

United States Department of Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Cole, William I., House

other names/site number N/A

### 2. Location

street & number 303 Gillett Street

N/A not for publication

city or town Fond du Lac

N/A vicinity

state Wisconsin code WI county Fond du Lac

code 39 zip code 53935

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Alvin L. Gougeon*  
Signature of certifying official/Title

January 31, 2002  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Cole, William I., House  
Name of Property

Fond du Lac  
County and State

Wisconsin

#### 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:)

*Edson H. Beall*

*3/28/02*

*[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)

Number of Resources within Property	
contributing	noncontributing
1	1 buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
1	1 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)

Italianate

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation stone

walls wood

roof asphalt

other wood

#### Narrative Description

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

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**GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

The William I. Cole House is an Italianate style residence that sits on a small urban lot in a large residential neighborhood in Fond du Lac, a medium-sized city in east-central Wisconsin. The Cole House is located in the city's large east side residential neighborhood, an area that developed between the city's downtown commercial district and the eastern outskirts of the city. The center of this neighborhood is along East Division and Sheboygan streets, which developed as a prominent residential neighborhood of large, stylish houses, primarily during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Gillett Street developed in a similar manner, but with smaller, generally more middle-class houses. The neighborhood continued to expand during the twentieth century, eventually ending in suburban neighborhoods on the east and north sides. The house was built in circa 1857 and moved in circa 1906.

The Cole House sits in the 300 block of Gillett Street, in the eastern area of a historic neighborhood, several blocks from downtown Fond du Lac. In this part of the neighborhood, the housing is fairly dense; most of the lots are medium to small in size and with similar set-backs from the street. Gillett Street is a relatively narrow residential street with improved concrete curbs, gutters and sidewalks. A terrace lies between the curb and the sidewalk on both sides of the street. The street is not a main thoroughfare and carries mostly traffic specific to the houses on the street. The topography of this part of the neighborhood is generally flat and dotted with mature trees and shrubs, along with smaller, more recent plantings, many replacing older trees that have been removed.

Although the Cole House has a mature lot, it has few large landscape features. The lot consists mostly of lawn space punctuated with some mature shrubs. There are no large trees, or trees of any sort, in the terrace in front of the house. On the west side of the house, there is a paved driveway that leads to a two-car garage at the rear of the lot. The one-story garage dates from the late twentieth century. It has a gable roof, an opening in the gable peak, and a large garage door that spans almost the entire south elevation. The garage is a non-contributing element of the property.

*Exterior*

The W. I. Cole House has a large two-story main block with a smaller one and one-half story rear wing projecting from the north elevation. The house sits on a raised fieldstone foundation that dates from circa 1906, when the house was moved to this location. The foundation has narrow three-light rectangular openings lighting the basement. The main block has a very low-pitched hip roof with a deck that may have once been decorated with cresting. The very wide,

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overhanging roof eaves are supported by paired scroll brackets attached to a paneled wooden frieze. The rear wing has gable roof that originally covered a smaller wing than exists today. This wing was slightly enlarged during a 1946 remodeling and expansion effort, along with the remodeling of the east side porch. This has created a complex gable roofline at the rear of the wing along with a flat roof over the enclosed porch. The house is covered with clapboard siding and accented by a wooden water table. Four paneled pilasters with cornice capitals accent the corners of the main block, as well.

Each elevation has both common and distinctive details. The front or south elevation of the house has regular fenestration of single-light sashes decorated with architrave surrounds that have arched cornice moldings. Under the cornices are identical classical decorations made up of shields and acanthus leaves. The two end windows of the second story and the east end window of the first story are slightly enclosed with wood and modern sashes. On the first story, the windows sit on wood panels.

The main entrance to the house sits slightly east of center and consists of a double wood and glass door topped with an elliptically-arched transom. The doors have decorative panels sitting under long, narrow, round-arched openings. They are flanked by pilasters with scroll bases. At the top of each pilaster are two large brackets that support a heavy arched cornice.

Covering the entrance is a porch that features a flat roof supported by two groups of three plain square posts decorated with long scroll brackets. The posts sit on paneled bases on a wood deck. The base of the porch is covered with latticework panels and the same panels extend across the foundation of this elevation, obscuring the stonework. A modern wrought-iron balustrade sits between the posts and the wall, as well as along the wide wooden steps that lead to the porch. The porch was probably built circa 1906, when the house was moved to this location.

