

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

JUN 21 1979

DATE ENTERED

JUL 27 1979

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Charles Quarles House
AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

2531 North Farwell Avenue

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Milwaukee

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Fifth

STATE

Wisconsin

CODE

55

COUNTY

Milwaukee

CODE

079

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. James Weichmann

STREET & NUMBER

2531 N. Farwell Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Milwaukee

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Wisconsin 53202

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Milwaukee County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

901 North Ninth Street

CITY, TOWN

Milwaukee

STATE

Wisconsin 53233

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

1979

— FEDERAL STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

CITY, TOWN

Madison

STATE

Wisconsin 53706

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Quarles house is a two-and-one-half story Queen Anne building of frame construction. It is set back on a large double lot surrounded by massive brick apartment buildings. Except for the enclosure of the back porch and general deterioration of the building through the years, the exterior has never been altered.

The house rests on a bold rock-faced foundation of Wauwatosa limestone and is covered with its original medium-width first floor clapboards and narrower clapboards above. A hipped roof shelters the body of the house and two tall tapered chimneys dominate the roofline. Several gables embellished with pressed wood designs on the bargeboards and supported by decorated brackets project from the hipped roof. The gable on the front (east) facade features a 3/4 circular window surrounded by shingles and covers a wide three-sided bay. The front porch projects from this bay and features a jerkin-head gable over the entrance the pediment of which is decorated with carved foliate designs and a band of reticulation. Wide steps lead to the porch deck which is enclosed by spindled railings and solid corner panels decorated in a reticulated pattern. Partial fluting embellishes the square porch piers, and a balustrade crowns the porch roof.

The curved southeast corner of the house wraps around a round tower, which pierces through the roofline and is capped by a conical roof with a galvanized iron finial. The south side of the house features a small, very decorative window composed of small panes of beveled glass and capped by a keystone segmental arch, the tympanum of which is carved with more foliate designs in high relief. Projecting from the southwest corner of the facade is another gable which shelters a two-story, flat-roofed bay capped by a balustrade, and the enclosed back porch. A semicircular window and another reticulated panel embellish the shingled gable end.

The north side of the house features a stained glass window which lights the stairs and a bowed orielled bay above.

The interior also has been very little altered since the house was built. Unfortunately, a building permit was recently issued to convert the house into a three-unit apartment building. The entrance stairhall is dominated by a massive red oak staircase with a carved newel post, and oak panelling with applied wooden ornament. A spindled screen decorates the doorway to the library behind the staircase. A small fireplace with a gas log warmed this room. To the left of the entrance is the parlor, and beyond that a sitting room, which features a corner fireplace of red marble with a carved wooden mantelpiece. Behind the sitting room is the dining room which leads into the kitchen through a china closet with its original cabinets. The kitchen fixtures and pine wainscoting are original, as are the cabinets in the back pantry.

The woodwork on the first floor is red oak and red birch with delicate, classically detailed pine trim grained to match. The maple floors are bordered in cherry in the dining room and front vestibule. Hand-grained sliding doors connect several of the principal rooms and some original chandeliers remain.

The second floor contains five bedrooms. Wood trim is of stained and varnished pine,

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Quarles, Charles, House

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including built-in chests-of-drawers. Two bedrooms contain simple neo-colonial fireplaces trimmed in brick. Even the bathroom, with its claw-foot tub and pine wainscoting, is intact. The third floor contains four finished rooms.

A one-and-one-half car garage is located at the southwest corner of the property.

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) association with historic people
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1891-2¹

BUILDER/ARCHITECT James O. Douglas¹

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Quarles house is significant primarily for its association with locally important individuals, Charles Quarles and Louisa Thiers. In addition, because of its virtually intact state and finely executed interior detail, it is an excellent example of 19th century craftsmanship. It was designed by James O. Douglas, one of Milwaukee's early settlers. Douglas is exemplary of the self-taught carpenter-designers who made up the majority of the mid-19th century architects.

History

Ranked at the time of his death as among the best constitutional lawyers in the country,² Charles Quarles was an important Milwaukee attorney during the decades surrounding the turn of the century. Quarles was born in Kenosha in 1846. He received his A.B. from the University of Michigan and read the law at the Kenosha firm of Head and Quarles. Between 1875 and 1888 he practiced law in Kenosha. In 1888, along with his brother Joseph Very Quarles and Thomas W. Spence, he formed the Milwaukee based firm of Quarles, Spence and Quarles and moved to that city. Three years later he had the Farwell Avenue house built for his residence.

Charles Quarles' Milwaukee legal career was punctuated by important cases that drew upon his expertise in his chosen fields of corporate and constitutional law. In 1905 he was counsel for the U.S. Government in its trust-busting case against the General Paper Company for violation of the Sherman Antitrust Law. The following year he was government counsel in a successful suit against the Milwaukee Refrigerated Transit Company and other railroads for rebating. Quarles probably gained his greatest fame for his successful prosecution of Charles F. Pfister's libel suit against the Milwaukee Free Press.

