

Perry, Melvin W. and Mary, House

Kewaunee County

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the

National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the

National Register.

See continuation sheet.

removed from the National

Register.

other, (explain:)

Eason H. Ball

1.23.08

[Signature]

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as
as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- structure
- site
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources
in the count)

<input type="checkbox"/> contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> noncontributing
1	buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
1	0 total

Name of related multiple property listing:
(Enter "N/A" if property not part of a multiple property
listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources
is previously listed in the National Register**

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Stone

walls Weatherboard

roof Asphalt

other Shingle

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY

Period of Significance

1909 - 1951

Significant Dates

1909
1920
1923

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Perry, Melvin William

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

De Long, W.W. (architect).
Pies, Frank (builder)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name/title	Brad and Shaun Schmiling	date	July 31, 2006
organization		telephone	920-487-0217
street&number	519 Third Street	zip code	54201
city or town	Algoma	state	WI

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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The Melvin W. and Mary Perry house, designed by Appleton, Wisconsin, architect W.W. De Long and constructed by builder Frank Pies, was the home of Melvin Perry from the time of its construction in 1909 until his death in 1951. The design incorporated elements of Shingle Style architecture with those of the Colonial Revival. When constructed in 1909, the dimensions of the house were 32 feet by 52 feet, five inches. De Long designed the structure to have weatherboard siding on the first floor and cut cedar shingles as the exterior treatment for the second floor and for the dormers of the attic. The shingle treatment flares out at the belt course between the first and second floors.

Exterior:

The basement walls of the house are constructed of rubble and faced with local split-faced granite. Originally divided into four rooms, the basement consisted of a vegetable cellar, laundry, fuel room, and boiler room. Partition walls are of poured concrete. Original plans included a large concrete-lined cistern under the kitchen. In later years, doorways were cut into the cistern walls to make it useable space.

The plane of the east façade is broken by the presence of a two-story gambrel-gabled projection. Although only 18 inches deep, this projection gives great visual interest to the street-facing side of the dwelling. The facing of the foundation of this projection from ground level to the base of the first floor windows is split-faced granite fieldstone, found locally; Bedford stone was used as a cap. The two basement windows have Bedford stone decorative keystone arch treatment. Two pairs of decorative wooden columns with composition Ionic capitals flank the triple living room window. Each panel of the window incorporates leaded clear beveled glass. A Palladian window occupies the face of the gambrel at the second floor level, and centered above it is an oval oculus in the Colonial Revival style at the attic level.

The front entrance to the house is inset into the plain of the façade. The entry is supported by a large semi-circular ashlar arch constructed of Bedford stone. Parapets of Bedford stone in broken ashlar flank the front entry steps. The entry porch extends in a semi-circle beyond the north wall of the structure. In place of railing and balusters, split-face granite was used to give the porch overall mass and a distinct look of strength. Three Ionic columns (capitals since removed) support the semi-circular portion of the porch. The entry door is flanked by leaded beveled sidelights. Colored mosaic tile was used as the surface of the entry porch floor.

Centered above the stone arch at the second story level is a pair of windows which angle outward about a foot at the center, forming an oriel of sorts. The upper sash of each window contains leaded beveled glass set at the diagonal. Centered above the arch at attic level is a small dormer with Renaissance Revival festoon. Two small leaded windows occupy the dormer.

The north face of the house at the first floor level has two Colonial Revival leaded beveled glass oculi windows at the stair landing level. Three double-hung windows with leaded glass upper panels complete the first floor prospect. The second floor of the north façade has a total of four windows, one of which is a single sash, the others double-hung.

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Of particular visual interest is the north attic gable. Here the treatment is distinctly Shingle Style. A pair of single sash windows with leaded diamond panes is set deeply into the gable, the shingle treatment forming a quarter circle from the plane of the gable to the inset of the windows. The shingle treatment flares out in an arc to form a swell above the windows.

The west façade, or rear face, of the house reflects most the changes that have taken place over the years. As originally conceived, the kitchen was a one-story projection off the back of the house. Formerly a one-story glazed-in porch spanned most of the west side of the house. This is now an open porch with a circa 1980s treated wood railing and spindles. A gabled ground-level basement entryway was added sometime after 1920. The second floor of the west side of the house originally had an open deck porch centered above the kitchen projection. In 1920 this open porch was enclosed for use as a sunroom. Located to the right of the former porch is a single double hung window.

