

**Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) Record-Level III  
Silas and Alida Robertson Farmstead Gothic Revival Residence  
845 N. Rand Road, Lake Zurich, Ela Township, Lake County, Illinois**

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Cultural Resource Management Report No. 1753

SILAS and ALIDA ROBERTSON RESIDENCE  
845 N. Rand Road  
Lake Zurich, Illinois  
Lake County  
Illinois

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED & INTERPRETIVE DRAWINGS

**Historic American Buildings Survey  
Silas and Alida Robertson Residence**

**Location:** 845 N. Rand Road, Lake Zurich, Illinois;  
Clover Hill Farms, Lot 20; Property Index Number: 1418102019;  
NE ¼ of the NE ¼ of the NW ¼ of Section 18, Township 43 North,  
Range 10 East (Ela Township), Lake County, Illinois  
**Present Owner:** Geraldine Morton, sale pending to Pathway Senior Living, LLC  
**Present Use:** Single-family residence  
**Statement of Significance:**

The Silas and Alida Robertson Farmstead Residence is a good and rare surviving example of the Gothic Revival style of residential architecture in Lake Zurich (Ela Township), Illinois. The building features the style's characteristic hallmarks of a steeply pitched roof, decorated vergeboards with crossbracing, false shaping above rectangular windows, drip mold window crowns, and a one-story bay window. Designers promoted Gothic Revival as a rural style (*circa* 1840-1880) compatible with the natural landscape. The location of Robertson Residence, on a rise immediately south of a creek, supports the concept of the residence as a rural retreat.

**Part I, Historical Information**

***A. Physical History:***

Date of erection: 1873  
Architect: Unknown  
Owners: William Landers (1843-1844, Public Domain land patent)  
William and Ruth Boot (1844-1852, deeds), in-laws of Jno. Briden  
John and Sarah Briden (1852-1867, deeds)  
John Robertson (1867-1873±, deed and plat)  
Silas Robertson, Silas Robertson Estate (1873±-1907)  
Edward and Luella "Ella" Posson (1907-1926±, deed, plat, and census)  
Charles Posson (1926±-1936±, plats)  
C. M. Owens (1936±-1948±, plat and census)  
John Krigeris (1948±-1967, Ela Township Historical Society)  
Geil and Arline Morton (1967-1996, deed and oral history)  
Geraldine Morton (1996-October 2015, assessor's records)  
Pathway Senior Living, LLC (Sale pending closing October 2015)  
Builder: Unknown  
Original plan: Silas and Alida Robertson erected a two-story, asymmetrical frame building around the time of their 24 May 1873 marriage. A limestone foundation supports the original portion of the eastward facing residence. Synthetic materials clad the building although the original cladding may remain in place underneath the replacement materials. Except for one window at the rear of the residence, all windows appear to be original as do the doors and associated hardware.

**Additions:** The 36 ft. (north-south) by 42.5 ft. (east-west) Silas and Alida Robertson Farmstead Residence retains most of the characteristic hallmarks of the Gothic Revival style although the installation of synthetic cladding and the construction of three additions have altered the integrity of the original building.

Review of the series of aerial photographs illustrates that the 20 ft. by 12 ft. one-story dining room addition at the northwest corner of the residence dates to *circa* 1988-2002 as does the 20 ft. by 17 ft. one-story sunroom-utility addition at the southwest corner of the residence. The single story porch along the east elevation includes the original 13.5 ft. by 8.0 ft. porch tucked into the “L” on the east façade and an addition. The addition, constructed between 1988 and 2005, extended the porch 3.0 ft. further north and 5.0 ft. further east.

Interior alterations include retrofit bathrooms, kitchen remodeling, the removal of some baseboards to accommodate baseboard radiators, and the installation of beadboard paneling on the ceilings and walls in the Porch, Entry Hall, Stairwell, and all but the east wall of the 2nd floor landing and Hall (post-1967). The first floor Bathroom probably served as a Butler’s Pantry originally. The second floor Bathroom probably served as the Servant’s Room originally. Prior to building the addition to the northwest corner, the Northwest Parlor probably functioned as the Dining Room.

***B. Historical Context:***

This essay reviews the history of the Silas and Alida Robertson Farmstead, the development of Ela Township and the Village of Lake Zurich, and the significance of the Gothic Revival residence within the township, village, and surrounding area.

*History of the Silas and Alida Robertson Farmstead:*

Through a series of deed transactions, Silas and Alida Robertson acquired the parcel on which they built a residence, the Silas and Alida Robertson Farmstead Residence—the subject of this HABS document. Previous residents on the parcel established a home further south beginning between 1844 and 1847, known as the Boot-Briden residence. Subsequent landowners maintained the Silas and Alida Robertson Farmstead residence as an owner-occupied or rental tenancy.

William Landers (assignee Seth Paine) purchased 40.21 acres from the Public Domain on 15 March 1843 for which he paid \$50.26 (\$1.25 per acre). President John Tyler signed the land patent on 10 July 1844 for the north half of Lot 1 in the NW ¼ of Section 18 in Ela Township, Lake County, Illinois (Certificate 12241; IL Vol. 93, page 447). William Landers does not appear in Cook or Lake counties during the 1840 or

1850 census enumeration (Table 1). William Landers and his wife Elizabeth Mary Ann Landers, then residents of Lake County according to the deed, sold the 40.21-acre parcel to William Boot on 15 January 1844 for \$75.00—a 49.2% profit in less than a year (Warranty Deed, Book D, page 311). On the deed, the Landers signed the document with their marks “X.”

Table 1. Chain-of-title for the parcel containing the Robertson Farmstead Residence.

Date	Record	Landowner (Purchase price)	Notations
1843	Public Domain	William Landers, N ½ of Lot 1, NW ¼ (\$50.26)	40.21 ac.
1844	Deed	William Boot, husband of Ruth (\$75.00)	40.21 ac.
1840	Federal Census	no Landers or Briden in Ela Township	NA
1850	Federal Census	John and Sarah Briden	Ela Twp.
1852	Deed	Ruth Boot to son-in-law John Briden (\$710.00)	Ela Twp.
1860	Federal Census	John Brighton [sic]	Ela Twp.
1861	Plat	Jno. Briden	156.00 ac.
1863	Death	Ruth Boot, murdered by farm laborer Wm. Bell	Ela Twp.
1865	State Census	J. Briden	Ela Twp.
1866	Deed	John Robertson (\$3,750.00)	Ela Twp.
1870	Federal Census	John and Sarah Briden	Bates Co., MO
		Silas Robertson with parents John & Charlotte	Ela Twp.
1873	Marriage	Silas Robertson and Alida Alexander	Lake Co.
	Plat	S. Robertson	NA
	Ela HisSoc	Silas Roberston <b>house built</b>	Ela Twp.
1880	Federal Census	Silas and Alida Robertson	Ela Twp.
1885	Plat	Silas Robertson	150.00 ac.
1900	Federal Census	Silas and Alida Roberts [sic]	Cook Co.
		unknown renter	Ela Twp.
1900	Death	Alida Robertson	Cook Co.
1906	Death	Silas Robertson	Cook Co.
1907	Plat	S. Robertson Est.	151.41 ac.
	Deed	Edward Posson (\$15,850 mtg.)	Ela Twp.
1910	Federal Census	Edward Posson, age 26 and single	Ela Twp.
1920	Federal Census	Edw. Posson (owner), unknown tenant on parcel	Ela Twp.
1926	Death	Edward Posson	Ela Twp.
	Plat	Chas. Posson (brother of Edward)	151.41 ac.
1936	Plat, Ela HisSoc	C. [Claude] M. Owens at “Clover Hill Farm”	150.00 ac.
1940	Ela HisSoc	Owens; Ernest Nelson, farm manager	Ela Twp.
1947	Death	Claude M. Owens	Chicago
1948	Ela HisSoc	John Krigeris*	Ela Twp.
1967	Oral History	Geil and Arline Morton (\$10)	Ela Twp.
1996	Death	Arlene (Larsen) Morton	Ela Twp.
	Death	Geil G. Morton	Ela Twp.
2015	Tax Records	Geraldine Morton	Ela Twp.

\*The Ela Township Historical Society mentioned that John Krigeris acquired the parcel in 1948; however, immigration records suggest that Janis Krigeris and his family emigrated from Latvia in 1950.

In an agreement dated 7 July 1852, Ruth Boot (1804±-1863) of England, wife of William Boot, appears to have granted her son-in-law John Briden the entire 156-acre NW ¼ of Section 18 in Ela Township for a consideration \$710.00 (Book I, pages 314-315). The nearly illegible agreement also mentions William Boot. The Briden family probably built the residence just south of the HABS building, owned by Sharon L. Rochford on 19 August 2015 (PIN 1418102020). In the “cow yard” of the farm, William Bell crushed Ruth’s skull with the flat of his axe and slit her throat with his straight razor according to the evidence gathered. Bell, who boarded at Ruth’s house and rented the land on shares, became the first execution in Lake County—on 30 June 1865 (Chicago Tribune 1863, Bateman and Selby 1902:651). Following the murder of Ruth Boot (1863), John and Sarah Boot Briden relocated to Missouri (New York Times 1865, Illinois State Census 1865, U.S. Census Bureau 1870). John and Sarah Briden sold the farm to John Robertson for \$3,750 on 14 December 1866 (Book 41, page 297).

Possible grantees in the Briden transaction include John Robertson, Sr. and his son John Robertson, Jr. Review of the census records for 1870 suggests that John Robertson, Sr. (1810-1877) of New Hampshire, his wife Charlotte Sutherland (1824-1875), and some of their ten children, including Silas Robertson (1847-1906), lived on the estate along the shore of Lake Zurich in Section 20 of Ela Township during that time (Figure 1). John Robertson, Jr. (1844-1918) may have lived in the Boot-Briden residence for a short period of time (1866-1870) after his marriage to Julia E. Parker 3 October 1866 although review of the 1870 census suggests that he later lived in Section 29 with real estate valued at \$9,000. Silas Robertson, son of John Sr. and brother of John Jr., owned the subject parcel as early as 1873 according to the plat of the year and the date of construction for the residence. Silas married Alida Rose Alexander (1856-1900) on 24 May 1873 and probably acquired the parcel between 1870 and 1873 in preparation for his new life. Silas did not own any real estate in 1870 according to the census although his father John owned real estate valued at \$80,000 in Lake Zurich (700 ac.) and Deer Grove (1,000 ac.), the family homestead from 1837-1857 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1870, LeBaron 1877:375). While Silas held title to the subject parcel in Ela Township until his death in 1906, both his obituary and the census records illustrate that between 1880 and 1900, Silas moved his family to nearby Barrington “in order to give his children the advantages of an education” (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1880, 1900; Solberg 2006:28). Unnamed tenants lived in the Robertson Farmstead Residence from as early as 1900 through at least 1907 when Silas’ descendants settled his estate and sold the parcel to Edward and Luella “Ella” Posson of Wisconsin.