The west elevation of the house has two sections, the main block and the rear wing. The main block elevation is punctuated with sashes that are of the same size and trimmed in the same manner as those of the main or south elevation. At the center of the second story, two windows are joined together under a single architrave surround and the window in the south end of the first story is also partially enclosed with wood and a modern single-light sash. The other two windows on the first story are filled with period single-light sashes. On the second story, all of the windows are filled with period two-over-two-light sashes.

Two similar openings sit in the rear wing of the west elevation. A shed-roofed dormer projects from the roof of this elevation of the rear wing. It has two modern single-light sashes. The dormer was added during the 1946 remodeling and expansion of the rear wing.

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The east elevation of the main block has features from circa 1906. On this elevation, there are two openings with architrave surrounds. The two other openings consist of an octagonal oriel at the center of the elevation and a two-story octagonal bay just to its north. The oriel has a hip roof with wide eaves decorated by thin scroll brackets, a denticulated frieze, and a curved and tapered base. The three openings sit on wood panels and are accented by four thin, round pilasters with turned knobs. The three openings are filled with sashes glazed with plain glass panels surrounded by borders of multi-colored stained glass.

The two-story bay has cornices decorated like the oriel. The openings in the bays sit on panels and four openings are filled with single-light sashes accented by the architrave surrounds. The central openings of the bay are enclosed, on the second story with clapboard siding, and on the first story with a large, modern, multi-paned window.

The rear elevation primarily consists of the north wall of the main block. It features a modern two-over-two-light sash on the second story and a central entrance covered with a modern gable-roofed overhang. Along the east wall of the rear elevation is the enclosed porch, which was enclosed to create a modern kitchen for the house. This enclosure has modern two-over-two-light sashes and a flat roof with a modern metal balustrade. Another entrance leads into the interior of the main block at the northeast corner where the enclosed porch meets the north elevation of the main block.

*Interior*

The main entrance leads into a small entryway and another set of wood and glass doors with a rectangular transom. The second set of wood and glass doors is similar to the main entry doors, with small panels sitting under tall and narrow round arched openings. These doors lead into another entryway that opens into the main hallway of the first floor through a painted four-panel wood door. On the east wall of the second entryway, there is a four-panel painted wood door that leads into a small room in the southeast corner of the house. This room is also the terminus for the original main staircase. During the late twentieth century, the original curved staircase that ended here was altered to end at a new entrance that opened to the main hallway through modern "French" style doors. The current owners have returned the end of the staircase to its original location and have constructed a short staircase off a corner of the original staircase that ends at the large entrance into the main hallway.

Several details are similar throughout the first floor of the house. The floors are all covered with narrow maple flooring, unless otherwise noted. This flooring was probably installed around or

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after 1906. The walls of the first floor are a combination of historic plaster and modern surfaces. Most of the rooms have wide painted baseboards, and there is a combination of historic and modern moldings around doors and windows, as noted. Most of the original doors into the first floor rooms have been retained, but some have been altered, again as noted. For example, to the left of the main hallway is a bedroom that was probably an original parlor or sitting room. In this room there are historic wall and ceiling surfaces and original trim, including wide painted baseboards and wide moldings around the windows, also painted. Under the windows are also historic wood panels. The only alteration to this room is the east wall that was added to make a large built-in cabinet and closets. This appears to have been done in the early twentieth century since the closet doors have five horizontal panels and the original hardware of the cabinet suggests this period.

North of the bedroom is the living room. It has two entrances off the main hallway, both are remodeled arched openings. The north entrance is larger than the south entrance. This room has simple plaster walls and modern, replacement moldings around the windows. Between the two entrances is the original carrara marble fireplace. The fireplace features a round-arched opening flanked by large pilasters decorated with paneled spandrels. At the center is a large bracket.

Opposite the living room is the dining room, and, to the south, the modern staircase entrance. This entrance is rectangular and covered with modern, multi-light "French" style doors. The modern staircase, itself, is wood and is covered with a dark stain that matches most of the treads of the original staircase. Above the staircase entrance is a large, modern, octagonal light.

