

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED APR 17 1980

DATE ENTERED

MAY 23 1980

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Blodgett, Selvy, House

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

417 Bluff Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Beloit

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Wisconsin

VICINITY OF

First

CODE

55

COUNTY

Rock

CODE

105

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
DISTRICT	PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	AGRICULTURE	MUSEUM
BUILDING(S)	X PRIVATE	UNOCCUPIED	COMMERCIAL	PARK
STRUCTURE	BOTH	WORK IN PROGRESS	EDUCATIONAL	X PRIVATE RESIDENCE
SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>		ENTERTAINMENT	RELIGIOUS
OBJECT	IN PROCESS	ACCESSIBLE	GOVERNMENT	SCIENTIFIC
	BEING CONSIDERED	YES: RESTRICTED	INDUSTRIAL	TRANSPORTATION
		YES: UNRESTRICTED	MILITARY	OTHER:
		NO		

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas C. Carson

STREET &amp; NUMBER

417 Bluff Street

CITY, TOWN

Beloit

VICINITY OF

STATE

Wisconsin 53511

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Rock County Court House

STREET &amp; NUMBER

51 South Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Janesville

STATE

Wisconsin 53545

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Rock County Historic Sites and Buildings

DATE

1975

FEDERAL STATE X COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Rock County Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

Janesville

STATE  
Wisconsin 53545

## 7 DESCRIPTION

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

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

The Selvy Blodgett house is a relatively well preserved 1½ story gabled limestone house in simple Greek Revival style. It is constructed of two sections which are flush at the rear, or east side. The main, north section is ca. 22' wide and 27' deep, facing west, and the other wing, recessed about a foot from the front, extends about 15' to the south and 26' to the east. A one-story veranda at some point was added and then removed from the west wall of the south block, and a gabled one-story porch or addition was also attached and later removed from the south wall. Traces of these roof lines are still visible on the stone walls. A window or door on the south side has also been blocked up with stone.

There is a one-story 6' x 13' enclosed porch on the back or east side of the south wing. The entrance to the kitchen from this porch is a "Dutch door". A red brick chimney and fireplace were added about the turn of the century to the back side of the main section, and a small gabled porch of the same vintage was added to the west front entrance. The entrance received a replacement door of early 20th century vintage with panes of colored and textured glass about 20 years ago. There is also a small square window on the second story of the entrance facade, which seems to have been added same time ago.

These changes do not detract from the integrity of the house, which retains its thick limestone walls, its six-over-six windows on all sides of the building, its wooden cornice with Greek Revival cornice returns, and its basic orthogonal shape and blocky proportions.

The stone was laid more precisely on the front, west wall of the main section, where mortar bands are raised to emphasize the rather precise courses, while the stone was rather randomly laid on the other walls of both the main section and the south wing. A stone water table extends from the west around the north wide of the main wing, but not on the south wing. Only the first story has windows on the north wall; there are two stories of windows on the other walls. Window lintels are generally constructed of flat, brick-sized stones, though a wooden lintel was used on the first story west wall of the south wing, where the veranda was removed.

Interior walls between the two sections are about 1½' thick, yet both were constructed about the same time. The plastered interior is well maintained. The first floor ceilings in the main section are about 8' high, but are slightly lower in the south wing. An early 20th century arch separates the entrance room ("front parlor") from the living room ("back parlor") with its simple handsome early 20th century fireplace. The dining room, with an old built-in corner cupboard, and a modernized kitchen are in the south block. There are four bedrooms as well as a bath upstairs. The floors of the two bedrooms in the south block are wide pine boards with "square" nails, while the floors in the main section are late, 4" wide hardwood. A basement was added same years after the construction of the house, with basement window additions cut into the stone foundations on the north side. Concrete floors and walls have been added, and the basement rafters are of milled lumber.

The present owners have maintained the house well, remodeling the kitchen and bathroom and beginning to restore the bedrooms without detracting from the historic quality of the house.

## 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"/> XOTHER (SPECIFY) association with locally significant family
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES ca. 1847-50

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the Selvy Blodgett house to Rock County and the city of Beloit is found in its stone construction and simple Greek Revival architectural style, and in its association with the locally significant Blodgett family, who were early explorers and settlers of Beloit.

