

MEMORANDUM

TO: Historic Sites

RE: 13520 Marengo Road, Huntley, Illinois, Prescott Whittemore home, Bernall Residence

DATE: March 6, 2022

FROM: Paula Rieghns

1. Prescott Whittemore (born 1787, Massachusetts, Died 1871, Nebraska) built the stone house now commonly known as 13520 Marengo Road, Huntley Illinois, in 1840-ish. Prescott arrived from New England between 1838, when his son Volney Stone Whittemore was born in New Hampshire, and 1850, when he was listed in the US Census. He lived in the home until between 1860 when he was listed in the US Census and 1865, when his wife died in Nebraska. Prescott was already 60 years old by the time he moved to what is now Huntley and built this home. Prescott and his wife, Lucy, had 13 children, 9 sons 4 daughters.
Source: Ansectery lifeline. (Copies to be provided)
2. The 1885 History of McHenry County lists 25 Whittemores. They includes Prescott's wife, Lucy Rebecca Geer, son, Asa D. (namesake of Prescott's brother who died in 1808), son, Benjamin, son Charles H., son Ebenezer S., son Edward H., son George P., daughter Harriet A., daughter Julia M., daughter Lucy E., daughter Mary (who married Elisha Dayton on November 11, 1847, when they farmed until she died and her widower lived in Marengo with Mrs. Ida Curtiss, see the 1885 History, pages 758 and 759), son Nathaniel, son Volney, and son, Washington. In other words, at age 60 or so, Prescott moved West with his entire family, all thirteen children plus his wife. That's interesting, because at the time of the move, his eldest child, son Asa, would have been about 45 years old, and his youngest, son Volney would have been about 15 years old. That's not a move – it's a migration! The 1885 History on page 667 says that the move took two wagons and six weeks to reach Aurora, Illinois, then three more months from aurora to what would be Huntley. Since they started in May, they would have arrived in September or October. One hopes they had enough food to last the winter.
3. Prescott opened the first hotel in Huntley, and operated his home as a hotel for ten years. The History of 1885 on page 638 says "When the village of Huntley was started and a hotel opened there, Mr. Whittemore closed his house, so to speak, although his latch string was never pulled inside." The history on page 296 lists him as one of three trustees for the Grafton school district. Prescott is mentioned on page 337 of the 1885 History, under chapter X, "The Honored Dead." The History says: "a pioneer, well remembered for his fondness for story telling, good jokes, and genial good nature. He was born . . . in 1787; settled near the village of Huntley in 1838; resided there until 1861, then went with his son to Nebraska. He was respected by all. . . ." Prescott named Grafton Township after Grafton Township, N.H. The first religious services in Grafton Township were held in 1839 in Prescott's home (but if the stone one wasn't built until 1840 . . .) On April 2, 1850, the first election was held in Grafton Township, and Prescott was elected "Overseer of the Poor."
 - a. The other Whittemores listed in this history include:

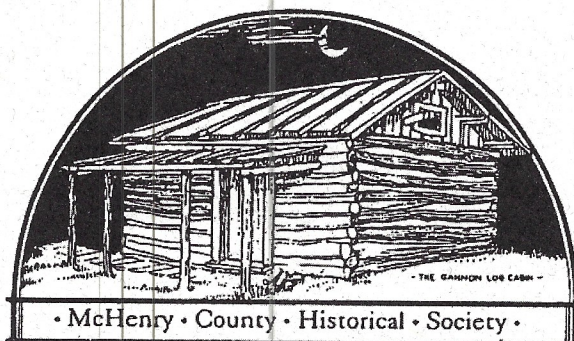
- i. Susan Perry, Washington's wife; Washington and Susan's four children, Willis P., Myron W. Charles B., and Hattie M. (deceased),
 - ii. Washington's wife's sister's husband Walker, a civil war Aid-de-Camp at the battle of Tippecanoe,
 - iii. Nathaniel Whittemore, who wasn't present in McHenry county per se, but who was a paymaster in the revolutionary war, and Washington Whittemore had some items of Nathaniel's that he was proud of (McHenry County History of 1885, page 638). There were two Nathaniel's, Washington's grandfather and another that was Washington's great-grandfather. Prescott's siblings are also listed.
 - iv. W. Whittemore is listed on page 324 of the 1885 History as being one of the original settlers of McHenry County, arriving in June, 1837 (which doesn't match Washington's story of arriving after a journey of 6 weeks plus three months, starting in May). But, since it is the only Whittemore listed as an "original settler," it probably is Washington.
- b. Susan Perry was a relative of Commodore Perry.
4. Washington Whittemore was the next owner of the farm after Prescott. The warranty deed was recorded in 1868. He was the School Trustee for 17 years. He was also "a strong anti-slavery man," and one of his war stories about his uncle Walker makes it into the History. He was "an active worker in every thing that tends to the advancement of the county. He is a prominent member of the Pioneer Society." I find it interesting that a man who migrated from New England with his family at age 17 or so, stayed behind when most of the family disbursed from the area some 15 to 20 years later. What caused the entire clan to move together, but not stay together? One of Washington's speeches is printed in the History, and I have copied it for our meeting. His speculation on the possibility of air travel made me smile.
5. The 1885 History of McHenry County on page 667 says that son Washington kept the farm that Prescott started. Washington was the 7th child of Prescott. The History says Washington had "500 acres of fine land, all well improved." Page 667. It also notes that Washington had "two wind engines on his farm, one of which pumps water, grinds feed, saws wood, shells corn and grinds edged tools." Washington died in 1897. His wife, Susan, died in 1924.
6. In 1897, Susan granted the land to her son, Charles "Charlie" B. Whittemore, and then Charlie and his wife apparently deeded the property back to her. Over the next forty years, there were a number of deeds back and forth among the Whittemores – my best guess is that it had to do with settling a probate. For example, the land patents themselves weren't recorded until 1938, probably as part of the probate process. In 1910, Susan recorded an affidavit, probably an affidavit of heirship.
 - a. Charlie was born in 1867 in Huntley. In 1893, he married Olive Lione Adams. He lived in Huntley until at least 1900. In 1910, he lived on Clark Street in Marengo, and died in 1937. Olive died in 1926. They are buried in the Marengo cemetery.
7. In 1938, Bertha Peterson and Peter Peterson purchased the property from the Whittemores. Peter died in 1965, and Bertha sold in 1968. She then died in 1996. She was born in Huntley

in 1913, and died in Huntley. She had at least two children, now deceased. Peter was born in 1896 in Denmark.

8. In 1968, Edward C. Schweiger purchased from Bertha Petersen (or Peterson). Edward was born March 24, 1921 in Prairie du Chein, WI. When he was 9, his family moved to Chicago. On June 24, 1944, he married Rita Marie Lyng, who died in 2018. Edward died in 2002 in Georgia. He and Rita had one child. His 1942 draft card says that he was 200 pounds, six feet tall, with brown hair and brown eyes and worked for United Wall Paper Company as a machinist. He had one year of college when he was drafted into the Army Air Corp. His grave says that he was a Brig. General that served in Korea. His one child, James Robert Schweiger, Sr., was born in 1947 and died in 2013. By 1994, they had moved to Georgia, presumably to be closer to their son. I have no idea why a Brig. General who was a machinist in civilian life would purchase a farm in Huntley.
9. In the late 1970s, the Schweigers recorded a number of plats of survey associated with this parcel. I assume they divided the land at that point, but I did not purchase the surveys. To my annoyance, I cannot find the building documents that Mrs. Bernal gave me, but I assume the Schweigers would have added the garage.
10. On October 4, 1979, Delwin and Francis Borhart purchased the property from Edward Schweiger and Rita M. Schwiger. They are the parents of my retired pastor, Pastor Glen Borhart, who retired from Zion Lutheran in Marengo two or three years ago. Pastor told me that his dad had retired from dairy farming at 65, so he figured he would retire from pastoring at 65, as well. I didn't exactly see the comparison, but he was a good pastor.
11. In 1983 the property was landmarked by Historic Sites.
12. In 1991, Delwin and Francis placed the property in trust.
13. In 2009, Clark H. Borhart and Sandra J. Borhart took 13520 Marengo Road, Huntley, from a Borhart trust and various other owners, presumably after Delwin died in 2008. Clark was one of Delwin's sons. In 2007, the trust granted an easement to Illinois Bell Telephone Company.
14. In 2013, the Bernalls purchased the property, now 7 acres, from Clark H. Borhart and Sandra J. Borhart. They stated that they haven't done anything to the inside of the house since they purchased it. Presumably, if it was part of an estate sale, neither did Clark and Sandra, since they owned the property for such a short time. That means the inside of the house is much like it was when the Borharts died.

