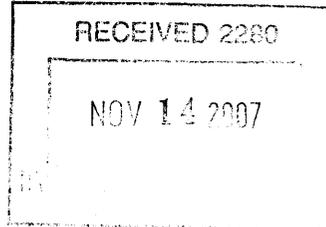


1329



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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

**historic name** Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall  
**other names/site number** First Baptist Church

**2. Location**

<b>street &amp; number</b>	102 Mary Street					N/A	<b>not for publication</b>		
<b>city or town</b>	Boscobel					N/A	<b>vicinity</b>		
<b>state</b>	Wisconsin	<b>code</b>	WI	<b>county</b>	Grant	<b>code</b>	043	<b>zip code</b>	53805

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Nov 12, 2007

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer - Wisconsin

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall

Grant County

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain):

*Edson H. Beall*

12-27-07

*for*

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

### 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
(check as many boxes as apply)

private

public-local

public-State

public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

building(s)

district

structure

site

object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

contributing

noncontributing

1

0 buildings

0

0 sites

0

0 structures

0

0 objects

1

0 total

**Name of related multiple property listing:**

(Enter "N/A" if property not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources**

**is previously listed in the National Register**

0

### 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL/meeting hall

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL/meeting hall

RECREATION & CULTURE/museum

### 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movements

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Stone

walls Weatherboard

roof Asphalt

other Wood

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History

**Period of Significance**

1896 - 1957

**Significant Dates**

1896

1938

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall  
Name of Property

Grant County  
County and State

Wisconsin

### 9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

#### Primary location of additional data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State Agency
  - Federal Agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - X Other
- Name of repository: Boscobel G.A.R. Hall

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 686560 4777794  
Zone Easting Northing

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

See Continuation Sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Elizabeth L. Miller, for	date	15 April 2007
organization	Isthmus Architecture, Inc.	telephone	608-233-5942
street & number	4033 Tokay Blvd	zip code	53711
city or town	Madison	state	WI

Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall  
Name of Property

Grant  
County and State

Wisconsin

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

**Maps** A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs** Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional Items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

<b>name/title</b>	Gary Young (contact person)	<b>date</b>	15 April 2007
<b>organization</b>	Boscobel G.A.R. Hall Preservationists, Inc.	<b>telephone</b>	608-375-5765
<b>street&amp;number</b>	1004 Chestnut Street	<b>zip code</b>	53805
<b>city or town</b>	Boscobel	<b>state</b>	WI

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1

Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall  
Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin

---

INTRODUCTION

The Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall is a two-story, frame, front gable building (see photo 1). Erected as the First Baptist Church in 1871,<sup>1</sup> it was significantly remodeled in 1896 to serve as the meeting hall for the John McDermott Post #101 of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.), and its ladies' auxiliary, the John McDermott Woman's Relief Corps #32.<sup>2</sup> The G.A.R. Hall is finished with broad clapboards, trimmed with simple cornice and corner boards, and rests on a fieldstone, ashlar foundation. Asphalt shingles cover the roof.

DESCRIPTION

The Boscobel G.A.R. Hall stands on the south side of Mary Street between Mound Street and Wisconsin Avenue, in a residential neighborhood just south of Boscobel's central business district. One- and two-story houses dating from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries surround the building. The G.A.R. Hall occupies a narrow lot, planted with grass and a few mature trees. Between the building and the sidewalk is a commemorative granite marker with a plaque. Placed in 1989, the marker honors Jefferson Coates, a local man who served in the Seventh Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiment. Coates was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his valor during the Battle of Gettysburg. Because of its small size, the marker is not included in the resource count.

The G.A.R. Hall is rectangular in plan and faces north. It measures about 45 feet (north-south) by 32 feet (east-west). Wooden, double-hung sash in 2/2 configuration light the building. All were installed in 1896.<sup>3</sup>

The north-facing (front) façade of the G.A.R. Hall is symmetrical. A door can be seen at either end of front façade. Originally, these likely provided gender-segregated entrances into the First Baptist Church. A window appears at the second story above each door. Between the windows, raised letters read: "G.A.R. Hall." A ca. 1985, concrete ramp with a wooden balustrade leads from the sidewalk to

---

<sup>1</sup> Dwight J. and Mary E. Parker to the First Baptist Church of Boscobel, Warranty Deed, 6 April 1871, Grant County Deeds, 72:232; American Baptist Home Mission Society to Trustees for the First Baptist Church of Boscobel, Mortgage, 11 July 1871, Grant County Mortgages, 22:355.

<sup>2</sup> American Baptist Home Mission Society to John McDermott Grand Army of the Republic Post #101 and the John McDermott Corps #32 Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Quit Claim Deed, 11 July 1896, Grant County Deeds, 129:317-18; and Emma Hammond to John McDermott Grand Army of the Republic Post #101, Mortgage, 1 August 1896, Grant County Mortgages, 46:253.

<sup>3</sup> Doris Cruckson, president, Woman's Relief Corps #32 and president, Boscobel G.A.R. Hall Preservationists, "The History of the Grand Army of the Republic Hall, 102 Mary Street, Boscobel, Wisconsin," prepared 2000, p. 3, on file, Boscobel G.A.R. Hall, Boscobel, Wisconsin.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 2

Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall  
Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin

---

the hip-roofed front porch.<sup>4</sup> The porch extends across the front façade and exhibits board flooring, simple posts, and plain rails. Its appearance largely dates from 1938, when the previous porch was widened, re-roofed, and its turned posts encased inside the existing square posts. The earlier porch, erected in 1896,<sup>5</sup> possessed a flat roof, turned posts with spindled brackets, and a spindled frieze. The engaged, turned posts of the 1896 porch are still attached to the building. Prior to 1896, there was no porch.

A narrow door is found on the east corner of the south-facing (rear) façade (see photo 2). A small, wooden deck with a plain rail provides access to this door. A water pump stands on the deck, but is no longer operable. Two, regularly-spaced windows can be seen at the second story. An interior brick chimney with a corbelled top perches on the ridge of roof.

Each of the east- and west-facing facades originally displayed four, tall, multipaned windows, lighting what was then the nave of the First Baptist Church. In 1896, these were reduced with clapboards and the existing windows were installed, reflecting the division of the interior into two floors.<sup>6</sup> The east-facing façade displays four windows at the first story (see photo 2). Three windows appear at the first story on the west-facing façade (see photo 3). Two windows are found at the second story on each facade.

As constructed, the interior of the First Baptist Church was a tall, open space. The Baptist congregation folded in 1879, leaving the building vacant. When the John McDermott Post #101 G.A.R. and Woman's Relief Corps #32 acquired the building in 1896, the interior was divided into two floors, with two rooms and a kitchen on the first floor, and a large meeting hall on the second floor.<sup>7</sup> The current layout dates from the 1896 remodeling. The west front door opens into the foyer (see attached floor plans). A wooden, half-turn-with-landing staircase rises at the west end of the foyer, in the northeast corner of the plan (see photo 4). South of the foyer is the social hall (see photo 5). The front room (housing Civil War artifacts) lies east of the foyer, and can be entered directly from the exterior through the east front door. The kitchen is located in the southeast corner of the first floor, with a door leading onto the back porch (see photo 6; note the dry sink and original stove). A large meeting hall occupies most of the second floor (see photos 7 and 8, note pews from First Baptist Church). Near the center of the hall, drywall partitions erected in 1994 screen the furnace from view.<sup>8</sup> A small office is tucked into the northeast corner of the plan. A closet, set between the stair hall and

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 3

Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall  
Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin

---

the office, is entered through the stair hall. Original broad, board flooring appears throughout. Wall finishes include paper, plaster, vertical board dado, and vertical board paneling called "railroad car siding," supposedly used by the railroads (see photo 8, far wall). The ceilings display board, plaster and paper finishes. Paneled wooden doors with porcelain knobs are found throughout the building. Some of the doors and surrounds are painted in imitation of wood graining, and the door into the meeting room retains its spy hole (see photo 9). Many furnishings original to the 1896 remodeling remain in place, including three cast iron stoves, a long dry sink in the kitchen, tables, chairs, and other items used by the G.A.R. members. The meeting hall also contains several plain wooden pews and an organ, used by the G.A.R. members, but acquired from the First Baptist Church. The Boscobel G.A.R. Hall is currently operated as a museum, and houses an extensive collection of artifacts, records and memorabilia from the Civil War, and the local chapters of the G.A.R., the Sons of Union Veterans, and the Woman's Relief Corps.

