

NPS Form 10-900  
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(Approved 3/87)

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NATIONAL  
REGISTER

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

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. Use letter quality printer in 12 pitch, using an 85 space line and a 10 space left margin. Use only archival paper (20 pound, acid free paper with a 2% alkaline reserve).

1. Name of Property

historic name Vertefeuille, Francois, House

other names/site number N/A

2. Location Highway K, 3.5 tenths of a mile south of the intersection

street & number of K with Limery Road N/A Not for Publication

city, town Town of Prairie du Chien N/A vicinity

state Wisconsin code WI county Crawford code 023 zip code 53821

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1	0
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		objects
		1	0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

No. of contributing resources  
previously listed in the  
National Register None

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. \_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

[Signature] \_\_\_\_\_ Date 1/22/93  
Signature of certifying official  
State Historic Preservation Officer-WI  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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. Patrick Andrus 3/18/93  
\_\_\_ 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:)  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions  
(enter categories from instructions)  
Domestic - Single Dwelling

Current Functions  
(enter categories from instructions)  
Vacant

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Materials

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: Log House

foundation Limestone

walls Log

Mortar

roof Shake

other Wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Francois Vertefeulle house is located in the Town of Prairie du Chien in Crawford County, Wisconsin. It is situated on Highway K, 1.2 miles north of the municipal limits of the City of Prairie du Chien. Highway K was historically called Frenchtown Road, indicating the cultural and geographical disposition of the area in which the Vertefeulle house is sited. The structure was part of a small 19th century nuclear village of dwelling lots located along the east bank of the Mississippi River, called the Upper Village of Prairie du Chien. All of the homes on these lots in the Upper Village historically faced Frenchtown Road, across from which were farm lots, some of which were held in common. The Vertefeulle house is in the extreme northeast corner of Upper Village Lot No. 4. The structure faces the road and has at its back the Mississippi River. Upper Village Lot No. 4 historically contained 7.51 acres, but after several subdivisions, the property attached to the Vertefeulle House is presently 0.21 acres. The house is the only structure located on the present property and on the original extent of the land historically associated with the house.

X See continuation sheet

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The Vertefeuille house is a side-gabled, one and a half story, double pier three bay wide structure. Constructed of hewn logs, it was built in two stages. The older section comprises the south two bays, in which is the front door; the addition is the north bay which contains the back door and a stairway to the second floor. The older section is the original house and was constructed circa 1810-1820; the addition was made after the house was acquired by Francois Vertefeuille, or circa 1820-1825.

The original house was composed of a single room on the first floor and the second floor loft. Under the front half of the original structure was a cellar pit with wood cribbing to support the walls. With the addition, one room was added to each floor. The overall size of the structure is 18 feet deep by 32 feet; the original house is 18 feet deep by 20 feet. The structure rests on a foundation of rough cut limestone laid up without mortar. The stones are set in a shallow trench less than a foot deep. Both sections are constructed of hewn timbers in a French-Canadian manner called piece sur piece en coulisse(1). The walls are built of horizontal timbers carefully hewn to measure on an average five inches deep by ten inches high: the piece sur piece. The timbers on all four sides of the original portion of the house and the north side of the addition run half the width of the wall and are joined together in the center by a colombage with coulisse. This is a hewn vertical post with a long mortise groove on two opposing sides. Tenons from the horizontal timbers fit into the grooves and are secured by pegs. As a result the timbers of the front and back facades of the original section are just under 10 feet long and the timbers composing the sides just under 9 feet. The front and back walls of the addition are composed of timbers 12 feet long. These timbers are joined into colombage with coulisse that butt up to and anchor onto the north corners of the original home. The corners of the original house and the addition are joined by half dovetail notching. A sand and lime mortar fills the horizontal spaces between the logs.

The front door utilizes the central vertical post as the south side of the opening. All four facades of the original house had a single window. Each, like the front door, utilize the central vertical post as one side of the window opening. The door, though, was framed by a second colombage with coulisse,

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while the windows were not. Rather, the end of the hewn timbers were squared and the window frame secured to the timbers with nails. With the construction of the addition, the window opening in the north facade was lengthened into a doorway. The log walls extend beyond the height of the first floor, forming hewn knee walls for the second floor loft. The roof rafters are notched to rest on the top plate of the front and back walls. The gable ends are framed with studs and covered with weatherboards. The northeast and southwest corners of the top plate of the original house had knee bracing tied into the plate with half-lap dovetails and wooden pegs. The rafters are nailed to the top plate and joined at the peak without a ridge pole. There are mortise slots in the top plate at the gable ends in the original house. This is indicative of an earlier elaborate gable end truss system with cross bracing and collar which fit into the plate and the end rafter. Found in Illinois French houses, this truss system was called faite au faite(2). Roof boards cover the rafters on the exterior and are covered in split wood shingles. The pitch of the roof is just under 45 degrees and ends in a coyau, a bell cast eve.

In the second quarter of the 19th century, work was done to the interior of the house to make it look like one building, not an earlier structure with an addition. The original ceiling joists in the first floor of the original house were removed, replaced by milled timbers and the overall height of the ceiling raised to conform with that of the addition. The replacement joists are those now in the house. Both the original ceiling joists and their replacements pierced the timbers on the front and back walls. The construction method used in the replacements is typical of piece sur piece, so a continuity was maintained. When the ceiling joists were raised, the front door opening was also raised. The floor joists were also replaced, but fitted into a summer beam which tied into the central coulisses in the front and back facades. The original summer beam is still in place. The floor boards date from the mid 19th century, as do the floor boards of the second floor. With the remodeling the first floor ceiling joists were left exposed. In piece sur piece construction, the ceiling joists were always left exposed, with the underside edges beaded. Though the milled timbers were not beaded, a continuity was again maintained with the French-Canadian building traditions by leaving the joists exposed. The mid-19th century exposed joists are presently

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part of the structure.

