

NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 8/86)  
Wisconsin Word Processor Format (1331D)  
(Approved 3/87)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SEP 19 1988

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

**NATIONAL  
REGISTER**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries. Use letter quality printer in 12 pitch, using an 85 space line and a 10 space left margin. Use only archival paper (20 pound, acid free paper with a 2% alkaline reserve).

1. Name of Property

historic name Vincent, James, House

other names/site number The Vincent House

2. Location

street & number 1024 Cass Street

N/A not for publication

city, town La Crosse

N/A vicinity

state Wisconsin

code WI

county La Crosse

code 063

zip code 54601

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	contributing	noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

None

No. of contributing resources  
previously listed in the  
National Register None

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination    request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets    does not meet the National Register criteria.    See continuation sheet.

X Jeff Dean  
Signature of certifying official  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
State or Federal agency and bureau

July 21, 1988  
Date

In my opinion, the property    meets    does not meet the National Register criteria.    See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

X entered in the National Register.  
   See continuation sheet

Entered in the  
National Register

Melvin Byer

10/20/88

   determined eligible for the National Register.    See continuation sheet

   determined not eligible for the National Register.

   removed from the National Register.

   other, (explain:)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions  
(enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions  
(enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Domestic/Single Dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

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### Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

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### Materials

(enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone

walls Brick

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roof Asphalt

other Limestone

Wood

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The James Vincent House is located in the Cass and King streets neighborhood in La Crosse, Wisconsin. The neighborhood is located on former prairie land bounded by the Mississippi River on the west and tall limestone bluffs on the east. The tree-lined streets are laid out on a typical grid. Cass Street is the most prominent residential street in this neighborhood, which is comprised of residences exhibiting a wide variety of historic architectural styles including Italianate and Queen Anne; and Neo-classical, Tudor, Spanish Colonial, and Romanesque revivals; which range in age from the 1860s through the 1940s. The neighborhood developed as an affluent residential location for the early industrial and commercial families of La Crosse. Cass Street is characterized by a wide street and large buildings set on spacious lots.

The Vincent House, completed in 1885, is situated on the southwest corner of Cass and Eleventh streets, and occupies most of its original site. The south (rear) portion of the lot, upon which a barn was originally located, was subdivided and sold in the 1930s and the buyers constructed a small house and garage facing Eleventh Street. Subdivision of the lot reduced the size of the property from a 140' x 100' lot to a 96' x 100' parcel. The original driveway of the Vincent House was later connected to a small non-contributing garage built behind the house in 1970.

The house is a two-story red brick residence with a low-pitch asphalt-shingled hip roof and a roughly cruciform plan. The roof has wide overhanging eaves with denticulation. Wide-set Italianate brackets are present on the north, east, and west elevations. The main (north) facade is dominated by an asymmetrically placed front gable with return eaves and a sunburst motif in the gable field supported by small brackets. The gable is balanced by an imposing one-story entrance porch which features a denticulated cornice, bracketed corners and squat tuscan columns on square, paneled piers. The side railings feature squat, heavy spindles and balustrade which were also originally found on the porch roof. The porch had a wooden vestibule that was erected on the porch for the winter and taken down each spring. The frame for the vestibule is still extant in the ceiling of the porch.

Gabled pavilions project from the east and west facades and feature the same decorative touches as the front-facing gable. The east gable is further distinguished by a one-story polygonal bay window topped by a decorative wrought

X See continuation sheet

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iron cresting. The projecting gable effectively conceals much of the bulk of the square dining room section located behind it. A canted, rectangular one-story bay window, located on the southeast corner of the dining room, mirrors the previous bay. A one-story screened porch fills the "L" between the projecting gable and the main facade. The west facade features a similar projecting gable and a ocular window which is dramatized by radiating limestone and brick keystones and a colorful stained glass glazing. A hipped roof porch fills in the "L" between the gable and the rear of the house and features a small pediment, chamfered posts and a ball-and-stick frieze.

First floor windows have limestone window hoods which are interconnected by a limestone beltcourse. The window hoods are ornamented by egg and dart molding and a carved flower motif in the keystone. Second story windows have flat limestone lintels and egg and dart moldings. All windows contain one-over-one double-hung sash. The main entrance is through massive, arched double doors. The house sits on a high coursed-ashlar limestone foundation which was quarried locally. Blocks are rough-faced with a burnished edge and are topped by a finished limestone water table. Two corbelled brick chimneys pierce the roof line.