#### ALTERATIONS

The Boscobel G.A.R. Hall has suffered few alterations since it was remodeled for meeting hall use in 1896. The front porch was extensively remodeled in 1938, and a concrete ramp leading up to the porch was installed ca. 1985. Interior alterations have been limited to cosmetic changes, such as wall paper (1950s), and drywall partitions around the furnace on the second floor (1994). Although the Boscobel G.A.R. Hall is a modest building, it retains excellent integrity.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 1

Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall  
Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin

---

SUMMARY

The Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall is eligible for the National Register under *Criterion A*, Social History, at the state level, for its long association with the local orders of the G.A.R. and the W.R.C., and as one of only two intact buildings in Wisconsin known to have been owned by and dedicated to the G.A.R. Constructed as the First Baptist Church in 1871, the building was remodeled in 1896 for the John McDermott Post #101 of the G.A.R. and its ladies' auxiliary, the John McDermott Woman's Relief Corps (W.R.C.) #32. It was home to the local chapter of the G.A.R. until the death of its last member in 1942. The W.R.C. #32 continues to meet in the building, carrying out one of its original mission, the perpetuation of the memory of Union veterans, through caring for the building and its extensive collection of Civil War and G.A.R. artifacts. In 1989, the W.R.C. organized the Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall Preservationists, Inc. (B.G.A.R.H.P.), transferring the building to the B.G.A.R.H.P. in 1990. Today, the Boscobel G.A.R. Hall hosts regular meetings of the W.R.C., and the L.G. Armstrong Camp #49 of the Sons of Union Veterans (re-chartered in 2003). The Boscobel G.A.R. Hall is open to the public every Saturday afternoon from May through September. Since 1994, the Boscobel G.A.R. Hall has also opened in conjunction with the annual G.A.R. Heritage Encampment held in Boscobel. The period of significance extends from the year the building became the G.A.R. Hall through the fifty-year cut-off date, 1896-1957.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: A BRIEF HISTORY OF BOSCOBEL

The earliest permanent European-American residents of what would become Boscobel were Thomas Sanders and Asa Wood, who came from Galena in 1846. They built a cabin, and cut logs to raft to sawmills on the Wisconsin River. Other settlers soon followed, farming in the vicinity. In 1854, C.K. Dean, Adam Ray and John Mortimer purchased the land on which Boscobel would be sited. Dean was a civil engineer in the employ of the Milwaukee & Mississippi (later the Chicago & St. Paul) Railroad and was planning the route for the line. Mortimer surveyed the original plat of the village in 1856, naming it Boscobel, from the French, "bosque belle," meaning beautiful woods. By the time the railroad was completed to Boscobel in the fall of 1856, a blacksmith shop, a store and several houses had been built in the community. The arrival of the railroad sparked a building boom. In 1857, several hotels and stores opened. The first school in Boscobel was established in 1859.<sup>9</sup>

When the Civil War broke out in April 1861, Boscobel was the first community in Grant County to raise two companies of volunteers. In 1864, Boscobel incorporated as a village. By 1865, Boscobel

---

<sup>9</sup> Castello N. Holford, *History of Grant County, Wisconsin*, (Lancaster, Wisconsin: The Teller Print, 1900), pp. 663-665.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 2

Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall  
Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin

---

was home to 1127 people, and had two newspapers and three churches. Boscobel continued to develop as an agricultural support community, with the construction of a flour mill in 1866, and a grain warehouse alongside the railroad. The population of Boscobel reached 1509 in 1870, and remained steady through the nineteenth century. In 1873, Boscobel incorporated as a city. The city erected a bridge across the Wisconsin River in 1874, hoping to draw business from the north side of the river. By 1880, Boscobel had become a regional commercial center, with three general stores, a clothing store, a shoe store, four hardware stores, two drug stores, two grocery stores, four restaurants, five milliners, three tailors, four shoemakers, three harness makers, three butcher shops, six hotels, ten saloons, three dressmakers, three wagon and carriage factories, one brickyard, one yarn-making firm, one flour mill, one cigar factory, two furniture stores, three livery stables, one cooper, two stave factories, two banks, one photographer, three jewelry stores, one lumber yard, three physicians, six lawyers, and three grain elevators.<sup>10</sup>

Boscobel continued as an agricultural support community through the late nineteenth century and into the mid-twentieth century as area farmers transitioned into dairying and tobacco cultivation. In 1898, Boscobel was the birthplace of the Gideon Society, an association of Christian men who place bibles in hotel rooms. On September 14 of that year, two traveling salesmen, John H. Nicholson of Janesville and Samuel E. Hill of Beloit were asked to share a room at the Central House Hotel (NRHP 1996). Discovering they were both devout Christians, they talked about forming an association to evangelize among traveling business and professional men. The following year, they formed the Gideon Society, and began the tradition of placing bibles in hotel rooms, which continues today.<sup>11</sup>

During the twentieth century, Boscobel grew slowly. By 1927, the population had reached 1700 and the business district included a tobacco warehouse, a brewery, a bottling works, two creameries, a monument company, two lumber companies, two hotels, three gas stations, a cement stave silo company, an opera house, and numerous commercial establishments including groceries, general stores, hardware stores, and the like. Boscobel also had a racetrack, five churches, two hospitals, a grade school and a high school, telephone, electricity, waterworks.<sup>12</sup>

Although some farming continued in the area after 1950, the manufacturing and service sectors came to dominate Boscobel's economy in the late twentieth century. In 2007, major employers include the Phillips-Advance Transformer Company (producing ballasts for fluorescent lights, 400-600

---

<sup>10</sup> C.W. Butterfield, editor, *History of Grant County, Wisconsin*, (Chicago: Western Historical Association, 1881), pp. 774-778.

<sup>11</sup> Architecture/History Inventory, Office of Historic Buildings, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

<sup>12</sup> *Map of Boscobel, Wisconsin*, (Pelham, New York: Sanborn Publishing Company, March 1927).

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 3

Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall  
Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin

---

employees), the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (250-300 employees), Boscobel Area Health Care (200-250 employees), the Boscobel Area School District (100-150 employees), the Milk Specialties Company (producing animal feed, 50-100 employees), and two packaging companies, Alcan and Nu-Pak (50-100 employees each). Boscobel promotes tourism, as well. Perhaps the most popular attraction is the annual G.A.R. Heritage Encampment, "Muskets and Memories," held the first weekend in August. The event draws as many as 1,000 Civil War re-enactors and was described as the premier Civil War event in the Midwest by the *Chicago Tribune* in 2006. The population of Boscobel in 2007 stands at 3262.<sup>13</sup>

**SIGNIFICANCE: FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS, THE GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC AND THE WOMAN'S RELIEF CORPS**

The Boscobel G.A.R. Hall is eligible for the National Register under *Criterion A*, Social History, for its long service to the John McDermott Post #101 of the G.A.R. and its ladies' auxiliary, the John McDermott Woman's Relief Corps #32. Constructed as the First Baptist Church in 1871, the building was remodeled for the veterans' organization in 1896. It was home to the local chapter of the G.A.R. until the death of its last member in 1942. The Woman's Relief Corps #32 continues to meet in the building.

