

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only

received OCT 10 1979

date entered DEC 5 1979

1. Name T.J. Walker Historic District

historic

and/or common

2. Location

street & number W Steigeme Rte. not for publication

city, town Fort Ransom vicinity of congressional district 1

state North Dakota code 38 county Ransom code 073

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name See continuation sheet

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds, Ransom County

street & number County Courthouse

city, town Lisbon state North Dakota 58054

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The T.J. Walker Historic District is a complex of structures associated with pioneer miller and merchant Tyler James Walker. The District includes a mill building and adjacent dam remains, a 1953 dam, a store building, a residential structure, a large barn, and an ice storage building. The structures are located near the Sheyenne River on a tract of 9.25 acres.

Mill

The focal point of the District is the Walker Mill, a single-story wood frame structure with parapet walls on three sides and a single-slope roof. The 30-foot square building is constructed of heavy wood beams joined in mortise-and-tenon fashion with wooden pegs, sheathed in random-width board nailed diagonally. The exterior is sheathed in stamped metal siding, and a slight dripline extends from the top of the facade or south side.

Fenestration is limited to the south and west elevations. The south side contains four bays: a double door to facilitate use of the interior as a garage; a simple paneled pedestrian door; and two rectangular fixed windows between the doors, with lower portions closed with plywood. The west elevation has two six-over-six double hung windows. Other original window bays have been closed but are evident in interior wall construction; the building apparently originally had three bays on the south side, two bays on the east and north, and an unknown arrangement on the west elevation.

The mill building is set on a foundation of large uncut native stone mortared with concrete. The stone walls are about three feet thick and are nine feet high from floor to sills of the upper structure. The walls are broken on the north where a drive shaft from the water turbines entered and on the east where a drive shaft from a steam engine entered the building. The break in the north wall was closed with concrete block in the 1960's, and the east wall opening was sealed with stone and concrete probably in the 1920's. The basement contains an intact shaft with drive pulleys, an intact heavy timber frame that supported the millstones, and a concrete slab with fittings for an electric dynamo that could be connected by belts to the intact shaft, and could be driven by either the water turbines or a steam engine. The interior of the upper level is occupied in a single room containing a fanning mill, fire doors from the original steam engine, and various other machinery and hardware associated with the milling and electrical generating activities in the building.

Other machinery lies to the immediate south and east of the building, including a mill roller, one mill stone, and the boiler of the original Paige steam engine. A depression to the immediate north of the building is believed to have been the site of a feed mill that was operated in conjunction with the flour mill. The feed mill is believed to have been demolished in the 1920's, when the flour mill building was also reduced from two stories to one. Lumber from the feed mill is believed to have been used in construction of a frame storage building that is now to the south of the flour mill building. To the east and northeast of the mill are foundation remains of the turbine and flume assembly,

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The buildings and structures of the T.J. Walker Historic District comprise a unique example of the industry and commerce of North Dakota's initial rural settlement. The Walker Mill is the only known remaining water-driven mill building in the state, of an estimated twenty such mills built between 1875 and 1900, and is representative of the milling technology of that era. The mill was also the point around which the village of Fort Ransom grew, and together with the natural beauty of the location the mill apparently sustained the viability of the townsite when it was by-passed by railroad construction in the 1880's. The industriousness and prominence of T.J. Walker in the local community in the years 1880 to 1919 were reflected in his substantial store building, the ice house, and in his residence of relatively rich materials and detail for the area.

Tyler James Walker came to Dakota Territory in 1879 with his father and a brother, who established flour mills at Valley City and near present Kathryn, North Dakota. In the fall of 1880 Walker established a claim to the present site and began construction of a two-story frame building with full basement. Initially a 40 horsepower vertical water turbine and two millstones were installed, but about 1885 a second turbine of 20 horsepower and three more millstones were added. Also about 1885 a Paige steam engine was installed to the east of the mill building to supply power when low or high water in the river precluded operation of the turbines. At an unknown date a roller mill and fanning mill were installed to increase the capacity and efficiency of the first mill. A feed mill was built to the north of the flour mill building to supply ground feed for livestock. The feed mill burned about 1914 and was rebuilt; this mill was demolished in 1971. In 1906 Walker added a third turbine of ten horsepower; this one to power an electric dynamo in the basement of the flour mill. The dynamo provided the first electrical lighting in the area to Walkers mill, store, and house, and later to other buildings in the village.

The present Walker store building was constructed in 1907-08 to replace the original 1881 frame store building, and remained in operation until 1964. A local institution of more than mercantile importance, the Walker stores housed the first and only bank in town from 1906 to about 1910, and also housed the local post office during Democratic administrations in 1893-97 and 1913-19. Walker sold iced fresh produce in his store, and also sold ice cut in winter from the pond behind the dam and stored in the ice house built about 1907. Although the present dam was built in 1953, it is contributory to the district because it is built on the approximate location of the mill dam and it maintains a visual quality once created by the original dam and millrace.

