

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED NOV 22 1977
DATE ENTERED APR 26 1978

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME **

HISTORIC

Robert S. Vessey House

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

118 College Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Wessington Springs

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2nd

STATE

South Dakota

VICINITY OF

CODE
046

COUNTY
Jerauld

CODE
073

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Lawrence Myers

STREET & NUMBER

118 College Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Wessington Springs

VICINITY OF

STATE

South Dakota

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Jerauld County Courthouse - Register of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Wessington Springs

STATE

South Dakota

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

South Dakota Historic Sites Survey

DATE

July 1976

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Historical Preservation Center

CITY, TOWN

Vermillion

STATE

South Dakota

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 Robert S. Vessey House in Wessington Springs is a two story, three bay long and two bay wide Dutch Colonial house. Vessey had this house constructed around 1906 and situated it on a slightly terraced corner lot. The front and two sides display a symmetrical design only the rear facade is erratic.

The house has a rectangular floor plan, a gambrel roof and a combination of clapboard and shingle facings. There are few exterior alterations with the exception of a portion of the front porch is now screened.

One of the front facade's most interesting features is its porch; this is because it gives the structure a deep shaded affect. The square shaped pillars support the porches flat roof which also covers two bay windows. Three dormers spring from the roof; one is windowless and triangular with a pent roof which covers three double hung windows. Flanking this are two hip roofed dormers.

The north facade has four openings, two on each floor, while the south facade has a corner bay window and coupled windows on the first floor while the second floor openings are similar to the north facade. Almost all the fenestrations are flat topped with slipsills; several have an arcade like muntin design in the toplight.

The rear facade has an extension back from the house which covers half of the posterior wall; according to local sources this is original. A rear entry and a hip dormer are also present on the west facade.

NO. 12-10-1900 111-11-1900 111-11-1900

111-11-1900

111-11-1900

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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1906-1910

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Robert S. Vessey House represents two areas of significance: architecture and government. Architecturally its Swedish-Dutch Colonial appearance makes it one of the better examples of every twentieth century architecture in Wessington Springs. Politically the structure is important for it housed Vessey when he was elected governor in 1908.

Vessey came to South Dakota from Wisconsin in 1883 and established squatters rights on a piece of land near Wessington Springs. Along with his brothers he established over the coming years a profitable business in a general merchandise store and land speculation. At this time Vessey showed little interest in politics, but this changed in the next decade.

Vessey during the 1890's and early 1900's became one of the states most respected legislators. He exposed progressivism and is responsible for getting much of this legislation through, especially those that involved moral issues. He was one of the key leaders in the progressive movement, probably only second to Coe I. Crawford who was the initial Republican against the old guard or stalwarts of the party.

In 1908 Vessey was the overwhelming choice for governor in the general election, but the primary battle helped to widen the gap in the Republican party. However in 1910 his re-election did bring the two divergent sides closer together; this was because George Egan ran as an independent Republican during the primary and almost won. This "Egan scare" made both sides of the party realize that they had better mend their differences.

As governor, Vessey kept his programs on the progressive side but most of the radical changes had occurred during the Crawford administration. However he was responsible for the first game warden and fostered the establishment of a Game, Fish and Parks Program. Vessey was probably more influential as a legislator and a member of his party than he was governor.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9

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Karolevitz, Robert F., Challenge: The South Dakota Story. Sioux Falls, South Dakota: Sioux Printing, Inc., 1975. viii pp. 323, Illus., Biblio., Index.

Klundt, August, personal interview, Wessington Springs, 15 August 1976 with Scott Gerloff.