National Inventor

OMB No. 1024-0018 Exp. 10-31-84

national Fo	ark Service	For	For NPS use only	
Nation Invento		received JUL 1 8 1985 date entered AUG 1 5 19 8		
See instructio	-	National Register Forms		
1. Nan	ne			
istoric Samue	1 Thompson Dickson	House		
and/or common	N/A			
2. Loc	ation			
street & numbe	r 225 SouthWest T	hird Street	<u> </u>	V/A not for publication
city, town Cha	atfield	$\underline{N/A}$ vicinity of		
state Minr	nesota co	de 22 county	Fillmore	code 045
3. Clas	ssification			
Category district M building(s) structure site object	Ownership public X private both Public Acquisition M/A in process N/A being considered	Status Xoccupied unoccupied work in progress Accessible yes: restricted yes: unrestricted Xno	Present Use agriculture commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	museum park x private residence religious scientific transportation other:
4. Owr	ner of Prope	erty		
name John	and Alice Flick			
treat 9 mumber	225 SouthWest T	hird Street		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
treet & number		N/A minimizer of	N/A vicinity of state Minnesota	
street & number city, town Chat	field	M/A VICINITY OF	31010	MINNESOLA

street & number Main Street

city, town Preston state Minnesota

Representation in Existing Surveys 6.

title Minnesota Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes _X_ no

August, 1980 date

Minnesota Historical Society-Ft. Snelling History Center depository for survey records

St. Paul city, town

state Minnesota

X state ____ county _

___ local

federal

3. Class

Description

ľ

Condition		Check one
X_excellent	deteriorated	X_ unaltered
good	ruins	altered
fair,	unexposed	

Check one X__ original site moved date

N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Sam T. Dickson Mill House is a square, two and a half story residence built of locally manufactured brick. It is built into a slope near Mill Creek in Chatfield allowing its basement to be open to the street on the Third Street side. It suffered no major structural changes or remodelings during its 120 year history and all of its architectural features have been resored in recent work.

Windows and doors are placed symetrically and spaced evenly. On the first and second levels front, doors at the center are flanked by six over six muntined windows, one to each side of each door. A six over six muntined window is centered in the gabled side (the third half story) facing the street and on the opposite side of the structure.

A dormer in the roof facing east and a small one story wing on the basement or first level on the west side of the building has been preserved.

Chimney flues discovered during restoration work on either side of the center windows and doors on the street side and opposite side of the building have been preserved though they are no longer used. Research prior to restoration indicated that the building probably never had fireplaces but the symetrical arrangement of rooms inside allowed access to a flue in each room. The flues were brought together at the peak on each gable end. The chimney stacks on each gable end have been restored.

The home's two porches, both on the street side, have been restored. The first is an extension of the roof line on the small one story west side wing. The other is a small porch providing shelter for the main basement entrance at the center and providing a walk out area for a second story door at the center of the building.

All gabled roof lines are original.

Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 X. 1800–1899 1900–	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric archeology-historic agriculture architecture art commerce communications	community planning landscape architecture reli conservation law scie economics literature scue education military soc engineering music hur x industry politics/government transpondent	ence Ilpture
Specific dates	1863	Builder/Architect N/A	

1863

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Sam T. Dickson Mill House is commercially and industrially significant as the home of Samuel Thompson Dickson, owner of the Nonpariel Flour Mill, which was located near the house, and the North Branch Flour Mill, located about one and one-half miles south of the NonPariel on the North Branch of the Root River.

Thomas B. Twiford, an organizer of the Chatfield Land Company which founded Chatfield in 1853 and encouraged its settlement in the spring of 1854, built a sawmill in 1854 which was converted and expanded into a flour mill when it was acquired by Sam Dickson in 1855. The completed three-story frame structure was named the Nonpariel (i.e. unrivaled or having no equal). It was powered by means of a mill race cut between two points on Mill Creek just above the creek's junction with the Root River and later, during winter months, with a steam engine.

Little is known of Dickson's life before arriving in Chatfield in 1855 and after leaving in the 1890s. It is known, however, that Dickson, a native of Sangamon County Illinois, arrived in Chatfield with \$2,000 which he promptly and successfully invested in land speculation. He acquired the mill, improved it and did a profitable business.

As an example, in one year in the 1860s the mill realized a profit of \$90,000. A third of it was paid to the miller in charge in keeping with the terms of a prior The remainder was retained by Dickson. He dismissed the miller and from agreement. then on hired millers at a salary of only \$50 a month, gaining considerably by the new arrangement. The mill house, built in 1863, with its simple unembellished design and still sound construction, stands alone as solid evidence of Dickson's success and thrift.

In 1873, as half-owner, he built the North Branch Flour Mill in partnership with two other men. It went into production early in 1874 and was soon turning out 150 barrels of flour every twenty-four hours. After three years, the mill's capacity was doubled.

In 1837, Dickson acquired full ownership of the North Branch Flour Mill but from then on operated it only intermittently. With local agriculture already diversified, flour prices falling, and Minneapolis mills dominating the flour market, both of Dickson's mills were soon no longer the source of easy profits they once had been.

Major Bibliographical References 9.