Figure 1. Lithograph dated 1873 showing the John and Charlotte Robertson Farmstead (from Frost & McLennan 1873).

The Posson family lived in St. Paul, Minnesota during the 1900 census enumeration. Fay Edward Posson (1883-1941), son of Edward Posson (1861-1926) and Ella Kittell, farmed and lived on the parcel in 1910 with a widowed Norwegian housekeeper aged 65 according to the census records. However, he is also listed within his parents' household, rental property on N. Howard in Chicago (Rogers Park neighborhood), employed as the manager at a dairy farm. Edward Posson, Sr. worked as an engineer at a railroad car construction company. Neither Edward Posson nor his son Fay Edward Posson lived on the Ela Township parcel during the 1920 census enumeration; however, Edward, Sr. died in the township in 1926. Fay Edward and Ella lived in Park Ridge where he continued to work as an engineer (1920). Fay Edward and his wife Helen Kenyon (m. 1912 in Chicago) lived in Oak Park where he worked as a buyer for railroad supplies. Therefore, other than the 1910 occupation by Fay Edward Posson on the dairy farm and the death of Edward Posson, Sr. in Ela Township, the 1907 through at least 1926 tenancy by the family appears to have included a number of renters or non-family farm managers. According to the records available, Claude M. Owens acquired the parcel between 1926 and 1936.

During the tenancy of Claude M. Owens of Kentucky (1873-1947?), the parcel became known as “Clover Hill Farm.” The 1940 census for Ela Township notes two residents named “Owen” in the vicinity of the subject parcel as “non-residents.” Further, the 1940 census lists C. M. Owens (aged 75) on E. 49th Street in Chicago with his daughter Bertha (aged 44) and granddaughter Janet (aged 17). Column 17 notes that they lived at the same place (Chicago) in 1935. Ernest Nelson, Sr. (1889-1953) of Solve, Sweden managed Clover Hill Farm in 1942 for C. M. Owens, according to Nelson’s draft registration. Ernest Nelson and his wife Mamie Hoeft (1891-1983) lived in Ela Township in 1942 but later (*circa* 1942-1953) moved to Mundelein, Lake County, Illinois. Nelson, a factory worker, hanged himself with a belt while held in a Mundelein police cell, under arrest for drunkenness (Chicago Tribune 1953). Following Owens’ death in 1947, John Krigeris acquired the parcel. Both the census records and the draft cards illustrate that tenants and/or farm managers lived in the Robertson Residence on Clover Hill Farm during the Owens tenancy (*circa* 1936-1947).

Document no. 635092 dated 19 January 1948 records the subdivision of Clover Hill Farm (B 31 of plats, page 8). The *Daily Herald* ran an advertisement dated 7 October 1949 announcing an auction of livestock from Clover Hill Farm, Lake Zurich. On 22 July 1967, John Krigeris provided a Warranty Deed to Geil G. and Arline Morton for Lot 20 of Unit no. 1 in Clover Hill Farm (Document no. 1350505). The Morton family moved to the parcel just three months after the 21 April 1967 F-4 tornado destroyed their previous home. Their daughter Geraldine Morton acquired the parcel when her parents died in 1999. After a prolonged period of tenant occupation, owners returned to care for the residence. Additions to the residence appear to date to the Morton tenancy.

In summary, the Boot-Briden family farmed and occupied the parcel on which Silas and Alida Robertson later built the subject building. The Robertson family farmed and occupied the parcel as well, resulting in owner-occupied residency lasting about 70 years. Tenants occupied the Robertson Residence and farmed the land for the next 32 or more years. Shortly after World War II, the township allowed subdivision of Clover Hill Farm. The landowner sold off the livestock, and sold smaller parcels to non-farming residents, such as the Morton Family resulting in owner-occupied, single-family residency lasting 48 years. Lake Zurich annexed the subject parcel to the village in 1994. Pathway Senior Living, LLC plans multi-family residential unit(s).

Land once devoted to farming and animal husbandry, while providing a place of residence for the attending landowner or tenant, shifted to residential only in the post-war years of 1948-49. Examination of the agricultural schedules appended to the 1850, 1870, and 1880 Federal Census provide a glimpse into the rural economy during the latter half of the nineteenth century (Table 2).



Table 2. Comparison of farming strategies between William Boot in 1849 and Silas Robertson in 1879.

<b>Data Categories</b>	<b>William Boot 1850</b>	<b>John Robertson, Jr. 1870</b>	<b>Silas Robertson 1880</b>
Improved acres	50	150	120
Unimproved acres (Meadow/Forest)	370	0	120/95
Value of farm	\$2,500	\$9,000	\$16,750
Value of implements	\$75	\$450	\$1,275
Number of horses	3	2	12
Number of milch cows	10	11	30
Number of oxen	2	0	0
Number of other cattle	12	18	0
Number of sheep	0	0	0
Number of swine	20	5	14
Value of livestock	\$380	\$1,120	\$1,866
Bushels of wheat	200	50	0
Bushels of corn	50	200	800
Bushels of oats	40	500	1,000
Pounds of wool	0	0	0
Bushels of peas	20	0	0
Bushels of potatoes	30	100	50
Pounds of butter	600	500	0
Pounds of cheese	0	0	0
Gallons of milk sold	0	0	15,000
Tons of hay/Acres mown	40/NA	30/NA	80/50
Value of slaughtered animals	\$60	\$100	NA
Value of farm production	NA	NA	\$3,000
Number of chickens	NA	NA	40
Dozens of eggs produced	NA	NA	12
Paid to farm laborers	NA	NA	\$925
Number of weeks hired	NA	NA	175
Bushels of apples	NA	NA	20
Value of produce	NA	NA	\$300

Middle to late nineteenth century farmsteads in Lake County functioned as self-contained units of production. Prior to the introduction of mechanized tractors for tilling in the latter part of the nineteenth century (steam then gasoline-powered), oxen and horses pulled the farm machinery in Ela Township—oxen initially (1850) with a switch to the exclusive use of horse-power by 1860. During the 1840s and 1850s farmers in the “Old Northwest” relied on wheat production for a cash crop but by 1860, the grain flooded the regional market as new production areas opened further west (Kane County Development Department 1991:12, Bird 2004, Cochrane 1993:72-73). The production of

corn, oats, and hay not only provided “fuel” for the beasts of burden (oxen and horses) but also supported a livestock-feeding industry for pork and beef products (1850 and 1860).

The farmers practiced mixed farming with saleable products including butter, beef, and pork until after 1870 when families began to sell fluid milk (1880). The rise of the dairy industry within the Chicago collar counties opened with the extension of the railroads into the rural hinterlands, providing an efficient and cost-effective access to the Chicago market (Bird 2004). Silas Robertson specialized in dairy farming with small-scale chicken and egg production.

The outbuildings recorded by Public Service Archaeological Program (McGowan 2003) during a Cultural Resource Management project—two Gambrel barns, two silos, a milk house, and a chicken coop—appear to be associated with the Silas Robertson occupation and Robertson’s mode of farm production. Between 1875 and 1880 Kane County farmers began to retro-fit their three-bay grain barns to dairying (Ingalls 1987:168). During this period of change in production, builders also introduced the Gambrel barn into the region—a barn specifically designed for the needs of the dairy farmer. The associated silos provided nutritious green food to the milch cows during the winter months. The barns, silos, and milk house mark the farm as a dairy farm. The temporal and functional associations suggest that Silas Robertson built these dairy outbuildings as well as the chicken coop (see Figure 3 in Tolmie 2015).

*Development of Ela Township and Lake Zurich:*

The Village of Lake Zurich developed around a 228-acre body of water known originally as “Cedar Lake” and described in the Spring of 1838 by E. C. Berry, surveyor of the public domain lands, as “impassable” (probably choked with vegetation). Farming occupied the early residents of Ela Township and the community that developed around the lakeshore. Review of the Public Domain land sale records illustrates that settlers and speculators (*e.g.*, Alexander Brand) purchased the land within the sections contiguous to the lake (Sections 17 through 20) between 1836 and 1848 (Figure 2). Seth Paine, sometimes in partnership with Daniel A. Baldwin, purchased 1,120 acres in Sections 17, 18, and 20, including the northeastern part of the lake. William Landers engaged Seth Paine to purchase the study parcel (NE  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the NW  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 18) for him at the Chicago land office in 1842.

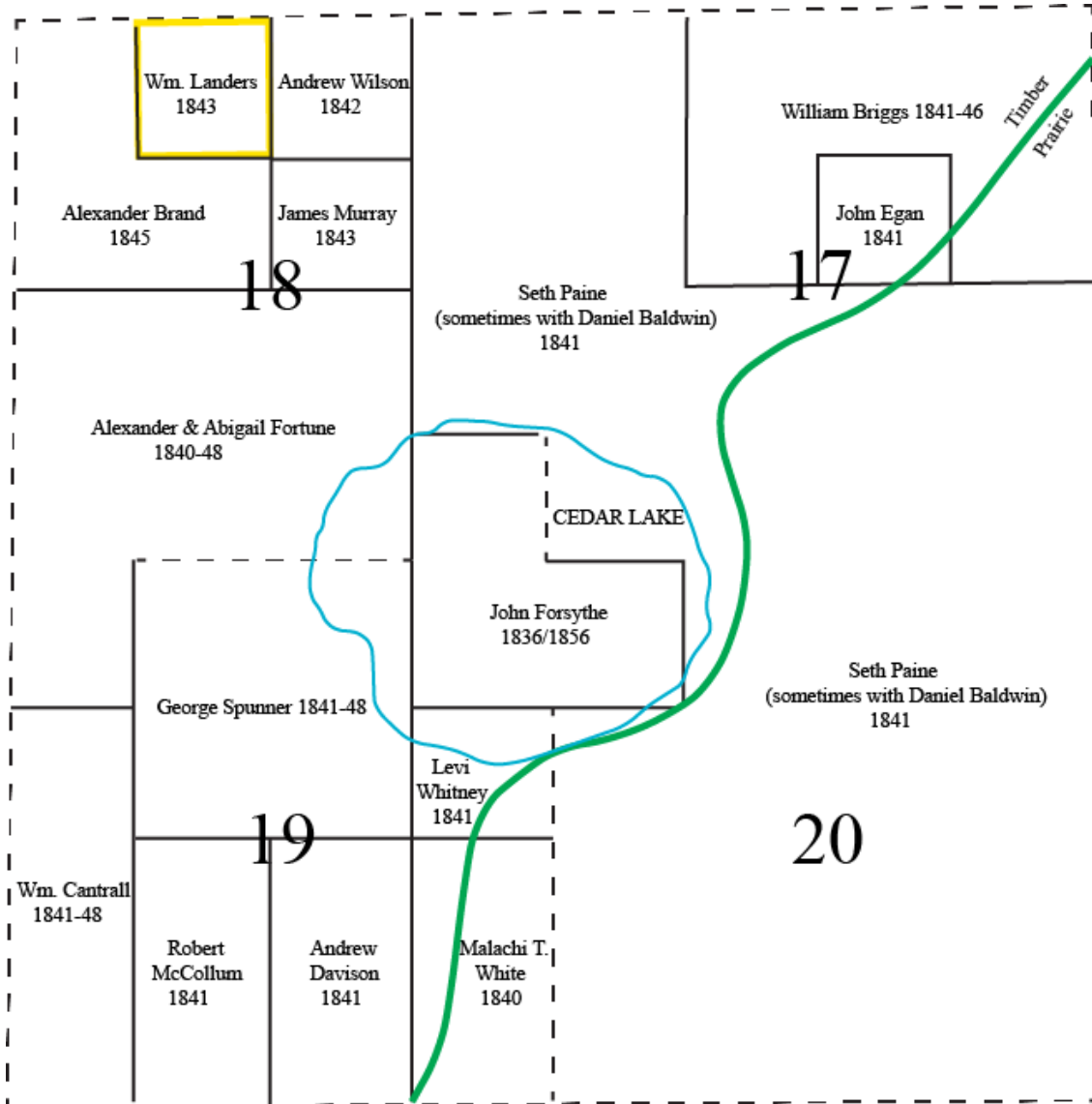


Figure 2. General Land Office plat dated 1840 showing the purchases from the Public Domain in the vicinity of Lake Zurich.

