

Wisconsin Word Processing Format (Approved 1/92)



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 Johnson, Nels and Nellie, House  
other names/site number

2. Location

street & number	850 1 <sup>st</sup> Avenue South	N/A	not for publication
city or town	Wisconsin Rapids	N/A	vicinity
state Wisconsin	code WI	county Wood	code 141
			zip code 54495

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.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

7/24/19  
Date

State Historic Preservation Office - Wisconsin  
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

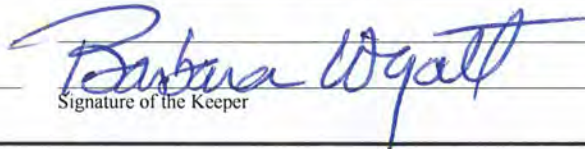
Johnson, Nels and Nellie, House  
Name of Property

Wood  
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):

  
Signature of the Keeper

9-12-19  
Date of Action

#### 5. Classification

Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	contributing	noncontributing
public-local	district	1	1 buildings
public-State	structure	0	0 sites
public-Federal	site	0	0 structures
	object	0	0 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  
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)  
LATE VICTORIAN: Queen Anne

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
foundation STONE  
walls aluminum

roof SYNTHETICS  
other

#### Narrative Description

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

**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)

COMMERCE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1892-1902  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1892  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**  
(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Johnson, Nels  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Parker, William H. (architect)  
Golla, Joseph (builder)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Statement of Significance**  
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Johnson, Nels and Nellie, House

Wood

Wisconsin

Name of Property

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

**Acreage of Property** one acre

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

1 16 44.387821 -89.83461  
 Zone Easting Northing

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zone Easting Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zone Easting Northing

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
 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

<b>name/title</b>	Jean L. Guarino, Ph.D.	<b>date</b>	October 12, 2018
<b>organization</b>		<b>telephone</b>	(708) 386-1142
<b>street &amp; number</b>	844 Home Avenue	<b>zip code</b>	60304
<b>city or town</b>	Oak Park	<b>state</b>	IL

Johnson, Nels and Nellie, House

Wood

Wisconsin

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County and State

**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.

**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>	John and Jackie Dietrich			<b>date</b>	
<b>Organization</b>				<b>telephone</b>	715-213-4700
<b>street &amp; number</b>	850 1 <sup>st</sup> Avenue South			<b>zip code</b>	54495
<b>city or town</b>	Wisconsin Rapids	<b>state</b>	WI		

**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 20503.22

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Johnson, Nels and Nellie, House  
Wisconsin Rapids, Wood County, Wisconsin

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The 1892 Nels and Nellie Johnson House is located at 850 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin. It is an excellent example of the Queen Anne style, featuring an irregular and steeply pitched gable roofline, asymmetrical massing, spindlework porches, and corbelled chimneys. It was the home of prominent Wisconsin Rapids businessman Nels Johnson.

The Johnson House has good overall integrity, retaining its original massing, roofline, fenestration, porches, doors, and decorative detailing. Aluminum siding has been applied over wood clapboard sheathing, which is presumably original. This alteration diminishes the level of integrity of this house and precludes it from eligibility in the area of Architecture. The wood-frame house has a rectangular footprint, four exterior wood paneled doors, and three porches. The full-façade front porch wraps around the east side of the south façade. There is also a secondary porch across the west side of the south façade and a partial-width rear porch. The basement level has awning windows and rusticated limestone walls. The walls above the basement and the soffits are sheathed with aluminum siding. The fenestration is comprised of tall, one-over-wood wood-sash windows unless otherwise noted. Windows are typically arranged alone and all have wood casings. The house has a steeply pitched roof with gable pavilions on the front and side façades with overhanging eaves. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles and features two corbelled brick chimneys: one on the north slope of the roof and the other on its east-west ridgeline. The interior exhibits high quality craftsmanship and retains its original floor plan, grand front staircase, doors, wood moldings, wainscoting, fireplaces, flooring and finishes.

### Setting and Site

Wisconsin Rapids is a community that is the county seat of Wood County and is geographically situated in the central part of the state. The Nels and Nellie Johnson House is prominently sited on a grassy lot that is about one acre in size at the northwest corner of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South. The picturesque three-story house faces east toward the Wisconsin River, which is across 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South, and is approached from that street via a concrete walkway. A stream runs along the western boundary of the property, which features an aluminum-sided, gable-roofed, three-car garage that was built post-2000 and is accessed from 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South via a semicircular concrete driveway. The next property to the north features the stately Thomas Nash House, a brick Tudor Revival style residence built in 1920 that currently serves as the headquarters of the Mead Witter Foundation. It is situated on an expansive parcel and like the Johnson House, faces east toward the Wisconsin River.

