

WASHINGTON

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

For HCRS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Hunt House  
and/or common Dunham-Hunt Museum

2. Location

street & number 304 Cedar Avenue N/A not for publication  
city, town St. Charles N/A vicinity of congressional district 14th  
state Illinois code 012 county Kane code 089

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Miss Jane Dunham (Primary Owner)  
St. Charles Historical Society (Secondary Owner)  
street & number 232 Kenston Court  
city, town Geneva N/A vicinity of state Illinois

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kane County Government Center - Recorder of Deeds  
street & number 719 South Batavia Avenue  
city, town Geneva state Illinois

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Architecture and Historic Urban Neighborhoods on the Fox River has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no  
date 1977  federal  state  county  local  
depository for survey records Kane County Urban Development  
city, town Geneva state Illinois

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Built in 1841, the Hunt House is credited as being the oldest brick dwelling in St. Charles. It is prominently sited on the northwest corner of Third and Cedar. The bricks came from the nearby Penny Brickyard.

The original house was in the Greek Revival Style, characterized by the simple, rectangular plan, and the strong gable roof. The front and rear entrances are both excellent examples of Greek Revival doors, sidelights, and transom. The asymmetrical aspect of the front facade is original, resulting from the chimney placement. Prior to 1855, the side and rear additions were built. This is substantiated by the Survey of St. Charles prepared by S. Bethel Architect/Surveyor, dated April 25, 1855. It indicates that in 1855 the form of the house was comprised of the original house (a 2 story brick element), a 2 story frame addition directly behind the original house, and a one story brick addition flanking the 2 story addition on the north, east, and west sides. The fascia detail on the first floor addition suggests a change in architectural thought from the stoic simplicity of the Greek Revival to the more carefree bargeboard detailing of the Gothic Revival cottage. The second floor was added to the west side of the original one story addition between 1855 and 1920. Building permits can be accurately traced back to 1920 substantiating that no addition has been made since then. It is assumed that this addition was made in the 1870's when the Frank Hunt family lived in the house with the Bela Hunt family.

As the photographs show, the expression of the front facade has changed at least twice. First, the Eastlake Style porch was added. Later it was converted to an enclosed brick porch. The porch was removed, as part of the restoration carried on by Jane Dunham in 1980. The porch removal revealed that the doorway to the porch was originally a window. The window has since been restored.

The interior of the house has seen a form of adaptive use. The second floor has remained an apartment, while the first floor has become the Dunham-Hunt Museum.

Care was taken in the design of the displays not to alter the spacial interrelationships of the rooms. The original flooring, trim, windows, doors, and door hardware have been preserved. Even the wood plank "kitchen" ceiling and hand sawn siding in the hall remain. The furnishing and decorating of each room reflects the period of each of the exhibits.

In the basement, the structure is expressed, and evidence of the different additions can be seen. The foundation walls of the original house are stone. The foundation wall of the east side of the one story addition is stone on the exterior, with exposed clay on the interior. There is still evidence of shovel marks from the excavation. The floor construction in the original house is 7 inch wide wood planks spanning across 8 inch diameter tree trunks, spaced 24 inches on center. In some places, the bark still remains. The tree trunks then bear along the perimeter of the foundation wall, and on the 7 inch by 9 inch hand hewn wood beams bisecting the house. The additions have 2 inch by 7 3/4 inch rough sawn joists with a 6 1/2 inch subfloor.

The current restoration uncovered a simple, brick fireplace in the basement. It is believed that this was for the original kitchen. Examination of the first floor framing shows no evidence of headering for a stair. Access to the kitchen was from the exterior. A partial retaining wall still remains in the basement, which held back the ground allowing entry to the basement through a rear door.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Historic
	Built 1841			
<b>Specific dates</b>	Addition-Pre 1855	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	Unknown	Association

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Dunham-Hunt Museum has been owned by only two families since it was constructed in 1841. In 1980, it left the Hunt family to the Dunham Family when Miss Effie Hunt sold the house to Miss Jane Dunham. Both families were pioneers in the St. Charles area and were catalysts in its growth and prosperity.