While the Lake Zurich essay in the *Encyclopedia of Chicago* (Pfannkuche 2004:458) notes that Paine (1816 -1872), a resident of Chicago but native of Vermont, arrived in Ela Township in 1836, he did not purchase land around the lake until 1841. Andreas (1884:315-320) placed Paine in Chicago from 1834 through 1841 in mercantile and banking businesses after which he retired to Lake County, inspired by French philosopher and socialist thinker François Marie Fourier (1772-1837) to create a utopian socialist community. Paine established his Union Store selling goods at wholesale plus handling and across the street built an “immense” barn intended for use as a stable originally (Andreas 1884:428). The three-story building, known as the “Stable of Humanity”

included a public hall, a free school, and rent-free suites of rooms for families in need. A small pox epidemic and fire brought about the demise of the Stable of Humanity *circa* 1865-66 (Halsey 1912:428-429). Paine returned to Chicago afterward and “engaged in philanthropic work the remainder of his life,” including aid to homeless women in a residential group home on the corner of Jackson and Halstead (Andreas 1884:428, 544). As early as 1858, postmaster Alexander Fortune described Lake Zurich as a post village celebrated as the former residence of Seth Paine of “Banker” notoriety and the location of Paine’s Stable of Humanity (Hawes 1859:124). Seth Paine and Ira Eddy founded the Bank of the City of Chicago on Clark Street in 1852. The bank’s basis for making loans included the “established character of the borrower. He must be a temperate, honest, and religious man or woman... We want no business done which is death to the human body or hell to the soul; and we would as soon furnish a rope to our brother for hanging himself as the money to buy it with” Andreas 1884:540).

Ela Township and the village on the lake remained rural and devoted to farming through the nineteenth century. Improved transportation—passenger rail services in 1912 on the Palatine, Lake Zurich & Wauconda Railroad and the paving of Rand Road in 1922—established Lake Zurich as a summer resort community. Natural ice production on the frozen lake complemented the business model. Freight rail service (Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railroad [EJ&E], Chicago Outer Belt—now part of the Canadian National system) extended to the lake community in 1889 and led to the incorporation of the Village of Lake Zurich in 1896 (Pfannkuche 2004:458). A 1904 article in the journal *Ice and Refrigeration* provides a drawing of the “progressive” steam-powered Bruce Ice Co. flat roof plant in Lake Zurich (Nickerson & Collins 1904:10). Other ice companies harvesting ice from the lake included Consumer’s Ice Co. and the Knickerbocker Co. (Loomis 1994:146).

At the Turn-of-the-Century, Chicago area residents began to rent rooms and cottages on Lake Zurich for summer recreation. Loomis (1994:147) reports daily rates at \$ 0.50 for swimming only with rates ranging from \$ 1.50 to \$ 3.50 for lodging (camp and tent grounds as well as cottages and hotels). Advertisements in the *Chicago Tribune* (1891, 1903) announced Illinois summer resorts filled with pleasure-seekers and gaining in popularity, especially over the July 4th holiday weekend. The 1903 *Chicago Tribune’s* summer vacation guide suggested boating and fishing on the lake, a short 5.0 mi. drive by stage or livery from the Barrington Chicago & North Western railway station. Accommodations included Elm House, Hoefl’s Summer Cottages, Ficke’s House, Whitney Farm, Young’s Maple Leaf Hotel, Tonne’s Boarding House, Pleasant Acres cottages, Watwasoa Lodge and cottages, Blue Acres cottages, Bicknase Cottages, Lakeside Hotel, and Farman Hotel (Loomis 1994:147, 151, 155). A selection of post

cards from a collection at the Lake County Discovery Museum provides views of some of these resort accommodations (Figures 1-9 in Part VII).

Planners re-routed Rand Road, a north-south travel corridor along the east edge of the lake since 1845, in 1939 to the west of the lake along the path of the former Cuba-Wauconda Road. The department of transportation increased the number of lanes from two to four in 1950, further diverting traffic from the Lake Zurich commercial district (Loomis 1994:67). Residential development followed in the post-war years, doubling population within the village in the decade between 1940 and 1950. By the late twentieth century, the village had gained the status of a small, suburban, bedroom community, shedding its former economic drivers of farming and tourism (Pfannkuche 2004:458). Another road project re-routed Illinois Route 22 (formerly coincident with Main Street) to the south of the commercial district in 2006. Downtown redevelopment plans in recent years, unfortunately conceived during the economic downturn and housing bust, have focused on residential townhome construction along the lakeshore.

#### *Gothic Revival Style:*

Gothic Revival style borrowed elements from the church architecture of medieval England, France, and Germany. Alexander Jackson Davis (1803-1892) brought the style and a picturesque aesthetic ideal to domestic architecture in the United States with his 1837 publication of *Rural Residences*. Davis, and later landscape designer Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852) with whom he collaborated, advocated Gothic Revival as a rural style compatible with the natural landscape.

The Silas and Alida Robertson Farmstead Residence fits well within the Carpenter Gothic architectural subtype designation, a North American improvisation with the application of Gothic Revival detailing such as steeply pitched cross gables, decorated verge board fenestration or cross-bracing in the gables, and gothic-shaped (pointed arch) windows on the carpenter-built, light-frame residences. The style remained especially popular for religious and institutional buildings during the latter half of the nineteenth century and into the 1930s (Figure 3).

Within the City of Chicago, the University of Chicago retains an outstanding ensemble of Gothic Revival buildings including eleven designed by architect Henry Ives Cobb (1859-1931) in the 1890s, according to the Chicago Historic Resources Survey data (CHRS 1996). Construction of Gothic Revival buildings peaked during the decade of the 1890s, with a resurgence marked by High Victorian Gothic phase buildings during the 1920s (McAlester and McAlester 1988:200).

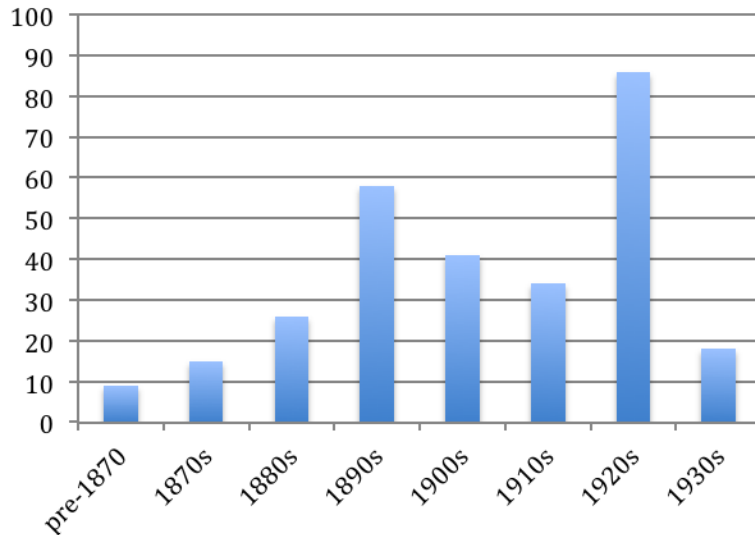


Figure 3. Dates of construction for Gothic Revival buildings in Chicago (statistics calculated from the Chicago Historic Resources Survey 1996).

A search of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) for Gothic Revival buildings in Lake County and in neighboring McHenry and Cook counties identified three listed on the NRHP—the *circa* 1880 Rev. C. S. Soule House at 304 Laurel Avenue in Highland Park (Lake County), the *circa* 1900-1924 Holy Family Church at 1840 Lincoln Street School in North Chicago, Illinois (Lake County) designed by Joseph Bajorek and William F. Gubbins, and the 1929 gymnasium addition (Jackson Gym) to the Libertyville High School Brainerd Building at 416 W. Park Avenue (Lake County) designed by John A. Scribbins.

## Part II, Architectural Information

### A. General Statement:

The Silas and Alida Robertson Farmstead Residence is a two-story, asymmetrical gable building with four gables, three dormers, and frame construction supported by a limestone foundation. The building features the characteristic hallmarks of the Gothic Revival (Carpenter Gothic) style including a steeply pitched roof, decorated vergeboards with cross-bracing, false shaping above rectangular windows, drip mold window crowns, brackets under the eaves, and a one-story canted bay window.

Fenestration comprises double-hung wood-sash windows arranged alone or in pairs (two-over-two on second floor dormers and in gable ends as well as on first floor north façade, three-over-three on first floor east façade); fixed windows (diamond in gable); ribbons of eight-light casement windows (Sunroom addition) and single-light casement windows (remodeled Porch and Dining Room addition).

Original entrances to the residence included a double door entrance from the porch on the east façade and a single door entrance on the south façade adjacent to the bay. The Original, hardwood four-panel with light, entry door remains part of the building but has been rehung to secure entrance into the porch addition from the exterior of the residence. A pair of flush doors with lights regulates movement between the porch and the interior of the residence, replacing the rehung doors.

Original interior wall finishes are lath-and-plaster, now covered with modern beadboard panels in many places (installed after 1967). Original panel moldings remain below the bay window in the Dining Room (Southwest Parlor). The back hall leading from the Butler's Pantry to the southern exit and connecting the Pantry, Kitchen, and Dining Room is clad with originally placed bead boards on the lower part of the wall (wainscoting) with a wainscot cap. Modern paneling clads the interior walls within the additions—with a rough-hewn look through the former southern entry and into the utility room and a smooth finish in the dining room (Addition). Sheet vinyl and wall-to-wall carpeting obscures the original flooring material—presumably hardwood. Four-panel interior doors provide privacy on the second floor. Transoms above each bedroom door entrance off the second floor hall provide ventilation. Elaborate period case, base, and wall moldings with ogee curves, made possible with industrial production and improved transportation, reflected the status and wealth of growing and prosperous Middle Class families such as the Robertsons.