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**Building Exterior**

Primary (east) façade

The front façade has a three-sided, full-height gable pavilion, the third story of which has an overhang with decorative wood brackets. A gable wall dormer is situated above the second story sun porch. The front façade is approached by a flight of wood steps and features a full-façade spindlework porch that wraps around the east side of the south façade. The wraparound porch has a pediment above the steps; three wood newell posts with incised vertical fluting; spindlework balustrades along its north and south sides and a portion of its east side; delicate porch supports with fan-like brackets; knob-like ornaments suspended from the porch ceiling; and a spindlework frieze on its central portion. The flooring of the porch is wood and the ceiling is covered with aluminum.

The front façade has two east-facing entrances: the off-center front entrance features a pair of oak double doors, each of which has a tall pane of etched glass with a geometric design and carved circular motifs next to its decorative metal knob. The panes of etched glass on each door have carved wood surrounds, as do the wood panels on the lower portion of each door, which have incised decorative detailing. This entrance is surmounted by a frosted glass transom etched with the year of construction: 1892. A secondary wood paneled east-facing door is situated within the recessed portion of the wraparound porch and opens onto the living room.

The front façade has a total of thirteen wood windows: four on the first floor, six on the second floor and three on the third floor; all are one-over-one sash except where noted below. The first floor window in the central portion of the gable pavilion has a large fixed pane with a stained glass transom. The third floor has a pair of windows in the gable pavilion and a single window in the attic gable.

North (side) façade

The north façade has a centrally-located, full-height gable pavilion with overhanging eaves and a total of 21 windows. These include a single-pane adjacent to the porch that is bordered by smaller panes as well as three adjacent single-pane windows illuminating the front hall, one of which has a wood transom featuring a sunburst motif.

South (side) façade

The south façade has an off-center, full-height gable pavilion and an adjacent two-story hip roof pavilion. Wood corner brackets ornament the second story level of the gable pavilion. This façade features two shed-roofed spindlework porches on its east and west ends. The porch on the east end is an extension of the wraparound front porch described above. The porch on the west end has

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spindework balustrades; newell posts with incised vertical fluting; knob-like ornaments suspended from the porch ceiling; and delicate spindle porch supports with fan-like brackets. A wood paneled west-facing door is situated within this porch opens onto a vestibule that leads to the dining room.

There are a total of 19 windows on the south façade: eight on the first floor, nine on the second floor, and a pair of windows on the third floor. The first floor window in the central portion of the gable pavilion has a large fixed pane with a stained glass transom. The second floor has three single-pane windows—one on the first floor and two on the second floor—that are bordered by smaller panes.

West (rear) façade

The rear façade has a partial-width, gable roofed wood porch with pediment that features plain wood newell posts, spindle balustrades, two spindle posts, and a wood panel door that opens onto the kitchen. This façade has a total of seven windows: three on the first floor, two on the second, and a pair on the third floor.

**Building Interior**

The first floor plan of the Johnson house has a total of five primary rooms: a family room and kitchen on its north side, and a parlor, living room, and dining room on its south side. A full bathroom is situated in-between the family room and the kitchen and an adjacent east-west hallway connects these two spaces. The northeast corner of the house features a front entrance vestibule, adjacent alcove, and a formal hall with grand oak staircase that leads to the second floor. The southwest corner of the first floor plan includes modest secondary wood staircases that provide access to the basement and attic levels, as well as two pantries: one adjacent to the dining room and the other adjacent to the kitchen. Both pantries feature original full-height, built-in oak drawers and cabinets. Some of the cabinets in the dining room pantry have glass doors. A vestibule adjacent to the dining room opens onto the south façade's west porch. The living room has a door that opens onto the south façade's east porch. The kitchen has a door that opens onto the rear porch.

The second floor plan has a total of six primary rooms: one bedroom on its north side, an office and two bedrooms on its south side, and a study in the rear. A full bathroom is adjacent to the north bedroom. The northeast corner of the second floor has a sitting area and sun porch. The southwest corner of the second floor plan includes stairways to the first and third floors, a rear north-south hallway, and a linen closet with full-height, built-in drawers and cabinets. A narrow east-west hallway runs through the center of the plan. The third floor attic is comprised of a single open space.

The Johnson House is finished with plaster walls and ceilings and has original wood flooring on the first and second floors. The two bathrooms have tile flooring. The first floor entrance hall is



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surrounded by oak wainscoting with recessed square and rectangular panels. The focal point of this space is the grand reverse-flight oak staircase with newell post featuring recessed panels; balusters exhibiting a lattice-like pattern; and a built-in bench. The large arched opening between the entrance hall and adjacent front alcove has a spindlework frieze and this space also features a built-in bench. The double-doors opening onto the entrance vestibule from this hall are identical in appearance to the home's front entrance doors, which were described above.