815•923•2267

FAX: 815•923•2271



An Illinois, Not For Profit Corporation

March 9, 2022

6422 Main Street P.O. Box 434, Union, Illinois 60180

www.mchsonline.org

Jessica and Ramon Rodarte
13520 Marengo Road
Huntley, IL 60142

Re: Prescott Whittemore Homestead proposed Renovation & Addition

Dear Jessica and Ramon,

It was a pleasure visiting your home and discussing the proposed renovations and addition to the historic Prescott Whittemore Homestead.

The McHenry County Historic Sites Committee has discussed the project, along with reviewing the architectural drawings provided (Dated 11-11-19) and current photos of the home. The Committee has agreed to allow the proposed renovations and addition to proceed. The Committee feels that the historical and architectural significance of this home, accompanied by your passion for maintaining the original structure and creating a cohesive design of the addition will result in this historic landmark remaining a part of our county's history for many years to come.

As stated previously during our visit, the plaque requirements state that a minimum of 51% of the original structure must be remaining. Some of the Items suggested by the Committee to help maintain this include:

- Sister new floor joists or rafters next to existing, instead of removing and replacing floor joist or rafters. Maintaining the majority of the original structure is imperative.
- Minimize removal of existing stairway to second floor.
- Delete Optional 2 story space at existing Family Room shown on architectural. This will remove too much of the original structure, not meeting minimum requirements to maintain your historic plaque.
- All new interior finishes installed in the original home area are to be indicative of interior finishes used in the 1840's. These items include, but are not limited to doors, door/window trims, wood flooring. The existing Master Bedroom door/hardware/trim and built-in corner cabinet in existing Family Room should remain and be used as a prototype.
- Reuse existing exterior stone/brick being removed as infill on original home areas where needed. Reuse original existing interior studs being removed as infill in other areas where needed.
- Window replacements should mimic original window style, including mullions.
- Exterior Door installations should mimic original exterior doors.
- Roof repairs to original home, including shingles, vergeboards and decorative finials should mimic original exterior details.

Other suggestions and requests by the Historic Sites Committee include: Photographic timeline of construction progress. A site visit of the completed project by the Historic Sites Committee, to ensure all discussed items have been completed and reflect the desired result to maintain your historic plaque.

Please let me know if there is anything else we may be able to help you with during this project.