The dining room is reached through another large, modern, arched opening. It is decorated in a similar manner to the living room. The main opening is a large entryway in the east wall that is trimmed with simple painted wood moldings. In the north wall of the dining room there is a smaller modern arched opening that leads into the rear wing. A perpendicular hallway leads to the left into a modern family room and to the right into the modern kitchen, which was fashioned from the enclosed porch on the east elevation of the house. Straight ahead is a modern bathroom.

The bathroom has modern floor, wall, and ceiling surfaces and modern fixtures. Part or all of the family room was added during the 1946 remodeling and expansion of the rear wing. It has modern ceiling and wall surfaces, simple ranch style moldings around doors and windows, and a wood floor. The kitchen has a long, narrow, rectangular plan. Along the east wall are built-in cabinets that span the entire wall, interrupted by two modern windows. Modern appliances are located along the west wall. This room has modern floor, wall, and ceiling surfaces, as well.

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The original portion of the main staircase is a freestanding, open string, curved staircase. The curved walnut balustrade features a thick walnut railing supported by turned posts. The newel is a large and heavy post with a tapered body sitting on a heavy octagonal base. The tapered body is decorated with rope moldings and the turned knob that sits on the base is decorated with a tongue molding. The top of the newel is a turned knob.

About half of the way up the stairs to the second floor is a small landing in front of a bay that corresponds to the oriel on the east elevation of the house. This bay features three sashes sitting on paneled bases that are trimmed with borders of multi-colored stained glass. The bay has a cove style ceiling.

At the top of the staircase there is an L-shaped hall with the base of the L on the south end of the floor. Most of the rooms of the second story have similar details, unless otherwise noted. There are wide molded baseboards throughout and wide moldings around doors and windows. All of the trim is painted. Entrances into the rooms are covered with simple four-panel wood doors that are also painted and have period hardware. Most of the second floor is carpeted, but in a few rooms, where noted, the floors have the narrow maple boards seen on the first floor. One of the rooms has vinyl flooring.

At the southeast end of the second floor there is a small bedroom that is carpeted. This room also has stained trim around the doors and windows, instead of painted trim. A small entrance from this bedroom leads into a larger room that is under renovation. This room is also carpeted; its walls are covered with wallpaper, and its trim is painted. A modern light fixture hangs from the ceiling. Through a large, rectangular opening on the north wall of this room is another small room, which has similar details to the larger room. These three connected rooms are being renovated into a master suite.

The long portion of the L hallway runs to the back of the house from this suite. On the east side of the hallway is a bedroom, bathroom, and the deck over the enclosed porch that houses the kitchen on the first floor. The bedroom has a maple floor, plaster walls and ceilings, and painted moldings. Behind this bedroom is the second floor bathroom. On the west side of the hallway is a small, narrow room that may have been an historic bathroom or a storage room. This room was converted into a small kitchen during the period in the twentieth century that the house was used as a duplex. The room has plaster walls and ceilings, simple painted trim around doors and windows, and a vinyl floor. There is also a built-in cabinet and a mid-twentieth century sink. To the north of this room is another bedroom that is trimmed in much the same way as the other bedrooms.

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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)

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1857-1906

**Significant Dates**

c.1857; c. 1906

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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



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**SIGNIFICANCE<sup>1</sup>**

The William I. Cole House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C, architecture, because it is locally significant as a good and intact example of the Italianate style. The city of Fond du Lac has a number of good examples of the Italianate style. This house stands out as an early, hipped roof version of the style that was given picturesque and high quality details from the Queen Anne style during the early twentieth century. The house has a good level of integrity, with most of its historic details intact. The details are well constructed and give the house an elegance that makes it stand out in the city. Its unusual history accounts for its architectural distinctiveness in Fond du Lac.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Between 1672 and 1829, the area at the southern end of Lake Winnebago was visited by French explorers, missionaries, and fur trappers; and trading posts were built in what is now the city of Fond du Lac. In 1829, James Duane Doty, along with several companions, traveled from Green Bay to Prairie du Chien looking for sites to develop. Among the sites they viewed was an area where the Fond du Lac River flows into Lake Winnebago. In 1835, after the federal government overcame Native American claims to the area, Doty and George McWilliams purchased 3,705 acres of this land under the name of the Fond du Lac Company. Within these acres, Doty also drew the city's original plat of 33 city blocks with 1800 lots.<sup>2</sup>