The exterior is remarkably intact and unaltered, the only major changes being the addition of combination aluminum storms and screens, the screening of the east porch about 1908, and the removal of the balustrade from the entrance porch roof. Wooden elements have recently been repainted using the original color scheme of grey and maroon.

The interior features an outstanding and intact examples of the Eastlake design. The elaborately detailed trim and built-in furniture are characteristic of the style and are constructed of a colorful variety of hardwoods including cherry, red oak, black walnut, maple (including birds eye and flame maple), ash, elm, butternut, yellow birch, red cedar, and red gum. With the exception of the red gum, whose origin is unknown, all of the wood used in the interior came from the forests of Wisconsin and Minnesota. All woods have an oil finish and are in excellent condition with nearly all original hardware still intact.

The first floor interior consists of a vestibule and hall, front parlor, sitting room, library dining room, bathroom, kitchen and pantry. The vestibule and hallway features wainscotting with inset panels in contrasting woods. The small rectangular top panels contain wood burl veneers. The diagonally laid hardwood

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parquet floors feature a similar use of dramatically contrasting hardwoods. Door surroundings have fluted moldings and corner blocks. The hall has a staircase with a spindled balustrade and newel post lamp. A rear staircase is located off the kitchen.

Each of the rooms is characterized by the use of a different hardwood for the trim and built-in furniture. Perhaps the most stunning of these rooms is the dining room with its maple fireplace surround and overmantel composed of open shelves and niches ornamented with typical Eastlake incising, short decorative spindles and low balustrades. The built-in maple sideboard and cupboard are birds-eye maple. The maple wainscotting features central panels inlaid with colorful "Baltimore decorative variegated glass tiles" whose patterns imitate marble tiles.

The parlor, sitting room, and library are interconnected by large pocket doors. The sitting room has a built-in, Eastlake-influenced bookcase and an especially notable carved cherry mantelpiece. The door from the sitting room into the library has a ball-and-stick lattice work.

The downstairs bathroom retains its original tongue and groove wainscotting, marble sink, and its "tinned" copper tub stamped with the name of the manufacturer: "Wolff Manufacturing Co. Chicago, Illinois." The bathroom interior alone exhibits five varieties of hardwood.

The upstairs of the main section consists of a hall, guest bedroom with sitting room, master bedroom, small bedroom, and small bathroom. The rear section is two steps lower than the main section and contains the Maid's room and attic. In 1941, the bathroom floor was raised two feet to the same floor height as the main section and connected by a new door opening to the small bedroom. The second story woodwork is executed in red gum, red oak and butternut.

About 1910, a steam heating system was added to replace the wood-burning, hot-air system originally used. Despite this, the large brick encased wood burning furnace is still extant in the basement and the hot air registers (some in walls, most in

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floors) are still in place. The steam was originally provided by a central heating plant run by the city of La Crosse. Later, when the city of La Crosse discontinued this service, a gas-fired boiler was installed to service the original steam system.

Access to the basement is provided by a stairs located in the short hall between the kitchen and bathroom, and through an exterior entrance on the west side of the house. The basement originally had a dining room to provide a cool dining place on hot summer days. The basement laundry still retains the original built-in wood laundry tubs, but they are in poor condition. The basement floor had a thin layer of cement with a wood floor on top; the wood floor was removed a few years ago when it was found that termites had infested it. Fortunately, this was discovered before they moved into the rest of the house to any degree and there was little damage.

A small frame garage with a low-pitch gable roof was built behind the house in 1970. It does not contribute to the significance of the property and has been listed as a non-contributing resource in the property count.

The exterior and interior of the Vincent House are admirably untouched and retain a high degree of historical integrity, probably due to the house remaining in the possession of the Vincent descendants. Its excellent condition is also a testament to the excellent materials and craftsmanship of its original construction.

8. Statement of Significance

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

Applicable National Register Criteria      A      B   X   C      D

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

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Architecture      1885      1885

     Cultural Affiliation

     N/A     

Significant Person

     N/A     

Architect/Builder

     Carroll, W.L.     

     Parker, William     

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

The James Vincent House is being nominated under Criterion C for its local significance as a fine example of late Italianate residential design and contains a notable interior featuring extensive wooden elements executed in a variety of hardwoods. It was one of the city's first large victorian era houses and is in an excellent state of preservation. Because it is being nominated for architecture alone, the period of significance is merely the construction date of the building.

