



City of Geneva, Illinois

Local Historic District & Landmarks
Property Inventory Survey

GENERAL PROPERTY INFORMATION:

HISTORIC NAME: Burr-Swanson-Bowman House

COMMON NAME: n/a

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1866

SIGNIFICANT ALTERATION DATES: Circa 1905, 1915, 1925, 1969

ARCHITECT: n/a

BUILDER: n/a

WILSON BROTHERS: ☐ AUGUST ☐ OSCAR ☐ BOTH

ARCHITECTURAL DATA:

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: Italianate, Craftsman

OVERALL PLAN SHAPE: Rectangular

NUMBER OF STORIES: 2

FOUNDATION MATERIAL: Limestone (parged)

PRIMARY WALL MATERIAL(S): Clapboard

FRONT PORCH: Entry

VISIBLE SIDE PORCH: Yes

ENTRY DOOR(S): Unknown

WINDOW MATERIAL: Wood

WINDOW STYLE: Double-hung (3/1, 2/2), Casement/Fixed (4 lite)

PRIMARY ROOF FORM: Hipped

PRIMARY ROOF MATERIAL: Asphalt

VISIBLE CHIMNEY: Yes

CHIMNEY MATERIAL: Brick

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES:

The overall form was dramatically altered in the early 20th century; those modifications were later altered when the front porches were enclosed.

PROPERTY ADDRESS:

401 Ford Street

PARCEL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (PIN):

12-03-255-011



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:

The property was sold in 1866 to George S. and Irene Burr. As early as 1850, G. S. Burr (1823-1888) operated a dry goods store at the southeast corner of Third and State streets. By 1866, the Burrs built a modest home on Ford Street: an Italianate house with a full-width, one-story, front porch and a hipped roof. Mr. Burr's obituary noted that he suffered several misfortunes and bad investments late in life, resulting in the loss of his fortune.

As early as 1887 (but likely around 1870-1871), the west wing was constructed, possibly so that the upstairs could serve as the home of the Burr's son, Irving, and his family.

Following her husband's death in 1888, Irene Burr (1829-1916) remained in the home until about 1899, when she moved to live with her son's family in DeKalb and, later, Iowa.

In 1890, Nels Swanson (1860-1947) married his wife, Ida (1863-1944) in Kane County. Shortly after their marriage and before 1900, the Nels Swanson family lived at the Ford Street property, where their four children were born: Hattie (1891-1962); Edwin (1892-1937); Albert (1894-1953); and Adele (1897-1994). Based on the historical record, the Swanson family likely cared for Mrs. Burr and the Ford street property; Mr. and Mrs. Swanson lived in the house their entire married life.

Stucco was first applied over the exterior clapboard of the house between 1905 and 1912 when the west addition was reduced to half of its earlier footprint. A year before Irene Burr died, the Ford street property was sold to Nels Swanson, who completed a major remodeling of the house between circa 1918 and 1925. At that time, the west wing was enlarged towards the street and the front porch was removed (likely around 1922-1923). The exterior of the house was covered with stucco, probably between 1918 and 1923. Between 1923 and 1930, a two-story stucco porch was added to the front of the house (likely around 1923-1924). When constructed, the main level of the front porch was open, presumably; however, the second floor may have always been enclosed as a "sleeping porch" with the windows that remained in 2020. (The lath from the earlier remodeling was attached on the bias and extended behind the framing of the later porch; the lath at the porch was installed horizontally). By 1930, the main level of the porch was also enclosed.

Hattie Swanson married Victor Bowman (1878-1943) while her sister, Adele, married Arnold Nelson. Upon the June 1947 death of her father, Hattie (Swanson) Bowman—then, a widow—inherited or purchased the Ford Street property from the Nels Swanson estate. The exposed fireplace may have been constructed between 1948 and 1956.

Following the death of Hattie Bowman in 1962, members of the Swanson-Bowman family retained the Ford Street house until 1968, when the property was sold to Donald and Mary Hart.

When it sold, the property was in the Swanson family for nearly 70 years, and under the ownership of just two families for more than a century.



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ADDITIONAL PROPERTY INFORMATION:

Mr. and Mrs. Hart sold the north portion of their property (see 312 N. Fourth Street) to Craig and Martha Ward in 1970. Over the next three years, the Harts made improvements to the Ford Street property that included the removal of the exterior stucco; installation of the steel siding over the lath and original clapboard; and the construction of a detached garage.

In 2016, the synthetic siding was removed along with the remnant lath, and the exterior siding was restored.

The property is notable for its association with one or more significant persons and for architecture—specifically the Italianate and Craftsman styles.

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; Geneva, Illinois: A History of Its Times and Places



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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:

10.18.16 Siding Restoration; 9.11.23 Fence



2016





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1999

