

Ravenswood Farm, Main House  
(Leonard Farm, Main House)  
Rural Route 1  
Bunceton vicinity  
Cooper County  
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1839

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1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

RAVENSWOOD FARM  
(Leonard Farm)

HABS No. MO-1839

Location: Northwest of Bunceton, Rural Route 1, Bunceton vicinity,  
Cooper County, Missouri

Present Owner and  
Occupant: Charles W. Leonard

Present Use: Residence, farm, museum

Significance: The house and outbuildings represent a rare survival of an intact late nineteenth-century, gentleman's farm residence. Descendents of the original owners still occupy the farm, and many original records and documents still survive, along with original furnishings, wall-paper, and other appointments in the house itself. Moreover, the farm occupies a large tract of land which gives the setting integrity.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection, main house: 1880
2. Architect: W. Angelo Powell of St. Joseph, Missouri
3. Original and subsequent owners: Charles Edward Leonard  
Nathaniel Nelson Leonard  
Charles Willard Leonard
4. Alterations and additions, main house:
  - 1907-1908: Replacement of the original front porch with the current monumental portico; tower altered
  - Addition of wrought-iron balcony at second-floor level on the west facade and alteration of second-floor bedroom windows to French doors for access to the balcony
  - Structure at southeast corner of the house added; contains morning room and breakfast room on the first floor, a bedroom and sun porch on the second, and water tank storage area in the attic

- 1913: Northeast porch enclosed to become a storage area and locked pantry (now used as a display room)
- Second-floor playroom constructed above the former northeast porch
- Second story "bridge" connecting the playroom and summer (old) kitchen built
- 1914: conservatory/greenhouse with terrace porch and power plant added
- 1928 Equipment removed from power plant, which was modified to serve as an annex to the conservatory/greenhouse area
- 1945 Steam heating system added to entire main house

B. Historical Context:

Nathaniel Leonard, the founder of "Ravenswood" farm, was born in Woodstock, Vermont in 1799. He went to Missouri in 1824, after spending two years as a fur trader in Chicago. When his original house burned in 1850, he built a frame house at the site of the present brick one. According to the Slave Census of 1850, Nathaniel Leonard did own slaves. Thus Ravenswood gives an example of the use of slaves in building up a large homestead before the Civil War.

The next owner of Ravenswood was Nathaniel's son. Born in 1839, Charles Edward Leonard served in the State Militia in the Civil War. In 1872 he married Nadine Nelson, daughter of a wealthy Missouri banker. In 1880 Charles Leonard built the present brick house, largely paid for by his father-in-law.

Charles and Nadine Leonard had one son, Nathaniel Nelson Leonard. In 1909 he married the daughter of a well-to-do Chicago manufacturer of electric and gas fixtures. Renovations to the house followed not long thereafter, in 1913 and 1914. Charles Willard Leonard, a direct descendent of this pair, currently owns the house and farm.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

Architectural character: The original main house represented a fairly straightforward Italianate Revival type. Windows have elaborated crowns, and decorative brackets support the eaves. Later additions have introduced the Colonial Revival element, as seen in the monumental portico and the tower decorations on the front elevation.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Structure is irregular in form, two-story plus attic and basement. House measures 54 feet north-south and 125 feet east-west.
2. Foundations: Coursed rubble faced with ashlar limestone blocks on the major exterior walls. The foundations of rear walls and interior partitions are not faced with cut stone.
3. Walls: Walls contain an inner core of dark red, unglazed brick fired on the farm, laid in common bond, and faced with a hand-fired brick veneer.
4. Structural systems: Exterior walls and interior masonry partitions support the wooden floors and roofs.
5. Porches: The house has three, none of which is original to the 1880 construction. The monumental portico extends across the west facade. On the south is a platform porch, along with another porch at the southeast corner.
6. Chimneys: There are five, corresponding to the location of interior fireplaces. Each is capped with brick belt courses.
7. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Low-pitched on outside planes, covered with grey slate. Asphalt covers upper portion of roof.
  - b. Eaves: Wood with ornamental wood brackets.
  - c. Towers: Tower on front facade with crenellated parapet and neo-Classical swags.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: An elaboration of the central hall surrounded by rooms. The many additions to the house add complexity to the floor plan. It is basically the same on the second floor as on the first, although on the second floor it does not extend as far to the east, and room usage is different.
2. Stairways: The main staircase is located off the main central hall to the north.
3. Decorative features and trim: The first floor features ornamental plaster cornices, medallions above the lighting fixtures and marble, brick and tile fireplaces. Woodwork, doors, and stairways are all original.
4. Original furnishings: House contains many of its original furnishings as well as original wallpaper in some rooms.

D. Site:

Main facade of house faces west toward Highway 5.

PART III. SOURCE OF INFORMATION

National Register of Historic Places nomination form, "Ravenswood," compiled by the Restoration Design Class (P. Egbert, C. Kerr, A. Needle, P. Ryan, P. Snadon, and J. Steinkamp) of University of Missouri, Columbia, July, 1973.

Prepared by: Robert Buerglener,  
Historian, Historic  
American Buildings  
Survey, July, 1988

ADDENDUM TO  
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