Historical Background

La Crosse received its name from the earlier "Prairie La Crosse," which was the name given to the area by the French.<sup>4</sup> The city developed as a trading post due to its location on the Mississippi River, with the first permanent settlers arriving in the early 1840s.<sup>5</sup> The well-drained and fertile soils of the La Crosse area drew numbers of settlers in the 1850s and increasingly profited from its location, becoming a center for transportation and industry. Lumbering was a major industry due to the proximity of the Black River pine forests and the city developed a number of lumber-related industries including planing mills, saw mills, lumber yards, shingle manufacturing, and window and sash companies.<sup>6</sup>

La Crosse boomed in the 1860s, and by 1870 had a population of 7, 785 making it one of the largest cities in Wisconsin. By 1880, the population had nearly doubled. In that same decade, it became Wisconsin's second largest city.<sup>7</sup> Lumbering grew tremendously during this period, becoming the largest industry in the city. Thirty-three saw mills, at one time or another, were located in La Crosse along the Mississippi and Black Rivers and the industry boomed until the turn-of-the-century when nearby timber supplies were exhausted.<sup>8</sup> After the turn-of-the-century, the city's growth slowed and the commercial and industrial importance of La Crosse lessened, although the city continued to experience moderate growth.

  X   See continuation sheet

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The Cass Street neighborhood developed during La Crosse's boom period and quickly became a choice residential area for 19th century lumber barons and wealthy industrialists and merchants of the early 20th century.<sup>9</sup> The neighborhood presents the full range of architectural styles built in La Crosse from the 1860s to the 1940s including Italianate, Queen Anne, Neo-classical Revival, Tudor Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, Romanesque Revival, and fine examples of the Prairie School. Cass Street developed as the premier street of the neighborhood due to its large lots and wide street and attained the highest social status of the neighborhood. The neighborhood was largely built by the 1940s; relatively few non-historic residences intrude on the historic ambience of the area.

James Vincent was born October 16, 1823 in Half Moon, New York. He moved to Lansingburg, New York, at age 13, to learn the carpenter's trade. By 1844 Vincent was a journeyman carpenter, and in 1847 began his own business. He ventured to California briefly during the gold rush, and in 1852 returned again contracting to build bridges for a short period of time. After returning to New York, he moved to La Crosse in 1855, where he entered the lumber business. In 1858 he formed a partnership with George Edwards, buying wheat and pork before turning to lumber. Vincent and Edwards started one of the first lumber yards in La Crosse and subsequently acquired pine holdings at the headwaters of the Black River. Eventually the firm moved exclusively to lumber and by 1875 Vincent became sole proprietor of the firm. Vincent brought his son, Eugene into the business in 1880 and the firm was renamed "James Vincent and Son," until the death of his son.<sup>10</sup>

### Architecture

The Italianate style is widespread in the south half of Wisconsin and was often the first "high style" residential architecture built. Typical examples have wide bracketed eaves, low-pitch hipped or gabled roofs, and often a polygonal or square rooftop cupola. Floor plans are typically square with boxy proportions or are "L"-shaped. Windows frequently have hood molds or even pediments. Porches and bay windows are commonplace features.<sup>11</sup>

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The original plans for the James Vincent House were drawn by Chicago architect W.L. Carroll and dated 12/20/1879, but were altered by the La Crosse architect W.H. Parker before construction began in 1884. Little is known of W.L. Carroll. He was brought to La Crosse to remodel the bankrupt Pomeroy Opera House in 1879 (no longer extant) and undoubtedly the commission for Vincent's house was a result of this visit.<sup>12</sup> His only other known commission was a residence in Evanston, Illinois and no biographical information has been obtained.