The first and second floors of the house retain all of their six-panel hardwood doors and have one-foot-high baseboard molding. The first floor also features three sets of six-panel pocket doors as well as original picture railings in all primary rooms. All windows and doors are surrounded by oak casing. Elaborate door casings on the first floor and in the second floor stairhall are fluted on the sides and topped by a cornice with dentil molding. Decorative plaster ceiling medallions from which lighting fixtures are hung are found in various first and second floor rooms. The parlor has an Art Deco-inspired tiered crystal ceiling light fixture that is original to the Johnson family, as it is shown in a 1947 photograph. The house is graced by two fireplaces—one in the parlor and the other in the living room—that have wood mantels surmounted by mirrors, both detailed with carved floral motifs. The formal dining room is surrounded by oak wainscoting. The rear stairwell has painted wood wainscoting.

### **Garage (Non-Contributing)**

The three-story garage is sheathed in aluminum siding and has a low-pitched gable roof with overhanging eaves and aluminum soffits. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The south façade has two metal overhead doors. The east façade has a metal service door and a small window with four panes.

### **Integrity**

The Johnson House has good historic integrity from its period of significance (1892 to 1902). The house retains its original exterior appearance from this period, including its massing, roofline, wood spindlework porches, fenestration, wood panel doors, decorative wood brackets, and two stained glass transoms. The primary exterior change is the installation of aluminum siding, which covers the walls above the basement level and the soffits. While this change is likely reversible as original wood clapboard siding presumably exists beneath the siding, it precludes the house as eligible for the National Register in the area of Architecture. The house originally had a third chimney, located on the south slope of its roof, which was removed at an unknown date. Some of the front porch railings have been removed.

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The interior of the house also retains excellent architectural integrity, retaining its original floor plan, wood flooring, plaster walls and ceilings, fireplaces and radiators. The front hall with its grand oak staircase is unchanged. Both the entrance hall and dining room exhibit original oak wainscoting. Original wood panel doors are extant throughout the house with their original hardware. All doors and windows feature original wood casing. Both first floor pantries and the second floor linen closet exhibit their original drawers and cabinetry. Interior changes are mainly limited to the modernization of the kitchen and both bathrooms with fixtures, appliances, and finishes appropriate to the period. Wall-to-wall carpeting has been installed on the second floor. An interior door opening that once connected the family room (which originally served as a bedroom) to the adjacent bathroom was removed at an unknown date. Despite the alterations, the house is clearly identifiable and if Nels or Nellie Johnson were to see it today, they would unmistakably recognize it as their home of many years.

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**Summary**

Wisconsin Rapids existed in the nineteenth century as two separate communities on either side of the Wisconsin River: Grand Rapids to the east and Centralia to the west. The rival communities merged in 1900 to become the city of Grand Rapids. The name was changed to Wisconsin Rapids in 1920. The Nels and Nellie Johnson House was built in 1892 in Centralia and designed by William H. Parker, an architect from La Crosse, Wisconsin. The period of significance extends from 1892 (the year that the house was constructed) to 1902 (the year of Nels Johnson's death).

The Johnson House is locally significant under National Register Criterion B in the area of Commerce due to its association with Nels Johnson (1847-1902), a prominent nineteenth-century merchant, industrialist, and political leader in Wisconsin Rapids. Johnson was at the height of his career and influence during the decade that he lived in this house, which is the only extant building associated with him in the city. Nels was the co-founder of the Johnson, Hills & Company department store, which in December 1891 was considered "the largest and most prosperous firm in Wood County," according to the local newspaper. One writer called Nels the community's "merchant prince" in 1902. Johnson was elected mayor of Centralia in 1894 and in this capacity he spearheaded important resolutions for municipal improvements, such as the construction of a waterworks and a bid to secure cheaper telephone service from the Wisconsin Telephone Company. In 1895 Johnson became first president of the Consolidated Water Power Company, which subsequently furnished building sites to manufacturing plants along the Wisconsin River and supplied them with electric power at a moderate price, thus playing a major role in attracting industry to Wisconsin Rapids in the early twentieth century. Johnson was also president of the Grand Rapids Pulp & Paper Company, and in 1895 he supervised the building of a dam and paper mill upstream at Biron, which linked the interests of that community with those of nearby Centralia and Grand Rapids.

A "Historic Property Reconnaissance Survey" prepared for the city of Wisconsin Rapids by Mead & Hunt in 1995 identified Nels Johnson as one of the "noteworthy figures in Wisconsin Rapids history" who made "significant contributions to the economic development of the community" and includes a short profile on him.<sup>1</sup>

The Johnson House has good overall integrity, retaining its original massing, roofline, porches, fenestration, doors, and decorative detailing. The primary exterior change is the installation of

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<sup>1</sup> Mead & Hunt, Inc., "Historic Property Reconnaissance Survey; Prepared for City of Wisconsin Rapids," (November 1995) 15-16.

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aluminum siding, which covers the walls above the basement level and the soffits. While this change is likely reversible as original wood clapboard siding presumably exists beneath the siding, it precludes the house as eligible for the National Register in the area of Architecture. The interior exhibits high quality craftsmanship and features its original floor plan, grand front staircase, doors, wood moldings, wainscoting, fireplaces, flooring and finishes.

