

City, Village or Town: New Richmond	County: St. Croix	Surveyor: Stager Roberts	Date: 1983 1986
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Street Address: 137 Third Street East	USGS Quad and UTM Reference: New Richmond South, Wis. 15/536460/4996250	Acreage: less than 1 acre
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Current Name & Use: Nature's Pantry	Current Owner: Lynn Wood
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film Roll No. SC28	Affix Contact Prints	Current Owner's Address: 153 Arch Avenue North New Richmond, WI. 54017
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negative No. 2	Affix Contact Prints	Legal Description: Gridley Addn.; W 65.75' of S. 51' of lot 5, Block 10, City of New Richmond
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academy Orient. S	Affix Contact Prints	
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Original Name & Use:	Source	Previous Owners	Dates	Uses	Source
2 Dr. Frank W. Epley Office	A, B				
Dates of Construction /Alteration 1884	Source				
Architect and/or Builder:	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: _____

Architectural Description and Significance:

See Attached

Interior visited? Yes No

Historical Background and Significance:

See Attached

5 Sources of Information (Reference to Above)

A Abstract of Title

6 Representation in Previous Surveys

HABS LDMK WIHP NRHP

other: _____

B St. Croix Republican, 5/21/1884; 7/2 and 7/30, 1884

7 Condition

excellent good fair poor ruins

C 1887 Sanborn Insurance Map

8 District: _____

pivotal contributing non-contributing

D

9 Opinion of National Register Eligibility

date: 7/21/86 initials: JRE

E

eligible not eligible unknown

national state local

Third Street East

137

City Map

SC28-2

Record No. H

INVENTORY FORM FOR NOMINATED PROPERTIES

Name of Property: DR. FRANK W. EPLEY OFFICE

Owner: Lynn Wood Date: 1/11/88

Address: 137 Third Street East

Owner's address: 153 Arch Ave. N, New Richmond

City: New Richmond

County: St. Croix (Code # 109)

*160 NRHP Certification

(a) _____ (b) _____

(c) _____ (d) _____

165 NRHP Certification Date

(a) _____ (b) _____

(c) _____ (d) _____

*170 Thematic or Multiple Resource Nomination Name

Historic Resources of New Richmond

180 NRHP List Name Dr. Frank W. Epley Office

*200 Level of Significance Local

*190 District Classification -

*210 Applicable Criteria B

*215 Criteria Considerations

*220 Area of Significance

Medecine

230 Period of Significance 1884-1908

60 Verbal Boundary Description

Gridley Addition, W 65.75' of S 51' of

Lot 5, Block 10, City of New Richmond

70 USGS Quad Map New Richmond South, WI

80 UTM Coordinates (Format: 99/999999/9999999)

15/ 536460 / 4996250

85 Listed Acreage less than one

340 Review Board Date _____

Number of Resources:

ONE Contributing Building

*use code tables for response

Record: H

Address: 137 East Third Street

DESCRIPTION

The Frank W. Epley office is a one and a half story wood shingled house with a cross gabled asphalt shingled roof. The plan is T-shaped and the foundation has a concrete wash. Window frames are wood with entrablature heads. The house has a plain wooden frieze under the eaves. Windows are one-over-one and six-over-one.

The front (south) side has an entry under a shed roof in a small side gabled addition which includes two small six light square windows, one facing south and one west. To the rear of this west portion is a one story addition with a shed roof. The east side of the house has a large ell with side gable.

Landscaping is minimal and the lot is very small. The building sits close to the sidewalk and a parking lot is located east and north of the structure. It is in excellent condition. Although there have been changes, the basic integrity of the building is good.

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

This structure was built in 1884. The St. Croix Republican noted on May 5 that carpenters were working on the office. The same newspaper followed the progress of Dr. Epley's new office: on July 2, the paper predicted that Epley would move in the following week, but it was not until July 30 that the paper confirmed that Dr. Epley was, indeed, in his new quarters. The house is shown on the 1887 and 1892 Sanborn maps as L-shaped with the present ell on the west. The April, 1900, Sanborn map shows the addition of the larger east gabled ell and a projecting rear entry. These were added on after the 1899 tornado when the house suffered some damage and was repaired. An historic photograph from ca. 1912 (New Richmond Preservation Society) indicates that the house was originally clapboard. This photograph also shows that the double windows in the west gable replaced a single window, the one story addition on the west, and the shed roofed front entry were added after 1912. Also, the house in 1912 was clapboard with cornerboards. Consequently, the wood shingle sheathing is not original either.

Dr Epley owned this property from 1878 until his death in 1907 according to the Abstract of Title. His house stood northeast facing N. Arch Avenue and there was a large two story barn on the west side of the office in the 1912 photograph, both of which are now gone.

Dr. Frank W. Epley (1851-1908) was a native of New York state. He moved to Wisconsin with his parents as a child, working first in a drugstore in Fond du Lac in 1871 and then in Hudson in 1872. From 1874-1877, Epley attended Rush Medical College and after graduation began practicing medicine and surgery in New Richmond.