After Vincent's second marriage to Agnes McKillip in 1884, plans were finally made to construct the residence and at that time the plans were redrawn by La Crosse architect W. H. Parker. Parker shortened and narrowed the house, simplifying the exterior and updating the style to make it more in keeping with other houses being erected in La Crosse. Parker was a native of New York State and a Graduate of Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. Parker established himself in Milwaukee in 1876 and moved his business to La Crosse in 1884. He moved to nearby Galesville, Wisconsin in 1893, although he apparently continued to practice in La Crosse until at least 1891. Three other known commissions of Parker's are still extant in the city. The State Bank Building at 311 Main Street was executed in 1885, in 1888 he designed the Goddard Hotel at 1639 Prospect Street and in 1891, the Leinlokken Bank at 203 South Fourth Street. The bank buildings are modest three bay commercial buildings displaying eclectically ornamented facades, whereas the Goddard Hotel is rather utilitarian in appearance.<sup>13</sup>

A newspaper article published when the house was completed relates that E. Johnson and a Mr. Marsh did the first story woodwork. Segelke, Kohlhaus and Company, a major La Crosse sash company, manufactured the first story doors, sash and blinds, and George H. Pierce did the same for the second.<sup>14</sup> Segelke, Kohlhaus and Company also manufactured stained glass, the ocular stained glass window may be their work.

The James Vincent House is one of the finest examples of late Italianate residential design in the city. The house has always been owned by the Vincent family and its descendants and has retained its original appearance. The house displays typical elements of the Italianate style including the window hood molds, bracketed eaves, low pitch roof and bay windows. However the design is unusual in its subtle references to the emerging Queen Anne style. For example, the sunburst motif found in all three gables and the ball-and-stick

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frieze found on the west porch are fairly common Queen Anne decorative details. Less apparent, though, the massing and outline of the house displays a cruciform plan, narrow vertically-oriented main facade and asymmetrical composition more common to the Queen Anne style. Decorative details on the interior show an even stronger Queen Anne/Eastlake influence, most notably the well-executed ball-and-stick fretwork in the library doorway, built-in furniture, the built-in work above and around the fireplace, and the elaborately appointed main staircase.

James Vincent's love of wood is evident on the interior of the house. Hardwoods including cherry, red oak, walnut, maple, ash, elm, butternut, birch, red cedar, and red gum are used extensively throughout the house. Contrasting colors and grain patterns are juxtaposed for dramatic effect. The exuberance of color and pattern are certainly in keeping with the opulence of the Queen Anne style. Vincent supervised much of the work himself, which may attest to the quality of materials and skilled execution of the interior woodwork. The interior elements are remarkably preserved and intact right down to the window blinds and wooden laundry tubs. Even the wood furnace, reputed to be the earliest confirmed use of hot air central heating in La Crosse, although no longer used, is still extant.

The Italianate style was an early residential style of the city, nonetheless, the city retains several fine examples. The Gideon Hixon House, at 429 N. Seventh Street (NRHP 1974), is a fine example of frame Italianate construction, but is simpler and less ornamented. The Lavery House, at 237 S. Tenth Street (NRHP 1977), is an excellent 1869 frame example with the typical square plan and rooftop cupola. It's design reflects an earlier and more typical interpretation of the Italianate style. Another more modest frame example is the S.S. Burton House at 929 King. The most comparable brick example, the Jacob Scholl House, at 1222 Main Street, has been altered by the addition, enclosure and removal of porches and therefore lacks the fine integrity of the Vincent House. Several other examples exist, but all are much more simple vernacular interpretation of the style, and lack distinction.

Although the house has lost some of its location integrity, due to the subdivision of the rear 44' of the property, it does not visually impact on any of the building's elevations and has little overall impact on the building's historic integrity.

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FOOTNOTES

- 1 "A Fine Home," The Morning Chronicle, 20 September, 1885.
- 2 "Complete Plans for a Residence for Mr. James Vincent, Esq.," in the possession of the owner, dated 12/20/1879. Historical research in addition to calls to the Chicago Landmarks Commission, Evanston Historical Society and the Evanston Planning Department did not result in any additional information on W.L. Carroll.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 History of La Crosse County, Wisconsin (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1881), pp. 329-330.
- 5 Ibid, p. 363-364.
- 6 Joan Rausch and Richard Zeitlin, Intensive Architectural/Historical Survey Report 1983-1984 (La Crosse: City of La Crosse, 1984), pp. 47-48.
- 7 Wisconsin Blue Book 1913 (Madison: 1913), p. 108.
- 8 Albert H. Sanford and H.J. Hirshheimer, A History of La Crosse, Wisconsin 1841-1900 (La Crosse: 1951), p. 155.
- 9 Rausch, p. 368.
- 10 History of La Crosse County, Wisconsin, p. 804; Biographical History of La Crosse, Trempealeau and Buffalo Counties, Wisconsin (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1892), p. 197-198; Benjamin F Bryant, ed., Memoirs of La Crosse County (Madison, WI: Western Historical Association, 1907), pp. 410-411; "James Vincent, Pioneer Lumberman, Engaged in Business Here in 1855," La Crosse Tribune and Leader Press, 1 April 1934.