In 1836, the historic Military Road came through Fond du Lac on its way between Green Bay and Prairie du Chien, an event that helped early settlement in the state. Looking to capitalize on the new road, the Fond du Lac Company established a tavern, inn, and land office at the site of the new community. Brothers Colwert and Edward Pier, with Colwert's wife, Fanny, agreed to run this business in a log cabin, becoming the first permanent white settlers in Fond du Lac.<sup>3</sup>

In 1838, physician Mason C. Darling, who was recruited to the new settlement by James Doty, arrived in Fond du Lac. As a fee for locating there, the Fond du Lac Company gave Darling 80 acres of prime land in the new plat, along with some nearby farmland. In a shrewd, but underhanded, economic move, Darling legally blocked the Fond du Lac Company from selling

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<sup>1</sup> The period of significance for this house includes the probable date of construction on its original site through the historic period when it was moved, and includes remodeling efforts associated with the move. The significant dates for this house were selected based on an evaluation of deeds, Sanborn-Perris fire insurance maps, city directories, tax rolls, and information from the owner.

<sup>2</sup> Carol Lohry Cartwright, *City of Fond du Lac Intensive Survey Report*, Fond du Lac: City of Fond du Lac, 1992, pp. 9-10.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

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and Darling quickly became wealthy. Additionally, Darling promoted the settlement by giving away some lots, donating land for the county courthouse, acquiring the postmaster appointment, and opening a hotel. But, despite Darling's efforts, Fond du Lac grew slowly during the 1840s, and only 400 people lived there in 1847.<sup>4</sup>

During the 1850s and 1860s, the population of Fond du Lac grew rapidly, the result of two important developments. The first was the development of an important rail link. In 1851, ground was broken for the Rock River Valley Railroad, a line out of Janesville, Wisconsin. This line was reorganized in 1855 and absorbed by the large Chicago North Western Railroad Company (CNW) in 1859. The Fond du Lac stop was part of the CNW's rail line that they developed through eastern Wisconsin during the 1860s, a line that became one of the most important transportation lines in the state.<sup>5</sup>

The second development that changed Fond du Lac was the lumber industry. Fond du Lac was an early "sawmill town," processing the timber that came down the Fox River system from areas north of the city. The first sawmill built in Fond du Lac operated in 1846-1847, then reopened in 1849, and operated until 1855. During the 1850s and 1860s, more sawmills were established in Fond du Lac. In 1873, at the peak of the lumber industry in the community, the city had 18 lumber and wood products mills that employed over 1,400 workers, who processed 67 million feet of lumber and 2.3 million dollars worth of wood products.<sup>6</sup>

Largely due to these developments, the population of Fond du Lac rose to almost 5,000 in the early 1850s, then doubled to 10,000 during the 1860s. At the peak of the lumber boom, Fond du Lac had just over 15,000 residents, 18 churches, six banks, and a dozen hotels. In order to house all of these new residents, a building boom began in the city. This boom included the development of downtown Fond du Lac, as well as three residential neighborhoods that grew up to the east, west, and south of the downtown. Much of the new housing was built for workers and was simple, vernacular housing, but a number of wealthier families built larger, more stylish, houses in these neighborhoods.<sup>7</sup>

In the residential area east of Fond du Lac's downtown, the larger, more stylish houses were concentrated primarily along two streets, East Division and Sheboygan, and during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this area developed into the city's most prominent residential neighborhood. South and east of the city's downtown, the larger, more stylish houses

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 108.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

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were less concentrated. Only two small concentrated areas of stylish houses were built in these neighborhoods. One is a small area along West Division Street close to downtown, and the other is a small area along Linden Street, just south of the city's downtown and courthouse complex.

After the lumber industry died out in the 1880s, Fond du Lac's economy slowed for a while. Although the city had other industries, none could rival the size of the lumber mills and factories. But, after the turn of the twentieth century, new or expanded industries brought a revival of the city's industrial economy. Large repair shops and division headquarters for both the Soo Line and Chicago Northwestern railroads in North Fond du Lac employed almost 2,000 men by 1912. Several other industries, including the Fred Rueping Leather Company, the Moore and Galloway Lumber Company, and the Giddings and Lewis Company, employed another 1,500 workers at that time. Several smaller industries, such as the Gurney Refrigerator Company, the Fond du Lac Table Manufacturing Company, the Northern Casket Company, the Vulcan Manufacturing Company, and the Galloway-West Dairy Products Company employed almost 1,000 workers in 1912. These companies continued to grow during the twentieth century; in particular, the Giddings and Lewis Company, the Vulcan Manufacturing Company, and the Galloway-West Company. They were the core of Fond du Lac's industrial economy in the twentieth century that helped the city become one of the largest industrial centers in east-central Wisconsin.<sup>8</sup>