With the mid 19th century remodeling, the original roof rafters were removed. Perhaps it was at this time the corner knee braces and the gable end truss system were also removed. Milled rafters from this remodeling now stretch the length of the house, covered by roof boards and wooden shingles. At the same time a set of stairs to the second floor was built in the northwest corner of the addition. The exterior walls were covered with sawn boards nailed vertically to the hewn logs.

The surface of the interior walls was originally covered in a burnt lime plaster. Then between 1825 and 1850, split willow lath was nailed diagonally over the plaster and to the hewn timbers and all walls were again plastered. A replastering in the late 19th century was part of another remodeling. In this remodeling, the windows were replaced with one over one double hung sash. The vertical board siding was covered with sheets of tin pressed in a brick pattern. Thus the structure remained to the present.

In 1965 a devastating flood swept the upper Mississippi River valley. Over four feet of water filled the house, and it was abandoned. When acquired by the present owners, the house had not been touched since before 1965 and was still filled with the silt and residue of the flood and twenty five years of ~~01234~~ habitation by bats. The roof had fallen in several places. Moisture from the flood and seasonal elements had permeated the logs. To prevent further deterioration, the remainder of the roof was covered in tar paper, and to allow the moisture to escape, the successive layers of plaster and the tin and wood sidings were removed, thus exposing the hewn logs.

Though the Francois Vertefeuille house underwent some cosmetic remodeling in the second half of the 19th century, it is still prima-facie a piece sur piece en coulisse house of the first quarter of the 19th century. The frame of the building has remained unchanged in the one hundred and seventy five or so years since its erection. The window and door openings have not been relocated or removed. The replacement of the rafters, roof, ceiling joists, and floor boards which occurred subsequently were accomplished in the same manner as the original, with details even down to the pitch of the roof and the curve of the coyau retained. All, the early 19th century frame and the remodeling of the second half of the 19th

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century, remains presently intact. Only the tin siding and the one over one sash are not in keeping with piece sur piece construction techniques and elements.

Historically, the exterior walls of French-Canadian log houses in Prairie du Chien were covered with split bark or weatherboards(3). What the original covering on the Francois Vertefeuille house was has not been determined. Perhaps nothing covered the logs until the mid-19th century when the sawn boards were nailed vertically to the exterior walls of the house.

The windows may have always been double-hung, or perhaps were casement. The framing around the existing windows dates from the late 19th century. But the size of the window openings is in proportion to an opening for casement windows. That type of window is documented in French-Canadian piece sur piece homes in the Michigan Territory, of which Prairie du Chien became a part in 1805.(4)

Thus in its basic configuration, the Francois Vertefeuille house is a good and rare example of French Canadian piece sur piece en coulisse construction. This type of construction was documented at Prairie du Chien as early as 1805, as being the method in which the French-Canadians residents of the prairie constructed their homes.(5) It is this construction technique that makes the house an identifiable representation of the French-Canadian cultural heritage in the United States. And the fact the both the original part of the house and the addition are of this construction adds even more significance because it makes the house an even more rare example and documents in one structure the evolution of this architectural trait.(6)

Footnotes:

(1) Peter N. Moogk. Building a House in New France (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd, 1977), p. 35; and George Gauthier-Larouche. Evolution de la maison rurale traditionnelle dans la region de Quebec (Quebec: Les presses de l'Universite Laval, 1979), pp. 65-97; and Michel Lessard and Gilles Vilandre. Le Maison traditionnelle au Quebec (Montreal: Les Editions de l'homme, 1974), pp. 108-111.

(2) Gregory M. Franzwa. The Story of Old St. Genevieve (2nd ed. St. Louis: The Patrice Press, 1973), pp. 104, 107, 114,

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117, 118.

(3) Letter of March 5, 1808 from Nicholas Boilvin to the Secretary of War. Records of the War Department, (transcribed by Peter L. Scanlan. A copy is on file at the Karrmann Library, University of Wisconsin, Platteville).

(4) Dennis M. Au. "Standing for Two Centuries: The Navarre-Anderson Trading Post," Michigan History 73 (November/December, 1989), pp. 32-36.

(5) Elliot Coues, ed., Pike, Zebulon M. Expeditions to Headwaters of the Mississippi River during the Years 1805-06-07, 1896, p. 46 appendix.

(6) Dennis M. Au. Architectural Analysis of the Francois Vertefeulle House, October 1991. Report prepared for the owners of the Francois Vertefeulle house.

0123L



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)

Areas of Significance	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
Architecture	1810-1825	N/A
Exploration/Settlement		
Ethnic Heritage		

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person	Architect/Builder
N/A	Unknown

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

The Francois Vertefeuille house is significant to the history of the nation. It is being nominated under criterion C as a rare example of French colonial architecture associated with the fur trade period. It is also significant under criterion A as an indication of the Ethnic Heritage of the French-Canadians who conducted the business of the fur trade and the Exploration/Settlement in the Great Lakes region and the Northwest Territory. The Francois Vertefeuille house was constructed when the fur trade dominated the region and was

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the cause for settlement at Prairie du Chien. It was constructed by people for whom the fur trade was the means to their existence. As an example of French colonial architecture of the fur trade, the house is evidence of the French-Canadian heritage directly from Canada, and, at the same time, the house is evidence of a second French culture, several generations removed from Canada, which flourished in the upper Mississippi Valley in the 18th and early 19th centuries. This is Le Pays des Illinois, the French of the Illinois Country.

The construction, setting, and history of the people associated with the Francois Vertefeuille house all document the influence of and blending of these two French cultures, the fur trade, and events that led to the establishment of United States government in the upper Mississippi Valley. Therefore the house is significant not only to the history of the state and the region but to the history of the nation.