Architecture: The Selvy Blodgett house is significant on architectural grounds as a well-preserved example of a type and period of construction. It reflects the utilization of local materials, the limestone which was at hand in the township, and expresses the popularity in the 1840's of the Greek Revival style in the old Northwest Territories, as it appeared in a local variation.<sup>1</sup> Greek Revival in inspiration are the blocky proportions, the gable roofs with cornice returns, the windows with straight lintels, and the six-over-six panes, many of the latter of which are retained.

Limestone was a fairly common building material in southern Rock County (and in the eastern and southwestern parts of Rock County, as well) in the period of the 1840's to the 1870's. There were many local quarries; three were located within the Town of Beloit in the early 1870's.<sup>2</sup> In 1855, 108 of the 583 dwelling houses in Beloit were of stone; only 18 of the limestone dwellings (in vernacular, Greek Revival, and Italianate styles) were surveyed as remaining within Beloit city limits by 1975.<sup>3</sup> Several of these have been razed since then. The Selvy Blodgett house is one of the best preserved examples which remain.

Exploration and Settlement: The Selvy Blodgett house represents the early exploration and settlement of the area around and including the present City of Beloit.

Selvy Blodgett (1812-81) was a son of the first permanent settler of Beloit, Caleb Blodgett, who in December 1836 purchased "three looks" in each direction, i.e., about four sections of land, from trapper and fur trader Joseph Thibault for \$200 (some accounts say \$250) and thereby started the settlement of Beloit.<sup>4</sup>

Selvy Blodgett was born in Batavia, New York, and worked his way westward to Ohio. From Ohio, he came to Beloit in 1837. Selvy's wife, Mahalia Norris Blodgett and their firstborn son, William, had come to Beloit in 1836 with Selvy's father.<sup>5</sup> The Selvy Blodgett's had a second son, Selvy, Jr., June 10, 1838, who was considered to be the first boy born within the Beloit village proper.<sup>6</sup>

In any case, Selvy settled in Beloit Township (S. 11, Yost Park area) just north of the village of Beloit on the east side of the Rock River in a timber cabin about June 1838.<sup>7</sup> He also may have farmed near Rockton, Ill. before he moved to the west

## **9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Guernsey and Willard, History of Rock County. Transactions of the Rock County Agricultural Society, Janesville, 1856, pp. 47, 63.

History of Rock County, Chicago, 1879, pp. 496, 616.

Portrait and Biographical Album, Chicago, 1889, p. 776.

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

## **10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1.0

UTM REFERENCES Quadrangle Name: Beloit, Wis.

Scale: 1:24000

A	1	6	3	3	2	2	6	0	4	7	0	7	0	8	0
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING													
C									D						

B															
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING													
D															

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

Lot 109, Hackett's Addition, S. 66' of N. 149 $\frac{1}{2}$ '

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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## **11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Nancy Belle Douglas, National Register Officer

ORGANIZATION

Rock County Historical Society

DATE

November 29, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 896

TELEPHONE

(608) 756-4509

CITY OR TOWN

Janesville

STATE

Wisconsin 53545

## **12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL  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

TITLE Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE

3/28/80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

W. Ray Price  
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: Kristin J. O'Connell  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ENTERED ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
DATE 5/23/80  
DATE 5/19/80

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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side of Beloit. In June, 1847 he bought a lot in Hackett's Addition on the west bluff overlooking the Rock River from his brother-in-law, John Hackett, Beloit's first postmaster and merchant. Though his house could conceivably have been built before he bought the lot, the price of \$100 indicates that he probably constructed it soon afterwards; he was living there by 1850.<sup>8</sup> In 1852, he followed the gold rush to California, where he stayed for three months.

In 1886 ownership of the house passed to daughter Sabra Blodgett Fenton Smith (1841-1928), who was born on the Yost Park farm and who was also considered a pioneer of the Beloit settlement. She and her husband Frank took out a \$2500 mortgage in 1892, then in 1893 they sold the house to F. N. Gardner, who took out several mortgages, including those of 1898 (\$1600), 1904 (\$500) and 1907 (\$2300), some of which may have paid for the chimney and interior alterations. The property remained in Gardner family possession until 1943. The present owners bought it in 1965.