The grandfather of Miss Effie Hunt was Major Bela Thaxter Hunt. He was born October 19, 1812 in Abington, Plymouth County, Massachusetts. His father was one of the first shoe manufacturers in New England.

Major Hunt left Boston in 1833 and eventually settled here in 1836 as the result of a business trip by an employee of his brother. Joseph Hunt sent John Holbrook to Chicago in 1835 to sell goods. It was here that Holbrook met Ira Minard, who had arrived in 1833. Minard convinced Holbrook that the settlement of Charleston, west of Chicago, was a good place for a town. Holbrook then entered into an agreement with Ira Minard and Read Ferson for one-half interest in the townsite. When Hunt arrived, the settlement was approximately twenty-five acres. Soon after, Hunt pushed for expansion, and generated the purchase of approximately two hundred acres from Evan Shelby. The partnership of Bela Hunt, Ira Minard, and Read Ferson lasted until 1867.

Major Bela T. Hunt is considered one of the honored pioneers, settlers, entrepreneurs, developers, and leading citizens of Charleston, and later St. Charles. Among his accomplishments are the following:

1. With Ferson and Minard, Hunt constructed the first frame building in Charleston (the company store) in 1836. This same year they also completed the dam.
2. In 1837 he bought out the interest of David Howard and Dr. Nathan Collins for their small hotel. After making additions, it was reopened July 4, 1838. It was in this hotel on March 21, 1838 the first election took place. The settlement of Charleston was to become the town of St. Charles. Hunt eventually traded the hotel to Daniel Clark for land in DuPage County.
3. Between 1838-1839, he erected two commercial buildings downtown. He rented a third corner to Croes and Brownlee for a general store in 1838.
4. In 1838, Hunt established a mercantile business.
5. In 1839 he was listed in the Chicago Directory, referenced to a business of feather beds and mattresses on South Water Street.
6. In 1840, he erected a brick and stone building on the northeast corner of Main and First Avenues. That, with the two adjacent buildings, was said to collectively be the most imposing business structure in Kane County.

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7. In 1841, he was elected the first Kane County Treasurer.
8. In 1841, Hunt, S.B. Flint, and Ira Minard erected a building on the east side of the river and filled it with machinery to make linseed oil. This existed for several years until it became difficult to obtain flax seed. The building was then used as a cabinet shop, and later a dry goods store.
9. Hunt's most prosperous business was the manufacture of paper. In 1844, he bought the interest in a mill from Haines and Simmons. In 1845, a mill was erected, and said to be the first of its kind north and west of the Ohio River. By 1846, the company was known as Hunt, Butler, and Hunt. The mill on the east side of the river was then enlarged and improved. In 1847, a second mill was built on the west side of the river. In 1856, this burned, but was rebuilt even larger, to employ eighty people.
10. In 1849, Hunt was authorized to sell subscriptions for capital stock in the St. Charles Branch Railroad.
11. After the completion of the St. Charles Branch Railroad in December of 1849, Bela Hunt and Rufus King built a large warehouse and started a lumber and grain business.
12. In 1850, Hunt built a tannery on the east side of the river and operated it until 1861. The Kane County Directory of 1859-60 lists Hunt's occupation as a harness manufacturer.
13. In 1856, Hunt operated a boot and shoe business on Lake Street, in Chicago.
14. From 1858-1890 Hunt maintained a hardware business. The Kane County Gazetteer and Directory of 1888-1890 lists Hunt as being in hardware, stoves and tinware, as well as a farmer with 147 1/2 acres.
15. Hunt was a major in the Civil War.
16. Bela Thaxter Hunt died October 23, 1908.

The family of Harriet Lathrop, Bela's wife, settled in St. Charles in 1842. She was born April 15, 1822 in Victory, New York. Geneology shows that she was a descendant of William Bradford of the Plymouth Colony. Harriet Lathrop married Bela Hunt in 1842. She died June 10, 1904 in St. Charles.

Frank B. Hunt, the son of Bela and Harriet Hunt, was the third mayor of St. Charles. He served from 1881-1885, 1899-1905, and 1907-1911. He lived with his family and the Bela Hunts in the Hunt House at 304 Cedar.