THE CHOSEN VALLEY by Margaret Snyder, W.W.Norton & Co., New York; 1948 HISTORY OF FILLMORE COUNTY by Rev. Edward D. Neill, Mn Historical Co., Mpls, 1882 EMMA CHERMAK DIARY by Emma Chermak;

HILDA BREKKE PRIVATE COLLECTION by Hilda Brekke, Chatfield, Mn, 1863

10. Geographical Data

GPO 894-788

Acreage of nominated property <u>Less than one</u> Quadrangle name <u>Chatfield Quad</u> . UT M References	Quadrangle scale7.5						
A 1 5 5 6 5 0 4 0 4 8 5 4 5 6 0 Zone Easting Northing	B Image: Second sec						
	$ \begin{array}{c} P \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} \\ F \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ F \end{bmatrix} \\ F \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ F \end{bmatrix} \\ F \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ F \end{bmatrix} \\ F \end{bmatrix} \\ F $						
Verbal boundary description and justification Lots 8-9-10, Block 38, Villare (now city) of Chatfield; also beginning at S Corner of said Bl 38 in Chatfield, thence S 45 deg. W 200 ft; thence N 19½ deg W 122 ft; thence N 7¼ deg, W 240 ft to W Cor of Bl 38 aforesaid; thence s 45 deg E 300 ft to place of beginning, containing 3/4 acre, more or less List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries							
state N/A code N/A	county N/A code N/A						
state N/A code N/A	county N/A code N/A						
11. Form Prepared By							
name/title Brett J Kruempel, City Historia	an						
organization Chatfield Historical Society	date September, 1984						
street & number 413 SouthEast Main Street	telephone 507-867-3870						
clty or town Chatfield	state Minnesota 55923						
12. State Historic Prese	rvation Officer Certification						
The evaluated significance of this property within the sta	ate is: X_ local						
665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the							
title Russell W. Fridley State Historic Preservation Off	data 6/27/85						
For NPS use only I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register Entered in the National Register date 8-15-85							
V Keeper of the National Register	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·						
Attest: Chief of Registration	date						

NPS Form 10-900-a (3-82)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Samuel Thompson Dickson House, Chatfield, Fillmore County, MN Continuation sheet Statement of Significance Item number 8

In 1874, the State Geologist reported thirty-two flour mills on the Root River and its affluents, sixteen of them within twenty miles of Chatfield. In 1878, the Minneapolis Tribune (April 15) cited thirty-seven flour mills in Fillmore County with a total of 151 run of stone.

Before the world price plummeted in 1882, repeated wheat crop failures in the Chatfield area had forced local agriculturists to diversify thus saving them from the worst effects of slavery to a one-crop system but also bringing to a close the heyday of flour milling in the area which had lasted nearly thirty years and made "Uncle Sam" Dickson a wealthy and influential owner of flour mills.

There were few sole owners of more than one flour mill in the area and of those, only Dickson was exclusively engaged in milling and wheat buying. Two large barns, which then stood between the house and mill, provided ample storage for the purchased grain. A spur line of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad, completed in 1878, ran between the mill and the mill house and barns and terminated there at the centerpiece of Chatfield's industrial development in the flour milling period.

The frame barns eventually fell into disrepair and were removed. The spur railroad line was entirely discontinued and the tracks removed within the last twenty years.

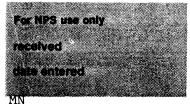
Dickson retired to California in the 1890s. The Nonpariel Mill property was first rented and then, after Dickson's death, sold at auction. In 1903, while the mill was being remodeled by its new owner, it caught fire, burned to the ground, and was not replaced. Yearly floods washed away the debris and filled the mill race.

The North branch Flour Mill was acquired by the Chatfield Electric Light and Power Company in the 1890s and was used to provide the community with its first source of electricity. The power generated there was limited, however. It soon could not meet the growing demand and other sources were found.

The North Branch buildings were dismantled and removed. What was left was swept away by floods. The mill dam survived some years longer but then succumbed to the floods also.

Chatfield's third mill, the Elmira Flour Mill, was located one and one-half miles northwest of the Nonpariel on Mill Creek. It was originally owned in equal partnership by Dickson and James M. Cussons. Cussons purchased Dickson's interest by the mid-1870s and became the mill's sole owner.

The Elmira Flour Mill continued to be used until before the First World War, though



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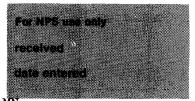
eventually only for grinding livestock feed. The mill was abandoned before the War's finish, the frame structure was not maintained, and successive floods damaged the foundation. Today, only a few of the stones remain to mark where the mill once stood.

The Cussons mill house, nearby, was substantially altered, added to, and remodeled over the years. Though still standing, it bears little resemblance to its original appearance.

The Sam T. Dickson Mill House, on the other hand, suffered no major and few minor alterations during the 120 years between its construction and its recent restoration. The house's original appearance remained intact, acquiring only a worn look in recent years while the structure itself remained sound.

Mills stand in Rushford, Lanesboro, and in Sumner Township in Fillmore County and at Simpson in Olmsted County. Mill houses also stand at the Rushford and Simpson (Fugel's) mills providing only scant physical evidence of a once extensive and thriving industry in the region.

The Sam T. Dickson Nill House, as the excellently restored home of a major owner of flour mills in the region, is therefore a rare and valuable survivor and the best representative structure from the flour milling period in the Chatfield area history.





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