***B. Description of Exterior:***

Overall dimensions: Width of 36.0 ft. (north-south), Length of 42.5 ft. (east-west)

Foundation: Limestone

Walls: Synthetic siding clads the exterior walls of the residence. Wood clapboards would have comprised the original cladding material.

Structural system: Wood-frame construction

Openings: *Doorways and Doors:* Wrought iron security doors cover the original paneled doors on the east façade and an entry door on the west façade, off of the Utility Room (Addition). The former entrance on the south façade has been incorporated into the sunroom addition with no door remaining. Additional doors on the west façade, include a sliding glass door off the dining room addition; and an aluminum screen door and modern storm door off of the Sunroom (Addition). Robertson utilized paneled doors throughout with ogee moldings and trimwork. The Morton family removed some of the trimwork during remodeling (post-1967)—at the main entry (exterior), in the retro-fitted bathrooms, and at the abandoned southern entryway.

*Windows:* Robertson's 1873 construction included double-hung

windows throughout the building with fixed-pane, diamond-shaped windows in the gable ends. After 1967, Geil Morton installed casement windows in the Dining Room addition, in the Sunroom addition, in the Porch expansion and remodel, and in the remodeled Kitchen. Robertson utilized ogee moldings to trim the windows while Morton utilized simple casework.

**Roof:** The building has a gable roof primarily with shed roofs on the Porch and porch addition as well as on the Dining Room addition, all covered with asphalt shingles. Wood shakes probably covered the roof when built in 1873.

***C. Description of Interior:***

**Mechanical systems:** The building has hot water heat provided by baseboard radiators. Former flue openings into chimney chases suggest that the original heating source, or a supplemental heating source, may have been radiant heat provided by cast iron stoves. Hot water or hydronic systems became very popular in the 1880s (Nagengast 2001).

**Floor plans:** The building has a compound plan with first floor projections from twentieth century, single-story additions. The original footprint of the building might be described as a T-plan with an irregularity due to a kitchen projection on the west façade. A central hallway controlled access to the first floor public rooms in the Robertson's residence (Parlor, Withdrawing Room, and Dining Room) as well as access to the Kitchen and Butler's Pantry. A central hallway also controlled access to the second floor private rooms (three Bedrooms and a Servant's Room). Guests arrived via the grand double door entrance facing Rand Road while residents, staff, and delivery personnel probably utilized the auxiliary entry along the south façade in the course of their daily chores and routines. Twentieth century additions reflect an increased focus on leisure time activities with the expanded and enclosed Porch and the addition of a Sunroom for three-season socializing. The advent of casual dining may have led to the addition of a less formal dining spot closer to the kitchen. With the eventual dismissal of servants and the desire for modern sanitation, the owner converted the Butler's Pantry and the Servant's Room into bathrooms sometime in the twentieth century. The basement contains maintenance supplies and the building mechanical systems as well as provides the residents with ample storage.

**Stairways:** Two sets of wood stairs proved access to the private rooms (bedrooms) on the second floor—an elaborate, hardwood stairway at the front of the residence and a simple, pine (softwood) stairway at the rear of the residence. The rear stairway linked the Servant's



Room with the Kitchen. Paint and a carpet runner cover the 11 treads, bead boards enclose the stairwell, and a simple handrail screwed to the wall provides some safety while inconspicuously traversing the single run of utilitarian stairs. In contrast the front stairway publically expressed and displayed the wealth and status of the residents. While the treads, skirting, and fascia appear to be oak, the newel post, turned balusters, and banister appear to be mahogany. Craftsmen carved foliate designs into the oak skirting brackets and in a pattern along the oak fascia. A painted dot pattern further accents the finial on the composite newel post, which comprises turned and boxed (octagonal) sections. The 16 treads in the single run provided a less steep ascent to the second floor than via the rear stairway. Painted pine treads (N=8) lead from the back hall to the basement.

Flooring:

Wall-to-wall carpeting and vinyl obscure the original floor materials. Given the period of construction, one assumes that the original flooring comprised hardwood throughout as exposed in Bedroom 3—perhaps oak primarily with maple in the kitchen given the availability of local materials and the building traditions common to the time and place. Flooring within the remodeled Kitchen, the Utility Room, and the Dining Room addition appears limited to sheet vinyl, typical for the latter part of the twentieth century. The Sunroom and Porch have wall-to-wall carpeting. Both bathrooms, the repurposed Butler's Pantry and Servant's Room, currently have ceramic tile floors.

Wall and ceiling finish:

All interior walls and ceilings were finished with plaster. Geil Morton sheathed a number of walls and ceilings in modern beadboard panels, installed in the latter part of the twentieth century. Original bead board wainscoting appears in the lower part of the Back Hall. Craftsmen installed panel molding under the three lights in the original Dining Room's bay window. Morton also installed paneling in the Dining Room addition (smooth finish, wood tone), in the remodeled Butler's Pantry (smooth finish, wood grain), and in the Sunroom-Utility Room addition (rough-hewn look).

Openings:

*Doorways and Doors:* Robertson built the residence with two doorways leading to the interior —the formal entrance along the east façade with oak paneled double doors (5 ft. wide) and a secondary entrance (2.5 ft. wide) on the south façade for deliveries and access to the outbuildings, blocked from street view by the extending bay window. Doorway height, including trim, ranges between 7.0 ft. (closets) and 8.5 ft. (bedroom with transom).

Subsequent modifications to the residence, post-1967 by G. Morton, resulted in new doorway configurations. Morton removed the door from the secondary entrance and changed the doorway's function to a doorway into the Sunroom. Morton also built four new doorways leading to the interior—two into the Sunroom (east and west façades), one into the Utility Room (west façade), and a sliding glass door into the Dining Room (west façade). While Morton or his daughter later blocked the east door on the Sunroom, all the other new doors provide egress to the expansive patio area at the rear of the residence. Interior doors, where present, comprise oak four-panel doors with transoms above the bedroom doors (32 in. wide). While the wide doorways into the Parlor, Withdrawing Room, and Dining Room may have once contained pocket doors, no doors or evidence for doors of any kind remain.

*Windows:* Double-hung windows (two-over-two or three-over-three lights) arranged alone or in pairs provide light to the interiors of the original rooms within the residence. Openings vary from 2.0 ft. to 6.0 ft. Window height, including trim, ranges between 5.5 ft. and 6.0 ft. Rooms added to the residence, for example the expanded and enclosed Porch, the Sunroom, and the Dining Room, have modern fixed-pane or casement windows rather than double-hung.

Decorative features and trim:

Rooms with original wall finishes have six-inch beaded baseboard molding with shoe molding, all probably oak but now painted. Simple ranch style baseboards (3.5 in. in height) replace the original molding where wall finishes have been altered. The doorway from the Back Hall to the Servant's Room includes ogee case molding, as do the other door and window openings, but here with the addition of a plinth block at the base matching the height of the baseboard. Subsequent owners removed some of the baseboards to install baseboard radiators. Original bead board wainscoting with cap appears only in the Back Hall. G. Morton apparently added the brick fireplace in the original Dining Room that is centered on the west wall.

Hardware:

Original window latches (painted) remain only in the Withdrawing Room, twentieth century brass latches replace the other window hardware elsewhere throughout the residence. Original white, porcelain knobs remain on the bedroom doors and on the door leading from the Back Hall to the basement. A brass thumb latch and keyed lock secure the paneled entry door on the east façade. The lock set includes a square escutcheon plate with a foliate design. The flush entry door has a knob with an egg-and-dart

motif, a formal design symbolizing life and death. Door hinges (Butt Hinge type) appear to be non-descript (painted but probably not engraved) with beehive-shaped pintles. The built-in cupboard with drawers in Bedroom 2 fills a niche in the east wall and appears to retain the original porcelain knob on the cupboard and cast iron bin pulls on the dresser drawers. The white porcelain knob and the dead bolt with keeper-strap on the door leading from the Back Hall to the basement appears to be original as well.

***D. Site:***

Historic landscape design:

The Silas and Alida Robertson Farmstead, now a large lot within the Clover Hill subdivision, once encompassed 335 acres in rural Ela Township. The builders situated the residence on a rise surrounded by trees and nestled along a winding creek, a preferred landscape for Gothic Revival residences. Robertson separated farm service area from the residential area by a small patch of woods but placed the residence in close proximity to the livestock.

Outbuildings:

The farm-associated outbuildings lay beyond the residence primarily in the woods to the west according to the 1939 aerial photograph. Only the closest outbuildings remain above ground—a garden shed, a workshop, a horse stable, and a water tower. Developers razed two barns, two siloes, a milk house, and a chicken coop sometime after 1993 to build a retention pond.

**Part III, Sources of Information**

***A. Architectural drawings:***

MARS, Inc. submitted a Freedom of Information Act form to Kyle Kordell, Deputy Village Clerk at the Village of Lake Zurich, on 31 August 2015 requesting building permits on file for the residence at 845 N. Rand Road. The village does not hold any architectural drawings for the subject property. MARS, Inc. measured and sketched all architectural drawings contained within this HABS document.

***B. Early views:***

1. Part of the 1840 General Land Office plat for Ela Township (GLO 1840).
2. Part of the 1861 Ela Township plat (on file at MARS, Inc.).
3. Detail showing the nascent village of Lake Zurich and the location of the John Robertson, Sr. Estate (on file at MARS, Inc.).
4. Part of the 1873 Ela Township plat (on file at MARS, Inc.).
5. Part of the 1885 Ela Township plat (on file at MARS, Inc.).
6. Aerial view of the Silas and Alida Robertson Farmstead dated 1939 (Illinois Clearing House).

**C. Interviews:** Sharon Rochford, daughter of Geil and Arline Morton and owner of the *circa* 1844 Boot-Briden Farmstead, interviewed by Clare Tolmie on 5 June 2015. Geraldine Morton, daughter of Geil and Arline Morton and owner of the Robertson Farmstead Residence, interviewed 5 June 2015 by Clare Tolmie and 6 October 2015 by M. C. Bird.

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[illinois.edu/data/imagery/1937-1947-illinois-](http://clearinghouse.isgs.illinois.edu/data/imagery/1937-1947-illinois-historical-aerial-photography)

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***E. Likely sources not yet investigated:***

Building permits that may be held at the Ela Township offices for the period predating the parcel's incorporation into the Village of Lake Zurich (1994).

***F. Supplemental material:***



Figure 1. Lithograph dated 1873 showing the John and Charlotte Robertson Farmstead (from Frost & McLennan 1873).