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(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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Alice Bjone
Rural Route
Verona, ND 58490

Harold Olson
245 South Central Avenue
Valley City, ND 58072

R.D. Larsen
Fort Ransom, ND 58033

Alan Larsen
Lisbon, ND 58054

Howard Hoff
Lisbon, ND 58054

Curt Sorly
Fort Ransom, ND 58033

Allen Rasmussen
Fort Ransom, ND 58033

Dale J. Anderson
Harwood, ND 58042

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and a deep ditch marks the former course of the millrace. Concrete and stone remains of at least two historic dams across the Sheyenne River are also present. A low structure of reinforced concrete, built in 1953 by the State Game and Fish Department, now impounds the river at the approximate location of earlier dams.

Walker Store

The Walker general store is to the west of the mill building, and is a two-story structure with hipped roof. The lower level of the building is set into the hillside rising to the west, and the north, south, and west walls are constructed of quarry faced random fieldstone mortared with concrete. The facade or east side of the lower level is constructed in pier-and-spandrel fashion of poured concrete. Ten bays are arranged symmetrically on the facade, in eight window and two door openings. Window bays contain six-pane rectangular windows in fixed frames; the southernmost bay is closed with plywood. Door bays contain double doors, with corresponding double transoms separated by light mullions.

The upper level of the store is of wood frame construction sheathed in clapboard. Fenestration is double hung windows in two groups of three bays on the facade and west elevations, and two single bays on the north end. A door at the center of the south end is served by a stone stoop, and another door near the northwest corner on the north end is served by an exterior wooden landing and stair. An gabled frame original outhouse that served the store and the Walker residence is to the west of the store.

The interior of the lower level is contained in one room, and now houses the museum collections of the Ransom County Historical Society. The lower level retains original wall treatments, wood trim, floors, and some original merchandise display cases. The original banistered stair with turned newel-posts remains intact. The upper level was also originally occupied in merchandise display and as living quarters for the miller's assistant. The living quarters are a row of three rooms along the north wall that are finished in original and period furniture of 1900-1930. The former merchandise display area is now occupied in museum display of sundry collections of historic and prehistoric artifacts. The display room has been significantly altered in 1975 by application of paneling to walls and the installation of a dropped ceiling.

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Walker Home

The Walker residence is a two-story T-plan gabled wood frame structure with Queen Anne elements including irregular massing and textural contrast in exterior materials. The house is set on a concrete foundation with a partial basement, and has gabled and shed frame additions on the east, south, and west elevations. The south gable end includes a two-story semihexagonal bay window with exposed members and diagonal siding that contrasts with the horizontal lap siding found throughout other exterior walls. A course of wooden pendants adorns the eaves of the hipped roof of this window bay, and above the bay roof is a sunrise motif in radiating lap siding that fills the gable end. A similar treatment is applied to the gable end of the main entrance addition on the east side, where the pendant decoration is attached to moldings immediately beneath the sunrise motif. Fenestration is irregular in location, and is generally one-over-one or two-over-two double hung rectangular windows. One original window of the facade ground level has a stained glass transom over a rectangular clear window.

The house interior has been extensively altered at unknown dates, including remodeling of the kitchen, installation of a bathroom, and application of wall paper and ceiling acoustical tile. Original interior details are a stair with grooved balusters and a turned newel-post, beaded wall board, and four-panel doors with ornate metal knobs and escutcheons, and most woodwork. The house has been vacant since 1959, but is being maintained by the Ransom County Historical Society who intend a restoration to original furnishings and detail.

Barn

The Walker barn is to the north of the house, and is a gabled two-story building of frame and masonry construction. The lower level walls are set into the hill rising to the west, and are constructed of quarry-faced fieldstone mortared with concrete. A single wide door opens at the center of the east side, and a course of small rectangular windows in three bays is at the top of the stone level on the east elevation. The upper level is constructed of heavy wood beams joined in mortise-and-tenon fashion and fixed with wooden pegs. The exterior is sheathed with vertical board painted red. The upper level is accessible through a double door at the center of the west elevation, where the floor is at ground level. Above this door is a mow door that can be lowered to allow ventilation or movement of hay into the building by means of a pulley and track system.

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The interior of the upper level is occupied in a single space without interior wall sheathing. Portions of the heavy plank floor were replaced in 1975. The lower level is occupied in stanchions once used for milking cows, and in small stall areas. Heavy upright beams support the floor above, and original hardware remains throughout the barn. The building now contains a small collection of obsolete or antique farm machinery. A concrete and stone foundation adjoining the south side of the barn is the remains of the Walker poultry house. The barn was partially re-roofed with plywood sheets covered with asphalt roll roofing in 1975.