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FOOTNOTES CON'T

- 11 Barbara Wyatt, ed., Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, Vol 2  
(Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin), Architecture section 2-6.
- 12 Rausch, p. 75.
- 13 Ibid., p. 72.
- 14 "A Fine Home."

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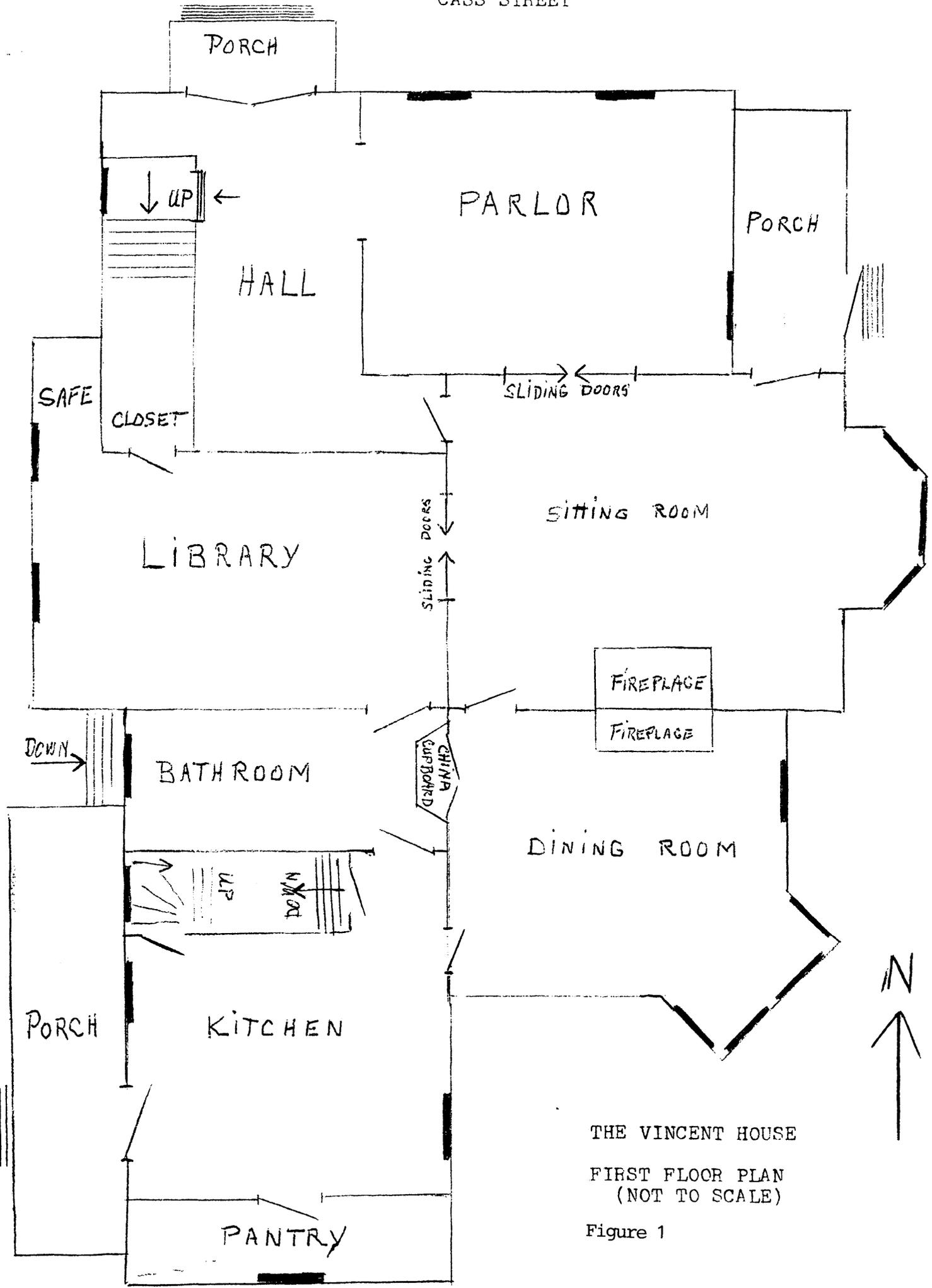