**Local Significance of Nels Johnson**

Nels Johnson was born on June 17, 1847 in Copenhagen, Denmark and immigrated to the United States from the island of Zealand at the age of twenty. He made his way to Chicago where he lived for a short time before relocating to Grand Rapids in search of employment. He went to work for Francis Biron who was operating a saw mill about three miles up the Wisconsin River from Wisconsin Rapids. Johnson started as a common laborer, working in the woods during the winter and in the saw mill during the summer. He advanced himself up until he held the position of head sawyer, when he quit to enter the general mercantile business with Henry Langord in 1876.<sup>2</sup>

Nels became a partner in the mercantile firm of Edwards & Johnson by 1880, but in the following year he established his own dry goods establishment, Nels Johnson & Company. A notice in the *Wood County Reporter* of that year stated that, "Nels Johnson & Co. are doing an immense business. They have the largest dry goods and grocery stock in the city of Centralia. Call and see their mammoth stock of boots and shoes."<sup>3</sup> In 1887, Nels merged his business with that of George Hill to form Johnson, Hill & Company (later Johnson & Hill). The dry goods establishment was located in a couple of adjacent buildings at the northwest corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and W. Grand Avenue, in what was then the city of Centralia. J.D. Witter, a prominent banker in the community, also invested in the concern. The *Wood County Reporter* published an article on Johnson, Hill & Co. in 1891, which was subtitled, "The largest and most prosperous firm in Wood County":

"This firm is made up of Mr. Nels Johnson, George M. Hill and J.D. Witter. They have two large store buildings in Centralia, in which they transact all their business. The new brick block is a modern structure, 60x90 feet, two stories high, containing all the modern improvements necessary to do a prompt and efficient mercantile business. It has the best shelving and counters, they use the Barr cash system; it is lighted by electric lights and is heated by furnace. In this building is confined the dry goods, gents furnishing goods and clothing, boots and shoes and fancy goods.

"Mr. Nels Johnson who has a life long experience in the mercantile business, has personal charge of this department. He is a man of social and pleasing qualities who is universally liked

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<sup>2</sup> "Prominent Citizen Dead," *Wood County Reporter* (December 18, 1902).

<sup>3</sup> *Wood County Reporter*, October 20, 1881.

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by all those who enjoy his acquaintance. He has excellent taste in the selection of goods and always keeps enough of everything you are pleased to call for.

“In the other building can be found groceries, drugs, flour and feed, shelf and heavy hardware, stoves and ranges. George M. Hill, the second member of the firm, has personal charge of this store. While he is the youngest man in the firm he is known as the “hustler.” He has those traits of character which make him popular with everybody. He is keen and can always drive a good bargain. He has been drilled in all lines of trade and makes an excellent running mate with his partner, Mr. Johnson.

“The third member of the firm is J.D. Witter, who is reputed to be the wealthiest man in Wood County. His thousands backs the concern and his excellent judgment is often brought into requisition by his partners in making large deals. A stronger firm is seldom organized and the result is they do a big business. It runs up into the hundreds of thousands.”<sup>4</sup>

*The Centralia Reporter* regularly reported on Nels Johnson’s buying trips to Chicago to purchase goods, and in 1893 he also traveled to that city to visit the World’s Fair.<sup>5</sup> Johnson’s granddaughter, Kathern Ellen (“Nellen”) Sherwood later noted that, “Eventually, my grandfather’s store was considered the Marshall Field’s of the north country.”<sup>6</sup> Nels Johnson was also identified with many other industries in Wisconsin Rapids. He was part owner of Centralia Hardware and was at one time involved in logging operations with John Landry in Tomahawk, Lincoln County, Wisconsin. In 1895, Johnson supervised the building of a dam and paper mill upstream at Biron for the Grand Rapids Pulp & Paper Company, of which he was president and a heavy stockholder. After the mill was constructed he continued to manage the firm, which benefitted nearby Centralia and Grand Rapids, as noted by *The Centralia Enterprise*: “The new plant cannot fail to be of vast benefit to the twin cities. The nearness will practically identify the interests at Biron with those of these cities.”<sup>7</sup>

In March 6, 1895, Nels Johnson purchased stock in the Consolidated Water Power Company, which was established on July 16, 1894 by several men with an agreement that stated in part, “the water powers at said cities (Centralia and Grand Rapids) would be of more value if consolidated and improved on one general plan.”<sup>8</sup> The company was formed from the holdings of several people with businesses using the power of the Wisconsin River around the present site of the CPI Wisconsin Rapids Dam. The intention of the agreement was that each owner would deed his properties to the

<sup>4</sup> “Johnson, Hill & Co.,” *Wood County Reporter* (Dec. 3, 1891).

<sup>5</sup> *The Centralia Enterprise* (October 7, 1893).

