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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Benjamin Brunson House is a late federal style, two story brick bearing wall residence, built in 1855. The house has a one and one half story appendage to the rear, a portion of which is original. The front elevation is divided by three equally spaced windows on the second level. Two windows and an offset entrance to the left are equally spaced on the first level below. The original six-over-six window sash has been replaced by two-over-two. However, the original window sizes and locations, as well as the top and side lighted sash at the entry are unchanged throughout the house. The three-sided bay window on the east or right elevation was added by the Brunsons sometime before the turn of the century.

Despite slight alterations over the years, the house has undergone very little change both to the exterior and interior since its construction. Exterior changes include the recent alterations to the original front porch and the stucco surfacing of the old Galena red brick. Most interior changes were made by the Brunson family who modified the once spartan, pioneer interior to accommodate their tastes as income allowed and late Victorian styles dictated.

The plan of the house is as one would expect for a detached, late federal style home. The entry is off-center leading immediately to the staircase constructed along the west wall. A parlor, dining room and kitchen (in the appendage) complete the first floor. The second floor is divided into sleeping rooms.

The house appears to be well maintained by the owner.



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The Brunson House is the lone surviving residence of one of Saint Paul's true city fathers and a symbol of the Brunson family's pioneering effort in the settling of the upper midwest frontier. Built in 1855 by Benjamin Brunson, the surveyor of the City of Saint Paul, the house is distinctive in its own right as one of the few surviving examples of federal style architecture in the state.

Born in Detroit in 1823, Benjamin Brunson along with his brother, Ira, and his father, the Rev. Alfred Brunson, were all prominent figures on the early midwestern frontier. His father, who initially made a reputation for himself in the Great Lakes naval battles during the War of 1812, became an itinerant Methodist preacher after the war in the new lands west of the Appalachians. The senior Brunson brought his family to the Michigan Territory (then including a portion of Minnesota) in 1835, where he was assigned a "circuit district" along and seventy miles either side of the Mississippi River from Rock Island, Illinois to the falls of Saint Anthony (now Minneapolis) as his congregation. Although based in Galena, Illinois, Rev. Brunson made his permanent residence in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, as this was the terminus of the famed Fox-Wisconsin River trade route and the main route for most of the first immigrants to the new territory. The elder Brunson traveled extensively both for religious and secular matters, as he also served as a Justice of the Peace, as the Indian Agent for the Chippewa at the LaPointe Agency on Lake Superior and in the Wisconsin Territorial Legislature. He is most well known in the Minnesota area for the establishment of the Kaposia Indian Mission in 1837 at Red Rock (now part of the suburb of Cottage Grove, south of Saint Paul) and the Saint Croix Academy, one of the first attempts in the state to create an institution of higher learning. His travels brought him many times to Benjamin's house in Saint Paul where he was no stranger to the city or its surroundings.

Benjamin Brunson came to Saint Paul in 1847 from Prairie du Chien to assist his brother, Ira, with the first platting of the city. His brother, while Deputy United States Marshall for the Wisconsin Territory in 1840, had made quite a reputation for himself, leading a group of Fort Snelling soldiers who drove the Canadian Selkirk colonists from the fort's military reservation unto the present day site of Saint Paul. This action led to the founding of Saint Paul, as these squatters became the first residents of the city and giving it its first name, "Pig's Eye".

(see continuation sheet)

SEE INSTRUCTION

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	INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM	Ramsey	·
	NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES	COUNTY	
Form 10-300a (July 1969)	UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE	STATE Minnesota	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·

8. Significance

Ira, with Benjamin's assistance, completed the first land survey in early 1847, laying out boundaries for the township as well as the city. However, the city plat was somehow never recorded and soon after was replatted and drawn by Benjamin who now receives credit for the original plat of the city. He also listed himself along with thirteen other gentlemen as one of the original city proprietors. He is credited with surveying nearly all the early city additions, including his own in 1849, as well as many of the city plats for neighboring Minnesotan communities. During his residence in Saint Paul which lasted until his death in 1898, Benjamin Brunson served as a Saint Paul representative in the first Minnesota Territorial Legislature, as a Justice of the Peace, as the city's first superintendent of mail carriers, as one of the city's earliest commission merchant's at the Old Steamboat Landing, and as the civil engineer for the Lake Superior Railroad, Minnesota's second railroad, which ran from Saint Paul to Duluth.

Benjanim Brunson built his house in 1855 in the area known as Brunson's addition to the City of Saint Paul, which was then a semi-rural area on the city's northeast outskirts. It is now an architectural and historical curiosity amidst Saint Paul's inner city warehouse and industrial district. Its history and architecture, however, tell the story of another era; the story of the birth of a city and its relationship to the development of midwestern United States through one family's eyes.



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

elon Keeper/

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Note: These changes apply to Brunson, Benjamin, House in Ramsey County, Minnesota.

REFERENCE NUMBER: 75001007

STATE: MINNESOTA

COUNTY: Ramsey

RESOURCE NAME (HISTORIC):

CITY:

VICINITY OF:

ADDRESS: 485 Kenny Rd.

CERTIFICATION DATE:

REMOVED DATE:

COMMENTS: Address on the computer print out was incorrect.

hina M. archabal

Nina M. Archabal State Historic Preservation Officer

JUN 1 7 1988 Date