

AD-A172 106

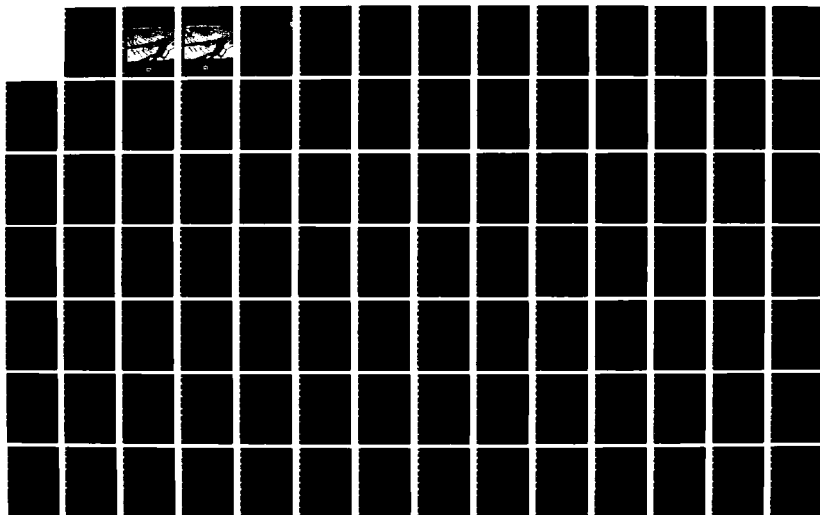
PRAIRIE DU CHIEN: URBAN CONSOLIDATION AND DECLINE  
1858-1938(U) ROTH LAB FOR PHYSICAL RESEARCH HARTFORD  
CONN R H ZEITLIN 1981

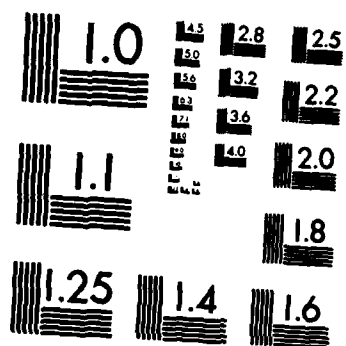
1/2

UNCLASSIFIED

F/G 13/13

NL





MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART  
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS-1963-A

**PRAIRIE DU CHIEN:  
URBAN CONSOLIDATION AND DECLINE  
1858-1930**

**RICHARD H. ZEITLIN**

AD-A172 106



**DTIC FILE COPY Flood Damage Reduction Project  
Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin**

This document has been approved  
for public release and sale; its  
distribution is unlimited.



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
St. Paul District**

**DTIC**  
SEP 22 1986  
**E**

86 9 22 0

**PRAIRIE DU CHIEN:  
URBAN CONSOLIDATION AND DECLINE  
1858—1930**

**RICHARD H. ZEITLIN**



**Flood Damage Reduction Project  
Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin**



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
St. Paul District**



UNCLASSIFIED

AD-A172106

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188 Exp. Date: Jun 30, 1986	
1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION <b>Unclassified</b>			1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS		
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY			3. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF REPORT  Approved for public release; distribution unlimited		
2b. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE			5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)		
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)			7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION		
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION  U.S. Army Engineer District		6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)	7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)		
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) 1135 U.S.P.O. & Custom House ST. Paul, MN 55101-1479			9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER		
8a. NAME OF FUNDING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION		8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)	10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS		
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)		PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.	PROJECT NO.	TASK NO.	WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) PRAIRIE DU CHIEN: URBAN CONSOLIDATION AND DECLINE, 1858-1930; Flood damage reduction project					
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) eitlin, Richard H.					
13a. TYPE OF REPORT Final		13b. TIME COVERED FROM _____ TO _____		14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) 1981?	
15. PAGE COUNT 155		16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION			
17. COSATI CODES			18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)		
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP	NONSTRUCTURAL FLOOD CONTROL WISCONSIN		
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)					
<p>This survey relates primarily to the area affected by the flood damage reduction project at Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. The purpose of the project is to evacuate and relocate citizens from their homes in the floodplain of the Mississippi River. Included with this study is a contextual background treatment of Prairie du Chien's history, roughly from the arrival of the railroad until 1930.</p> <p>Two methodologies have been used for this survey. For buildings classified as Preferred, an on-site inspection as well as structural analysis of each building was undertaken. For buildings categorized as Non-preferred, a systematic review of historical data as well as the physical inspection was conducted. Tax rolls from 1876-1930 provided much of the information. Deed searches were carried out as the situation required.</p>					
20. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT. <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS			21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION <b>Unclassified</b>		
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL			22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code)		22c. OFFICE SYMBOL

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	1
Methodology	3
Prairie du Chien: Urban Consolidation and Decline, 1885-1930	4
Bibliography	21
The Preferred Category	27
The Non-preferred Category	62
Recommendations	127

### MAPS

1. The Project Area (2 sections)
2. 1870 Bird's Eye (HABS)
3. 1876 Bird's Eye (HABS)
4. Farm Lot 35
5. The "Loop Line"
6. Pontoon Bridge Routes

### Plates

1. Pontoon Bridge (1st model) 1874-1885
2. Pontoon Bridge (2nd model) c. 1912
3. "Diamond Jo" Warehouse
4. Second (Rock) Fort Crawford, c. 1872
5. French Store, c. 1915
6. Flood of 1916
7. Flood of 1916, Dousman House Hotel
8. Clam Boats, 1910-1934
9. Western "Draw" Pontoon Bridge (2nd model), c. 1930's
10. Pontoon Bridge Patent (4 Sheets)



Accession For	
NTIS GRA&I	
DTIC TAB	
Unannounced	
Justification	
By	
Distribution/	
Availability Codes	
Dist	Avail and/or Special
A-1	

## INTRODUCTION

This survey relates primarily to the area affected by the Flood Damage Reduction Project in progress at Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. The purpose of the project, undertaken by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the city of Prairie du Chien, is to evacuate and relocate citizens from their homes in the floodplain of the Mississippi River. The project area, therefore, is bounded on the west by the Mississippi River and on the east by the lowest-lying areas of the city north and south of Blackhawk Avenue--roughly coinciding with Main Street (see Project Area Map Plates 1 and 2).

Two studies preceded this one. In 1976 Edgar Oerichbauer of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin undertook a literature survey relating to Prairie du Chien's fur trade and frontier outpost era, making note of potential sites of archeological and historic significance in his "Prairie du Chien, A Historical Survey." In 1978 a Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) team inventoried the structures which would be affected by the project in "Prairie du Chien: Historical and Architectural Resources." The HABS team classified the affected structures into three categories: Preferred, Non-preferred, and Excluded. According to the HABS survey, the 27 Preferred category buildings represented a unified resource, not because they were individually significant, but rather because they dated from the period of Prairie du Chien's regional and national importance as a city. Three of the Preferred structures were deemed potentially eligible for inclusion on the National Register.

The HABS survey made no comprehensive structural analysis of the buildings because the occupants still remained in most of the homes. The State Historic Preservation Officer questioned the HABS survey results on the basis of their classification of post-1876 structures as categorically Non-preferred. As a result, this study has been undertaken to examine the Non-preferred buildings, tracing their histories and inspecting them physically for potential historic value. A structural analysis of all Preferred buildings was also conducted.

Included within this study is a contextural background treatment of Prairie du Chien's history, roughly from the arrival of the railroad until 1930. Only two secondary works treat this period, the 1884 History of Crawford and Richland Counties, Wisconsin, and an article by the eminent geographer Glen T. Trewartha, published in 1932. As a result, a number of archival and manuscript sources have been utilized to further the understanding of the period. The most useful of these sources proved to be the Peter L. Scanlan papers.

Scanlan, a retired doctor, spent several decades compiling information relating to local Prairie du Chien history. His unpublished manuscripts, "The History of Crawford County" and the "History of Prairie du Chien" contain local historical material of great value. Scanlan's research notes were invaluable. Gaps still remain, however, and his study is more suggestive than conclusive in nature.

A number of individuals assisted with the research. Dale Klemme, the Housing and Urban Development Block Grant Coordinator for Prairie du Chien, showed me around the area and explained some of the project's various aspects. Don Munson, the curator of the Villa Louis, made available the archives and records under his care. William Howe, editor of the Prairie du Chien Courier-Press, provided useful information on local events and personalities. Martin Sprosty, the County Treasurer, explained the tax records. Lyall T. Johnson, the Register of Deeds, was a veritable gold mine of historical information.

Kay Thompson, Jack Holtzheuter, George Talbot, Rick Dexter, and John Penmann, all of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, provided considerable assistance. Finally, the citizens of Prairie du Chien who allowed this researcher to climb around in their attics and basements, make holes in their walls, and peel off sections of siding, deserve mention.

Each building was treated individually. The significance (or lack of it) of each building was noted. In addition, the results of this study are summarized in an accompanying abstract. A section of recommendations is also included.

## METHODOLOGY

Two methodologies have been used for this survey. For the buildings classified in the HABS report as Preferred, an on-site inspection as well as a structural analysis of each building was undertaken. The major structural components of the buildings and their condition are described. Recommendations, observations, and suggestions are presented. In certain cases, historical data not provided in the HABS survey appear, along with a summary of relevant details.

For the buildings categorized as Non-preferred, a systematic review of historical data as well as the physical inspection was conducted. Tax rolls from 1876-1930 provided much of the information. Deed searches were carried out as the situation required. A survey of the Federal Manuscript Census for 1870, 1880, and 1900 provided associational and background data concerning the people who were connected with the buildings.

PRAIRIE DU CHIEN  
URBAN CONSOLIDATION AND DECLINE  
1858-1930

Prairie du Chien is a tri-nodular city consisting of distinct settlement areas.<sup>1</sup> The Island of St. Friole was the original Prairie du Chien; it is known locally as the Fourth Ward and historically as the Main Village. Just east of the narrow Marais de St. Friole, on the Wisconsin mainland, arose the village of St. Friole, known for many years as the Upper Village (Upper Town or New Town) and today the heart of the city. South of the New Town, and separated from it by the grounds of the second (or Rock) Fort Crawford--at one time the largest fortification in the Northwest--arose Lower Town.<sup>2</sup> The Mississippi River on the west and a series of bluffs to the east further delineate the city's boundaries.

The Reverend Richard Cadle, founder of the Holy Trinity Episcopal Congregation at Prairie du Chien observed in 1837:

The settlement (of Prairie du Chien) commences about two miles above the mouth of the river Wisconsin, and from its southern to its northern extremity is four miles. It consists of ... villages. The first, on ascending the Mississippi, is one recently begun to be built, but where there are upwards of twenty buildings under contract. (Lower Town.)

At the distance of a mile from the site of this settlement is Fort Crawford (Rock, or second Fort Crawford completed 1829-32) ... and adjoining the Village is a place locally distinguished by the name of St. Freol (sic) containing the Indian Agency House, the Post Office, and the Court House for the County of Crawford. The settlements above described, consist chiefly of an English population.

About one quarter of a mile from the upper part of St. Friol (sic) is the old settlement of Prairie du Chien, which in high stages of the Mississippi River is insulated from the rest of the Prairie ... this village (original Main Village) is more compact than the other settlements, contains an establishment of the American Fur Company, and is principally a French population ...

The whole population of Prairie du Chien is from 1000-1200 persons, one third of whom are estimated as English and Protestant.<sup>3</sup>

Because French fur traders settled Prairie du Chien during the Colonial Era, the city inherited the French system of land division. Based on a unit of measurement known as the arpent (c. 192.5 ft.), the French system utilized such "natural" boundaries as streambeds for baselines of property divisions. Typically, French system lot sizes had different widths. Further complicating matters, three sets of French land claims

coexisted at Prairie du Chien. The Main Village lots on the island Fourth Ward (comprised of 37 properties of various widths) made up one of these sets. The Village of St. Friole contributed 20 Upper Village lots to the area's property divisions. Forty-three farm lots of different sizes completed the French land claims.<sup>4</sup>

The need to translate the French system into American units of measurement caused confusion, with the result that Prairie du Chien eventually underwent eight separate surveys over the years.<sup>5</sup> Even today, locating individual properties is a complicated process because of the inheritance of the French system and its imprecise boundaries. It became especially important to carry out conversion from the French system during periods of urban growth and resulting subdivisions. Prairie du Chien's confusing deeds records became the source of a series of litigational struggles involving boundary disputes contested by reference to French land claims.

Between 1855 and 1885 Prairie du Chien experienced the greatest sustained economic boom in its history. Long a center of fur trade and a military outpost of considerable importance, Prairie du Chien underwent a depression when these activities declined, as they did throughout the 1840's. Among the factors contributing to the town's economic woes were the removal of the Indians further west, the eventual abandonment of the Fort Crawford garrison culminating in the final departure of the military in 1855, and the trend of immigrants to seek opportunities in Iowa and Minnesota.<sup>6</sup>

While Prairie du Chien felt the economic downturn of the 1840's, not all citizens experienced hardship. Indeed, the leading French fur trade families (Dousman, Rolette, and Brisbois) all completed elaborate new homes near the Fourth Ward's riverfront, giving the island Main Village a new and more prosperous aspect.

Early in the decade of the 1850's it appeared likely that a railroad line would be constructed to the Mississippi River. The Milwaukee-Mississippi Railway (eventually the Milwaukee and Prairie du Chien; the Milwaukee and St. Paul; Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul; Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific or Milwaukee Road) selected Prairie du Chien for its western terminus. A number of Prairie du Chien's prominent citizens, such as Hercules L. Dousman and A.H. Brunson, helped promote the selection of their city to railway officials. (Dousman owned stock in the railway.)<sup>8</sup>

The coming of the railroad in 1857 transformed Prairie du Chien. Its arrival meant prosperity. Between 1852-1857, 161 new buildings were completed in Upper Town, 141 in Lower Town, and 17 in the Main Village.<sup>9</sup>

In Lower Town, the location of the railroad depot in Farm Lot 26 (along the riverfront near the Government Landing on the southwestern edge of Farm Lot 35) brought new industries, and workers to man them. Irish and Bohemian workers soon outnumbered other Americans in Lower Town<sup>10</sup> as hotels, sawmills, breweries, lime kilns, brickyards, and a steam-powered flour mill<sup>11</sup> sprang up.

While the forces of modernization had linked Prairie du Chien with Milwaukee, the Mississippi River imposed a costly and time-consuming barrier upon people and cargo attempting to cross. Transshipment onto steamboats and ferries made for slowed progress and full hotels.

Three steamship lines and two ferries provided transshipment and passenger service either to Iowa or to St. Paul. These lines included the Old Galena Packet Company, owned by Orrin Smith, the Northwest Packet Company, owned by John Lawler (an agent of the Milwaukee Railroad), and the Diamond Jo line, owned by Joseph "Diamond Jo" Rolette. H.L. Dousman too launched himself into the transshipping business with his steamer Allamakee.<sup>12</sup> By 1860 it was not unusual for the steamboat traffic at Prairie du Chien to range between 70 and 80 vessels a week.<sup>13</sup>

During the first several years of rail operations at Prairie du Chien, wheat and other food products were shipped west to the frontier and north to St. Paul. By 1859, however, Minnesota and Iowa farmers reversed the flow of foodstuffs. Grain traveled east to the Milwaukee market via the Prairie du Chien connection. Thereafter, immigrants and finished goods moved west, while foodstuffs and livestock traveled east.<sup>14</sup>

Transshipment improvements also occurred in the years just prior to the Civil War. At first, workers removed cargo from the railroad cars, loaded it on to steamers, and reloaded it again in Iowa. In 1858 John Lawler, the innovative General Agent of the Milwaukee - Mississippi Railroad, developed a system of tracked transfer barges to speed the process. Transfer barges could carry a railway car (soon three) without breaking down the cargo, and were pulled by steamer to North McGregor (now Marquette), Iowa. Transfer barges became larger as time went by. Soon two barges could be towed by one steamer and finally four.<sup>15</sup> Railroad construction in Iowa and Minnesota helped to speed the movement of people and goods to their destinations.

Not all innovative transportation efforts met with success. During the winter months, when the Mississippi either froze or had large ice floes in its course, transportation methods adapted to the conditions. In 1859, inventor James Wiard and his youthful assistant John Muir announced the trial run of the Lady Franklin, a large, twin-stacked, steam-powered "ice boat", at Prairie du Chien. Although 10,000 people paid 25¢ each to see the mechanical wonder operate, the entire venture failed.<sup>16</sup>

More prosaic--and more effective--methods for ice-crossing appeared. By 1870, after years of effort and experimentation, the energetic Lawler perfected a removable-pile bridge<sup>17</sup> which could support railway cars. Freightage became easier during the winter. The transfer barge method continued in use, however, until the mid-1870's.

More challenging than winter's ice was summer's low water. The Lower Town depot depended upon the proximity of docking facilities. The "Pigseye" slot between the East Channel of the Mississippi and the islands fronting the Lower Town docks became impassable for steamers during low water. During these periods, railroadmen extended tracks northward, bridging the extreme southern tip of the island Fourth Ward, and transshipped cargo from the riverfront along Water Street.<sup>18</sup>



Also during low water, steamers would tug transfer barges to the large island dividing the East and West Channels of the Mississippi at Prairie du Chien, and "walkers" would hand-pull or pole the barges through the narrow swampy channels which had been cleared for this purpose. Machine-driven cable power was also tried.<sup>19</sup>

Floods added to the environmental difficulties of transshipment. In 1859, for example, a large flood "wiped out much of Lower Town" and inundated the island Fourth Ward.<sup>20</sup> It is not surprising that the railroad company sought different locations along the Mississippi, such as La Crosse, for possible development into a main line. Still, not until 1872 was direct rail access to St. Paul available from La Crosse.<sup>21</sup>

The Civil War occupied the attention of many Americans between 1861 and 1865. With the Confederate blockade of the Mississippi in effect, western agricultural products reached their markets via the east-west railroads. Even after the Mississippi was secured by Union forces, the railroads continued to carry much of the grain and livestock which westerners shipped to such markets as Milwaukee. Prairie du Chien boomed during the Civil War. It was not unusual for 100 carloads of wheat to pass through the town daily en route to Milwaukee, the center of the U.S. grain trade and the "greatest primary wheat market in the world." Milwaukee docks handled 60,000,000 bushels of wheat during the war years.<sup>22</sup>

In 1864 the Milwaukee Railroad moved its main depot north to the island Fourth Ward. The "Pigseye" slot filled in and the company set up new facilities on the island. The facilities altered the Fourth Ward's river-front, although, as noted, temporary docks and tracks had reached the island prior to the final move. "One of the finest railway yards in the United States" emerged.<sup>23</sup> In addition to a freight and passenger depot, a huge, five-story grain elevator with a 200,000-bushel capacity went up. Docking facilities were improved. "Diamond Jo" Reynolds built a large warehouse of stone. Jules Famechon set up a flouring mill south of the Villa Louis. Yards away from the depot, the giant Dousman House (Railway House) hotel was constructed, while several smaller hotels sprang up as well. Before the middle of the 1870's, Hercules Dousman's widow rebuilt the city's largest home and completed the second (still standing) Villa Louis, an elaborate Cream City brick Italianate mansion.<sup>24</sup>

The large Brisbois House Hotel in Lower Town became part of the Swift Hospital complex for wounded troops. Parts of the old Fort Crawford became hospital grounds as well.<sup>25</sup> The abandoned fort had been "seized" in 1858 by Ira B. Brunson and B.W. Brisbois, city businessmen, because of a title conflict involving Government purchase of the grounds, a deed signed by James D. Doty and James Lockwood, and part of a French land claim owned by Joseph Rolette. Many travelers passing through Prairie du Chien became tenants in the "apartments" created from the fort's barracks.<sup>26</sup>

The conclusion of the Civil War did not end the economic development taking place at Prairie du Chien. The shipping business remained strong.

The railroad's new grain elevator in the Fourth Ward could load 275 railway cars in a single day. The Lower Town depot was enlarged, and slightly to the north a car works arose. Emigration continued as throngs of people traveling west "clogged traffic" at Prairie du Chien, bringing "hundreds of covered wagons and trailing stock."<sup>28</sup>

The consolidation of key railroad lines in Iowa and Minnesota by the Milwaukee and Prairie du Chien Railway in 1865, followed by its absorption by the well-capitalized Milwaukee and St. Paul line in 1866, helped to speed the construction of rail lines to St. Paul. Acquisition of the Minnesota Central in 1867 linked St. Paul with Milwaukee and Prairie du Chien via Austin, Minnesota, and the recently absorbed McGregor and Western Railway. The Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway was actively involved in extending its lines during the 1870's and 1880's, and became one of the better-run railroad systems in the nation, with tracks connecting Chicago and the Dakota Territory. A second line to St. Paul via La Crosse was completed in 1872.<sup>29</sup>

Population statistics reflect the urban growth experienced by Prairie du Chien during the years 1855-1870. In 1855, 1,519 people lived in the city. In 1860 the population reached 2,398. Five years later, 3,556 people claimed Prairie du Chien as their home. By 1870 the population had leveled off at about 3,000. The city's population had doubled in 15 years.<sup>30</sup> By 1870 the Fourth Ward had become an industrial-commercial center because of the relocation of the rail terminus and the rise of structures associated with shipping and land transportation. Lower Town's growth, however, slowed for the same reason.<sup>31</sup>

Upper Town, in the meantime, became the center of the city. The main streets and roads emanated from the old village of St. Friole, and commercial establishments lined Bluff and Bridge Streets (now Blackhawk Avenue). A new courthouse, completed during the 1860's, and most of the city's religious institutions were located in the Upper Town.<sup>32</sup>

The city's downtown traffic patterns became established during the 1855-1875 era. Prior to the commercial and industrial revival of the Fourth Ward caused by the transportation boom, the main crossing from the island to the mainland was located on what is today Washington Street. Although three crossings existed after 1824 (one on what became Bridge Street, one 2 blocks south, and the third at Washington Street), only the Washington Street site had a bridge. County Commissioners voted the funds for its construction in 1837. By 1843 the structure had become unsafe and a new span arose by 1847.<sup>33</sup>

Washington Street was a natural site for the bridge because it gave the island's predominantly French population convenient access to St. Gabriel's Church and the courthouse. In fact, even today, the configuration of the local topography is such that, from the Villa Louis facing east, the Fourth Ward appears to be connected to the slightly elevated church grounds. In other words, the northern part of the Fourth Ward and the northern part of the Upper Town seem really to be part of a single neighborhood. Even the Fourth Ward school (1868) was located on N. Michigan Street near St. Gabriel's. Not until the early 20th century did the Fourth Ward school actually exist in the Fourth Ward (between Third and Fourth Streets, facing Fisher Street, in the middle of block 17).<sup>35</sup>

In 1857 a substantial bridge was built across the slough on Bluff/ Bridge Street (today, Blackhawk Avenue),<sup>36</sup> allowing direct access from the newly thriving Upper Town city center to the docking facilities along Water Street. The flood of May 1859 inundated the Fourth Ward, covered the bridges, and washed parts of the bridges downstream.<sup>37</sup> The 1870 Bird's Eye map shows no bridge on Washington Street.<sup>38</sup>

By 1876, however, a narrow earthen bridge had been constructed. The 1876 Bird's Eye map clearly delineates the different widths of the roadbeds.<sup>39</sup> The Bluff Street bridge had become a commercial thoroughfare, and the Washington Street site decreased in importance. In 1890 a new bridge was constructed on Washington Street. By 1931 the Washington Street bridge was flanked by "garbage dumps and debris."<sup>40</sup>

A series of disastrous floods occurred in June 1880 and in October of 1881. The 1880 flood washed away 900 feet of railroad tracks, and severely affected the Fourth Ward as well as the Bluff Street bridge. A groups of musicians chartered a boat and "with a number of friends took a sail over the submerged portion of the city, the Fourth Ward....It is said the boat glided along over peaceful waters...and moored at the railway eating house (Dousman House)."<sup>41</sup> In 1883 the City Council authorized repairs for the slough bridge. In 1980 the Bluff Street bridge was enlarged and sidewalks added.<sup>42</sup>

The grandest bridge in Prairie du Chien's history opened in 1874. John Lawler's energy again provided decisive leadership in an ambitious project to bridge the Mississippi River. Born in Ireland in 1837, Lawler immigrated to the United States during the early 1850's. Lawler worked for several railroads in New York and New Jersey before arriving in Prairie du Chien as the General Agent of the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railway in 1857.<sup>43</sup> He initiated the transfer barge system in 1858, and in 1865 obtained the contract to transfer all the Milwaukee - St. Paul Railway's freight across the Mississippi.<sup>44</sup> Lawler and his Irish-born wife Cathrine had a large family of six sons and three daughters. They employed two servants.<sup>45</sup>

Lawler's experiments with removable-pile railway bridges for winter service had convinced him of the feasibility of a more permanent bridge. He utilized the talent of Michael Spettel who worked for "Diamond Jo" Reynolds and was an expert at watercraft construction. Spettel had immigrated from Bavaria where his family had been boat builders for years.<sup>46</sup>

Spettel began constructing a model of a floating pontoon bridge. He apparently carved the first prototype from a solid block of wood, using a penknife.<sup>47</sup> By 1874 Lawler obtained a patent for the design, borrowed money from H.L. Dousman, and began constructing a giant pontoon bridge with two draws--one in the eastern channel of the Mississippi and one in the western channel.<sup>48</sup> The floating "draws" were made of swamp oak, noted for its strength, buoyancy, and resistance to rot. The draws were approximately 400 feet each and the bridge measured about 8,000 feet in length.<sup>49</sup>

The problem of leveling the floating draw so that the weight of a heavy locomotive would not imbalance the boat-like pontoon was overcome

by adjustable tracked "aprons" on each side of the movable sections. Water level depth adjustments were accomplished by hand jacks. The draws were secured by thick chains and closed by a 25-horsepower steam engine.<sup>50</sup>

Between the eastern and western draws, Lawler's Prairie du Chien and McGregor Railway ran on the islands in the middle of the river.<sup>51</sup> The eastern approach to the pontoon was complicated by the need for a "looped" entry for trains. The island Fourth Ward's geography once again served man's needs. Lawler ran tracks north along the riverfront from the Famechon flour mill at the corner of Boilvin and Water Streets, past the Villa Louis and the old (or first, or log) Fort Crawford, north of Main Village Lot 1, past the section corner of Government sections 23, 24, 25, 26T7 N., R. 7W, eastward through Government Lot 5 and just inside Government Lot 4 (Section 24),<sup>52</sup> looping back south and west on a 487.3-foot radius, and on to the eastern draw.

The pontoon ran at a southwest diagonal, leaving the Fourth Ward on the southern edge of Main Village Lot 4 before arriving on the Mississippi islands en route to North McGregor. The Prairie du Chien and McGregor Railway or "Loop Line" comprised 1.75 miles of track. Lawler charged the Milwaukee Railroad a toll to cross the bridge. The bridge had a capacity of 1,000 cars a day, although 300 a day was the average total use.<sup>53</sup>

The pontoon bridge was a sensation. In addition to being an engineering marvel, it made rail connections between Milwaukee and central Iowa more direct. River traffic, however, now had to take into account the floating barrier; several weeks after the pontoon's completion the steamer Robert Ross, towing a raft of logs, collided with the eastern draw, but no serious damage occurred.<sup>54</sup>

The pontoon bridge was relocated and altered over the years. In 1883-84, for example, an improved system of hydraulic jacking appeared which could more easily adjust the height of the railroad tracks on the pontoon to conform with the water level. The 1883-84 pontoon had a different superstructure than the original.<sup>55</sup> After building the new pontoon, engineers relocated it several hundred feet south of its original point of departure in the Fourth Ward.<sup>56</sup> The second pontoon opened in 1885 and incorporated a new and more southerly route across the channel islands. In 1888 the western pontoon was realigned as well as altered.<sup>57</sup>

In 1893, after Lawler's death, the Milwaukee Road acquired the Prairie du Chien and McGregor Railway. The railroad sold the area surrounding the "Loop Line" in the Fourth Ward to Cathrine Lawler, and relocated the second pontoon to the southern edge of the Fourth Ward, almost exactly at the location of the present suspension automobile bridge.<sup>58</sup>

(John Lawler had become a rich man; Michael Spettel died broke.)

A new approach to the draw was completed, rendering the "Loop" obsolete, and by 1899 the second pontoon was operating in its new location. Another and straighter route across the Channel Islands was completed at the same time, although the western pontoon remained unchanged.<sup>59</sup>

A series of wing dams were constructed on the western side of the eastern channel of the Mississippi on the islands to prevent ice jams from damaging the pontoon. By 1905, some 15 of these structures existed.<sup>60</sup> Even these alterations did not conclude the history of pontoon bridge modifications.

In 1910 the Milwaukee Road began considering shortening the length of the "draw" on the second pontoon. In 1912 the railroad hired George Bamber, a shipbuilder from England, to construct new hulls. The resulting new pontoon was 209 feet long. It began operating in 1914.<sup>61</sup>

In summary, by 1914 two distinct types of pontoon bridges had been emplaced in the Fourth Ward. The two pontoons had a total of three different locations. The final pontoon, which was removed in 1961, was the shortened, rehulled, and electrified second pontoon. The final location of the modified second pontoon--including its associated wing dam protector--was on the extreme southern end of the Fourth Ward, approximately on Main Village lots 36-37.

With the 1899 relocation of the pontoon on the southern part of the Fourth Ward, the Lower Town yards became reinvigorated, but only for a short time. The railway began shifting its yard workers to North McGregor (Marquette) and to Madison. Railroad employment in Prairie du Chien declined with the turn of the 20th century. The "Diamond Jo" warehouse also ceased operating during this era.<sup>62</sup>

The pontoon bridge had several important effects on the city. It solved the transshipping problem. Stopping at Prairie du Chien became unnecessary and, in the long run, the city's growth was slowed. However, the bridge provided employment--as did the railroad yards and shops--it altered the face of the Fourth Ward, and it attracted worldwide interest.

During the 1870's Prairie du Chien consolidated its three parts. Bluff Street, as noted, became the main thoroughfare. The bridge to the Fourth Ward's industrial heart--along Water Street--was simply an extension of the city's main street. Lower Town had been connected to Upper Town only by South Main Street/Front Street. After Prairie du Chien became incorporated as a city in 1872, Church Street (now Beaumont Road) was extended southward. In order to accomplish this extension, city road builders destroyed parts of Fort Crawford.<sup>63</sup> A comparison of the 1870 and 1876 Bird's Eye maps reveals the addition.<sup>64</sup> Lower Town now had several points of access to the city's heart, and at a more convenient location, as it grew eastward and southward along what is today Highway 18 and toward Bridgeport.

Other forms of industry aside from railroads and steamboats emerged in the 1870's. Lumber milling had an uneven history at Prairie du Chien. Local mills had been started by the Federal troops at the time when the second Fort Crawford was under construction. Other mills had existed in the area since 1857, and lumber had always been a readily available commodity, produced at nearby Red Cedar, Iowa, and along the Black River in Wisconsin.<sup>65</sup> In 1872, the Stauer Company, which began operating a large shingle and lath mill at its lumber yard in the Fourth Ward, just northwest of the railroad depot, produced 85,000 feet of lumber a day.<sup>66</sup>

In 1870 the Harris and Benson Company began producing steel plows and cultivators at Prairie du Chien.<sup>67</sup> A small boot and shoe industry also emerged.<sup>68</sup> Brewing had been taking place on a small scale at Prairie du Chien since 1855, but in 1872 Theodore Schumann and Michael Menges established the commercial City Brewery on Church Street.<sup>69</sup> A vinegar works arose in Lower Town during the 1870's. A soap factory was also enlarged.

The artesian well craze seized Prairie du Chien in the 1870's. Judge Ira B. Brunson spearheaded the drive to secure stockholders in the Prairie du Chien Artesian Well Company. The first of twelve artesian wells spouted its 70-foot fountain of water in 1876. Situated on the northwest corner of Wisconsin and Minnesota Streets (now on the lawn of the public library), the rapidly flowing current was directed to nearby Bluff Street, where it ran down open stone gutters on each side of the street toward the river. Hydrants were soon installed and tin drinking cups were conveniently placed for public use.<sup>71</sup>

Other artesian wells soon made an appearance. T.L. Brower, Lower Town's leading businessman--a druggist--had one dug at his residence. The overflow formed a small "lake" and helped water his lawn. Not to be outdone, H.L. Dousman's widow had an artesian well dug on the Villa Louis grounds facing Boilvin Street. Henry Weniger sank two wells and used them to power his flour mill located just south of Bluff Street and east of the Marais de St. Feriole on the mainland in 1878.<sup>72</sup>

Another sign of urban sophistication was the organization of fire companies. Three companies, with uniformed employees, protected each of the city's main sections. Hand-powered engines were utilized.<sup>73</sup>

The clamming industry began in the 1880's, and by the middle of the decade had become important locally. Clammers used a flat-bottomed boat equipped with a bar on each side from which chains with four-pronged hooks were suspended. The clams were taken to a group of shacks that dotted the river's edge north of Block 1 in the Fourth Ward, where they were opened with hot water.

In 1899 a full-scale button factory opened in Prairie du Chien to make use of the clammers' catch. The factory contained 24 lathe-like button cutting machines and employed 30 workers. It was located on Bluff and Prairie Streets in the "Dousman Block." The factory closed in 1909 as clams became more scarce.<sup>74</sup>

Just prior to the arrival of the Burlington and Northern Railway in 1885, Prairie du Chien was described by a writer of local history who noted the dominance of the Upper Town in the city's makeup:

At the present time (1884) the principal part of the city is on the high ground in the rear of the old village of St. Feriole (sic). What was known as the "Main Village" at an early date, lay immediately along the east bank of the Mississippi River, and is now occupied by the railroad yards, warehouses, and lumber yards.

