

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 Merten, Charles, House

other names/site number Anderson, J. K., House

2. Location

street & number 929 Rosemary Street N/A not for publication

city, town Waukesha N/A vicinity

state Wisconsin code WI county Waukesha code 133 zip code 53186

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)		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

No. of contributing resources  
 previously listed in the  
 National Register 0

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.

*[Handwritten Signature]*

2/7/95  
Date

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.  
     See continuation sheet

*[Handwritten Signature: Edson H. Beall]*

3.17.95

     determined eligible for the National Register.      See continuation sheet

     determined not eligible for the National Register.

     removed from the National Register.

     other, (explain:)

Entered in the  
National Register

*[Handwritten Signature]*

Signature of the Keeper

Date

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions  
(enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions  
(enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials  
(enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne

foundation	<u>Limestone</u>
walls	<u>Weatherboard</u>
	<u>Shingle</u>
roof	<u>Asphalt</u>
other	<u>Wood</u>

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Charles Merten House is a fine, highly intact, middle-sized two-story Queen Anne style residence that was probably built for J. K. Anderson ca.1890. The house is almost square in plan, being approximately 22-feet-wide by 24-feet-deep. Rectilinear one-and-a-half story bays on the west and north elevations extend the house in those directions, but the overall plan is basically square. The exterior walls rest on a tall cut stone foundation and the slope of the site exposes most of its south side. The first story is sided in clapboard, the second story is sided in octagonal pattern wood shingles, and the walls rise up to the multi-gable roof that covers the house. The north and south-facing gable ends of the roof are sided in clapboards, but the front-facing west gable end is more elaborately treated. The house sits on a deep rectilinear lot that is located just below the crown of a steep hill that is one of the most prominent topographical features of the historic central portion of the city of Waukesha. Today, the house is almost hidden from view by numerous mature trees and dense shrubbery, plantings which limit the views from the house during the summer months. Originally, though, the house (which was also the first house on its block) had spectacular panoramic views to the west and south. The steepness of the land gives the house two principal facades, the principal one of which faces west onto Rosemary Street and the other of which faces south down the hill towards Arcadian Avenue.

At the time this house was built Waukesha enjoyed a national reputation as a summer resort due to its assiduous promotion of the health-giving properties of the local spring waters. This promotion began in 1868 and its success caused the local population to increase from 2500 in 1870 to 8740 by 1910. By the turn-of-the-century, however, the economic importance of the city's resort trade began to decline and numerous manufacturing concerns were created to take their place, transforming the city's economic base. This transformation, coupled with Waukesha's close proximity to Milwaukee, greatly increased Waukesha's population which by 1980 numbered 53,941, making it Wisconsin's eighth-largest city.

Beginning in 1907, this house was owned by successive generations of the Merten family until 1987, when the current owners took possession. Because of this long tenure, the house is in virtually original condition today. The present owners are in the process of totally restoring the house, resulting in the preservation of a very fine example of a style that was frequently chosen by members of the rapidly growing middle class of this period.

The large block on which the Merten house is situated is Block B of Anderson's Addition and it is bounded by the north-south running Rosemary Avenue on the west, National Avenue of the north, Aurora Street on the east, and Arcadian Avenue on the south. This block slopes steeply down the side of the hill described above and the block to the west (Block C) consists of the grounds of the very large Neo-Classical Revival New Tribes Bible Institute, which was originally the Resthaven Hotel (1905,

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: \_\_\_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_\_\_ statewide  X  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria   A   B  X  C   D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)   A   B   C   D   E   F   G

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Architecture   
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

Ca.1890   
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

Ca.1890   
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A   
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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

Significance

The Charles Merten house is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) for its local significance under National Register (NR) criterion C. More specifically, the Merten house is being nominated because of its association with the area of Architecture; a theme which is also identified in the State of Wisconsin's Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP). Research was undertaken to assess the NRHP potential of the Merten house utilizing the Queen Anne style subsection of the Architectural Styles study unit of the CRMP and the Queen Anne subsection of the Architecture Theme section of the final report of the Waukesha Intensive Resources Survey. The results of this research is detailed below and confirms that the Merten house is locally significant under NR criterion C as a fine and highly intact example of a middle-sized Queen Anne style residence.

