

B. HARLEY BRADLEY HOUSE
701 South Harrison Avenue
Kankakee
Kankakee County
Illinois

HABS IL-327
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS
FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

B. HARLEY BRADLEY HOUSE

HABS NO. IL-327

- Location: 701 South Harrison Avenue, Kankakee, Kankakee County, Illinois
- Present Owner and Occupant: Mr. and Mrs. Gaines B. Hall
- Present Use: Private Residence and Interpretative House Museum
- Significance: Built in 1901, the B. Harley Bradley House is considered by the Frank Lloyd Wright Conservancy as being one of the earliest, if not the first, house Wright designed in the groundbreaking Prairie style of architecture.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1901. B. Harley Bradley, a Kankakee, Illinois businessman, was given the 701 South Harrison Avenue lot by his father-in-law, Warren Hickox, Sr. in 1900. Together Bradley and his wife, Anna Hickox Bradley, and his brother-in-law, Warren Hickox, Jr. and his wife, Laura Laparle Hickox, hired the great American architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, to design both of their houses on South Harrison Avenue in 1900.
2. Architect: Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959) was recognized as “the greatest American architect of all time” by the American Institute of Architects in 1991. The Bradley House is considered the earliest and most complete example of Wright incorporating art glass windows, interior furnishings, and landscaping into his design.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Reference is to the B. Harley Bradley House National Register Nomination dated, 22 April 2009, prepared by Mardene Hinton, Kankakee, Illinois Historic Commission.

1895 Warren Hickox, Sr. Estate to deeds Parcel #17-05-323-019 (701 South Harrison Avenue) in the City of Kankakee to Anna Hickox.

1900 B. Harley Bradley and Anna Hickox Bradley build the B. Harley Bradley House at 701 South Harrison Avenue as their primary residence.

1913 B. Harley Bradley Estate sells the B. Harley Bradley House to A.E. Cook.

- 1915 A. E. Cook sells the B. Harley Bradley House to Joseph Dodson. Dodson makes it his primary residence.
- 1949 Joseph Dodson Estate sells the B. Harley Bradley House to Mrs. James F. Nellis, Sr. and William Lord.
- 1953 Mrs. James F. Nellis and William Lord sell the B. Harley Bradley House to Marvin Hammack and Ray Schimel. Hammack and Schimel convert the B. Harley Bradley House into “Yesteryear” restaurant. They add a non-contributing addition to the rear of the house.
- 1984 Hamack and Schimel sell the B. Harley Bradley House to Richard Murray and Bradley Hockholder.
- 1986 Murray and Hockholder sell the B. Harley Bradley House to Stephen Small. Small attempts to renovate the restaurant but is kidnapped and murdered. The renovation is stopped.
- 1990 Stephen Small Estate deeds the B. Harley Bradley House to Nancy Small who sells it to Lee Thacker, Robert LeBeau, Michael Deitchweiler and Ron Moline. Thacker, LeBeau, Deitchweiler remove the rear non-contributing addition and renovate the house to become their law offices.
- 2005 Thacker, et al sells the B. Harley Bradley House to Gaines and Sharon Hall. The Halls restore the B. Harley Bradley House, including the stable, and turn it into a house museum and their primary residence.
4. Builder, Contractor: Charles Childs
5. Original plans and construction: The B. Harley Bradley House is a 6000 square feet residence on two floors with a 3000 square feet basement; it is connected by an open breezeway to a 3000 square feet stable which has also has two floors. It has an exterior stucco finish, dominant horizontal lines, low pitched cross gabled roofs with large overhangs and ribbon art glass casement windows. All of these features are typically found in a Prairie style residence. The main entrance is on the north façade beneath a broad carriage porch. The stable is located the rear or west side of the property. The interior has a cruciform plan with large chimney centered in the house. The living room has a large fireplace, false beams and a large bay window. Flanking the living room, there is a vestibule on the north side and the dining room on the south side along with a large porch, which has been recently enclosed with tempered glass. The staircase is behind the chimney. On the west end of the first floor, there is a large sitting room, dressing room, butler’s pantry and kitchen. These rooms are accessed by a hallway which runs north-to-south. On the second floor, there are four bedrooms, the master bedroom is located above the living room and it has a similar large bay window as the living

room, facing east. The south end of the second floor has a large sleeping porch, which has been enclosed recently with tempered glass.

6. Alterations and additions: The B. Harley Bradley House has had numerous additions built on it when it was converted into a restaurant. The largest addition was a commercial kitchen which occupied the back courtyard space between the stable and the main residence. All of the incongruent additions have been removed in 2005 when the Halls restored the house to its original Wright design.

