

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

JUN 26 1979

AUG 27 1979

DATE ENTERED

# 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

Strange Powers House

AND/OR COMMON

**LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

338 North Main Street

\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Prairie du Chien

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

3rd

STATE

Wisconsin

CODE

55

COUNTY

Crawford

CODE

023

**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

\_\_COMMERCIAL

\_\_EDUCATIONAL

\_\_ENTERTAINMENT

\_\_GOVERNMENT

\_\_INDUSTRIAL

\_\_MILITARY

\_\_MUSEUM

\_\_PARK

 PRIVATE RESIDENCE

\_\_RELIGIOUS

\_\_SCIENTIFIC

\_\_TRANSPORTATION

\_\_OTHER:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Dale Klemme

STREET &amp; NUMBER

338 North Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Prairie du Chien

STATE

Wisconsin

53821

\_\_ VICINITY OF

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Register of Deeds

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Crawford County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Prairie du Chien

STATE

Wisconsin

53821

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

1979

\_\_FEDERAL  STATE \_\_COUNTY \_\_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS State Historical Society of Wisconsin

CITY, TOWN

Madison

STATE

Wisconsin

53706

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Strange Powers house is an L-shaped detached dwelling comprised of three distinct sections. Although the front section resembles an early twentieth-century bungalow, its main block is constructed of hewn timbers and logs in a French colonial manner. The one-and-one-half-story front section faces west and the one story ell, which is built in two sections, runs east from it. (see diagram on continuation sheet)

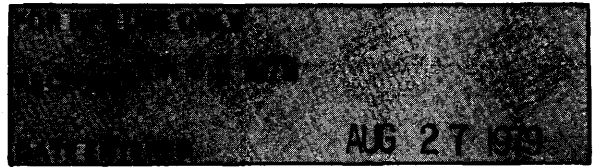
The front section has a gable roof and is sided with blue asbestos shingles. The west facade has a glassed-in porch which is sheltered by the gable roof. The south gable facade has a single-story bay. Most windows are two-over-two double-hung sash. Evidently, the roof was made much broader than the original sometime in the building's history. The front wall of the building, not including the porch, is of timber and log construction, as are the sides of the front section. The rear wall is of construction contemporary with the extended roof; the original timber and log rear wall of the house now serves as an interior partition.

The timber and log structure is a characteristic example of French Canadian pièce sur pièce à tenon en coulisse construction. The structure measures twenty-six by twenty feet and is five bays wide, with two rooms flanking a central hallway. Vertical squared timbers are mortised and pegged into square timber sills. Round logs, with the bark still on them, lie horizontally mortised into the vertical timbers. Remnants of whitewashed mud daub are visible on one wall. Mortises pierced in the vertical timbers about six-and-one-half feet above the floor once received the tenons of supports for the second story floor joists and suggest the original ceiling height. Floor joists are logs hewn on one side; floorboards are about four inches wide.

The ell is comprised of two sections, the older being a once-detached single-storied brick building, and the newer being a balloon frame structure which joins the brick building to the front part of the house. The brick building measures fourteen by twenty feet. Windows have segmental arches and two-over-two double-hung sash. The brick has been painted a number of times. A single-story enclosed porch runs the length of the south side of the ell. About ten feet southeast of the house stands a frame two-car garage with novelty siding.

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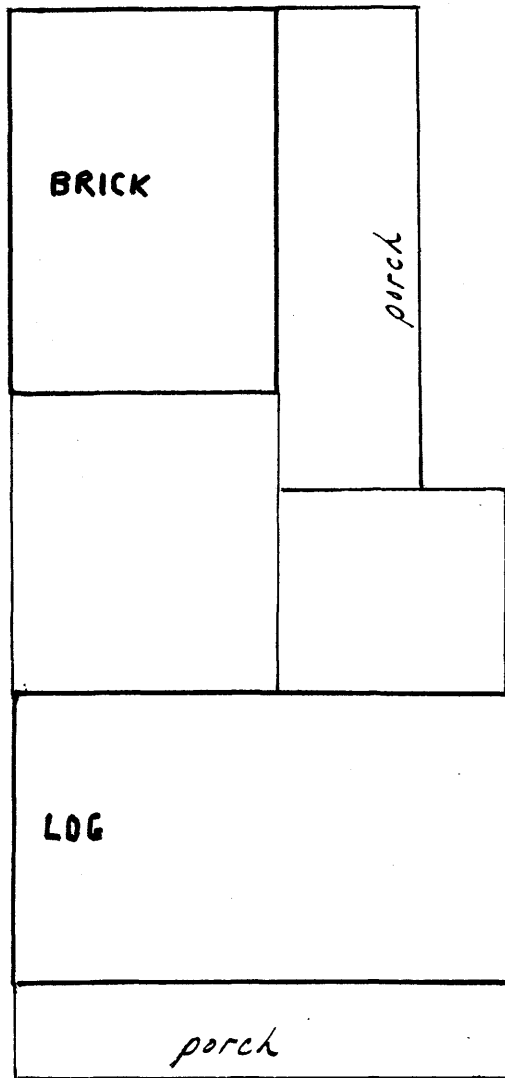
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**



CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 1



*N. Main Street*

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1800-1820

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Strange Powers house is significant to the history of the nation as a rare example of fur-trade period French colonial style architecture that has survived intact and on its original site. Although early American explorers to Prairie du Chien reported a village comprised of several dwellings of similar construction, the Strange Powers house is the only known survivor. An example of the earliest construction at Prairie du Chien, the house reflects the French Canadian influence in the Great Lakes-Mississippi Valley region during the period when the fur trade dominated the region. As such, it is an important artifact of the era preceding the American settlement of the Old Northwest.