The house is believed to have been built as a speculative venture by James K. Anderson, who platted this block and the adjacent blocks as the Anderson Addition in 1885. Anderson may have built the house as an advertisement for his new plat, but there is no evidence that either Anderson or the subsequent owner, Harriet Morton, ever lived in the house. Instead, the house seems to have been rented out until 1907, when Charles Merten purchased the house from Morton. Merten was then employed in the family-owned Merten Printing Co. in Waukesha and he lived here with his wife and son until his death in 1953. His son, Byron Merten, continued to live in the house until his own death in 1987. These successive generations of the Merten family maintained the house in an unchanged state throughout their ownership. As a result, the present owners were able to purchase the house in virtually original condition and they have shown great respect for the house during the course of modernizing certain aspects of it such as the kitchen and the utility systems. Consequently, both the interior and exterior of the Merten house are significant today as fine and highly intact examples of Queen Anne style residential design.

<sup>7</sup> Abstract of Title for 929 Rosemary Street. In the possession of the owners. The period of significance is the date of construction of the house

X  See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Abstract of Title for 929 Rosemary Street. In the possession of the owners.

Building Permit. Building Permit File for 929 Rosemary Street. City of Waukesha Building Inspection Office, Waukesha City Hall, 201 Delafield Street.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

See continuation sheet

- 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than 1.0 acres

UTM References

A	<u>1/6</u>	<u>4/0/0/6/7/0</u>	<u>4/7/6/2/8/1/0</u>	B	<u>/</u>	<u>/</u>	<u>/</u>	<u>/</u>	<u>/</u>	<u>/</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing			
C	<u>/</u>	<u>/</u>	<u>/</u>	D	<u>/</u>	<u>/</u>	<u>/</u>	<u>/</u>	<u>/</u>	<u>/</u>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 20 & 21, and N½ of Lot 19. Also W½ of vacated alley adjoining lots on E. Block B, J. K. Anderson's Addition in the City of Waukesha, Waukesha County, Wisconsin. In Section NW2 T6N R19E.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries enclose all the land that has been historically associated with the Merten house.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

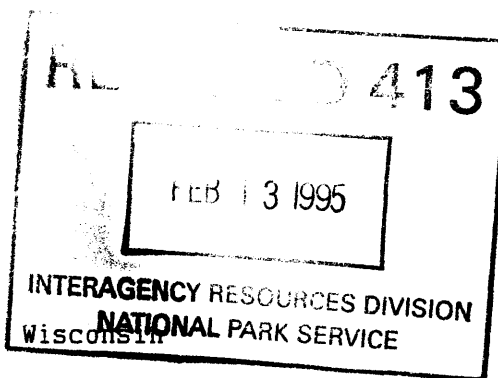
name/title Timothy F. Hegglund/Consultant  
 for: City Plan Commission, City of Waukesha  
 organization 201 Delafield St. Waukesha, WI date August 11, 1992  
 street & number 1311 Morrison Street telephone (608) 251-9450  
 city or town Madison state WI zip code 53703

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Charles Merten House, Waukesha, Waukesha County, Wisconsin

Section number 7 Page 1



915 N. Hartwell Ave. - NRHP 10/28/83), Waukesha's last resort hotel and one of its largest. Both blocks were originally platted by J. K. Anderson, the developer of the Arcadian Springs complex (Arcadian Bottling Works, c.1885, 1891, 900 N. Hartwell - NRHP 10/28/83), which originally occupied the southwest corner of Block C.<sup>1</sup> The lot associated with the Merten house is 50-foot-wide by 150-foot-long, has a rectilinear shape, and it is situated about midway along the one-block length of Rosemary Street. The other houses on this block consist of a mix of mostly twentieth century houses and a few very late nineteenth century houses, none of which equal the Merten house in terms of integrity or originality of design.

The Merten house is asymmetrical in appearance, nearly square in plan, and is two-stories in height. It consists of a multi-gable roofed 22-foot-wide by 24-foot-deep main block and there is a 4-foot-wide by 12-foot-deep rectilinear plan staircase ell on its north-facing side elevation and an 8-foot-deep by 12-foot-wide rectilinear plan ell on its east-facing rear elevation that contains the kitchen pantry. The entire house rests on tall, cut stone foundation walls made out of the almost ubiquitous local limestone whose quarrying was one of Waukesha's principal industries in the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The foundation walls have raised mortar joints and they enclose the full, concrete-floored basement that underlies the whole house. The original clapboard siding covers the exterior walls of the first story of the house. This siding is enframed by a frieze board that encircles the house just above the first story window heads, by corner boards, and by a water table that encircles the house just above the limestone foundation. The second story walls have a slightly flared overshot base and they are sided in octagonal pattern wooden shingles. These walls then rise up to the steeply pitched, asphalt shingle-covered multi-gable roof that covers the attic floor of the house. Overhanging boxed eaves help to shelter the walls, and the ridge of the main portion of the roof runs from side to side on a north-south axis that is parallel to the front and rear elevations of the house.