Edwin M. Hunt, son of Wilbur Hunt (city attorney) was the eleventh mayor of St. Charles. He ran against his uncle, Frank B. Hunt, in the mayoral election, and won. He served as mayor from 1911-1921.

Jane Dunham, as with Effie Hunt, is a descendant of pioneers in the St. Charles area—the Dunhams on her father's side and the Wards on her mother's side. Her grandfather, Solomon Dunham, came to St. Charles Township in 1835 from New York State. He first built a log cabin, then a house similar to the Dunham-Hunt House as early as 1837. The bricks were handmade by the Dunhams. The house eventually became the Dunham Woods Club.

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Solomon Dunham was one of the first county supervisors. Her grandfather, Mark Dunham, built the Oaklawn Farm in Wayne, just east of St. Charles. He went to France and purchased large Percheron draft horses to pull the McCormick Reapers. Oaklawn became a large scale breeding center acclaimed nationally and internationally.

The Ward family was also a family of distinction. Calvin Ward settled in Charleston in 1836, from Massachusetts, where he purchased 120 acres of land from the claim of Evan Shelby. Prudence Ward, his daughter, was the first schoolteacher in Charleston. She married Dean Ferson in 1836, which represented the first marriage in Charleston. The Ward House, when seen from the railroad bridge, was said to have a view that rivaled the Alhambra in Spain.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .29 Acres

Quadrangle name Geneva, Illinois

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A 

16	3911320	4640960
Zone	Easting	Northing

B 

Zone	Easting	Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 3 and 4 (except the north 75 feet of said lots) and all of Lots 5 and 6 in Block 22 of the Original Town of St. Charles, in the City of St. Charles, Kane County, Illinois.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bruce R. Dahlquist, A.I.A.

organization Bruce R. Dahlquist, Architect date April 26, 1982

street & number 472 North McClean Boulevard telephone 312-742-4063

city or town Elgin state Illinois

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature David Kennedy

title Director date 9/24/82

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Division

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1. History of St. Charles, Illinois - Revised and Corrected, Samuel W. Durant, 1855, Chapters IX, XIV, XV, and XIX
2. Ferslew's Kane County Gazetter Directory 1857, Published by Ferslew & Co., Printed by Wilson & Cockroft
3. Chicago Directory, 1839
4. The Biographical Record of Kane County, Illinois, 1898, S.J. Clark Publishing Co.
5. Our Community, Clauter and Williams, 1967, p. 187
6. St. Charles Chronicle, May 22, 1930, "Landmarks of St. Charles"
7. Fox Valley Mirror, "Three Progressive Cities of the Fox River Valley", February 1939, p. 213
8. St. Charles Chronicle, July 18, 1962, article re: F.B. Hunt
9. St. Charles Chronicle, August 22, 1962, article re: E.M. Hunt
10. Interview with Miss Effie Hunt by the St. Charles Historical Society, Margaret L. Brown, April 29, 1975
11. Reflections of St. Charles - A History from 1833 - 1976, Ruth Seen Pearson, 1976, Brethren Press, Elgin, Illinois
12. Kane County Abstract, 1857
13. Abstract of Title - Lots 3,4,5, and 6 in Block 22 of the Original Town of St. Charles, June 26, 1980
14. The Wayne-DuPage Hunt, Robert Sirotek, 1980, Photopress Inc., Broadview, Illinois pp. 23-26
15. The Daily Courier News, August 13, 1980, article re: Jane Dunham Purchase/Restoration
16. Dunham-Hunt House Description of Exhibits, Jane Dunham, 1981
17. Application to the Society of Mayflower Descendants by Bradley Hunt Gunter
18. Architecture and Historic Urban Neighborhoods on the Fox River, Kane County Urban Development, 1976-1977, Geneva, Illinois

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19. The Past and Present of Kane County, Illinois, Wm. LeBaron Jr. & Co., Chicago, 1878, pp. 340-343
20. Kane County Directory for 1859-60, John Bailey, Press and Tribune Steam Book and Job Print, Chicago, 1859, p. 99& 131
21. Kane County Gazetteer and Directory for 1888-1890, Wm. Evans, News Advocate Printing and Binding House, 1888
22. Yesterday and Today- The Official History of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad, 1910