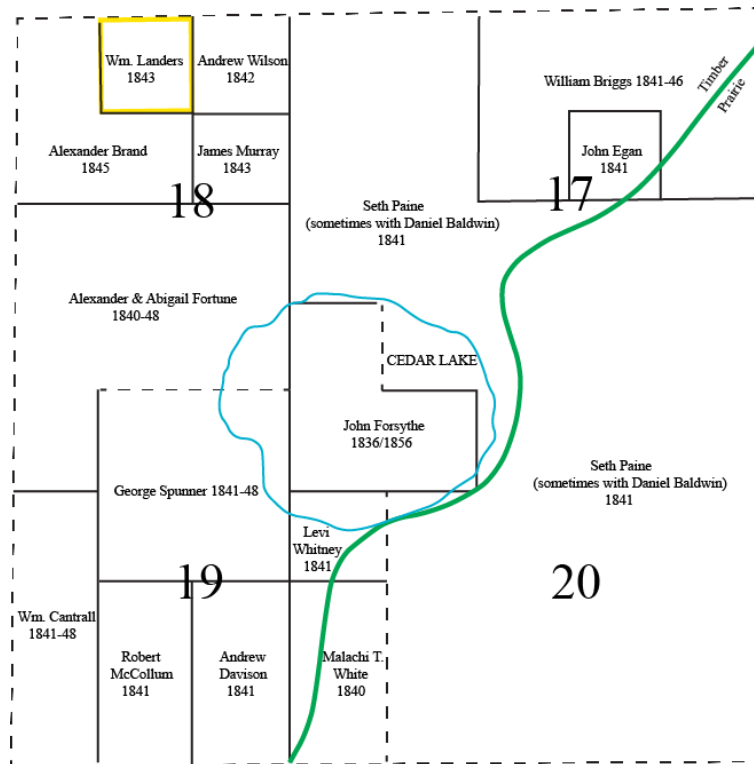


Figure 2. General Land Office plat dated 1840 showing the purchases from the Public Domain in the vicinity of Lake Zurich.

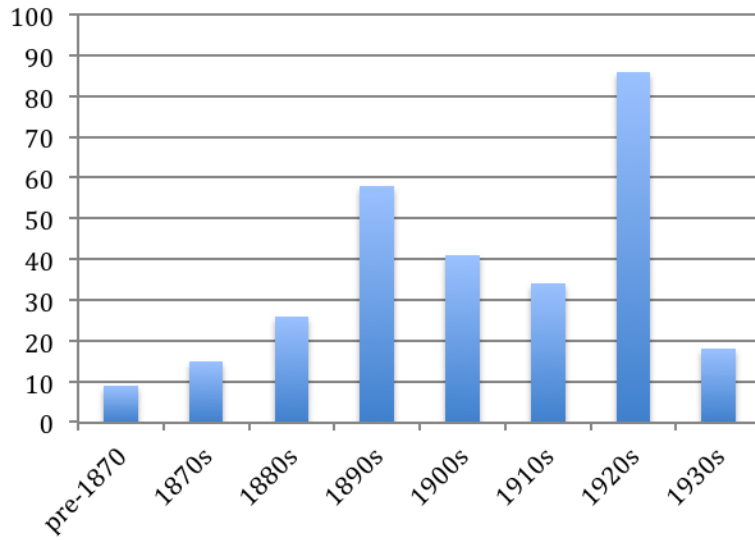


Figure 3. Dates of construction for Gothic Revival buildings in Chicago (statistics calculated from the Chicago Historic Resources Survey 1996).

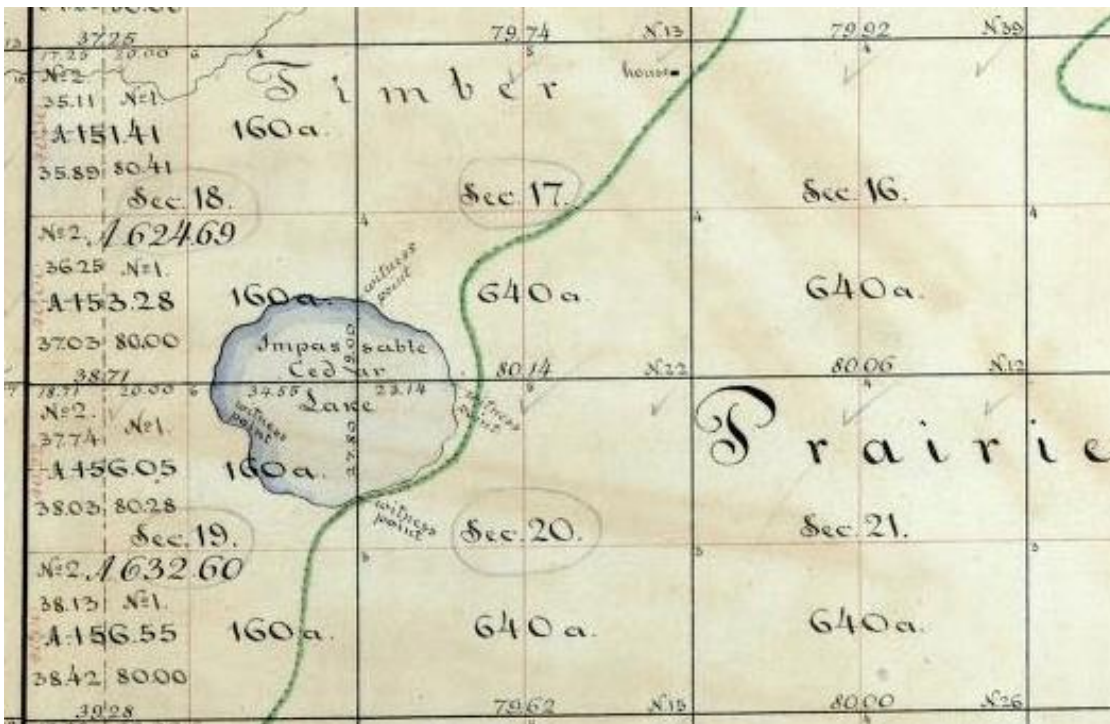


Figure 4. General Land Office plat (GLO) dated 1840.



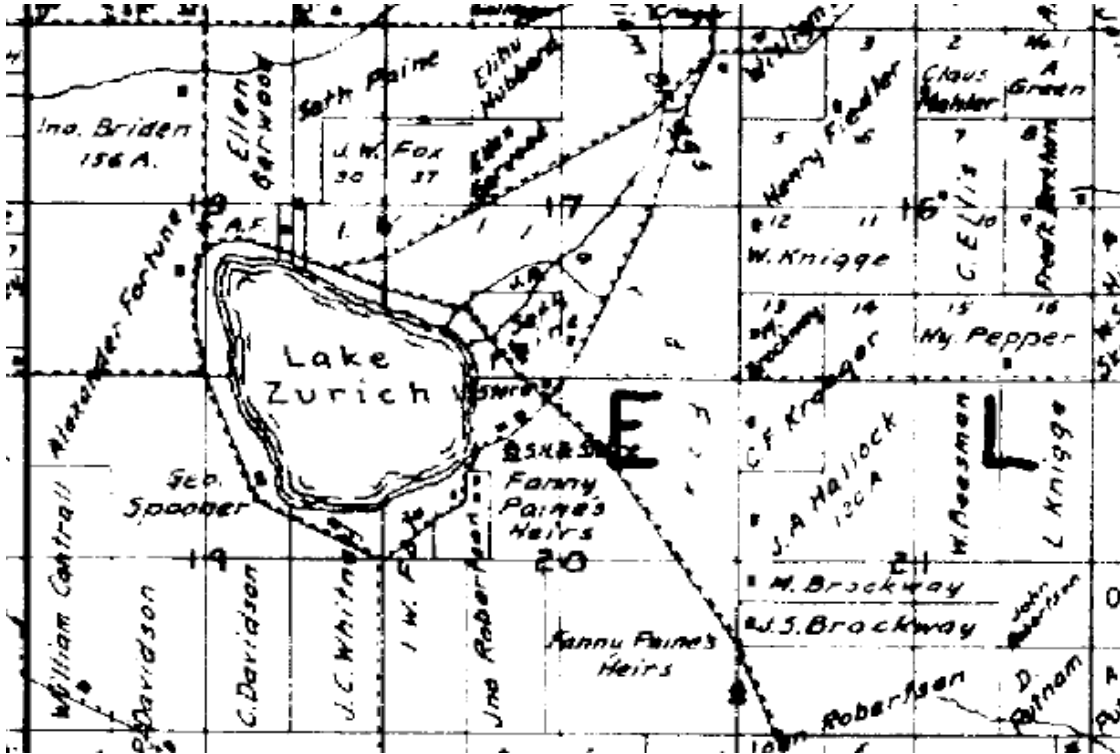


Figure 5. Part of the Ela Township plat dated 1861 showing the Boot-Briden residence in the NW ¼ of Section 18.

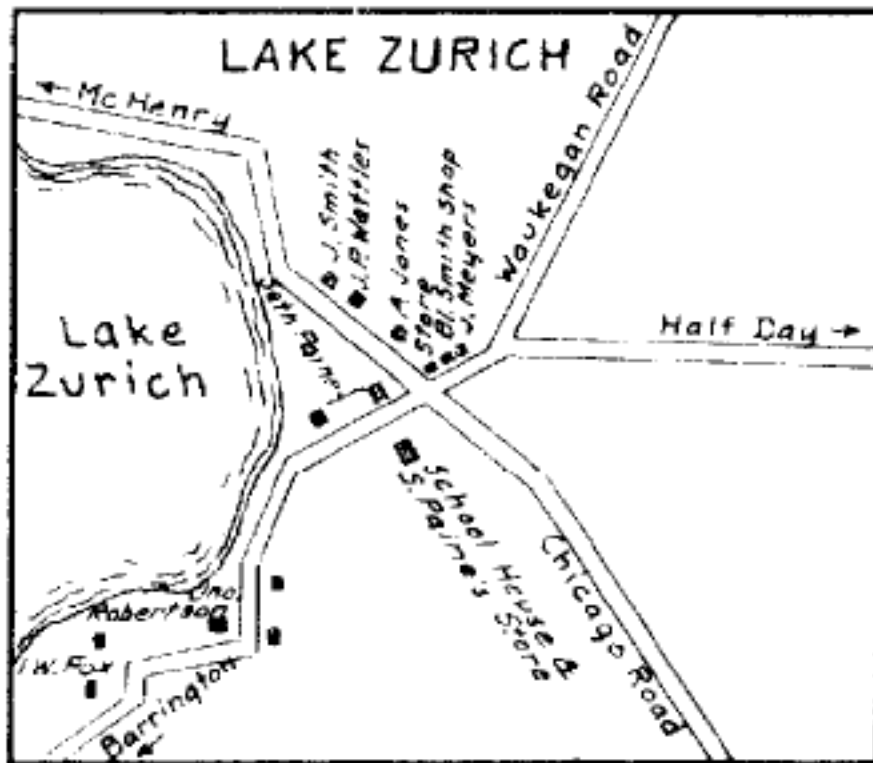


Figure 6. Detail 1861 plat of the village showing the John Robertson, Sr. residence at the southeast corner of the lake.