#### Historical Background

Prairie du Chien is a nine mile plain located north of the confluence of the Wisconsin and Mississippi rivers. As early as 1685 it was visited by the French explorer Nicolas Perrot. He established a "fort" on the prairie but as late as 1766, when Jonathon Carver visited the prairie, there seems to have been no permanent habitation on what he called "Prairie Les Chiens". Carver, a New Englander who was trading on the upper Mississippi, reported that the prairie was a place of rendezvous between French traders and American Indians, exchanging beaver and other pelts for manufactured goods(1).

Permanent settlement began in the 1770s by French people from the Illinois country who had travelled north to trade. The formal grant of land by the British governor at Michilimackinac in 1781 demonstrates that the majority of the early residents of Prairie du Chien were French from the Illinois Country(2). Others of those first residents of Prairie du Chien were French-Canadians from Quebec, and in the 1790s more Canadians would come to the prairie, where, by 1810 they formed the largest ethnic component of the community(3). Though Prairie du Chien became part of the Northwest Territory as a result of the American Revolution, the land was very much under British control because of the fur trade(4). As the century turned, more and more men settled at Prairie du Chien. Traders or voyageurs, all were from French-speaking Canada. By 1810, the Canadians were the dominant people in Prairie du Chien.

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The French culture prevailed at Prairie du Chien until the 1830s, when the region was opened for settlement by the United States(5).

With the relocation of the Indians to beyond the Mississippi River, the fur trade moved north and west. The furthest reaches of the old Northwest Territory were open to settlement by people from the East. The Canadian frontier established by the French and based on the fur trade, which had existed as far south as Arkansas(6), ceased to exist within the confines of the United States. One of the last communities to be established in this Canadian frontier concept had been Prairie du Chien, and with the opening of what was to be Wisconsin to white settlement, Prairie du Chien would cease to be a French-Canadian community. All that would remain of the French-Canadian fur trade culture which had once dominated the Northwest would be structures and patterns of land settlement(7).

#### Architectural Significance

The Francois Vertefeuille house in its general form of construction is close to the standard found in houses built in Quebec from the mid-18th to the 20th century(8). It is a story and a half structure with a gabled roof, the ridge running parallel to the front facade and the road. The door is in the center with windows placed on each side. The cellar is distinctive and similar to other homes in the Midwest associated with the fur trade. Dennis Au, in his report Architectural Analysis: The Francois Vertefeuille House, compares the structure to the Navarre-Anderson Trading Post and Francois Lasselle House in Monroe, Michigan, the McGulpin House in Mackinac, Michigan, and the Michel Broillet House in Vincennes, Indiana. All were structures owned by people of Canadian origin employed in the fur trade. With each of these, Mr. Au found similarities to the Francois Vertefeuille House in methods of construction(9).

The ratio of depth to width of homes in New France was 4:5(10); the ratio of depth to width in the original portion of the Vertefeuille House is 9:10, which fits within the definition of 4:5. While other cultures erected log homes, the method and size of the logs in the Francois Vertefeuille house makes this structure a tangible remnant of the French-Canadian culture that once dominated the upper Mississippi.

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The logs in the original structure and addition are hewed on an average of 5" by 10" high. Logs of this size are found on other documented log houses in the Midwest, per Dennis Au. The length of the timbers are significant; they are of a 10 foot module, consistent with 18th and 19th century French-Canadian carpentry traditions that the length of timbers in the front and back facades be in some module of 5 feet(11). The structure is therefore a good example of French-Canadian piece sur piece construction.

It is the vertical mortise posts, colombage with coulisse, which confirms the French-Canadian architectural importance of the Francois Vertefeuille house. The colombage with coulisse were perfected and extensively used in the 18th century by French-Canadians; colombage with coulisse are an element unique to French-Canadian carpentry. Because of the colombage with coulisse found in all four walls of the house, the hewn log structure is a piece sur piece type made only by people of French-Canadian culture.

The coulisse are also indicative of the age of the structure. The vertical mortise posts in the original structure show the hand of someone experienced in making coulisse. In the addition, this architectural element was less adeptly made. The original section was erected when French-Canadian construction techniques were still very viable, while the 0123 addition was made when these traditions were in decline. The fact the colombage with coulisse was used to frame both sides of only the door is significant. In the late 18th century they were used to frame all openings in structures found in the Midwest(12). Since the coulisse was found only on the door, it indicates that the house was built in the early 19th century. The size of the window openings indicate that the windows were double hung sash, probably not French casement, again another indication of early 19th century construction.

Several other construction details reference that the house is a French-Canadian structure. The central ceiling joist pierces the coulisse, typical of piece sur piece construction. The horizontal bracing in the corners of the top plate are unknown in English building traditions in North America, but documented in French buildings, including another structure in Prairie du Chien(13). The pitch of the roof is an important indicator of French-Canadian construction found on Quebec

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cottages of 1780 to 1845. The bell cast eve, coyau, is also a characteristic of Quebec homes.

Therefore on several counts the Francois Vertefeuille House is a rare example of vernacular architecture. The piece sur piece construction is the unique and important feature. That the original section of the house and the addition are both constructed in this method adds even more significance to the structure. It documents in one structure the evolution and continuance of this architectural trait over a period of time. Also, it is this construction technique that makes the house an identifiable representation of the French-Canadian cultural heritage of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

#### Setting Significance

The geographical siting of the Francois Vertefeuille house indicates the influence of the Illinois French culture in regions beyond the mid-Mississippi Valley. The French-Canadians who had settled on the east bank of the Mississippi just below St. Louis about 1700 had established six nucleated villages(14). These then were the Illinois French who came to Prairie du Chien in the second half of the 18th century. They were from two of these villages. They established at Prairie du Chien the same pattern of land management as they had known in Illinois. Three nucleated villages were established at Prairie du Chien close to the river. Common fields, with internal divisions, 01234 behind the villages and away from the river. The residents of the prairie owned a village lot upon which they lived, and a farm lot, which they cultivated or maintained as pasture in common(15). This pattern of land ownership and management of a nucleated village and unitary farm strips was characteristic of Pays des Illinois settlements. While found in the St. Louis region and to the south, this pattern of land settlement is found no where in French-speaking Canada or in the old French-Canadian settlements in the Great Lakes region. Only at Prairie du Chien, a settlement long associated with the Great Lakes fur trade, does this pattern of settlement occur(16).