"Lower Town" is that part of the city situated about a half

mile down the river from old St. Feriole (sic). Here the railroad shops are located, and other business interests, yet the principal business of the city is done on the old site of St. Feriole.<sup>75</sup>

The coming of another railroad generated a spurt in the population statistics. The Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railway ran its tracks on the eastern edge of town along Illinois Street to its depot in the Upper Town. The effect of the new line is difficult to measure, but it added to a general trend which began to seriously affect Prairie du Chien. The city had basically functioned, between 1857 and 1885, as a "rail and river junction" site. Between 1885 and 1910, however, increased north-south railway linkages contributed to a decline in the commercial steamboat trade.<sup>76</sup>

After 1885, the town underwent no economic boom. The changes that occurred took the form of material improvements associated with general economic changes taking place in the nation at large, such as electricity, paved streets, internal combustion engines, and automobiles.<sup>77</sup> The 1885 population, for example, was not equalled until after 1910.

Late in the decade of the 1880's, city officials began offering bonuses to entrepreneurs willing to establish businesses in Prairie du Chien. By 1890 a basket factory, a foundry, and a pickle factory had been granted bonuses. In 1891 the Prairie du Chien Woolen Mill, which employed more than 20 people, got its first bonus.<sup>78</sup>

In the middle of the 1880's an important litigational dispute occurred. The western edge of Farm Lot 35 on the northern extremity of Lower Town began to attract the interest of city property owners as a promising site for subdivision and home construction. Before this desire could become reality, however, the vexing problem of exact boundaries and precise titles had to be solved. Farm Lot 35 had undergone numerous divisions since the 1820's. Although the deeds were properly recorded, few people actually settled in the area. Rather, the deeds were bought and sold to raise capital or to secure debts.

By 1884, however, B.F. Fay, the first mayor of the city of Prairie du Chien (1872) brought suit to settle boundary disputes on the French land claims and to establish precise locations. Officials of the Crawford County Court went out and surveyed Farm Lot 35 with references to the numerous rival claims. They established a crazy quilt of fractionalized holdings of strange dimensions in their resulting "Commissioners Plat of Farm Lot 35." Even today the location of properties on Farm Lot 35 is an extremely difficult process.<sup>79</sup> It is said that one can lose 60 feet of property in a measurement of Farm Lot 35, depending upon the direction from which one begins counting.<sup>80</sup>

In 1889 the city placed a dam on the southern edge of the island Fourth Ward, to improve health conditions. The low water in the Marais de St. Frisole contributed, it was felt, to a swampy, unhealthy environment. A dam was placed 775 yards below Bluff/Bridge Street to raise the water level in the slough.<sup>81</sup> The project drew criticism from Fourth Ward property owners whose lots became flooded. In addition, not enough water flowed through the slough to complete the original plan; "scum and smell were not gotten rid of." Floods eventually destroyed the dam, starting in 1899.<sup>82</sup>

Throughout the 1870's and 1880's John Lawler involved himself in philanthropic activities which led to the establishment of two Catholic educational institutions in Prairie du Chien. St. Mary's Academy, a school for women, opened in 1872. Located on the grounds of the second Fort Crawford, using some remaining fort structures (since demolished, c. 1955), this institution grew into Wyalusing Academy, which still operates at Prairie du Chien.<sup>83</sup>

With assistance from Lawler, the Christian Brothers began a Catholic boys' school, south and west of St. Mary's along Church Street (now South Beaumont) in 1871. The school had a troubled early history, and in 1880 the Jesuit Order took control of the educational institution. In 1891 the Jesuits gave the school its present name, Campion College.<sup>84</sup>

Electricity came to Prairie du Chien during the 1890's. In 1894 I.D. Hulbert, Sherwin Bisbee, and Thomas Lawler founded the Prairie du Chien Electric Company. One of the largest users of electrical power was the Pure Foods Products Company, a dairy concern which manufactured ice cream.<sup>85</sup>

After a national economic depression in the 1890's, Prairie du Chien attracted new businesses. Sand and gravel began to be produced in the Fourth Ward. The Prairie du Chien Canning Company opened in 1912. The Prairie du Chien Cement Products Company started in 1920.<sup>86</sup> Automobiles became important during the early 1920's. By 1925 the city had begun clamoring for the State to construct an automobile bridge to Iowa across the Mississippi and for another bridge to span the Wisconsin River at Bridgeport.<sup>87</sup>

A city waterworks was installed in 1920. Apparently the new system was "not surpassed by any in the state." The waterworks had two engines, a centrifugal gas-driven Sterling and and electric Gould Triplex.<sup>88</sup>

Prairie du Chien, like much of the rest of the nation, experienced a general period of prosperity during the 1920's. The city underwent a modest increase in its population. In 1910, the city's population was 3,249--about the same as its 1890 population and a slight decline from its 1885 high of 3,326.<sup>89</sup> Between 1920 and 1930 a 7.6 percent growth took place at Prairie du Chien, as the population increased from 3,537 to 3,943.<sup>90</sup> Slight increases had taken place in the Lower Town (First Ward), and the Fourth Ward had an increase of some 80 people. The area receiving the overwhelming increase in population was the Upper Town (Second and Third Wards).<sup>91</sup>

Home construction in the Fourth Ward progressed at a lively pace during the first two decades of the 20th century. The island served more as a residential area than as a commercial/industrial center after the pontoon was moved to its final location in the Fourth Ward. Freightage was still important, of course, but the activities were concentrated at the southern end of the area, and used the Lower Town facilities as well. Impressionistic evidence, based on the perusal of the 1870, 1880, and 1900 Federal Manuscript Census, suggests that the island's population was overwhelmingly Catholic and strongly identified with the French ethnic group (albeit somewhat integrated with Irish and German co-religionists).



By 1930 Prairie du Chien had become, in the words of one eminent geographer, "a quasi dormant community."<sup>93</sup> Steamboat trade had slowed, rail connections no longer depended upon transshipping, the pontoon had become electrified and needed fewer men to operate, the railway car works had been relocated, and the automobile bridge across the Mississippi had not been completed.

When Glen T. Trewartha visited the city in 1931 he described its main features and three sections:

Upper Town contains the only retail commercial core of the entire city. The principal shopping street is still Black Hawk Avenue (Bluff Street), business houses...occupying both sides of the thoroughfare from the slough to the Burlington tracks...Most of the business section is composed of small retail and commercial establishments.

(Lower Town) is almost exclusively residential in character. Two small neighborhood stores and a saloon are the only business places. The houses are small, frequently of cottage architecture, and the rest are only ordinary...The streets are grassy lanes while associated with the homes are barns, chicken houses, large gardens and even small field plots. One frequently is in doubt whether the scene is not more rural than urban.

(The Fourth Ward) The principal streets are surfaced but without curbs; others are grown over with grass. No retail core exists. The waterfront has not been altered greatly in the past half century...the grist mill has disappeared, but the ferry landing, the Diamond Jo warehouse and part of the grain elevator exist... The residential section, which lies back from the railroad zone along the river, is composed almost exclusively of poor or ordinary small frame houses, many of them old, dilapidated, and in need of paint...Miserable shacks of clambers and fishermen, some of them permanent dwellings, dot the immediate river bank from the village north...

Prairie du Chien changed greatly in the 75 years following 1855. It went from a frontier transportation system boom town to a quiescent community. The automobile bridge over the Mississippi helped increase the local commercial importance of the city during the 1930's. Railroading was still important in that era, and the town hosted special high-speed passenger trains.

Today Prairie du Chien serves as a local service center. On Saturdays the streets are crowded with area shoppers. Black Hawk Avenue remains the main commercial street, although strip development has taken place along Highway 18 nearly to Bridgeport. For a town of approximately 5,000 population, Prairie du Chien is spread out to a significant degree. This dispersal of settlement is undoubtedly an inheritance of its original tripartite nature. Lower Town is not as clearly delineated today as it was in the last century. Upper Town still contains the most prosperous core of the city's population. The Fourth Ward still retains its French and Catholic neighborhood atmosphere.

## NOTES

- 1 Glen T. Trewartha, "The Prairie du Chien Terrace." Annals of the Association of American Geographers, vol. 32 (June, 1932), 145.
- 2 Bruce E. Mahan, Old Fort Crawford and the Frontier (Iowa City, 1926); Peter L. Scanlan, MSS "History of Crawford County," Scanlan Papers, Box 5.
- 3 Rev. Richard F. Cadle, Nov. 8, 1837, MSS notes for "History of Crawford County" Scanlan Papers, Box 4.
- 4 Scanlan, Ibid.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Adjutant General of the U.S. to Peter L. Scanlan, April 12, 1924 # A.G. 314.71, Scanlan Correspondence, Ibid., Box 1; Edgar Oerichbauer, "Prairie du Chien: A Historical Study," (State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1976), pp. 99-100.
- 7 Alice E. Smith (ed.) "Wisconsin's First Railroad, the Linsley Letters 1852." Wisconsin Magazine of History, vol. 30, no. 2 (March, 1947).
- 8 See E. H. Broadhead, "Report of the Engineer and Superintendent of the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad," Oct. 29, 1856. MSS, Villa Louis Archives; A. H. Brunson, "The Road to Prairie du Chien," no date, MSS, Villa Louis Archives.
- 9 Oerichbauer, pp. 99-100.
- 10 Peter L. Scanlan, Prairie du Chien: French, British, American (Menasha, 1937), p. 209.
- 11 Oerichbauer, pp. 99-100.
- 12 Union Publishing Company, The History of Crawford and Richland Counties, Wisconsin, 2 vols. (Springfield, IL, 1884), pp. 404-406, cited hereafter as 1884 History.
- 13 Oerichbauer, pp. 99-100.
- 14 1884 History, p. 404.
- 15 Ibid., p. 405.
- 16 Scanlan, MSS "History of Crawford County," Papers, Box 4.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Conversation with William Howe, 6 Apr 1980; J. L. Gillespie, Asst. Engineer, "Original Three Foot Channel Wing Dam Construction," MSS map dated March 31, 1883, St. Paul District, U.S. Army Corps of

Engineers District, St. Paul Minn., Upper Mississippi River, Master Plan for Resource Management, Pool 10, Chart no. 115, no date.

19 Ibid.; personal investigation of remains which can still be discerned, 6 April 1980; also see Cecil Cook, Marquette, the Biography of an Iowa Railroad Town (Des Moines, 1975), p. 177.

20 1884 History, p. 667.

21 Alden E. Miller, "The Prairie du Chien Pontoon Bridge." The Railway and Locomotive Historical Society Bulletin, no. 58 (1942), 49; Report on Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway Co. (N.Y., 1925); Brief History of the Milwaukee Road (Milwaukee, 1968), p. 28--map; also see John W. Cary, The Organization and History of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway Company (Milwaukee, 1892).

22 Ibid., Robert Nesbit, Wisconsin (Madison, 1975), p. 167; also see Frederick Merk, Economic History of Wisconsin during the Civil War Decade (Madison, 1913), pp. 310-312, Mark's figures reveal that in 1860 35,000 tons of freight passed eastbound at Prairie du Chien, and by 1861 100,549 tons travelled east via the same route. In 1865 the figure had risen to 131,202 tons.

23 1884 History, p. 405.

24 Ibid., p. 477; Oerichbauer, p. 100; Miller, p. 49; Trewartha, "Prairie du Chien," p. 140; Scanlan, Prairie du Chien, pp. 209-210.

25 1884 History, p. 665.

26 Mahan, Old Fort Crawford, p. 269.

27 1884 History, p. 477.

28 Miller, "Pontoon Bridge," p. 51.

29 Cary, Chicago-Milwaukee, St. Paul, p. 88-92.

30 1884 History, p. 478; Trewartha, "Prairie du Chien," 140; Wisconsin Legislative Blue Book 1880--compendium of Wisconsin Census.

31 Trewartha, "Prairie du Chien," p. 140.

32 Chicago Lithography Co. Prairie du Chien (Chicago, 1870), hereafter cited as 1870 Bird's Eye Map.

33 Alison K. Hoagland and Bradley T. Frandsen "Prairie du Chien: Historical and Architectural Resources," Historic American Building Survey, Department of the Interior, Summer 1978 p. 11, cited hereafter as HABS.

34 Scanlan, MSS "History of Crawford County," Papers, Box 5.

35 Sanborn--Perris Map Company Ltd. Prairie du Chien (New York, 1905).

- 36 HABS, p. 11.
- 37 1884 History, p. 667.
- 38 1870 Bird's Eye.
- 39 Phoenix Map Company, Prairie du Chien (Milwaukee, 1876) cited hereafter as 1876 Bird's Eye Map.
- 40 Scanlan, MSS "History of Prairie du Chien," Papers, Box 4; also see Trewartha, "Prairie du Chien," p. 149.
- 41 1884 History, pp. 668-669.
- 42 Scanlan, MSS "History of Prairie du Chien," Papers, Box 4.
- 43 Scanlan, MSS "History of Prairie du Chien," Papers, Box 4.
- 44 Cary, Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul, p. 90.
- 45 1880 Federal MSS Census, Schedule of Inhabitants.
- 46 Miller, "Pontoon Bridge," p. 50.
- 47 Ibid., p. 53.
- 48 U.S. Patent No. 154,055, "J. Lawler, Floating Draw Bridges," in Scanlan Papers, Box 7.
- 49 Miller, op. cit., p. 52.
- 50 Scanlan Papers, Box 7.
- 51 Personal inspection, 6 April 1980.
- 52 See map in Deeds, vol. 72, p. 263; and Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway Company to Cathrine Lawler, 11 Dec 1894 in Deeds vol. 58, p. 6.
- 53 Miller, "Pontoon Bridge," p. 52; also see James P. Kaysen, The Railroads of Wisconsin (Boston, 1937), p. 30.
- 54 Prairie du Chien, Courier, 21 Apr 1874.
- 55 Cecil Cook, Marquette: The Biography of an Iowa Town (Des Moines, 1975), p. 187-188.
- 56 Ibid., p. 188; J. L. Gillespie, "Original Three Foot Channel Wing Dam Construction," MSS map, March 13, 1883, St. Paul District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Map File.
- 57 Cook, Marquette, p. 190.

58 Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railway to Cathrine Lawler,  
11 Dec 1894, Deeds, vol. 58, p. 6.

59 Cook, p. 190; Mississippi River Commission, Map of the Mississippi River, 1899, Chart no. 127, St. Paul District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Map File.

60 Major C. Mc D. Townshend, James Lush, and C. S. Riche, Corps of Engineers, Map of the Mississippi River from the Falls of St. Anthony to the Junction of the Missouri...survey 1878-1879, drawn by H. Bosse and A. J. Stibolt, 1903-1905, St. Paul District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Map File.

61 Cook, Marquette, p. 193; Pioneer Press, Jan. 10, 1910.

62 Fred Schraeder, "The Milwaukee Railroad." MSS, Villa Louis Archives.

63 Scanlan, MSS "History of Prairie du Chien," Papers, Box 4.

64 1870 and 1876 Bird's Eye maps.

65 Scanlan, MSS "History of Crawford County," Papers, Box 5.

66 1884 History, p. 660.

67 Ibid., p. 684.

68 1870 Federal MSS Census, Schedule of Industry.

69 Ibid., also 1884 History, p. 661.

70 Ibid., p. 662.

71 Ibid., p. 660.

72 Ibid., p. 652.

73 Ibid., p. 653.

74 Scanlan, MSS "History of Crawford County," Papers, Box 5.  
Button machinery and clam fishing equipment on view at Villa Louis Museum.

75 1884 History, p. 638.

76 Trewartha, "Prairie du Chien," p. 140, 145.

77 Ibid.

78 Scanlan, MSS "History of Prairie du Chien," Papers, Box 4.

79 See B. F. Fay and Willa F. Fay vs. B. F. Schermerhorn, Talbot

C. Dousman, Alonzo Pelton, William D. Merrell and Mary F. Merrell, the unknown heirs of Robert Stuart (deceased) and the unknown owners of that part of Farm Lot 35 of the Private Land Claims of Prairie du Chien formerly owned by Robert Stuart (deceased), C. K. Wells Jr. and R. Brigham and Daniel Wells Jr., June 2, 1884, in Deeds, vol. 45, p. 111 and attached map "Commissioners Plat of Farm Lot 35."

80 Conversation with William Howe, editor, Prairie du Chien Courier-Press, 6 April 1980.

81 Still visible and seen clearly on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers District, St. Paul, Minn., Upper Mississippi River, Master Plan for Resource Management, Pool 10, Chart no. 115, no date, St. Paul District Map File.

82 Scanlan, MSS "History of Prairie du Chien," Papers, Box 4.

83 Reverend Thomas A. Finnegan, "The Story of St. Gabriel's Parish, 1817-1947," MSS in Scanlan Papers, Box 3.

84 Ibid., also see Peter L. Scanlan, Centennial History of St. Gabriel's Parish, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin (Prairie du Chien, 1936).

85 John G. Gregory, Southwestern Wisconsin: A History of Old Crawford County, 2 vols. (Chicago, 1932), p. 249.

86 Ibid., p. 247, 249.

87 Scanlan, MSS "History of Prairie du Chien," Papers, Box 4.

88 Gregory, Old Crawford County, p. 235.

89 Legislative Blue Books, 1875-1930 (Madison, 1875-1930), Census Compendiums.

90 Ibid.

91 Trewartha, "Prairie du Chien," p. 145.

92 See inventory of "Non-preferred" structures.

93 Trewartha, "Prairie du Chien," p. 119.

94 Ibid., pp. 146-150.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Archival and Manuscript Sources

Broadhead, Edward H. "Report of the Engineer and Superintendent of the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad," Oct. 29, 1856. Villa Louis Archives.

Brunson, A. H. "The Railroad to Prairie du Chien," no date c. 1857, Villa Louis Archives.

Clark, Betty "History of the Fernette Family" letter to Lawrence Fernette, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, 13 March 1971 in possession of Lawrence Fernette.

Finnegan, Rev. Thomas A. S. J. "The Story of St. Gabriel's Parish, 1817-1947" in Scanlan Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

Hoagland, Alison K. and Frandsen, Bradley T. "Prairie du Chien: Historical and Architectural Resources." Historic American Building Survey, Summer, 1978. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Resources Branch, St. Paul District.

Oerichbauer, Edgar S. "Prairie du Chien: A Historical Study," State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1976.

Scanlan, Peter L. Papers, 9 boxes, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Platteville Area Research Center.

Schrader, Fred A. "Milwaukee Railroad," Villa Louis Archives.

### Other Unpublished Sources

Budahl, Lee "Architecture Before 1900 in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin," MA thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1966.

Grant, David P. "Early Folk Architecture in Crawford County Wisconsin," MS thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1971.

Johnson, Jesse W. "History of Crawford and Richland Counties Wisconsin," LB thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1901.

Government Documents

Crawford County Wisconsin, Office of the County Treasurer, Prairie du  
Chien, Wisconsin, Tax Rolls, 1876-1930.

Crawford County Wisconsin, Office of the Register of Deeds, Deeds,  
Mortgages, Probates, Final Judgements, Miscellaneous records.

State of Wisconsin, Legislative Blue Books, Madison, 1885-1930.

U.S. Federal Manuscript Census 1870, 1880, 1900. State Historical  
Society of Wisconsin.



## Maps

Appleby, James K. "Private Land Claims, Prairie du Chien Farm Lot 35," MSS, 2 May 1884 in Office of Register of Deeds, Crawford County, Wisconsin.

Anonymous "Map of Prairie du Chien and Vicinity," MSS, Washington, 1829. Villa Louis Archives.

Briggs and Falconer and Co. Map of Crawford County, Wisconsin, Pardeeville, Wisconsin, 1878.

Brisbois, B. W. and Broadhead, Edward H. "Lower Prairie du Chien," 1856 MSS, Villa Louis Archives.

Broch and Co. Standard Atlas of Crawford County, Chicago, 1930.

Brunson, Ira B. "Plat of the Main Village of Prairie du Chien," 1853 MSS, Villa Louis Archives.

Chicago Lithography Co. Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, Chicago, 1870.

Gillespie, J. L. Assistant Engineer St. Paul, Minn. "Original Three Foot Channel Wing Dam Construction," March 31, 1883, MSS, St. Paul District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Map File.

Lee, J. esq. "Plan of the Settlement at Prairie des Chienenes," not taken from actual survey, 1820 American State Papers, Office of the Register of Deeds, Crawford County, Wisconsin.

Lyons, Lucius Plat of the Private Claims at Prairie du Chien, New York, 1828.

Mississippi River Commission Survey of the Mississippi River, made in 1893-1894, J. Bien and Co. Lith. n.p, Chart #166, St. Paul District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Map File.

——— Mississippi River, 1899, Sheet #127, St. Paul District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Map File.

Ogle, George A. and Co. Standard Atlas of Crawford County, Chicago, 1902.

Phoenix Map Co. Map of Prairie du Chien, Milwaukee, 1876.

Sanborn-Perris Map Co. Ltd. Prairie du Chien, New York, 1884.

——— Prairie du Chien, New York, 1892.

——— Prairie du Chien, New York, 1899.

——— Prairie du Chien, New York, 1905.

——— Prairie du Chien, New York, 1912.

——Prairie du Chien, New York, 1924.

Seifert, H. Plat of Lower Prairie du Chien, Milwaukee, 1856.

Snyder, Van Vetchen and Co. Historical Atlas of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, 1878.

Townshend, Major C. Mc.D., Lusk, James L. and Richie, C.S. Corps of Engineers, Map, Map of the Mississippi River From the Falls of St. Anthony to the Junction of the Missouri. Compiled from maps of survey of the Upper Mississippi River...under the direction of Major F. U. Farquhar, Corps of Engineers in 1878 and 1879, drawn by H. Bosse and A. J. Stibolt, 1903-1905. St. Paul District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Map File.

U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers District, St. Paul, Minnesota, Upper Mississippi River. Master Plan for Resource Management Pool 10, Chart no. 115, St. Paul District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Map File, no date.

Webb Publishing Co. Atlas and Farm Directory of Crawford County, Wisconsin, St. Paul, 1914.

### Published Works

Allen, Robert S. "Canadians on the Upper Mississippi: The Capture and Occupation of Prairie du Chien during the War of 1812," Military Collector and Historian, vol. 31, no. 3 (Fall, 1979).

Anonymous, A Brief History of the Milwaukee Road, Milwaukee, 1968.

Brunson, Alfred H. Prairie du Chien, Its Present Position and Its Future Prospects, Milwaukee, 1857.

Brunson, Ira B. The City of Prairie du Chien, Cincinnati, 1856.

Campbell, Henry C. (ed.) Wisconsin in Three Centuries, New York, 1906.

Cary, John W. Organization and History of the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railway Company, Milwaukee, 1893.

Condit, Carl W. American Building: Materials and Techniques from the Beginning of the Colonial Settlements to the Present, Chicago, 1968.

Cook, Cecil Marquette: The Biography of an Iowa Railroad Town, Des Moines, 1975.

Coverdale and Colpitts, Consulting Engineers Report on the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad Company, New York, 1925.

Development Guidance Association St. Feriote Island Restoration, Cambridge, Mass., 1957.

Durrie, Daniel S. The Early Outposts of Wisconsin: Annals of Prairie du Chien, Madison, 1872.

Fairfield, George "Early Historical Events of Prairie du Chien," The Prairie du Chien Union, July 27, 1905.

Flaherty, William B. "The Life of John Lawler," Wisconsin Magazine of History, vol. 24, no. 2 (December, 1940).

Gregory, John G. Southwestern Wisconsin: A History of Old Crawford County, 2 vols, Chicago, 1932.

Judson, S. C. Views Around Prairie du Chien, Chicago, 1857.

Kaysen, James P. The Railroads of Wisconsin, 1827-1937, Boston, 1937.

Mahan, Bruce E. Old Fort Crawford and the Frontier, Iowa City, 1926.

Merk, Fredrick Economic History of Wisconsin during the Civil War Decade, Madison, 1916.

- Miller, Alden E. "The Prairie du Chien Pontoon Bridge," The Railway and Locomotive Historical Society Bulletin, no. 58, 1942.
- Nesbit, Robert C. Wisconsin: A History, Madison, 1975.
- Newcomb, Rexford Architecture of the Old Northwest Territory, Chicago, 1950.
- Scanlan, Peter L. Prairie du Chien: French, British, American, Menasha, Wisconsin, 1937.
- Centennial History of St. Gabriel's Parish Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, 1936.
- Shafer, Joseph "Ferries and Ferryboats," Wisconsin Magazine of History, vol. 21, June, 1938.
- Sherman, Althea R. Historical Sketch of the Park Region About McGregor, Iowa and Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1919.
- Smith, Alice E. (ed.) "Wisconsin's First Railroad, the Linsley Letters, 1852," Wisconsin Magazine of History, vol. 30, no. 3, March, 1947.
- Trewartha, Glen T. "The Prairie du Chien Terrace," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, vol. 32, (June, 1932), 119-158.
- Union Publishing Co. History of Crawford and Richland Counties, Wisconsin, 2 vols., Springfield, IL, 1884.
- Whiffen, Marcus American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles, Chicago, 1960.

## THE PREFERRED CATEGORY

Structures categorized as "preferred" have been so designated on the basis of their pre-1876 date of construction, with three exceptions. The Historic American Buildings Survey team, which undertook an initial survey of buildings in the project area in 1978, considered the year 1876 to be the cutoff date for the national and regional importance of Prairie du Chien as a city. While most of the structures were not historically significant in and of themselves, the HABS team considered the group as a whole as being associated with the period of Prairie du Chien's importance and, therefore, important as a group.

While there is nothing incorrect in this approach, there are a number of structures in the Preferred category which are historically significant only by a great stretch of the imagination. The following synopses of structures in the Preferred category are based on HABS research, although a structural analysis and on-site inspection of each structure was carried out. It is the opinion of this reviewer that preservation of a smaller number of higher quality buildings would be more consistent with the limited means available to preserve important historic structures than the preservation of any building regardless of its physical condition, based solely on the criterion of its pre-1876 construction. There are any number of post-1876 structures in Prairie du Chien, and several of them are interesting as well as significant historically. Therefore, the fact that a building dates from 1876 is not, in this reviewer's opinion, sufficient justification to warrant preservation.

The HABS team judged three of the buildings within the Preferred category to be worthy of consideration for National Register eligibility. These structures, two of log and one of brick, are important because of their construction techniques and building materials. They are undoubtedly historically significant (see synopses #26, 33, 62).

There are also a number of other structures which are worthy of consideration in any historic preservation design plan which might emerge for the project area. These include a c. 1858 modest frame structure (#24) associated with Prairie du Chien's steamboat and railroad era; a tavern which once served as a hotel during the same era (#90); and a home constructed by Jean Pierre Fernet, reportedly a carpenter hired by H.L. Dousman to work on the first Villa Louis (#74).

Three other structures are worthy of consideration in a historic preservation reuse plan. These include a frame home reportedly constructed prior to 1845 (#35); a small frame building reportedly built before 1856 in the Lower Town area of the city by one of Prairie du Chien's early land companies (#129); and the home of a Prairie du Chien mayor whose brother was probably one of the most famous personalities in the city's history (#49). There are problems with preserving these structures, as well as with all three of the additional buildings listed above. Details and recommendations appear in the individual synopses.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
22	22 lot 1, 2 4th Ward, Main Village	222 Villa Louis	City

This substantial, clapboard-over-frame, two-story, rectangular, gable-roofed building has three bays running from the west gable facade and a side-hall door. A two-bay porch has been added to the front, and a central doorway was cut from a window. There is a lean-to addition on the east. The interior of 222 Villa Louis has been greatly altered and all original sense of space lost. The interior is in a state of decay and the building has been vandalized repeatedly.

The foundation of #22 is the usual 19th century rock and mortar treatment. The floor is of poured concrete which has softened and cracked with age and dampness.

All the lumber has been milled. The foundation sills, however, have been hewn and all of the joist notches cut by hand. Cut nails appear throughout the building. The roof structure is made of 2 x 4 lumber and milled roof boards of various widths. The attic has been finished.

The building at 222 Villa Louis retains a sense of the Greek Revival style. It is one of the few buildings in the project area that does so. Its clean lines, however, have been marred by the insensitive handling of the interior alterations and the entire building is somewhat of a "mess".

The structure was completed between 1853 and 1857 by Frederick J. Miller. Miller passed the home on to his mother, Olivia Miller, who owned it until her death in 1891.<sup>1</sup>

Building #22 is nearly an historical resource. Its Greek Revival style and its graceful simplicity made for an attractive home. At present, however, the building has lost all identity. Vandalization, significant alterations, and the aura of desolation which surrounds this structure emphasize its loss of structural integrity. I recommend that the City of Prairie du Chien be authorized to demolish this structure.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Prairie du Chien: Historical and Architectural Resources," Historic American Building Survey (Summer, 1978), #22.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
24	23 lot 5, 6, 15 Main Village 4th Ward	215 Villa Louis	City

This clapboard-over-frame, one and one half story, gable-roofed, rectangular structure with a one-story addition on the east, is a modest and well proportioned building. In fact, of all the unoccupied structures, whether on the "preferred" or "non-preferred" list in the project area, this building is among the most sound in condition.

The original basement of 215 Villa Louis is the typical pre-20th century rock and mortar, whitewash-coated treatment, with a dirt floor. The one-story addition on the west has a foundation of poured concrete and is not a full basement. The sills are milled, with hand-notched fittings for the joists, and are beginning to rot. In the basement, cut nails predominate.

The attic is of conventional 2" x 4" rafter construction. The roof boards are of the commercially milled variety, although, as with other pre-20th century buildings, they vary dramatically in width. The notches for the fittings of the rafters have been hand cut, and wire nails have been used.

The walls on the first floor are now of masonite. In the upstairs section, however, the walls are composed of lath and plaster. The flooring seemed sound throughout.

According to the HABS team which carried out the research for this building, and all other pre-1876 structures in the project area, the American Fur Company transferred the ownership of Main Village lot 18 to H. L. Dousman in 1853. Dousman sold the lot to Frederick J. Miller shortly thereafter. In 1855 Miller sold the southern half of Main Village lot 18 (including lots 5, 6, 15 in block 23 upon which 215 Villa Louis is located) to Rush Pratt for the handsome sum of \$3,000. The 1858 tax records indicate that the three lots 215 Villa Louis now occupies, and one additional lot no longer associated with the property, were improved and valued at \$300. It is probable that 215 Villa Louis had been constructed in 1858.<sup>1</sup>

The four-lot property came into the ownership of John Lawler in 1864, and then singly into the possession of John Cavanaugh in 1867. The 1870 Bird's Eye Map depicts a building on the site.<sup>2</sup>

The HABS team conjectured that 215 Villa Louis might have been an American Fur Company rental property, built as early as the 1840's.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Prairie du Chien Historical and Architectural Resources," Historic American Building Survey, Summer, 1978, #24.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

More likely, the structure was built during the latter part of the 1850s when the transportation boom associated with that decade in Prairie du Chien's history--and which by 1862 centered on St. Friole Island--stimulated an influx of population and construction. The documentary evidence supports a c. 1858 (certainly no later than 1870) construction date, the period of intense railroad and steamboat prosperity in the 4th Ward.

In my opinion 215 Villa Louis is a c. 1858 structure built to accommodate the increased population of the 4th Ward, which experienced a significant increase in commercial importance during the late 1850's. By the early 1860s, the 4th Ward boomed as never before, when the CMSPRR terminus was relocated to the island. Additional service-oriented structures, such as the huge Dousman House hotel, the Diamond Jo Steamship Line Warehouse, a grain elevator, and a grist and flour mill sprang up along the east channel of the Mississippi.<sup>3</sup>

It is also my opinion that while 215 N. Villa Louis is not by itself an architecturally significant building nor one intimately associated with any individuals of importance, it is clearly part of the fabric of Prairie du Chien's historic role as a rail and river junction of note. The building is representative of Prairie's emergence from the depressed economy of the 1840s--with the collapse of the Fur Trade, the removal of the Indians farther West, and the closing of the Fort Crawford garrison--into the most important era of prosperity in the town's history.

Prairie du Chien's last period of regional and national importance occurred between 1857-1874, when the railroad arrived at the Mississippi River and steamship facilities provided the mechanism to transship cargoes moving East and West. The blockade of the Mississippi River by the Confederates during the Civil War, moreover, tended to increase the national importance of East-West transshipment points like Prairie du Chien. The construction of John Lawler's famous steam-powered pontoon bridge in 1874 made the costly and time-consuming transshipment process obsolete, and even though railroading continued to provide local employment in Prairie du Chien, by the 1890's facilities had been moved to other more convenient locations.

Building #24 has an air of graceful simplicity about it. Its economy of line, its reasonably sound structural component, and its association with the course of history recommend this building as a candidate for preservation.

---

<sup>3</sup> Edgar S. Oerichbauer, "Prairie du Chien: A historical Study." Unpublished report funded by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1976, pp. 99-100.



File Number	Block	Address	Owner
26	22, lot 22, 23 Main Village, 4th Ward	210 Villa Louis	Mrs. Orlan Reed

This modest, brick, rectangular, one and one half story, gable-roofed structure has a cinderblock addition on the north. The west gable facade has three bays, side hall door with a window in the gable, and wooden lintels on all windows in the original section. There is a porch on the south and west with turned columns. The bricks have seven rows of stretchers separated by a row of headers and have been painted white, although their original color is a light red/ochre. The southeast corner has been replaced.

There is no basement under this structure. The interior of the building has been extensively modified. The owner tore out the original dividing wall as well as the central stove and chimney. The soft red brick was of the type imported via the Mississippi River from St. Louis during the early 1840's. It has a pleasing color, but is not durable.

The original section of the home has a sense of the Greek Revival style about it. It has lovely proportions. The brick construction is rare in the project area. Even the cinderblock addition has not destroyed the beauty of the modest building. The rise upon which #26 is sited may be an Indian mound.

According to the HABS report, #26 predates the Prairie du Chien tax records which began in 1857. Fur trader Joseph Rolette owned the property between 1835 and his death in 1841. Four years later, Rolette's daughter, Emilie Rolette Hooe, acquired the real estate and probably constructed this home. It undoubtedly existed on the site by 1853 when Mrs. Hooe sold the two lots to Paulina Hurd for \$195. The 1850 Census notes that Emilie Hooe lived with the Hurds.<sup>1</sup> The earliest tax records value the Hurd building at \$200.<sup>2</sup> Paulina Hurd retained ownership until her death in 1887.<sup>3</sup>

Both Emilie (Emilia) Rolette and Alexander Hooe are historically significant personalities. Emilie was the daughter of one of Prairie du Chien's old time fur traders, who controlled sections and territories before the arrival of Dousman and the Astor interests. Emilie had been well educated and would have been one of the city's most eligible young women during her prime. During the 1830's, Captain Alexander S. Hooe of the 5th Infantry, stationed at Fort Crawford, apparently met, courted, and married Emilie Rolette. Hooe rose to the rank of Major during the years he spent at Prairie du Chien and was briefly in command of the Fort Crawford garrison in 1847.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Historic American Building Survey, "Prairie du Chien Historical and Architectural Resources," Summer, 1978, #26.