The principal facade of the house faces west onto Rosemary Street. It is asymmetrical in composition and is three-bays-wide and has a pronounced vertical emphasis. Its design is dominated by the elaborate gable end that crowns the facade, and by a projecting one-story entrance vestibule that occupies the left-hand bay of the first story. This vestibule is six-feet square, has a pedimented gable roof, and each of its elevations is sided in clapboards that are enframed with a watertable, a frieze board, and cornerboards that have a simple vertical incised quirk bead decoration. A small square window opening is centered on the north side elevation of the vestibule, while the south elevation contains a single seven-panel door surmounted by a transom light.<sup>2</sup> Centered in the principal west-facing elevation of the vestibule is a fine pair of seven-panel double doors that have

<sup>1</sup> Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff. Spring City's Past: A Thematic History of Waukesha and the Final Report of Waukesha's Intensive Resources Survey. Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1982, pgs. 15-16.

<sup>2</sup> This door opens onto the front porch.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Charles Merten House, Waukesha, Waukesha County, Wisconsin  
Section number 7 Page 2

---

rectilinear raised panels and their original hardware. The wall surface of this elevation of the vestibule is also enframed by boards but its base is decorated by an additional band of vertical boards and its frieze is panelled. A molded cornice is placed above the frieze band, and the tympanum of the pedimented gable end above the cornice is outlined by fine raking molding and is divided into squares and triangles by a grid of narrow horizontal and vertical boards.

The remainder of the first story of this facade consists of two bays, each of which contains a tall one-over-one-light flat-arched double hung window that is covered with an original four-light storm window, and the base of this wall surface is also sided with a band of vertical boards. These two bays are then sheltered by a one-story shed-roofed 6-foot-deep by 16-foot-long open porch that spans that portion of the facade not taken up by the entrance vestibule. This porch is itself two-bays-long and one-bay-deep, and it is rectilinear in plan and has a wooden tongue-and-groove board floor that rests on two brick piers. The porch roof is supported by two tall, thin, chamfered posts and two matching pilasters, each of which rests on a tall plinth. These posts and pilasters are linked by a modern wrought iron balustrade and by segmental-arched wooden members that form a simple frieze. The molded cornice above this frieze is a continuation of the molded raking cornice that crowns the entrance vestibule and the same grid of narrow horizontal and vertical boards that decorates the entrance vestibule is also used to divide the south-facing half gable end of the porch roof into squares and triangles.

The second story of this facade is also three-bays-wide and is symmetrical, each bay being filled with a tall one-over-one-light flat-arched double hung window that is identical to those on the first story. The wall surface of this story is sided with octagonal pattern wood shingles. The facade is then surmounted by an elaborate pedimented gable end, most of which is overshoot over a broad cavetto cornice that is ornamented with ribbing and whose triangular-shaped end panels feature scrollwork ornament formed by scroll-shaped leaves that radiate from a center point. The gable end features elaborately molded raking moldings and the lower half of its tympanum is covered with the same grid of narrow horizontal and vertical boards that decorates the entrance vestibule. The upper half is filled with false half-timber work that divides the surface into panels of different shapes, all of which are filled with stucco or plaster.<sup>3</sup> The half-timber work also enframes a small centered rectilinear-shaped 20-light window as well.

The width of the main facade is extended to the north by the recessed west-facing side elevation of the shed-roofed staircase ell. This elevation is treated in the same manner as that of the main facade, having an enframed clapboard-sided first story and a shingle-sided second story that is surmounted by a half-timbered half gable end. The stucco panels of the half gable end are almost filled with blue glass fragments and a small square window opening is set into the upper part of the

---

<sup>3</sup> Some of these panels have irregular pieces of mostly blue glass stuck into them, but whether this treatment is original or was done later is not known.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Charles Merten House, Waukesha, Waukesha County, Wisconsin  
Section number 7 Page 3

---

first story. This window was originally filled with beautiful stained glass that has since been removed and replaced with clear glass.<sup>4</sup>

The north-facing side elevation of the Merten house faces the crown of the hill and it is two-bays-wide and each story is sided with the same materials as the main facade. Each story of the left-hand bay contains a single flat-arched one-over-one light double hung window and there is a small rectilinear window in the basement story below. The right-hand bay consists of a rectilinear plan one-and-a-half story 6-foot-deep by 12-foot-wide ell that contains the main staircase of the house. This ell has cut stone foundation walls and a small oblong window is centered on the north-facing wall. The ell is sided in the same manner as the main wall surfaces and it is surmounted by an asphalt shingle-covered shed roof. A small square window opening is set into the upper right-hand corner of the ell's first story and another one is set into the lower left-hand corner of the second story. These openings follow the rise of the staircase inside the ell and they are now filled with clear glass that replaces the original stained glass. This elevation is then crowned by a full-width gable end whose framing members project beyond the clapboard-sided wall surface. Both ends of the cornice of this gable end are supported by brackets and a single eleven-light oblong window is centered on the gable end.