The Francois Vertefeuille house is a tangible remnant of this pattern of settlement. It is located in the Upper Village, the last of the three nucleated villages established at Prairie du Chien. In this village were seven lots. The owners of the lots in the Upper Village also owned Farm Lots, cultivating

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the Farm Lot and residing on the Village Lot. In addition to Upper Village Lot No. 4, Francois Vertefeuille owned Farm Lot No. 21(17).

Of the various 18th century communities established in Wisconsin by French-speaking people, only Prairie du Chien was platted with nucleated villages and farm lots similar to those of French Illinois(18). The other French communities in Wisconsin and around the Great Lakes. All were layed out in long lots which ran from a body of water back. Each resident lived on the front of the long lot and farmed the back. There was no sense of village only unitary strips, and no need for a road to unite elements of the community.

The Francois Vertefeuille house documents this pattern of French Illinois land division and management unique in Wisconsin to Prairie du Chien. Not only does the house document a pattern of settlement unique to the Great Lakes region, of the seven houses which once existed in the Upper Village, the Francois Vertefeuille house is the only house still extant.

#### Historical Significance

The Francois Vertefeuille House is significant to the history of the nation for in the history of the people who were connected with the structure are all the components which document the political, economic, cultural, and social-political history of the formative years of the United States.

By the 1760s, as reported by Jonathon Carver, Prairie du Chien was the major fur trade center on the upper Mississippi River. In the 1770s a permanent settlement had begun on the prairie by people involved in the fur trade. In 1781, in response to their request, the British governor at Michilimackinac granted to the residents of Prairie du Chien ownership of the nine mile tract of the prairie. Two years later this settlement became part of the United States, yet in the Treaty of Greenville the United States was not sure of the existence of the community(19). Though part of the Northwest Territory, Prairie du Chien was under the economic control of the British fur trade. Great Britain carried on the fur trade in what it called the Indian Territory in defiance of the United States. British traders and their engages traversed the region and would continue to do so until 1816.

Thomas Anderson, a Canadian trader, reported that in 1801 the community of Prairie du Chien consisted of between ten and

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fifteen houses, with three farms at a distance of three miles(20). Four years later Zebulon Pike, the American explorer came to Prairie du Chien and would write that there were eighteen dwelling houses in two streets of the Main Village, eight houses in the Village of St. Friole, and eight houses scattered on the prairie(21). In 1811 Nicholas Boilvin, United States Indian Agent found thirty to forty house at Prairie du Chien(22). Then in 1816 James Lockwood, who came to trade at Prairie du Chien as an agent for the American Fur Company, found a trader's village of twenty-five to thirty houses(23). All who described the houses at Prairie du Chien said they were constructed in piece sur piece en coulisse. The population of the community at the time of these descriptions rose from 65 people in 1800 to 238 in 1810 to 361 in 1820, the latter with fifty-two heads of households. One of the households was headed by Francois Vertefeuille, who by 1820 was living on Upper Village Lot No. 4(24).

Though the settlement and buying and selling of land at Prairie du Chien had been going on since the 1770s, the legal ownership of the property was tenuous. The British governor had granted land at Prairie du Chien, but this grant had never been confirmed by the United States. In 1816 when the United States established Fort Crawford at Prairie du Chien, the commandant confiscated half of the Main Village for military use, ordering the houses on these lots to be moved. Fearful that all would loose their land, especially in light of the comment made by the Governor of Illinois Territory Ninian Edwards that he considered all the residents of the prairie traitors who should be banished, the residents of Prairie du Chien petitioned the United States to confirm them in the ownership of their homes. One of the signers of the petition was Francois Vertefeuille(25).

Francois Vertefeuille was from French-speaking Canada. As early as 1797, he engaged to work in the fur trade going to Michilimackinac(26). By 1809 he resided at Prairie du Chien. In that year Vertefeuille enclosed and improved Farm Lot No. 21(27). Vertefeuille like other engage turned from the debilitating physical demands of the fur trade to farming and made a home at Prairie du Chien. He supplemented his income with work for local traders. In 1815 he became embroiled in the political turmoil of the War of 1812.

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In the summer of 1814 in an attempt to secure the upper Mississippi Valley and the lucrative fur trade, the United States erected a fort at Prairie du Chien. The residents were forced to take sides, many participating in the British campaign which captured the fort. Most residents of Prairie du Chien made their livelihood in the fur trade, if not as a trader or an engage then as a farmer who supplied wheat and foodstuff for those who traded. The British controlled the fur trade in the upper Mississippi and Prairie du Chien was their major post on the upper Mississippi, so most of the residents of Prairie du Chien supported the British who provided their livelihood.

Within a month of the erection of the United States fort at Prairie du Chien, the British, supported by fur traders from Mackinac to Prairie du Chien, captured the fort and renamed it McKay. In 1815, while British forces controlled Prairie du Chien and the upper Mississippi, Vertefeuille was employed by the commandant of Fort McKay to go to Lake Pepin to shoot and salt fowl for the garrison(28).

The conclusion of the War of 1812 forced the British to leave Prairie du Chien and all United States territory. The residents finally were to be subjected to American rule. In 1816 several companies of United States infantry came to Prairie du Chien and the commandant instituted martial law. This action was the impetus for the petition by fifty-three residents.

0123L As one of the fifty-three petitioners, Vertefeuille wanted to gain title to his land in the Upper Village. Like everyone at Prairie du Chien, he had to prove continuous occupation of the lot since 1796. The United States Commissioner Isaac Lee sent to Prairie du Chien to take testimony on the claims of the residents, heard Vertefeuille's claim. Satisfactorily proving twenty years of continuous occupation of Upper Village Lot No. 4, the lot was granted to Francois Vertefeuille(29).