An external chimney faced with Bedford stone at the first floor level and constructed of red brick from that point upward, is a prominent feature of the south side of the house. In 1920 a one-story sunroom was added. Three double-hung windows are found at the second story level. A fire escape door, added in the 1960s when the building was used as women's convalescent home, was recently removed and replaced with a lunette (located between the central window and the chimney). At the attic level is a small shed dormer with three leaded glass windows as well as a triangular gable with a pair of leaded diamond-paned windows.

Two major changes were made to the exterior of the house over the years. The first was the addition of the second floor west sun porch and first floor south sunroom in 1920. In 1923 a garage with a linking breakfast room was added to the north side of the structure. In each instance, careful attention to detail was taken so that these additions harmonized well with the existing structure. The façade of the garage, for example, incorporated the use of two Ionic columns flanking the garage door, and a decorative round window with scroll-cut grillwork was incorporated into the triangular pediment of the garage addition. It is unclear if the current garage addition dates from 1923, or was altered again at a later date. The current footprint differs from the Sanborn map.

In the 1920s or 1930s the second floor and attic exterior walls were covered with stucco. By the mid-1980s the stucco had seriously deteriorated and was falling off in large chunks. The owner at the time decided to remove the stucco and was quite surprised to find the cedar shingles in very good condition.

Interior:

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the interior of the house is the extent to which the architect employed decorative elements produced by Perry's own firm. Perry and his wife loved to entertain in their home, and they often had potential business clients over to dinner. In a very real sense, the house was an advertisement for the products and quality of craftsmanship produced at Perry's veneer plant.

The entrance foyer and living room make extensive use of mahogany veneer for baseboard and, in the foyer,

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wall treatment. A pair of mahogany Ionic order columns marks the entrance to the living room, and squared mahogany Ionic pilasters mark the entrance to the dining room. Originally the foyer and dining room flowed together with a much more open concept. In the 1920 remodeling, the space between two of the pilasters was filled in with mahogany paneling to create a more enclosed dining space. To the right of the entry door, the stairway leads to the second floor. Risers are mahogany veneer and the treads are maple.

The living room features a window seat beneath the triple leaded glass front windows. Mahogany Ionic columns flank the window seat on either side of the window. The present living room ceiling, probably installed in the 1920s, is constructed of painted veneer and creates a reverse pan effect. The living room fireplace was removed at the same time the current ceiling treatment was installed. The original tile hearth was removed and the flooring patched with maple. Flooring throughout the living room, foyer, and dining room is maple with a decorative border of alternating courses of oak and maple.

Oak veneer paneling to the height of the plate rail was used as wall treatment for the dining room. Frames and panels alike are constructed of oak veneer from Perry's plant. The beamed oak ceiling, including the beams themselves, is also veneer. Acanthus leaf composition brackets, stained dark oak, support the plate rail. Originally a fireplace occupied a major section of the west wall of the dining room. At some point, perhaps in the 1920s, the firebox was sealed off and covered over with oak veneer. The tile hearth was also removed and maple flooring was used as a patch.

Really nothing remains of the 1909 kitchen, or of the kitchen of the 1920s. When the house was converted for use as a women's convalescent home in 1960, the kitchen was totally gutted.

When the sunroom was added on the south side of the den in 1920, the south chimney was used for an Arts and Crafts style fireplace in the expanded den. Also at this time, the original back porch was enclosed to enable the expansion of the downstairs bathroom and the enlarging of the master bedroom. The bathroom walls were surfaced in subway style ceramic tile and hexagonal tile was used for flooring, all still in existence today. The current pedestal sink also dates to the 1920 remodeling.

De Long's design concept for the second floor also remains largely intact. Three bedrooms and a smaller maid's room occupy this floor. The southwest bedroom was designed with a colonnade to separate the sleeping area from a seating alcove. The three main bedrooms were all designed to have walk-in closets. Over the years the upstairs bathroom has been changed out with different fixtures and the stairway to the attic has also been moved. The back staircase is still in place.

Two distinctive features are to be found in the basement of the house. The basement of the 1920 sunroom has a walk-in wine cellar complete with a massive cast iron bank vault door. Clay sewer tiles embedded in concrete form racks for wine bottles. A small portion under the garage was excavated to provide a storage area for root vegetables.

The current owners have taken a great deal of care to plan a sensitive rehabilitation of the house. They are

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keenly aware of the historic fabric of both the exterior and interior of the building. Happily, those historic elements are being preserved for future generations to enjoy.