<sup>2</sup> Tax Roll, 1857.

<sup>3</sup> HABS #26.

<sup>4</sup> Bruce E. Mahan, Old Fort Crawford and the Frontier (Iowa City, 1926), pp. 219, 236, 269.

Building #26 probably served as the Hooe home. Major Hooe died young, and by 1853 Emilie was a widow. She became a U.S. Agent taking care of the fort during the ever more frequent absences of the garrison, and lived in the commandant's residence rent-free. Emilie repeatedly warned the Secretary of War of a local businessmen's scheme to seize the Fort Crawford property because of an irregularity in the government's title. In 1858 she was evicted by the businessmen's group.

This building is most assuredly a significant resource. Its early date, brick construction, historical association with both Prairie du Chien's fur trade/military outpost era, and important local personalities (Emilie Rolette and Major Alexander Hooe) combine to reinforce the building's significance.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
28	22 lot 20, 21 4th Ward, Main Village	200 Villa Louis	City

This rectangular, asphalt siding over frame, gable-roofed structure was probably constructed in about 1867. It has already been disposed of by the City of Prairie du Chien, with the approval of the State Historic Preservation Office and the Army Corps of Engineers. The basement has been filled and the original rock and mortar foundation is still visible at the site.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
30	27 lot 6, 7, 8 4th Ward, Main Village	128 Villa Louis	Zella Welch

This substantial, clapboard over frame, two-story, L-shaped, gable-roofed, three-bay structure has been substantially modified over the years. The owner refused to permit an on-site inspection of her building: therefore, no structural analysis could be undertaken.

The historical records, however, are fairly clear on the background of #30. John Lovewell acquired the real estate in 1869 and paid tax on a \$30 assessed value. Clearly, no building existed on the lots in that year. In 1870, Lovewell's tax-assessed value jumped to \$350, indicating that a building had been constructed. Lovewell sold the property to Ann Curtis in 1878 for \$1200. A home appears on the property in both the 1870 and 1876 Bird's Eye maps.<sup>1</sup> The rise upon which #30 is situated might be an Indian mound.<sup>2</sup>

The structure has been well maintained and the modifications which have taken place have been carried out in the interest of making the home more modern. The visual impact, however, has been in the direction of lessening the building's importance as a historical resource. It is my opinion that building #30 has no significance from a historical point of view. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove this structure.

---

<sup>1</sup> Historic American Building Survey, "Prairie du Chien: Historical and Architectural Resources," Summer 1978, #30.

<sup>2</sup> Edgar S. Oerichbauer, "Prairie du Chien: A Historical Study." State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Oct. 1976, p.103.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
31	27 Lot 9, 10 4th Ward, Main Village	122 Villa Louis	Vernon Webster

This modest, aluminum siding/over clapboard/ over frame, rectangular, gable-roofed structure has a recent addition on the south and an earlier one to the east. The basement under the original section is made of whitewashed rock and mortar. The dirt floor under the original section is hard-packed and difficult to distinguish from the concrete floor on the east. All the lumber has been commercially milled, and all the nails are of the wire variety. There are recently added poured concrete steps on the north. There is no attic.

According to HABS research, Patrick Burk constructed the original section of this still small home in 1867. In 1866 the tax value of the property stood at \$10, but 1868 it had jumped to \$130. A home appears on this location in the 1870 Bird's Eye map of Prairie du Chien.<sup>1</sup>

The HABS report concluded that this structure had limited historical significance. The number of internal and external modifications plus the lack of any historical associations connected with this home combine to underscore the suitability of #31 for removal. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove this structure.

---

<sup>1</sup> HABS #31.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
33	26 Lot 21, 22 4th Ward, Main Village	113 Villa Louis	Esther Obmacher

This substantial, clapboard over hewn timber, two and one-half story, rectangular, gable roofed, three bay structure has enclosed porches to the east and west. The supportive underpinnings for this structure are composed of round logs, hewn flat on one side. The sills and floor joists are treated in this manner. The foundation is whitewashed rock and mortar and the basement retains a dirt floor. The porches have poured concrete foundations.

The most conspicuous feature of #33's basement is the small stone room in the northeast corner and its arched vaulted ceiling. There are also two small stone arches in the basement located close to the stone vaulted room. Because of the flooding problem long associated with Prairie du Chien's history, elaborate basement construction is rare.

The roof structure of #33 is supported by milled 2" x 4" rafters. Both wire and cut nails can be seen in this home. The roof boards are of random widths. There was a fire in the brick chimney on the west which did extensive damage to the attic. Many of the rafters and a section of the roof boards are charred and probably weakened. Above the second floor's dropped ceiling can be seen the remains of the original whitewashing covering the log work.

The horizontal timbers are approximately 18" hewn pine logs with a semi-dovetail corner notch. Mortar and stone serves as chinking. Both wire and cut nails have been used on the outside of the building. The home was covered by siding, probably because there is extensive rotting along the lower 4-5 courses of log work. On the south there are the remains of a bricked-over chimney.

Destructive testing along the north and south revealed extensive rotting of the hewn timbers. The corner notches, especially, suffer from this condition. The logs above the fifth course seem to be in better shape. The siding will have to be removed before a complete assessment can be made. It is clear, however, that #33 is in need of stabilization if it is to be preserved.

The stone vault and other masonry in the basement have justly been considered as important construction techniques, especially in combination with the existence of so large a log building. There has been some question as to the function of the stone vault, and who its builder might have been.

According to the HABS research, it is most likely that building #33 came into existence in about 1860. As is so often the case with early Prairie du Chien, the property underwent successive surveys before finally being platted. The overlapping "exact descriptions" of the old French and early American "Main Village Lots" and the modern block and lot divisions make for difficulty in trying to pinpoint a particular building's probable date of construction--especially if it came into being before the tax

records--which are extant from 1857.

In 1859, Josephine Brisbois Jones and her husband Joel subdivided their recently platted Main Village Lot 23. Minnie Erdenberger and her husband Charles (Carl) acquired a half interest in lots 21, 22 in block 26 for \$40.<sup>1</sup> In 1860 the tax value of the lots rose to \$200, indicating a building.<sup>2</sup> This jump in value probably indicates the construction of building #33. Erdenberger, a German born mason, probably had the talent to construct the basement stone work.<sup>3</sup>

The Erdenbergers traded their half interest in lot 22 to Josephine Brisbois Jones in return for her interest in lot 21 in 1862. Two years later the Erdenbergers acquired lot 22 from the Jones' for \$125.<sup>4</sup> When the Erdenbergers sold their property to Wilhelmina Fritsche in 1870, they received \$1000 in compensation.<sup>5</sup> It is reasonable to believe that #33 came into existence under the guidance of Mr. Carl Erdenberger in about 1860. The home undoubtedly existed by 1870.

The function of the stone-arched basement is less certain. In the mid-1850s, however, the local brewing industry came into being when Theodore Schuman started a small brewery. He "excavated a cellar which was stoned up and arched over," according to local historical sources.<sup>6</sup> It might be that Mr. Erdenberger brewed his own beer, or provided beer to the local 4th Ward taverns and hotels.

Building #33 is undoubtedly a significant historical resource. It is important because of its log construction technique, as well as the stonework in the basement. It came into being during Prairie du Chien's heyday as a rail and river transportation center of regional and national importance. For these reasons it seems appropriate that the Erdenberger building be judged eligible for consideration for inclusion on the National Register. It is important, also, to remember that #33 is in poor physical condition and, therefore, efforts should be made to stabilize the deterioration of the logwork. There are chemical treatments which might prevent further rotting of the structure. I recommend that #33 be preserved as a significant historical resource.

---

<sup>1</sup> J. D. Jones and wife Josephine to Minne Erdenberger, 15 Sep 1859, Deeds, vol. N, p. 174.

<sup>2</sup> Tax Roll, 1860.

<sup>3</sup> 1860 Federal MSS Census, Schedule of Inhabitants.

<sup>4</sup> Erdenberger to Jones, 22 March 1862, Deeds, vol. 16, p. 480; Jones to Erdenberger, Ibid., p. 484.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Erdenberger to Wilhelmina Fritsche, 11 Nov 1870, Ibid., vol. 31, p. 80.

<sup>6</sup> Union Publishing Co., History of Crawford and Richland Counties of Wisconsin, 2 vols. (Springfield, IL, 1884) p. 661.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
34	27 lot 11 4th Ward, Main Village	116 Villa Louis	Elmer White

This modest, clapboard over frame, rectangular, one-story, gable-roofed three-bay structure is nearly identical to #36. In fact, both came into existence at about the same time and the O'Mailey (O'Mailla) brothers were responsible for their construction.

The foundation of this structure is composed of whitewashed rocks and mortar. The basement retains a dirt floor. Wire nails and commercially milled lumber are visible throughout this conventional treatment.

The attic is made up of 2" x 4" rafters and milled roof boards. The sheathing varies in width, ranging from 12" - 24". There are additions to the east and west.

According to the HABS research, James O'Mailey had the building constructed in 1871. In that year, his taxes jumped from \$90 to \$300, indicating a substantial improvement had occurred on the lot.<sup>1</sup>

This building, like its twin, #36, is in no respect a historical resource. It remains a heavily modified home which has served its primary goal of providing low cost shelter for many years. It is architecturally unremarkable and has no significant historical associations. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove this building.

---

<sup>1</sup> HABS, #34.



File Number	Block	Address	Owner
35	26 Lot 20 4th Ward, Main Village	109 Villa Louis	Lester Hubbard

This substantial, asphalt shingle over frame, one and one-half story, L-shaped, gable-roofed, three-bay structure could well be one of the oldest in the project area. The foundation under the home's original section on the north is composed of rock and mortar. The basement floor is dirt. The addition to the west and the porch in the east rest on poured concrete foundations and have crawlspaces beneath. All lumber visible appears to have been milled. The original flooring varies in width, ranging from 1"-10". It is in a state of deterioration, caused by rot. The base sills have been similarly affected by rotting. Square-shaped cut nails are visible throughout the basement area.

There is no attic; rather, a tiny crawlspace serves the same function. Rafters are milled 2" x 4" lumber. The random-width roof boards are badly rotted. Cut nails are visible. Lath and plaster walls existed until the 1965 flood.

According to HABS research, Mariah and Era Putnam sold this lot to Benjamin Boudrie in 1845. The deed made note of the fact that Boudrie resided on the lot, apparently renting it from the Putnams. The earliest tax records (1857) indicate that a building existed on the site. The building appears on the 1870 and 1876 Bird's Eye maps.<sup>1</sup>

Because #35 is still occupied, no destructive testing could be undertaken. It would be beneficial to look under the siding to see how and if the home is actually of frame construction. True frame buildings came into existence during the 1830's in the Chicago area, and the appearance of one at Prairie du Chien before 1845 would be significant.<sup>2</sup>

This building should be considered for inclusion in any reuse plan. In order to make such use of it, however, the extensive rot will have to be stabilized if possible. Building #35 represents a structure of unique building style (for that time) and is roughly contemporaneous with the first Villa Louis, the Hooe building #26, the Rolette house, and the Brisbois house.

---

<sup>1</sup> HABS, #35.

<sup>2</sup> John A. Kouwenhoven, Made in America (New York, 1948).

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
36	27 lots 12, 13 4th Ward, Main Village	112 Villa Louis	City

This modest, clapboard over frame, L-shaped, one-story, gable-roof structure was constructed in 1871 by Patrick O'Mailey. Patrick's brother James O'Mailey built a nearly identical structure immediately to the north (File number 34) on lot 11.<sup>1</sup> The O'Mailey's buildings are otherwise unremarkable.

There are two additions, both on the east. One has a foundation of rock and mortar, while the other, to the northeast, rests on large-diameter posts elevated about 24" from the ground level. The basement under the original section is of rock and mortar construction. It has a poured concrete floor which was undoubtedly added at a later date. The foundation sills are hand-hewn and notched and have been coated with whitewash. Cut nails are found in the basement. Flooring is of pine or other "medium" grade milled lumber, although the widths vary in different sections of the home. The walls are of lath and plaster, with the lath being of the machined variety.

The attic is composed of conventional 2" x 4" rafters. All the lumber has been milled commercially. As opposed to the basement, only wire nails could be located in the attic, suggesting that the structure had been reroofed, or that wire and cut nails shared a period of overlapping use during the immediate post-Civil War era in Prairie du Chien. The roof boards are of pine, and the widths range from 6" to 24".

There is a large block of poured concrete steps on the south. This concrete block, which is out of all proportion to the home's modest size, is the most striking feature of the entire building.

The building at 112 Villa Louis is inconsequential in terms of historic value. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to move or dispose of the structure.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Prairie du Chien: Historical and Architectural Resources" Historic American Building Survey (Summer, 1978) # 36.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
41	Approx. E 10' of S 1/2 of Main Village lot 27 E of S 3rd St. (now S. Villa Louis Rd.) 4th Ward, Main Village	108 S. Villa Louis	E. Vance

This modest, asphalt shingle over clapboard, one-story, L-shaped, gable-roof home has three additions. The building retains a shack-like appearance, and is in fair condition overall.

The basement under the original section of the house is of rock and mortar construction and has a dirt floor. The additions on the south and north have similarly constructed basements. The basement under the porched western addition is made of poured concrete. All the lumber is of the commercially milled variety as are the joists and sills. However, the notches cut in the joists and sills have been worked by hand. Wire nails are found throughout the building. No attic entrance could be found.

According to the HABS research, this structure is depicted on the 1870 Bird's Eye map. Its location on Main Village lot 27, which was repeatedly divided although never platted and apparently never measured, makes positive dating understandably difficult. In any case, the building is no later than an 1870 structure. The HABS research pointed out that this building's probable initial owner was Patrick O'Tool, and that his property on the unmeasured Main Village lot 27 was assessed at \$70 in 1876 (the most valuable single portion of real estate on the low-lying near-swamp)<sup>1</sup>.

It is probable that O'Tool came with the railroads. The historical works covering that era mention that large numbers of Irish workers arrived during the railroad boom of the late 1850's through the 1860's.<sup>2</sup> In any case, #41 has been altered by three additions which detract from any historical significance which it might have possessed. It retains nothing that might be described as charm, and no associations which make it other than insignificant.

I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to dispose of this structure in any way deemed suitable.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Prairie du Chien: Historical and Architectural Resources" Historic American Building Survey, Summer 1978, #41.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Scanlan, Prairie du Chien: French, British, American (Menasha, 1937), p. 209.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
49	18 lot 2, 3 4th Ward, Main Village	312 Fourth St.	Robert Fuller

This substantial, asphalt siding over frame, L-shaped, gable-roofed, one-story, projecting bay on south gable end, two-story projecting bay on west gable front home has been associated with a locally significant historical personality. The building is still inhabited, and no access could be gained to the living quarters for an inspection. The basement, however, is the usual 19th century rock and mortar treatment with a dirt floor. The addition to the east is also composed of rock and mortar. All the lumber is of the commercially milled variety, and wire nails appear throughout.

According to HABS research, James Lawler acquired the property where #49 is sited in 1871. The 1870 tax records value the real estate at \$30, while one year later the same property jumped to \$800 value. Thus, it is likely that Lawler constructed a home upon these lots in 1871.<sup>1</sup>

Born in New York of Irish parents, James Lawler lived in the building on Fourth Street with his wife Sarah, their four children, and one servant.<sup>2</sup> James Lawler's brother John was Prairie du Chien's leading citizen in the later half of the 19th Century. John Lawler's famous pontoon bridge, which connected Prairie du Chien and McGregor, Iowa, represented the culmination of a string of successes arising from his association with the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad (Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific; Milwaukee Road). John Lawler finally started his own company, the Prairie du Chien and McGregor Railroad, which operated 1.75 miles of track, after completing the patented floating railroad bridge of his own design. The bridge secured the Lawler fortune, although ultimately it contributed to Prairie du Chien's decline in importance, since transshipment across the Mississippi River no longer had to depend on steamboats and lengthy delays.<sup>3</sup>

James Lawler became the "Captain of the Western Pontoon of John Lawler's Pontoon Bridge."<sup>4</sup> During 1893-1895 James achieved success as a mayor of Prairie du Chien.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> HABS, #49.

<sup>2</sup> 1880 Federal MSS Census, Schedule of Inhabitants.

<sup>3</sup> William B. Flaherty, "The Life of John Lawler." Wisconsin Magazine of History, vol. 24, no. 2 (1941); Alden E. Miller, "The Prairie du Chien Pontoon Bridge," The Railway and Locomotive Historical Society Bulletin, no. 58 (1942); U.S. Patent Office to John Lawler of Prairie du Chien, 30 Jul 1874, "Improvement in Floating Draw Bridges," in Scanlan Papers, Box 7, 5 D.

<sup>4</sup> 1880 Federal MSS Census, Schedule of Inhabitants.

<sup>5</sup> HABS, #45.

Building #49 thus has been associated with historically significant individuals on the local level. The structure of itself is not important. I recommend James Lawler's home for consideration in any reuse plan emerging from the project.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
54	22 lot 5, 6 4th Ward Main Village	219 Fourth	Richard Nagel

This aluminum siding over frame, L-shaped with one story addition to the south and a two story original section on the west, gable-roofed, two-bay structure has undergone extensive rebuilding. The basement is now made up of poured concrete and cinderblock. There is a dirt floor in the original section. There are two additions to the south, both of which rest on blocks and have a crawlspace below. The lumber in the basement is all relatively new and of the commercially milled standard dimensional type. Wire nails are found throughout.

The attic is as conventional as the basement and foundation. Standard 2" x 4" rafters, single-dimensioned roof boards, and wire nails complete the picture. The impression created by this building is one of plainness, and it is unremarkable in every respect.

According to HABS research, this building came into existence in 1867. In that year, the tax value of the property rose from \$30 to \$125. The home was constructed either by Thomas Burke or Alonzo Allen.<sup>1</sup>

This structure exemplifies and epitomizes the problems associated with setting aside buildings for preservation because of their "significance" based solely on an arbitrary date. There are dozens of homes in the Prairie du Chien area that resemble #54. It is completely uninteresting. I recommend that the city be authorized to remove this structure.

---

<sup>1</sup> HABS #54

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
62	11 lot 1, 2, 3, 4 4th Ward Main Village	419 Fifth	City

This asphalt-sided/over clapboard/over horizontal hewn timber, one and one half story, gable-roofed, three-bay structure has an enclosed porch addition to the east and another addition to the west. The logs are about 12" wide and chinked with brick, mortar, and strips of wood. The basement under the original section is a rock and mortar treatment with a dirt floor. The crawlspaces under the additions are composed of poured concrete. All the lumber appears to be of the commercially milled variety. Wire and cut nails appear throughout.

The attic has 4 x 4 rafters and extremely wide roof boards ranging from 20 - 25". Cut nails predominate in the attic. The interior walls are of lath and plaster and the lath has been machine cut. The roof has a leak on the northwest.

The exterior logs are fitted by a semi-dovetail corner notch. They appear to be in excellent condition. The building has been well maintained, although the interior has been altered.

According to HABS research, #62 was moved to its present location in 1900 by Charles Gremore. Old time Prairie du Chien residents remember the home as having come from northwest of the Villa Louis grounds. Gremore sold the house and property to George Coorough in 1902. Merilla Coorough resided at this address until 1978 when the city acquired the home and lots.

The HABS research makes a series of inferences, based on circumstantial evidence, to plot the probable history of #62 before the 20th century. The HABS report concludes that this building was probably built by Guillaume (William) St. Germain who appeared on the first 1857 tax roll northwest of Villa Louis with a \$350 tax valued property.

It is the opinion of this reviewer that #62 is probably not as old as the HABS report indicates: condition of the logwork is too good, considering Prairie's history of flooding, for the building to date back to the fur trade era. In any case, this structure is undoubtedly a historical resource. It makes use of a unique construction technique and deserves to be preserved.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
74	5 lot 1, 2, 3, 4 4th Ward, Main Village	504 Boilvin	Lawrence Fernette

This modest, asphalt siding over frame, L-shaped, one-story, gable-roofed structure has had an interesting history. The basement is composed of the usual Prairie du Chien rock and mortar treatment with a dirt floor. The sills are 8" thick and have been hand-hewn. Cut nails appear on the original section. The addition to the east has a foundation made of concrete blocks and was built in 1967.

The attic contains 2" x 4" rafters and random width roof boards ranging from about 10" - 24". The owner states that after the 1965 flood he removed the chimney on the west gable end and added a fireplace along the north wall. While undertaking this project, Mr. Fernette removed the soft red brick that filled the wall. He further stated that this same soft red brick was used as nogging for the rough sawed frame of the original structure.

Both Mr. Fernette and the HABS report mention the family history concerning the building's history. According to the local tradition, #74 was built by Jean Pierre Fernette, a French Canadian carpenter who assisted with the building of the first Villa Louis during the early 1840s. Fernette rented the land, so his name does not appear on any deeds of the time. By 1860 a building undoubtedly stood on this location and it probably was #74. The building passed into the hands of Joseph Wilhaber, and Christopher Nugent, until reverting back into the hands of members of the Fernette family.<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to tell what remains hidden under the siding of this structure. It would, however, be beneficial to look. In my opinion, the building is worthy of being considered for consideration in any reuse plan emerging for the project area. The home's construction technique--if there is anything left reflecting the original construction methods--its association with the Fernette family, and its early date combine to reinforce one another.

---

<sup>1</sup> HABS #74.



File Number	Block	Address	Owner
75	10, lot 1, 2, 3, 4 5, 4th Ward, Main Village	512 Boilvin	Mrs. Clarice Cokey

This clapboard over frame, T-shaped, one and one half story, gable-roofed with cornice returns, three-bay structure with a lean-to addition in the south, is in an advanced state of deterioration. The basement is composed of whitewashed rock and mortar and has a dirt floor. The floor joists are hand-hewn on three sides and round on the bottom. Cut nails predominate. The addition too has rock and mortar for its foundation, and hewn beams for support, but has a poured concrete floor.

The flooring has rotted over the years and the interior of the home is deteriorating. There is a leak in the roof which helps spread this disintegration process. The 2" x 4" rafters in the attic have been commercially milled, as have the random width roof boards.

According to the HABS report, #75 was constructed in about 1870. In 1869 the property was owned by Marie F. Aubin and valued at \$25. The following year it appeared in the tax roll under the ownership of Jacques Aubin, Marie's husband, with a \$125 value.<sup>1</sup>

The building has limited historical significance. It has not been associated with important personalities. It displays no unique construction methods. It is in poor physical condition. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove this structure.

---

<sup>1</sup> HABS, #75.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
80	18 lot 6, 7 4th Ward Main Village	310 Brisbois	R. Linzenmayer

This asphalt shingle over frame, two story, L-shaped, gable roof building with an enclosed porch on the north front and another on the east wing of the rear, one-story ell, has limited historical value. The building has been altered significantly on a number of occasions, and moved from its original site on the alley bordering lot 7 to its present straddling position on lots 6 and 7.

The basement is done in three sections; north, south, and east, all with dirt floors. Concrete blocks were used for the building material and the structure has been raised at least once, using poured concrete cast blocks. All lumber is of the commercially milled variety with standard dimension sizes and wire nails. The floor has been insulated. The attic was sealed off and no access could be gained. Walls are of lath and plaster.

In 1864 Elizabeth Doyle (b. 1830), the wife of Irish born laborer Patrick Doyle (see file #92), came into possession of lot 7. There were no improvements to the property, and tax assessors valued the real estate at \$35. In 1870 the value jumped to \$100 and one year later to \$400.<sup>1</sup> The Doyles left for LeRoy, Minnesota in about 1878.

Joe Pitzer bought the house from his grandparents in 1931 and explained that they had the second story and the south wing added. The siding was replaced by Frank Kozelka who owned the building 1949-1964, and he enclosed the front porch on the north. Robert Linzenmayer moved the building to its present raised location after the 1965 flood.<sup>3</sup> Although rumored to be constructed of logs, no evidence of this could be found.

I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to dispose of this structure in any way deemed suitable. The building itself is in a state of excellent repair and has been well maintained.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Prairie du Chien: Historical and Architectural Resources," Historic American Buildings Survey, Summer, 1978, #80; Federal Manuscript Census 1870, Schedule of Inhabitants.

<sup>2</sup> Patrick and Elizabeth Doyle to F. T. Hobbs, 2 August 1878, Deeds, vol. 307, p. 436.

<sup>3</sup> "Prairie du Chien," HABS report # 80.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
87	23 lot E 1/2 13, all 14 4th Ward, Main Village	202 Fisher	M. Ingle

This small, clapboard over frame, one-story, L-shaped, gable-roofed, rectangular building has experienced considerable alteration over the years. In addition, it is nearing the state of advanced deterioration. Flooding has caused much of the problem, although human adaptation, to suit the needs of a moment, has altered the building in a way sufficiently gross as to destroy any historic value that the structure might otherwise have had.

The basement of 202 Fisher is the typical pre-20th century rock and mortar treatment with dirt floor. Commercially milled lumber has been used. Cut nails and hand hewn and notched foundation sills in badly rotted condition, are also found in the basement. The disastrous flood of the mid-1960s completely inundated the structure, and the debris from that catastrophe remains in the basement.

The attic has been finished and transformed into living quarters. The rafters are conventional 2" x 4" members. The roof boards, as is typical in pre-20th century structures in Prairie du Chien, vary in width, some being over 20". The owner of 202 Fisher, Mark Ingle, recently poured a concrete floor on the ground level west room and converted the structure generally into a shop. The walls, at least on the upper level, are of lath and plaster.

The HABS research indicates that Thomas A. Savage constructed 202 Fisher in 1868. In that year the value of Mr. Savage's real estate jumped from \$30 to \$450.<sup>1</sup> Savage, a Virginia born (c. 1809) retail merchant whose parents had emigrated from England, disposed of his building in 1883.<sup>2</sup> In that year Hannah Deary acquired three lots and the building for \$300.<sup>3</sup> Hannah Deary and her Irish born husband Daniel (b. 1838) were listed by Census takers as saloon keepers.<sup>4</sup> Local informants remember 202 Fisher as a tavern, and neighbor Lou Cardin, himself in his eighties, recalls when he would carry beer from the Deary saloon at 202 Fisher to his father.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> "Prairie du Chien Historical and Architectural Resources," Historic American Building Survey, Summer 1978, #87.

<sup>2</sup> 1880 Federal Manuscript Census, Schedule of Inhabitants.

<sup>3</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>4</sup> 1880 MSS Census, Schedule of Inhabitants.

<sup>5</sup> "Prairie du Chien Historical and Architectural Resources," #87.

The deteriorated condition of 202 Fisher, its alterations, and its limited historical significance combine to support the request of the city of Prairie du Chien that it be authorized to remove this structure.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
89	17, lot 1, 18 4th Ward Main Village	301 Fisher	Ahrens Realty

This clapboard over frame, two-story, rectangular, two-bay structure has a storefront on the ground level and an addition to the east. There is no basement. The foundation, which rests on the ground, is giving way along the west side, where there apparently had been a lean-to addition at one time. The ground floor has undergone several modifications within the recent past. It has been, within the memory of local informants, a grocery store and a locker plant. It has also been damaged seriously by flooding and the entire ground floor is deteriorated. The attic is composed of 2" x 4" rafters and standard dimensioned roof boards. Wire nails appear throughout.

Historically, this structure once served the important function of being the 4th Ward's fire company house. According to HABS research, the property was acquired in 1877 by the Badger Fire Company No. 2 and in 1878 building #89 became the station house.<sup>1</sup> The Crawford County history of 1884 described the Badger Fire Company No. 2 as having a uniformed staff of thirty-two members, 3,000 feet of rubber hose, and several hand operated fire engines.<sup>2</sup>

According to local informants, the firemen built the station themselves, scavenging the lumber from the local mill in the 4th Ward. The firehouse served as a clubhouse as well. Thus, #89 has some importance for its history as the site of a local community organization.

In terms of recommendations, there are several points which should be emphasized. First, the building should be classified as belonging to the "Non-Preferred" category. Second, and more important, are the questions regarding physical condition and repeated adaptive alteration. The building suffers from extensive rot on its ground floor level. It, furthermore, probably bears little resemblance to the original Badger Fire Co. No. 2 since its years of being a grocery store and a locker plant. Careful consideration should be given to these points before making a determination involving removal or reuse.

---

<sup>1</sup> HABS, #89.

<sup>2</sup> History of Crawford and Richland Counties, Wisconsin, 2 vols., (Springfield, IL, 1884), p. 652.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
90	25, lot 3, 4 4th Ward Main Village	136 N. Water	Gordon Bowers

This clapboard over frame, two-story, flat-roofed, exaggerated parapet and brackets on the front west, four-bay structure has one-story additions to the west and east. The interior on the ground floor is a one-room tavern. The owner and his family reside in an apartment above. The basement is of rock and mortar construction and has a poured concrete floor. An early addition to the basement along the south also is made of rock and mortar but has a dirt floor. All lumber is of the commercially milled variety, including the sills. Wire nails appear throughout. The attic contains 2" x 4" rafters and various width milled beams ranging from about 10" - 24". The building serves as a tavern, as have buildings located on this site since the 1820s.

According to HABS research, Charles Lapointe owned and operated the Franklin House hotel/tavern on this site in 1820.<sup>1</sup> Lapointe sold the property to Joseph Rolette who kept it until 1841 when he died. Rolette left it to his daughter, Emilie Rolette Hooe.<sup>2</sup> In 1865 Patrick Quinn acquired the title and increased the value from \$200 to \$1500 prior to 1873.<sup>3</sup> In 1874 the hotel burned. Shortly thereafter, Edward Rodgers acquired the site and moved his Minneapolis House hotel to the lot. During 1882, after two floods, Rogers enlarged the hotel and renamed it the Sherman House.<sup>5</sup>

Rogers was born in Ireland in 1829. During the 1850s he emigrated to England where he worked as a miner. In 1860 Rogers came to the U.S. via the port of New Orleans, settling in Missouri. During the Civil War Rogers departed from the South, and relocated himself in Prairie du Chien where he worked for the railroad. The illiterate Rogers maintained the hotel/tavern until a 1903 fire gutted the establishment.<sup>6</sup> Rogers rebuilt the structure again and sold it in the 1920s to Charles McClure.<sup>7</sup>

The 20th century rebuild approximated the old building's shape. Thus, the present structure, while not itself historically significant, has a traditional tavern style and an association of being on this important local site.

- 
- 1 HABS #90.
  - 2 Scanlan papers, MSS "History of Crawford County" Box 5, folder 5 D.
  - 3 HABS, #90.
  - 4 History of Crawford and Richland Counties, Wisconsin, p. 666.
  - 5 Ibid., p. 686.
  - 6 Ibid.; 1870 Federal MSS Census, Schedule of Inhabitants.
  - 7 HABS #90.

The present owner, Mr. Gordon Bowers, has expressed a desire to remain in the 4th Ward and even restore the building to nearly original-- if possible. This would be a worthy endeavor. The 4th Ward will need some kind of commercial establishment in the area no matter what the eventual reuse plan might be. I recommend that #90 be considered a potential resource with historical associations and allowed to remain on this site.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
113	57 lot N 1/2 7, all 6, S 1/2 5 Union Plat, 3rd Ward	417 N. Main	Ronald Simon

As with a number of sites in Prairie du Chien, there exists historically significant material relating more specifically to the background and subsequent divisions of real estate since the French Colonial Era, than to the buildings now located thereon. The building located at 417 N. Main is an example of this phenomenon. The structure is an asphalt sided, frame, two-storied, gable-roofed, rectangular building with a three-bay unenclosed porch front entrance to the east. The basement on the original section to the east is of rock and mortar construction with a dirt floor. The one-story addition on the west has a poured concrete foundation and floor. Wire nails are found throughout the building. The lumber is of the commercially milled variety, although the foundation sills have been cut by hand to accept the joists. The roofing technique is typical 2" x 4" rafter construction which have been occasionally braced for rigidity. The roof boards are of pine, and while they too have been commercially milled, they are of various widths ranging from as narrow as 6" to as wide as approximately 20". The random width roof board feature has also been seen in a number of other pre-20th century buildings inspected during the course of this study. All walls are of lath and plaster.

The structure is in a state of disrepair. The roof is leaking, the building has been subjected to extensive vandalism, and there has been fire damage on the first floor on the original east section within the trap door enclosure leading to the basement. Virtually all the windows have been broken.

The Historic American Building Survey team traced the history of the property. According to their information, the property upon which 417 N. Main stands was carved from Farm Lot 30 in 1840 by Julian Lariviere who had acquired the real estate in 1827. The area was platted in 1853 and by 1856 was owned by Alonzo Pelton who held it for 10 years. No improvements existed on the property. In 1866 Thomas Walsh purchased the lots upon which 417 N. Main now stands. He constructed the building during the early 1870s and held it until his death in 1899.<sup>1</sup>

In 1900 Justus Dremmel acquired lots 4-15 and the Walsh home.<sup>2</sup> Dremmel retained the property (except for lots 9 and 10 in block 57) until 1914. The building was valued at \$150 until the 1913 tax raise increased it to \$500.<sup>3</sup> In 1914 Dremmel relinquished the property to Dan Harwood, who

<sup>1</sup> "Prairie du Chien: Historical and Architectural Resources"  
HABS, Summer 1978, #113.

<sup>2</sup> Tax Roll, 1900.



owned the lots and building until after 1930, and their value remained fairly constant after the 1920 tax increase at \$550.<sup>4</sup>

The building at 417 N. Main is unremarkable in any way. Its deteriorated condition and vulnerability to successive waves of vandals, coupled with its limited historical value, suggests that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to dispose of the structure in any manner that seems fit.