Francois Vertefeuille had not been the first owner of Upper Village Lot No. 4. The lot had originally been part of Farm Lot No. 15 directly across the road. This farm lot had first been occupied about 1799 by Marie Souligne. She had come to Prairie du Chien in the 1770s from the Illinois Country with her husband, who was a fur trader. She sold the land on which the Francois Vertefeuille House stands in 1817 to Joseph Rolette(30). By that time Rolette was the most prosperous trader in the community, owning several farm lots and village lots.



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Through a bad venture in the fur trade, Rolette was forced to sell all of his land to a former British trader, James Aird(31). Now working for the American Fur Company, Aird with this acquisition became the prosperous trader. It was from Aird's estate that Vertefeuille acquired his land. Between 1818 and 1820 the seven acres of Farm Lot No. 15 lying west of the road were sold to Francois Vertefeuille and became Upper Village Lot No. 4(32).

The scarcity of documents recording land transactions at Prairie du Chien between 1810 and 1820 has made it difficult to determine when the original portion of the Francois Vertefeuille House was built. As early as 1799 Marie Souligne had had a house constructed on Farm Lot No. 15. About 1815-16, she built a small house on the same property(33). This could be the Francois Vertefeuille House. The Vertefeuille house is small compared to most French-Canadian homes. The original structure had only one room per floor instead of two to four, which is most common in French-Canadian homes.

The north addition to the Francois Vertefeuille house would have been constructed after Vertefeuille acquired the property and possibly by Vertefeuille himself. The construction evidence indicates the person who did the work was not as skilled as the builder of the original portion. Vertefeuille was capable of erecting barns, but these did not require the skill of a house-builder(34). The logs were not placed as tightly together as in a house; the logs in the addition are loosely spaced, creating large random gaps.

Based upon this information, the Francois Vertefeuille house was built between 1810 and 1820, with the addition erected by Vertefeuille before he left Prairie du Chien in 1830.

With the original portion of the Vertefeuille house having been built between 1810 and 1820, it was then one of the homes delineated in the early descriptions of Prairie du Chien. And of the houses enumerated in Prairie du Chien prior to 1820, it would be one of the structures "scattered about the country, at a distance of one, two, three and five miles [from the Main Village]". The Francois Vertefeuille House is approximately 2.2 miles from the site of the old Main Village. The largest number ever given to the number of house scattered about the country is eight. That was in 1805 though by 1820, as extrapolated from the Federal Census, the number may have risen

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to about fifteen. So the Vertefeuille was one of eight to fifteen houses on the prairie at Prairie du Chien. Today, it is the only house extant on the prairie at Prairie du Chien from the early nineteenth century, and the only extant house constructed in the French-Canadian piece sur piece en coulisse that Anderson and Lockwood described so well.

Of all the French-Canadian log houses once in Prairie du Chien, only four are known to exist today. In the 1840s as Easterners arrived in Prairie du Chien, the log houses were described as "antique looking timber houses" and by the 1870s only chimneys marked where many of the houses had once stood(35). Of the four that still exist, the Francois Vertefeuille house and two other still stand on their original site. One is the Strange Powers (Poze) house in the Village of St. Friole, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. The other is the LaChapelle house in the old Main Village. Besides being one of only three French-Canadian log houses on its original site in Prairie du Chien, the Vertefeuille house; and the two others seem to be the only French-Canadian log houses on their original sites in the State of Wisconsin.

In conclusion, the Francois Vertefeuille House is significant for several reasons. It is one of the few surviving examples of French-Canadian architecture in the United States located on its original site. It references two French cultures ~~01221~~ that were present in the Mississippi Valley in the only community in which these cultures commingled. It is a physical testimony to the fur trade which dominated the Great Lakes region and the upper Mississippi, a form of commerce that spurred French exploration in North America, caused French- and English-speaking peoples to travel to and settle the upper Mississippi, and in the west was the reason for the conflict between Britain and the United States in two wars.

Footnotes:

(1) Peter L. Scanlan. Prairie du Chien: French, British, American. (Appleton: Banta Press, 1927), pp. 13, 60-61.

(2) This conclusion made by the author is based upon research

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and analysis of documents held by the Illinois Regional Archives Depository.

(3) This conclusion made by the author is based upon research and analysis of documents held by the Illinois Regional Archives Depository, "Land Claims in Michigan" American State Papers Volume IV, and the Mackinac Notary Book of Samuel Abbott in the collection of the Bayliss Library, Sault St. Marie, Michigan.

(4) Scanlan, Prairie du Chien, pp. 168-169.

(5) This conclusion by the author is based upon analysis of fur trade engagements and the Federal Census for Prairie du Chien of 1820 and 1830.

(6) W. J. Eccles. The Canadian Frontier 1534-1760. (revised edition, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press), 1990.

(7) Mary Antoine de Julio. Multi-cultural Urbanity: The Canadian Home on the American Frontier 1770-1830. (paper delivered at the Winterthur Conference on the American Home, 1992).

(8) Gauthier-Larouche, Evolution de la Mansion rurale traditionnelle dans la region de Quebec, pp. 177-218.

(9) Dennis Au. Architectural Analysis: The Francois Vertefeulle House. (unpublished manuscript, 1992), pp. 8, 19, 22.

(10) Moogk, Building a House in New France, p. 35.

(11) Au. Architectural Analysis: The Francois Vertefeulle House, pp. 8, 19, 22.

(12) Au. Architectural Analysis: The Francois Vertefeulle House, pp. 8, 19, 22.

(13) Lessard and Villandre. Le Maison traditionnelle au Quebec, pp. 11-117.

The LaChapelle-Erdenberger house located in Prairie du Chien Main Village Lot No. 23 has horizontal bracing intact

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in the corners of the top plate.