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Statement of Significance:

The Melvin W. Perry house is historically significant for its association with the life of Mel Perry. Melvin Perry's role in the community included entrepreneur, industrialist, politician, and philanthropist. Perry, through his lifetime of work and service, was strongly influential in the growth and development of his community. The house is a vital link to his life and times and is an important part of the heritage of Algoma, Wisconsin. The Perry House is the property most closely associated with Perry's life. He lived here from the time of the home's completion in 1909 until his death in 1951. It was during these years that he was actively involved in the establishment and running of important Algoma industries. His contribution in this field earned him the name of "Father of Algoma industry," the title bestowed by the *Algoma Record Herald* in 1967.

Historical background and significance:

Algoma's settlement began in 1851 when Orrin Warner, John Hughes and Edward Tweeddale came to the area to explore its fishing potential. In fewer than five years, the community had grown to include farmers, lumberman, fisherman, and merchants and by 1855 had 120 residents. The arrival of German and Bohemian families from the Racine-Kenosha area boosted the population to 1152 people by the time of the 1860 census.

The 1880s and 1890s were a time of substantial growth with early industries established. Among the first were those founded and headed by Melvin Perry, including the Ahnapee Veneer and Seating Company in 1892. In 1897 Ahnapee changed its name to Algoma. The 1900 census showed a population of 1738 residents. Manufacturing, heavily concentrated in wood products, contributed to the community's rising population through the 1930s. World War II brought further business and prosperity to the community and led to further population growth.

Melvin (Mel) Perry remains perhaps the single most influential person in the growth and development of the city of Algoma, Wisconsin. Like other successful men of his time, he was born of modest circumstances, had little formal education, was faced with tremendous challenges and responsibilities as a young man, but used his resourcefulness and ingenuity to benefit himself, his family, and the larger community.

Melvin William Perry was born in Racine, Wisconsin, on February 26, 1864, while his father, William N. Perry, was serving in the Union Army. William N. Perry had come to Northeastern Wisconsin in 1855 and settled in Ahnapee (now Algoma) in 1856. The elder Perry owned and operated a chair factory on the village's Mill Street. The factory closed during the time Perry was serving in the war, and although he returned wounded and in ill health, William Perry reopened the business. Unable to recover his health, he finally sold the factory in 1870. Undoubtedly, as a child, Mel spent large amounts of time around the chair factory, learning basic woodworking skills and developing an interest in mechanical technology.

Perry attended Ahnapee's two-room frame schoolhouse. His father was very interested in his eldest son's education and encouraged Mel to study further to become a doctor. It is also interesting to note that the elder

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Perry served on the village school board and supervised the construction of a brick school building built in 1876. It was William Perry's desire to see a high school established in the village. The elder Perry died in December of 1878, forcing the fourteen year old youth to support his mother, two brothers, and infant sister and set aside all dreams of a medical career. However, from an early age, Mel had shown a keen interest in machinery, and this would prove to be of great advantage to him.

By the time Mel was twenty years old, he had been contracted to build houses in Ahnapee (now Algoma) and in the neighboring communities of Kewaunee and Sturgeon Bay. When his mother died in 1886, Perry moved to Milwaukee in hopes of getting a job erecting flour mill machinery for the A. P. Allis Corporation. The job did not materialize, and the disappointed young man ultimately found a job in a Sheboygan, Wisconsin factory, working at the rate of 12 ½ cents per hour. Within a couple of years, Perry had risen through the ranks and had become superintendent of the company's two plants.

In the year 1892, G. W. Wing, a lawyer and prominent citizen of Kewaunee, Wisconsin, contacted Perry about the feasibility of starting a veneer company in their community. Perry was actively interested and informed the Kewaunee Advancement Association that with start-up costs of \$20,000, he would be able to put a plant in operation.

Word of this proposal spread quickly to Perry's home community ten miles to the north. Citizens of Ahnapee (Algoma) wondered why a veneer plant could not be located in their community instead. Perry told the interested group that the only thing that stood in the way was \$20,000.

The twenty-eight year old Perry was somewhat skeptical that his home community would be able to raise the needed capital to begin operation. However, he set a deadline to raise the capital before he headed back south again to assess Kewaunee's fund raising efforts. By 11:00 a.m. of the next day, the community of Ahnapee had raised \$19,000 dollars, enough money to start up a plant, Perry felt. The Ahnapee Seating and Veneer Company formally incorporated on May 3, 1892.