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 1902-1913.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 1914-1930.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
122	Part of Part "D" of Commissioner's Plat of Farm Lot 35	952 S. Main	Mark Tessmer

This asbestos shingle over frame, two-story, gable-roofed with a central chimney structure has two hipped-roof additions to the north and west. The basement under the original section of the home is composed of whitewashed rock and mortar. All the lumber is of the commercially milled variety and has many layers of whitewash as a covering. The floor is poured concrete. The additions are supported by poured concrete foundations with crawl spaces, rather than basements, underneath. The attic retains milled 2" x 4" rafters and random width roof boards. Wire nails are found throughout. The walls are made of lath and plaster.

According to the HABS research, #122 was built by William Seary (Sery) a City Clerk. Seary paid tax on a \$100 assessed value in 1869 and on a \$300 assessment in 1870. It is probable, therefore, that the building came into existence in 1870.

The home has no historical associations of importance. Its construction methods reflect no significant technique or use of materials. Its additions make the structure appear cluttered. There are numerous other homes in the Prairie du Chien area which appear to be similar. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove this structure.

---

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
127	183 lot 5,6 Lower Prairie du Chien Addition	1420 S. Main	G. Benish

This asphalt sided, L-shaped, modest-sized frame structure with gable roof and an enclosed porch on the east is unremarkable in every way. Built in about 1867 by Peter Flanagan, the structure was valued at \$170 for tax purposes. No building existed on the property prior to Flanagan's acquisition of the real estate in 1866 for \$30.<sup>1</sup>

Structural analysis of 1420 S. Main revealed no significant information. The walls are of lath and plaster. The attic is of commercially milled lumber with conventional 2" x 4" rafter construction, and wire nails are found throughout the building. As in most pre-20th century structures inspected in Prairie du Chien, the roof boards are milled but of various widths, some being 20" wide.

The basement is the usual pre-20th century rock and mortar structure coated with usual layer of whitewash. The addition on the south is supported by a similarly constructed rock and mortar foundation. Wire nails and commercially milled lumber were used for the area.

A new room was added on the southwest in the 1960s. The enclosed porch on the east was also added to the building after its initial construction. According to the HABS research, the building has never been associated with any significant event or personality of local importance.

I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to dispose of the structure at 1420 S. Main Street in any manner that is deemed suitable.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Prairie du Chien: Historical and Architectural Resources," Historic American Building Survey, Summer, 1978, #127.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
128	3 lots 8-16 Lockwood's Addition	1534 S. Main	Sam Tesar

This substantial, steelclad-vinyl siding over frame, two-story, gable-roofed, rectangular structure has one-story additions to the north and south. The entire building has been raised about 7 feet by adding concrete blocks. The home has been extensively remodelled and is in an excellent state of maintenance. There is, however, little remaining of the original character of the house.

Below the center section there is a poured concrete basement which replaced the rock and mortar original. Much of the lumber is recent and of standard dimensions. The original hewn sills are still visible and several of the floor joists have been notched by hand. The attic portion of the original section has 3" x 3" square milled rafters. The roof boards are new. The home has been substantially altered to improve and enlarge its function as a modern home.

The HABS research indicates that the home was originally built in 1858 by John Seefred. The block was a commercial center in those days, caused by the arrival of the railroad and the nearby location of the docking facilities for cargo transshipment across the Mississippi. These facilities were moved shortly thereafter to the 4th Ward's waterfront because of silting at the original location.<sup>1</sup>

Because of the tremendous number of alterations and improvements which this home has experienced, there is little remaining of its historic integrity. It has no significant associations. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove it. The building, however, does not appear to be in any immediate danger and is well maintained and cared for.

---

<sup>1</sup> HABS, #128.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
129	6 lot 12 Lower Prairie du Chien Addition	Lockwood and Main	Lena Tyler

This modest, clapboard-over-frame, rectangular, one-story, gable-roofed, two-bay structure has a central chimney and a steep pitched roof. The building has been raised about one foot by the addition of four poured concrete slabs above the original rock and mortar foundation. Wire nails and recent commercially milled lumber can be seen from underneath. The attic has 2" x 4" milled rafters and random width roof boards. The chimney bricks appear to be of recent origin--they are not the soft red St. Louis type. The flooring is warped, no windows remain, the roof leaks, and the structure seems to have been abandoned for a number of years. The walls are now made of sheet rock--badly rotted. Wire nails appear throughout.

According to the HABS research, this structure was put up prior to 1856 by the speculating Prairie du Chien Land Company No. 1. The Prairie du Chien Land Company No. 1 was composed of enterprising New Yorkers and New Englanders who platted this area in Lower Prairie du Chien in 1838 in anticipation of rapid settlement. Their plans collapsed, although a number of small homes were constructed. The tax records start in 1857 and at that time Caleb C. Willard owned the lot and maybe this particular home. The HABS report is inconclusive on who built #129 or when. They believe that this building existed on the site by 1861.<sup>1</sup>

The 1870 Bird's Eye map does not extend to include a view of this property. The 1876 map is likewise unclear on this parcel. The building has a typically primitive look about it, although much of the lumber is recent, all of it has been milled, and wire nails appear throughout. This is a building that might have significant historical associations if it indeed was built by the Prairie du Chien Land Company No. 1. I recommend that #129 be considered for consideration in a reuse plan for the project area. My guess is that the structure is not as old or as important as it is reported to be.

---

<sup>1</sup> HABS #129.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
134	21, lot 7, 8, 9 Beaumont's Addition	1205 S. First	Don Keister

The building at 1205 S. First has already been removed. According to the HABS survey it was a clapboard-over-frame, one-story, T-shaped, five bay structure with a gable roof on the front and a hipped roof to the rear. There was an addition to the south. The structure was apparently built in 1867 by Frederick Zabel.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
135	183 lot 1, N 1/2 2, 10, all of 9, Lower Prairie du Chien	1403 S. First	Mrs. L. Bunders

This clapboard-over-frame, L-shaped, two-story, gable-roofed structure has one chimney at each ell, and shed-roofed porch additions to the east and west. The basement is a rock and mortar treatment. When the siding was replaced because of rotting caused by flood damage, many cut nails were removed from the work area according to the owner. The foundation sills are in a deteriorated condition. The attic is composed of 2" x 4" rafters and commercially milled various width roof boards. The building has been well maintained even though it has suffered from floods. The owner showed the researcher a photo of herself approaching #135 with a boat during the 1965 high water.

According to the HABS research, building #135 was constructed in 1871 by Henry Wiebrecht. Wiebrecht paid taxes on property with an assessed value of \$15 in 1820 and \$600 the following year.<sup>1</sup>

This structure has a pleasing shape and has not been heavily modified over the years. It is not a remarkable building and there are numbers of similar looking homes in Prairie du Chien. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove this structure.

---

<sup>1</sup> HABS, #135.

## THE NON-PREFERRED CATEGORY

The Non-preferred category consists of 51 structures identified by the HABS report as having been constructed between 1876-1927. These buildings have been deemed to be outside the time frame of Prairie du Chien's period of national and regional importance.

A structural analysis, an on-site inspection, and a systematic review of the historical records relating to the buildings was carried out in the course of this research effort. Most of the Non-preferred buildings were constructed after the turn of the 20th century. A sizable proportion were built in the 1910-1925 era. Eight (No's 1, 2, 11, 39, 51, 95, 112, and 121) were post-1927 structures. One (#70) fell into the borderline of the Non-preferred/Preferred categories and has been recommended for preservation planning.

Each building is treated individually. Recommendations appear at the end of each synopsis. The accompanying abstract summarizes the research findings.



File Number	Block	Address	Owner
1	1 lot 1 4th Ward, Main Village	N. Water St.	Berkley Brewer

This structure has been removed from its previous location on North Water St. It was an asphalt shingle/over clapboard /over frame, one-story, gable-roofed summer cottage. It had the appearance of a well-maintained shack.

Although classified by the HABS report as being a non-preferred building c. 1876-1927, this #1 is a c. 1950 structure. According to the Tax Rolls, the U.S. Government owned the property throughout the 1930s and 1940s. After 1950 a number of small structures made their appearance along the river bank, north of block #1. Several of these structures were clam sheds and boats which began to be adapted for summer cottage use.

I recommend that building #1 be place in the Excluded Category.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
2	1 lot 2 4th Ward, Main Village	520 Water St.	Kenneth Bie Nash

This small, one-story, asphalt shingle, gable-roofed, rectangular building was constructed between 1926-1927. It began its existence as a houseboat. It now functions as a vacation residence.

No internal inspection was permitted. However, Kenneth Fernette, the previous owner, stated that his uncle, Lawrence Fernette, helped convert the boat into a land-based home late in the 1920's. Lawrence Fernette (see files No. 72, 74) was approximately 16 years old when he helped move a houseboat owned by Arnold Miehle onto the shore. Fernette helped lay out the concrete block foundation and remove the hull. The Tax Rolls have no record of any buildings on the site prior to 1929.

The structure is well maintained and appears sound. However, it is not an historic resource. I recommend that building #2 be placed on the excluded list.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
3	14 lot 7, 8 4th Ward, Main Village	412 Water St.	Calvin Kloecke

This modest, clapboard-over-frame, rectangular, one and one half story, gable roofed, bungalow-style home with porches to the east and west has recently been painted and sided over with aluminum.

No access was permitted to the upstairs, but the basement was inspected. The building rests on a poured concrete foundation. It has been raised about two feet, and the front porch, facing west, is supported on posts. All lumber is of the commercially milled variety of standard dimensions. All the nails are mass produced wire type.

The property upon which #3 is situated belonged to the American Fur Company. The site was originally part of Main Village Lot 14, upon which the American Fur Company Warehouse was located.<sup>1</sup> The lot came into the possession of M. C. Brisbois and in 1861 he sold the property to Adelaid M. Brisbois.<sup>2</sup>

After the French long lot had been subdivided, and the property under discussion became lot 7, 8 block 14, Main Village, lots 7 and 8 came under divided ownership. Lot 8 and the north half of Lot 17 were owned by Fred Miller, who moved to Texas after the Civil War. Miller's tax defaulted property was sold at public auction in 1881, and C. M. Seely acquired the lots and other property for \$200. No improvements are listed on the Tax Roll.<sup>3</sup>

Lot 7 had come into the possession of Joel D. Jones. In 1880, Jones sold lot 7 to Henry M. Rice of Minnesota for \$50.<sup>4</sup> Upon the death of Mr. Rice, his wife, Matilda, sold the lot to J. W. Barnum for \$25.<sup>5</sup> Barnum's property (including seven other lots) had no improvements.<sup>6</sup>

In 1905 Michael Menges, Baden-born carpenter and self proclaimed capitalist, acquired lot 8 for \$1.40 in back tax. The property at that

---

<sup>1</sup> United States of American to American Fur Co., Feb. 21, 1852, Deeds, vol. G, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> M.C. Brisbois to A. M. Brisbois, Ibid., vol. 16, p. 387.

<sup>3</sup> Fred Miller to C. M. Seely, 3 Sep 1881, Ibid., vol. 42, p. 19; Tax Roll, 1881-1900.

<sup>4</sup> Joel D. Jones to Henry M. Rice, 5 Mar 1880, Deeds, vol. 39, p. 258.

<sup>5</sup> Matilda Rice to J. W. Barnum, 27 Aug 1900, Ibid., vol. 64, p. 262.

<sup>6</sup> Tax Roll, 1900.

time had no improvements upon it.<sup>7</sup> The same year, Menges bought Barnum's lot 7 for \$50, thereby unifying the histories of lots 7 and 8.<sup>8</sup>

In 1915, Menges sold lots 7 and 8 to Eugene Aman, who sold it on the same day to Mrs. Mina (Minnie) Voth, a laundress, for \$200.<sup>9</sup> The following year, 1916, a \$500 improvement appears on the Tax Roll.<sup>10</sup> The 1920 tax increase raised the improved value of the Voth's lots 7, 8 to \$600. In 1923 a significant improvement occurred on the lots, which raised the value of the home to \$1200.<sup>11</sup> In 1927 Mrs. Voth sold the lots and building to R. C. Voth, probably one of her children, for \$1,000.<sup>12</sup>

Building #3 is a 1916-1923 structure, probably the former since lot 17 was sold at the same time Mrs. Voth transferred her property to R. C. Voth. In either case, it is not a historically significant structure. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to dispose of the building.

---

<sup>7</sup> Tax Deed, 15 May 1905, Deeds, vol. 46, p. 615; Tax Roll, 1905; Federal MSS Census 1870, 1880, Schedule of Inhabitants.

<sup>8</sup> J. W. Barnum to M. Menges, 27 Nov 1905, Deeds, vol. 74, p. 416.

<sup>9</sup> M. Menges to E. Aman, 2 Jun 1915, Ibid., vol. 98, p. 335; E. Aman to Mrs. Mina Voth, 2 Jun 1915, Ibid., vol. 98, p. 336; Federal MSS Census 1900, Schedule of Inhabitants.

<sup>10</sup> Tax Roll, 1916.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 1920-1923.

<sup>12</sup> Mina Voth to R.C. Voth, 8 Oct 1927, Deeds, vol. 138, p. 452.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
6	23 lot 1, 2 (N 1/2) 4th Ward, Main Village	222 N. Second	Leo Weber

This medium-sized, asphalt-shingle-over-frame, one and one half story, L-shaped, gable roofed building has been well maintained. Its structural elements are all sound.

The basement under the original section of 222 Second St. is composed of rock and mortar. The addition to the south, and to the inside of the rock and mortar original wall, has a poured concrete wall. All basement floors are of poured concrete. The original section sills are hand hewn. Wire nails are found throughout the structure. The flooring is sound.

The attic is composed of standard 2" x 4" rafters, and all commercially milled lumber. The roof boards vary considerably in width, as has been found in many of the pre-20th century buildings in Prairie du Chien. The chimney has been removed.

The real estate upon which #6 is situated was owned by the American Fur Company. In 1853 H. L. Dousman acquired the Main Village Lot 18 for \$500 and sold it shortly thereafter, for the same price, to Fred J. Miller.<sup>1</sup> During the railroad boom of the 1860s, L. Case acquired lot 2, block 23 in the 4th Ward and constructed a building known as "The Island House," probably a hotel. In 1869 Case sold lot 2 and the Island House to Austin Hinman. In 1876, Miller sold Hinman neighboring lot 1 for \$100.<sup>2</sup>

Several years later Hinman moved to Texas. In 1879 Hinman sold lots 1, 2 in block 23 to Sam B. Frost for \$750. Lot 2 is noted as having "that building known as the Island House" upon it.<sup>3</sup> Shortly thereafter, Frost sold Island House and the two lots to F. T. Hobbs (see #92) for \$500.<sup>4</sup>

Starting in 1880 the value of the improvements located on lots 1 and 2 began to drop. Perhaps the record breaking flood of 1880, followed by another similar disaster in October of 1881, caused damage to Island House. In any case, the property dropped from a \$620 tax assessed value in 1879 to \$320 in 1880. By 1882 no improvements are located on the lots, whose tax value amounted to a mere \$30.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ramsay Crooks to H. L. Dousman, 7 Apr 1853, Deeds, vol. G, p. 201; H. L. Dousman to Frederick J. Miller, 1 Dec 1853, Ibid., p. 324.

<sup>2</sup> L. Case to Austin Hinman, 3 Nov 1869, Ibid., vol. 39, p. 54; Fred Miller to Austin Hinman, 1 Jul 1876, Ibid., vol. 38, p. 148.

<sup>3</sup> Austin Hinman to Sam B. Frost, 26 Jul 1879, Ibid., vol. 38, p. 170.

<sup>4</sup> Sam B. Frost to F. T. Hobbs, 21 Oct 1879, Ibid., vol. 39, p. 109.

<sup>5</sup> Tax Roll, 1879-1882.

Hobbs failed to pay his taxes on the property, and the county granted a Tax Deed to James Kennedy for the paltry sum of \$14.85.<sup>6</sup> Hobbs transferred all claim to lots 1, 2 in block 23 to Kennedy in 1883 for \$100.<sup>7</sup>

In 1884 Kennedy constructed a home on lot 1 valued at \$150 for tax purposes.<sup>8</sup> Kennedy died shortly thereafter, and in 1893 his wife Johanna sold the house and lot to Frank Finn for \$350.<sup>9</sup> Finn acquired the north one half of lot 2 in 1898.<sup>10</sup>

In 1900 Finn sold his home and lots 1, 2 (N 1/2) to William J. Harding for \$260.<sup>11</sup> Harding retained possession of the home and property until 1930. The tax increase of 1913 and 1920 raised its \$200 value to \$490.<sup>12</sup> In 1927 and 1928 Harding made significant improvements to the home which raised its value for tax purposes to \$750.<sup>13</sup>

There is nothing indicating that building #6 has historical significance. It is in very sound condition and had been well made, although, as noted, has no chimney. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove the structure.

---

<sup>6</sup> Tax Deed, 11 May 1880, Deeds, vol. 40, p. 366.

<sup>7</sup> F. T. Hobbs to James Kennedy, 17 Apr 1883, Ibid., vol. 44, p. 32.

<sup>8</sup> Tax Roll, 1884.

<sup>9</sup> Johanna Kennedy to Frank Finn, 28 Aug 1893, Deeds, vol. 55, p. 211.

<sup>10</sup> Tax Roll, 1898.

<sup>11</sup> Frank Finn to William J. Harding, 13 Oct 1900, Deeds, vol. 58, p. 262.

Building	Block	Lot	Address	Owner
8	26	8 4th Ward, Main Village	124 S. Second	Ken Lessard

#### Synopsis

At the turn of the 20th century, lot 8 was part of a property owned by Henry Whaley which comprised lots 3, 4, 7, 8, and 9. On this property, Mr. Whaley owned a house which city officials valued at \$325 for tax purposes. The 1913 tax raise increased Whaley's building valuation to \$450 and the 1920 increase raised it to \$700.

In 1921 the executors of the Whaley Estate sold the property to Paul Kingston, who improved the house and raised its value to \$900 for tax purposes. Three years later Kingston sold lot 8 to Laverne Gremore (Greemore). In the Tax Rolls for 1924 and 1925 Gremore's new lot was listed as being unimproved and without buildings. In 1926, however, Gremore has a building constructed on lot 8 which was valued at \$800 for tax purposes. The following year Gremore made a significant improvement to the property which raised his tax valuation another \$400.

My inspection, carried out on 3 October, revealed a conventional 20th century treatment. The basement has poured concrete walls and a concrete floor. All lumber is commercially milled, of standard dimension, with wire nails used throughout. There is an addition on the east which has poured concrete walls and a dirt floor. The attic revealed no surprises-- 2 x 4 rafters, standard 1 x 12 roof boards--all commercially milled.

In my opinion, building #8 was built in 1926. The 1927 jump in value represents the east side addition. With these facts in mind, there is no reason why the city of Prairie du Chien should not be allowed to remove the structure from its present location and resite it elsewhere.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
9	26, lot 9 4th Ward, Main Village	122 N. Second	LeRoy Coorough

This aluminum-sided, one story, gable-roof, rectangular, bungalow-style building is in no way an historical resource. Constructed just one year before the 1927 exclusion date, the building had been part of a larger property with a history of improvement.

At the turn of the 20th Century, Henry Whaley owned lots 3, 4, 7, 8, 9 in block 26 (4th Ward, Main Village). Whaley had a building located on his real estate valued at \$350 for tax purposes in 1902.<sup>1</sup> Whaley's family moved to Wisconsin from Minnesota during the late 1860s. Henry's father, Daniel (b. 1826) had been a laborer before his untimely death in the late 1870s. Henry grew up in care of his French-born mother, Teresa, and in the home of his father's brother, William.<sup>2</sup>

Henry Whaley sold lots 3, 4 and acquired lots 5, 6 in 1910. The property value of his building remained constant during this land transaction.<sup>3</sup> The 1913 increase raised the value of Whaley's building to \$450.<sup>4</sup>

Whaley died in 1917 and the property and building came into the possession of Paul Kingston in 1921. Kingston made a number of improvements, increasing the tax value of the building to \$900 by 1921.<sup>5</sup> In 1924 Kingston sold lot 8 and the value of his property decreased significantly to \$100 with "no improvements" being noted by the tax assessor.<sup>6</sup> In 1925 Carroll Ray acquired lots 5-9 (except 8) and there were no buildings or other improvements on the property in that year.<sup>7</sup> In 1926 Ray constructed a building valued at \$700 for tax purposes. In 1927 Ray improved the building, thereby increasing its value to \$900 for tax purposes.<sup>8</sup>

A structural analysis of 122 N. Second (#9) revealed no surprises and further corroborated the 1926 construction date. The basement under the original section of the home is of poured concrete. The addition to the east is also of poured concrete. Commercially milled lumber of standard dimensions and wire nails are found throughout the conventional treatment. The attic is constructed with standard 2" x 4" rafters and the roof boards are standard sized widths as well. The building is structurally sound.

Considering the recency of this home's construction date, and the absence of any associational importance, I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove and/or dispose of the building in an appropriate manner.

<sup>1</sup> Tax Roll, 1902.

<sup>2</sup> 1870 and 1880 Federal MSS  
Census, Schedule of Inhabitants.

<sup>3</sup> Op. Cit., 1910.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 1913.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 1921.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 1924-1935.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 1926-1927.



File Number	Block	Address	Owner
11	Part of Government Lot 5 in Section 24 T.7N. R7W. 4th Ward, Main Village	724 Villa Louis	F. E. Dillman

This L-shaped, aluminum sided, hipped-roofed, one-story structure is of recent construction. The building's history is difficult to trace because of the complex land patterns and divisions associated with the real estate upon which #11 is located. The real estate under discussion was a part of the property examined in building file number 12. The following description will pick up where the #12 synopsis left off, and the two should be reviewed together since they have been intimately, and confusingly, related.

After acquiring "about 40 acres more or less" of property north of Main Village Lot 1 in 1917, W.A. Johnson and his partner, Frank Roth, of the Johnson and Roth Co., began selling parcels of the land. Johnson carefully excepted his house (#12, built c. 1910 by George Schweiger) from the transactions and reserved farm rights on lands he sold.

In April 1923, for example, Johnson sold 5 acres within the loop of the old CMSPRR to R. F. Whale and C. J. Knight, and one month later sold the same men another 20 acres.<sup>1</sup>

In 1929 Johnson sold his remaining acreage in Government Lots 4, 5 (Section 24) and Lot 1 (Section 25) to the Prairie Sand and Gravel Company, excepting a 483' x 517' plot (the "one French arpent" upon which #12 is situated) and whose northern boundary would be considered a "barn yard fence line," retaining "farm rights" on areas not being used for sand and gravel purposes.<sup>2</sup> Johnson's house, (#12) and his arpent of land, then disassociate themselves from the real estate under examination below.

In 1936 C. J. Knight purchased the holdings of the Prairie Sand and Gravel Company for \$6,000.<sup>3</sup> No home is mentioned in the Warranty Deed nor are there any "exceptions" or indications that a dwelling exists on the property until 1944.

In March 1944 Wymond A. Miller purchased a one-half interest in the

<sup>1</sup> W. A. Johnson to R. F. Whale and C. J. Knight, 23 Apr 1923, Deeds, vol. 118, p. 146; W. A. Johnson to Robert F. Whale and C. J. Knight 5 May 1923, Ibid., Vol. 100, p. 485.

<sup>2</sup> W. A. Johnson to Prairie Sand and Gravel Co., 3 Jan 1929, Ibid., vol. 131, p. 161.

<sup>3</sup> Prairie Sand and Gravel Co. to C. J. Knight, 25 Jul 1936, Ibid., vol. 148, p. 287.

Knight Company for \$17,124. Miller also acquired the right of tenancy on the property, and the responsibility of insuring the habitation, in the name of Mr. Knight, for \$8,000.<sup>4</sup> The Knight-Miller partnership did not work out.<sup>5</sup> Knight then acquired another partner.

In 1945 F. E. Dillman entered into a business relationship with Mr. Knight. Dillman became a partner in the C. J. Knight Company, a "tenant" on the property, received \$40 a week pay, and was allowed to direct his half of the company's profits into payment of the \$16,025 debt he owed Knight for the partnership and the land contract home.<sup>6</sup>

It is clear that 725 Villa Louis came into existence during the period 1936-1944. Mr. Blair Dillman, son of Mr. and Mrs. F. E. Dillman, explained that #11 was constructed during 1940 and within his memory. The Dillmans raised the building in 1952 and added the section to the east at that time. Although I was denied access, and was therefore unable to inspect the structure, Mr. Dillman stated that commercial lumber, wire, nails, and poured concrete are the characteristic building elements found throughout 725 Villa Louis.

Building #11 is a c. 1940 home. It has no association with persons or events of importance. It is architecturally unremarkable. I recommend that 725 Villa Louis be placed on the excluded list.

---

<sup>4</sup> C. J. Knight to Wymond A. Miller, 24 Mar 1944, Ibid., vol. 170, p. 61.

<sup>5</sup> Wymond A. Miller to C. J. Knight, 23 Nov 1945, Ibid., vol. 179, p. 11.

<sup>6</sup> C. J. Knight and Elizabeth Knight (his wife) to F. E. Dillman 28 Nov 1945, Land Contract, Ibid., vol. 176, p. 16.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
12	All of Government lot 5 in Section 24 and that part of Government lot 1 in Section 25 T7 N., R.7W 4th Ward, Main Village	644 Villa Louis	Harry Zabel

The property upon which 644 Villa Louis is situated has had a complex history relating to the difficulties associated with adjusting the French Colonial era's land patterns to the American system of real estate divisions. Typically, the American rectangular survey and sectional grid system proved incompatible with French farm and village lot boundary lines, and a number of properties in Prairie du Chien have been located upon fractionalized lots with confusing "exact descriptions," as a result.

Located just north of Main Village Lot 1, 644 Villa Louis was part of an area that in the second half of the 19th Century had been owned partly by the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad Company (CMSPRR) and partly by Cathrine Lawler--the Irish born wife of John Lawler. Slightly northeast of where the building now stands, ran the "Loop Line" of the CMSPRR, connecting John Lawler's famous steam powered bridge with Iowa and Wisconsin.<sup>1</sup>

At the turn of the 20th century, the property where 644 Villa Louis now stands was owned by the railroad and H.C. Poehler (who had acquired Cathrine Lawler's property in this area). There were no buildings on the site where 644 Villa Louis is situated, according to the Tax Rolls.<sup>2</sup> Poehler died in 1902 and a portion of his part of the property under discussion came into the possession of Thomas and John Nugent the following year.<sup>3</sup> In 1904 the CMSPRR sold its holdings around and including the "Loop Line" of 20.8 acres to the Nugent Brothers after surveying the area and drawing an extremely detailed map which they included in the resulting deed.<sup>4</sup> By 1908 the Nugent Brothers had relinquished their

<sup>1</sup> 1880 Federal Manuscript Census, Schedule of Inhabitants; Fred A. Schrader "Milwaukee Railroad" MSS D1-12, Villa Louis Archives; Alden E. Miller. "The Prairie du Chien Pontoon Bridge," The Railway and Locomotive Historical Society Bulletin, no. 58 (1942); Alice E. Smith (ed.) "Wisconsin's First Railroad, Linsley Letters, 1852" Wis. Mag. of History, vol. 30, no. 3 (March, 1947).

<sup>2</sup> Tax Rolls 1902; Cathrine Lawler to H.C. Poehler 4 May 1899, Deeds Vol. 61, p. 334.

<sup>3</sup> Judgement and Executors of H.C. Poehler Estate, 8 Jul 1902, Deeds vol. 69, p. 423; Frank Poehler to Thos. and John Nugent of Nugent Brothers and Co, 13 Apr 1903, Ibid., vol. 70, p. 315.

<sup>4</sup> Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad Co. to John and Thomas Nugent 10 Mar 1904, Ibid. vol. 72, p. 262, see MSS map attached.

portion of property to George Schweiger, son of a German-born hotel keeper.<sup>5</sup>

In 1910 Schweiger began making improvements to his property, and a building valued at \$200 appears on the Tax Roll.<sup>6</sup> The area begins to be used for sand and gravel purposes during this period, although it is not clear exactly when. In 1915 Schweiger transferred his property to Herman Kuchenbecker noting that all of the acreage with the exception of "one square French arpent" [a unit of land measurement utilized during the French Colonial era] could be used for sand and gravel purposes.<sup>7</sup>

Two years later in 1917 Kuchenbecker transferred ownership of his property to W. A. Johnson and Frank Roth of the Johnson and Roth Company. Johnson got 5/7 of the "pear shaped parcel of land" and Roth received 2/7.<sup>8</sup> Johnson obtained the building, and even though he began selling portions of his land, he retained a 483' x 517' (the arpent) section of property for himself, carefully reserving farm rights on lands not being used for sand and gravel purposes.<sup>9</sup> In 1925 Johnson's home was valued at \$2,000.<sup>10</sup>

The building owned now by Harry Zabel at 644 Villa Louis Road is a large one and one half story, gambrel-roofed rectangular structure covered by asphalt siding. The basement is of poured concrete and, although the owner explained that the structure had not been raised, it appears to this observer that it has been elevated by adding five levels of concrete blocks. Milled lumber of standard dimensions and wire nails appear throughout the building which utilizes conventional building techniques. Based on structural evidence and historical records, it is likely that 644 Villa Louis was constructed in 1910 and substantially improved upon by W. A. Johnson during the period 1921-1925. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to dispose of the structure.

---

<sup>5</sup> 1870 Federal MSS Census, Schedule of Inhabitants; Tax Roll, 1907-1908.

<sup>6</sup> Tax Roll, 1910.

<sup>7</sup> George Schweiger to Herman Kuchenbecker, 7 Apr 1915, Deeds, vol. 102, p. 441.

<sup>8</sup> Herman Kuchenbecker to W. A. Johnson, 17 Jul 1917, Ibid., vol. 102, p. 441.

<sup>9</sup> W. A. Johnson to R. F. Whale and C. J. Knight, 23 Apr 1923, Ibid., vol. 118, p. 146; W.A. Johnson to Prairie Sand and Gravel Co., 3 Jan 1929, Ibid. vol. 137, p. 161.

<sup>10</sup> Tax Roll, 1925.



File Number	Block	Address	Owner
14	12, lots 4,5, 6 4th Ward, Main Village	414 Villa Louis	Francis Fernette

This one and one-half story, clapboard-over-frame, bungalow-style, rectangular structure is of recent construction. The basement is of poured concrete and commercially milled lumber of standard 2 x 4 and 2 x 6 dimensions are found throughout the house. The owner, Francis Fernette (b.c. 1915) explained that there had been another home situated on the property, that it had been torn down and the foundation re-utilized (although redone after the floods of the 1960s) for the present structure. The building is in a state of exceptionally fine maintenance.

The Fernette family has been intimately associated with the history of Prairie du Chien since the end of the fur trade era. According to the family historian, Lawrence Fernette (see File #74) the original Fernette to settle in the Prairie du Chien region was a French Canadian wood worker, J. P. Fernette, who relocated to the area at the request of Hercules Dousman when the latter became desirous of constructing the original Villa Louis mansion during the 1840s.<sup>1</sup>

The Fernette who first acquired ownership of the property under investigation was Pierre (Peter). In 1858 Pierre Fernette acquired ownership of lot 5 in block 12 of the recently platted original Main Village (4th Ward, St. Friole Island, Prairie du Chien) from the Estate of B. W. Brisbois. By 1859 a house appeared on the Tax Rolls and the property ranged in value from \$260 to \$100.<sup>2</sup> Fernette acquired lot 4 in 1877.<sup>3</sup>

Upon the death of Pierre (Peter), the property in block 12 came into the possession of John Peter Fernette in 1909. The building situated on lot 5 was valued at \$200 for tax purposes and rose to \$250 value at the 1913 tax increase. In 1920 the tax assessed value of improvements jumped dramatically to \$1315 and again in 1921 to \$1500. The tax purpose value remained steady at \$1500 until 1927 when it rose to \$1615. It is likely that the house now occupying the site on block 12, lots 4, 5, 6 was constructed between 1920 and 1921 and improved, perhaps with the covered porch in the rear (towards the east) being added, in 1927.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Conversation with Lawrence Fernette, 31 Oct 1979, family MSS history in his possession.

<sup>2</sup> Tax Roll, 1857-1900; 1880 Federal Manuscript Census Schedule of Inhabitants.

<sup>3</sup> Tax Roll, 1877.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 1909-1927.

In the opinion of this writer, building #14 is a c.1920-1921 home with limited historic importance. Its association with the Fernette family does not, in my judgment, alter its merit from an historic building perspective. There are other Fernette properties in the area which are more closely associated with the city's historic past. I recommend that the City of Prairie du Chien be authorized to move or dispose of this structure.

Building	Block	Address	Owner
15	12 lot 15, 4th Ward, Main Village	410 Villa Louis	Dorris Heisz

Tax records indicate that lot 15 was part of a property originally owned by Bedford Busch (Bush). It remained unimproved until 1918 when C. F. Bush was taxed for a \$700 improvement on his lots 11-15. Following the 1920 raise in the city-wide tax assessment, the Bush lots remain at \$895 improved value until 1924. In that year, the value of the improvements increased dramatically to \$1695 and by 1926 to \$2095, even though there was no raise in the level of local tax assessment in Prairie du Chien. It is likely that another building was constructed on lots 11-15. In 1928 lot 15 appears on the tax roll individually, with a \$950 improvement.

Structural analysis revealed a conventional 20th century treatment. Poured concrete foundation walls and basement floors, with milled lumber floor joists, floor boards, and wire nails suggested nothing unconventional or unique. The roof structure, of the hipped type, has 2 x 4 rafters and standard size roof boards. The bungalow construction, however, is not as yet associated with historically significant architectural style. In my opinion this building was constructed between 1918 and 1926 (probably the latter) and is of limited historical significance.



File Number	Block	Address	Owner
17	12 lot 11, 12, 13 14 except S.50' 4th Ward, Main Village	408 Villa Louis	City

The building which occupied 408 Villa Louis has been removed from the project area. It was an aluminum sided, hipped roof, one-story rectangular structure with an enclosed porch to the west.