Fraternal Organizations

Fraternal organizations, such as the Grand Army of the Republic, the Masons, and the Oddfellows, performed a wide range of social, cultural, economic, and occasionally political functions in the United States in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Fraternal orders provided fellowship to their members, and an instant network of connections for newcomers to a community. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, they also served their members and the larger society, providing indemnities to families of deceased brethren, helping maintain mental health and medical facilities for the indigent, and contributing funds for scholarships, public works and municipal improvements.<sup>14</sup>

Although fraternal organizations were established in Wisconsin as early as 1823, these orders experienced the height of their popularity between 1866 and 1910. This can be partially attributed to increased migration and immigration to Wisconsin during the period, but it was also an era of

---

<sup>13</sup> City of Boscobel, "Boscobel Community Profile," [On line] 8 April 2007, <<http://www.boscobelwisconsin.com/cp>>; and Gary Young, "History of John McDermott Post #101, Grand Army of the Republic, Boscobel, Wisconsin," prepared 2006, on file, Boscobel G.A.R. Hall, Boscobel, Wisconsin, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> Barbara L. Wyatt, editor, *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*, (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), 3:5-1 to 5-5.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 4

Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall  
Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin

---

“joiners,” and fraternal organizations of all sorts were being conceived, ritualized, and promoted in the second half of the nineteenth century. Men wanted the social aspects of fraternalism. Most men of substance joined two, three or more fraternal orders, as a social outlet and for whatever advantage they could gain in their business affairs with their “brothers,” a benefit known as “reciprocal patronage.” Many fraternal orders, including the G.A.R., instituted female auxiliaries during this period. Almost every community of more than a few hundred inhabitants contained at least one fraternal order. Fraternal associations formed a central focus of social life in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. They were important cultural institutions that played an instrumental role in the maintenance of group life, particularly in the more isolated rural communities.<sup>15</sup>

Membership in fraternal organizations gradually declined during the first half of the twentieth century. Since the 1950s, many of these organizations have slipped into the background of social life and have had difficulty attracting younger members, although their social and charitable work has continued. A series of court decisions in the 1960s censuring fraternal groups for their racist policies has had a negative effect on their public perception.<sup>16</sup>

The Grand Army of the Republic

The Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) was a fraternal association of men who served in the Union Army, Navy, or Marine Corps between the years 1861 and 1865, and were honorably discharged. It was organized hierarchically, with “posts” at the local level, under the supervision of the state “department,” which answered to the national organization. Local posts were numbered in the order of the date of their charter, and named in honor of a Union soldier, sailor or marine killed in the Civil War. Each department held an annual “encampment,” which often included camping out, formal dinners, entertainment, and memorial events. The G.A.R. held a national encampment in a different city each year; several were held in Wisconsin. Although the G.A.R. continued until the last member died in 1956, the final encampment was held in 1949.<sup>17</sup>

The G.A.R. was founded by Major Benjamin F. Stephenson and Reverend W. J. Rutledge in Illinois, in the spring of 1866. On 6 April 1866, Stephenson issued the first post charter to Decatur, Illinois, naming himself as Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Illinois. Wisconsin became the second state to organize a G.A.R. department on 7 June 1866 in Madison, and Madison became Post #1. An estimated 90,000 Wisconsin men had served in the Union forces; 12,000 lost

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas J. McCrory, *Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Wisconsin*, (Black Earth, Wisconsin: Trail Books, 2005), p. 1.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 5

Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall  
Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin

---

their lives in the conflict. Early members in the G.A.R., Department of Wisconsin, were political and business leaders, such as Thomas S. Allen, Wisconsin Secretary of State; Lucius Fairchild, then Governor of Wisconsin; and Jeremiah Rusk, then Wisconsin Bank Comptroller, later a Congressman and seven-year governor of the state.<sup>18</sup>

The G.A.R. motto was, "Fraternity, Charity, Loyalty." Members of the G.A.R. subscribed to the principles of the organization:

1. To preserve and those kind and fraternal feelings which have bound together, with the strong cords of love and affection, the comrades in arms of many battles, sieges, and marches who united to suppress the late rebellion, and to perpetuate the memory and history of the dead.
2. To make these ties available in works and results of kindness of favor and material aid to those in need of assistance.
3. To make provision, where it is not already done, for the support, care, and education of soldiers' orphans, and for the maintenance of the widows of deceased soldiers.
4. To protect and assist disabled soldiers, whether because of wounds, sickness, old age, or misfortune.
5. To establish and defend the late soldiery of the United States morally, socially, and politically, with a view of inculcating a proper appreciation of their services to the country, and to a recognition of such services and claims by the American people.
6. To maintain true allegiance to the United States of America based upon paramount respect for, and fidelity to, the national constitution and laws....together with a defense of universal liberty, equal rights, and justice to all men.<sup>19</sup>

Union veterans responded enthusiastically and the G.A.R. expanded rapidly in Wisconsin and the nation. By the end of 1867, the Department of Wisconsin had chartered 56 posts, including #37, established in Boscobel in 1866. National membership in 1869 stood at 240,000. However, most posts, including those in Wisconsin, folded in the next few years. Post 37 disbanded on 20 November 1871. The failure of many of these early posts was likely the result of several factors. First, the veterans were young, and concentrating on making a living and supporting their families. Second, the economic depression of 1873 made membership dues unaffordable for many. And finally, many veterans were turned off by the radical Republican politics of the Wisconsin and national leadership, who actively encouraged the membership to vote Republican. The G.A.R.'s reputation as a vehicle for

---

<sup>18</sup> McCrory, pp. 2-4; and Robert B. Beath, *History of the Grand Army of the Republic*, (New York: Bryan, Taylor & Co., 1889), pp. 18 and 35.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted from Beath, p. 45.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 6

Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall  
Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin

---

partisan politicking had a long-term adverse effect on enrollment. By the end of 1873, national membership had plummeted to 27,100 and the number of posts in Wisconsin had fallen to six. No posts were reinstated, nor were any new posts chartered in Wisconsin until 1879, at which point there were only 135 members in good standing in the state.<sup>20</sup>

The G.A.R. survived, in large part because of its sponsorship and promotion of Memorial Day, which commemorated the heroism of the Civil War dead. In 1868, G.A.R.'s Commander-in-Chief John A Logan had issued General Order No. 11, designating May 30<sup>th</sup> as Decoration Day. The first state to recognize the holiday was New York, in 1873. The name was changed to Memorial Day in 1882, and by 1890, all northern states celebrated it. G.A.R. posts planned Memorial Day observances, which included decorating graves, making speeches, and singing patriotic songs. Memorial Day raised public recognition of the G.A.R. and had a positive impact on the reputation of the fraternity. In addition, the G.A.R. had curtailed its overt political activities in the late 1870s, although it would remain politically powerful until the early twentieth century.<sup>21</sup>