B. Historical Context:

The B. Harley Bradley House is an example of Prairie Style architecture. The style originated in the Oak Park and River Forest suburbs of Chicago during the period from 1900 to 1920. Frank Lloyd Wright is considered the master of this style and the buildings he designed during the early stage of his long and prolific career embody all of the hallmarks of the Prairie Style—horizontal orientation, ribbon art glass, a direct relationship between the interior and the landscape, and cruciform plans that center around the fireplace and hearth. Noted historians of Wright's work debate what was the first true Prairie style house by Wright. Alan Hess, author of *Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie Houses*, states that the Ward Willits House in Highland Park, Illinois is the first Prairie House. Thomas Heinz, author of *The Vision of Frank Lloyd Wright*, states that the B. Harley Bradley House is the first Prairie Style House. Both the Willits House and the Bradley House were built in 1901.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The building is considered one of the earliest, if not the first, building designed and built in the Prairie style by Frank Lloyd Wright.
2. Condition of fabric: The building underwent a comprehensive and historically accurate restoration in 2007. It has 82 of its 90 art glass windows; only the main porch and the sleeping porch have incongruent additions—the addition of large plate glass enclosures in the porch openings. The stable has been adapted into a gift shop and has a new accessible restroom in the old carriage area of the stable. Other than these changes, everything in the B. Harley Bradley House is as designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 95 feet, 7 inches by 60 feet, 2 inches. The main building and the stable are two-story.

2. Foundations: The basement walls are composed of brick and stone and are 18 inches thick.
3. Walls: Above grade walls are covered with painted Portland cement based stucco. Heavy timber planks define the horizontal lines of the residence, most notably the water table and the sills of the ribbon windows that run across the residence. Heavy timber posts and beams accent the sitting porches, gable ends and the carriage porch.
4. Structural system, framing: Dimensional lumber balloon framing is found throughout the building and the stable. The roof is framed with dimensional two by four and two by six lumber with one by six roofing planking.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: On the south side of the main house, there is a large sitting porch on the first floor and a sleeping porch on the second floor. The roofs of both porches have large overhangs, and are supported by large timber posts and beams. On the north side there is a large carriage porch with a roof with large overhangs, beams encased in stucco and large stucco encased piers. On the east main façade, there are two gable hood overhangs at the entry doors which connect the living room to a large exterior terrace which is defined by a low stucco wall that is capped with large timber planks. On the west, or rear, elevation, there is a small balcony connecting the kitchen to the back yard. It is five feet above grade.
6. Chimneys: The main house has a center chimney which finished with stucco that matches the house. A copper cap is placed over the chimney. The stable has a small stove flu chimney which is also finished with stucco.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main door, located in a vestibule off of the carriage porch is a 4 feet, 0 inches by 6 feet, 6 inches large quarter sawn oak door with one recessed wood panel of book matched quarter sawn oak. A similar door is found on the west side at the covered breezeway. The east façade has two French doors that are peaked to form a triangle when they are closed; art glass is set in each door panel. The porch door is also a large French door with art glass.
 - b. Windows and shutters: All of the windows are casement windows except for the non-contributing tempered glass windows at the porches. The front façade casement windows all have elaborate “tulip” motif leaded art glass with color stain glass accents. The west rear windows are casements with simple wood mullions and clear glass panes.
8. Roof: The roof on the main house is a cruciform gable roof with the center gable bisecting the main section at the chimney. The gable ends are slightly canted upward. The roofs have large overhangs and eaves with stucco soffits. The fascia is simple and canted slightly. There are lower gable roofs at the first floor ceiling level. The

stable has gable roofs, which are asymmetrical with large overhangs and matching fascia and soffits. All of the roofs are covered with wood sawn shingles. There are no dormers or cupolas on either building.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plans: See drawings HABS No. IL-327 for floor plans.
2. Stairways: There are two stairways in the main house, a main stairway and a service stairway. The main stairway is a switch back stair with a landing three steps up from the main floor and a large switch back landing after the first run of steps. The balustrade is made out of quarter sawn oak and are stained. The service stair is a simple winding stair with a wall mounted railing. The stable has a simple switch back stair with a small landing.
3. Flooring: Flooring throughout the main house is stained quarter sawn oak. The stable has a concrete slab covered with carpet; the second floor of the stable is wood and is covered with carpet.
4. Walls and ceiling finish: The walls in the main house are all plaster with a fresco finish. The living room, entry areas and dining room all have elaborate false beams and are finished with matching plaster. The stable walls and ceilings are covered with stained pine bead board.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The entire main house either has one panel book matched stained quarter sawn oak doors or French doors with art glass. The dining room doors are French doors with art glass both at the living room/dining room doorway and the exterior doorway at the large porch. Door casings are all stained oak with backband moldings. Cased openings are all stained oak with similar moldings. The stable has similar doors and doorways.
 - b. Windows: The typical windows for the main house (except on the east rear elevation) are casements with elaborate art glass panels. The east side windows and the stable have wood casements with a simple cruciform light configuration with wood mullions and clear panes.
6. Decorative features and trim: The living room and dining room has an elaborate cornice shelf which runs across the entire room; there are elaborate false beams across the living room. Square posts frame a cased opening between the entire vestibule and the north library vestibule in the living room. The living room has a large oak paneled sitting nook. The mantle trim is composed of simple beveled trim which frames the small fire box opening. The fireplace surround is made out of Roman brick. Flanking the fireplace, there is an arch and a vaulted ceiling at the southwest corner of the living room and a cased opening with a decorative oak beam on the north side. The dining room has built-in side board with glass doors on the

