

MINNESOTA HISTORIC PROPERTIES INVENTORY FORM

HISTORIC NAME: National Woodenware Company Superintendent's Residence
 COUNTY: Aitkin
 CITY/TWP.: Hill City
 LEGAL DESC.: Lot 1 & E $\frac{1}{2}$ Lot 2, Block 21, Buck's Addition to Hill City
 ADDRESS: SW corner of Elm Street & Ione Avenue

MAR 15 1982

CLASSIFICATION:	CONDITION:	SIGNIFICANCE:	THEME/S:
Building <u> X </u>	Excellent <u> </u>	Local <u> X </u>	Primary <u> Industry </u>
Structure <u> </u>	Good <u> X </u>	State <u> </u>	Secondary <u> Settlement </u>
Object <u> </u>	Fair <u> </u>	National <u> </u>	Others <u> </u>
District <u> </u>	Deteriorated <u> </u>		

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: Yes No X Restricted
 VISIBLE FROM THE ROAD: Yes X No
 OCCUPIED: Yes X No
 PRESENT USE: Residence

DATE CONSTRUCTED: 1910 ORIGINAL USE: Superintendent's Residence
 ORIGINAL OWNER: National Woodenware Company ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Unknown

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: Willis J. & Helen Weller % First Federal Savings & Loan Association, 1 NW Fifth Street, Grand Rapids, MN 55744	ACREAGE: Less than one acre <u> X </u>
LOCAL CONTACT/ORG.: Aitkin County Historical Society, 316 1st Ave. NE, Aitkin, MN 56431	UTM REFERENCE: Hill City MN Quad. 7.5 15 / 454815 / 5204340
FORM PREPARED BY: Mark Haidet	
DATE: February 1981	

DESCRIPTION:

The National Woodenware Company Superintendent's Residence occupies a sloping corner location one block north of Hill City's central business district. The rectangular 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ story clapboard structure was erected in 1910. Its gable roof with boxed cornice and gable returns is broken by two interior brick chimneys, three pedimented dormers on the east side, and a similar central dormer on the west side. A Tuscan columned pedimented portico featuring a sunburst motif shelters the principal entrance which is offset to the west on the north facade. An elevated veranda featuring Tuscan columns and turned balustrade is located on the east and south facades.

The interior remains virtually unaltered with the exception of the kitchen. The most outstanding features are the original woodwork and fireplace with decorative wood mantel.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The National Woodenware Company Superintendent's Residence is significant for its association with Hill City's principal industry in the early twentieth century. The National Woodenware Company, a subsidiary of the large Chicago packing concern Armour & Co., moved its operation in 1910 from Ithaca, Michigan to Hill City, a small community platted in 1906. The Company erected a large mill complex for the manufacturing of woodenware (barrels and tubs used in the packing industry) from the area's second growth hardwood forests. Company officials also purchased nearly 1/3 of Hill City's lots and constructed residences for their employees and administrative personnel. As a result of the Company's establishment, Hill City's population more than tripled to over 1000 inhabitants. The mill closed in 1928 due to depletion of the hardwood forests in the region and increased use of cheaper substitute containers in the packing industry. Since the mill's closing, Hill City's population has steadily declined to its present level of 357. The Superintendent's Residence, the most distinctive residence in town, housed the Company's chief local administrator from 1910 to 1928. It is one of the few remaining structures associated with this locally significant industry.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- Carlson, Mary Jane and Gertrude Strom, comp. A Preview of the Hill City Saga: A Brief Picture Story, 1955.
- Hill City News, 1910-1928.
- Lemen, Robert N. III. The Rabey Line: Being an Account of the Life and Death of a Short-Line Railroad in the Minnesota Northwoods, 1970.