During the economic boom of the early twentieth century, Fond du Lac's already-established residential neighborhoods grew significantly. But, most of this new housing was in the form of small to medium-sized residences built for the skilled industrial workers of the city. In fact, Fond du Lac's historic housing stock contains large concentrations of American Foursquare and simple Bungalow style houses, both built among the older neighborhoods and in new subdivisions further east, west, and south of the older neighborhoods. In the East Division and Sheboygan streets neighborhood the new construction of the early twentieth century consisted primarily of large Craftsman and Period Revival style homes. But, in the older neighborhoods to the south and west of downtown Fond du Lac, including the West Division and Linden Street neighborhoods, this new construction was primarily smaller "infill" type housing for middle-class and working-class families.

During the late twentieth century, the residential neighborhoods of Fond du Lac continued to expand, primarily with tracts of suburban-style ranch houses. The prominent neighborhood along East Division and Sheboygan streets has been largely retained, and some houses that had been deteriorating during the 1970s and 1980s, are now being restored. The other historic neighborhoods in Fond du Lac have seen more intrusive elements introduced and more remodeling. But, overall, these neighborhoods are relatively stable, and the larger, historic

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<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

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homes along West Division and Linden streets are still extant. Other historic houses scattered throughout the city have also been largely preserved and are recognized as local landmarks in the community.

The William I. Cole House has an interesting and complex history. According to the current owner, the house had been moved to this location around the turn of the twentieth century. This house was originally located on the northeast corner of East Division and Olcott streets, several blocks away from its current location. It was probably built around 1857, possibly by local contractor William Benson. Orrin Wright acquired the original lot on East Division Street in 1854. In 1857, Wright sold the property for \$4,000 to William and Alida Benson, suggesting that a house was part of the transaction. Since William Benson was a contractor, it is possible that he built the house for Wright, then purchased it for resale, which he did the next year, in 1858. Benson sold the house to Hiram and Elizabeth Laughlin, who lived there until 1906.<sup>9</sup>

Hiram Laughlin was a native of New York State who came to Fond du Lac in 1849 during the city's pioneer era. He operated a dry goods store in downtown Fond du Lac until 1896, when he passed away. In 1858, he married Elizabeth Carey, whose brother was a one-time partner with him in his store. After their marriage, they located in this house on East Division Street. Elizabeth Laughlin lived in the house after Hiram's death until 1906. She died while living out of town in 1914. In 1906, she sold the house to William C. Reinig, a local businessman and developer. Reinig apparently liked the location, but not the house. He sold the house to one of his business associates, William I. Cole, who was an officer of the Cole Savings Bank, one of Fond du Lac's historic private banks. Cole moved the house to its current location, probably in that same year, remodeled it, and lived there until his death in 1942.<sup>10</sup>

This sequence of events is verified by several sources. First, the current owner indicated that the history of the house states that it had been moved to this location from the northeast corner of East Division and Olcott streets. Second, the plat map for 1893 shows a vacant lot at the house's current location along Gillett Street. Third, Sanborn-Perris Maps from 1902 and 1908 show two different houses at the northeast corner of East Division and Olcott streets. In 1902, a house with

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<sup>9</sup> Deeds, Volume 1, page 216; Volume 12, p. 361, Volume 17, page 123; Volume 168, page 519, on file in the Register of Deeds Office, Fond du Lac City-County Building, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin; Sanborn-Perris Maps for the City of Fond du Lac, on file in the Archives of the Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin; Plat Map for the City of Fond du Lac, Fond du Lac County, 1893, on file in the Archives of the Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

<sup>10</sup> Deeds, Volume 168, page 519; Volume 168, p. 416; Sanborn-Perris Maps; City Directories for the City of Fond du Lac, on file in the Fond du Lac Public Library, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin; "Death of H. K. Laughlin," *Fond du Lac Daily Commonwealth*, 8 April 1896, p. 3; "Funeral Will Be From Cathedral," *Fond du Lac Daily Commonwealth*, 20 June 1914, p. 5.