- west side and a simple built-in table on the east side. An elaborate light diffuser which once had art glass is set over the dining room table between the large false beams. The south sitting room and the southwest dressing rooms all have built-in cabinets which are stained oak.
7. Hardware: All of the hardware is brass; doorknobs are cast brass and are octagonal in shape.
 8. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: Originally the main house was heated with steam generated from a coal burning boiler. Radiators were hidden under decorative features such as sitting nooks and cabinetry and still remain intact but are inoperable. A new forced air heat pump air conditioner and forced air furnace was installed during the last restoration in 2005-2007.
 - b. Lighting: Historic lighting includes simple brass sconces with opaque glass globe shades. A large decorative chandelier is in the living room.
 - c. Plumbing: All of the plumbing has been replaced throughout the house and stable during the last renovation. There are two bathrooms, a powder room and a full bath on the first floor of the main house and a master bathroom and a full bathroom on the second floor. The stable has one ADA compliant bathroom beneath the stairway. It was installed in 2007 when the stable was converted into a gift shop. The kitchen has the original soapstone sink.

D. Site:

1. Historic landscape design: The B. Harley Bradley House is the last building on the west side of South Harrison Avenue. The Kankakee River runs southeast to northwest and defines the site's southern boundary. There is a small landing with steps leading down to the water at the southern end of the building. The house sits approximately four feet beneath Harrison Avenue. It has a large driveway which connects the carriage porch to the street. The drive also wraps around the carriage porch and terminates with a cul-du-sac which faces the covered breezeway. South of the covered breezeway, a small yard was designed for the family milking cow. An ornamental hedge defines the east side of the main house and there are several mature deciduous trees placed randomly throughout the one acre lot.
2. Outbuildings: There no outbuildings on the site.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural drawings: The Bradley House Drawings, 1900. Frank Lloyd Wright Drawing Collection, William Wesley Peters Library. the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture, Taliesin West, Scottsdale, Arizona.
- B. Early Views: Not applicable.
- C. Interviews:

Gaines B. Hall, October 20, 2009, 701 South Harrison Avenue, Kankakee, Illinois 60901.

Paul S. Kruty, November 5, 2009, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign School of Architecture 608 Taft Drive, Champaign, Illinois 61820.

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary and Unpublished Sources:

Kankakee County Office of Deeds, Kankakee, Illinois
Kankakee Historical Society

National Register Nominations:

Schwade, JoAnne, Hinton, Mardene, Lind, Rosalind, Riverview Historic District, April 16, 1986. Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. Springfield, Illinois. Retrieved May 28, 2010 from <http://gis.hpa.state.il.us/hargis/PDFs/12304.pdf> .

Hinton, Mardene. B. Harley Bradley House, April 22, 2009. Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. Springfield, Illinois. Retrieved May 28, 2010 from <http://gis.hpa.state.il.us/hargis/PDFs/12304.pdf> .

2. Secondary Sources:

Hess, Alan, Alan Weintraub and Kathryn Smith. *Frank Lloyd Wright Prairie Houses*. New York: Rizzoli Press, 2006.

Heinz, Thomas. *The Vision of Frank Lloyd Wright*. Surrey, U.K.: Chartwell Books, 2006.

Levine, Neil. *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Architecture Press, 1996.

Storrer, William Allin. *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright: A Complete Catalog*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The B. Harley Bradley House was recorded during the fall of 2009 by a team of students from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign School of Architecture under the guidance of Professor Paul Kapp and teaching assistant, Laura M. Stoller. The students on the team were Monica Alicea-Matos, Phillippe Brochart, Scott Farbman, Wei Gao, Mathew Goyak, Jonathan Klocke, Konrad Laskowski, Naomi Lipke, Marlo Messer, Iris Sacher, Catherine Wang, and Lili Xu.