

City of Madison Landmarks Commission
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (1)

I. Name of Building or Site

(1) Common
Dorothy Ridler House

(2) Historic (if applicable)
Judge Braley House

II. Location

(1) Street Address
422 N. Henry St., Madison

(2) Ward (available @ City Clerk)
8th Aldermanic District

III. Classification

(1) Type of Property (building, monument, park, etc.)
building

(2) Zoning District

(3) Present Use
Multi-unit residential

IV. Current Owner of Property (available at City Assessor's office)

(1) Name(s)
Dorothy A. Ridler

(2) Street Address
same

(3) Telephone Number
255-4915

V. Legal Description (available at City Assessor's office)

(1) Parcel Number
0709-144-2125-4

(2) Legal Description
Orig. plat NW 82' of Lot 8 Blk 58

VI. Condition of Property

(1) Physical Condition (excellent, good, fair, deteriorated, ruins)
excellent

(2) Altered or Unaltered?
see description

(3) Moved or Original Site?
original

(4) Wall Construction
frame with brick veneer

(5) On a separate sheet of paper, describe the present and original physical construction and appearance (limit 500 words).

City of Madison Landmarks Commission
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (2)

VI.(5) Describe Present and Original Physical Construction and Appearance:

The structure is of frame construction with a Milwaukee cream brick veneer painted white.

The gabled roof slopes steeply and has at present a cornice without brackets. The eaves, however, are bracketed. The roof is pierced by several dormer window gables decorated with ornate carpenter's lace within the gable end. The trusses and brackets are wood. The two chimneys have bases which are corbelled just above the ridge of the roof.

The former octagonal porch at the northern corner of the house was enclosed in 1961-2. Much of the detailing was preserved and the character retained.

Detailing is the same on the porch on the Henry St. side. Crossed diagonal braces at the caps of the porch posts give an arched effect. There are indications that this porch was a later addition. The cornice lines of the porches are continuous along the Henry St. side across the bay window. The facing below the bay window sills is decorated by crossed diagonal wood strips.

A shallow rectangular bay is on the southeast face of the southeast wing.

The main entrance on Henry St. features sidelights and top lights which have since been replaced with wood panels. The two windows of the original library on the same side of the house are floorlength.

The window lintels are dressed stone with incised center ornaments. The lower edges are chamfered. An additional window was cut on the Gilman side of the west wing of the house.

The southern corner of the house was remodeled during WWII to accommodate a parking garage with a studio above it. Interior changes to provide a shop and two living units were done at that time also. The fireplaces and a portion of the stair were removed.

The stair newel has an octagonal base, convex ribs or a heavy reeding on its tapered shaft with necking and cap moulded to classical contours. Classical mouldings on door and window casings.

City of Madison Landmarks Commission
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (3)

VII. Significance

(1) Original Owner Judge Arthur B. Braley	(2) Original Use private residence
(3) Architect or Builder ?	(4) Architectural Style Victorian Gothic Revival
(5) Date of Construction 1876-1877?	(6) Indigenous Materials Used
(7) On a separate sheet of paper, describe the significance of the nominated property and its conformance to the designation criteria of the Landmarks Commission Ordinance (33.01), limit of 500 words.	

VIII. List of Bibliographical References Used

1. Berryman's Bench and Bar 1898 (v.2. p.336)
2. Wisconsin State Bar Report of Proceedings (v.3 pp.210-211)
3. Madison, Past and Present, 1902,(pp. 37, 38, 91, 92.)
4. 37th Annual Proceedings of the State Historical Society, 1890, pp.89-94
5. Capital Times Nov. 28, 1955, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, by Alan Kent
6. Capital Times, Apr. 29, 1950, Braley Home Description, Alexius Baas
7. Dane County Tax Records
8. Madison Community Center Camera Club 'Old Madison Homes Project' Braley House Entry by L. E. Blair

IX. Form Prepared By:

(1) Name and Title Gary Tipler	(2) Organization Represented (if any) Research and Nominations Committee
(3) Address 1118 E. Dayton, Madison	(4) Telephone Number 257-9335
(5) Date Nomination Form Was Prepared February, 1975	

City of Madison Landmarks Commission
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (4)

VII.(7) Significance of Nominated Property and Conformance to Designation Criteria:

The nomination fulfills the criteria for landmark status in sections one and two of the four categories of significance. That is to say that the structure in question is identified with historic personages and reflects through documentation the cultural, political, and social history of the community.

Judge Braley was known as a Shakespearean scholar and a patron of the literary efforts of Ella Wheeler as evidenced in her memorial address before the State Historical Society just two days after the Judges death. (see addendum, p.5) ; ;

Although Ella Wheeler Wilcox was not a great poetess, her romantic optimism appealed to an age in which she lived and wrote. While accruing a great following across the nation her works played a significant role in a changing American society.

Judge Braley also had some impact on the political climate at least locally. He became political editors for both the Wisconsin Daily Patriot in 1864 and the Madison Democrat in 1868 during the presidential election campaigns.