In 1902 no improvements existed on lots 11-15 in block 12 of the 4th Ward. Bedford Busch (Bush) owned the real estate and paid tax on a \$50 assessed valuation for his five lots. In 1918 C. F. Bush acquired the lots and had a building valued at \$700 for tax purposes constructed. The 1920 tax raise increased C. F. Bush's building to \$895.<sup>1</sup>

In 1924 the value of C. F. Bush's lots jumped dramatically to \$1695 and steadily rose to \$2095 by 1926.<sup>2</sup> In 1928 C. F. Bush divided his lots in half and the southern half came into the possession of Paul Bush. Paul Bush's property and building on the southern half of lots 11-14 was valued at \$760. C. F. Bush's property to the north remained at about the same level it had been in 1920.<sup>3</sup>

Building #17 occupied the north 1/2 of lots 11-14. It was constructed in 1918 by C. F. Bush and improved slightly thereafter. It has already been moved and there is no reason to regret this course of events.

---

<sup>1</sup> Tax Roll, 1902-1920.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1924-1926.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 1928.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
18	17 lot 5 4th Ward, Main Village	382 Villa Louis	John Trayer

This modest, clapboard-over-frame, one-story, hipped roof, bungalow-style building is of recent construction. The structure has been raised nearly five feet by the addition of cinder blocks to the cast concrete block foundation.

The building is in fair condition overall. All the lumber is of the commercially milled variety and wire nails are found throughout. The roof of the structure is composed of conventional 2" x 4" rafters of standard dimension. The roof boards were replaced in 1972.

At the turn of the 20th century no building existed on lot 5, which was valued at \$10. In 1909 L. Case sold the real estate to Bedford Bush who constructed a building valued at \$100 for tax purposes.<sup>1</sup> The 1913 tax increase raised the building's value to \$150.<sup>2</sup> In 1917 one Jacob Johnson acquired the lot, but no improvements are listed by the city tax assessor. Perhaps a fire occurred or, perhaps, Bush moved the building located on the lot to another location.<sup>3</sup> Johnson sold the lot to George Sutton in 1919 and Sutton did nothing to improve the value of the real estate.<sup>4</sup>

In 1923 Charles Gokey acquired lot 5 and constructed a building valued at \$700 for tax purposes on it. Gokey kept the building until 1928 when he sold it to Albert Cavanaugh. The value remained fixed at \$700 until after 1930.<sup>5</sup>

Building #18 is not an historic resource. It is a 1923 bungalow style structure. It has not been associated with any person, event, or construction technique of significance. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove and/or dispose of the building at 328 Villa Louis.

- 
- 1 Tax Roll, 1909.
  - 2 Ibid., 1913.
  - 3 Ibid., 1917.
  - 4 Ibid., 1919-1922.
  - 5 Ibid., 1923-1930.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
19	17 Lot 3,4 4th Ward, Main Village	316 Villa Louis	City

The building which occupied the site at 316 Villa Louis has been removed. It was, according to the records, a modest, clapboard, one-story, rectangular, gable-roofed structure, of bungalow style. It was a 1923 construction, without associational importance.

At the turn of the 20th century, the property upon which #19 was located had not been improved. The H. L. Dousman Estate owned the real estate until 1907. In that year Hiram Wagner acquired the lots and did nothing to improve their value.<sup>1</sup>

Warren Price came into possession of lots 2, 3, 4 and 11, 12, 13 in block 17 during 1909 and he constructed a building valued at \$165 for tax purposes upon his holdings. By 1914 the value of the building had increased to \$320 and Price had transferred the ownership of his lots to John Lawless.<sup>2</sup>

Lawless sold the property to Lee Pace in 1916 and Pace improved the value of the building slightly. In 1922 George Sutton acquired lots 2, 3, 4 and the city tax assessor noted that "no improvements" existed on the lots.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, it is clear that the building constructed by Warren Price upon lots 2, 3, 4, 11, 12, 13 in 1909 was located upon lots 11, 12, 13. The Price structure is #48 in this study. Lots 2, 3, 4 had probably not been improved before 1922.

In 1923 Sutton constructed a building valued at \$100 for tax purposes.<sup>4</sup> Sutton continued in possession of the property until after 1930 and he made a significant improvement to the building in 1929.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Tax Roll, 1902-1907.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1909-1914.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 1916-1922.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 1923.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 1924-1930.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
21	22 lot 12, 13, 14 4th Ward, Main Village	230 Villa Louis	City

This substantial, asphalt shingle-over-frame, two-story, L-shaped, gable roofed structure has two enclosed porches added to the one story wing on the south. There is also a lean-to attached to the southern addition. The foundation is of rock and mortar. The basement under the original two story section on the north has been coated with whitewash and retains a dirt floor. All lumber has been commercially milled and wire nails are standard throughout. The addition is resting on poured concrete walls, and there is no basement. The attic is composed of 2" x 4" rafters and milled roof boards of varying widths.

For many years the lots associated with 230 Villa Louis had a history of divided ownership and lack of improvements. The lots had been traded heavily since the 1870s.<sup>1</sup> In 1886 Joseph Loomis, who worked on the crew of the steam-powered pontoon bridge, purchased lots 12, 13, 14 and constructed a home upon it. The house and property were valued at \$375, whereas the vacant lots had heretofore been assessed at \$10 each for tax purposes.<sup>2</sup> During the years between 1890 and 1901 Loomis' property declined in value, reaching as low as \$200. In 1902, Loomis significantly improved the building, thereby increasing its tax value to \$500.<sup>3</sup>

In 1905, Loomis sold the property to Richard Brew, who held it for two years before transferring the title to Solomon Schwartz. Schwartz owned the lots and the building until 1912 and, like Brew, did nothing to alter the value which remained constant at \$500.

In 1913, Justus Dremmel purchased 230 Villa Louis. During Dremmel's ownership, which lasted until after 1930, two tax increases affected the building's value. No other improvements occurred until after 1930.<sup>5</sup>

Building #21 is not an historically significant resource. It is in sound condition. Also, it is similar to any number of like buildings located throughout Prairie du Chien. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove this structure.

<sup>1</sup> Tax Roll, 1857-18-7.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1886; Fred Schrader, "Milwaukee Railroad." MSS D1-12  
Villa Louis Archives.

<sup>3</sup> Op.Cit., 1902.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 1905-1912.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 1913-1930.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
23	22 lot 3 4th Ward, Main, Village	218 Villa Louis	City

This modest, clapboard over frame, one-story, rectangular, gable-roofed structure with its front gable facade toward the west has been torn down. The property had been intimately associated with lots 4 and 24 (building #25) until 1936. As a result, it is difficult to determine what alterations occurred on any particular lot within the same 3, 4, 24 unit.

No improvements existed on lots 3, 4, 24 at the turn of the 20th Century. They belonged to F. T. Hobbs (see #92) until being sold to Leonard Pitzer in 1909. In that year, Pitzer constructed a building valued at \$75 for tax purposes.<sup>1</sup> The 1913 tax raise increased the value of Pitzer's undoubtedly modest building to \$100, and the 1920 tax jump heightened it to \$140.<sup>2</sup> By that time, Mr. Pitzer had died and the property remained in the possession of the executors of his estate.

In 1923 the value of the Pitzer Estate quintupled, jumping to \$800.<sup>3</sup> This dramatic increase indicates either a significant improvement to the existing structure on one of the lots, or the construction of another building.

The second possibility seems likely because in 1936 Delford Pitzer acquired lot 3 from the Pitzer Estate and city officials placed a \$140 value on the lot's improvements (the same improved value assessed prior to the 1923 activity). Lots 4 and 24 were devalued, thus corroborating the two-building theory.<sup>4</sup> It is probable, therefore, that building #23 was the 1909 structure built by Leonard Pitzer.

Because the building has been removed no structural analysis could be undertaken. From existing accounts, however, it seems that #23 was a 1909 building with little historical merit.

- 
- <sup>1</sup> Tax Roll, 1902-1904.
  - <sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1913-1920.
  - <sup>3</sup> Ibid., 1923.
  - <sup>4</sup> Ibid., 1936.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
25	22 lot 4 and 24 4th Ward, Main Village	214 Villa Louis	Charlotte Gifford

This clapboard-over-frame, one and one half story, gable-roofed, rectangular, bungalow-style structure with front and rear porches is of recent construction. It has been intimately associated with lot 3 (see file #23) and the synopses of the two properties should be reviewed together.

As pointed out in file number 23, building #25 on lot 4 and 24 (214 Villa Louis) was constructed in 1923. The structure has no basement and the crawl space has been blocked off. The attic is composed of conventional 2 x 4" rafters and standard dimensioned milled lumber. It is unremarkable in every way. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove this building.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
27	23 lot 16, 17 4th Ward, Main Village	205 Villa Louis	City

The building which occupied the site at 205 Villa Louis has been demolished. According to the records, it was an asphalt shingle over clapboard, one story, gable-roof, rectangular structure with an addition and enclosed porch on the south.

At the turn of the 20th century the property upon which 205 Villa Louis had been located was unimproved. It belonged to the Henry Hurley Estate. In 1909, George Aubin (Obin, Oben) acquired the property and constructed a home valued at \$100 for tax purposes.<sup>1</sup>

Aubin was born in 1864. His illiterate father, Jacob, had emigrated from Canada in the late 1850s. Jacob, a carpenter, and his wife, Mary, had eleven children.<sup>2</sup> George became a "steamboat hand" and piloted the ferry boat which ran between Prairie du Chien's 4th Ward and McGregor, Iowa.<sup>3</sup> According to Emma Gokey--George Aubin's daughter, who grew up in 205 Villa Louis, living there for 73 years--George Aubin logged a total of 236,250 miles on the Mississippi River before his death in the 1930's.<sup>4</sup>

Building #27 underwent several improvements during the ownership of George Aubin. The building was significantly improved in 1927 and again in 1928.<sup>5</sup> The destruction of 205 Villa Louis precluded any attempt at structural analysis.

---

<sup>1</sup> Tax Roll, 1902, 1909.

<sup>2</sup> Federal MSS Census 1870 and 1880, Schedule of Inhabitants.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 1900.

<sup>4</sup> "Prairie du Chien: Historical and Architectural Resources" Historic American Building Survey, Summer, 1978, #27.

<sup>5</sup> Tax Roll, 1927-1928.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
37	27 lot 14 4th Ward, Main Village	106 Villa Louis	Amy Gokey

This clapboard-over-frame, one and one half story, rectangular, bungalow-style structure with enclosed porch is of recent construction. The building is in fair condition overall. The basement is of poured concrete and has a dirt floor. Standard dimensioned milled lumber and wire nails of the commercial variety are found throughout the building. The attic has been partially finished.

According to the records, a building existed on lot 14 at the turn of the century. Tax assessors valued Paul La Bonne's building at a mere \$50, so it undoubtedly must have been a modest structure. In 1913 Alva (Albert) Gokey, acquired the lot and the old home upon it.<sup>1</sup>

Gokey, a saw mill worker of French Canadian extraction, began dramatically changing his property around 1919. In that year, his building tripled in value.<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Amy Gokey, who lived in 106 Villa Louis since 1920, explained that Alva Gokey removed the old house and constructed #37. In 1921 the Gokey home was valued at \$1230 for tax purposes.<sup>3</sup>

The building has a pleasing shape and epitomizes the time when the 4th Ward must have been a pleasant residential area. Much construction occurred in the 4th Ward during the period 1914-1925. At that time, the Island of St. Friele served the needs of its growing number of residents by providing an advantageous location in relation to the city's business district along Blackhawk Ave. (Bluff St.) and St. Gabriel's Catholic Church just over the marais on Washington St.

While the building is in need of attention in many areas, it seems fairly sound from a structural point of view. It is not an historic resource, although it retains its usefulness as a home. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be allowed to remove this structure.

---

<sup>1</sup> Tax Rolls, 1902-1913.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1919.

<sup>3</sup> Conversation with Amy Gokey, 12 Sep 1979; Tax Roll, 1921.



File # 39

Block 26  
Lot 17(E.90')  
4th Ward, Main  
Village

Owner  
William Bunts

The property upon which 101 N. Villa Louis now stands has been built upon for many years. The buildings located on the lot, however, have changed. The 1876 Birds Eye map showed a structure located on lot 17. By the turn of the 20th century, this property and building was owned by F.T. Hobbs. Hobbs lived in another building within the project area, however. In 1909 Hobbs sold the East 90' of lot 17 and its associated structure to Charles Koepp. At that time the building was valued at \$150.

In 1911 Koepp sold his property to George D. Sutton. After two tax increases (1913 and 1920) the structure rose in value to \$350. In 1921 Sutton improved his building and its value remained unchanged at \$450 until after he transferred ownership to Minnie Voth, a laundress, in 1930.

During the 1930s the value of the building and property declined. In 1941 the Tax Roll notes that there are no improvements upon the lot, then in the possession of R.C. Voth. Apparently the home located on lot 17 experienced a fire and was largely destroyed. No improvements are noted on the R.C. Voth property until the end of the 1940s. By 1950 Voth constructed a \$980 building on lot 17.

The Voth building at 101 N. Villa Louis is a one-story, gable-roofed structure now covered with corrugated tin siding. Apparently Voth utilized the basement of the previous structure as the foundation for his new home. The basement is a rock and mortar treatment, and has a poured concrete floor. All sills, joists, and flooring have been commercially milled and wire nails are used throughout. Flooding has contributed to the rotting of the floor. The roof structure is composed of conventional 2 x 4 rafters along with 1 x 6 roof boards. According to the owner, Mr. Bunts, and corroborated by a neighbor, Mrs. Amy Gokey, Voth used a number of the old house parts during construction. The basement, most particularly, reflects a construction technique of the 19th, rather than the 20th Century.

I recommend that 101 N. Villa Louis be moved to the "Excluded" category. It is not an historical resource.

---

<sup>1</sup> Justus Dremmel, MSS Census of 1900, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
43	W150' ft. of Main Village lot 29 East of 3rd St. 4th Ward Main Village	120 S. Villa Louis	City

The building at 120 S. Villa Louis burned down. It was a clapboard over frame, one and one half story, gable roofed, rectangular structure with an addition to the north, and gable returns on the west facade.

The low-lying near-swamp of the unplatted eastern part of Main Village Lot 29 came into the possession of Dennis Roach in 1877. In that year the total tax assessment on the property reached \$25, indicating that no buildings or other significant improvements existed.<sup>1</sup>

Dennis Roach worked for the railroad. He and his disabled wife, Mary, had emigrated from Ireland. They had two children.<sup>2</sup> In 1880 Roach improved the property, raising its tax assessed value to \$60.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Roach died early in the 1880s, and Mary Roach took over the ownership of the property. The oldest child, William, became a "railroad yard worker" to help support the family.<sup>4</sup>

The Roach property declined in value through the rest of the century, reaching \$45 by 1900.<sup>5</sup> In that year Mary Roach died and the property came into the possession, although not the ownership, of William Roach.

The Mary Roach Estate began a slow steady rise in valuation between 1902 and 1911. In 1902, the home was valued at \$75 for tax purposes and rose to \$150 in 1911. After the 1913 tax increase, the home was valued at \$280.<sup>6</sup> The 1920 tax raise increased the Roach building's value to \$390 where it remained until after 1930.<sup>7</sup> William Roach acquired ownership of the property in 1927.<sup>8</sup>

The destruction of 120 S. Villa Louis prevented any structural analysis. From the records and photographs, it appears not to have been a significant building in an historical sense.

- 
- 1 Tax Roll, 1877.
  - 2 Federal MSS Census 1880, Schedule of Inhabitants.
  - 3 Op. Cit., 1880.
  - 4 Federal MSS Census 1880, Schedule of Inhabitants.
  - 5 Tax Roll, 1900.
  - 6 Ibid., 1902-1913.
  - 7 Ibid., 1920-1930.
  - 8 Ibid., 1927.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
44	11 lot 9, N 27' 10" of 15, 16, 17, 18 4th Ward, Main Village	404 Fourth St.	James Coorough

This stucco-covered, rectangular, one and one half story, hipped roof structure with hipped roof dormers on west and east, and enclosed porches front and rear, is a bungalow-style building of recent construction. It is almost identical to building #46 immediately to the south; the two buildings were constructed within two years of one another by members of the same family.

At the turn of the 20th century no improvements existed on lots 9-18 in block 11 of the 4th Ward. The H. M. Rice Estate owned the unimproved property until 1909.<sup>1</sup> The following year, Amos Pake acquired the lots, held them for two years, and did nothing to improve their value.<sup>2</sup> In 1912 James Coorough (Corrough) acquired the lots and held them until 1923 without improving their value by adding buildings.<sup>3</sup>

In 1924 James Coorough split the property, transferring ownership to Joseph Coorough and Ray Coorough. Ray Coorough constructed a home valued at \$1500 on lots 17 and 18 in 1925. Ray Coorough's home is building #46 (400 Fourth Street) in this study.<sup>4</sup>

Joseph Coorough built a home on his portion of the property (lots 9 and 16), valued at \$1700 in 1927.<sup>5</sup> The Joseph Coorough home is building #44.

The building at 404 Fourth Street has a full basement made of concrete blocks. It has been raised at some point in its history. All lumber is of the commercially milled variety and of standard dimension. Wire nails are found throughout the structure. The basement floor is of poured concrete. The roof members are all conventional 2" x 4" rafters and roof boards are standard widths. The building is in excellent repair and has been well maintained.

Building #44 is not an historical resource. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to move the structure. Hopefully another location can be found upon which to recycle this sound building.

- 
- 1 Tax Roll, 1902-1909.
  - 2 Ibid., 1910-1912.
  - 3 Ibid., 1912-1923.
  - 4 Ibid., 1924-1925.
  - 5 Ibid., 1927.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
45	12 lots 7,8, 9, 10 4th Ward, Main Village	401 Fourth St.	Eugene McGrath

This one and one half story, clapboard over frame, rectangular, gable-roofed building is of recent construction. Commercially milled lumber of standard dimensions and wire nails are found throughout the conventional structure. The home underwent a reroofing in 1957 and acquired new flooring after the 1965 flood. The basement is in two sections. The north section is made of whitewashed concrete blocks and retains a dirt floor. The southern portion is of poured concrete throughout. The entire home was raised by the addition of four levels of cinder block.

The history of the property is as unexceptional as the structure. In 1902, lots 7,8,9 in block 12 of 4th Street, 4th Ward, was owned by the H.M. Rice Estate and had a value of \$40 with no improvements. Lot 10 was valued at \$10 and its owner remained "unknown" until 1909.<sup>1</sup> In 1910 William Gremore (Goermore), who owned a number of properties in the city, acquired the lots and did nothing to improve their value which remained constant at \$100.<sup>2</sup>

In 1915 Fred Hill came into possession of lots 7-10 and built a home valued at \$800 for tax purposes. The 1919 tax increase raised the value of Hill's structure to \$1100. In 1928 Hi'l made an improvement to his home, thereby raising its value to \$1160.<sup>3</sup>

The building at 401 Fourth Street is a 1915 construction. It has limited value from an historical point of view. I recommend that building #45 be placed at the disposal of the City of Prairie du Chien, and that the city be authorized to move or demolish the structure.

---

<sup>1</sup> Tax Roll, 1902-1909.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1910.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1915-1928.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
46	11 S 77 1/2' 15, 16, 17, 18 4th Ward, Main Village	400 Fourth St.	Gerald Coorough

This building is virtually identical to #44. It was constructed in 1925. The histories of #44 and #46 are inextricably linked.

File Number	Block	Lot	Address	Owner
47	18	5,6,7 (N.84') 4th Ward, Main Village	324 Fourth St.	Charles Spiker

This building stands on a property that has had a history of divided ownership. The HABS survey indicated a house had been constructed on the southern half of lot #7 during the 1850s. The early building, part of a property composed of lots 4, 5, and the S. 1/2 of 7 was owned by George Loomis at the turn of the 20th century, and had a building standing on the site in 1902. Lot 6 and the North 1/2 of lot 7 were owned by the C. Stabin Estate and also had a building located on the site (valued at \$200 in 1902). In 1905 the Loomis property came into the possession of Robert Gremore (Greemore) who owned a number of lots on the island. A year later, Stabin relinquished his property to B. Bush. Gremore maintained ownership of his lots and improvements until after 1930.

Mr. Bush's lots, however, went through changes. In 1910, for example, the Bush property was listed in the Tax Roll as being unimproved and without buildings. Either the house originally on the site had burned or it had been moved. In 1913 Minnie Knyvette came into possession of the Bush lots and did nothing to improve their value. In 1916 Knyvette sold the lots to Fred Stantorf who also did not construct any buildings on the property. Stantorf passed the unimproved lots to E. Briggs in 1923.

In 1924 the Briggs lots included the North 1/2 of lot 5, 6, and 7 while Gremore controlled lots 4 and the South 1/2 of 5, 6, and 7. In 1925 the City of Prairie du Chien's tax assessor noted in his yearly roll that a "new house" was under construction on the Briggs property. The following year, a \$600 tax value was placed on the Briggs holdings, which was increased to \$635 in 1928.

The current occupant of 324 Fourth Street, Mr. Baker (born in 1913) remembers the building of the house he now resides in when he was a teenager. This further indicates that the building under examination dates from the 1926 period. A structural analysis carried out on 12 September 1979 adds further verification to the 1926 date. The original section of the building on the west has poured concrete walls and basement floor. The porch addition towards the east has bricks and poured concrete for foundational support. The lumber is all commercially milled, of standard dimensions, and wire nails are used throughout. The one-story, hipped roof bungalow style is also consistent with the 1920s construction date. In my opinion there would be little to be lost, in a historical sense, from removing this building from its current site and relocating it elsewhere.

AD-A172 106

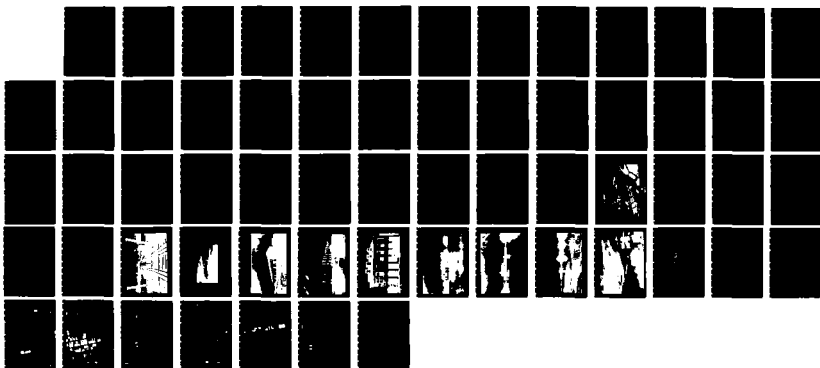
PRAIRIE DU CHIEN: URBAN CONSOLIDATION AND DECLINE  
1858-1938(U) ROTH LAB FOR PHYSICAL RESEARCH HARTFORD  
CONN R H ZEITLIN 1981

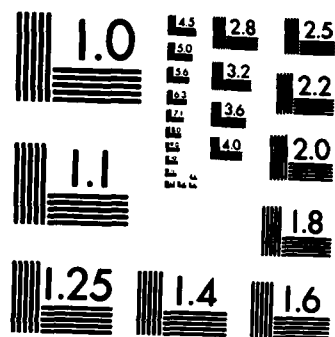
2/2

UNCLASSIFIED

F/G 13/13

NL





MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART  
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS-1963-A



File Number	Block	Address	Owner
48	17; lot 11, 12, 13 4th Ward, Main Village	311 Fourth Street	Ray Valley

This one and one half story, clapboard over frame, gable-roofed, rectangular structure is a post-20th-century building. Presently, 311 Fourth Street is in a state of mild deterioration. The exterior paint is peeling off and there is evidence of water seepage damage in both the crawl space and the basement. Both the basement and the crawlspace are of poured concrete construction, and retain dirt floors. The basement on the north has a coating of whitewash on the walls. Commercially milled lumber of standard dimensions and wire nails are found throughout. The attic has been converted to living space and no structural analysis could be carried out on the roofing members.

At the turn of the 20th century this property was part of the Hercules Dousman Estate and had no improvements, as appears to be characteristic of Dousman lands within Prairie du Chien. In 1907 Hiram Wagner purchased a number of lots on block 17 of Fourth Street and did nothing to improve them.<sup>1</sup> Two years later, Warren Price acquired lots 2, 3, 4, and 11, 12, 13 on block 17 and he constructed a building valued at \$165 for tax purposes upon his property.<sup>2</sup> The 1913 tax raise increased the value of Price's building to \$200.<sup>3</sup>

In 1914 Price passed his holdings on to a man named John Lawless, who increased the value of the improvements on lots 2, 3, 4, 11, 12, 13 to \$320.<sup>4</sup> Lawless transferred ownership of his holdings to Lee Pace in 1916.<sup>5</sup> The 1920 tax raise inflated the value of Pace's building to \$445.<sup>6</sup> By 1923 lots 2, 3, 4 had been acquired by a man named Kellogg and are noted as having "no improvements" on the Tax Rolls.<sup>7</sup>

August Valley obtained lots 11, 12, 13 in 1924 and the value of the improvements remained at the same tax level as they had under Lee Pace.<sup>8</sup> Valley made a slight improvement to his building in 1928, increasing its value to \$500 for tax purposes.<sup>9</sup>

The building at 311 Fourth Street is a 1909 structure, improved in 1914, 1917, and in 1928. The structure has limited historical value and is in the initial stages of decay. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to dispose of the structure as seems fit.

---

<sup>1</sup> Tax Rolls, 1900-1908.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1909.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 1913.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 1914.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 1916.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 1920.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 1923.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 1924.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 1928.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
50	22 lot N 1/2 9, 10, 11 4th Ward, Main Village	231 Fourth St.	City

This modest, clapboard over frame, one-story, gable-roofed, bungalow-style structure with tapered columns on the gabled front porch has already been removed from the project area to another location. The building is of recent construction.

Although the property upon which #50 is located had a building situated upon it at the turn of the 20th century, by 1917 lots 9, 10, and 11 were vacant and unimproved.<sup>1</sup> In that year, Minnie Knyvette had acquired the lots from Sherman Johnson. In 1925, Knyvette had a building valued at \$860 constructed on the property.<sup>2</sup> Two years later the value of the lots 9, 10, 11 more than doubled, jumping to \$2,200.

Either the 1925 home had been significantly improved, or another building had been constructed. The latter possibility is more probable because in 1928 Knyvette divided the lots. The north half (#50) was assessed at \$1,050, and the south half at \$1250 (#51).<sup>3</sup>

Since #50 has already been removed, no structural analysis was undertaken. There is no reason to regret the relocation of this 1923 building.

---

<sup>1</sup> Tax Roll, 1902-1917.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1925.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 1928.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
51	22 lot S 1/2 9, 10, 11 4th Ward, Main Village	227 Fourth	J. L. Bolenback

This aluminum siding over frame, rectangular, gable-roofed, three-bay, bungalow-style building with an enclosed front porch is a 1927 structure. Owned by an East Coast couple and used for a vacation home, #51 has a poured concrete foundation and basement floor. The front porch addition to the east has poured concrete foundation walls and a crawl-space rather than a basement. All lumber is of the standard sized commercially milled variety. Wire nails are used throughout.

The building site was carved from the unified lots 9, 10, 11 in 1927. In that year Minnie Knyvette divided her lots and constructed a building valued at \$1,250 for tax purposes.<sup>1</sup> A more complete synopsis of the lots appears with discussion of #50. I recommend that this building be placed on the excluded list.

---

<sup>1</sup> Tax Roll, 1927-1928.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
55	21 lot S 21' of 4, N. 20' of 21, all 22, 4th Ward, Main Village	212 Fourth St.	Margaret Favre

This clapboard over frame, one and one half story, L-shaped, gable-roofed home is one of the more substantial buildings in the project area. It has two bays in the gable end and is three bays deep on the southern section. There are two screened porches, on the west and on the east.

The original section of the home, to the north, rests on concrete blocks and has no basement. The southern wing has foundation walls composed of poured concrete to which a number of stones were added. The walls are covered with whitewash. The basement floor is of poured concrete. The porch additions rest on concrete blocks.

All lumber is of the commercially milled variety. All dimensions are standard. Wire nails appear throughout. The roof members are 2" x 4" rafters and the roof boards have similarly sized widths. According to the owner, the second story of the southern section was constructed after the ground story addition.

The property has had a somewhat complex history. At the turn of the 20th century, August Valley owned lots 1, 2, 3, 4 in block 21. Valley had a building valued at \$40 upon his real estate. Lots 21 and 22 remained unimproved and belonged to the H. L. Dousman Estate.<sup>1</sup> In 1904, Charles Contell, a clam fisherman of mixed French Canadian extraction, and his wife Martha, purchased a number of lots in block 21 from the Dousman Estate. Lots 21 and 22 were part of Contell's purchase, and a building valued at \$350 for tax purposes appeared in that year. A man named Joseph Fox acquired lot 22 in 1904 and he constructed a house valued at \$250 for tax purposes on it.<sup>2</sup>

In 1907 Edward Favre replaced Fox as the owner of lot 22 and the \$250 building.<sup>3</sup> Favre remained in possession of lot 22 for the remainder of his life, and it is still in the ownership of the family. The 1913 tax raise increased the value of Favre's building to \$300 and the one in 1920 raised it to \$500.<sup>3</sup> The only significant improvement prior to 1930 occurred in 1927.<sup>5</sup>

Building #55 is a sound structure. It was constructed in 1904 by Joseph Fox. It is unremarkable, and unassociated with events or people of significance and cannot be considered an historical resource. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove this building.

---

<sup>1</sup> Tax Roll, 1902.  
<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1904.  
<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 1907.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 1913-1920.  
<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 1927.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
56	22 lot 15, 16, 17 4th Ward, Main Village	211 Fourth St.	City

This clapboard over frame, one and one half story, gable roofed, rectangular structure was two bays in width. The building experienced a fire in the Fall of 1978 and is no longer extant. The building was of recent construction.

At the turn of the 20th century no improvements existed on lots 15, 16, 17 in block 22. The property belonged to the Henry Hurley Estate until 1911. In that year, Hattie M. Bush acquired the vacant lots.<sup>1</sup>

In 1914, Hattie Bush had a building constructed on the property valued at \$500 for tax purposes.<sup>2</sup> By 1917, the building and property had come into the possession of L. J. Bush. Bush held the building until 1926 when he sold it to Fred Kuhn.<sup>3</sup> Kuhn remained in possession of the structure until after 1930.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Tax Rolls, 1902-1911.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1914.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 1917-1926.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 1926-1930.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
57	21 lots 16-21 except N. 20' of 21, 4th Ward, Main Village	206 Fourth St.	Dorothy Brunner

This substantial, aluminum siding over frame, two-story, T-shaped, cross gable roofed, three-bay structure with a one-story porch appears well maintained. The owner refused to allow inspection so no structural analysis could be undertaken.

According to the records, James Barr had the building constructed in 1880. In that year the value of the real estate jumped from \$36 to \$280, indicating an improvement.<sup>1</sup> Barr continued in possession of the building until 1903. The value of the Barr home had increased to \$350 by that date.<sup>2</sup>

Charles Contell, a clam fisherman of French Canadian extraction, and his wife Martha purchased 206 Fourth St. in 1904.<sup>3</sup> The Contells did nothing to improve the value of the home which remained constant until the tax raises of 1913 and 1920 increased the structure's value to \$700 for tax purposes.<sup>4</sup> In 1927 the home underwent a significant improvement, raising its value to \$900.<sup>5</sup>

There is nothing remarkable about building #57. It seems to be in sound condition. It has no significant associations, and there are a number of other structures in the Prairie du Chien area that look remarkably like it. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove this structure, although there does not seem to be any need for haste in the matter. The owner is anxious to remain where she is and will undoubtedly continue to maintain the building.

---

<sup>1</sup> Tax Roll, 1880.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1902.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 1904.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 1904-1920.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 1927.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
58	22 lot 18, 19 4th Ward, Main Village	201 Fourth St.	Robert Sheckler

This modest, clapboard over frame, one-story, cross-gable-roofed structure with a shed-roof addition to the west was built at about the turn of the 20th century.

The property upon which #58 is situated experienced a series of owners during the late 19th century. Some of these individuals constructed buildings on their lots, but upon which particular lot is impossible to determine.<sup>1</sup> The first time lots 18, 19 appear as a unit on the Tax Roll occurred in 1888. In that year, William H. Evans paid taxes on a property valued at \$15, indicating an absence of buildings.<sup>2</sup>

Born in Ireland in 1843, and a lawyer by profession, Evans and his wife Mary lived with their six children and William's father, a gunsmith. Evans had a building constructed on lots 18, 19 in 1890 when his property quadrupled in value. It is likely, considering the size of Evans' family, that he rented the unquestionably modest structure valued at \$60, to somebody else.<sup>3</sup> Evans improved the property, until by 1901 it had reached \$100 in value—including the building and the real estate.<sup>4</sup>

In 1902 Peter Gremore (Germore) obtained the Evans property. Gremore's building had risen to \$175 in tax assessed value by that date.<sup>5</sup> In 1904, W. T. Allen bought the lots and the building and was assessed at \$275 for the value of the building. It is clear that great changes had occurred on lots 18, 19 since Mr. Evans' day. Allen retained ownership until 1911 when he sold it back to Gremore.<sup>6</sup>

Gremore kept the property until after 1930. The tax increases of 1913 and 1920 raised the value of the building to \$560.<sup>7</sup> Gremore made significant improvements in 1927 and 1928, raising the value of the home to \$850 for tax purposes.<sup>8</sup>

- 
- 1 Tax Roll, 1877-1887.
  - 2 Ibid., 1888.
  - 3 Ibid., 1890.
  - 4 Ibid., 1901.
  - 5 Ibid., 1902.
  - 6 Ibid., 1904-1911.
  - 7 Ibid., 1911-1930.
  - 8 Ibid., 1927-1928.

A structural analysis of #58 revealed that the building rests on a poured concrete foundation, suggesting a 20th century treatment. The additions to the north and south rest on blocks and the entire house has been raised. Commercially milled lumber and wire nails are found throughout the building. The roof structure, too, has a 20th Century look about it. All the 2" x 4" rafters are standard sized as are the roof boards.