During the late 1870s, the G.A.R. began hosting state and national veterans reunions. The rebirth of the G.A.R. in Wisconsin was inaugurated by "Soldiers and Sailors Reunion Day," sponsored by Post #4 of Berlin, held on 1 January 1879. All Union veterans in the state were invited. The event was well attended, and an even larger "Grand Reunion" was planned for Milwaukee for the following summer. Reflecting a growing concern over pension issues for their disabled comrades, the veterans at the reunion also voted to urge their representatives in Washington to support the Arrears Pension Act, which would make a disability pension application retroactive to discharge rather than effective upon approval. The G.A.R. would make pension issues a key component of their national efforts between 1879 and 1890, successfully advocating for legislation that eventually extended pensions to all Union veterans, as well as to all widows and orphans of Union veterans. The G.A.R. also proved instrumental in the establishment of soldiers' homes during this period. New York opened the first such home in 1879. The National Soldiers' Home in Milwaukee, operated by the federal government and overcrowded by the late 1880s, inspired the Wisconsin Department of the G.A.R. to establish its own veterans' home. Dr. Frederick A. Marsden of Milwaukee headed the planning committee. Dr. Marsden believed the home should accept wives and widows, as well as old soldiers, and that the home should be composed of cottages, to keep families together. The Grand Army Home for Veterans at King, Waupaca County, was dedicated 29 August 1888. It was the first soldiers' home in the United

---

<sup>20</sup> McCrory, pp. 6-8, 11, 16, 20, and 69.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 16-17.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 7

Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall  
Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin

---

States to admit wives and widows. The G.A.R. operated the home until 1929, when it was transferred to the state.<sup>22</sup>

As the attention of the G.A.R. shifted to social policies and activities for veterans, more former soldiers and sailors became members at the local level. Another important element in the rejuvenation of the G.A.R. was nostalgia: time had dimmed painful memories, leaving pleasant recollections of the aging veterans' youthful adventures. Events such as the Grand Reunion, held in Milwaukee in June 1880, capitalized on the growing nostalgia of veterans. The Grand Reunion drew 150,000 visitors to Milwaukee. It featured a parade of 30,000 veterans in uniform, marching in a procession three miles long, reviewed by former Union generals Ulysses S. Grant and Philip H. Sheridan. Old Abe, the eagle mascot of the Eight Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiment, appeared. A tent camp and regimental reunions were also part of the festivities.<sup>23</sup>

The Grand Reunion, regimental reunions, and "camp fires" (reenacting the camp life of Union soldiers) hosted by the G.A.R. in the 1880s led to the formation of many new G.A.R. posts, including the John McDermott Post #101 in Boscobel. The G.A.R. also sponsored social events such as dinners and dances, and created auxiliary organizations for the wives and children of veterans during this period. The Woman's Relief Corps (see below), Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic, and Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War were all officially endorsed as "Allied Orders." These activities and allied orders also brought new membership to the G.A.R. Enrollment in both the Department of Wisconsin and the national G.A.R. climbed through the 1880s, peaking in 1889. That year, the Department of Wisconsin had 264 posts with a total of 13,978 members, accounting for one in every three Wisconsin Union veterans. National enrollment in the G.A.R. stood at 410,686. The 1889 National Encampment, held in Milwaukee, drew almost one-third of all G.A.R. members in the nation, and attracted 100,000 spectators.<sup>24</sup>

The John McDermott G.A.R. Post #101 was chartered on 15 August 1883 in Boscobel. It was named in honor of Captain John McDermott, commander of Company C, 20<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiment. McDermott was killed in action at Prairie Grove, Arkansas on 7 December 1862, attempting to retrieve the colors from a fallen color guard. McDermott was from neighboring Fennimore, Wisconsin. Post #101 began with 44 charter members. L.C. Armstrong was the first commander of the post. Dr. Armstrong had served as a surgeon with the Eighth and the Sixth Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiments, and was the area's disability pension examiner. He would

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 17-22, and 40-42.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., pp. 24-26.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., pp. 34-36, and 56.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 8

Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall  
Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin

---

later be elected president of the Wisconsin Medical Association. By end of 1883, enrollment in Post #101 had risen to 94. Among members were Wallis W. Young, John Stahel, J.W. Nice, M. Ablieter, Charles B. Miller, R. B. Rice, and Harvey Miller, all of whom have descendants living in Boscobel today. Membership in Post #101 peaked at 107 in 1887, hovering above 50 through 1910. Post #101 still had more than two dozen men during World War I, when many other posts were withering away. The last living member was John Ricks, who died 15 February 1942. In all, Post #101 served 254 men.<sup>25</sup>

In the post-Civil War era, fraternal organizations typically met in downtown commercial blocks, in a hall located above the ground floor. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, many fraternal associations erected their own buildings.<sup>26</sup> In Boscobel, Post #101 met in a series of commercial blocks, then in the fire house, and then in the Grant Lodge #169 F. & A.M. (Masonic Lodge). When climbing to the Mason's third floor hall proved too arduous for the veterans, Post #101 joined with their ladies auxiliary, Woman's Relief Corps #32, and bought the vacant First Baptist Church at 102 Mary Street for \$150 in July 1896. The building had been erected in 1871, but the Baptist congregation had disbanded in 1879. The two organizations remodeled the building, and it served Post #101 until 1941, and continues as the home of Woman's Relief Corps 32 and the L.G. Armstrong Sons of Union Veterans Camp #49 (re-chartered in 2003).<sup>27</sup>

Membership in the G.A.R. began to decline after passage of the Dependent Pension Act of 1890, providing pensions to all honorably discharged soldiers, their widows and minor dependents. In part, the most pressing goal of the G.A.R. had been accomplished with the enactment of this legislation. Increasingly, however, attrition was due to the aging of the veterans. The G.A.R. undertook a new, education mission, to instill patriotism in younger generations. In Wisconsin, a committee of the G.A.R. reviewed history textbooks used by state schools, and concluded that the textbooks inaccurately portrayed the Civil War, favoring the Confederate point of view. The national G.A.R. took up the issue and pressured publishers to revise the interpretation of the causes of the war. The G.A.R. also preserved battlefields and campgrounds (such as Camp Randall in Madison, 1892-93), erected monuments (such as the Memorial Arch at Camp Randall, 1909), promoted the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance, and placed flags in schools. Department of Wisconsin Patriotic Instructor Hosea Rood published *A Little Flag Book*, providing information on flag display and care. The Department of Wisconsin also established a museum, the G.A.R. Memorial Hall (1901), housed in the State Capitol. Destroyed in the 1904 State Capitol fire, the museum was reinstalled in 1918 when the

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 187; and Young, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Wyatt, 3:5-4.

<sup>27</sup> Holford, pp. 680-81; and Young, p. 3.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 9

Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall  
Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin

---

current State Capitol was completed. The museum relocated in 1993, and is now known as the Wisconsin Veterans Museum.<sup>28</sup>

After 1895, the G.A.R. membership derived the most satisfaction from the camp fires, which recalled the fellowship of camp life. Eventually, G.A.R. camp fires took on a more structured, educational format, to show the public what the veterans experienced, with stories, military calls with the bugle or the drum, and patriotic songs.<sup>29</sup>

In 1898, war broke out between the United States and Spain. At the national encampment of the G.A.R. that year, a resolution was offered that would modify the requirements for admission to the G.A.R. "in such manner that after the close of the present war, the honorably discharged soldiers and sailors...may be eligible for membership therein."<sup>30</sup> A heated discussion followed, and the resolution failed. New veterans would form their own organizations, such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion. In the words of Jerome Watrous, of Wisconsin,

The volunteers now in the war against Spain went with the same love in their hearts for the government and the flag; they are just as good men as we were; they deserve just as much praise as we did...They will be earning their own place...Do not let us forestall them by turning over to them that which we are nearly through with. Let this society die with the Union veterans of the War of the Rebellion.<sup>31</sup>