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a footprint consistent with an Italianate style house was shown at that location. In 1908, that house had been replaced by what appears to be a Queen Anne style house, probably the new house erected by William Reinig. Unfortunately, this house is no longer extant. Although the 1908 Sanborn map does not extend to the 300 block of Gillett Street, the exact imprint of the house that appears on the 1902 map at the corner of East Division and Olcott Streets appears in the current location of the Cole house on the 1927 map. Fourth, the city directory for 1907 listed W. I. Cole living at this address on Gillett Street, while the 1905 directory shows him living elsewhere. Fifth, the deed to the current location of the Cole house shows that William I. Cole first purchased the property along Gillett Street in April of 1906 for only \$435, a sum that suggests no house was located there at that time. And, deeds show that Cole purchased this property only a month before Mrs. Laughlin sold the house on East Division Street. Finally, William Reinig was one of the directors of the Cole Savings Bank and had a direct business relationship with Cole.<sup>11</sup>

The type of period alterations on the exterior of this house, i.e., the front porch and east elevation bays, suggest that they were done after it was moved about 1906 by William I. Cole. Later alterations came during the twentieth century when the house was used as a duplex for a time, and as previous owners modernized some of its interior features.

William I. Cole was a director and long-time Cashier of the Cole Savings Bank, which was begun by his father, William E. Cole, in 1878. The Cole Savings Bank was one of several private banks that operated in Fond du Lac during the nineteenth century. William E. Cole incorporated his bank in 1890 under the state banking laws, and in 1899, he located the bank in the old Amory block in downtown Fond du Lac. William I. Cole was born in Fond du Lac just three years prior to the establishment of his father's bank. After graduating from St. John's Military Academy in southeastern Wisconsin, William I. Cole joined his father's bank. But after a short time, he went to work as a telegraph operator for the railroad and was a salesman for the Wells Manufacturing Company. In 1909, when his father died, Cole returned to the bank, serving as Cashier and as Vice-President.<sup>12</sup>

Some time between 1912 and Cole's death in 1942, the bank closed and Cole operated an insurance and travel agency business. Cole was married twice; first to Mabelle Kelsey and second, to Jennie Wilkie. Besides his business interests, Cole was a notable citizen in the community. He was on the board of vocational and adult education, becoming president in 1918

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<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup>Maurice McKenna, ed., *Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin, Past & Present*, Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1912, p. 240; "Heart Attack Proves Fatal to W. I. Cole," *Fond du Lac Commonwealth Reporter*, 11 September 1942, p. 3.

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and serving in that capacity until his death. He was president of the local board of education between 1913 and 1915 and helped found the Wisconsin Association for the Disabled. He was the organization's treasurer from 1926 to his death. He was also one of the organizers of the local children's home and served as the organization's president. And, he served as president of the Fond du Lac Board of Insurance Underwriters.<sup>13</sup>

**AREA OF SIGNIFICANCE: ARCHITECTURE**

The William I. Cole House is architecturally significant at the local level and eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a good example of the Italianate style, with some additional details from the Queen Anne style. The house has a good level of integrity and its attractive and picturesque details make it stand out in the city.

The Italianate style was widely popular in Wisconsin between 1850 and the early 1880s. Italianate houses are commonly square, two-story buildings with hipped roofs; wide, overhanging eaves with brackets; arched openings; and picturesque porches with thin posts and decorative brackets. Early versions of the style are often more rectangular and "boxy," than later versions of the style, but because the style was popular for so long, many variations were developed. These variations of the Italianate style include hipped-roof houses with a centered gable on the main elevation, an asymmetrical type house, sometimes with a tower or raised gable, a front-gabled type of house, and an attached townhouse type seen in dense urban neighborhoods.<sup>14</sup>

The Cole House is an example of the square form, hipped-roof house that dominated the style, particularly during its early years of popularity. It has all of the major details of the style, including the low-pitched hip roof, wide eaves with brackets and frieze, and arched openings. The Cole house is a bit more decorative than some examples of the style from the 1850s, due to its corner pilasters, architrave window surrounds, and the added details from c.1906. These details include the front porch and the oriel and bay of the east elevation. But, unlike some houses that are remodeled, these details only add to the picturesque quality of the building and do not overwhelm it. The small porch is a detail that may have replaced an Italianate style porch of the same size. Many replacement porches from this era are large and tend to overwhelm the main elevation. This porch is in fine proportion to the original house. Also proportionate are the

<sup>13</sup> "Heart Attack Proves Fatal to W. I. Cole."

