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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

JAN 30 1989

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name LeMoine Building  
other names/site number Gheen Store and Post Office

2. Location

street & number off County Highway 74  not for publication N/A  
city, town Unorganized Territory Orr  vicinity  
state Minnesota code MN county St. Louis code 137 zip code 55740

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>          </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> objects
			<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Nina M. Archabal 1/23/89  
Signature of certifying official Nina M. Archabal Date  
Minnesota State Historic Preservation Officer  
State or Federal agency and bureau Minnesota Historical Society

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Alfred Byrne Entered in the National Register 3/2/89  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government / post office

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: False Front Commercial

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls metal

roof asphalt

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The LeMoine Building is located in the community of Gheen in the southeast 1/4 of Section 6, T63N R19W. By road, the building is located on the north side of County Road 905 approximately 150 yards west of the intersection of County Road 905 and the tracks of the Duluth, Winnipeg, & Pacific Railroad. This nomination is for one contributing building only. The Gheen store is a false front 2-story frame commercial building erected by its first owners, the LeMoine brothers, in 1913. The building sits on a massive poured concrete foundation. It does not have a basement, but does have a generous crawl space under the first-floor joists which is high enough to accommodate a person standing erect.

The building is sheathed inside and out with galvanized stamped metal. The stamped metal exterior has never been painted. The metal has not rusted and is in excellent condition. The stamped metal on the inside covers lath and plaster walls, and it has been painted. The false front is substantially original, except for a band of stamped metal above the store windows where a transom would customarily be in a building of this style. This band is covered in a brick-pattern stamped metal, while the rest of the exterior is covered in a dimpled concrete-block pattern stamped metal. The owner is fairly certain that there are transom windows behind the brick-pattern metal, but has never seen them. This area of the building is covered with metal outside and wallboard inside, so it cannot be seen without breaking into a wall. The building faces east, so a transom might have been less important for its usual positive function as a source of light than it would be as an undesirable source of heat loss. The only other change to the front facade is that the original central entry doors have been removed and replaced with a compatible smaller door flanked with compatible infill. The original double doors are stored in the building.

The band above the store windows is topped by a wood molding. A similar molding at the cornice line projects slightly to each side of the front facade. The building's windows are the original double-hung one over ones wood sash windows. The display windows in the storefront are also the wood-frame originals. The gabled roof of the building is covered with white asphalt shingles.

At the back of the building is a shed-roof board and batten addition which was, the owner estimates, added around 1932. The addition's foundation is covered with tarpaper. The addition has a corrugated metal roof.

See continuation sheet

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance  
1913-1938

Significant Dates  
1913

\_\_\_\_\_  
Commerce  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A

Significant Person  
N/A

Architect/Builder  
unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Lemoine Building is significant within the context of Northern Minnesota Lumbering and is related to the settlement of Gheen as a type of townsite associated with logging operations in northern St. Louis County. The LeMoine Building is a historical representative of a once-common turn-of-the-century building type of which there are very few remaining examples in former lumber towns in northern Minnesota. The LeMoine Building is the most intact building in Gheen and derives its significance, in part, from the significance of the townsite.

According to the context of Northern Minnesota Lumbering developed by the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, townsite development in northern Minnesota followed the logging/lumber industry's northward expansion and the agricultural settlement of the cutover lands. Townsites were of two types: 1) those initially developed as centers of logging/lumbering activity and 2) those that developed primarily as agricultural trade and service centers. The unincorporated town of Gheen had its beginnings in the family of Thomas Pierce Gheen, an eastern man who moved to Taylors Falls when it was Minnesota Territory. Thomas fought and died in the Civil War, but not before fathering two sons: William Atkin Gheen and Stephen Gheen. The Gheen brothers came to northern Minnesota in 1888 and homesteaded the area around the portage of Elbow River in 1890, three miles east of what is now the town of Gheen. A government store/ trading post and farm was established here and Stephen Gheen was the Indian Agent and farmer/teacher until around 1900. The Indians were the Bois Forte (Strong Wood), presumably, from what is now the Nett Lake Reservation to the northwest of Gheen. According to his son, John Wesley Gheen, William Gheen had a falling-out with his brother, Stephen, and William moved three miles southwest to what is now Gheen, building the Willow Valley's first sawmill and a store on the townsite of Gheen. Warren Upham's Minnesota Geographic Names mistakenly attributes the name of the town to a Rear Admiral in the Navy, instead of to William Aiken Gheen, the first settler of the townsite.