Kind regards,

Mimi Bierman
Historic Sites Secretary
McHenry County Historical Society

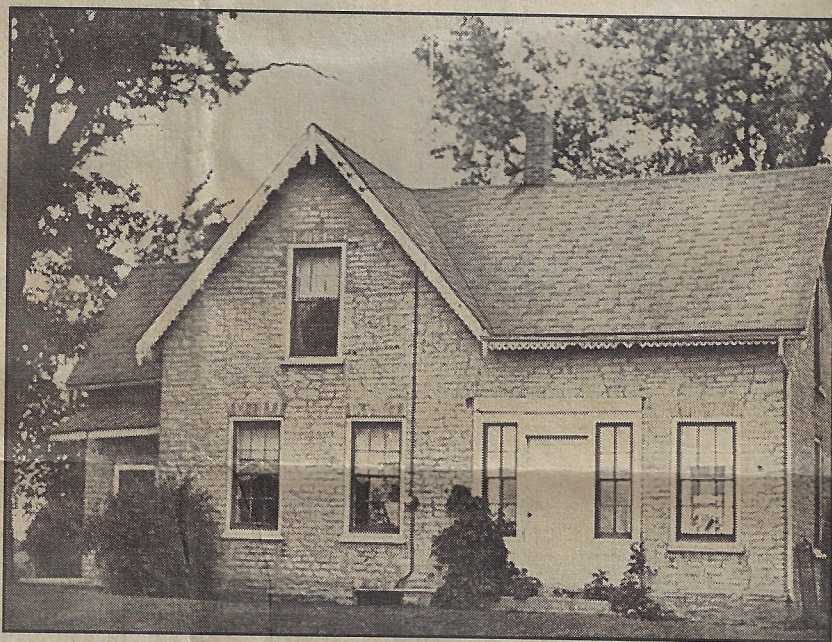
Northwest
Herald
STYLE

THURSDAY, MAY 3, 2001 • SECTION E

Inside

Bridge: Crystal Lake
man contributes
poem to column.

Page 4



ABOVE: Sandy and Clark Borhart are the owners of the Prescott Whittemore House on Marengo Road in Huntley. The house was built in 1841 and is recognized by the McHenry County Historical Society. BELOW: This early picture of the home came from the Historical Committee's chronicle of Huntley at its centennial in 1951, "Huntley Centennial: 1851-1951."

Windows to the past

House witnesses township's birth, American history

Just more than a mile west of Huntley stands a rather unassuming limestone house

The weathered, almond-colored stone and the white trim laced along the eaves hint at its long history.

In 1839, Prescott Whittemore and his family journeyed from Grafton, N. H., to this sparsely settled part of northern Illinois. Built in 1841, the Whittemore home is the oldest building in Grafton Township, which Whittemore named after his hometown.

The two-story, 1,750-square-foot house may appear modest by today's standards. However, in the middle of the 19th century, it would have been considered an upscale residence, said Nancy Fike of the McHenry County Historical Society. Wood-frame houses and small log cabins were common in Grafton Township at the time, but not limestone.

"Compared to that," said homeowner Sandy Borhart, "We live in a mansion."

Sandy Borhart, her husband, Clark, and their three children have lived in the Prescott



The house is trimmed with decorative circles on the eaves.

Whittemore home since they purchased it from Clark's parents, Delwin and Frances Borhart, in 1995.

The construction of the home in 1841 was unusual. The limestone used to build the home had been hauled by horse and wagon from Garden Prairie. It would have been both

a time-consuming and expensive task at the time, Fike said.

One of the few buildings in the area, the Whittemore home was used as more than just a residence. For more than 10 years, it served as an inn for travelers. A Baptist minister, Elder Marvin, hosted the first religious services in the area there.

"It was the only place you could go at the time," said Frances Borhart.

Washington Whittemore inherited the property from his parents, Prescott and Lucy Geer Whittemore. Sympathetic to the abolitionist cause, Washington Whittemore, on one occasion, sheltered fugitive slaves in his home.

The Whittemore family owned the property for nearly a century until Pete Peterson purchased it in 1938. The Peterson family lived on and farmed the 120 acres until 1967. Wayne Peterson, Pete Peterson's son, recalled that his family installed heat and indoor plumbing in the late 1940s.

See WHITTEMORE, page 8

Story by Cassie Peterson • Photos by Ryan Rayburn



Ryan Rayburn / The Northwest Herald

A flag flies in front of the Whittemore home in Huntley, which was built in 1841 by one of the township's first settlers.

Whittemore

Continued from page 1

Over the years, the house has undergone many renovations and restorations.

Sandy Borhart said a professional tuck pointer had told her that he could see at least seven different shades of mortar used to repair the house over the years.

In 1985, the Borhart family added another room and garage to the back of the house. They also have replaced some of the plaster walls, leveled the upstairs floor and installed a new front door.

While adding flagstone steps to the new front entrance, the Borharts unearthed an old flagstone walk, buried about a foot

underground.

Though the house has required some maintenance, the basic structure is still intact after more than a century and a half. The McHenry County Historical Society officially recognized the Prescott Whittemore home in 1983.

The pre-Civil War home and its surrounding land provide a unique place for work and play as the 21st century begins. The house and outbuildings provide ample room for Clark Borhart's landscaping business. The Prescott Whittemore property still serves as a central gathering place for the Borhart family events.

"There's no doubt about it," said Clark Borhart.

"It's a great place for a family picnic."