Being a man of prominence and distinction he built his home on a then prestigious street in a well to do neighborhood. Though not as pretentious as some his home was a lasting statement that he had 'made it'. Though the street and neighborhood have changed this structure retains the dignity and prominence the whole of Henry Street must have had.

Arthur B. Braley

Arthur B. Braley was born in Perry, Wyoming County, New York on February 11, 1824. He was the only son of Rufus and Hepzee Braley. His father was born in the town of Adams, Mass. and was among the early settlers of western New York. His mother's name was Foster, and her father, Daniel Foster was a soldier in the Revolutionary army and was at the battle of Monmouth Church.

Arthur Braley lost his father at age fifteen and went to live with a wealthy relative where he studied Shakespeare. In the spring of 1845 he began the study of law.

In 1846 he came to Wisconsin and settled at Delavan and there completed his studies of law while he busied himself as a real estate agent in adjacent towns.

In 1848 he first visited Madison and was admitted to the bar that year and came to reside here in 1852.

On February 11, 1855 he married Miss Philinda Stevens.

In 1856 when the village of Madison became an organized city he was elected Police Justice for three terms of two years each. He returned to private practice in 1861.

During the presidential campaign of 1864 he became editor of the Wisconsin Daily Patriot and resigned that position after the election. He was then chosen alderman of the first ward - an office he held for three years.

In 1868 he was elected city attorney of Madison and in the summer and fall of the same year he became the principal political editor of the Madison Democrat. "As a political writer he took a high rank, and his articles were greatly admired and often quoted for their vigor and power." He resigned that position also after the election.

In 1872 he was again elected Police Justice. It was this term that the court was reorganized and converted into the municipal court for the city and the county and in 1874 he was elected judge of this court for a term of six years and was re-elected in 1880 and in 1886.

It was in May of 1876 that he purchased the lot at the corner of Henry and Gilman from Levi B. Vilas and the existing house was

probably constructed during 1876-1877.

In 1879 he lost his wife but in April of 1880 he again married a Miss Alta E. Jordan of Allegany, New York.

On December 31, 1889 Judge Braley died at his home. He was a frequent contributor to the newspapers and other periodicals on political and literary topics. One person who was close to him whom he undoubtedly influenced to some degree was the poetess Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

Ella Wheeler was born at Old Johnstown, Rock County on Nov. 5, 1850. At age 3 her family moved to a farm in Westport. At the age of twelve Ella began contributing her romantic poems to the New York Mercury and Frank Leslie's Bazaar, however, they printed her works but never gave her credit. This was unsatisfactory to her ambitious nature so she sent second copies of the poems to country newspapers. When she forwarded a poem entitled "King and Siren" to the Weekly Wisconsin State Journal it brought forth praise from David Atwood.

Soon after she was sent an invitation to the General and Mrs. Atwoods's 'silver wedding' reception thus attaining the social acceptance of those she respected.

The first poem she wrote for a public occasion was read on Decoration Day by Major Mears, and both the Madison Democrat and the State Journal gave it good reviews.

Soon after when the Grand Army of the Republic held its reunion in Madison in 1872, Ella produced a piece in praise of Generals Grant and Sheridan, the latter being present to hear her effort. Major Mears officiated, and his splendid elocution brought approbation. After the Journal review, General Fairchild, then governor, presented himself at the Braley residence and congratulated the poetess on her work.

Her first ambitious work 'Maurine' was encouraged by David Atwood and when it was published in book form the Journal was kind in its criticisms.

Perhaps her best known poem is the one called 'Solitude' which was written in the home of Judge Braley in February of 1883 and was subsequently published in the New York 'Sun' on Feb. 21st.

The poem begins with the lines...

"Laugh and the world laughs with you.

Weep and you weep alone.

For the sad old earth must borrow its mirth,

But has troubles enough of its own ..."

In 1883 she had also published her "Poems of Passion" which

quickly became controversial across the nation. The controversy was that she being unmarried did not bind herself to the Late-Victorian moral philosophies of the times. In just two years 60,000 copies were sold. While the controversy over the "Poems of Passion" was at its height Ella Wheeler married. Among her suitors was the poet James Whitcomb Riley, but their romance ended when they met. It was Robert Wilcox, a silversmith, that she chose. They went east to live on Long Island Sound in Connecticut in a home known to thousands as 'the Bungalow'. "Here Ella held court, took milk baths, effected the Grecian style of dress, bleached her hair, promoted various cults and fads, and generally basked in the adulation of a large public eager for her gems of wisdom."

Addendum 1

Excerpts from
A Memorial Address
in reference to the late Judge Braley

February 2, 1890
by Ella Wheeler Wilcox

" He was the agent from whom my father rented the house in which I was born and it was from his well-filled library that I gained my first knowledge of books. His editorial pen gave some of my earliest local literary efforts encouragement, and during a period of fully twenty years I was a frequent guest in his home."