This building was most likely constructed between 1902 and 1904. Gremore started the construction process and Allen either finished it, or purchased the property just after Gremore completed the job. There is nothing historically significant about this building. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove it.



File Number	Block	Address	Owner
60	27 lot 21 4th Ward, Main Village	113 Fourth	Donald Hand

This cast-building-block, one and one half story, gable-roof with double pitch over front and rear porches, rectangular building is of recent construction. The home rests on a concrete block foundation with the basement retaining a dirt floor. The structure has been raised approximately five feet at some point in its history. The northeast section of the residence has no basement at all. All lumber has been commercially milled and is of standard dimension. All nails are of the mass-produced wire variety. The attic has been finished and transformed into living quarters.

The property upon which #60 is situated has had a somewhat complex history. At the turn of the 20th century, lot 21 belonged to the H. L. Dousman Estate. As with most of the property in the Dousman Estate, lot 21 had no improvements.<sup>1</sup> In 1904 Charles Lindner purchased the lot and held it for six years without improving its value.<sup>2</sup> In 1910 lot 21 was sold as part of a unit composed of lots 15-22 to A. N. Scoville. Scoville had a building constructed on one of his lots, although it is not clear exactly which one.<sup>3</sup> Three years later, and with a different owner, tax assessors noted that no improvements existed on the lots.<sup>4</sup>

Laverne Gremore (Gremore, Germore) bought lots 21-22 in 1914 and had a building valued at \$625 for tax purposes constructed. The property changed hands again in 1917, as William Dundon became the owner of the two lots in block 27. Dundon improved the house, bringing its assessment value to \$900.<sup>6</sup>

The 1920 tax increase raised the value of Dundon's improvements to \$1400. The next year, city officials divided their entries for lot 21 and 22, even though Dundon continued to own both properties. Tax records for these lots revealed that two homes now existed on the neighboring properties with lot 21 (#60) valued at \$700.<sup>7</sup>

In 1922 Dundon sold lot 21 and building #60 to M. H. Wells. Wells made a number of significant improvements, which by 1930 had increased the value of the home to \$1400.<sup>8</sup>

The structure at 113 Fourth St. is not an historic resource. It is a c. 1914-1920 building. It has not been associated with events, personalities, or construction techniques of significance. I recommend that the City of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove it.

<sup>1</sup> Tax Roll, 1902.  
<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1904-1910.  
<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 1910.  
<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 1913.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 1914.  
<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 1919.  
<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 1920-1921.  
<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 1922-1930.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
61	27 1/2 lot 17, 18, 4th Ward, Main Village	101 Fourth St.	Belle McGuire

This wooden-shingle over frame, one and one half story, hipped-roof with dormer, three-bay, square, bungalow-style structure has an enclosed front porch facing east. It is of recent construction and has a storefront addition to the south. The building rests on a poured concrete foundation with the basement floor composed of the same material. All lumber is of the commercially milled variety and all the nails are of the mass-produced wire type. The roof members are conventional 2" x 4" rafters and standard dimensioned roof boards.

At the turn of the 20th century, the property belonged to the H. L. Dousman Estate and remained unimproved.<sup>1</sup> The property changed hands a number of times, coming into the possession of A. N. Scoville in 1909, Mrs. Cleo Gokey in 1912, George Clanton in 1913, and Mike Roach in 1914. Up to that point, no improvements appeared listed on the Tax Roll for the property.<sup>2</sup>

In 1916 Roach had a building valued at \$1000 for tax purposes, constructed on lot 17. Roach sold the place and it came into the possession of Fred Standorf just in time for the 1920 tax raise to increase the building's value to \$1500.<sup>3</sup> By that time, Mrs. F. T. Hobbs had acquired the West 50' of lots 17, 18, 19.<sup>4</sup>

Standorf held 101 Fourth St. until 1924 when he sold it to Silvester McGuire. McGuire did nothing to alter the value of the building until after 1930.<sup>5</sup> The addition to the south functioned as a neighborhood store for a number of years.

The building is not an historic resource. It is in a mild state of deterioration and has not been well maintained. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove the structure.

- 
- <sup>1</sup> Tax Roll, 1902.
  - <sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1903-1914.
  - <sup>3</sup> Ibid., 1920.
  - <sup>4</sup> Ibid., 1918.
  - <sup>5</sup> Ibid., 1924-1930.

Building	Block	Address	Owner
63	10 lot 6, 4th Ward, Main Village	418 Fifth	Irene Johnson

Tax record survey data indicate that Mrs. George Deary owned lot 6 in 1902. In that year lot 6 had no improvements. In 1904, George Ducharme (Duchane) acquired lot 6 from Mrs. Deary as well as lots 7 and 8 from Robert Gremore. Gremore's lots had a \$150 tax assessed value building situated on them in 1902. Ducharme made a significant improvement to the structure, thereby increasing its value to \$270 in 1904. Tax value remained steady until 1913, when the city raised the level of all assessments. In that year Ducharme's building rose to \$350 in value, and after another tax raise in 1920, to \$490.

During 1923 and 1924 lot 6 does not appear on the Tax Roll, either through oversight or through legal problems. It is unlikely, however, that the city assessors would have failed to levy a tax on a lot with a building upon it. In 1925, lot 6 came into the possession of Mr. George Schweiger. At that time, Schweiger erected a building valued, for tax purposes, at \$1075 on the site. Ducharme, meanwhile continued in possession of lots 7 and 8--and the \$490 building--until after 1930.

Structural analysis, carried out on 19 September 1979, indicated that the building was definitely a post-20th century structure. Commercially milled lumber, wire nails, poured concrete foundation walls, 2" x 4" rafters, standard size roof boards are further indication of a conventional treatment of recent vintage. In my opinion, the structure is a 1925 building of little historical significance.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
64	10 lot 7, 8 4th Ward, Main Village	416 Fifth St.	City

Building #64 has been removed and demolished. Previous survey records show it to have been a clapboard-over-frame (with asphalt siding over that), T-shaped, one and one half story building on the north, with a one-story section to the south, and that it had a gable roof.

Historical records show that there had been quite a bit of activity on the property being discussed, although it is unclear as to exactly what the activity was. In 1876, for example, there were no improvements on the lots. In 1878 Dan Deary acquired lots 6, 7, 8 and the value rose from \$15 to \$75 before steadily shrinking back to the \$15 mark six years later.<sup>1</sup> By 1897 the Deary Estate paid tax on a property valued at a mere \$5.<sup>2</sup>

In 1898 Robert Gremore acquired lots 7, 8 and paid tax on a property valued at \$80.<sup>3</sup> By 1902, Gremore unquestionably had a building situated on the lots valued at \$150.<sup>4</sup> Gremore sold the property to George Du Chane in 1904 and Du Chane improved the building significantly, raising its value to \$270.<sup>5</sup> Du Chane retained the building until after 1930, and aside from the tax increases of 1913 and 1920, which raised the assessed value of the building, he improved the structure only once, in 1927.<sup>6</sup>

No structural analysis could be undertaken. It is clear, however, that building #64 was not an historic resource.

- 
- <sup>1</sup> Tax Roll, 1876-1884.
  - <sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1897.
  - <sup>3</sup> Ibid., 1898.
  - <sup>4</sup> Ibid., 1902.
  - <sup>5</sup> Ibid., 1904.
  - <sup>6</sup> Ibid., 1904-1930.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
70	13 lot 1, 2 4th Ward, Main Village	419 Villa Louis	Robert Fernette

This asphalt siding over frame, one and one half story, rectangular, gable-roofed, two-bay structure with one-story addition to the south has undergone considerable modernization. The building has been raised on two occasions, and is fully ten feet higher than it stood originally. The original rock and mortar foundation has been replaced by poured concrete and cinder blocks. The hewn floor joists and sills have been replaced with modern lumber, and the entire basement remodeled. The attic has been converted into living quarters while the original lath and plaster walls have been replaced by wall board. The roof structure has some of the original sheathing of milled pine boards 1-1/4" thick and of various widths up to 24". The overall condition of the home is excellent. The owner did much of the work himself, and both pride and craftsmanship are evident throughout.

The home was built by Paul Fernette in 1878, when the value of lots 1,2 rose from \$20 to \$200. The disastrous flood of 1880 and 1881 reduced the value of Fernette's home to \$140 by 1882. By 1890 the value had dropped to \$100.<sup>2</sup> Paul Fernette worked in the local saw mill. Although born in Wisconsin, Paul Fernette was illiterate. His parents were of French Canadian extraction and the family had long been associated with Prairie du Chien.<sup>3</sup>

By the turn of the 20th century, Fernette had improved his home significantly, raising its value back up to the 1878 mark of \$200.<sup>4</sup> Paul Fernette kept the building and property until 1913 when George D. Sutton acquired the lots.<sup>5</sup> Sutton experienced the 1913 and 1920 tax increases which raised the value of the home to \$360. No improvements occurred at 419 Villa Louis (then 3rd Street) until after 1930.<sup>6</sup>

Building #70 is not precisely an historical resource. It is nearly one. The building's long association with the Fernette family, who have been part of Prairie du Chien's historical fabric since the 1840s when, family tradition has it, J. P. Fernette emigrated from French speaking Canada at the behest of Hercules Dousman to supervise the construction of the first Villa Louis. Building #70, however, has undergone considerable modification, altering its structural integrity. As a result of these modifications, #70 is a sound, well maintained home, and appears safe from the threat of flooding. This, it must be pointed out, has been accomplished at the expense of the building's historical merit.

I recommend that #70 be allowed to remain where it is for the moment. It is in no danger from floods. It is well kept. It is not, as it now stands, an historic resource, although it remains a solid and useable structure with some historical associations.

<sup>1</sup> Tax Roll, 1877-1878.

<sup>2</sup> Tax Roll, 1880-1890; Union Publishing Co. History of Crawford and Richland Counties Wis., 2 vols. (Springfield, IL, 1884) pp. 668-669.

<sup>3</sup> Federal MSS Census 1880, Schedule of Inhabitants

<sup>4</sup> Tax Roll, 1902.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 1902-1913.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 1913-1930.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
71	4 lot 4 4th Ward, Main Village	309 Boilvin	Robert Sheckler

This small, asphalt-sided, frame, hip-roofed, square building with a gable roof porch and a shed-roofed addition to the north is a 20th century structure. The current owner refused to permit access to the building and no fabric analysis could be undertaken. However, members of the Fernette family who constructed the building, and who lived in the structure for many years, have added enough useful data in addition to the historical records so that a determination concerning the structure's past can be presented.

In 1900 John P. Fernette acquired the vacant lot 4 from the estate of Mrs. Mary Metz who had owned the property for over 30 years. Fernette constructed a building on his lots 4-5-6-7-8, which was valued at \$350 in 1902.<sup>1</sup> According to the Fernette family historian, Lawrence Fernette, John Fernette's building was located on lot 5 (see file #72--building replaced in 1950's and since removed). John Fernette's home was valued at \$450 after the 1913 tax increase.<sup>2</sup> Apparently there was a fire which affected John Fernette's home, most likely in 1917. John Fernette's brother, who lived less than a block away at 504 Boilvin (see file #74, block 5 lots 1,2,3,4), donated and helped move a shed-like outbuilding of his own construction to John's land until the home would be rebuilt. This occurred in 1918, when the value of John Fernette's improved property took a dramatic jump to \$1500--tripling in worth.<sup>3</sup> Lawrence Fernette explained that John Fernette (his grandfather) altered the roof on 309 Boilvin in about 1919, making it of the hipped variety, and shortly thereafter gave it to his son Charles Fernette upon his marriage.<sup>4</sup>

Charles Fernette is listed as the owner of lot 4 in 1925, and city tax assessors placed \$500 value on the building located upon the property.<sup>5</sup> Mrs. Charles Fernette explained to the Historic American Building Survey team that she and her husband continued to live in 309 Boilvin for the next fifty years.<sup>6</sup>

It is clear that 309 Boilvin evolved into a home from an early career as a shed. The years 1917-1918 mark its first use as a dwelling and the hipped roof probably appeared during this period as well. By

---

<sup>1</sup> Tax Roll, 1902.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1913.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 1918.

<sup>4</sup> Conversation with Lawrence Fernette, Sep. 19, 1979, notes.

<sup>5</sup> Tax Roll, 1925.

<sup>6</sup> Draft Report, "Prairie du Chien: Historical and Architectural Resources," Summer 1978, File # 71.

1925, 309 Boilvin had become a home, a purpose it still serves.

The building is unexceptional in every respect. Its single historic point of interest lies in its association with the long-established Fernette family. Since two other Fernette buildings (file #74 and 70) are both older and more significant structurally, I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be allowed to dispose of the building as they see fit.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
72	4, lot 5 and W 33' 6, 7, 8 4th Ward, Main Village.	315 Boilvin	Louis Fernette

This asphalt shingle over frame, L-shaped, one story, gable-roofed structure has been removed. From previous surveys it appears that this structure was of recent vintage. No structural analysis could be undertaken.

The historical records show that a building had been situated on the site occupied by #72 in 1880 when Fred Piglaw owned the property. John Fernette, a young saw mill worker, acquired the property and building in 1884 and continued in possession of the real estate until after 1930.<sup>1</sup>

In 1918 the existing structure (built by Piglaw in 1880) underwent a dramatic improvement which tripled its value. Informants state that Fernette replaced the old building with a newer one. In any case, Fernette paid taxes on a building valued at \$150 after 1918, and \$2100 after the 1920 tax increase. In 1927 a small improvement took place on the property.<sup>2</sup>

It seems that the structure removed from 315 Boilvin was a c. 1918 structure at oldest. The HABS team reported that #72 was a c. 1950 structure. In either case, the building is not in any way historically significant.

---

<sup>1</sup> Tax Roll, 1880-1930.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1902-1930.



File Number	Block	Address	Owner
73	12 lot 1, 2, 3 4th Ward Main Village	314 Boilvin St.	Emma Walz

This substantial, clapboard-over-frame, cross-gable, two-story home with a one-story addition to the south has roof returns with jigsawed pilasters. The building has undergone a number of recent modifications which have made structural analysis difficult. There is no basement or crawlspace. The foundation rests on blocks, but is filled. The attic has been converted to living space and no entry into the roof member area exists.

Hubert Aubin, a saw mill worker of French Canadian extraction, had the building constructed in 1877 after purchasing unimproved lots 2 and 3 from the B. W. Brisbois Estate. Aubin's home was valued at \$400, including the lots, in that year.<sup>1</sup> The floods of 1880 and 1881 dramatically affected the property's value, driving it steadily down to \$225 in 1882.<sup>2</sup>

Eliza Gerry, an Ohio born widow whose two sons, aged 14 and 10, worked as day laborers, acquired Aubin's property in 1890.<sup>3</sup> Under Gerry's ownership, the property continued to decline in value, reaching as low as \$180. In 1902, however, the building increased in value to \$350.<sup>4</sup>

Gerry sold the property to Clara La Roeque (Larocque) in 1907. The home's value remained unchanged until the 1913 and 1920 tax increases raised it to \$735. In 1919 Joseph LaRoque acquired the neighboring unimproved lot 1.<sup>5</sup> The LaRoques held onto their property until after 1930, making no improvements affecting the structure's value.<sup>6</sup>

Building #73 is not an historical resource. It is similar to a number of other buildings in the Prairie du Chien area and would be greatly affected by any flooding which might occur. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove this building.

---

<sup>1</sup> Tax Roll, 1876-1877; Federal MSS Census 1880, Schedule of Inhabitants.

<sup>2</sup> Tax Roll, 1882.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 1890; Federal MSS Census 1880, Schedule of Inhabitants.

<sup>4</sup> Tax Roll, 1902.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 1902-1920.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 1920-1930.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
88	16 lots 1-7; 16-18; S 12' of W. 45' 13 alley between 16 & 17; W. 1/2 alley way 2, 3, 4, 7, 4th Ward Main Village.	209 Fisher	State Historical Society of Wisconsin (Louis Cardin has life lease)

This substantial, clapboard over frame, two story, T-shaped, two-bay home was built in two sections. The section to the east is a late-19th-century treatment, while the western addition dates from the early 20th century. The entire structure has been raised about 4-1/2 feet and now rests on blocks.

The basement under the original section of the home is composed of rock and mortar and has a dirt floor. The western addition's foundation is of poured concrete. Commercially milled lumber and mass produced wire nails are found throughout the structure. Standard 2" x 4" rafters and roof boards of various widths, up to about 20", comprise the structural members of the roof. To the northeast of the home stands the much altered remains of what once was a modest log shed and/or barn, now used for auto storage.

The real estate has had a somewhat complex history because of its background of divided ownership. In 1890, for example, the H. L. Dousman Estate owned unimproved lots 2-15, Mrs. P. J. McGrath owned unimproved lot 16, and L. Case owned lots 1, 17, 18--one of which had a substantial improvement upon it.<sup>1</sup> In 1893 Godfrey Cardin, a clam fisherman of French Canadian extraction, purchased lot 17. There was an improvement on Cardin's lot which tax assessors valued at \$85 along with the single lot. This figure might represent the log barn/shed or a very modest home.<sup>2</sup> Cardin acquired lot 16 in 1900, and a value of \$100 was placed on his real estate and improvements.<sup>3</sup>

In 1902 the Cardin home's value was \$175, and the following year it more than doubled, indicating that a substantial improvement had taken place.<sup>4</sup> The western addition was most likely added at this time, and owner Louis Cardin corroborated the historical records with his own memory.

Cardin continued in possession of the property until his death in the 1920s. At that time, Mrs. Cardin became the owner, and acquired unimproved lots 1 and 18 as well.<sup>5</sup> The property is now in the possession of Louis Cardin, Godfrey's son.

Building #88 is not really an historical resource. It is a well maintained and structurally sound home which has been in the possession of the family that originally built it so many years ago. It is safe from flooding because it has been raised. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove this structure at some future point in time. It resembles any number of similar structures within the city.

<sup>1</sup> Tax Roll, 1890.

<sup>2</sup> Federal MSS Census 1900, Schedule of Inhabitants; Tax Roll, 1893-1894.

<sup>3</sup> Tax Roll, 1900.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 1902-1903.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 1903-1923.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
91	23 lot 20 4th Ward, Main Village	205 Rolette	Maurice Collins

This medium sized, clapboard over frame, one and one half story, gable-roofed with gable-roofed dormer facing south, three-bay, rectangular structure has a one-story addition on the north. The original section of the building rests on a rock and mortar foundation which has been heavily coated with whitewash. There is an addition to the east which rests on poured concrete and cinder blocks. Basement floors are composed of dirt. All lumber is of the commercially milled variety and all nails are the mass produced wire type. The attic and roof members are made up of 2" x 4" rafters and standard width roof boards.

The building which is now situated at 205 Rolette Street replaced an earlier structure. As early as 1872, a building occupied lot 20.<sup>1</sup> Arthur McArthur owned the building until 1880. In that year, the value of lot 20 dropped sharply from \$125 to \$80 and by 1882, to \$50.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the two cataclysmic floods of 1880-1881, which were particularly severe on the homes in the 4th Ward, was responsible for the drop in value experienced by lot 20.

In any case, the lot became part of a larger property owned by Phil Lynch until 1900. In that year, lot 20 came into the possession of Julia M. Chulte who constructed a modest home on the property.<sup>3</sup> In 1902 Henry Whaley purchased the lot and kept it until 1907. Whaley made no additional improvements and the building remained valued at \$125.<sup>4</sup>

In 1910 Mrs. John Nelson purchased the building and made an improvement which increased the value of the home to \$150 for tax purposes.<sup>5</sup> In 1913 George Sutton bought the property and improved it in 1921 and 1928. By 1930 Sutton's building was valued at \$500.

Building #91 is not an historical resource. It is in only fair condition overall and has no important associations or construction techniques lurking in its background. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove this structure.

- 
- <sup>1</sup> Tax Roll, 1872.
  - <sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1880-1882.
  - <sup>3</sup> Ibid., 1883-1900.
  - <sup>4</sup> Ibid., 1902-1907.
  - <sup>5</sup> Ibid., 1910.
  - <sup>6</sup> Ibid., 1910-1930.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
92	26 lot 50'W. 17, 18, 19, S. 10' of W. 50' 20, 4th Ward, Main Village.	915 W. Blackhawk	City-county

This substantial clapboard over frame, asphalt-shingled, two-story, rectangular, gable-roofed structure with a one-story lean-to addition to the north and three bays across the south gable facade, has two central doors on the first and second levels. The structure rests on a rock and mortar foundation and the basement floor is composed of dirt. While the flooring lumber has been commercially milled, the floor joists and all the sills on both the ground and second floor have been hand hewn. The floor boards are milled but of various widths. The entire upper level and the attic have experienced a fire and the damage has been extensive. Rafters, all charred, appear to be of the conventional 2" x 4" type, although the roof boards vary considerably in width. The roof is covered with wooden shingles, which leak in several places.

The building is in an overall state of mild deterioration. In addition to the considerable damage caused by the upstairs fire, the home has become infested by animals of several varieties. Vandals have made their presence felt too, and have smashed every window in the home. The basement contains the debris and clutter associated with flood damage.

The two chimneys are of different vintages. On the original southern section of the structure, the chimney is the buff colored "Cream City" brick which might have come from Milwaukee--a city which produced great numbers of this type of brick after the Civil War. The chimney on the northern addition is composed of mass produced red brick of no particular type.

The building has a confusing history and is sited in an unusual fashion, across several lots. A number of people have been associated with the property and it is difficult to make a precise determination concerning a probable date of construction.

In 1870 the property upon which #92 is situated was owned by three different land holders. Only one, Patrick Doyle, had a building situated upon his lot, #17. The Heirs of Soloman Cogswell owned #18, and H. L. Dousman owned 19 and 20.<sup>1</sup>

During the middle of the decade of the 1870s things began to change. In 1874 a Crawford County Court assigned ownership of the lots 15 and 18 in block 26 to Charles Cogswell after the death of Soloman Cogswell of Rice County, Minnesota.<sup>2</sup> Shortly thereafter, Charles Cogswell sold

<sup>1</sup> Tax Roll, 1870.

<sup>2</sup> Deeds, 5 March 1874, vol. 34, pp. 125-126.

unimproved lot 18 to Mr. F. T. Hobbs for \$40.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Hobbs then acquired lot 19 from the public auction of the Christina Frenefort Estate, paying \$160 for the property.<sup>4</sup> In 1878, Hobbs came into possession of lot #20 which had been improved by its most recent owner, A. Denio, who constructed a home valued at \$150 upon it.<sup>5</sup>

Patrick Doyle, an Irish-born laborer, and his wife Elizabeth left Prairie du Chien to settle in Le Roy, Minnesota in 1878.<sup>6</sup> The DoYLES sold their lot and home to Mr. Hobbs, who by 1879 owned lots 17, 18, 19, 20 and three homes.<sup>7</sup> One of these is #92.

Since #92 occupies lands on lots 17, 18, and 19 it could not have been either constructed or moved to the property until that real estate had come into the unified possession of Mr. F. T. Hobbs. Hobbs mortgaged his home (#92) in 1879 and paid the insurance premium on a building valued at \$600.<sup>8</sup> Hobbs had become a landlord, owning a number of buildings in the 4th Ward as well as the three on his crowded homestead.

Hobbs was born in Virginia in 1815 to a Cuban-born man and a Welsh woman. He became one of Prairie du Chien's Justices of the Peace, and died at the ripe old age of 93 in 1908.<sup>9</sup> Upon Mr. Hobbs' death, his wife, Martha, inherited the "homestead." A court-appointed commission defined the Hobbs "homestead" as being the West 50' of lots 17, 18, 19 and part of lot 20 all in block 26, in other words, building #92.<sup>10</sup>

Mrs. Hobbs kept the home until 1921. She made a number of improvements which increased the value of the building from \$250 in 1913 to \$400 in 1918.<sup>11</sup> Ed Rothermal (Rothermaul, Rotherneard) acquired the building in 1921, and he made two significant improvements to the structure. In 1921 Rothermal made an improvement valued at \$450 for tax purposes to the home, and in 1928 he increased the value another \$100 to \$1250.<sup>12</sup>

Building #92 is a c. 1878 structure. Stylistically it could predate

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 21 Nov 1874, vol. 34, p. 332.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 21 Aug 1875, vol. 34, p. 570.

<sup>5</sup> Tax Roll, 1878.

<sup>6</sup> 1870 Federal MSS Census, Schedule of Inhabitants.

<sup>7</sup> Deeds, 2 Aug 1878, vol. 37, p. 436.

<sup>8</sup> Mortgage Records, 21 Oct 1879, vol. I, p. 414.

<sup>9</sup> 1880 Federal MSS Census, Schedule of Inhabitants:

1900 Federal MSS Census, Schedule of Inhabitants.

<sup>10</sup> "Report of the Commission," 15 Jan 1909, Deeds, vol. 80, p. 635.

<sup>11</sup> Tax Roll, 1909-1918.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 1921-1930.

the 1870s but it is impossible to tell if the building had been moved to the site. It is clear that the structure has undergone a number of alterations over the years. At least four significant improvements occurred to the home prior to 1930. Mr. Thomas Lutz of the Midwest Regional Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Chicago pointed out that the doorway on the second floor was a feature characteristic of mid-19th century waterfront structures, and that, therefore, the building might be of an earlier type than it seemed. It is not possible to make a determination concerning the second story doorway since the interior has been fire damaged. There are no stairway scars on the southern facade.

It is my opinion that #92 is an 1878 building. The second story stairway might have been added as some later modification whose function is not clear at this point. The building is not in sound condition, to say the least. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove this building.

---

<sup>13</sup> J. E. Rothermal to O. E. Fritsche, 8 Oct 1954, Deeds, vol. 202, p. 123.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
95	27 lot 1/2 17, 18, 4th Ward, Main Village	815 Blackhawk	Ray Coorough

This brick front, cinder block, rectangular, flat-roofed, storefront building with picture windows facing south is of recent construction. The building is composed throughout of modern construction details. The basement is made up of cinder blocks with a poured concrete floor. All lumber has been commercially milled, all nails mass produced. The whole building has a sense of recentness about it.

The historical records which relate to the property upon which #95 is situated appear with the synopsis of #61. There was no building on this property until after 1930. This is a recent building, which last functioned as a cafe called "May's Fishery" and now serves as a rental apartment.

I recommend that building #95 be placed on the Excluded list. This is not an historic resource. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove this structure.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
110	17, lot 10, N.30' all of 11, 12, S. 20 of 13 3rd Ward., Union Plat	606 N. Main	Mary Waite

This substantial, asphalt-shingle over frame, gable-roofed, one and one half story, two bay structure has enclosed porches facing west and east. The addition on the north rests on a poured concrete foundation and the entire home has a poured concrete basement floor. The original section of the building on the south rests on a rock and mortar foundation. All lumber has been commercially milled and all nails are of the mass produced wire variety. On the original section, however, the joists, while milled, have been cut and fitted by hand. The house has been raised on several occasions, and the two different styles of blocks used in accomplishing this are visible.

The attic and roof structure are composed of standard sized 2" x 4" rafters. The roof boards, however, are of random width, some being as wide as 10". The walls are lath and plaster. The construction of the foundation and the varying-width roof boards suggests a 19th-century treatment. The tax records, however, barely corroborate this impression.

At the turn of the 20th Century, Swiss born William Schofenbul (Schoenfenbuhl, Schwenfenbel, Schonfenbule, Schaufenbel, Shaufenbaill) owned lots 5-8, 11-12 and the north 30' of 10 in block 17 of the Third Ward. These lots were valued at \$50 for the real estate and another \$50 for their improvements.<sup>1</sup> If there existed a home on the Schofenbul property, it undoubtedly was a modest one. In 1903 William transferred ownership of his real estate to Frank Schofenbul.<sup>2</sup> Frank, also born in Switzerland, was a laborer. He had married a Bohemian woman named Bashia, and had been in the Prairie du Chien area since 1880.<sup>3</sup>

Frank Schofenbul bought and sold several lots in block 17, which did not alter the \$50 assessed value of his improvements. By 1909 he owned lots 2-6, 11-16, the north 30' of 10 and the north 30' of 7.<sup>4</sup> In 1913, the value of Schofenbul's improvements quadrupled--indicating more than just a rise in the local tax rate.<sup>5</sup> In 1915, Frank Schofenbul transferred part of the property--lots N. 30' of 10, and 11, 12; the site of building #110--to Tony Schofenbul. Tony's lots had an assessed value of \$200 for their improvements, indicating that #110 was on site by 1915.<sup>6</sup>

Tony kept the home until after 1930. He improved the building in 1921, bringing its value up to \$400, and again in 1927. By 1930, the home was valued at \$600 for tax purposes.

<sup>1</sup> Tax Roll, 1902; 1880 Federal MSS Census, Schedule of Inhabitants.

<sup>2</sup> Tax Roll, 1903.

<sup>3</sup> 1880 Federal MSS Census, Schedule of Inhabitants.

<sup>4</sup> Tax Roll, 1909.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 1913.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 1915.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 1920-1930.



Considering the construction technique of the building's rock and mortar foundation, the hand fitted floor joists, and the random-width roof sheathing, it is probable that #110 existed on this site prior to the 20th Century. It must have been in dilapidated condition, however, to be valued at a mere \$50. It is clear that Frank Schofenbul made substantial improvements to this structure in 1913-1914, amounting to a virtual rebuilding. It seems logical, therefore, to consider #110 a 19th century structure, with significant post 20th century modifications.

The building is not, in any case, a historical resource. It has no associational importance nor does it make use of any significant construction technique. I recommend that the City of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove this structure.

File # 112	Block 57 Union Plat, Lot 4, 5 (N1/2)	Address 421 N. Main St.	Owner Delbert Christy
------------	--	----------------------------	--------------------------

The building owned by Delbert D. Christy at 421 N. Main Street is a small, asphalt shingle over frame, rectangular, one-story hip-roofed structure. The basement walls and floor are of poured concrete. The addition on the east is of poured concrete as well and it has a dirt floor. Milled lumber and wire nails are found throughout the building. The attic is of conventional 2 x 4 construction and 1 x 10 roof boards are found there as well.

The history of the 421 N. Main St. property is associated with that of its neighbors 417 and 403 North Main Street. Since 417 is the oldest, it is convenient and logical to begin the narration with this property. Upon the death of Thomas Walsh, builder of 417 N. Main (constructed about 1870) in 1899, an Iowa-born day laborer, Justus Dremmel, came into ownership of the Walsh building as well as lots 4-15 in block 57 (Union Plat) of Prairie du Chien's 3rd Ward.<sup>1</sup> In 1906 Dremmel sold two lots to Lewis Favre who constructed 403 N. Main (file # 115) upon lot 9.

Dremmel continued in his ownership of 417 N. Main and the home was valued at \$150. The 1913 tax increase raised its value to \$500 for tax purposes. In 1914 Dremmel sold his lots and building to Dan Harwood.

Harwood owned the building and properties for 34 years. The value of 417 N. Main remained relatively constant between 1920 and the time Harwood sold his holdings to Henry L. Crady in 1947.<sup>2</sup> In 1950 Crady divested himself of all his holdings on the West side of Main Street except lots 4 and 5 (N 1/2). These two lots were then valued a \$180 and the improvements valued at \$940. Prior to 1949, all of Crady's numerous lots as well as the home at 417 were valued at \$2100. In my opinion, 421 North Main St. was constructed by Henry L. Crady in 1950. It, therefore, should be moved into the "Excluded" category.

---

<sup>1</sup> Justus Dremmel, MSS Census of 1900, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Harwood to Henry L. Crady 7 Oct. 1947, Deeds Vol. 183, p. 316.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
115	57 lot 9 3rd Ward, Union Plat	403 N. Main	Louis Favre

This clapboard over frame, one and one half story, hip-roofed, square, bungalow-style structure is of recent construction. The basement has walls made of poured concrete and retains a dirt floor. All of the lumber is of the commercially milled, standard dimension variety and wire nails are used throughout the structure. The roof members are also standard sized and machined.

At the turn of the 20th century Justus Dremmel, an Iowa-born day laborer of German extraction married to a French Canadian woman owned lots 4 through 15 on block 57 (Union Plat, 3rd Ward)<sup>1</sup>. Dremmel owned a house on his real estate valued at \$150.<sup>2</sup> In 1906 Louis Favre acquired lots 9 and 10 and he constructed a building valued at \$125 for tax purposes on the property.<sup>3</sup> Lots 9 and 10 had apparently been vacant, since Dremmel's improved value taxes remained unchanged after the 1906 transfer.

Favre's home remained at the same \$125 value even during the 1913 tax raise, perhaps indicating that the structure was either run down or an extremely modest one.<sup>4</sup> By 1916 the Favre home had decreased in value still further.<sup>5</sup> The following year, however, the tax value of the improvements constructed on lots 9 and 10 increased seven times, reaching \$700, indicating a new home or an extensive reconstruction of the previously existing structure.<sup>6</sup>

The 1920 tax raise increased the value of Favre's home to \$980.<sup>7</sup> In 1921 Favre made a significant improvement to the property, thereby raising its tax value to \$1270.<sup>8</sup> The value of the Favre property remained steady until after 1930.<sup>9</sup>

The house at 403 N. Main is a 1917 building, improved in 1921. It is unremarkable in every way, although it is structurally sound and has a lovely enclosed porch on the east. It has limited historical significance.

I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to dispose of the structure.

- 
- 1 Federal Manuscript Census 1900, Schedule of Inhabitants; Tax Roll, 1902.
  - 2 Ibid.
  - 3 Ibid., 1906.
  - 4 Ibid., 1913.
  - 5 Ibid., 1916.
  - 6 Ibid., 1917.
  - 7 Ibid., 1920.
  - 8 Ibid., 1921.
  - 9 Ibid., 1930.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
118	125 lot 1 3rd Ward, Union Plat	403 S. Main	Ada May

This modest, clapboard-over-frame, one story, L-shaped, gable-roofed home has enclosed porches to the west and east. The building has been raised on two separate occasions, elevating it about 6 feet over the original height. Both raises made use of concrete blocks. The foundation on the original section of the home to the south is made of poured concrete. The northern addition rests entirely on blocks. The basement retains a dirt floor.

All lumber has been commercially milled and is of standard dimensions. All nails are of the mass produced wire variety. The rafters are conventional 2" x 4"s and roof boards are uniformly sized.

At the turn of the 20th century Martin Wolford owned a home situated on the site of #118 which city assessors valued at \$100.<sup>1</sup> Wolford died in 1906 and his estate continued in possession of the building until Bertha Logan acquired it in 1909.<sup>2</sup> In 1911 the home took a dramatically downward shift in value. The Logan house plummeted to \$25 value in 1911 and in 1912 city tax assessors noted that no improvements existed on the site.<sup>3</sup>

Louis Franklin acquired the property in 1913 and constructed a home valued at \$100 for tax purposes. Franklin died in 1915 and the property changed hands.<sup>4</sup> Joseph Dohse was the next owner. He made a significant improvement which increased his home's value to \$300 in 1916.<sup>5</sup>

Dohse sold the property to Dr. D. W. Clark in 1919 and Clark's taxes increased through the effects of the city-wide tax increase of 1920. Clark's home was valued at \$350 for tax purposes.<sup>6</sup> In 1921 Clark sold the property to William Fields. Fields continued in possession of #118 until after 1930.<sup>7</sup>

This building is not historically significant. It appears well maintained, and has a lovely view of the river to the west. It has been raised to prevent flood damage. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove this structure at some future point in time. It is in no danger at the moment.

- 
- 1 Tax Roll, 1902.
  - 2 Ibid., 1906-1909.
  - 3 Ibid., 1911-1912.
  - 4 Ibid., 1912-1915.
  - 5 Ibid., 1916.
  - 6 Ibid., 1917-1920.
  - 7 Ibid., 1921-1930.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
121	The W.80' of the N. 100' of that part of Farm lot 35 of the Private Land Claims, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. Designated by the letter "H" in the Report of the Commissioners...	900 S. Main	Jerry Nagel

This modest, clapboard over frame, rectangular, one-story, gable-roofed building has been constructed in four sections running from west to east and has a separate addition to the south. The building has a shack-like appearance and no basement or crawl space. The attic is composed of standard dimensioned 2" x 4" rafters and has roof boards of various widths. Wire nails are used throughout.

Building #121 is located upon a property with an extremely complicated history dating back to the City of Prairie du Chien's early days as a fur trade outpost. The list of owners and speculators who at one time had interests in the property located on Farm Lot 35 reads like a Who's Who of early Wisconsin personalities. Trading in blocks of Farm Lot 35 real estate, speculators carefully recorded their actions with the Crawford County Register of Deeds, but never actually platted the property. Partially as a result, a number of land claims conflicted. The Lowertown area of Prairie du Chien experienced a population rise after the mid-19th Century, and rival land claims on Farm Lot 35 had to be resolved before subdivision and settlement could continue.<sup>1</sup> In 1884 Crawford County Circuit Court appointed a Commission of three prominent citizens to actually survey and map Farm Lot 35 after deciding issues of ownership. (See map "A", attached).<sup>2</sup>

The site of building #121, on parcel "H" of the "Commissioners Plat" of Farm Lot 35 was unimproved at the time that the court confirmed ownership of the property jointly to R. Brigham and Daniel Wells. In 1884 Brigham and Wells paid taxes on parcel "H" and "I" of the Commissioners Plat based on a \$15 assessed value. The \$15 value remained unchanged until Martin Blazek purchased parcel "H" and "I" in 1901. Blazek paid \$34.75 for the "1.39 acres more or less" of parcel "H."<sup>3</sup>

Martin Blazek came to Wisconsin from his native Bohemia in 1880. He worked as a farmer for a number of years before involving himself in the real estate business in the Lowertown area. Both of his sons worked as clam fishermen.<sup>4</sup> The same year he acquired parcel "H", Blazek had

<sup>1</sup> Phoenix Map Co., Map of Prairie du Chien (Milwaukee, 1876).

<sup>2</sup> B. F. Fay vs. B. F. Schermerhorn, T. C. Dousman, W. D. Merrell et. al., 2 Jun 1884, Deeds, vol. 45, p. 111.

<sup>3</sup> Tax Roll, 1884-1901; Sarrah Wells, Mary Brigham et. al. to Martin Blazek, 4 Apr 1901, Deeds, vol. 66, p. 102.

<sup>4</sup> 1900 Federal MSS Census, Schedule of Inhabitants.

a building constructed on the site valued at \$85.<sup>5</sup> By 1903 Blazek had substantially improved the building, increasing its tax assessed value to \$500.<sup>6</sup>

The 1913 tax increase raised the value of Blazek's improvements to \$700 and he added another \$100 worth of improvements in 1914. In 1916 Blazek sold the southern section of his holdings to Frank Kratchey, and Blazek's property value decreased to \$600.<sup>7</sup> The 1920 tax increase raised its value to \$840--a plateau from which it did not deviate until after 1930.<sup>8</sup>

John T. Feeney acquired parcel "H" from Martin Blazek in 1942.<sup>9</sup> Four years later, in 1946, Feeney sold the west 80' of the north 100' of parcel "H" to Eldoras A. Martin.<sup>10</sup> Martin and his wife obtained a \$550 mortgage from the Prairie City Bank for a home they built on their west 80' of the north 100'--building #121.<sup>11</sup>

The Martins sold #121 to George M. Geary and Lloyd L. Wilson for \$1000 in 1958. Geary bought Wilson's half share four months later.<sup>12</sup> Geary was judged to be incompetent in a court case before the year ended, and a guardian was appointed for the custody of Mr. Geary and his home.<sup>13</sup>

In any case, the building was eventually to come into the possession of its present owner, Jerry Nagel, in 1971. Although the property upon which #121 is sited clearly has been associated with the historical fabric of life in Prairie du Chien, the building has not. In my opinion the home is a 1946 structure built by Eldoras A. Martin and his wife. I recommend that #121 be placed in the Excluded category.

---

<sup>5</sup> Tax Roll, 1901.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 1903.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 1913-1916.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 1920-1930.

<sup>9</sup> Martin Blazek to John T. Feeney and Mary L. Feeney, 3 Jun 1942, Deeds, vol. 164, p. 151.

<sup>10</sup> John T. Feeney and Mary L. Feeney to Eldoras A. Martin and Jeanette Martin, 17 Jul 1946, Deeds, vol. 178, p. 368.

<sup>11</sup> Prairie City Bank to Eldoras A. Martin, 12 Nov 1946, Mortgages, 169, p. 92.

<sup>12</sup> Martin to George M. Geary and Lloyd L. Wilson, 20 Jan 1958, Deeds, vol. 202, p. 422; Wilson to Geary, 20 May 1958, Ibid., vol. 171, p. 418.

<sup>13</sup> In the Matter of Guardianship of George Geary Incompetant, Sept. 30, 1958, Miscellaneous, vol. U, p. 500.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
126	183 lot 4, 12 (house on 4) Lower Prairie du Chien Addition	1414 S. Main	John Kivi

This modest, asphalt shingle over frame, gable-roofed, one story, rectangular, three-bay structure has a west-facing main doorway surmounted by a pediment and brackets protruding about two feet further to the west. The building has been raised about three feet and the top of the foundation is composed of "stylish" diamond-shaped cast blocks which indicate 1920s. The basement is constructed of poured concrete and has a dirt floor. All lumber has been commercially milled, and wire nails are found throughout the home. The attic retains standard dimensional 2" x 4" rafters, and roof boards of about 8" in width.

At the turn of the 20th century John Pfaler owned the southern two-thirds of lot 4 and 13. No improvements existed on the property at that time.<sup>1</sup> The north 1/3 of lot 4, as well as lots 1-3, 14-16 were owned by a Mrs. E. Bunders, who had a home valued at \$200 sited on a part of her property.<sup>2</sup> Pfaler's real estate remained at its \$20 value until after he sold it to Joe Koptick (Koptis) in 1915.<sup>3</sup> Koptick began improving lot 4 in 1916, and by 1918 had a home valued at \$275 located on the site. The following year, Koptick acquired the north 1/3 of lot 4. The improved value of Koptick's holdings remained unchanged, proving that Mrs. Bunders had not constructed anything upon her section of the lot.<sup>4</sup> The 1920 general tax increase raised the value of building #126 to \$300.<sup>5</sup>

In 1923, V. Robesek (Robeck) acquired the home. He kept it for three years before transferring the ownership to Joseph Robejcek (Robjseck, Rubycheck). By 1930, the building had risen to a value of \$350.<sup>6</sup>

This building is not an historic resource. It is a well maintained small home of a not uncommon type. It has no significant association nor have any important construction techniques or materials been used in its building or subsequent alterations. I recommend that the City of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove this structure.

- 
- 1 Tax Roll, 1902.
  - 2 Ibid., 1902.
  - 3 Ibid., 1902-1915.
  - 4 Ibid., 1916-1919.
  - 5 Ibid., 1920.
  - 6 Ibid., 1923-1930.

File Number	Block	Address	Owner
133	1 lot 11, 12, 13, 14 Addition	1123 S. First	Frank Kratchvill

This modest, clapboard over frame, L-shaped, one-story, gable-roofed on the original section to the north and hip roofed on the southern L, has an eastward facing porch with turned columns and jigsaw fan brackets. There are two additions, one on the east and one on the south. The basement on the original section to the north as well as the eastern addition is composed of rock and mortar with a heavy coat of whitewash. The southern section rests on a foundation of poured concrete. All lumber has been commercially milled and all nails are of the wire variety. The attic has conventional 2" x 4" rafters and standard dimensional roof boards.

In 1900, the worth of the four lots which make up this piece of real estate had an assessed value of \$25. No improvements existed. John Pintz, a laborer whose parents had been born in Bohemia, acquired the lots in 1901, and by the following year he constructed a building valued at \$130 for tax purposes on the site.<sup>1</sup>

John Pintz continued in possession of building #133 until after 1930. He improved the home in 1916, increasing its value by \$50. By 1930 the building had a tax assessed worth of \$350.<sup>2</sup>

Building #133 has not been occupied for a number of years. It has a dilapidated appearance, although it is sound of structure. The current owner is a fisherman and has raised worms in the basement on a commercial scale. There is nothing of historical merit associated with this structure. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove it as deemed necessary.

---

<sup>1</sup> Tax Roll, 1900-1902; 1880 Federal MSS Census, Schedule of Inhabitants.

<sup>2</sup> Tax Roll, 1902-1930.



File Number	Block	Address	Owner
/41	17 Lot 9, S. 20' of 10 3rd Ward, Union Plat	217 McLeod	Mrs. William Burger

This substantial, clapboard over frame, T-shaped, cross-gable, one and one half story building had had its porch removed from the west side recently. No access was permitted and therefore a structural analysis could not be carried out.

The records, however, indicate that the building is a c. 1891 construction. In 1891 Simon Richards sold the property to Mary Lessard for \$250.<sup>1</sup> There was probably a house on the site by that date, though Richards paid \$60 tax for this and four other lots the year before.<sup>2</sup> Lessard paid tax on a property valued at \$100, and sold the building and real estate to A. Scheufenbil in the mid-1890s.<sup>3</sup> By 1898, however, Scheufenbil's home and property dropped in value to a mere \$75.

At the turn of the 20th century, building #141 underwent a number of improvements which increased its value. Alford Cornford acquired the property in 1903 at a time when the building had reached a \$200 value for tax purposes.<sup>4</sup>

Alford Cornford worked as a button cutter, an adjunct of the clam fishing industry centering in Prairie du Chien. His wife Julia was of mixed Swiss and Bohemian extraction.<sup>5</sup> Cornford retained ownership of the building and enlarged his property by acquiring a number of other lots. By 1907 Cornford's building #141 had increased in value to \$350.<sup>6</sup>

The tax increases of 1913 and 1920 raised the value of Cornford's home to \$510.<sup>7</sup> In the late 1920s, Cornford improved the home again, raising its tax assessed work to \$700.<sup>8</sup> Cornford kept the property until after 1930.

There is nothing of historical significance in the background of #141. I recommend that the city of Prairie du Chien be authorized to remove the structure.

- 
- 1 Richards to Lessard, 12 Apr 1891, Deeds, vol. 53, p. 130.
  - 2 Tax Roll, 1890.
  - 3 Ibid., 1895.
  - 4 Ibid., 1903.
  - 5 1900 Federal MSS Census, Schedule of Inhabitants.
  - 6 Tax Roll, 1907.
  - 7 Ibid., 1908-1920.
  - 8 Ibid., 1927.

## ABSTRACT

Of the 51 buildings in the Non-preferred category, eight (Nos. 1, 2, 11, 39, 51, 95, 112, and 121) were built after the 1927 cutoff date. They have been recommended for inclusion in the Excluded category. One structure, #70, is a c. 1878 building with some local historical association. I recommend that the structure be assigned to the Preferred category and considered for preservation in any emerging reuse plan for the project area.

In the Preferred category, the three buildings (Nos. 26, 33, 62) noted by the HABS report as being potentially eligible for consideration for National Register status are of no historical significance. Three others (Nos. 24, 90, 74), seem worthy of consideration for preservation based on their historical associations with Prairie du Chien events and personalities. Three others (Nos. 35, 49, 129) are structures which are worthy of consideration. That is to say, they might be important to local citizens, although they are probably not historically significant on the basis of National Register criteria.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Most of the recommendations which can be put forward at this point involve procedural matters. It is the suggestion of the reviewer that Prairie du Chien seek the professional services of city planners. The town is without doubt one of the more important historical areas in Wisconsin. There has been a great deal of environmental alteration of Prairie du Chien over the past 150 years, some of which has negatively affected the city's cultural resources.

The reuse plan for the Fourth Ward might well reverse the historic trend of piecemeal development at Prairie du Chien. An imaginative and realistic reuse plan must come to grips with the island's historic nature, as well as offering practical suggestions which would be compatible with the desires and aspirations of the community. It will not be an easy task.

Until the reuse plan is adopted, a procedure for removal of project area buildings should be agreed upon. In the opinion of the researcher, the city should remove the newer structures before the older ones. This would allow for planning time without endangering historic resources.

Additional security measures are imperative. Vandalism and wanton destruction seem to be ongoing pastimes in the project area. Vandals have already made their presence felt and contribute mightily to the general aura of dilapidation which surrounds the Fourth Ward.

A subtle trend of advocacy among the various agencies involved in the Flood Damage Reduction Project is tending toward an adversary type of relationship. Each agency seeks to fulfill its responsibilities. Little debate over the issue of ultimate economic questions, however, seems to be openly discussed. It seems time for the various representatives of the Corps of Engineers, the City, the State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council to meet and resolve the questions revolving around the issue of costs. Again, these are procedural matters and are offered merely as disinterested suggestions.

MAPS



Copyright 1907 by J. P. & S. H. Miller



# PRATERIE DU CHIEN

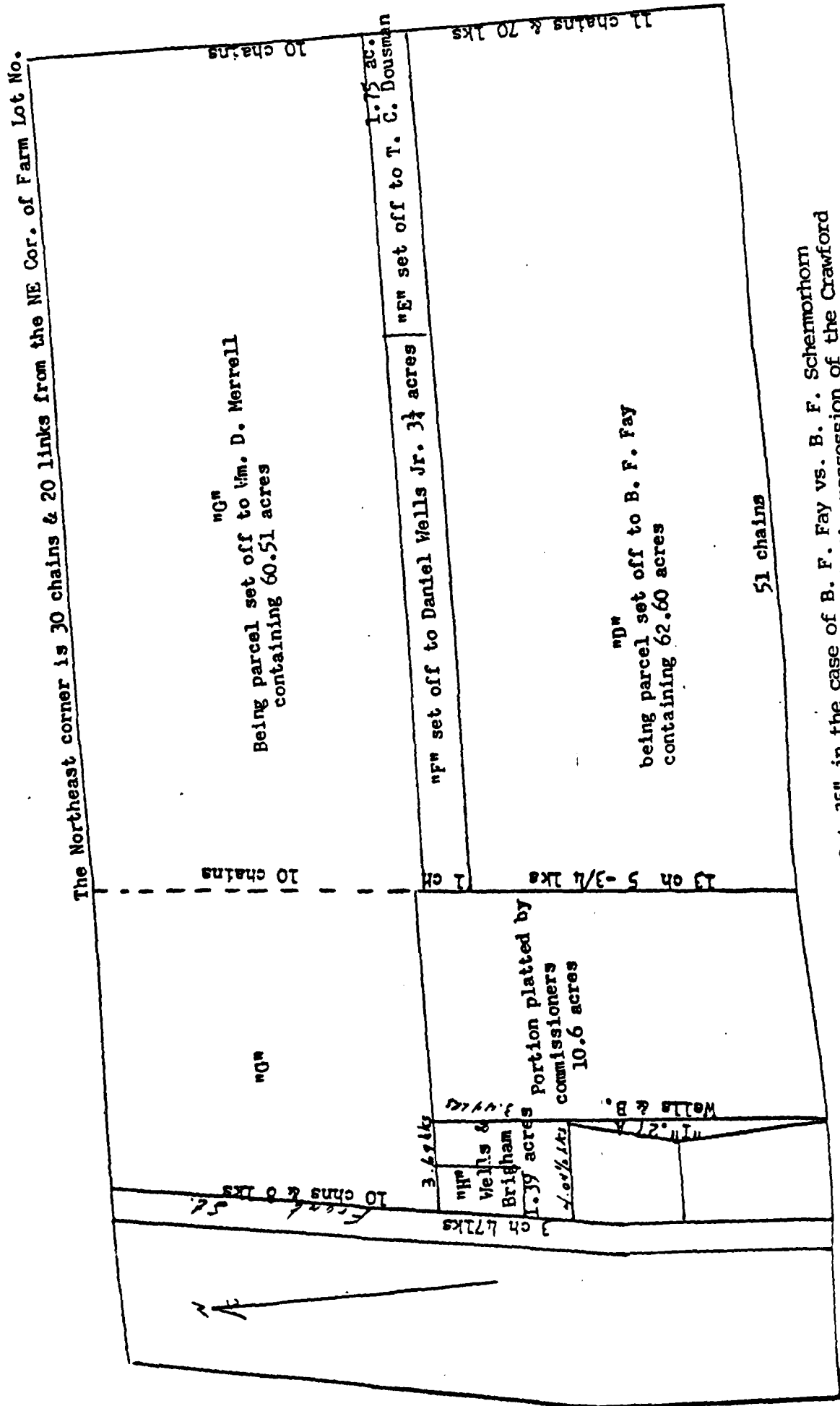


By J. P. & S. H. Miller

1876 BIRD'S EYE (HABS)

See Map 3 in back pouch

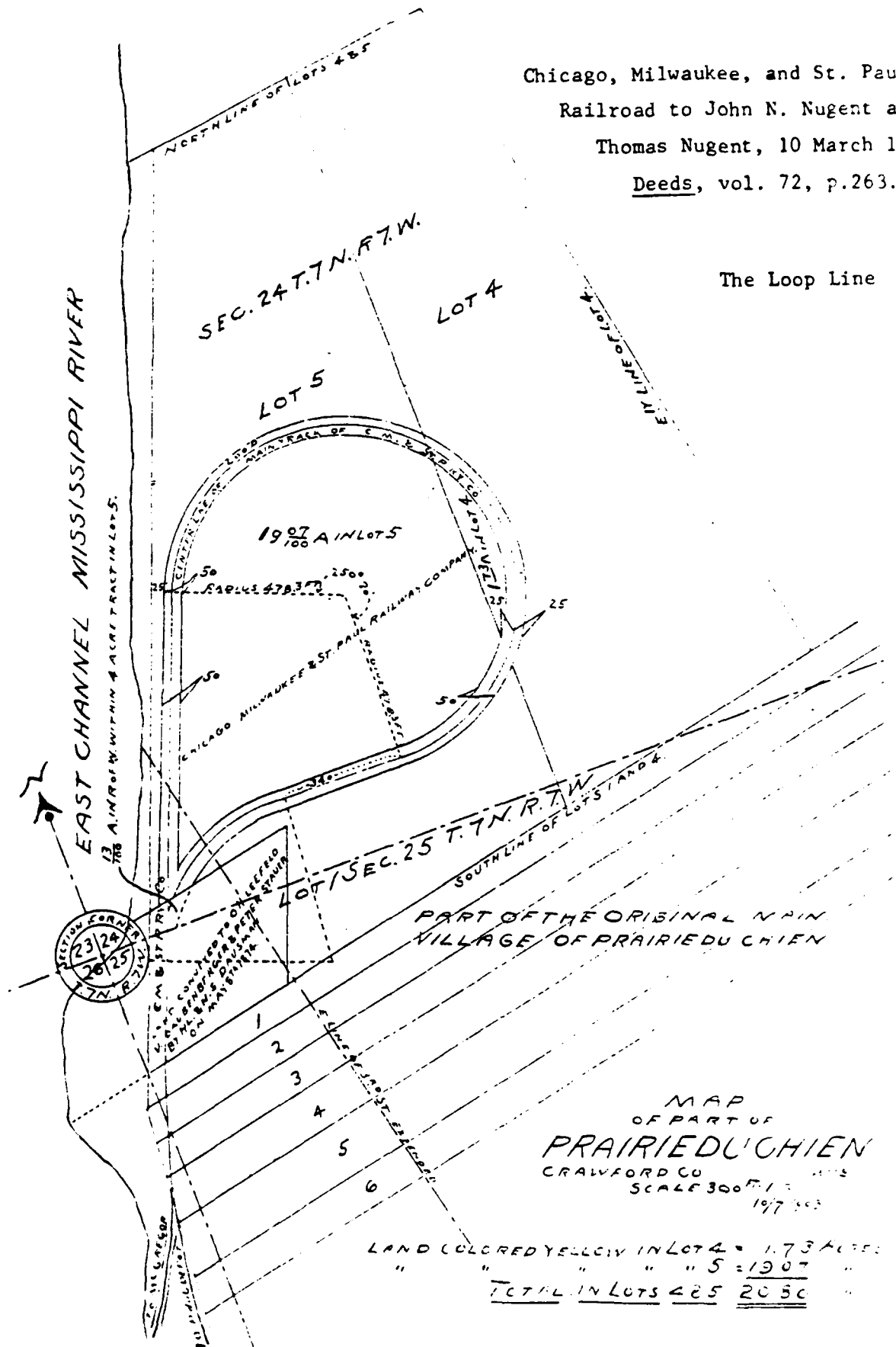
MAP 4  
Detail of Farm Lot 35



From "Commissioners Plat of Farm Lot 35" in the case of B. F. Fay vs. B. F. Schemmhorn et. al. 2 June 1884, Deeds, vol. 45, p. 111. Original is in the possession of the Crawford County Register of Deeds Office, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin.

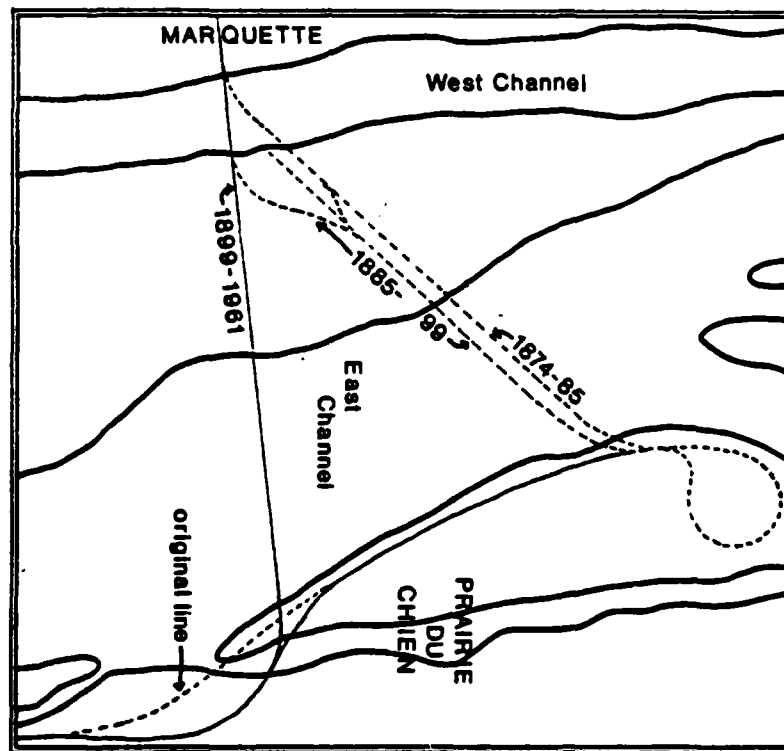
Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul  
 Railroad to John N. Nugent and  
 Thomas Nugent, 10 March 1904,  
Deeds, vol. 72, p.263.

The Loop Line

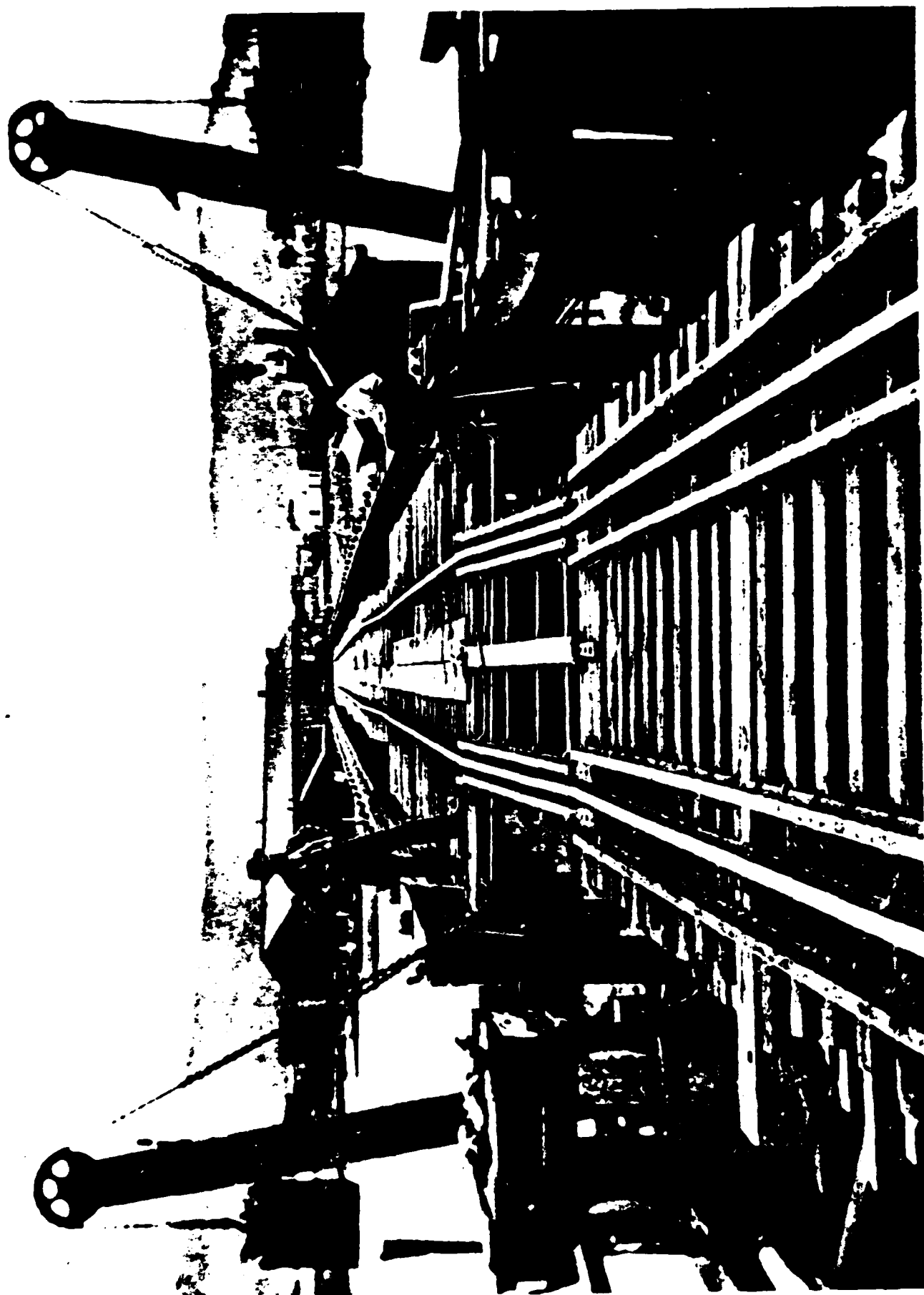




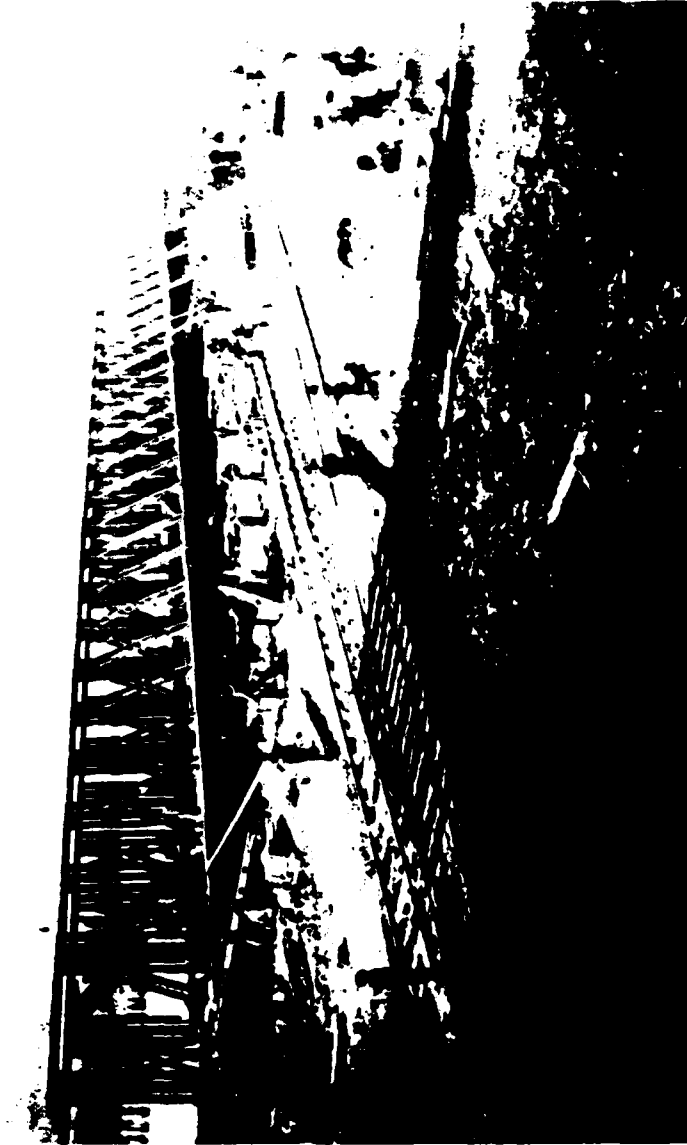
## Pontoon routes



PLATES



Pontoon Bridge (1st model) Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, c. 1874-1855.  
Photo reprinted by permission of State Historical Society of Wisconsin.  
WH1(x313)2728.



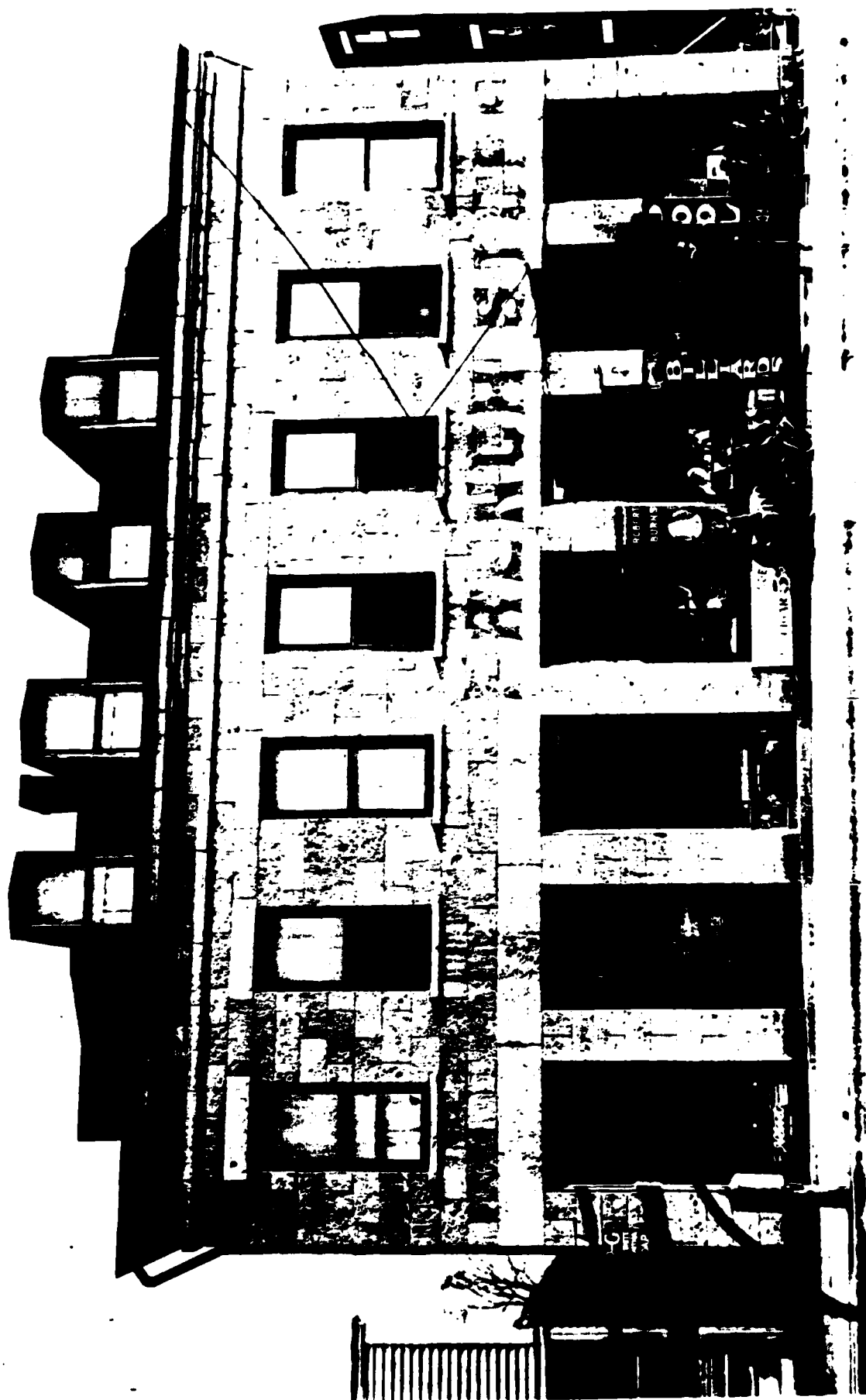
Pontoon bridge construction, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, 1910.  
Photo reprinted by permission of the State Historical Society of  
Wisconsin. WHI(x3)36230.



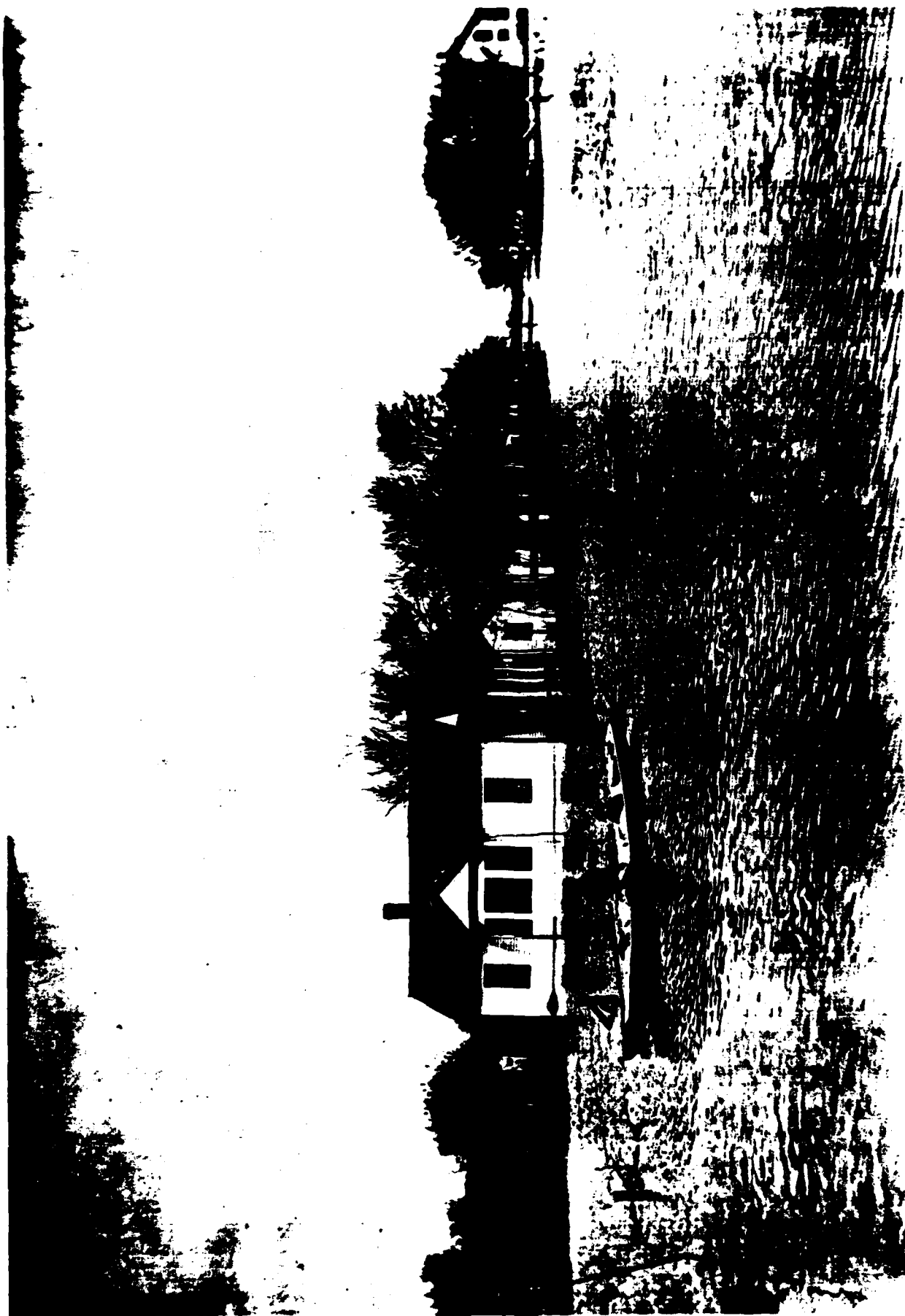
Diamond Jo Warehouse, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. Photo reprinted by permission of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. WHI(D485)11812.



Ruins of Fort Crawford, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, c. 1875. Photo reprinted by permission of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. WH1(x3)14576.



French Store and Pool Room, Prairie du Chien Wisconsin, c. 1915. Photo reprinted by permission of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Frank Cornelius, Photographer. WHI(c76)90.



Flood scene, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, c. 1916. Photo reprinted by permission of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Frank Cornelius, Photographer. WHI(c76)214.

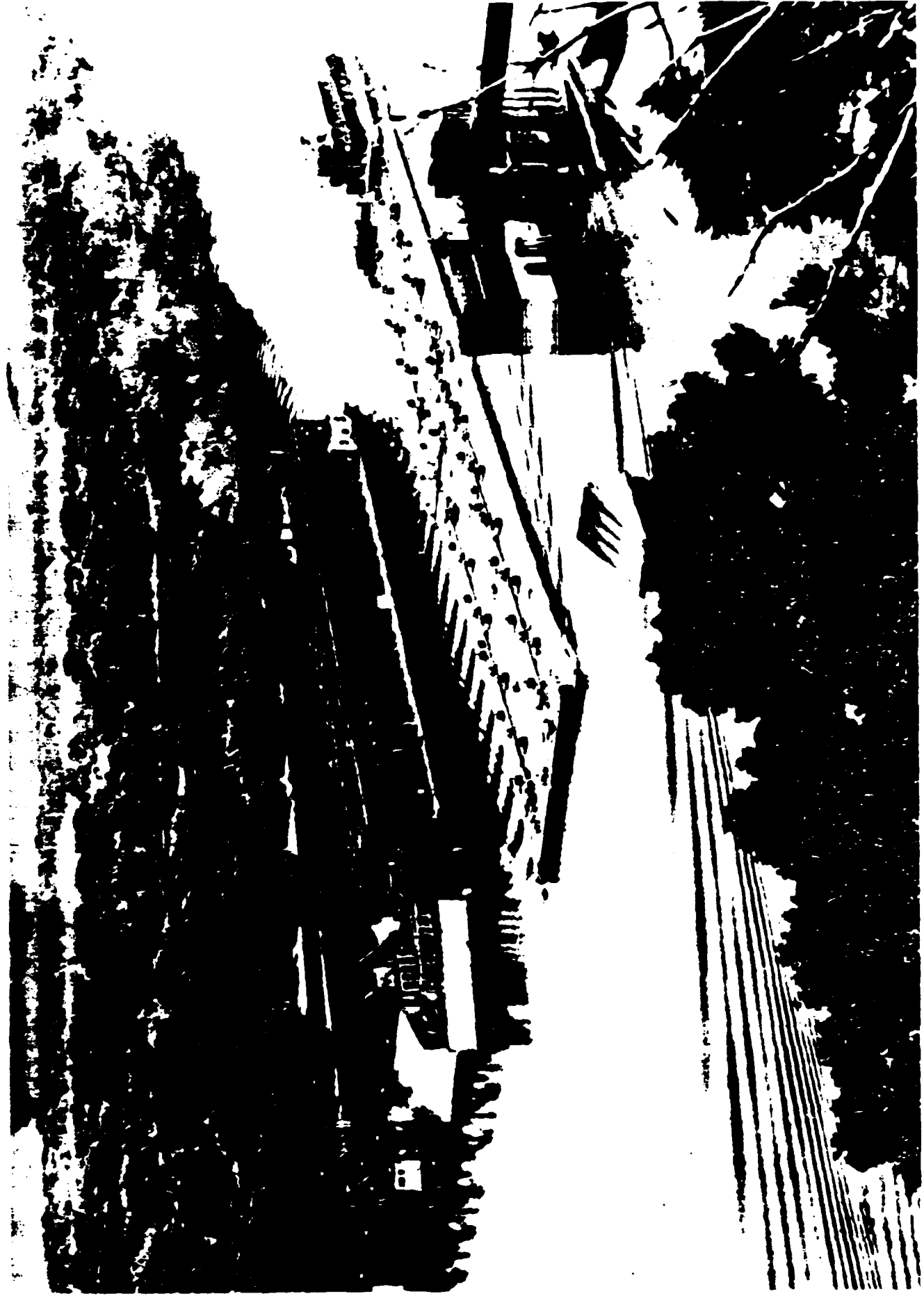




Carriage passing Dousman Hotel during flood. Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin c. 1916.  
Photo reprinted by permission of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Frank  
Cornelius, Photographer. WHI(c76)215.



Clamming boats moored along the Mississippi River, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, 1910-34.  
Photo reprinted by permission of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Frank  
Cornelius, Photographer. WHI(c76)125.



Western "draw" pontoon bridge (2nd model) 1930's. Photo reprinted  
by permission of Marquette Sundries.

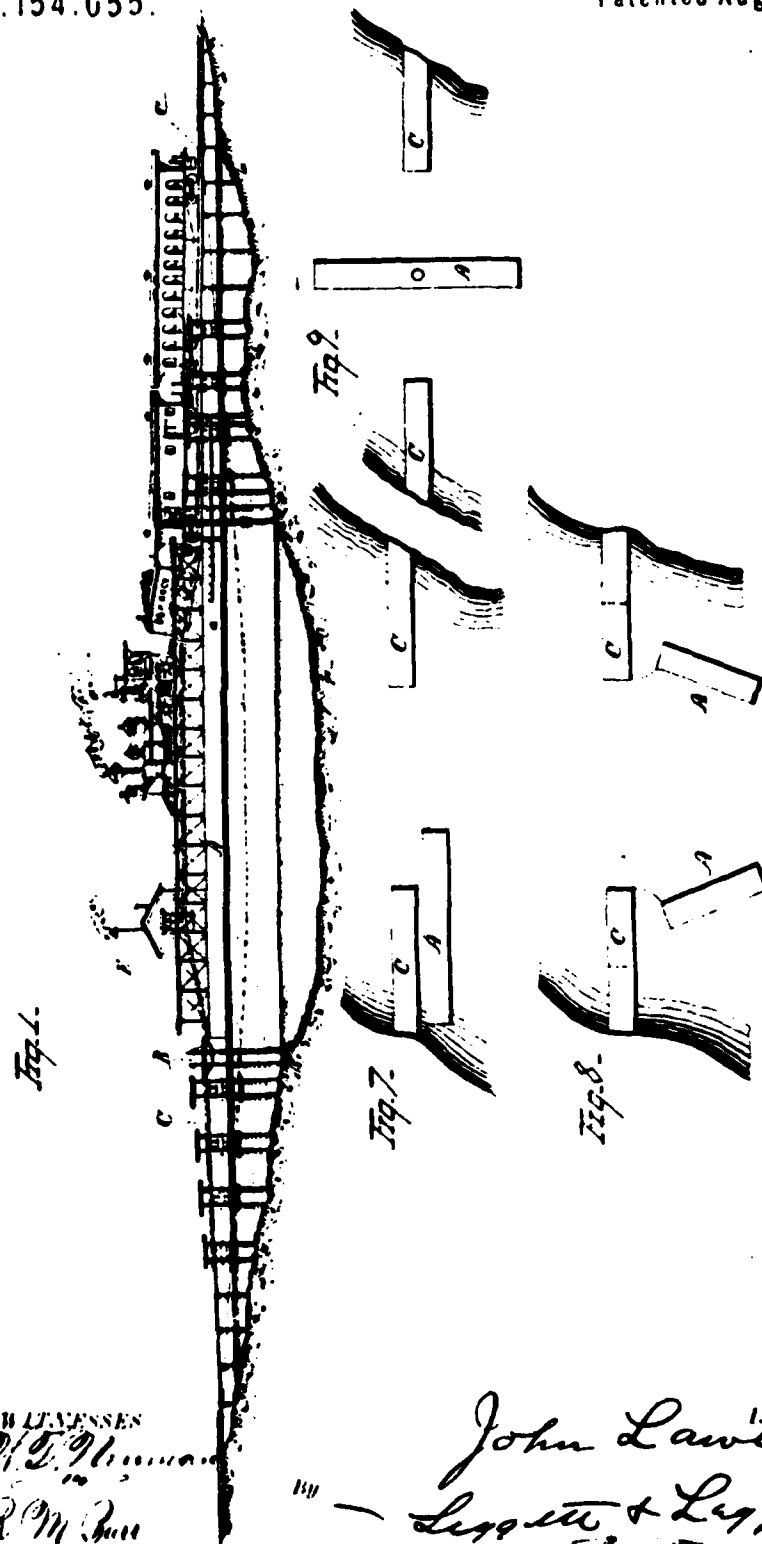
Pontoon Bridge Patent  
Scanlan Papers  
Box 7 Folder 5D

4 Sheets--Sheet 1.

J. LAWLER.  
Floating Draw-Bridges.

No. 154,055.

Patented Aug. 11, 1874.



WITNESSES  
M. D. Munn  
R. M. Bull

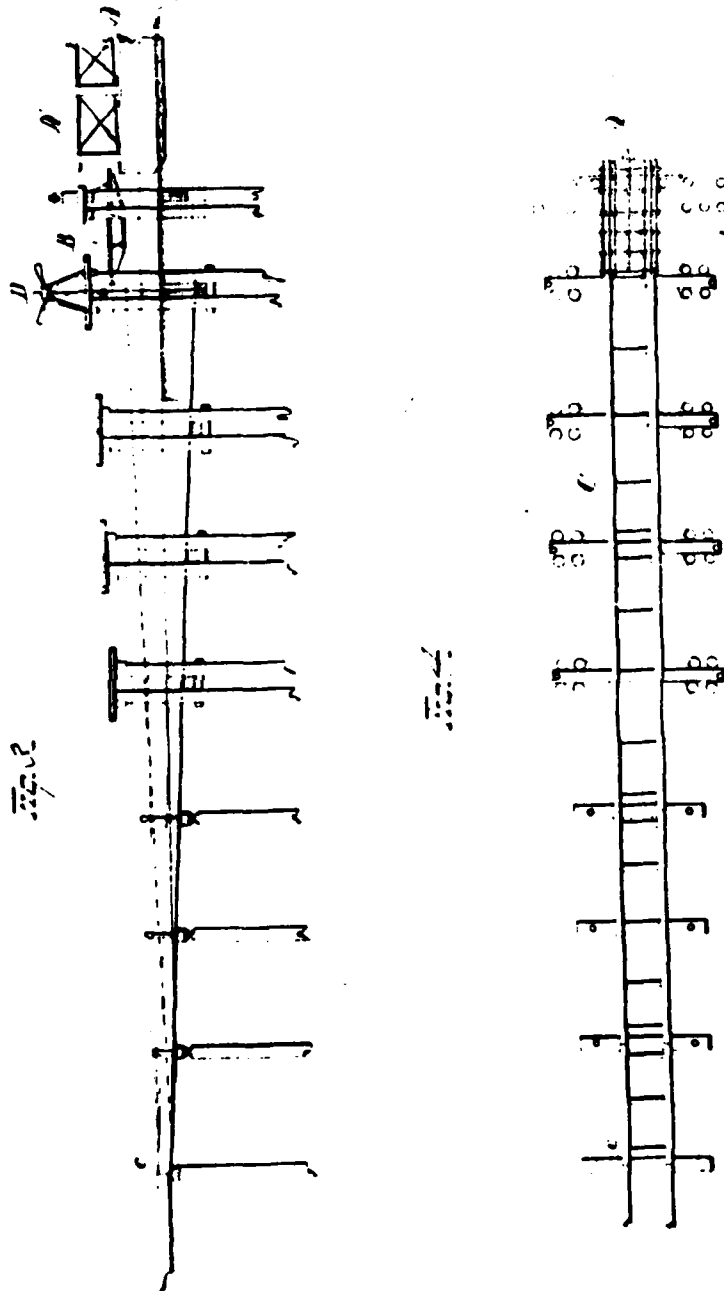
INVENTOR  
John Lawler  
L. L. L. & L. L. L. Attorneys.

THE GRAPHIC CO. PHOTO LITH. 225 N. 4TH ST. PHILA. PA.

J. LAWLER.  
Floating Draw-Bridges.

No. 154,055.

Patented Aug. 11, 1874.



WITNESSES

*Wm. H. Sherman*  
*A. M. Burr*

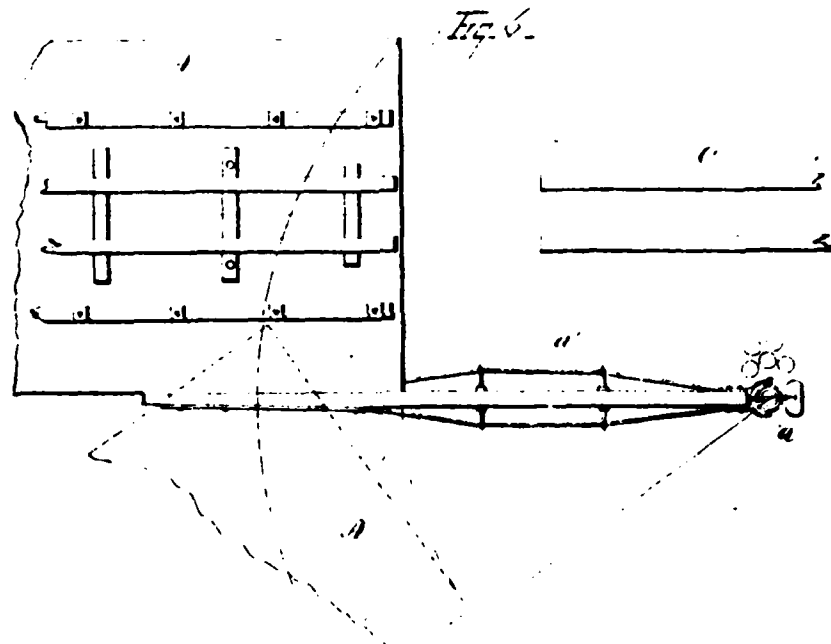
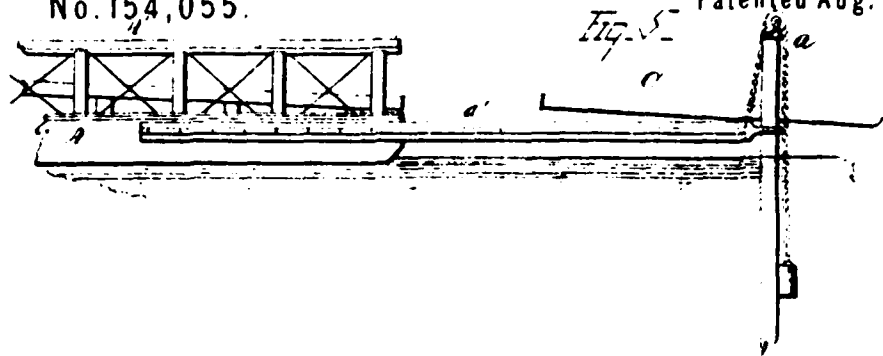
189

INVENTOR  
*John Lawler*  
*Leggett & Leggett*  
Attorneys.

J. LAWLER.  
Floating Draw-Bridges.

No. 154,055.

Patented Aug. 11, 1874.



WITNESSES

*W. B. Sherman*

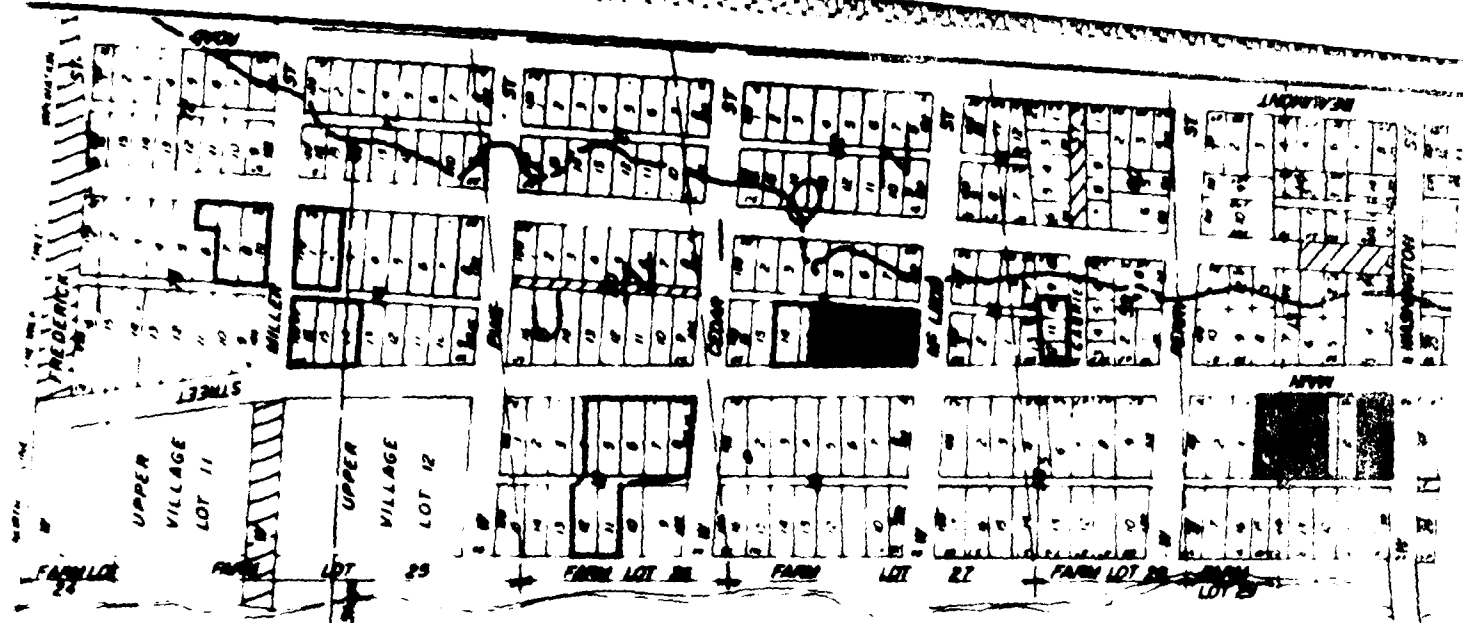
*W. B. Sherman*

INVENTOR

*John Lawler*

*Leggett & Leggett*

Attorneys.



MARAIS DE SAINT FERIE



①

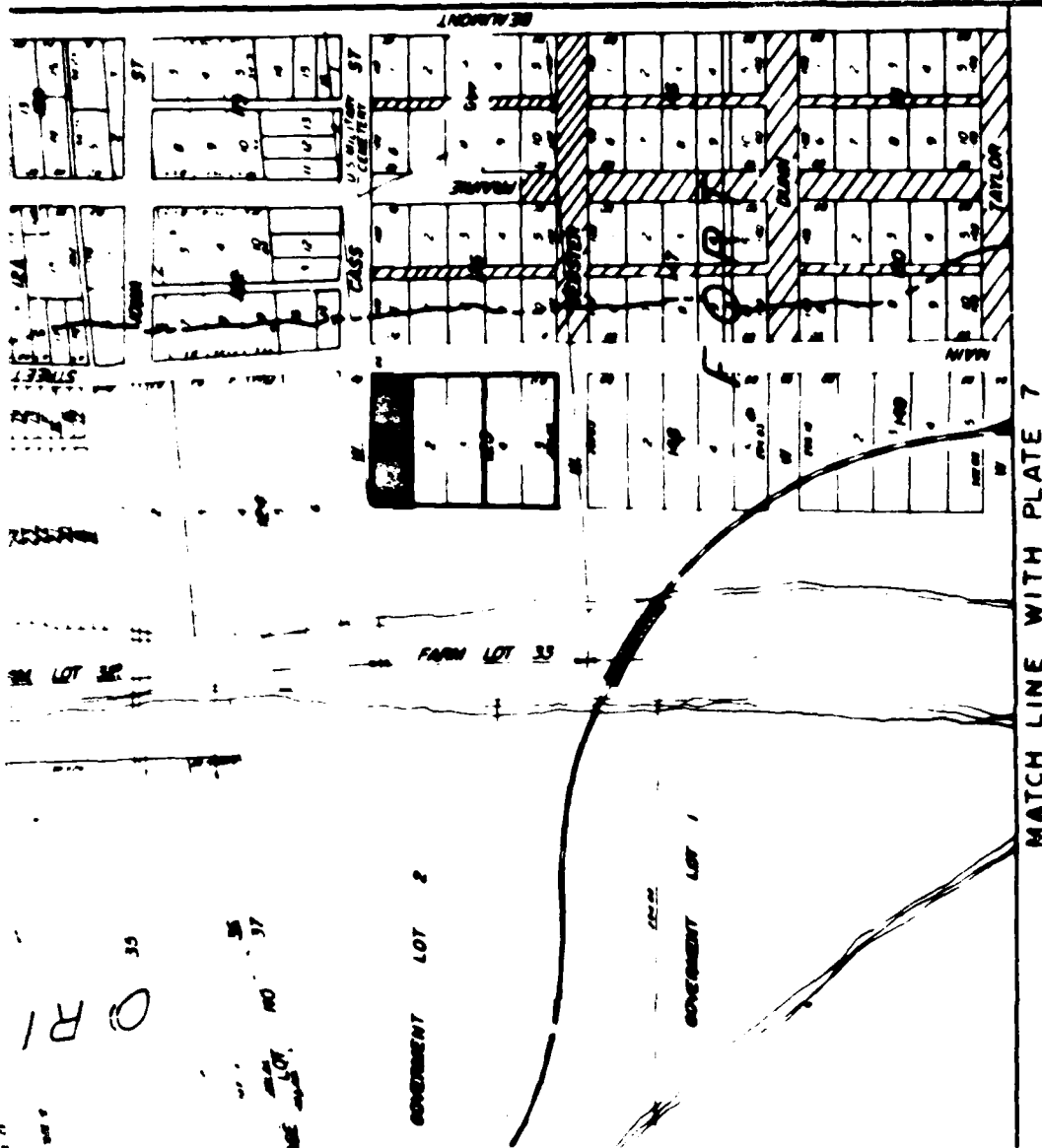


2

HI

U.S.





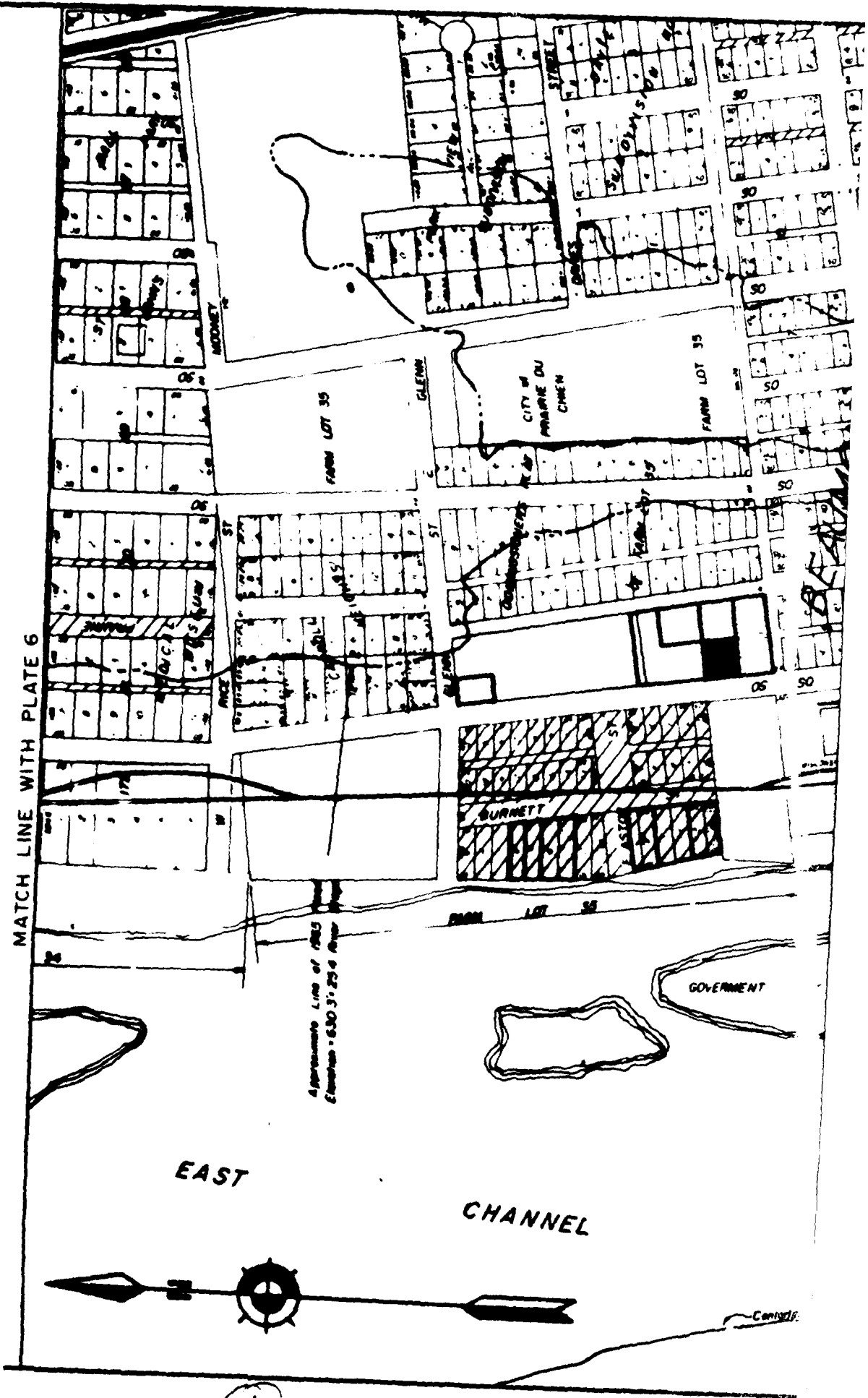
 PREFERRED STRUCTURES (PRE-1876)

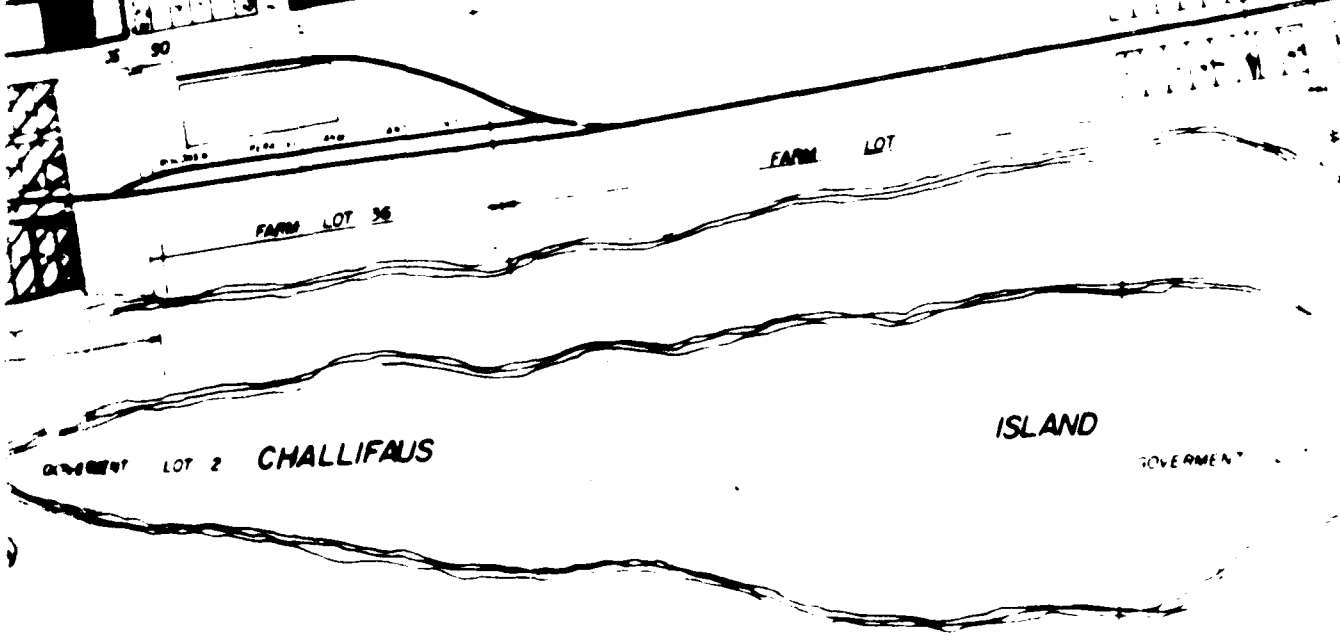
 NON PREFERRED STRUCTURES (1876-1927)

 EXCLUDED STRUCTURES (POST-1927)

DESIGN MEMORANDUM NO. 3  
FLOOD DAMAGE REDUCTION  
FROM: MISSISSIPPI RIVER AT  
PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, WISCONSIN  
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
SUMMER 1978  
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA DISTRICT

Reproduced from  
best available copy.





MISSISSIPPI.

RIVER

Center of East Channel B Corporation Line 7

2



- PREFERRED STRUCTURES (PRE-1876)
- NON PREFERRED STRUCTURES (1876-1927)
- EXCLUDED STRUCTURES (POST-1927)

DESIGN MEMORANDUM NO. 3  
 FLOOD DAMAGE REDUCTION  
 FROM: MISSISSIPPI RIVER AT  
 PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, WISCONSIN  
 HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
 SUMMER 1978  
 ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA DISTRICT

END

10-86

DT/C