By the 1760s Prairie du Chien was the major fur trade center on the upper Mississippi River. By 1781 a permanent white settlement was firmly established, comprised primarily of French Canadians. (Oerichbauer, 1976:74) In 1800 Thomas Anderson, a Canadian, reported that the village consisted of between ten and fifteen houses. (W.H.C. 9:147) In 1805 Zebulon Pike, an American explorer, reported that eighteen houses stood on St. Friol Island and eight stood along the east bank of the Marais de St. Friol, the site of the Powers house. Pike described the construction of most Prairie du Chien residences as follows: "...the houses are framed, and in place of weather boarding there are small logs let into mortises made in the uprights, joined close, daubed on the outside with clay, and handsomely whitewashed within." (Coves, 1956:303-5) Other observers of the period indicated that these structures were sided either with bark or clapboards. (Oerichbauer, 1976:75, 90)

The Powers house closely matches Pike's description. It is a faithful example of the characteristic French Canadian mode of log/frame construction known as pièce sur pièce à tenon en coulisse which was popular in Quebec from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries. Salient features of the mode of construction are the frame of squared timbers and the infill of tenoned logs set horizontally into mortises running the lengths of the vertical timbers. Extensive use of chinking or daub also is characteristic. (Lessard and Vilandré, 1974:111-117)

It is unknown precisely when the original portion of the house was built. As noted, Zebulon Pike reported eight houses of its type in its immediate vicinity as early as 1805. Early in the 1800s the lot on which the house stands was a part of Farm Lot 30, a long slender parcel facing the marais that was owned by Pierre Lariviere. Later, the waterfront portion of Farm Lot 30 was subdivided to form the Village of St. Friol or the Upper

(continued)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Coves, E., ed. Zebulon M. Pike. Expeditions to the Headwaters of the Mississippi During the Years 1805-06-07. reprint edition. Minneapolis, 1956.
- Fraser, M.E., Rev. "Early Families of Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin," 1920.
- Lessard, Michel and Gilles Vilandre. La Maison Traditionnelle au Quebec. Montreal, 1974.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

(cont.)

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.24

QUADRANGLE NAME Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin-Iowa QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:62500

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 5	6 5 0	8 0 0	4 7 6 8	0 4 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING		EASTING	NORTHING	
C						D			
E						F			
G						H			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The nominated property occupies lots 24 and 25 block 11 on the Union Plat, and is roughly 100 x 105 feet.

### LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE  
David Donath, Historian

ORGANIZATION  
State Historical Society of Wisconsin

STREET & NUMBER  
816 State Street

CITY OR TOWN  
Madison

DATE  
April 7, 1979

TELEPHONE  
(608) 262-3390

STATE  
Wisconsin 53706

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X STATE \_\_\_\_\_ LOCAL \_\_\_\_\_

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Richard M. Murray*

TITLE Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE 5/14/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Carol Shull*  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 8-27-79

ATTEST: *Anna Jane Saxe*  
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION  
Regional Coordinator

DATE 8-27-79

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PAGE 1

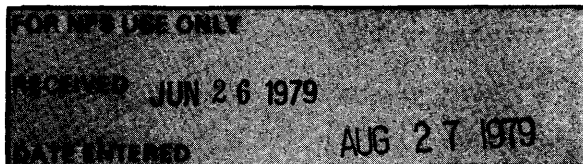
8. SIGNIFICANCE continued

Village. In 1818 Lariviere conveyed the house lot (Upper Village Lot 14) to Strange Powers. (American State Papers 4:878) Records are too scanty to determine whether the house may have stood on the lot prior to Powers' purchase, or whether Powers may have built the house himself.

Little is known about the life of Strange Powers (the French routinely spelled his name Poze). He was a British Canadian who settled on Farm Lot 35 in Prairie du Chien in 1799. He was employed on several occasions as a carpenter. In 1825 he married Euphrosine Antaya. He died in 1835. (Statement of Don Munson, Curator of Villa Louis; Fraser, 1920.) In 1843 the administrators of Powers' estate had part of Upper Village Lot 14 platted, but not the portion on which the house stands. In 1850 the administrators auctioned the house property, advertising it as also containing a stable and an orchard. (Deeds E, 174; Prairie du Chien Patriot, 5/8/1850) I.P. Perret Gentil bought it for \$50 (Deeds F, 447), and shortly thereafter he sold it back to Powers' widow. She mortgaged it and then lost it in a foreclosure in 1869 (Deeds 26, 57). The 1870 Bird's Eye View of Prairie du Chien represents the house as a story-and-a-half saltbox with two chimneys flanking the central hall and a single-story veranda stretching the breadth of the main facade. A single story stable is represented on the location of the brick portion of the ell. It seems likely that the brick structure stood in 1870, and it is possible that it was the stable mentioned in the 1850 advertisement.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 & 11 PAGE 1

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES continued

Oerichbauer, Edgar S. "Prairie du Chien: A Historical Study." Madison, 1976.

Register of Deeds. Crawford County Courthouse. Prairie du Chien.

Scanlan, Peter Lawrence. Prairie du Chien: French-British-American. Menasha, Wisconsin, 1937.

Wisconsin State Historical Society. Collections. (W.H.C.) Volume 9. Madison, 1903

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11. FORM PREPARED BY continued

Alison K. Hoagland, Supervisor

HABS Summer Team

September 5, 1978

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Washington, D.C.

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