<sup>6</sup> Mark Scarborough, “Remembering Johnson Hill’s,” *The Daily Tribune* (Wisconsin Rapids), April 3, 1996.

<sup>7</sup> “A New Enterprise,” *The Centralia Enterprise* (June 15, 1895).

<sup>8</sup> Roy Urban and Max Andrae, *Consolidated Water Power Company: One Hundred Years of Water Power, 1894-1994* (Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin, 1994) 4.

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“consolidated” corporation formed in exchange for shares in \$300,000 of capital stock. The company controlled nearly every foot of land on both sides of the river in what was then the separate communities of Centralia and Grand Rapids.<sup>9</sup>

Nels Johnson was elected president of Consolidated in 1895, and he quickly became the enterprise’s leading proponent, along with J.D. Witter, his partner both in the Johnson & Hill store and in the Grand Rapids Paper Company mill at Biron. However, the company’s resolution to develop the “grand rapids” became frustrated almost immediately when Tom and John Nash, who were riverfront property owners and signers of the original agreement, changed their minds and refused to deed their land to the consolidated group. Johnson and Witter demanded that the Nash brothers honor the original agreement and took them to court. Litigation lasted seven years, but Johnson was relentless in moving the project forward. Finally in March 1901, Thomas E. Nash agreed to sell to Consolidated Water Power and lands along the Grand Rapids for his price of \$33,750.<sup>10</sup>

Nels Johnson’s various mercantile and industrial enterprises in Centralia and Wood County provided him with a vested interest in the area’s growth and development. He was actively involved in both local and county politics during the 1880s and 1890s. Johnson was elected Alderman of the City of Centralia’s 1<sup>st</sup> Ward in 1880 and served for several terms on the Wood County Board of Supervisors. The earliest term documented was in 1886 and the last was in 1901. In 1892, the year that the Johnson House at 850 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South in Centralia was erected, Nels was the Republican candidate from Wood County for the Wisconsin General Assembly. The *Wood County Reporter* published this endorsement:

“It would be unnecessary for us to introduce Mr. Nels Johnson, of Centralia, the republican candidate for Member of Assembly, if the southern portion of the county were all that was going to vote for him, but for the information of the people in the northern part of the county we desire to say a little about him.

“His nationality is that of a Scandinavian. He came to this country when a boy and was first employed in Wood County in Mr. Biron’s saw mill. He worked in this capacity for several years until he had saved a few hundred dollars, with which he made his beginning in the mercantile business until now he is a member of one of the largest and strongest firms financially there is in Wood County.

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<sup>9</sup> Dave Engel, *The Age of Paper: Consolidation of the Water Power at Wisconsin Rapids, 1886-1904* (Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin: South Wood Historical Corporation, 1986) 47. This book provides an in-depth history pertaining to the Consolidated Power and Paper Company’s establishment.

<sup>10</sup> Dave Engel, *The Age of Paper: Consolidation of the Water Power at Wisconsin Rapids, 1886-1904* (Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin: South Wood Historical Corporation, 1986) 49, 51, 53, 65-66.

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“He has accomplished this by hard work, honorable dealing with his customers until now he is in easy circumstances. He is strictly a man of the people kindhearted and true. His remembrances to the poor and needy in times of distress and hardship has made him beloved by all classes and conditions. He has never sought an office and is now sacrificing his business interests for his party. He is very popular and well thought of by members of both parties. He is a republican and therefore can be counted on to vote with his party on the issues which come up between them.”<sup>11</sup>

During local elections held in April 1894, Johnson was elected as mayor of Centralia over Dr. A.L. Ridgman by a vote of 212 to 163. The *Centralia Enterprise* praised the outcome of the vote: “In the choice of Mr. Nels Johnson for mayor, our city has secured the services of one of our most successful business men. He is a man of broad experience and as his business interests are largely centered here, he will take pains to see to it that the interests of the city will in no wise suffer during his administration.”<sup>12</sup>

As mayor, Nels represented Centralia in a meeting of businessmen from the surrounding cities held in February 1894 to take united action in securing cheaper telephone service from the Wisconsin Telephone Company. A letter was formulated that requested a reduction of telephone rentals in each city to two dollars per month for business houses and offices and one dollar per month for private residences.<sup>13</sup> Another important measure spearheaded by Nels as mayor was the construction of a waterworks. He signed a resolution to condemn and appraise land for this purpose, which was adopted by the Common Council of Centralia at its meeting held on February 27, 1895.<sup>14</sup> In December 1901, Nels was among the Commissioners who voted in favor of resolution that the sum of \$16,667 be levied and assessed upon the taxable property of the towns, villages and cities of Wood County, for the use of a “state school fund, hospital for insane, industrial school for boys, and a Wisconsin home for feeble minded and care of chronic insane.”<sup>15</sup>

By 1902, Nels Johnson was at the height of his career. The Johnson and Hill Company was described by one contemporary in that year as “the largest mercantile establishment in central Wisconsin.”<sup>16</sup> After the death of J.D. Witter in March of that year, Johnson stood nearly alone to carry on the Consolidated venture. He was able to keep the company on track by convincing Witter’s son-in-law George Mead, a board member, to move forward with construction of the dam and paper mill. On November 10, 1902, Consolidated’s Articles of Incorporation were amended to include the

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<sup>11</sup> “Republican County Ticket,” *Wood County Reporter* (October 20, 1892).