He married Anna Hoyt, the daughter of a Hudson doctor, on June 21, 1877. Five children were born to this marriage. Hoyt Epley, a son, also became a doctor in 1904. Frank Epley was the Soo Line surgeon around 1885. He was more interested in disease prevention than cure. Two of his interests were diagnosis using microscopes and tissue examination. In 1890, Epley performed the first appendectomy in the area. He gave the first diphtheria shots in 1895. In 1895-96 he was also president of the Wisconsin State Medical Society. Today, the Museum of Medical Progress in Prairie du Chien has many Dr. Epley's artifacts on exhibit.

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The building at 137 East Third Street was Dr. Epley's office at the time of the June 12, 1899 tornado. Although heavily damaged, it was the only doctors office from which medical supplies could be salvaged. Epley served on the medical relief committee after the storm. He was elected by business and civic leaders to solicit funds from communities outside the city and state. He formulated an unsuccessful plan to tax every Wisconsin county as a way to fund New Richmond disaster aid.

Among the many offices Epley held were city mayor (1902-04), health officer, surgeon for the Omaha and Soo lines and a member of the board of pension examiners. He held membership in the Wisconsin State Medical Society, St. Croix County Medical Society, Minnesota State and Fox River medical societies, and Inter-County Medical Society.

As mayor, Epley was interested in street and sidewalk improvements. He left a detailed mayor's report in 1904 when his tenure ended. Epley declined renomination saying that the position of mayor took too much of his time.

Dr. Epley established and was president and general manager of the Apple River Power Company in Somerset, Wisconsin in 1897. The company developed water power and transmitted it to the city so that there would be continuous service. New Richmond contracted with the company in 1898 for water and electric power to supplement its own supply. Shortly before the 1899 tornado, Epley bought in to the telephone company. This was destroyed in 1899 and he rebuilt it as the Phoenix Telephone Company. Before it was sold in 1905, the exchange was run out of his office.

Epley retired from active medical practice in 1907 a year before his death by drowning in his cistern. His son, Hoyt, continued to use the office for his medical practice. Anna Hoyt Epley, born in 1851 in St. Croix Falls, attended Appleton Academy in New Hampshire and received a masters of letters in Greek, Latin, and French. Until her marriage, she was principal of Stillwater High School in Minnesota. She was on the New Richmond school board and was one of the founders of the library and the first librarian. In 1900, she wrote A Modern Herculaneum, a first hand account of the 1899 tornado (Easton, History of the St. Croix Valley, vol. 2, 892-893).

SIGNIFICANCE

This building is locally significant for its association with Dr. Epley. During most of his career, Dr. Epley owned the property at 137 East Third Street. He used this building as his office from 1884 until his death in 1908. His large house was on adjacent property facing east on N. Arch Avenue before and after the tornado. The building is historically significant as the only remaining building associated with his career. It played a key role in post-tornado medical assistance after the June 12, 1899 storm which destroyed much of New Richmond. It was also used for several years as the telephone exchange around the turn-of-the-century.

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Significance continued:

Dr. Epley's primary significance comes from his association with the medical history of the community and his specific efforts in association with the tornado of 1899. One of only five practicing physicians identified 1895 Wisconsin State Gazetter for the community of New Richmond, Epley represents the earliest era of medical practice in the community, which prior to the 1890s was dependent upon traveling doctors or distant cities. Soon after moving into the nominated property Epley became the surgeon for the local division of the Soo Line Railroad, representing a unique aspect of the 19th century medical field.

Epley was a most dynamic citizen. While his main contributions to the community were directly involved with the field of medicine, he was also deeply involved in the building up of the community. His involvement occurred both before and most importantly after the 1899 tragedy. The doctor's role in city and health affairs directly after the devastation of the 1899 tornado were of unestimable value to the physical health of the citizens and the physical rebuilding of the community. The ability of Epley to make available from his office much needed medical equipment no doubt served to deny the tornado more victims than might have been possible. Epley's continued medical service based at this site in a community where all other medical supplies had been destroyed has bestowed on the man and his office a special recognition of value that is continued to this day.

Epley was also called upon in the aftermath of the tornado to seek monetary aid for the community, no doubt because of his standing as a recognized member of the state medical profession (President, State Medical Society 1895-96; AMA, Minnesota, Fox River Medical societies...). In subsequent years Epley held the important office of Mayor of New Richmond and was instrumental in drafting a detailed report on the status and development future of the city, which was still rebounding from the devastation of the 1899 event just 5 short years earlier. In addition Epley was directly involved in the development of regular and dependable electric power for the community and in the organization of a competent local phone system.

In a period of dramatic need such as most communities never see, Dr. Epley was able along with the help of many hardworking citizens to overcome adversity and help with the physical healing of a community and its people.