The city of Ahnapee (now Algoma) was ripe for industrial development. Beginning in the mid 1880s the community made concerted efforts to try to bring rail service into the town. Citizens were eager to have their community, already a port on Lake Michigan, more readily linked to the outside world by rail. Prior to the arrival of the railroad, the town was really little more than a village whose businesses supported the local farming community. With no rail link, there were no major industries. Efforts did finally pay off, and the Ahnapee & Western's first train rolled into town on September 5, 1892, precisely the same time that the veneer factory was under construction.

Construction of Ahnapee Seating and Veneer Company's factory began in mid May of 1892 on property adjacent the Ahnapee & Western's right-of-way. Actual veneer production began in September of 1892 with 15 employees and two executives on the payroll. It went on to become the largest employer in Algoma.

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The early years of the plant were challenging, and the company produced, as Perry put it, "everything from outhouses to bank furniture." However, the company soon narrowed its focus to the manufacture of veneer seating and other furniture for railway stations, churches, banks, and other commercial applications. In addition, the company produced a line of commercial veneer paneling.

By the time the Perrys sold their interest to the U.S. Plywood Corporation of New York in 1941, the plant had been physically expanded several times, the workforce had grown to over 500 employees, and the capital interests of the company at the time of ownership transfer amounted to over \$900,000. Perry's business venture still exists today as Algoma Hardwoods and operates out of the same plant expanded from the original 1892 building.

Perry's industrial interests did not focus only on the veneer industry he created in Ahnapee. He was also instrumental in organizing the Algoma Net Company in 1914, still in business, and the Algoma Foundry and Machine Company in 1922. At the time of his death in 1951, Perry was president of both those firms. At its high point in the 1950s the Algoma Net Company employed about 100 workers. In addition, Perry was one of the founders in 1911 and president (1911-1920) of the Citizen's Bank of Algoma.

Perry was also politically active in the community and at the state level. He served as a city alderman for several terms and was the city's mayor from 1910 to 1914. In 1911, Perry ran for and was elected to the Wisconsin State Senate, First District, on the Republican ticket. He served in this capacity until 1919. In 1904, he was named as alternate delegate to the Republican National Convention in Chicago.

For many years Perry served on the board of the Door-Kewaunee County Normal School and also served on the building committee of the Algoma Public School when a new building was built in 1934. For a man with little formal education, Perry, like his father before him, certainly took an active interest in the education of the community's youth.

Additionally, Perry was instrumental in the city's purchase, in the early 1920s, of the former Van Camp's Canning factory on the shores of Lake Michigan. He assisted the community in its redevelopment of the property into a community center. The DugOut, as it has come to be known, includes meeting rooms, a gymnasium, and also an American Legion Clubhouse, all within the walls of the former factory.

In 1924, Perry deeded over two blocks of his own property to be developed into a city park and athletic field. His son Ralph died as a result of wounds sustained in France on Armistice Day 1919. Ralph Perry Memorial Field honors the memory of the fallen soldier who so loved sports while a high school student here in Algoma.

Mel Perry shaped the existence of the Algoma community in many ways. His house at 519 Third Street, a place he planned and dearly loved, serves as a fitting tribute to the life and work of this remarkable man. Many of the changes made to the house occurred during his lifetime, reflecting Perry's long time association with the property. In addition, the house was a showpiece for products produced by Perry's company. Perry played an

Wisconsin Word Processing Format (Approved 1/92)

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important role in the rise of industry in Algoma. He founded and ran important local companies that were major employers, including Ahnapee Veneer and Seating Company (Algoma Plywood and Veneer), Algoma Net Company, and the Algoma Foundry and Machine Company.

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Verbal boundary description:

Lots 5 and 6, Block 9, Youngs & Steele Addition, City of Algoma, Kewaunee County, Wisconsin.

Verbal boundary justification:

The nominated property includes the entire lot that has been historically associated with the property, as assembled by M.W. Perry in 1909.

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The following applies to all photographs submitted for the nomination of the M.W. Perry House at 519 Third Street.

Historic Property Name: PERRY, Melvin W. and Mary, HOUSE

Location: Algoma, Kewaunee County, Wisconsin

Name of Photographer: Robert D. Hoppe

Date: July 2006

Location of Negatives: Wisconsin Historical Society

Photo #1 of 10

View of east façade of house from Third St.

Photo #2 of 10

View of south side of house from adjacent property.

Photo #3 of 10

View of west side of house from alley.

Photo #4 of 10

View of north side of house, breakfast room, and garage from Third St.

Photo #5 of 10

View of front porch detail and stair landing windows taken from driveway.