After about 1910, the G.A.R. was an organization of survivors, gradually diminishing, with fewer attending each succeeding annual encampment. The G.A.R.'s active patriotic work was turned over to the allied orders, especially the Woman's Relief Corps, and the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. Boscobel has had chapters of the Sons of Union Veterans. John Stahel Camp #43 was organized in 1897, with 42 members. It reorganized as the L.G. Armstrong Camp #49 in 1914, but surrendered its charter in 1928. Camp #49 was re-chartered in 2003. Very often, the local G.A.R. post died along with the last Civil War soldier in town. The Department of Wisconsin continued its yearly encampments until 1951. By then it had just one member, Lansing A. Wilcox, of Cadott in Chippewa County. In 1950, he moved to the Grand Army Home at King, turning 105 in 1951, and dying on 30 September 1951, the last of the 90,000 Wisconsin men who served in the Civil War.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> McCrory, pp. 38-39.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 46 and 57; and Young, pp. 3-4.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 10

Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall  
Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin

---

The Woman's Relief Corps

The Woman's Relief Corps (W.R.C.) was formed as an auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) in 1883. Women had served as nurses and even soldiers during the Civil War, and had undertaken many relief efforts after the war. Several women's relief associations had come to the attention of the G.A.R. by the late 1870s. In 1880, the G.A.R. adopted a resolution calling for the creation of a female auxiliary. In response to this call, 58 women from several states came to the G.A.R. national encampment in Denver in July 1883. These women became the charter members of the W.R.C. They elected E. Florence Barker of Massachusetts as the first president of the national organization. Barker visited La Crosse in 1884 to charter the W.R.C. Department of Wisconsin and its first seven corps. Boscobel's John McDermott W.R.C. #32 was chartered on 1 January 1886. Jennie Birchard was the chapter's first president.<sup>33</sup>

The objectives of the W.R.C. mirrored those of the G.A.R.:

1. To specially aid and assist the Grand Army of the Republic and to perpetuate the memory of their heroic dead.
2. To assist such Union Veterans as need our help and protection, and to extend needful aid to their widows and orphans. To find them homes and employment, and assure them of sympathy and friends. To cherish and emulate the deeds of our army nurses, and of all loyal women who rendered loving service to our country in her hour of peril.
3. To maintain true allegiance to the United States of America; to inculcate lessons of patriotism and love of country among our children and in the communities in which we live, and encourage the spread of universal liberty and equal rights to all.<sup>34</sup>

As with the G.A.R., race was not a factor in membership in the W.R.C., and both organizations had Menominee and Oneida chapters in Wisconsin.<sup>35</sup> Rather than limit its membership to the wives and daughters of Union veterans, the W.R.C. opened its membership to all

---

<sup>33</sup> Flo Jamison Miller, *Resume, 1883-1919, of the Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic*, (n.p.: n.p., ca. 1920), p. 7; Wisconsin Veterans Museum Research Center, "Register of Woman's Relief Corps, Department of Wisconsin, ca. 1884-1988," prepared 2001, on file, Wisconsin Veterans Museum, Madison, Wisconsin, p. 3; and Cruckson, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Emma W. Campbell, *Activities and Services of the National Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic*, (Minneapolis, Minnesota: n.p., 1936), p. 4.

<sup>35</sup> The fact that the Menominee and Oneida chapters were separate suggests that, although race may not have been a stated factor barring membership, it may have been implied.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 11

Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall  
Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin

---

women of good moral character and correct deportment who have not given aid and comfort to the enemies of the Union, who would perpetuate the principles to which this association stands pledged, and who have attained the age of sixteen years...<sup>36</sup>

The organization of the W.R.C. was patterned after the G.A.R., with corps at the local level, reporting to departments at the state level, and governed by a national board made up of delegates elected from each department. The local corps was attached to the local G.A.R. post, sharing its name, but not its number. The W.R.C. annual national convention was held concurrently with the G.A.R.'s national encampment, and took place in the same city. W.R.C. state conventions also met in concert with G.A.R. departmental encampments. Wisconsin hosted several W.R.C. national conventions. Four Wisconsin women held the position of national president of the W.R.C.: Charity Rusk Craig, Belle W. Bliss, May Luchsinger, and Daisy Heineman.<sup>37</sup>

During its first 15 years, the W.R.C. raised funds to benefit needy Army nurses, petitioned Congress to provide pensions for Army nurses and to increase pensions to veterans' widows and dependents, and established a home in Ohio for Army nurses, widows, mothers and daughters of soldiers. The W.R.C. placed forget-me-nots and miniature flags on the graves of Union soldiers each Memorial Day, and financed markers for veterans and Army nurses whose families could not afford them. The organization also provided scholarships to the children of Union veterans, and donated funds and materials to veterans' hospitals.<sup>38</sup>

The W.R.C. Department of Wisconsin helped raise money to purchase land and fund the construction of the Grand Army Home for Veterans at King, Wisconsin. Following its opening in 1888, the Department of Wisconsin continued to donate money, material, and time to the home and its residents. As a special project, the Wisconsin W.R.C. funded the building and maintenance of a chapel on the grounds of the home.<sup>39</sup>

Although the W.R.C. was originally dedicated to Union veterans, the organization quickly expanded its mission, giving funds for disaster relief in the wake of catastrophes such as the Johnstown (Pennsylvania) Flood (1889) and the San Francisco Earthquake (1906). The W.R.C. maintained close ties with the Red Cross, whose founder and first president, Clara Barton, was an active member of the

---

<sup>36</sup> Campbell, p. 4.

<sup>37</sup> Wisconsin Veterans Museum, p. 3.

<sup>38</sup> Miller, pp. 12-14.

<sup>39</sup> Wisconsin Veterans Museum, p. 4.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 12

Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall  
Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin

---

W.R.C. The W.R.C. also supported soldiers and veterans of later military conflicts, beginning with the Spanish-American War. The W.R.C. Department of Wisconsin bought liberty bonds and volunteered in the Red Cross during World War I, and the national W.R.C. gave nearly \$150,000 and four mobile units to the Red Cross during World War II.<sup>40</sup>

In 1896, the national W.R.C. took title to the grounds on which the infamous Andersonville prisoner of war camp had stood. They maintained the property until 1910, when Andersonville National Park was deeded to the federal government, although the W.R.C. continued to contribute to its upkeep. The Department of Wisconsin also donated to a park that honored Civil War service: Cushing Memorial Park in Delafield, Wisconsin. In Boscobel, W.R.C. #32 joined with G.A.R. Post #101 to erect a monument to the unknown war dead in Memorial Park in 1907. The national W.R.C. also collected G.A.R.-related artifacts and eventually established the Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Museum in Springfield, Illinois. The national headquarters of the W.R.C. is housed in the museum.<sup>41</sup>

After 1900, the W.R.C. added the active patriotic education work of the G.A.R. to their other responsibilities, presenting flags to schools, churches, courtrooms, public buildings, cemeteries, and new citizens. They handed out copies of Hosea Rood's *A Little Flag Book*, and promoted the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance in schools. As before, the W.R.C. participated in commemorative celebrations such as Memorial Day and Flag Day ceremonies, placed monuments and markers, and planted trees in veterans' cemeteries. The W.R.C.'s liberal membership policy and their support of all servicemen and veterans allowed them to flourish at a time when the G.A.R. was fading. By the early 1920s, Wisconsin boasted 148 corps and over 11,000 members. In 1936, the national W.R.C. counted nearly 150,000 members.<sup>42</sup>

Although enrollment in the W.R.C. has declined since the 1950s, the W.R.C. is still active. In 2007, there are 2,630 members in 18 states. The organization offers annual scholarships; distributes flags and patriotic literature; promotes the Americanization of immigrants; contributes time and money to anti-drug programs, the Red Cross, and a wide range of charities, as well as veterans' hospitals; supports pro-veteran legislation on the state and national level; continues to support a Junior Corps; and promotes proper etiquette of the American flag and observance of national holidays, especially Memorial Day. In Wisconsin, eight corps operate in Viroqua, Reedsburg, Peshtigo, Appleton, Platteville, Richland Center, the Wisconsin Veterans' Home, and Boscobel.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Miller, p. 14; and Wisconsin Veterans Museum, p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> Miller, p. 20; Cruckson, p. 4; and Wisconsin Veterans Museum, p. 4.