<sup>12</sup> “Our Spring Elections,” *The Centralia Enterprise* (April 7, 1894).

<sup>13</sup> “The Cooperative Telephone System,” *The Daily Tribune* (Wisconsin Rapids), (Feb. 9, 1895).

<sup>14</sup> “Notice,” *The Centralia Enterprise* (March 9, 1895).

<sup>15</sup> “County Board Proceedings,” *The Daily Tribune* (Wisconsin Rapids), (Dec. 28, 1901).

<sup>16</sup> “Prominent Citizen Dead,” *Wood County Reporter* (December 18, 1902).

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manufacture of pulp and paper. The company's name then changed to the Consolidated Water Power and Paper Company.<sup>17</sup>

On Sunday, December 14, 1902, Johnson traveled to Chicago to be gone only a day or two. While in Chicago on Monday he decided to visit Wilmington, Delaware to obtain two paper machines on behalf of the Consolidated Water Power and Paper Company.<sup>18</sup> He arrived in that city on Tuesday afternoon and retired to his bed at the Clayton House Hotel when he was taken violently ill. He asked the porter of the hotel to summon a physician. Dr. William Spring arrived shortly thereafter and found Johnson suffering great pain. Although the doctor remained at his bedside and administered what remedies he could, Johnson passed away at about one o'clock a.m. on Wednesday, December 17. The cause of death was pronounced to be "uremic convulsion."<sup>19</sup>

The sudden and unexpected death of Nels Johnson was announced to the community of Wisconsin Rapids in an article published the next day in the *Wood County Reporter*, which noted that: "In the death of Mr. Johnson his family loses an affectionate and devoted husband, a considerate and kind father, and the city of Grand Rapids an excellent citizen and exemplary business man. His presence will be greatly missed at the home, in the counting house or store, and in the business counsels of his associates."<sup>20</sup> Johnson's body returned to Wisconsin Rapids on the St. Paul line, arriving on Saturday, December 20, and was laid in state at his house.

Judge W. J. Conway delivered a eulogy at a funeral service held the following day. Conway described among the "unusual assemblage" of "so many citizens of our city, the sad sense of bereavement and sorrow which sits upon the visages of those here present, the funeral decorations of this home, the empty chair so eloquent..." Johnson, said Conway, had arrived in New York with 25 cents in his pocket but had quickly become "the architect of his fortune. He was essentially a businessman. He did things. To him theories were subordinate to practical results. ..." Conway also noted that Nels delighted in his happy home on the banks of the Wisconsin where he lived "in the sweet companionship of those he loved." The funeral cortege to Calvary Cemetery was thought to be the longest ever seen in Grand Rapids, with 173 teams in line besides the many that were present at the home and grave side during the last services. Many were present from out of town.<sup>21</sup>

One writer noted that Johnson's death "was a great shock to his family and the people in Grand Rapids, and the entire city is in mourning. Grand Rapids has lost one of her most successful business

<sup>17</sup> Urban, 5.

<sup>18</sup> "Prominent Citizen Dead," *Wood County Reporter* (December 18, 1902).

<sup>19</sup> "The Last Sad Rites: Nels Johnson Laid to Rest," *The Centralia Enterprise* (December 24, 1902).

<sup>20</sup> "Prominent Citizen Dead," *Wood County Reporter* (December 18, 1902).

<sup>21</sup> "The Last Sad Rites: Nels Johnson Laid to Rest," *The Centralia Enterprise* (December 24, 1902).



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men and as time passes, his worth will be more keenly felt.”<sup>22</sup> Another obituary noted that, “The Johnson name is indelibly linked with the steady, prosperous growth this city has enjoyed. Mr. Johnson was an old resident of Wood County, a leading factor in the upbuilding of Grand Rapids, and associated with many of her leading industries.”<sup>23</sup>

The article announcing Johnson’s death ended by stating: “Just what effect his death will have upon the contemplated improvements by the Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co., is not known, but we shall all sincerely hope that the improvements may go on to the benefit of the stockholders and the community generally.”<sup>24</sup> A week after, George W. Mead put an end to the speculation by publicly announcing that the Consolidated venture would continue. He stated to a reporter that, “It was thought by many that the death of Mr. Johnson would delay or stop the work, but this is not the case. Mr. Johnson was one of the most enthusiastic members of the company and it had long been his ambition to see the power improved, and the remaining members will carry out the work as proposed. The matter of drawing plans is still in progress.”<sup>25</sup> Work on the dam and mill buildings began in early 1903 and were completed by June 1904. Consolidated subsequently furnished building sites to other manufacturing plants and supplied them with electric power at a moderate price, thus playing a major role in attracting industry to Wisconsin Rapids in the early twentieth-century. The company’s paper mill is still the community’s largest employer.