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

LeMoine Building, St. Louis County, MN

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Real settlement around the Gheen vicinity in Willow Valley did not materialize until around 1903, and then only a handful of less than 20 families established homesteads. Gheen was simply a crossroads with one store, a sawmill, and a few houses. In 1909, the town was platted by a Minneapolis lawyer. Around 1908-09, Gheen was the rail head for a year of the Duluth, Winnipeg and Pacific Railroad and the town had a large encampment of Indian teepees, lumber camp buildings, and settlers frame and log homes. Around 1916, the town name was changed to Alvina, but was changed back to Gheen around 1923 when William Gheen became postmaster and insisted the town go back to its original name as a condition of his employment.

Today, there are only ten buildings left at the townsite. The most notable, visible, and the one with greatest architectural integrity is the LeMoine Building. It is also the only remaining commercial building remaining in the town. In 1912, two brothers, Fred and Felix LeMoine, applied for a patent from the State of Minnesota, which they filed in 1914. Originally, they built the building as a grocery store and maintained living quarters in the back of the building. From about 1916-1919, the LeMoines operated the post office in the building. The upstairs was used as a dance hall. There were three groceries in Gheen and competition was fierce, so the LeMoines moved to Cook in 1920, building another building there which became a bus stop, lunch counter, and hotel. They rented their building in Gheen to the school district and the LeMoine Building was used as a school from 1920 to about 1927. The building survived a fire in Gheen in the Spring of 1930, when most of the business blocks in the town burned. A Mr. Neagbour bought the building from the LeMoines in 1930 and operated a grocery there during the 1930s and 1940s. In 1929 or 1930, the General Log Division of Northwest Paper began a large pulpwood logging operation in the area with a log yard and offices at Gheen. General Log was eventually bought out by Potlatch Corporation, who moved their operations to Cook around 1980, thus completing the decline of Gheen. A recent owner, Arline Abrahamson, was told by a Supervisor of the Master Bread Company that when General Log operated out of Gheen in the 1930s, the Neagbour store was the largest bread account they had.

The Abrahamsons have operated the Gheen post office out of the LeMoine Building since 1974 when they purchased the building from Neagbour. Gheen is located off the main highway, #53, between Virginia and International Falls and the county will not allow signs directing the way to the store. Consequently, several plans for the building have fallen through. The owner has a buyer who wishes to move the building to Cusson: The Reverend Arthur Dale, who is interested in re-building the Cusson townsite and would like to use the LeMoine Building for a theater. The LeMoine building is the last intact structure in Gheen and should be considered endangered.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Abstract of Title of subject property.

Aguar, Charles E.. Exploring St. Louis County Historical Sites. A special Services Project of Aguar Jyring Whiteman Moser, Inc. Duluth: St. Louis County Historical Society, 1971, 34.

John Wesley Gheen. Taped interview, April, 1987, by Reynold Holmer for the Iron Range Historical Society. In possession of Iron Range Historical Society, Gilbert, Minnesota.

Letter from Arline Abrahamson to Joe Roberts, September 9, 1987.

Unnamed clipping dated May 19, 1936 in "Gheen File." Iron Range Historical Society, Gilbert, Minnesota.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A 

1	5
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5	1	3	1	9	5
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5	3	1	2	6	0	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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B 

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Zone Easting Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies City Lots 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10, Block 13, plat of Gheen.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the five city lots that have historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Drs. Joe and Norene Roberts  
organization Historical Research, Inc. date November 4, 1987  
street & number 7800 Tessman Drive telephone (612) 560-4348  
city or town Minneapolis state Minnesota zip code 55445-2734