<sup>14</sup> Barbara Wyatt, ed., *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, Vol. II*, Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986, Architecture, p. 2-6; Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985, pp. 211-214, 226-227.

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oriel and bay on the east elevation. Not only are these details proportionate, they are of high quality craftsmanship and add to the historic quality of the house. Even the fieldstone foundation, more typical on Queen Anne style houses, is a high quality detail.

The overall form and massing of the main block of this house is impressive and its few alterations appear to be minor intrusions on the exterior. A few of the window sashes have been slightly reduced in size, but the surrounds remain. This is not irreversible and replacement windows of the original size can bring this detail back. The remodeling on the rear wing is largely hidden from view and is simple and largely well-crafted.

The interior of the house has a few more alterations than the exterior, but much of the original and period features of the house are extant and, like the exterior, the remodeling does not overwhelm the historic interior features. The current owners are also working to retain as much of these details as possible. For example, they have already returned the main staircase to its original location, while retaining the convenient alteration. They are maintaining the original wall surfaces and woodwork that were extant in the house when they acquired it. Although some of these surfaces and woodwork have been altered on the first floor, they are almost all extant on the second floor.

What is impressive about many of the historic details in the interior of the house is their high craftsmanship. For example, the maple floors probably date from the circa remodeling, but they are fine period floors that are extant throughout the house, not just in public areas. The original staircase is an outstanding interior feature of the house, particularly with its decorative walnut balustrade and newel post. Also, the stained glass in the oriel window is a beautiful turn of the twentieth century detail.

According to the 1992-completed intensive survey for the City of Fond du Lac, the William I. Cole House is one of the important examples of the Italianate style in Fond du Lac. It is cited as an elaborate and unusual example of the style because of the addition of the Queen Anne details and the type of decorative Italianate details on its exterior. These details make the house stand out in the community.

The William I. Cole House is a good example of the Italianate style that is enhanced by the addition of the Queen Anne details. It has a good level of integrity and is well-preserved, especially on its exterior. The historic details are in good condition and almost all extant. The interior also is in good condition with many of its historic details intact, especially on the second floor. The house has been generally well-preserved and the current owner plan to continue this level of preservation in their further restoration efforts.

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**CRITERIA CONSIDERATION**

Around 1906, the William I. Cole House was moved from a location several blocks from its current location. It was probably moved to preserve it from demolition for the construction of a new house that, ironically, is not extant. At the time it was moved, this area of Fond du Lac was almost suburban, with sparse housing and large lots, so the move did not detract from the quality of the house. And, as the neighborhood has expanded, the house currently has a streetscape that is not too much different from its original location. This house is being nominated for architectural significance, not any significance derived from its former location. Because its current location is a suitable and similar setting to its original location, and because the house was moved almost 100 years ago, its nomination to the National Register is an exception to Criteria Consideration B, removed from its original location.



Cole, William I., House  
Name of Property

Fond du Lac  
County and State

### 9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):**

- \_\_\_ 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
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than one \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	384450	4848000	3	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

See Continuation Sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Carol Lohry Cartwright	date	6/13/01
organization	prepared for the City of Fond du Lac	telephone	262-473-6820
street & number	W7646 Hackett Rd.	zip code	53190
city or town	Whitewater	state	WI

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Deeds, Volume 1, page 216; Volume 12, p. 361, Volume 17, page 123; Volume 168, pages 416, 519, on file in the Register of Deeds Office, Fond du Lac City-County Building, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

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“Heart Attack Proves Fatal to W. I. Cole,” *Fond du Lac Commonwealth Reporter*, 11 September 1942, p. 3.

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**BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The William I. Cole House has a boundary that is described as follows: East 72 feet of the West 132 feet of the South 120 feet, lot 6, Subdivision of Lot 19, Pettibone's Addition.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary of this property has been its historic site since the house was moved here around 1906.