The Johnson & Hill department store likewise continued to thrive for decades after Johnson’s death. After over two decades at W. Grand and 2<sup>nd</sup> avenues, in 1912 the company built an imposing brick department store one block away, at W. Grand and 3<sup>rd</sup> avenues, which is extant. Johnson & Hill celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1937, at which time the store had 145 full-time employees and was “one of the largest department stores to be found anywhere in a city the size of Wisconsin Rapids,” according to *The Daily Tribune*. The same article noted that, “The development of central Wisconsin agriculture and industry, bringing good roads and rapid communication throughout the area, has given Johnson-Hills an ever increasing trade area. The store now has a normal service area with a radius of 45 miles out from Wisconsin Rapids. The company owns and operates its own wholesale department and has New York and Chicago buying offices. It is also associated with 23 other stores in the northwest in a combined buying group purchasing many hundreds of thousands of dollars’ worth of goods annually.”<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> “Prominent Citizen Dead,” *Wood County Reporter* (December 18, 1902).

<sup>23</sup> “Sudden Summons: Nels Johnson Succumbs to Heart Failure,” *The Marshfield News and Wisconsin Hub* (Marshfield, Wisconsin), December 18, 1902.

<sup>24</sup> “Prominent Citizen Dead,” *Wood County Reporter* (December 18, 1902).

<sup>25</sup> “Will Continue Work: Improvements to Continue on Water Power,” *The Daily Tribune* (Wisconsin Rapids) (December 24, 1902).

<sup>26</sup> “Johnson & Hill Co. has 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary,” *The Daily Tribune* (Wisconsin Rapids), (April 29, 1937).

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The Johnson & Hill department store was an important employer of women in Wisconsin Rapids, many of whom reminisced decades later that it was *the* place to work. The full-service department store included a grocery and meat department and catered to the entire community. The Johnson & Hill Company was purchased from the Johnson descendants in 1952, five years after Nellie Johnson's death. By the 1960s, the Johnson and Hill Company had become a chain with stores in Wisconsin locations that included Manitowoc, Oshkosh, Neenah, Wausau, Marshfield, and Waukesha. In 1987, the Johnson & Hill's concern was sold to the Kline Companies, Inc. of Cleveland, Ohio, and the Wisconsin Rapids store became a Kline's department store. Kline's closed its stores in 1994 and the former Johnson & Hill building stood vacant until 1999 when it reopened under new owners as an office, retail and service space.<sup>27</sup>

**History of the Nels and Nellie Johnson House**

The Johnson House at 850 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South was originally situated on a sprawling twelve-acre parcel of land that was purchased by Nels Johnson on May 29, 1891, as reported in *The Centralia Enterprise*:

“An important transfer of real estate took place in our city yesterday. Mr. Nels Johnson purchased of Mr. Freeman Blanchard about twelve acres of land in the third ward, just below the residence of Thos. E. Nash. The consideration was \$1,050. Mr. Johnson is contemplating the purchase of other property in that vicinity, and either this or next season will put up a fine residence thereon. With a frontage on the beautiful Wisconsin River, a fine stock range in the rear, and the whole only four or five blocks from the business center of the city, Mr. Johnson's new purchase certainly has every commendable feature for a first class residence site.”<sup>28</sup>

Johnson's newly acquired parcel was just a few blocks south of his thriving dry goods establishment, Johnson & Hill, which one writer referred to in 1891 as “the largest and most prosperous firm in Wood County.”<sup>29</sup> Both the home site and store were located in the city of Centralia, which had a population of 1,435 in 1895.<sup>30</sup>

Nels Johnson (1847-1902) and his wife Nellie (Hanifin) Johnson (1859-1947) were married on October 29, 1879 in joint ceremony with her sister Maggie Hanifin, who wed Wood County Sheriff Peter McCamley. A marriage notice in the *Wood County Reporter* stated that, “The Misses Hanifin are highly esteemed young ladies of culture and refinement, and general favorites with our people.”<sup>31</sup>

<sup>27</sup> “Johnson & Hill building timeline,” *The Daily Tribune* (Wisconsin Rapids), (August 4, 1999).

<sup>28</sup> *Centralia Enterprise* (May 30, 1891).

<sup>29</sup> “Johnson, Hill & Co.,” *Wood County Reporter* (Dec. 3, 1891).

<sup>30</sup> George O. Jones, *History of Wood County, Wisconsin* (Minneapolis: H.C. Cooper, Jr. and Company, 1923) 143.

<sup>31</sup> “Wedding,” *Wood County Reporter* (October 30, 1879).

