



City of Geneva, Illinois

Local Historic District & Landmarks Property Inventory Survey

GENERAL PROPERTY INFORMATION:

HISTORIC NAME: Skipwith-Brown House

COMMON NAME: n/a

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1856

SIGNIFICANT ALTERATION DATES: 1916, c. 1923, c. 1955, c. 1973

ARCHITECT: n/a

BUILDER: William Burman (Clark & Long) / Martin Seastrom

WILSON BROTHERS: ☐ AUGUST ☐ OSCAR ☐ BOTH

ARCHITECTURAL DATA:

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: Three-Bay

OVERALL PLAN SHAPE: Rectangular with additions

NUMBER OF STORIES: 1.5

FOUNDATION MATERIAL: Parged

PRIMARY WALL MATERIAL(S): Synthetic Siding over Clapboard

FRONT PORCH: Yes, enclosed

VISIBLE SIDE PORCH: Yes, enclosed

ENTRY DOOR(S): Non-historic

WINDOW MATERIAL: Unknown (Replacement)

WINDOW STYLE: Double-hung (1-over-1)

PRIMARY ROOF FORM: Gable

PRIMARY ROOF MATERIAL: Asphalt

VISIBLE CHIMNEY: No

CHIMNEY MATERIAL: n/a

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES:

Overall massing and form, 1916 modifications, front porch form.

PROPERTY ADDRESS:

301 North First Street

PARCEL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (PIN):

12-03-280-003



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:

In 1853, Lots 10 and 11 of Block 18 were acquired from Kane County by Luther Dearborn (then, Sheriff) for the sum of \$1.00. Dearborn sold both lots to William Burman in November 1854.

Burman had moved his family from Ontario, Canada to Buffalo, New York by 1851, and to Geneva, Illinois by 1853 (see: 305 and 311 N. First Street; the three properties have an intertwined history).

William Burman (c. 1805 - c. 1881), a member of the Queen's Guard in Canada married the widowed Sarah (Dabbs) Skipwith (b. 1803 - c. 1880) in Ontario, Canada in 1839. At the time of her second marriage, Sarah (Dabbs) Skipwith had two young boys: George John Skipwith, Jr. and Frederick "Fred" Richard Skipwith.

William Burman's stepson, George John Skipwith, Jr. (1827-1897), moved to Geneva around 1846-1847. G. J. Skipwith was an early Geneva settler, working as a tailor; he married Aurelia Amanda Pier, the daughter of the early Genevan blacksmith, Philetus Pier. The couple were married in Geneva in 1848 and had their first child the same year.

William and Sarah Burman and their son, Fred, moved from Ontario, Canada to Buffalo, New York in 1851 and, by 1853, to Geneva, Illinois.

The house at 301 North First Street originally fronted Ford Street and was built by William Burman in 1856. Burman was a carpenter with Robert Long (a building contractor who arrived in 1854 and later established Clark & Long, building contractors).

The house was occupied, most likely, by George John Skipwith, Jr. and his wife, Aurelia Amanda (Pier) Skipwith until 1857 or 1858, when the couple moved their young family to southwestern Illinois (Perry County). By 1863, G. J. Skipwith, Jr. was imprisoned in St. Louis, Missouri for "aiding the enemy" during the Civil War; Aurelia divorced him around 1866.

The property at 301 North First Street was either never sold to G. J. Skipwith or was granted back to William and Sarah Burman, who moved to 301 N. First Street in 1858. That year, Sarah Burman entered into a property transaction with Jeffrey Wells, but in 1866, Sarah Burman and her husband deeded the property to local banker William B. West. Sarah Burman later transferred the property in 1876 to Jeffrey Wells, who sold the property to Edward and Charlotte Susanna Tinsley in 1877.

Based on the 1869 Bird's Eye View of Geneva map, the house was rotated 90 degrees on the lot between 1869 and 1880, most probably by either Edward Tinsley or Charles K. Millard.

Tinsley sold the property in 1878 to Charles K. and Mary (Wright) Millard, who sold the property to Clara Chambers. Chambers sold the house to Elida Hagaman in September 1882 (see also: 311 N. First Street). In 1884, Elida Hagaman (also Hagerman) married John Swanson; the couple lived at 301 North First Street for 13 years. In 1897, the property was sold to Elida's youngest brother, Henry Hagaman, who likely added the one-story room on the north side of the original house before 1912. A full-width porch stretched across the First Street (front/west) facade by 1912.

Henry Hagaman sold the property to Martin Seastrom in 1916.



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ADDITIONAL PROPERTY INFORMATION:

According to newspaper accounts, "a new cottage was under construction Martin Seastrom at corner of First" and Ford streets (26 July 1916 Geneva Republican) to be occupied by telephone company employee Joseph Brown and his wife, Elizabeth. Mr. Seastrom often rebuilt and remodeled existing houses, so the "new cottage" was probably a remodeling and expansion of the earlier home: the First Street facade was modified and its Ford Street wing was extended.

The front (west) dormer was most likely added during the 1916 remodeling by Martin Seastrom, who built the first addition in 1916 on the east side (the addition likely replaced the earlier service wing). By 1923, the porch did not exist along the First Street facade. The house was enlarged to the northeast between 1923 and 1930. The front porch was constructed by 1930 but was not enclosed until after 1945. An addition(s) was made to the north circa 1955, and the large addition to the east dates to circa 1973. The front (First Street/west) porch was enclosed between circa 1955 and 1973 when the Ford Street (south) porch also was enclosed.

The early 1.5-story home and its service wing are clearly discernible in 2020. The property is a rare example of mid-19th-century working-class housing, associated with an early, documented carpenter.

The property is notable for its association with one or more significant persons, architecture, and community development—specifically the Early Settlement Period of Geneva (1837-1857).

SOURCES:

GHPC Case Studies; GHM Archives; 2016 North Geneva NRHP Update; 1869 Bird's Eye View of Geneva; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps; Kane County Recorder's Office Land Records; The Founders and Early History of Geneva, Kane County, Illinois (Gibbons, p. 601); Ancestry.com



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CONTRIBUTING ACCESSORY STRUCTURES:

AS1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

n/a

AS2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

n/a

CONTRIBUTING LANDSCAPE FEATURES:

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

n/a

HPC ACTION:

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Demolition Approved: n/a

Other HPC Action:

n/a





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1999



1999