The east-facing rear elevation of the Merten house is dominated by the 8-foot-deep by 12-foot-wide one-story shed-roofed ell that is centered on it. This ell - like the staircase ell - has cut stone foundation walls that are a continuation of the walls of the main block of the house. A small oblong window is centered on the ell's east-facing foundation wall. The only opening in the walls of the first story of the ell is a small flat-arched double hung window on its south-facing side; the other walls have no openings. The large half gable ends of the steeply sloped asphalt shingle-covered shed roof of the ell are sided in octagonal pattern wood shingles. The first story of the ell was originally sided in narrow wooden clapboards like the rest of the first story of the house. Recently, however, this siding was covered over with wide gauge metal siding, the only alteration of importance to the exterior of the house save for the wrought iron balustrade on the front porch.

The main wall surface of the rear elevation is sided in the same materials as the rest of the house. Its first story features a one-over-one light double hung window placed to the right (north) of the ell and a door opening surmounted by a transom light placed to the left (south) of the ell, which is reached by a flight of stairs. There are no openings on the second story, most of which is covered by the roof of the ell. There is also a gable-roofed dormer on the slope of the main roof above whose side walls and gable end are covered in octagonal pattern wood shingles. A short but massive panelled chimney stack also is centered on the ridge of the roof.

---

<sup>4</sup> This window and two more on the north side of this ell were removed when the house was sold in 1987. They are now owned by the Waukesha County Historical Museum.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Charles Merten House, Waukesha, Waukesha County, Wisconsin  
Section number 7 Page 4

---

The south-facing side elevation of the house is very similar to the north-facing side elevation, but the slope of the site reveals almost the whole of its basement story. This elevation is two-bays-wide and two-stories-tall and it too is surmounted by a full-width gable end that is sided in clapboard and that contains a single eleven-light oblong window. Both stories of the right-hand bay and the second story of the left-hand bay contain single flat-arched one-over-one light double hung windows that are identical to the ones elsewhere on the house. The basement story and the first story of the left-hand bay, however, are covered by a one-story polygonal bay window whose shallow-pitched asphalt shingle-covered hip roof is now edged by non-original wooden cresting. This bay has three windows and the spandrels below them are sided with a band of vertical boards. The center window features a fixed nine-over-one light window while the two less wide side windows are both nine-over-one light double hung type windows. These windows light the south end of the front parlor and they originally provided a magnificent view down the hill to the south before the tree cover grew up.

The asymmetrical design of the exterior of the house is reflected in the plan of the very fine and extremely well-preserved interior. Entrance to the interior is gained by passing through the outside entrance doors into the vestibule, which opens directly into a stairhall which occupies the northwest corner of the first story. Entrance from the vestibule into the stairhall is made through a pair of wooden doors that are surmounted by an operable transom. The lower halves of these doors feature three panels while the upper halves each contain a large rectilinear opening that is filled with a band of 12 stained glass lights that surround two larger clear plate glass lights that have bevelled edges. The transom above echoes this design, but utilizes larger clear glass center lights. A large flat-arched double-width opening opens from the stairhall into the front parlor that occupies the southwest corner of this story while a door at the rear of the stairhall opens into the dining room, which occupies the northeast corner of the first story. A door at the rear of the dining room opens into the pantry in the rear ell and another door in the pantry opens into the kitchen, which occupies the southeast corner of the first story. The second story contains two full bedrooms, a smaller bedroom, and a bathroom. Hardwood floors and plaster walls are used throughout the house and almost all of the original woodwork and decorative features of the house are still intact as well.

The double-L type staircase is contained in an ell that runs along the north side of the hall and it is lit by a pair of single light corner windows and by a single one-over-one light double hung window. The staircase first ascends an open flight of two steps to a small landing, then turn ninety degrees to a second open flight of eight steps that runs up the the north (outside) wall of the ell. Winder stairs are then employed to carry the flight around a second ninety degree bend, and the final closed flight of stairs runs up the rear (east) wall of the ell to the second story. This combination open/closed staircase is notable for its fine starting newel, which has a tall square base, a square post decorated with reeding, and a tall solid wood cap that has bulls-eye ornaments incised on each of its four sides.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Charles Merten House, Waukesha, Waukesha County, Wisconsin  
Section number 7 Page 5

---

The newel post is crowned with the house's only surviving original gas lamp, which is placed at the end of a tall stem that is centered on the cap. A finely molded wooden wall rail is fastened to the outside wall of the staircase and a short hand rail assembly is supported by turned balusters, all of which are varnished, as are the risers, treads, and the closed stringers. The spandrel between the closed stringers and the wide baseboard that encircles the base of the stairhall is also covered with varnished wood panelling.