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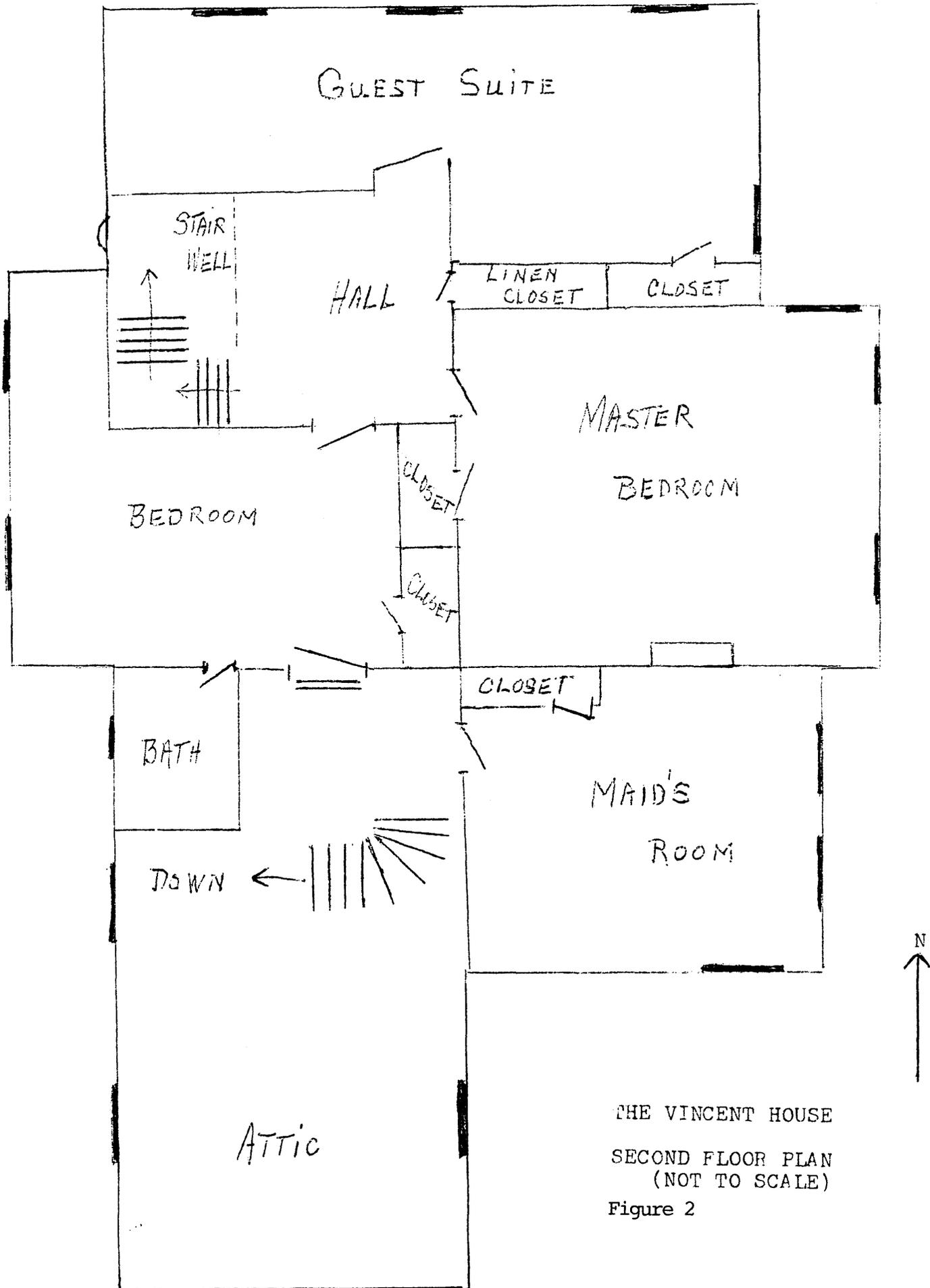
Wyatt, Barbara, ed. Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin. Madison: State  
Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986.





THE VINCENT HOUSE  
FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
(NOT TO SCALE)

Figure 1



THE VINCENT HOUSE  
SECOND FLOOR PLAN  
(NOT TO SCALE)  
Figure 2