(14) Winstanley Briggs. "Le Pays des Illinois," William and Mary Quarterly Third Series, Vol. XLVII, No. 1 (January 1990), p. 30.

(15) United States Congress. American State Papers Public Lands, Vol. IV, map of the Private Land Claims at Prairie du Chien.

(16) Briggs, "Le Pays des Illinois," pp. 30-40.

(17) American State Papers, Vol. IV, p. 870.

(18) Conversations between the author and Carl Ekberg, Professor of History at University of Illinois-Normal, January and February, 1992.

(19) Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Treaties between the United States of America and the Several Indian Tribes from 1778 to 1837 (Washington: Langtree O'Sullivan, 1837), pp. 55-56.

(20) State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Wisconsin Historical Collections, Vol. II (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin), p. 147.

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(21) Coues, Zebulon M. Pike, p. 47 appendix.

(22) Letter of March 5, 1811 from Nicholas Boilvin to the Secretary of War. Records of the War Department, (transcribed by Peter L. Scanlan. A copy is on file at the Karrmann Library University of Wisconsin-Platteville).

(23) Wisconsin Historical Collections, Vol. II, p. 119.

(24) Federal Census of 1800 for Indiana Territory, Federal Census of 1810 for Illinois Territory, Federal Census of 1820 for Michigan Territory.

(25) Petition of the Inhabitants of Prairie du Chien, 53 in number, to the Congress of the United States, manuscript privately owned. (Typescript copy owned by the author).

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(26) Rapport de L'Archiviste de la Province de Quebec pour 1942-1943 (Quebec: Redempti Paradis, 1943), pp. 375, 389; and American State Papers Vol. IV p. 870.

(27) American State Papers Vol. IV, p. 870.

(28) Wisconsin Historical Collections, Vol. XIII, pp. 129-130.

(29) American States Papers Vol. IV, p. 877.

(30) Ibid, p. 869.

(31) Indenture dated May 20, 1818 between Joseph Rolette and James Aird. Samuel Abbott Notarial Records, 1806-1818. Bayliss Public Library, Sault St. Marie, Michigan.

(32) American States Papers Vol. IV, pp. 869 and 877.

(33) Ibid.

(34) Crawford County Register of Deeds, Liber A, pp. 147-148.

(35) History of Crawford and Richland Counties (1884), pp. 348, 460-467.

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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 #

X See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

X State Historic preservation office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

X Other

Specify repository:

Illinois State Archives, Crawford County Court House

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 0.21 acres

UTM References

A 1 15 61510161510 4171711141810 B / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / /

C / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / /

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Crawford County Certified Survey Map No. 384, Lot 2, Located in Upper Village Lot No. 4 of the Private Land Claims at Prairie du Chien

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary for the property being nominated was so chosen because it encompasses the building and its immediate surrounding currently under a single ownership.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary Antoine de Julio

organization date October 3, 1992

street & number 317 S. Wacouta Ave. telephone (608) 326-6626

city or town Prairie du Chien state WI zip code 53821

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- Rapport de L'Archivite de la Province de Quebec pour 1942-1943. Quebec: Redempti Paradis, 1943.

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Photographic Materials - Identification

Vertefeuille, Francois, House  
Town of Prairie du Chien  
Crawford County, Wisconsin  
Photos by Jean Hamann  
April, 1992

Negatives held by Division of Historic Preservation, State  
Historical Society of Wisconsin

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Photo #1: East elevation (front of house)

Photo #2: West elevation (rear of house)

Photo #3: North elevation (north facade of house)

Photo #4: South elevation (south facade of house)

Photo #5: Interior east wall, detail of colombage flanking front door

Photo #6: Interior southwest corner

Photo #7: Interior east wall second floor, joining of roof to walls

01231 Photo #8: Interior southwest corner with evidence of horizontal bracing

Photo #9: Interior looking east showing north addition to  
original structure

Photo #10: Interior west wall of north addition

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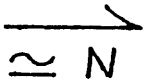
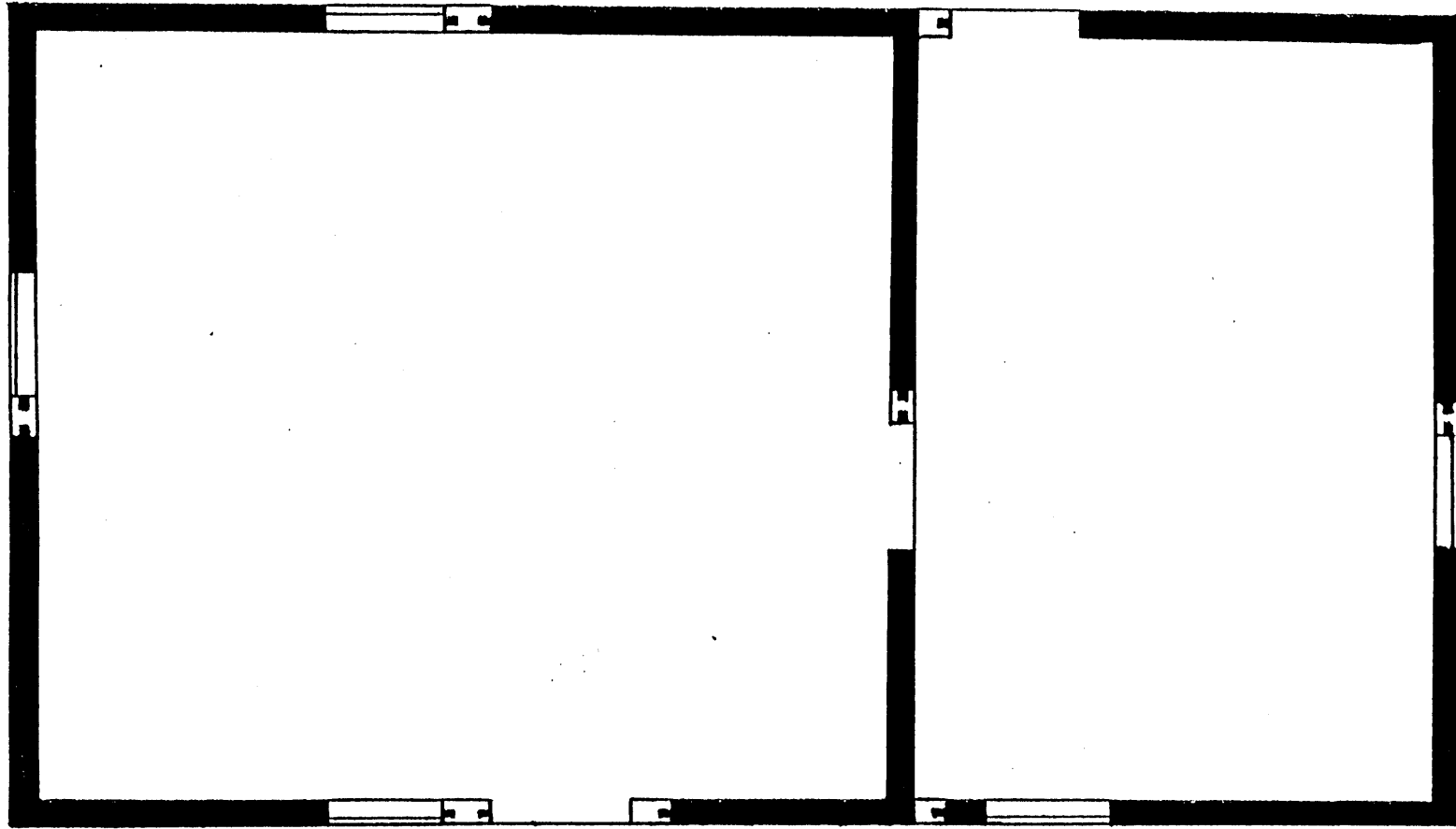
Section number Owner Page 1