Photo #6 of 10

View of north gable of house taken from driveway.

Photo #7 of 10

View of entry foyer of house.

Photo #8 of 10

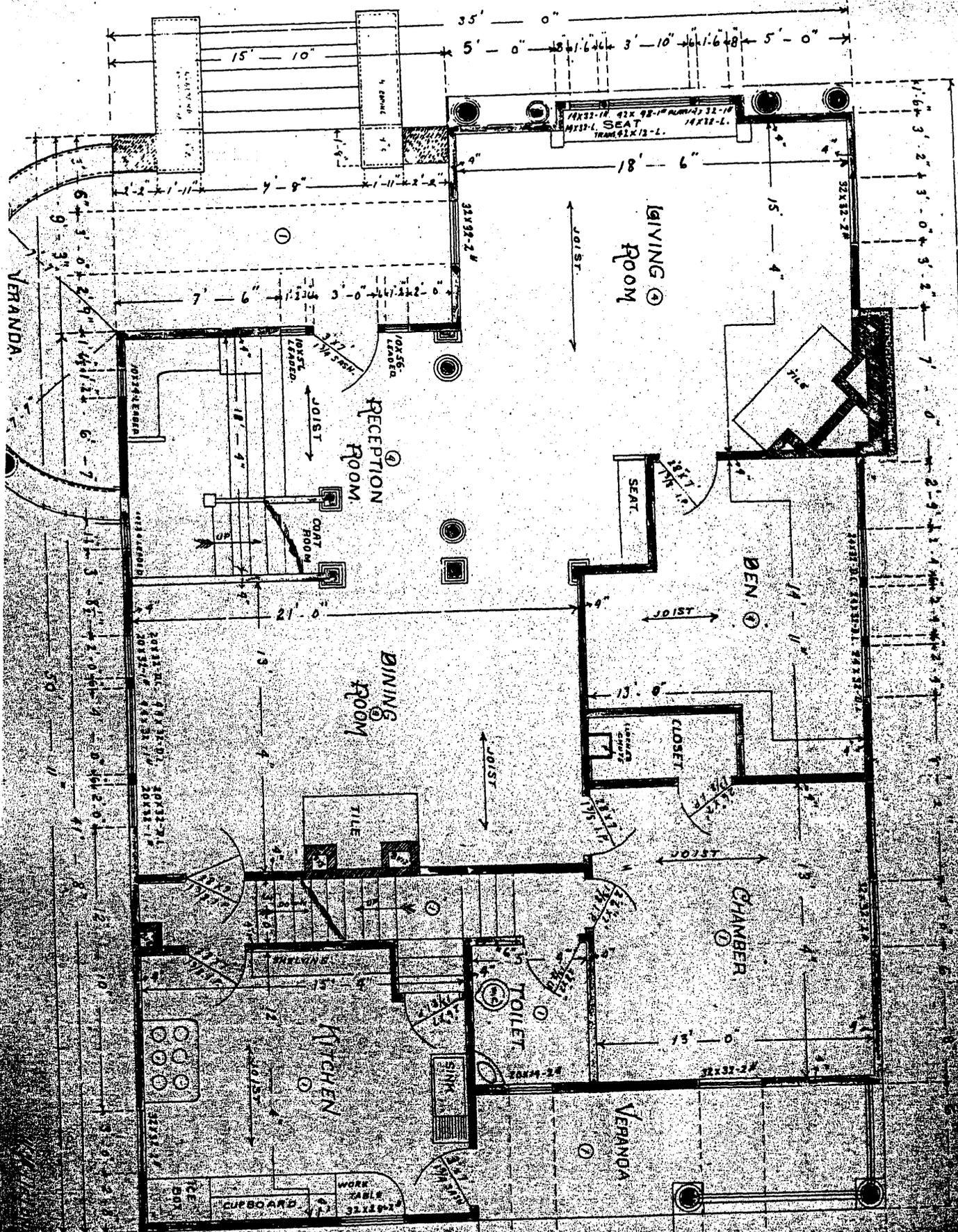
View of dining room veneer paneling and ceiling.

Photo #9 of 10

View of 1923 fireplace in den of house.

Photo #10 of 10

View of veneer ceiling detail in living room of house.



PERRY, MELVIN W. AND MARY, HOUSE
 ALGOMA, KEWAUNEE COUNTY, WISCONSIN

FIGURE 1: 1909 BLUEPRINT, FIRST FLOOR

Not to Scale