Ice House

An ice storage building operated by the Walker family is to the northwest of the barn, near the west bank of the Sheyenne River. The pyramidal-roofed frame building is sheathed in fitted lap siding, as is a shed-roofed addition. The pyramidal roof is surmounted with a lowered cupola with bellcast finial, constructed to allow escape of warm, moist air from the ice house. A single door enters on the east side of the structure, facing the river. The ice house has not been used or maintained for several years, and is now in deteriorated or ruin condition.

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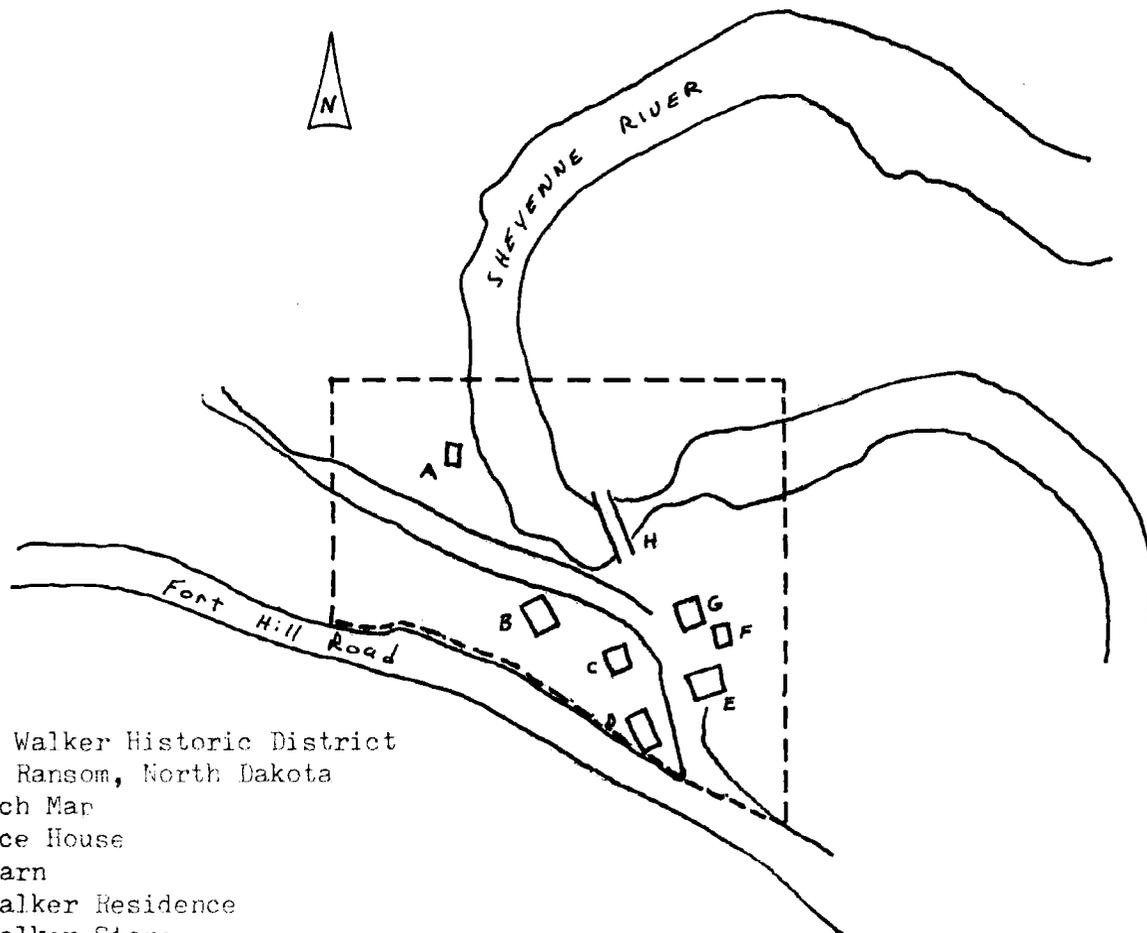
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Commencing at a point 2400 feet due south of the common corner of Sections, 1, 2, 11, and 12, T.135N; R58W., this point being on the section line between Sections 11 and 12, T.135N; R58W.; thence due westward 600 feet to a point; thence due southward about 350 feet to a point on the northern boundary of a county roadway known as the Fort Hill Road; thence along said Fort Hill Road in a southeasterly direction to the section line common to Sections 11 and 12, T.135N; R58W.; thence due northward along said section line to the point of beginning. All of the above is within Section 11, T.135N; R58W., and contains about 9.25 acres in total.