The trim set that is used in the stairhall and throughout the rest of the house consists of a molded pilaster finish in which door and window casings consisting of identical thin reeded pilasters rise from base blocks, meeting head blocks that are decorated with bulls-eye ornament. These vertical elements are then tied together by the use of identical reeded horizontal head casings and the bases of the walls are covered by tall molded baseboards. Additional trim includes simple picture moldings in the front parlor and the dining room, and corner beads, which are used as decoration in several places in the stairhall.

The dominant feature of the rectilinear plan front parlor is the small but rather elaborate and totally original mantelpiece that is placed on a canted wall just to the right of the opening between the parlor and the stairhall. The design of this mantle is vertically oriented. Both the hearth and the fireplace surround are faced in small glazed ceramic tiles. The tiles that cover the hearth form a border that enfames a triple diamond pattern, those placed just above the fireplace opening have floral patterns, and those that edge the opening are plain and are a celadon green in color. Surrounding the tiles and the opening is the fine wood mantelpiece, which has a pilaster strip at each end that terminates vertically in a bracket that helps support the mantleshelf. Above this is an elaborate rectilinear overmantel whose right side consists of a bevelled mirror and whose left side consists of a wooden panel. Two bric-a-brac shelves with turned supports are placed in front of this panel.

Another significant feature of the front parlor is its nearly floor-to-ceiling windows. The two west-facing windows in this room are one-over-one light double hung type and the triple window group in the three-sided bay at the south end of the room consists of double hung windows that each have nine lights in their top sash. In addition, the wall space below each of the windows in the bay is panelled.

A single door that is surmounted by an operable transom is placed at the rear of the stairhall and it opens into the dining room. Natural light enters the dining room from two identical double hung one-over-one light windows, one of which is centered on the north wall and one on the east wall. Artificial light comes from a hanging four-light electric chain shower fixture that has a single chain, a flattened metal urn, and four frosted ball lamps.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Similar but not identical original hanging light fixtures that feature multiple hanging glass shades are still extant in the stairhall and front parlor as well.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Charles Merten House, Waukesha, Waukesha County, Wisconsin  
Section number 7 Page 6

---

Another seven-panel door that is surmounted by an operable one-light transom is also ~~also~~ placed in the east wall of the dining room. This door leads to the kitchen pantry, which still contains all its original built-in cabinetry including wooden countertops, wall units etc. Still another door that is surmounted by a transom light is placed in the west wall of the ell and it leads into the kitchen, which is the only room on the first story that has experienced significant remodeling.

The present owners of the Merten house are fortunate to have acquired a house that was in the possession of one family for so long. More than anything else this single fact explains not only why the most important features of the house are still intact, but also why so much of the original hardware--such as that belonging to the doors and windows--is still extant. The retention of these and all the other original features makes the Merten house one of Waukesha's most complete examples of the Queen Anne style.

The only other associated building on the property is a small 12-foot-wide by 18-foot-deep gable-roofed, rectilinear plan, one-car garage that was built on the southeast corner of the lot in 1927.<sup>6</sup> This garage is located at the end of a gravel driveway that runs along the south edge of the property and it is of frame construction, is sided in clapboard, and has an asphalt shingle-covered roof whose ridgeline runs east-west. The principal opening of this building faces west onto Rosemary Street and it still retains its original pair of side-hinged six-light over three-panel wooden garage doors. There is also a four-panel side door on the north elevation and a four-light window, and the floor consists of a concrete pad. Although this garage is still in good, largely original condition today neither its date of construction nor its style are related to the architectural significance of the house. Consequently, it is considered to be a non-contributing resource.

---

<sup>6</sup> Building Permit. Building Permit File for 929 Rosemary Street. City of Waukesha Building Inspection Office, Waukesha City Hall, 201 Delafield Street.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Charles Merten House, Waukesha, Waukesha County, Wisconsin  
Section number 8 Page 1

---

Historic Context

A general history of the city of Waukesha is contained in both the final report of the Waukesha Intensive Survey<sup>8</sup> and in the text of the Historic Resources of Waukesha Multiple Resource Nomination form.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, the following historical background deals mostly with the owners of the house and with the surrounding area.