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Robert and Deb Camardo  
230 South Street  
Mineral Point, WI 53565  
(608) 987-3100  
987-3566 work

0123L

Fig. 17.



Dennis M. Au  
October 1991  
Crawford County

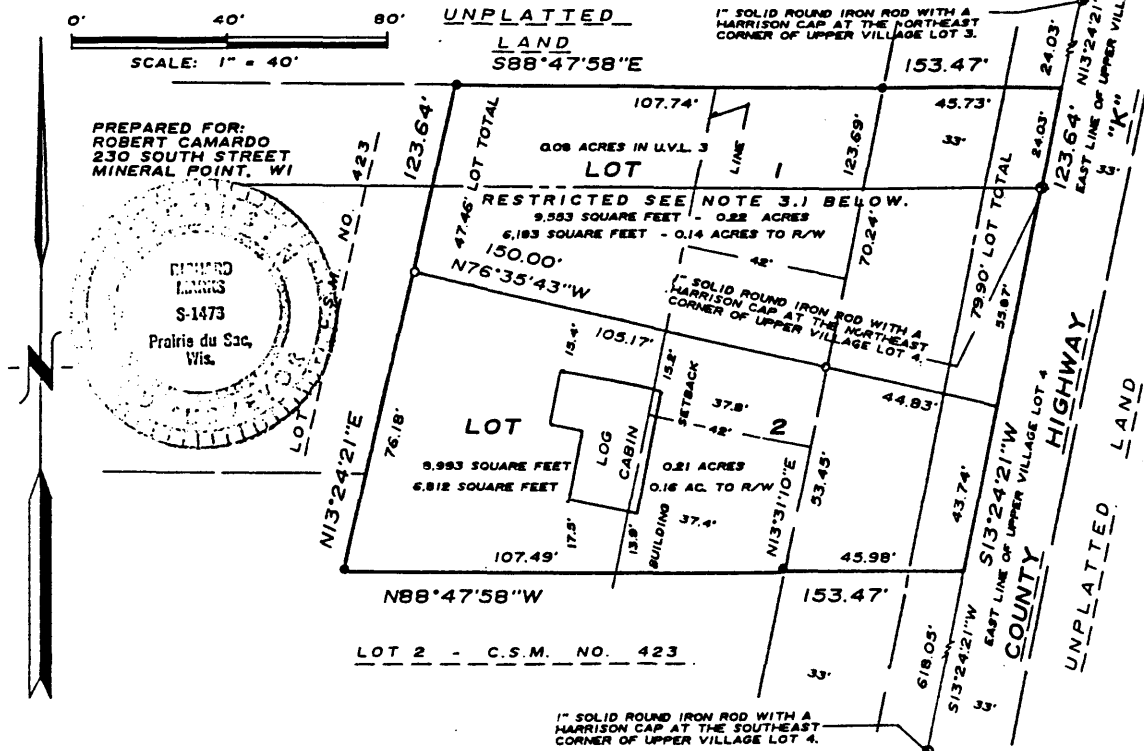
François Vertefeuille House  
Prairie du Chien, WI

Scale:  $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'$   
Plan, First Floor

#36  
4-CSM-244  
Doc. No.  
233763

**CERTIFIED SURVEY MAP No. 617**

**LOCATED IN UPPER VILLAGE LOTS 3 AND 4 OF THE PRIVATE LAND CLAIMS AT PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, TOWN OF PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, CRAWFORD COUNTY, WISCONSIN.**



**LEGEND AND NOTES**

- o Denotes 3/4" X 24" solid round iron rod weighing 1.50 lbs per lineal foot, set
- Denotes 3/4" solid round iron rod found.
- 1.) Bearings are referenced to the East line of Upper Village Lot 4 of the Private Land Claims at Prairie du Chien, bearing S13°24'21"W - True from United States Coast and Geodetic Survey datum.
- 2.) Variance granted by the Crawford County Board of Adjustments on October 7, 1991, from S64.23(A)(2), S64.23(A)(19), S64.23(A)(21) and S64.23(A)(23) of the Crawford County Subdivision Ordinance.
- 3.) Lot 1 of this certified survey is restricted to the sale of land to an adjoining land owner and is not subject to County approval pursuant to Section 236.45(2)(a)3. of the State statutes.
- 4.) Lot 2 of this certified survey is in the 100 year flood plain.

**SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATE**

I, Richard Marks, Registered Land Surveyor, do hereby certify: That I have surveyed, divided, mapped, and monumented a parcel of land located in Upper Village Lots 3 and 4 of the Private Land Claims at Prairie du Chien, Town of Prairie du Chien, Crawford County, Wisconsin more particularly described as follows:

LOT 2 OF CRAWFORD COUNTY CERTIFIED SURVEY MAP NUMBER 384, RECORDED IN VOLUME 3 OF CERTIFIED SURVEYS ON PAGES 18 AND 18-A, DOCUMENT NUMBER 221534 IN THE OFFICE OF THE CRAWFORD COUNTY REGISTER OF DEEDS

That I have made such survey and land division under the direction of Robert Camardo. That I have fully complied with the provisions of Section 236.34 of the Wisconsin Statutes, Section A.E.-7 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code and the Crawford County Subdivision Regulations in surveying, mapping and dividing the same. That such plat is a correct representation of all the exterior boundaries of the land surveyed and subdivision thereof made and is accurate and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Dated this 12<sup>th</sup> day of October, 1991

Richard Marks  
Richard Marks S-1473  
COUNTY APPROVAL

Approved for recording by the Crawford County real property lister on this 22nd day of November, 1991.

Delores Bonney  
Delores Bonney - Real Property Lister

**River Valley  
Land Surveying**  
RICHARD MARKS - PHONE (608)643-4391  
1502 LORI COURT - SAUK CITY - WI - 53583

RECEIVED FOR RECORD THIS 22nd DAY OF November, 1991 AT 10:50 A.M. AND RECORDED IN VOLUME 4CSM OF CERTIFIED SURVEYS ON PAGE 244  
Flourice Erickson  
REGISTER OF DEEDS SHEET 1 OF 1  
C.S.M. NUMBER 617  
DOCUMENT NUMBER 233763

Map of the Private Land Claims at Prairie du Chien

American State Papers Public Lands Volume IV.

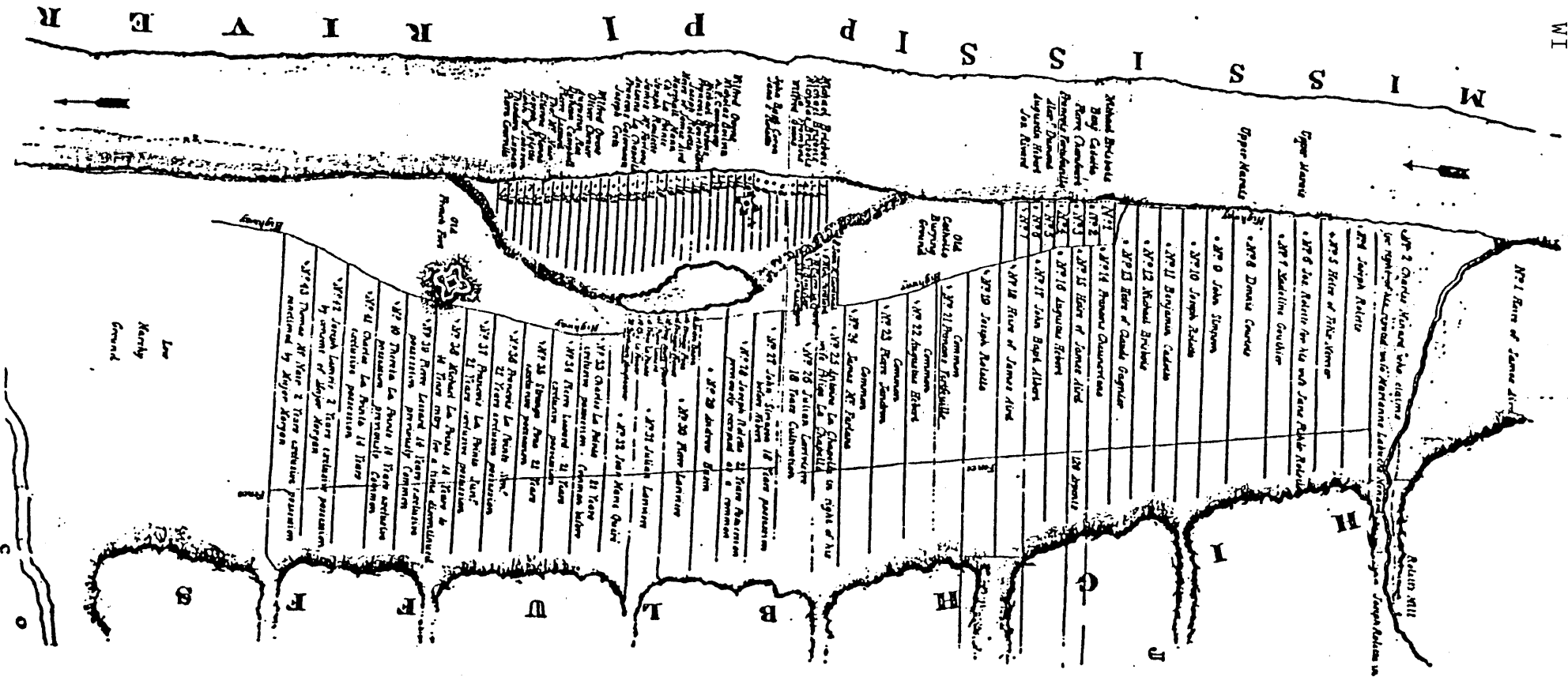


FIG. 1.