott contributions document the manner in which scientific institutions and methods were carried to the Midwest.

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During the first half of the 19th century the principal concern of American science was the study of natural history. From Jefferson's Lewis and Clark expedition through the Wilkes expedition to the great railroad surveys and the State geological surveys, the major interest of American science focused on collecting, identifying, and describing the natural phenomena of the North American continent.¹ To accomplish this objective botanists, zoologists, ornithologists, geologists, paleontologists, and their colleagues accompanied the various expeditions making collections which they described after returning to the East. At the same time amateur naturalists, usually doctors or men of means, who lived in the frontier territories also studied natural history in their regions. Adopting the methodologies of their eastern peers they spread out making collections of flora and fauna and recording strata and uplifts. They dutifully sent east the data they gathered to institutions such as the Smithsonian. In his collecting activities in Illinois Robert Kennicott illustrates this type of scientific activity. He did not attend a prominent eastern college or university and was largely self taught, nor did he travel to Europe as did his prominent Eastern peers. But after learning methodology at the Smithsonian he explored in the old Northwest, Canada, and Alaska and sent his collections to the Smithsonian. Kennicott, and an unknown number of naturalists like him, helped fill in the natural history details of frontier America and thus contributed to science in America during the mid-19th century.

When Dr. John Kennicott moved to the Chicago area in 1836 or 1837, there were no scientific institutions. His home at today's Kennicott Grove became a center for the concerns of science. His son Robert grew up to become "Chicago's First Naturalist."² When in 1856 Robert Kennicott and like minded Chicago citizens established the Chicago Academy of Sciences, their act represented the establishment in the Midwest of an institution that could trace its intellectual ancestry to the Philadelphia Philosophical Society or the Boston Academy of Arts and Sciences. As the institution grew it together with the young colleges in the area began disseminating scientific knowledge in the region, thus, first, joining the Midwest to the mainstream of American culture, and, second, helping to transform the

¹see George H. Daniels, American Science in the Age of Jackson, (New York, 1968).

²W. J. Beecher, "Chicago's First Naturalist," Field Museum Bulletin, as contained in Open Land Project, "A Proposal for Intergovernmental and Citizen Group Agreement for Acquisition, Development, and Maintenance of the Grove," (Chicago, 1974).

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region from frontier to an area of civilization and culture. Although Robert Kennicott was not an outstanding scientist, he and the house he occupied illustrate how science was pursued in the Midwest during the mid-1800's and how scientific institutions were established. He, thus, illustrates an important element in the total picture of the history of science in America.

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PAGE 1

James A. James, The First Scientific Exploration of Russian America and the Purchase of Alaska, (Chicago, 1942).

James A. James, "Robert Kennicott," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, July 1913.

George H. Daniels, American Science in the Age of Jackson, (New York, 1968).

"Robert Kennicott," Dictionary of American Biography, 10, (New York, 1933).

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