



City of Geneva, Illinois

Local Historic District & Landmarks
Property Inventory Survey

GENERAL PROPERTY INFORMATION:

HISTORIC NAME: Riverbank Laboratories

COMMON NAME:

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1912

SIGNIFICANT ALTERATION DATES: 1950's

ARCHITECT: Unknown

BUILDER: George Fabyan

WILSON BROTHERS: ☐ AUGUST ☐ OSCAR ☐ BOTH

ARCHITECTURAL DATA:

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: Craftsman

OVERALL PLAN SHAPE: Square

NUMBER OF STORIES: 2.5

FOUNDATION MATERIAL: Limestone

PRIMARY WALL MATERIAL(S): Wood

FRONT PORCH: Full

VISIBLE SIDE PORCH: N/A

ENTRY DOOR(S): Original

WINDOW MATERIAL: Wood

WINDOW STYLE: Panel, Single Hung

PRIMARY ROOF FORM: Side Gabled with Dormer

PRIMARY ROOF MATERIAL: Asphalt Shingles

VISIBLE CHIMNEY: Yes

CHIMNEY MATERIAL: Brick

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES:

PROPERTY ADDRESS:

1512 South Batavia Avenue

PARCEL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (PIN):

12-10-376-014



LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE RATING:

- ☒ Significant
- ☐ Contributing
- ☐ Non-Contributing – Built After 1987
- ☐ Non-Contributing – Reversible Alterations
- ☐ Non-Contributing – Irreversible Alterations

HISTORIC DISTRICT LOCATION:

- ☐ Central Geneva NRHD
- ☐ North Geneva NRHD
- ☐ Local Geneva HD
- ☒ Not in HD / Individual Historic Landmark

NR DISTRICT SIGNIFICANCE RATING:

- ☐ Contributing
- ☐ Non-Contributing
- ☒ Not Applicable / Not in NR District



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ADDITIONAL PROPERTY INFORMATION:

BRIEF HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION:

Riverbank Laboratories has four buildings: the Engineering Building, Sabine Acoustical Laboratory and its addition, the Lodge and Studio, and a large garage. The site spans 9.72 acres, with the buildings clustered in the northeast corner along Batavia Avenue. The remaining land is vacant and covered in grass. This location was once part of the expansive Fabyan estate, Riverbank. Directly across Batavia Avenue from the laboratories, the remaining portion of the estate is now a Kane County Forest Preserve. The Fabyan Villa within the preserve is currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

For over 80 years, Riverbank Laboratories has been a hub for groundbreaking scientific and literary research with local and national significance. Once part of the 350-acre estate of George and Nelle Fabyan, the laboratories continue to be a major contributor to scientific advancements. Research conducted at Riverbank included decoding enemy messages during World War I, deciphering alleged secret messages in the works of William Shakespeare, pioneering studies in architectural acoustics, groundbreaking cryptography research, fieldwork on hand grenades and military trenches, tuning fork development, and studies on human fitness and anatomy. Researchers dedicated years of their lives to scientific progress at Riverbank, with many visiting and staying at the Lodge.

Riverbank played a key role in U.S. military successes during World War I and World War II, and its legacy directly links to the National Security Agency (NSA) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

SOURCES:

2016 Central Geneva NRHP Update



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CONTRIBUTING ACCESSORY STRUCTURES:

AS1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Large Garage, Non Historic

AS2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

CONTRIBUTING LANDSCAPE FEATURES:

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

HPC ACTION:

☐

Demolition Approved:

Other HPC Action:

