


**1** City, Village or Town: Hudson County: St. Croix Surveyor: R. LaRowe Date: 9/14/83

Street Address: 904 Seventh Street USGS Quad and UTM Reference: Northline/Zone 15, easting: 519810; northing: 4980480 Acreage: less than one acre

Current Name & Use: Ernest Duwell Current Owner: Ernest Duwell

Film Roll No. SC 2  
SC 4  
Negative No. 7  
17  
Facade Orient. S



Current Owner's Address: 904 Seventh Street

Legal Description: Lot #1, Block E, Sublets, Bates, Searles, and Days Addition

**2** Original Name & Use: Samuel T. Merritt Resident Source: A Previous Owners: NA Dates:  Uses:  Source:

Dates of Construction / Alteration: Pre-1862 Source: D

Architect and/or Builder: unknown Source:

**3** Architectural Significance

- Represents work of a master
- Possesses high artistic values
- Represents a type, period, or method of construction
- Engineering
- None

**4** Historical Significance

- Assoc. with lives of significant persons
- Assoc. with significant historical events
- Assoc. with development of a locality
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- None

Period of significance 1867--1918

Architectural Description and Significance:  
 Description: The two-story Italianate dwelling purchased by Samuel T. Merritt in 1862 (B), has a central cube and rear wing plan, clap-board siding with corner boards, and rests upon a stone foundation. The cube has a truncated hip roof with boxed cornices, and entablature friezeboard, and carved brackets placed in pairs, while the gable roof of the rear wing features returns. Windows are 2/2. Although no physical evidence supports the removal of a second story window over the south side entrance door, historical photographs

Interior visited?  Yes  No

Historical Background and Significance:  
 Background: Born in Carmel, Putnam County, New York April 17, 1830, Samuel Townsend Merritt was educated in his native state as a teacher, a career he continued until 1855. After his marriage to Elizabeth Hill in 1857, the couple came to St. Paul and soon settled on 100 acres of land in Washington County, Minnesota. The Merritts purchased the Italianate residence on the northeast corner of Seventh and Orange Streets in Hudson in 1862, but rented the property to other families during a personal five year absence. Upon returning to

- 5** Sources of Information (Reference to Above)
- A** Merritt, Samuel T., obit., Hudson Star-Observer, October 18, 1918, p.1)
- B** St. Croix County Land Records, Grantee Index, 1862. (St. Croix Co. Courthouse, Hudson, WI)
- C** Historic Photographs, "Merritt Family Album", property of Ernest Duwell.
- D** Commemorative Biog. Rec. of the Upper Lake Reg (Chicago: J.H. Beers and Co., 1905, p93)
- E**
- F**

**6** Representation in Previous Surveys

- HABS
- LDMK
- WIHP
- NRHP
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

**7** Condition

- excellent
- good
- fair
- poor
- ruins

**8** District: \_\_\_\_\_

- pivotal
- contributing
- non-contributing

**9** Opinion of National Register Eligibility

date: 9/14/83 initials: ES

- eligible
- not eligible
- unknown
- national
- state
- local

Seventh Street  
904  
TOWN  
BUILDING  
SECTION  
MAP NAME  
Hudson/North Hudson Intensive Survey Map  
MAP CODE  
SC 4/17

Architectural Statement (cont'd):

show louvered shutters, which visibly correct the three-bay symmetry. The raised panel entrance door has an elliptical transom and side lights with decorative leaded glass. Carved pilasters, supporting an entablature shelf lintel with an arched panel frieze, surround the entrance. A rectangular bay with a bracketed octagonal shingled roof is found on the west side. Large carved brackets support a shed roof placed over a west side window, which replaced a secondary entrance door. (C) A stoop porch on the south side replaced an open porch which featured a pediment over the front steps. Additions include a closed porch on the west side and a garage attached to the east facade of the rear wing. The interior could not be viewed to the failure of contacting the present owner. The residence is located on a spacious corner lot studded with trees and proportionate shrubbery. Extensive alterations have affected the dwelling's architectural integrity and when comparing it with other Italianates in Hudson, such as the William Dwelley House at 1002 Fourth Street which is also being nominated, the Samuel T. Merritt House does not stand as the community's best example of the style.

Historical Statement (cont'd):

Hudson in 1867, Samuel T. Merritt engaged in buying and exporting wheat where he earned the "distinction (as)...the first to ship wheat down the (St. Croix) river to La Crosse, ...by barge, with a boat 'Viola', which was built in Hudson".(D) Throughout his life in Hudson, Merritt gained considerable wealth in numerable ventures including real estate investment in Nebraska and commercial property ownership in Hudson. A devout Baptist and Republican, Merritt became recognized as a highly prominent and influential citizen, revered as "starting out in life poor in pocket, but rich in the possession of health, courage, and ability. His success has not come...by any royal road, but through careful plodding work, good investments, and excellent management, while the ...esteem in which he has held has been honestly won by honorable methods and a pleasing personality." (D) Samuel T. Merritt died in October, 1918.

Significance: The Merritt House, 904 Seventh Street, serves as the finest symbol of the life of Samuel T. Merritt. He gained distinction in Hudson's historical development as the first to ship wheat down the St. Croix River to La Crosse in the late 1860's, as a local businessman, and commercial investor. In comparison, no other structure represents Merritt's contributions to Hudson than the residence he purchased in 1862, and lived in from 1867 to his death in 1918. In addition, the Merritt house is one of the few surviving structures directly linked to the booming wheat era in nineteenth century Hudson. The St. Croix River, of course, was a central feature in the wheat industry, serving as the transportation corridor for locally grown grain and (later) milled flour. From Hudson, wheat was shipped to La Crosse, St. Louis and other points for processing. Merritt pioneered such shipments, thus helping to open a wide market for St. Croix county wheat in the era before the arrival of the railroad. It is the last remaining structure associated with the wheat era in Hudson.