<sup>42</sup> Campbell, back cover; and Wisconsin Veterans Museum, p. 4.

<sup>43</sup> Wisconsin Veterans Museum, p. 4; and Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, "Auxiliary to the G.A.R.: Woman's

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 13

Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall  
Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin

---

The John McDermott W.R.C. #32 has been active in Boscobel for over 120 years. The organization partnered with the John McDermott G.A.R. Post #101 in the purchase and renovation of the Boscobel G.A.R. Hall in 1896. In 1898, the W.R.C. deeded the hall to the Post #101, but continued to meet in the hall and assist with the maintenance of the property.<sup>44</sup> In 1915, Post #101 deeded the hall to the city of Boscobel for \$1.00, stating that the members of the post were

....desirous of leaving for all time to come a memorial that shall instill into the hearts and minds of the future citizens of Boscobel the sprit of true patriotism...<sup>45</sup>

Despite municipal ownership, the hall continued as the social center for the members of Post #101 and W.R.C. #32, and the ladies auxiliary continued to help take care of the building. In 1932, the G.A.R. bought the hall from the city of Boscobel for \$1.00 and transferred it to W.R.C. #32.<sup>46</sup> W.R.C. #32 upheld its commitment to perpetuating the memory of the G.A.R. and Union veterans through its stewardship of the building. W.R.C. #32 commissioned the remodeling of the front porch in 1938, painted and papered the interior in the 1950s, and painted the exterior in the 1970s. In October 1985, W.R.C. #32 opened the G.A.R. Hall for tours. In 1989, W.R.C. #32 formed the Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall Preservationists, Inc. (B.G.A.R.H.P.), transferred ownership of the hall to this non-profit corporation in 1990.<sup>47</sup> W.R.C. #32, the B.G.A.R.H.P., and the L.G. Armstrong Camp #49, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, currently open the G.A.R. Hall to the public on Saturday afternoons from May through September, and on Veterans' Day. The associations also conduct tours for school groups. In 2005, the B.G.A.R.H.P. inaugurated a campaign to preserve and restore the G.A.R. Hall. Camp #49 and W.R.C. #32 are assisting the B.G.A.R.H.P. in their pursuit of preservation grants, fundraising, and nomination of the hall to the National Register of Historic Places.

## CONCLUSION

---

Relief Corps," [Online] 8 April 2007, <<http://suvcw.org/wrc.htm>>.

<sup>44</sup> Grant County Deeds, 129:317-18; Grant County Mortgages, 46:253; John McDermott W.R.C. #32 to the John McDermott G.A.R. Post #101, Quit Claim Deed, 12 July 1898, Grant County Deeds, 130:230;

<sup>45</sup> John McDermott G.A.R. Post #101 to the city of Boscobel, Warranty Deed, 15 June 1915, Grant County Deeds, 188:589.

<sup>46</sup> City of Boscobel to the John McDermott G.A.R. Post #101, Warranty Deed, 4 February 1932, Grant County Deeds, 228:120; and John McDermott G.A.R. Post #101 to the John McDermott W.R.C. #32, Warranty Deed, 22 July 1932, Grant County Deeds, 228:121.

<sup>47</sup> The John McDermott W.R.C. #32 to the Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall Preservationists, Inc., Warranty Deed, 8 October 1990, Grant County Deeds, 672:697.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 14

Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall  
Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin

---

The Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) was the first national organization for veterans. It offered Civil War Union veterans a powerful political voice, as well as fulfilling important social and charitable roles. The G.A.R. and its ladies auxiliary, the Woman's Relief Corps (W.R.C.), permeated Wisconsin society between 1880 and about 1910. The activities these organizations sponsored, the camp fires and commemorative ceremonies, the dances, picnics, dinners, and the music and drama programs, were major events in the social life of the most communities during the period. The G.A.R. and the W.R.C. were found throughout Wisconsin. Almost 320 Wisconsin communities had a G.A.R. post at one time or another. The W.R.C. had chapters in close to 150 communities. On average, the local G.A.R. post was active for about 29 years. Ninety-five posts survived for a half-century or longer. Boscobel's John McDermott Post #101 was one of these, lasting 58 years (1883-1941). The John McDermott W.R.C. #32 is one of only eight W.R.C. currently active in the state, and the fourth oldest.<sup>48</sup>

The Boscobel G.A.R. Hall is one of the few surviving buildings that was dedicated to the use of the G.A.R. Like most fraternal organizations in the nineteenth century, G.A.R. posts typically met in downtown commercial blocks, in a hall located above the ground floor. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, some posts bought or built their own meeting halls.<sup>49</sup> For example, G.A.R. Post #11 (Madison) acquired and remodeled a three-story masonry building downtown (demolished ca. 1973). Boscobel and several other posts bought or built small, frame halls, including Post #7 (Omro), Post #16 (Amherst), Post #80 (Gays Mills), Post #122 (Friendship), Post #150 (Hancock), and Post #245 (Necedah). Although many commercial blocks that housed an upstairs G.A.R. post hall do survive around the state, no more than three free-standing hall buildings are known to remain in Wisconsin. Post #101 is one of these. The O.D. Chapman G.A.R. Post #80 in Gays Mills (AHI No. 23899) may have occupied only the second floor of the Side Gable frame building on Grove Street. Built in 1860, it served many other uses, including harness factory and broom factory. The building has been subdivided for apartment use, affecting its integrity. The Thomas Eubank G.A.R. Post #150 built the one-story, frame, Boomtown front hall in Hancock in 1894, remaining in residence until the Post disbanded in 1911. Thomas Eubank W.R.C. #95 also met in the hall. The village of Hancock has maintained the clapboard-sided building since that time, and it appears to retain very good integrity.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> McCrory, p. 68; and Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War.

<sup>49</sup> Wyatt, 3:5-4.

<sup>50</sup> McCrory, pp. 122, 132, 198, 215, and 267; and Wisconsin Veterans Museum, p. 12.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 15

Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall  
Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin

---

The Boscobel G.A.R. Hall is one of only two intact buildings in Wisconsin that are known to have been owned by, and dedicated to, the G.A.R. and the W.R.C. It retains a high degree of integrity, clearly conveying its association with these orders, and continues to carry out the original mission of these orders, to perpetuate the memory of the Union servicemen of the Civil War. As such, it is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 1

Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall  
Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin

---

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Beath, Robert B. *History of the Grand Army of the Republic*. New York: Bryan, Taylor & Co., 1888.

Boscobel, City of. "Boscobel Community Profile." [Online] 8 April 2007.  
<<http://www.boscobelwisconsin.com/cp>>

Butterfield, C.W., editor. *History of Grant County, Wisconsin*. Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1881.

Campbell, Emma W. *Activities and Services of the National Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: n.p., 1936.