Cole, William I., House  
Name of Property

Fond du Lac  
County and State

Wisconsin

**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.)

<b>name/title</b>	Robert Schels-Helen Moll	<b>date</b>	6/13/01
<b>organization</b>		<b>telephone</b>	920-922-6005
<b>street&amp;number</b>	303 Gillett St.	<b>city or town</b>	Fond du Lac
<b>city or town</b>	Fond du Lac	<b>state</b>	WI
		<b>zip code</b>	54935

**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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**COLE, WILLIAM I., HOUSE**, 303 Gillette St., Fond du Lac, Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin.  
Photos by Carol Cartwright, February 2001. Negatives on file in the Historic Preservation  
Division of the Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

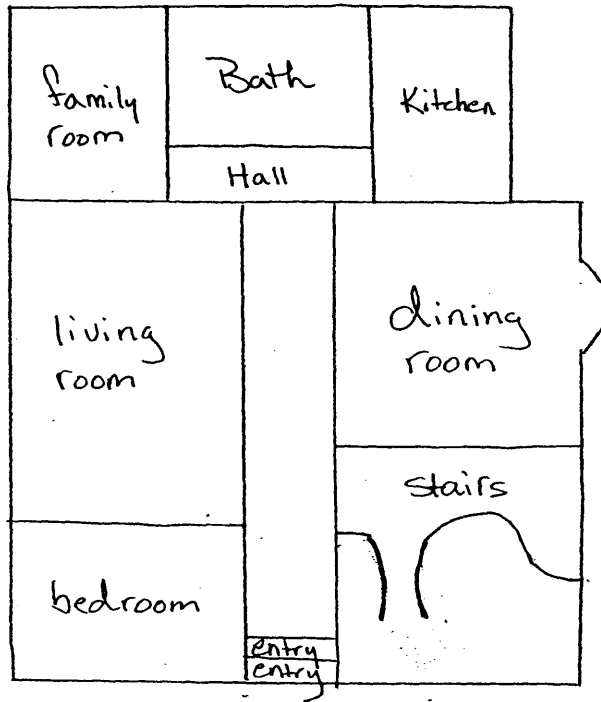
Views:

- 1 of 11: Site view and main elevation, from the southwest.
- 2 of 11: Site view and west elevation, from the southwest.
- 3 of 11: East elevation, from the south.
- 4 of 11: Interior, first floor, main hallway.
- 5 of 11: Interior, first floor, bedroom (old parlor) window.
- 6 of 11: Interior, first floor, living room, looking at staircase.
- 7 of 11: Interior, first floor, living room, fireplace.
- 8 of 11: Interior, first floor, looking into dining room.
- 9 of 11: Interior, first floor, staircase.
- 10 of 11: Interior, second floor, main hallway.
- 11 of 11: Interior, second floor, bedroom suite.

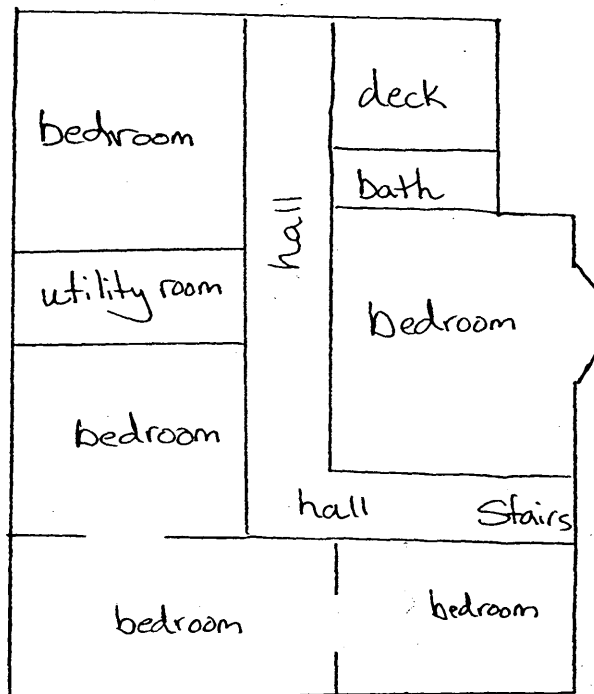
**COLE, WILLIAM I., HOUSE**  
**Floor Plan**

NOT TO SCALE

FOND DU LAC, FOND DU LAC COUNTY, WISCONSIN



*First Floor*



*Second Floor*