

Historical Marker - S570C - William Austin Burt / William Austin Burt (Marker ID#:S570C)



Front - Title/Description

William Austin Burt

Near this site lived William Austin Burt, inventor, legislator, surveyor, and millwright. Born in Massachusetts in 1792, Burt settled in this area in 1824, after spending several years in Erie County, New York. There he had been a justice of the peace, a school inspector, and a postmaster. In Michigan he worked as a land surveyor and a millwright, building over eight mills. He was a member of the Michigan Territorial Legislature in 1826-27. He served as Mount Vernon's first postmaster (1832-1856), a Macomb County Circuit Court judge (1833-1853), a state legislator (1853) and a deputy U. S. surveyor (1833-1853). Between 1833 and 1857 he and his five sons won acclaim for their accurate work on public land surveys. In 1857 Burt moved to Detroit, where he died in 1858.

Significant Date:

Statehood Era (1815-1860)

Registry Year: 1985 **Erected Date:** 1986

Marker Location

Address: 4300 Main Park Drive, Stoney Creek Metropark

City: Washington Township

State: MI **ZipCode:**

County: Macomb

Township: Shelby

Lat: 42.71170400 / **Long:** -83.07168900

Web URL:

Back - Title/Description

William Austin Burt

America's first patented typewriter was constructed by William Austin Burt in 1829 in a workshop located on this site. It was also here that Burt built the solar compass, patented in 1836, which was the prototype for those used today. Burt's compass became an indispensable instrument for surveying because it used the sun instead of the magnetic north as a fixed reference and was therefore unaffected by the magnetic fields of iron ore deposits. Burt also received a patent for an Equatorial Sextant. Among Burt's other accomplishments were the establishment of the northern point of the Michigan principal meridian in 1840, the discovery of the Marquette iron ore range in 1844 and the establishment of the northern portion of the Michigan Wisconsin boundary in 1847. In 1852 he assisted in surveying