Cruckson, Doris. "The History of the Grand Army of the Republic Hall, 102 Mary Street, Boscobel, Wisconsin," prepared 2000. Boscobel G.A.R. Hall, Boscobel, Wisconsin.

Grant County (Wisconsin). Deeds.

Grant County (Wisconsin). Mortgages.

Holford, Castello N. *History of Grant County, Wisconsin*. Lancaster, Wisconsin: The Teller Print, 1900.

McConnell, Stuart. *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1992.

McCrary, Thomas J. *Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Wisconsin*. Black Earth, Wisconsin: Trails Books, 2005.

*Map of Boscobel, Wisconsin*. Pelham, New York: Sanborn Publishing Company, March 1927.

Miller, Flo Jamison. *Resume, 1883-1919, of the Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic*. N.p.: n.p., ca. 1920.

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. "Auxiliary to the G.A.R.: Woman's Relief Corps." [Online] 8 April 2007. <<http://suvcw.org/wrc.htm>>.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 2

Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall  
Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin

---

Wisconsin Veterans Museum Research Center. "Register of Woman's Relief Corps, Department of Wisconsin, ca. 1884-1988," prepared 2001. Wisconsin Veterans Museum, Madison, Wisconsin.

Wyatt, Barbara L., editor. *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*. Three volumes. Madison, Wisconsin: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986.

Young, Gary. "History of John McDermott Post #101, Grand Army of the Republic, Boscobel, Wisconsin," prepared 2006. Boscobel G.A.R. Hall, Boscobel, Wisconsin.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 1

Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall  
Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin

---

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The Boscobel G.A.R. Hall is located on Lot 13, Block 13, Parker's Addition, in the city of Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin. The parcel encompasses less than one acre.

**VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundaries of the Boscobel G.A.R. Hall coincide with the legal boundaries of the parcel on which it sits, and enclose all the resources historically associated with the property.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall  
Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin

Section photos Page 1

---

The following information is the same for all photographs:

**Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall**  
**Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin**  
**Photo by Elizabeth L. Miller, April 2007**  
**Negative on file at the Wisconsin Historical Society**

Photo 1 of 9

View of the north- (front) and east-facing façades, looking southwest.

Photo 2 of 9

View of the south- (rear) and east-facing facades, looking northwest.

Photo 3 of 9

View of the north- (front) and west-facing facades, looking southeast.

Photo 4 of 9

View of the foyer, looking toward the staircase.

Photo 5 of 9

View of the social hall, looking toward the door into the foyer.

Photo 6 of 9

View of the kitchen, looking toward the back door. Note the dry sink (left) and the original stove.

Photo 7 of 9

View of the meeting hall, looking toward Mary Street. Note the pews, original to the First Baptist Church.

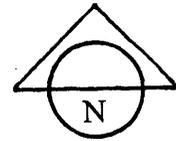
Photo 8 of 9

View of the meeting hall, looking away from Mary Street. Note the "railroad car siding" on the back wall.

Photo 9 of 9

View of the door into the meeting hall. Note hand-painted wood graining, and swiveling cap that covers the spy hole.

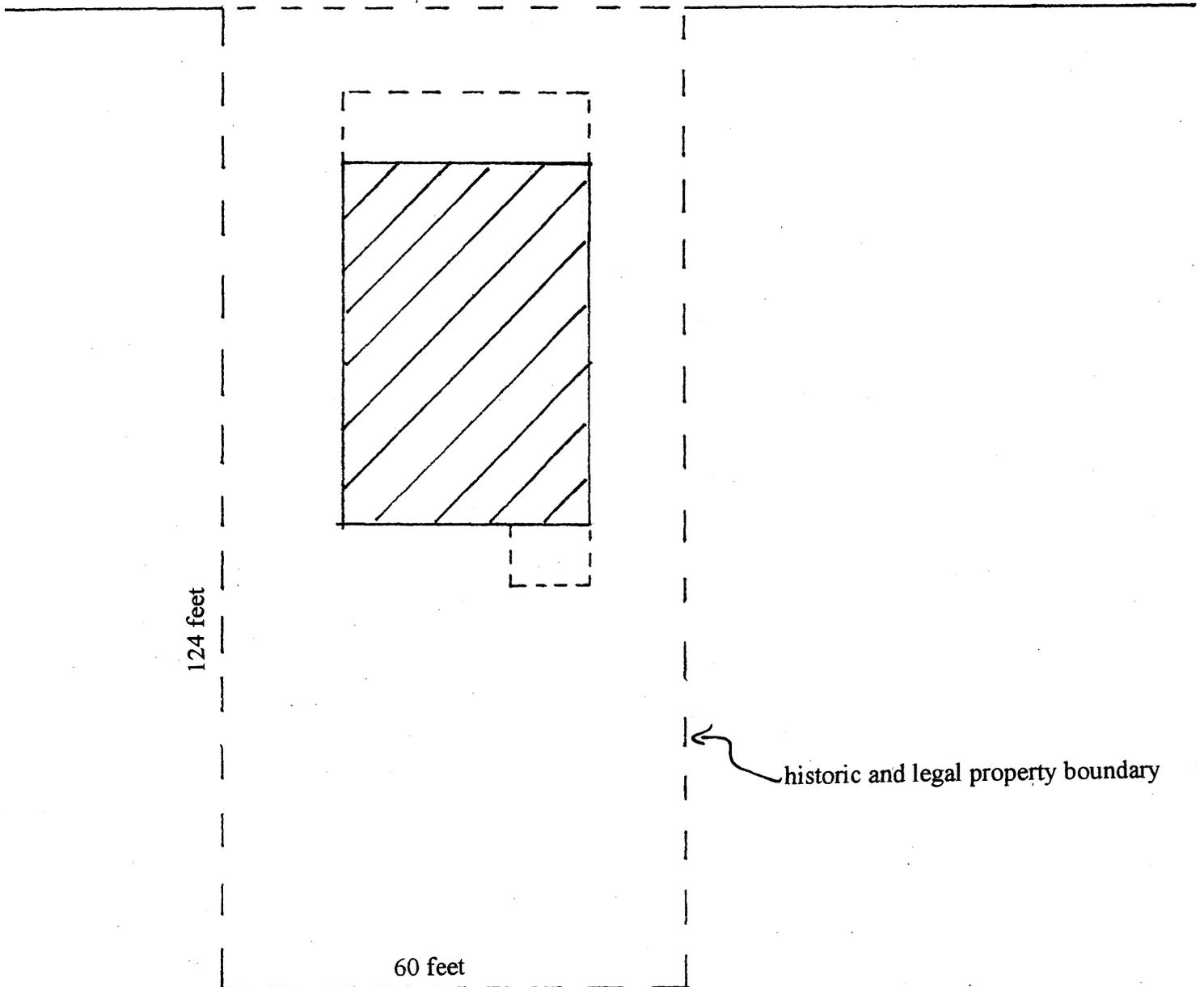
**Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall**  
102 Mary Street  
Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin



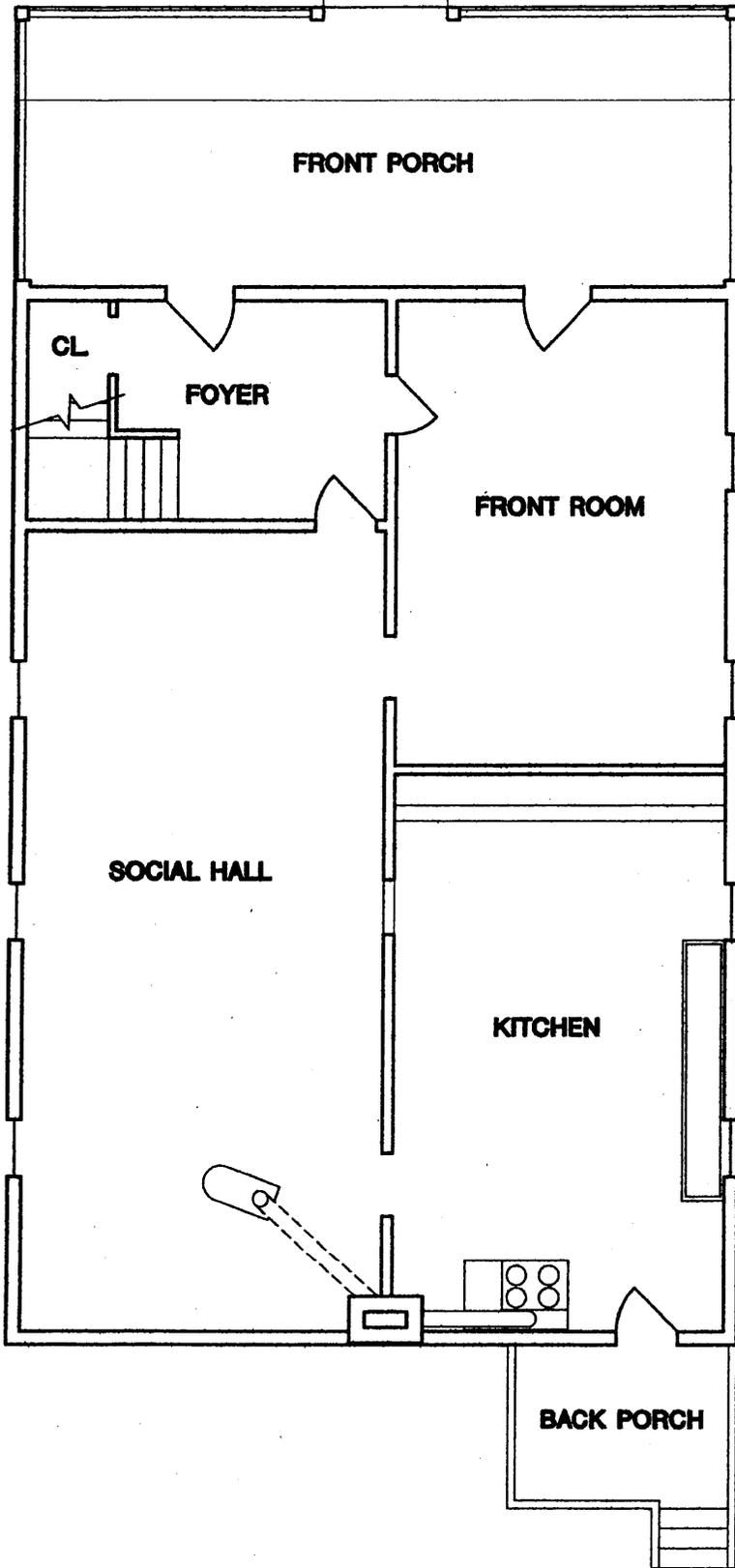
Scale 1" = 20'

-  Contributing
-  Non-contributing

102 Mary Street



**Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall**  
102 Mary Street  
Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin



PROJECT NAME

**BOSCOBEL GAR HALL**  
**HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT**

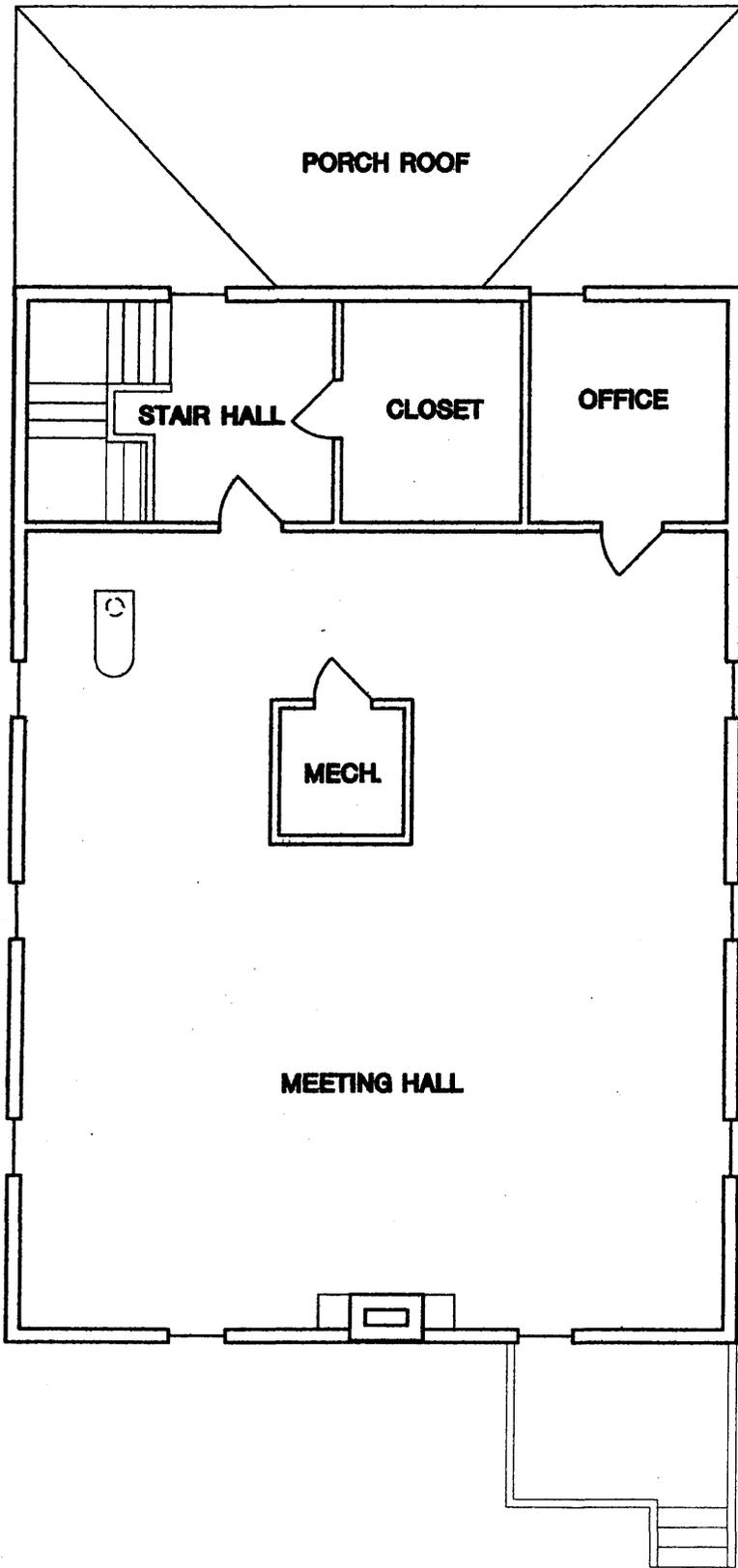
**FIRST FLOOR EXISTING PLAN**  
PRELIMINARY- NOT FOR  
CONSTRUCTION

DATE: 4-1-07  
DRAWN BY: ME



SHEET

**12**



**Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall**  
 102 Mary Street  
 Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin

**PROJECT NAME**

**BOSCOBEL GAR HALL**  
**HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT**

**SECOND FLOOR EXISTING PLAN**  
 PRELIMINARY- NOT FOR  
 CONSTRUCTION

DATE: 4-1-07  
 DRAWN BY: ME



SHEET