T.J. Walker Historic District

Fort Ransom, North Dakota

Sketch Map

A. Ice House

B. Barn

C. Walker Residence

D. Walker Store

E. Former Walker Store, no longer on site

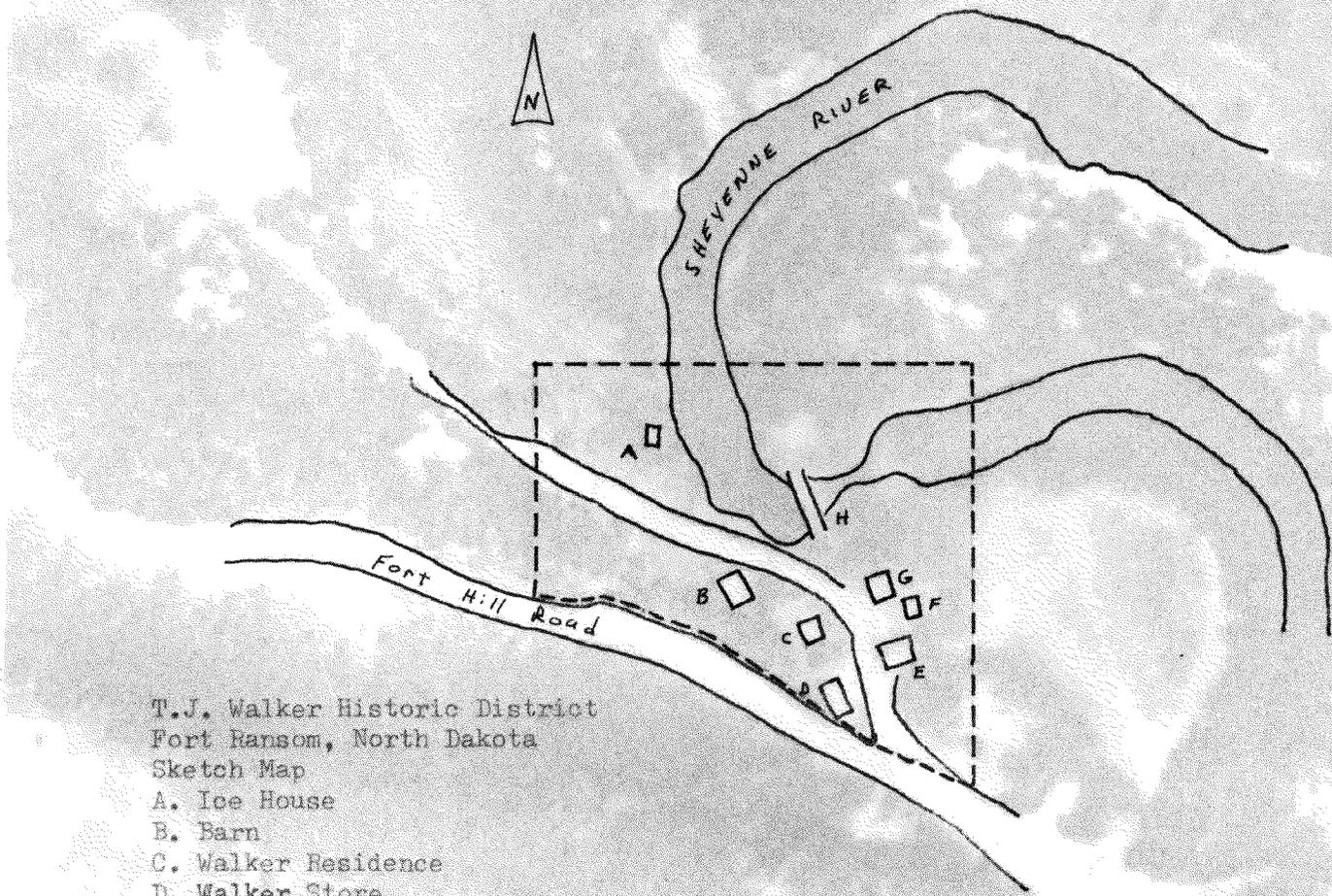
F. Storage building

G. Walker Four Mill

H. Dam

Approximate district boundaries delineated by broken line.

Sketch map corresponds to accompanying aerial photo; scale undetermined.



T.J. Walker Historic District
Fort Ransom, North Dakota
Sketch Map

- A. Ice House
- B. Barn
- C. Walker Residence
- D. Walker Store
- E. Former Walker Store, no longer on site
- F. Storage building
- G. Walker Four Mill
- H. Dam

Approximate district boundaries delineated by broken line.
Sketch map corresponds to accompanying aerial photo; scale undetermined.