Charles Quarles died while at the height of his career, and members of the Wisconsin bar eulogized him liberally. Chief Justice Winslow, in a memorial address before the Wisconsin Supreme Court affirmed that "Death could have chosen no more shining mark than Charles Quarles from the whole body of the Wisconsin bar."³

Louisa (Capron) Thiers, the mother-in-law of Charles Quarles, lived in the house from the time of its construction until her death in 1926. Born in 1814 to an established Yankee upstate New York family, she received a cultivated upbringing and attended Emma Willard's Female Seminary in Troy. With her husband, David B. Thiers, she migrated to Wisconsin in 1850. By the time of the First World War she had gained widespread renown for her longevity coupled with her remarkable vitality and was regarded as Milwaukee's "Grand Old Lady." When she died in 1926 at the age of 111, she was the documented oldest person in the United States.⁴

She was also the oldest of the small number of surviving original Daughters of the American Revolution, being the daughter of Seth Capron, who had served as a corporal in the Continental Army. Because of her personal recollections, that

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

see continuation sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .353

QUADRANGLE NAME Milwaukee, Wis.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 16 428180 4768120

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 3 and 4, Block 13, Hayes Subdivision, SW 1/4 section of Town 7 North, Range 22 East, City of Milwaukee.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Katherine E. Hundt, Architectural Historian and David A. Donath, Historian

ORGANIZATION

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE

April, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

816 State Street

TELEPHONE

608-262-2970

CITY OR TOWN

Madison

STATE

Wisconsin 53706

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL x

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

Richard Renny

TITLE

Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE

5/10/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Robert Allen ...
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 7-27-79

ATTEST: *Emma Jane ...*
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION
Regional Coordinator

DATE 7-27-79

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spanned most of the history of the United States, Louisa Thiers became a celebrity. Newspapers interviewed her on her birthdays or sought her opinions on the affairs of the day. Secretary of the Treasury W.G. McAdoo sent her personal thanks when she purchased a Liberty Bond at the age of 102. A pilot fighting for the French in the First World War asked her to be his godmother. President Calvin Coolidge thanked her for her vote and sent her birthday congratulations when she was 110.

The house was also the residence of Louis French, the son-in-law of Charles Quarles. French was a well respected national and international patent attorney in Milwaukee. He lived in the house until his death in 1958.

ARCHITECTURE

Because of its unaltered state, the Quarles house is an excellent example of the work of this self-taught carpenter-architect. The interior detail, from the majestic staircase, the stained glass windows, and simple fireplaces, to the built-in cabinets and spindled and carved ornament, represents an attention to detail and a level of craftsmanship seldom seen in modern construction. In addition, the house with its original kitchen and bathrooms, is a lucid reminder of a late 19th-century way of life.

The Quarles house was designed by James O. Douglas, "a pioneer of Milwaukee and for years one of the leading architects of the city."⁵ Douglas was born in Scotland and moved to Milwaukee in the 1840s. He began his career as a carpenter in partnership with his brother, gradually moving into designing the residences that they built. From 1863 to 1872 Douglas worked for the Northwestern Life Insurance Company, resuming his architectural practice thereafter. He died in 1894.

Throughout his career, Douglas specialized in domestic architecture. According to a contemporary account, he designed houses in "many of the most tasteful cities and villages of the Northern and Western States and also the orange groves of the Sunny South," where his style departed so widely from the stereotyped models that it became known as the "Douglas style."⁶

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- 1 Blueprints and original specifications for the Quarles house in the possession of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.
 - 2 Chicago Record Herald, 4/9/1908.
 - 3 Wisconsin Supreme Court Reports, CXXXVI (1908), 136-1.

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- 4 M.S. Camps, "Now That's What I Call Living!" Exclusively Yours (Sept. 1971), 36ff.
- 5 Milwaukee Evening Wisconsin, 9/1/1894.
- 6 Frank A. Flower, History of Milwaukee (Chicago, 1881), II, 1500.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Biographical Dictionary and Portrait Gallery of Representative Men of Chicago, Wisconsin, and the World's Columbian Exposition. Chicago, 1895, 568-569.

Camps, M.S. "Now That's What I Call Living!" Exclusively Yours. Milwaukee, Sept. 1971, 36ff.

Chicago Record Herald, 4/9/1908.

Flower, Frank A. History of Milwaukee. volume II. Chicago, 1881.

Gregory, John G. History of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. volumes II & III. Milwaukee, 1931.

Kenosha Telegraph Courier, 4/16/1908.

Milwaukee Evening Wisconsin, 9/1/1894.

Quarles/French Materials. Artifacts, photographs, documents, original architect's blueprints and specifications, etc. now in the possession of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

Watrous, Jerome A., ed. Memoirs of Milwaukee County. volume II. Madison, 1909.

Wisconsin Supreme Court Reports. volume CXXXVI, 1908.