According to a list in the files of the Waukesha County Historical Museum, approximately 50 springs were operated, either publicly or privately, at one time or another in the City. The great majority of these were not major tourist attractions to tourists or used for bottling purposes. In 1907, Haight (Theron W. Haight, author of Memoirs of Waukesha County, Western Historical Association, Madison, Wisconsin, 1907) referred to twenty-three mineral springs noting that many of those originally in existence had been closed by that time. Several of these remaining springs are important for their commercial use and several as parts of resort hotels.<sup>10</sup>

Among the springs discussed in this chapter on the industry and commerce of Waukesha was the Arcadian Spring. This mineral spring was developed as a commercial enterprise in 1885 by James K. Anderson, and it was located in the southwest corner of a large, irregularly shaped parcel of land that Anderson purchased in 1880. Anderson then proceeded to plat the land surrounding the spring in October, 1886, as J. K. Anderson's Addition to the plat of Waukesha, a decision that was undoubtedly an outgrowth of his concurrent development of the Arcadian Spring.

The Arcadian Spring was opened on the northwest corner of Arcadian and Hartwell Avenues in 1885 by J. K. Anderson who, with his brother (C. B. Anderson), had (previously) been involved in the development of the Silurian Spring. It was Anderson who built the spring house and the oldest portion of the bottling plant across Hartwell to the west.<sup>11</sup>

The new Arcadian Spring complex was clearly derived from Anderson's previous experience with the Silurian Spring. The extensive grounds and the buildings of the Silurian Spring Co. (non-extant) were located on Crescent Avenue (now Hartwell

---

<sup>8</sup> Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff. Spring City's Past: A Thematic History of Waukesha and the Final Report of Waukesha's Intensive Resources Survey. Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1982.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. Historic Resources of Waukesha Multiple Resource Nomination form. September, 1982. On file at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin Historic Preservation Division in Madison, Wisconsin.

<sup>10</sup> Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff. Spring City's Past: A Thematic History of Waukesha and the Final Report of Waukesha's Intensive Resources Survey, pg. 21.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, pgs. 22-23. The Arcadian Bottling Works (c. 1885, 1891, 900 N. Hartwell Avenue) was added to the NRHP 10/28/83.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Charles Merten House, Waukesha, Waukesha County, Wisconsin

Section number 8 Page 2

---

Avenue) just three blocks further south of the Arcadian Spring site and these grounds were conveniently situated adjacent to the tracks and passenger depot of the Wisconsin Central Railroad. Anderson's new site bordered this same track, but it also featured considerable additional acreage situated on a prominent hillside site above the actual site of the spring itself. Anderson's reasons for buying this additional acreage are conjectural, but it was apparently his intention to capitalize on the fact that the development of most of the earlier spring sites in Waukesha had been followed by residential development on adjacent lands. By assembling so large a piece of land at the onset of the development of the spring, Anderson may have hoped to direct the development of the surrounding land himself rather than let others reap the profits.

Development of the Arcadian Spring site began in 1885, and Anderson also constructed a pavilion and a welcoming house there (both non-extant) besides the bottling plant and the spring house mentioned above. The 1891 plat map of the City of Waukesha shows that all of these buildings were in place by that time.<sup>12</sup> In addition, this map also shows the house at 929 Rosemary Street as well, which was then the only house on Block B of the plat. A construction date for the house is not definite, but the house is clearly shown on the 1891 map and the abstract of title for the house shows that Anderson took out a mortgage on lots 17-22 (the house is on Lot 20) in this block for \$5000 in 1890, a mortgage that was acquired by Harriet Morton in the same year. There is no evidence, however, that suggests that either Anderson or Morton ever lived in the house themselves. It is more likely that Anderson built this house as a speculative venture and as an advertisement for his subdivision since the location of the house was clearly visible from the springs (all this land was without shrubs or mature trees at this time). Whatever the true story behind the construction of this house may be, Anderson's involvement with it and with the Arcadian Spring was short-lived.

In 1891, Henry W. Phelps purchased the spring and formed the Waukesha Arcadian Company. Phelps expanded the plant and started the production of soda pop. In 1907, Albert O. Trostel, Jr., the Milwaukee tanner, purchased the company renaming it the Roxo Beverage Company. In 1967, the Bon Ton Beverage Corporation purchased Roxo and some production is still [1983] undertaken in the new Bethesda/Roxo Company. In 1977, the Roxo bottling plant, which had been abandoned, was purchased and rehabilitated to apartments. The building is at 900 N. Hartwell.<sup>13</sup>

Anderson's involvement with the surrounding area also came to an end as well. Harriet Morton foreclosed on Anderson's mortgage for the 6 lots in Block B in 1895. She then acquired the lots and the house at a subsequent sheriff's sale in October.

<sup>12</sup> Foote, Charles M. & J. W. Henion. Plat Book Of Waukesha County. C. M. Foote & Co., Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1891.

<sup>13</sup> Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff. Spring City's Past: A Thematic History of Waukesha and the Final Report of Waukesha's Intensive Resources Survey, pg. 23.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Charles Merten House, Waukesha, Waukesha County, Wisconsin  
Section number 8 Page 3

---

Thus, by 1895, Anderson's involvement with his Arcadian Spring property was essentially finished. Morton retained her lots in the subdivision until 1907, however, and during this period the house was either rented or leased by others. From 1899 to 1903, the occupant was Henry Mohle, the chief dispatcher for the nearby Wisconsin Central Railroad. Mohle was followed by Claude A. Tiffany, an oil dealer whose office was also in the house. Tiffany lived in the house until 1907, when Harriet Morton sold the house, all of Lot 20, and the south two feet of Lot 21 to Charles Merten.<sup>14</sup>

In 1907, H. F. Charles Merten (1871-1953) was working as a printer with the family firm of Merten Printing Co. and he and his wife, Emily, had a five-year-old son, Byron C. Merten. Merten was born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1871.

When he was a year old the family moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and in April, 1880, they moved to Waukesha. The father did coopering at the Waukesha Silurian spring and when the boy was 11 he obtained a job dipping the spring water for the summer visitors.

From the beginning he went on numerous jobs connected with the various springs. When he was 20 years old he returned to Pittsburgh where he worked for the Steamboat Supply Co. On his return to Waukesha he worked as a carpenter and in 1900 he became manager of the Miniska Mineral Spring Co. of West Waukesha.

In 1904 he became employed at the Merten Printing Co., where he worked for his brother H. F. Merten. He remained with that company until his retirement in 1935.<sup>15</sup>

Following Merten's death, his wife and son continued in residence at the house. Emily J. E. Merten (1879-1963) came to Waukesha in 1895. After her marriage to Merten she became the mother of Byron Merten in 1902, and was also a charter member of Grace Lutheran Church in Waukesha, which was organized in 1909. She continued to live in the house until her death in 1963.<sup>16</sup>

The Merten's only child, Byron C. Merten (1902-1987), succeeded his parents as owner and sole occupant of the house on Rosemary Street. Merten never married and he

---

<sup>14</sup> Abstract of Title for 929 Rosemary Street. Op. Cit. The reason behind this sale is not known since no information about Harriet Morton has been found other than her name. It is possible, however, that Morton finally decided to realize a good price for the most saleable of her holdings while the opportunity presented itself since housing starts in this block of the subdivision were then almost non-existent. Indeed, even as late as 1926, aerial photos of the area show no other buildings on the north half of the block except for the one at 929 Rosemary Street.

<sup>15</sup> Waukesha Daily Freeman. May 4, 1953. Obituary of Charles Merten.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. February 2, 1963. Obituary of Emily J. E. Merten.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Charles Merten House, Waukesha, Waukesha County, Wisconsin  
Section number 8 Page 4

---

worked in Racine, in Waukesha, and finally in Milwaukee for the Wisconsin Telephone Company, finally retiring from its traffic department in 1967 after 40 years with the firm. Merten continued to live in the family home until his death, in 1987.<sup>17</sup> Subsequently, the contents of the house were auctioned off and the building was put up for sale. A local reputation for being a haunted house did nothing to help sales, but the present owners, Waukesha attorney Eric Schlieter and his wife Christel, finally purchased the building and its reputation in 1989, and have since made the house into a home for themselves and their two young sons.<sup>18</sup>

### Architecture

The architectural significance of the Charles Merten house lies in its being an excellent representative example of the middle-sized Queen Anne style residences that formed a major portion of the middle class building stock of the city of Waukesha and other Wisconsin cities between 1880 and 1900, and this significance is considerably enhanced by the high degree of integrity which is still present in the fabric of the Merten house today. The designer and the builder of this house may well have been one and the same, and while their name(s) are unknown the design makes good use of the "irregularity of plan and massing" and the "asymmetrical facade" compositions which are hallmarks of the Queen Anne style that are specifically mentioned in the Queen Anne style subsection of the Architectural Styles study unit of the CRMP.<sup>19</sup> The design of the Merten house also makes sparing use of such typically Queen Anne style elements as variegated exterior surface materials, "wall projections," "steeply pitched roofs," "cutaway bay windows," and a dominant front-facing gable," all of which are also mentioned as specific attributes of the Queen Anne style in the CRMP.