Figure 7. Part of the Ela Township plat dated 1873 showing the S. Robertson property in the NW ¼ of Section 18.

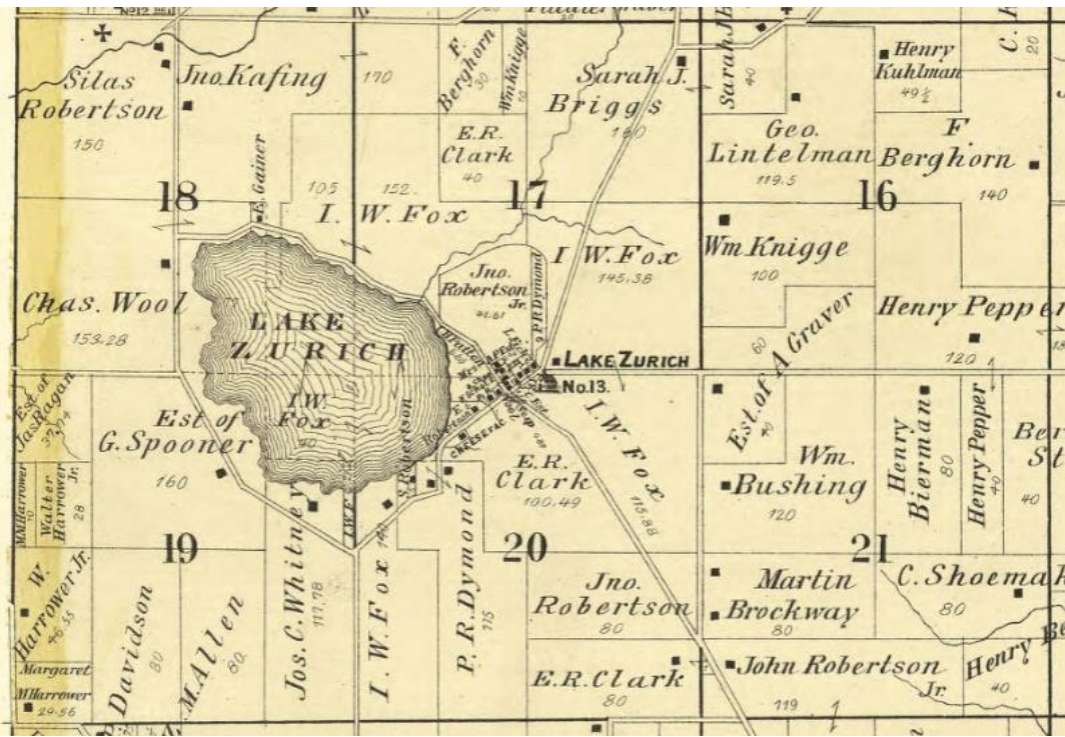


Figure 8. Part of the Ela Township plat dated 1885 showing the Boot-Briden and the Silas Robertson residences, north and south respectively, in the NW ¼ of Section 18.



Figure 9. Aerial photograph dated 1939 showing the Silas and Alida Robertson Farmstead Residence (red outline) and immediate landscape.

#### **Part IV, Methodology of Research**

##### ***A. Research Strategy:***

The research focused on gathering data to establish and build date and chain-of-title for the residence. Researchers reviewed a variety of primary and secondary sources, including deeds, plats, books, newspaper articles, and historic photos, in order to develop a thorough history of the residence within its cultural and historical setting. Site visits to the building aided in the development of interior and exterior architectural descriptions.

##### ***B. Actual Research Process:***

*Establish chain-of-title:* Conducted a title search for the Silas and Alida Robertson Farmstead Residence utilizing the Lake County deed records to verify the preliminary chain-of-title developed through examination of census and plat records.

*Conduct background research:* Conducted background research at the Ela Area Public Library, the Ela Township Historical Society and Museum, the Village of Lake Zurich, and utilized Internet resources to gather information relating to landowners, residents, renters, to aid in the development of contextual essays. Many of the post card images, included here for educational purposes, belong to the Lake County Discovery Museum.

*Site visit:* MARS, Inc. visited the parcel on 5 June 2015 during the initial Phase I investigations and subsequently on 6 October 2015 to measure and photograph the residence for the HABS document.

*Preparation of document:* Began background research on 20 August 2015 with notice to proceed from the client. Planned to wait until after closing for site visit but the real estate closing was delayed and plans could not be put off any longer.

***C. Research Staff:***

Principal Investigator: Dr. M. Catherine Bird of Midwest Archaeological Research Services, Inc. (MARS, Inc.), 3819 N. State Route 23, Suite F, Marengo, Illinois 60152 supervised all aspects of this project, conducted the supplemental background research, and drafted the HABS document.

Project Team: Steven Katz took all digital photographs used in this document. M. C. Bird and Clare Tolmie measured the building. Jay Martinez developed the floor plan illustrations.

**Part V, Project Information**

In June of 2015 MARS, Inc. conducted a Phase I archaeological and architectural survey of a 5.9-acre parcel in Lake Zurich, Illinois. MARS, Inc. identified two nineteenth residences therein, completed a site correction form for the properties, and suggested that the historic property at 845 N. Rand Road is eligible for inclusion on the NRHP. After consultation, the SHPO concurred that the residence is eligible for inclusion on the NRHP pursuant to criterion "C," because it is a good, and rare, example of Gothic Revival architecture in northern Illinois and that the proposal to raze the building constitutes an adverse effect as defined by the Illinois State Agency Historic Resources Preservation Act (IHPA Log no. 030041315; letters dated 28 and 30 July 2015). The client will ensure mitigation of the loss through the preparation of an Illinois Historic American Buildings Survey Level III for the building.

## Part VI, Photographic Appendix

### HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY Index to Photographs

SILAS and ALIDA ROBERTSON FARMSTEAD RESIDENCE  
845 N. Rand Road  
Lake Zurich, Illinois  
Lake County  
Illinois

Steven A. Katz, Midwest Archaeological Research Services, Inc.  
6 October 2015

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-1  | Approach to residence from driveway off Rand Road illustrating the setting and landscaping (33).   |
| Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-2  | Overview of the backyard illustrating the landscaping and relationships among the residence, patio, and garden shed (79).  |
| Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-3  | Front (east) façade of the residence (9).  |
| Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-4  | South façade of the residence showing the detail in the gable end, in the window surrounds, and in the bay (8).  |
| Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-5  | Rear façade (west) of the residence illustrating the relationship between the patio and the residence, and showing the two gable ends partially obscured by the tree foliage (65). |
| Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-6  | North façade of residence (39).  |
| Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-7  | Detail of verge boards in gable ends and the brackets under the eaves (19).  |
| Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-8  | Detail of dormer window and trim in Bedroom 3 (34).  |
| Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-9  | Multi-panel front door on east façade (28).  |
| Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-10 | Door latch detail on multi-panel front door (29).  |
| Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-11 | Newel post, balusters, banister, treads, and skirting for the main stairway (98).  |
| Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-12 | Detail of decoration on the newel post (96).   |
| Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-13 | Detail of skirting brackets (95).  |
| Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-14 | Detail of the skirting on the fascia (102).  |
| Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-15 | Overview of stairway from second floor showing as well the modern beadboard paneling and the original plaster finish (108).  |
| Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-16 | Overview of back stairway from second floor (167).   |
| Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-17 | Typical four-panel bedroom door with transom. Note modern beadboard paneling in hallway (106).   |
| Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-18 | Overview of built-in bedroom cabinet (110).  |
| Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-19 | Detail of bedroom cabinet latch (111).   |

Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-20	Detail of bedroom cabinet pull (112).
Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-21	Detail of basement door hardware (130).
Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-22	Detail of original window latch (148).
Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-23	Detail of door pintel (157).





Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-1. Approach to residence from driveway off Rand Road illustrating the setting and landscaping (33).



Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-2. Overview of the backyard illustrating the landscaping and relationships among the residence, patio, and garden shed (79).





Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-3. Front (east) façade of the residence (9).



Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-4. South façade of the residence showing the detail in the gable end, in the window surrounds, and in the bay (8).





Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-5. Rear façade (west) of the residence illustrating the relationship between the patio and the residence, and showing the two gable ends partially obscured by the tree foliage (65).



Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-6. North façade of residence (39).





Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-7. Detail of verge boards in gable ends and the brackets under the eaves (19).



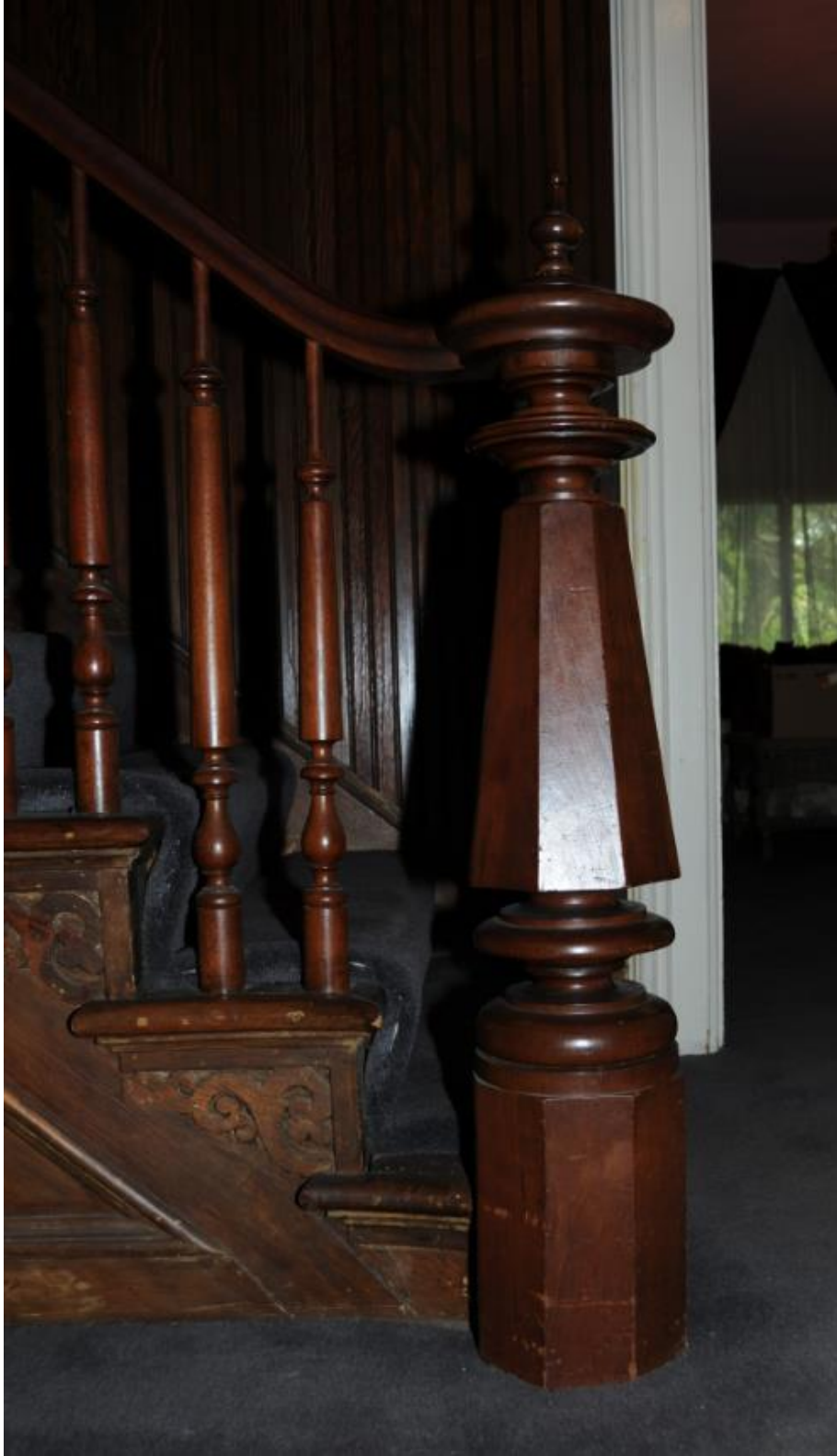
Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-8. Detail of dormer window and trim in Bedroom 3 (34).



Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-9. Multi-panel front door on east façade (28).



Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-10. Door latch detail on multi-panel front door (29).



Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-11. Newel post, balusters, banister, treads, and skirting for the main stairway (98).





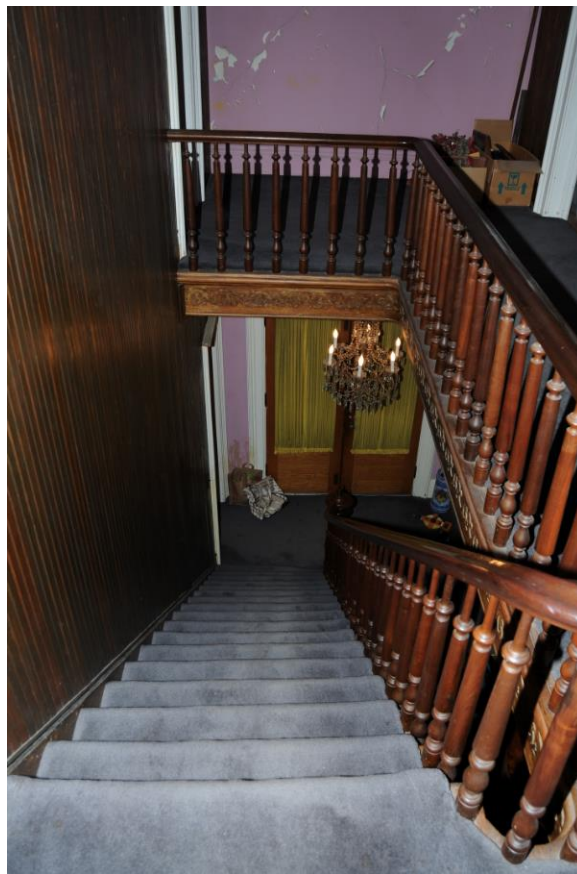
Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-12. Detail of decoration on the newel post (96).



Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-13. Detail of skirting brackets (95).



Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-14. Detail of the skirting on the fascia (102).



Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-15. Overview of stairway from second floor showing as well the modern beadboard paneling and the original plaster finish (108).



Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-16. Overview of back stairway from second floor (167).



Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-17. Typical four-panel bedroom door with transom. Note modern beadboard paneling in hallway (106).





Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-18. Overview of built-in bedroom cabinet (110).



Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-19. Detail of bedroom cabinet latch (111).



Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-20. Detail of bedroom cabinet pull (112).



Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-21. Detail of basement door hardware (130).



Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-22. Detail of original window latch (148).



Illinois HABS No. L-2015-01-23. Detail of door pintel (157).



**Part VII, Supplemental Images**

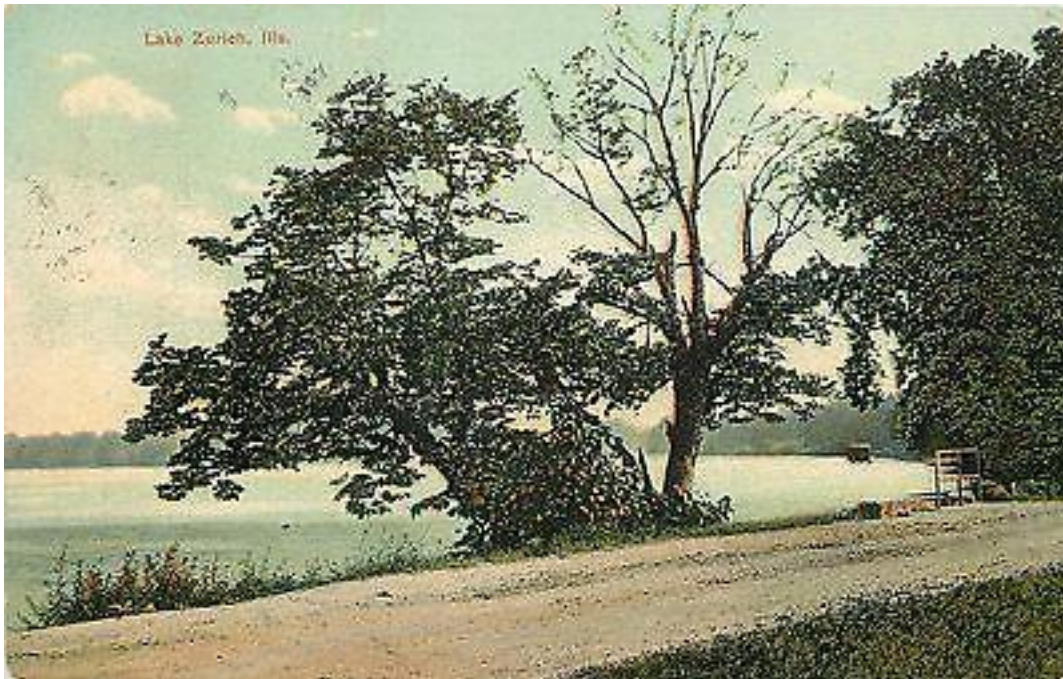


Plate 1. Lake Zurich post card dated 1908, prior to the installation of the sea wall.



Plate 2. Post card of Bicknase's Cottages dated 1910.



Plate 3. Post card of Bicknase's Cottages dated 1911.



Plate 4. Post card of E. A. Ficke's Residence dated 1911.





Plate 5. Post card of Ficke's Residence.



Plate 6. Post card of Lake Zurich attractions dated 1913.





Plate 7. Post card showing "Lake Zurich: The Dimple of the Lake Region" dated 1928.



Plate 8. Post card of "Lake Side Auto Road" in Lake Zurich, Illinois.



Plate 9. Post card of Orchard Court Motel dated 1955.

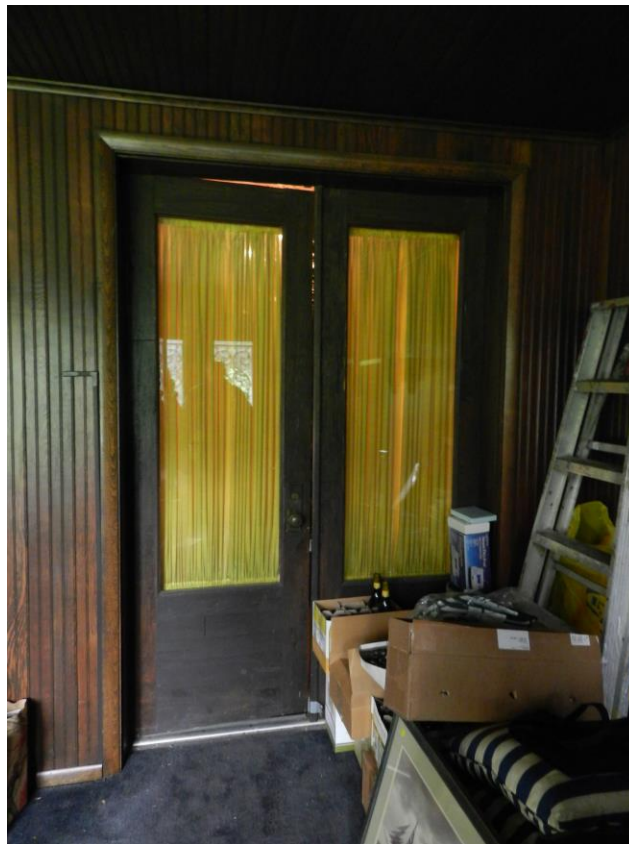


Plate 10. Double entry door from Porch into residence. Note the modern beadboard paneling on the walls and ceiling of the Porch. Photograph from the Phase I investigations (99).



Plate 11. Original bead board wainscoting in the Back Hall of the residence.  
Photograph from the Phase I investigations (84).



Plate 12. Original panel modeling in the Dining Room, below the bay window  
openings. Photograph from the Phase I investigations (89).





Plate 13. Overview of Parlor from the entry hall (from Phase I).



Plate 14. Overview of the fireplace and Dining Room from the entry hall (from Phase I).