Other: Association with a Locally Significant Family The house is significant for its association with one of Beloit's best known early settlers, one of the founders of a local milling dynasty which lasted over 100 years in Rock County.

In 1857 Selvy and his son William purchased a half interest in the flouring mill which John Hackett had established on the west side of the river north of his addition in 1848.<sup>9</sup> In 1867 they purchased Hackett's interest, and the mill became known as the Blodgett Mill. After some sales and transformations, the business was reorganized in 1890 as a corporation, the Blodgett Milling Company, which was headed by William Blodgett until his death in 1901. Following the destruction of the mill by fire in 1898, the business was moved to Janesville, where it continued under the administration of Blodgett descendants until 1960. In 1960 the Blodgett Milling Company closed and the descendants moved to related businesses in Minneapolis.<sup>10</sup> The Janesville mill itself was razed for parking.

The milling business was significant to Rock County in the 1850's and 60's, when wheat was the principal crop to which the prairie land was broken. Wisconsin as a whole ranked ninth in the nation in the production of wheat in 1850, and third in 1860.<sup>11</sup>

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Footnotes

1. According to Perrin and to Newcomb, the simplification of Greek Revival forms which appeared in such pattern books as those Asher Benjamin and Minard Lafever, combined with the use of local materials, resulted in an indigenous type of Greek Revival in Wisconsin which was different from that of any other state of the Old Northwest. R. W.E. Perrin, The Architecture of Wisconsin, Madison: SHSW, 1967, pp. 63-64; R. Newcomb, Architecture of the Old Northwest Territory, Chicago: U of Chicago, 1950, p. 126.

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Footnotes (continued)

2. Combination Atlas Map of Rock County, 1873, p. 42.
3. Guernsey and Willard, History of Rock County; Transactions of the Rock County Agricultural Society, Janesville, 1856, p. 63; Rock County Survey, 1975. In 1855, besides the 108 stone houses, there were 20 cobblestone houses, 55 brick houses, and 400 frame houses in Beloit.
4. Ibid., p. 47; Book of Beloit, Beloit, 1936, p. 7, etc. Caleb Blodgett evidently visited the countryside in 1835 and returned to purchase in 1836.
5. Brown, Rock County, Chicago, 1908, p. 923.
6. History of Rock County, Chicago, 1879, p. 616. According to the biography of William Blodgett, Op. cit., 1908, p. 924, Selvy Jr. was born on the Yost Park farm north of the village in Beloit Township where daughter Sabra was born in 1841; Sabra B.F. Smith, Obit., Beloit Daily News, 1928.
7. Op. cit., 1879, p. 527. Actually, his uncle Selvy Kidder had title to the Yost Park land from the federal government. In 1843 Selvy Kidder sold the land to William Yost, on which a cobblestone house, now part of the Riverside Motel, is located.
8. Portrait and Biographical Album, 1889, p. 776; Rock County Directories, 1857, 1858. Centennial Trails, Beloit, 1936, #74, dates the house to 1844. John Hackett's house (on the site of the present Municipal Building) was the first one built on the west side of the river, in 1842-3. The 1858 Rock County map mistakenly lists the Selvy Blodgett home to the west of Lot 109. Selvy bought Lot 158 on Farm (present Highland) Street for \$375 in 1856 and sold it to William for \$1200 in 1859, but the directories list his residence for these years as Bluff Street.
9. Op. cit., 1889, p. 776; Op. cit., 1908, p. 170. Besides Blodgett's mill on the race by the Rock River, there were also two mills on Turtle Creek, Goodhue's "Old Red Mill", built in 1837 and the Brooks Mill, built ca. 1859.
10. Op. cit., 1908, p. 925; Janesville Directories, 1960-61.
11. Op. cit., 1879, p. 152.

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Brown, Wm. F., Rock County, Chicago, 1908, pp. 170, 923-925.

Book of Beloit, Beloit, 1936, pp. 6-8, 12.

Centennial Trails, Beloit, 1936, #74.

Douglas and Hartung, Rock County Historic Sites and Buildings, Janesville, 1976,  
illus. p. 17, Pl. 4c; pp. 195-7.

Abstracts, deeds; Files of the RCHS.