The Waukesha Intensive Survey Report identified buildings designed in the Queen Anne style as important components of the nineteenth century building stock in Waukesha and the report enumerated numerous examples of the style which are mostly concentrated in residential neighborhoods located close to the downtown commercial district.<sup>20</sup> Many of these buildings were subsequently incorporated into the first four historic residential districts which the survey identified and ultimately placed on the NRHP late in 1983.<sup>21</sup> These districts contain many of Waukesha's best

<sup>17</sup> Waukesha Daily Freeman. September 11, 1987. Obituary of Byron C. Merten.

<sup>18</sup> Norris, Tim. "Catching the Spirit." Milwaukee Journal. October 26, 1989.

<sup>19</sup> Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin. Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, 1986. Vol. 2, 2-15 (Architecture).

<sup>20</sup> Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff. Spring City's Past: A Thematic History of Waukesha and the Final Report of Waukesha's Intensive Resources Survey. Op. Cit. pgs. 106 and 111.

<sup>21</sup> These districts are: The College Avenue Historic District; the Laflin Avenue Historic District; the McCall Street Historic District; and the Wisconsin Avenue Historic District.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Charles Merten House, Waukesha, Waukesha County, Wisconsin  
Section number 8 Page 5

---

examples of the Queen Anne style, but the Intensive Survey also identified a number of individual examples as well that it considered to be potentially eligible for future designation. Several of these buildings were afterwards incorporated into the Historic Resources of Waukesha Multiple Resource Nomination in October of 1983 and were subsequently placed on the NRHP (10-28-83). Among them were several good examples of middle-sized Queen Anne style residences similar in size and elaboration to the Merten house including: the Perry Grace house, 307 N. West Ave., built c. 1885; the Camillia Smith house, 603 N. West Ave., built in 1883; the Dwinell house, 442 W. College Ave., built between 1885-1890; and the Robert O. Jones house, 501 W. College Ave., built c. 1898.

The Merten house has been chosen as one of the first of the second group of Waukesha buildings to be nominated to the NRHP principally because of its high degree of integrity; the legacy of its eighty years of ownership by members of the Merten family. This high degree of integrity is important because while Queen Anne houses were once fairly widespread in Waukesha's older neighborhoods many have since been lost or greatly remodeled and many of those that still survive are threatened by changes in occupancy and usage; examples with the same degree of intactness as the Merten house have thus become quite rare. Its intact survival is especially important because the City of Waukesha hopes to use the house as a demonstration model for other restoration projects in this neighborhood.

The Charles Merten house is thus eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion C because it is a fine representative example of late Victorian period Queen Anne style residential design. The Merten house has most of the characteristic design features of this style such as an asymmetrical main facade, variegated exterior surface materials, wall projection, steeply pitched multi-gable roofs, cutaway bay windows, and a dominant front-facing gable. These exterior features are all in a highly intact state and the significance of the house is further strengthened by the survival of the highly intact interior. The house is also significant as a representative example of a house type that was closely associated with the middle class of its day in Waukesha and elsewhere in Wisconsin.

Archeological Potential

Whether any archeological remains are extant on this site is unknown at the present time. No information was discovered during the course of this research that suggests that any previous buildings ever occupied this site and early maps of the city that depict buildings on surrounding plats show nothing on this one. Neither was any information discovered during this research that suggested the possibility of extant remains dating from pre-European cultures or from prehistoric periods being uncovered from this site.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Charles Merten House, Waukesha, Waukesha County, Wisconsin  
Section number 9 Page 1

---

Major Bibliographical References Continued

Foote, Charles M. & J. W. Henion. Plat Book Of Waukesha County. C. M. Foote & Co., Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1891.

Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff. Historic Resources of Waukesha multiple resource nomination form. September, 1982. On file at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin Historic Preservation Division in Madison, Wisconsin.

----. Spring City's Past: A Thematic History of Waukesha and the Final Report of Waukesha's Intensive Resources Survey. Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1982.

Norris, Tim. "Catching the Spirit." Milwaukee Journal. October 26, 1989.

Sanborn-Perris Fire Insurance Maps of Waukesha, Wisconsin. Sanborn-Perris Map Company, New York, New York, 1911, 1917, 1922 and 1929.

Warren S. O'Brien Photo Collection. Photo #6742, October 7, 1926. Resthaven Hotel Folder, Waukesha County Historical Society.

The Waukesha Freeman. May 4, 1953; February 2, 1963; September 11, 1987.

Waukesha City Directory. Waukesha Gazetteer Co., Waukesha, Wisconsin, 1890-1891. Also, all directories from 1892-1992.

Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin. Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, 1986. Vol. 2.