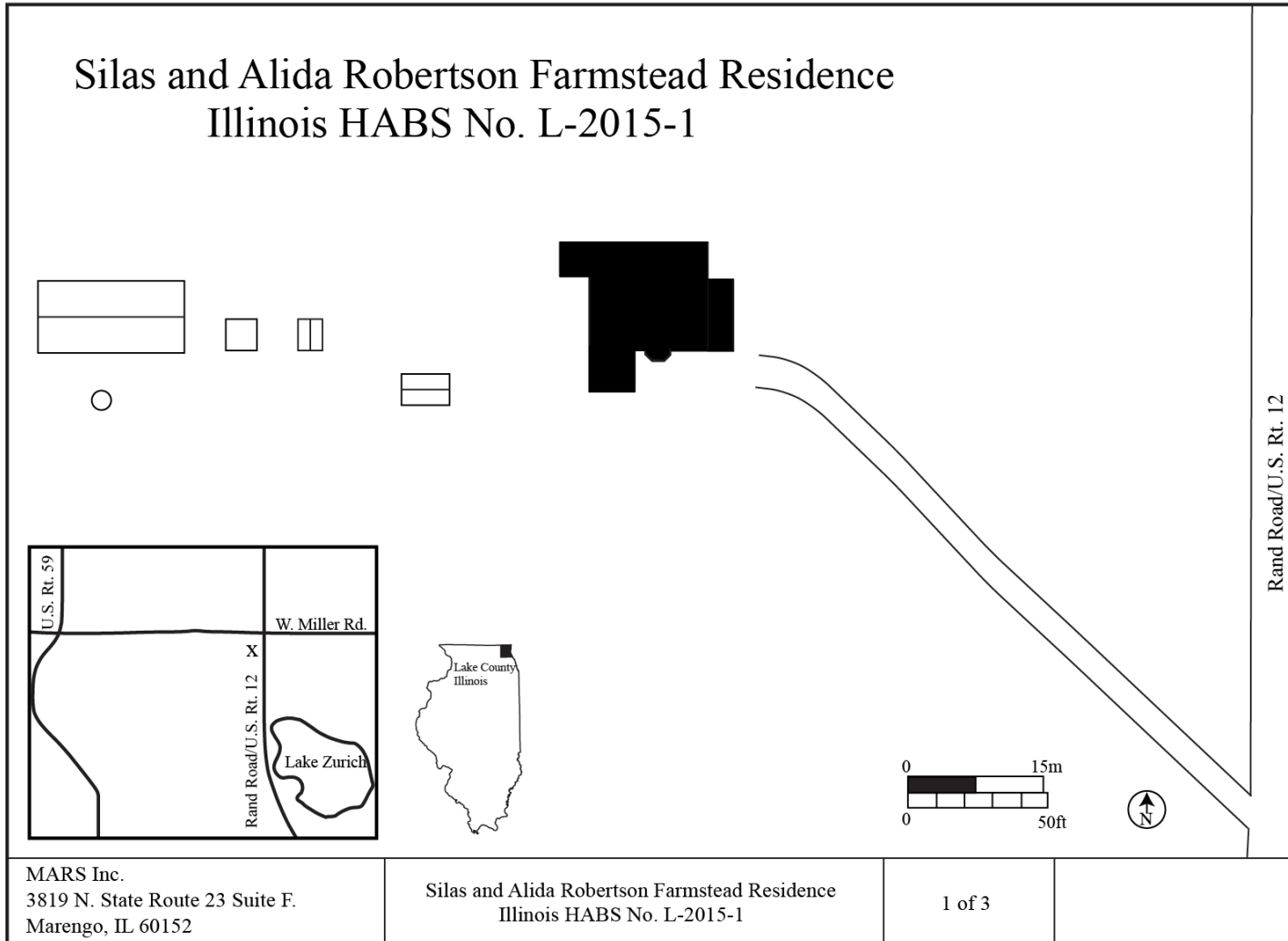


Plate 15. View into the Withdrawing Room from the Parlor (from Phase I).

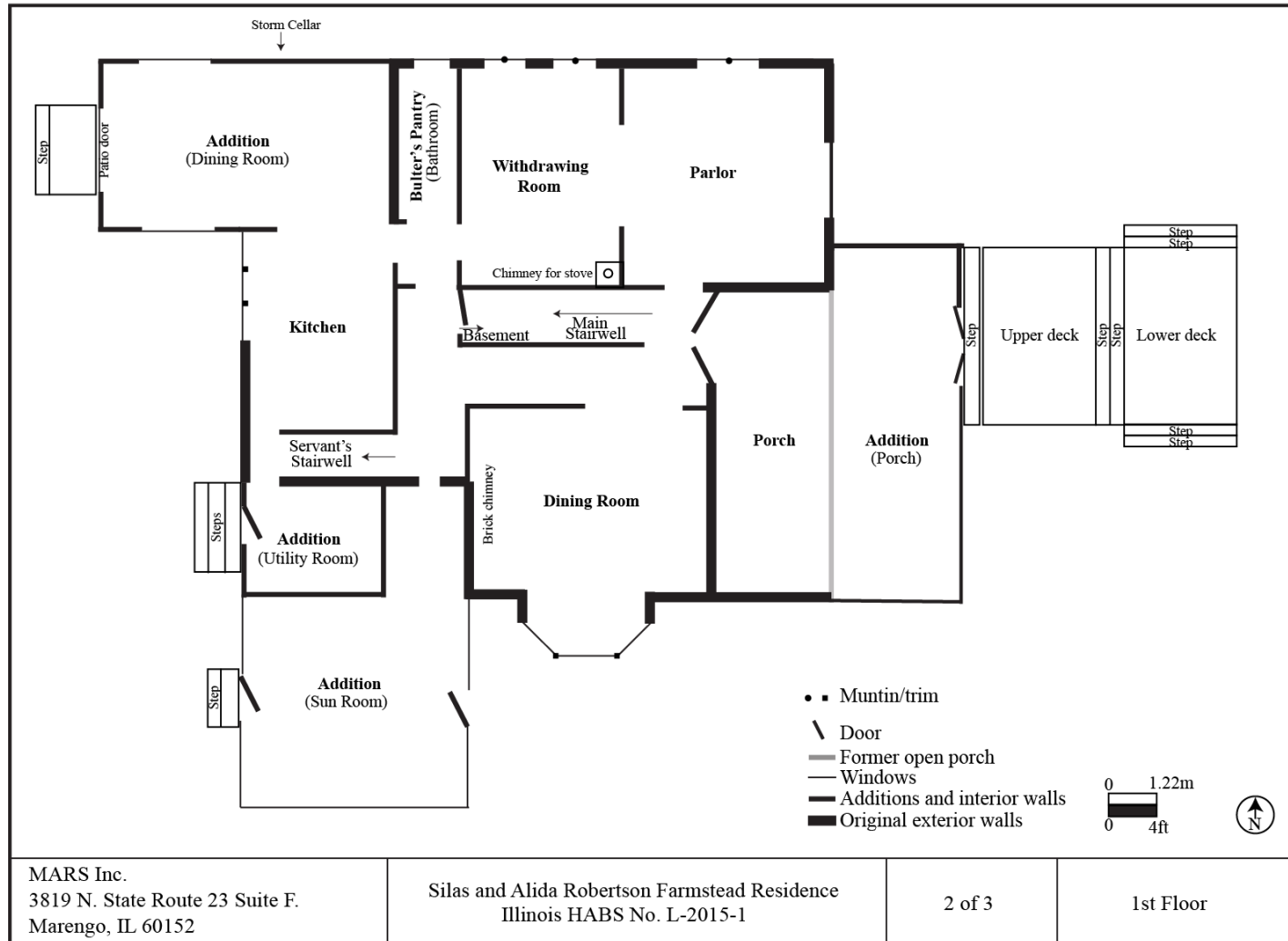


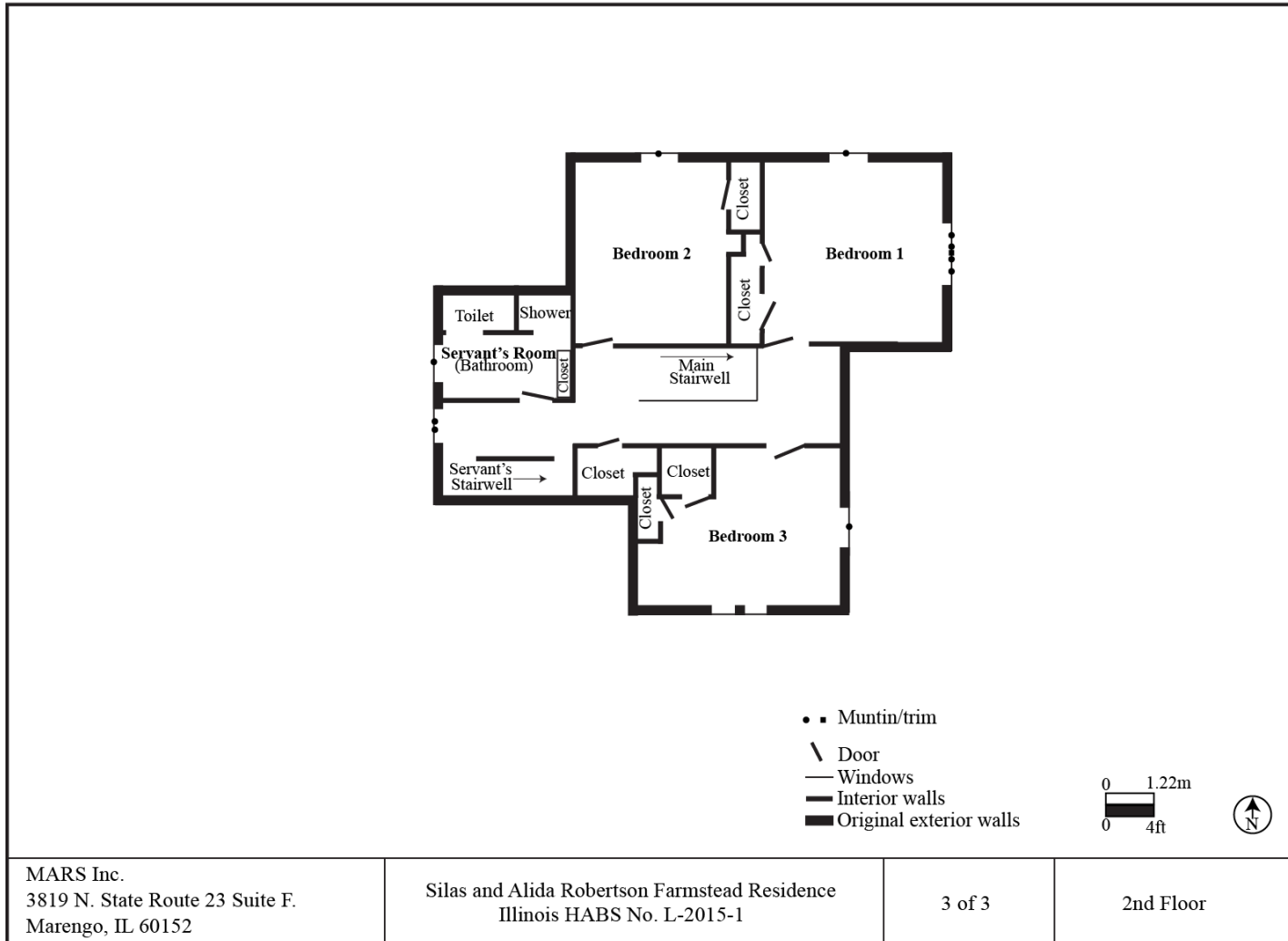
Plate 16. Overview of Bedroom 2 from just inside the door. Note the built-in cupboard to the right of the closet (from HABS documentation).

**Part VIII, Architectural Drawings**









MARS Inc. 3819 N. State Route 23 Suite F. Marengo, IL 60152	Silas and Alida Robertson Farmstead Residence Illinois HABS No. L-2015-1	3 of 3	2nd Floor
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