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Nels, a native of Denmark, had emigrated to the U.S. in 1867 and arrived in the “almost unbroken forests of Wisconsin” shortly thereafter.<sup>32</sup> Nellie was one of six children born to Thomas and Mary Hanifin, a well-known family of Wood County pioneers.<sup>33</sup>

In 1880, Nels and Nellie Johnson lived at 33 Cranberry Street (now Grand Avenue) in Centralia.<sup>34</sup> Upon their purchase of the parcel at 850 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South the couple had five children: Maurine M. (b. 1881); Lona A. (b. 1883); Raymond T. (b. 1884); Bernice E. (b. 1886); and Irma E. (b. 1891). They had three additional children in the 1890s: Donald P. (b. 1893); Leland S. (b. 1896); and Malcolm F. (b. 1898).<sup>35</sup>

In 1892, architect William H. Parker of La Crosse, Wisconsin, furnished the plans and specifications for the Johnson family’s new house on South First Avenue in Centralia.<sup>36</sup> Joseph Golla, a local architect and builder, supervised the construction of the house from plans furnished by Parker. On July 21, 1892, the *Wood County Reporter* noted that Golla “was engaged to take charge of the erection of N. Johnson’s new residence. He is pushing the work.”<sup>37</sup> In 1892, Golla also served as the builder for Grand Rapids’ new city hall building, a two-story, red brick edifice located “at the head of Water Street,” which featured an eighty foot clock tower, which was designed by M.C. Radway of Ripon, Wisconsin.<sup>38</sup>

The Johnson House—which had a “commodious and convenient barn with stone foundation” in the rear of the parcel—was nearly completed in November 1892 when it was described by a contemporary:

“Among the number of fine residences in course of construction in Centralia, that of Mr. Nels Johnson bears the palm. For artistic elegance, combined with utility, it is unsurpassed.

“Mr. Johnson owns thirteen acres fronting the river at one of the most picturesque points in the city, and is known as the old Dixon property. At the rear of the house a few feet away is a little brook that winds its devious way to “join the brimming river.” It has unlimited possibilities of

<sup>32</sup> “The Last Sad Rites: Nels Johnson Laid to Rest,” *The Centralia Enterprise* (December 24, 1902).

<sup>33</sup> Jones, 567.

<sup>34</sup> Ancestry.com. *1880 United States Federal Census*.

<sup>35</sup> Names and birth dates taken from: Ancestry.com. *1900 United States Federal Census*.

<sup>36</sup> The current owners of the house have Parker’s original plans and specifications, which were given to them by members of the Johnson family.

<sup>37</sup> *Wood County Reporter*, July 21, 1892. In Wisconsin Rapids, Joseph Bolla was also the architect and builder of the Hamm Building at 160 First Street North (1894); an upright-and-wing house for ex-sheriff Michael Vincent (1895) that was located “near the Catholic cemetery.” “Hamm Building,” *The Daily Tribune* (Wisconsin Rapids), (September 11, 2014). *Wood County Reporter*, March 21, 1895.

<sup>38</sup> “New City Hall,” *Wood County Reporter* (Jan. 28, 1892).

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added to the attractiveness of the place. The environments of the place are all the most fastidious taste could wish. In winter the barrenness of the groves and woods forming the background is relieved by the somber green of pines and evergreens. Birch and maple give color and beauty to the autumn landscape. Looking in any direction the views are charming.

“The house is a large three story building crowned with a roof of design conforming to the artistic outline of the building. A cellar or basement underlies the whole. The building is supplied with water from a well in the cellar, is carried to all parts of the house by a force pump. A tank is on the upper floor. Twenty-five electric lights are distributed at convenient points. Electric bells are supplied A Boynton hot water furnace provides the heat. Three large chimneys are carried up from the foundation. Both the first and second floors are furnished with bath rooms, complete in their appointments.

“A large reception hall with carved white oak, grand stairway is entered from the front through a vestibule. It has an alcove with stainless glass windows. A parlor adjoining this and connected with it by sliding doors, occupies the southeast corner; next to this a sitting room and beyond a large bedroom and bath room. These rooms are finished in red birch. In the parlor is an Aldine grate in antique copper, the sitting room has the same style of grate in antique bronze. All of these rooms are connected by sliding doors. The dining room on south side is finished in white oak, and has a china closet similarly finished, connecting it with the kitchen. In the china closet is a warming oven of modern design. The kitchen is roomy and convenient, finished in red oak. The laundry is in the basement, as are also store rooms for cold storage, vegetables, etc.

“Across the front of the house and running the length of the southern elevation is a low, wide porch. A door from the sitting room opens on to this. Also from the dining room is a southern entrance. This is large enough to suggest a generous supply of hammocks, porch chairs, settees, camp tables and hot weather luxuries.”<sup>39</sup>

The *Wood County Reporter*, which was the local paper for Grand Rapids, Wisconsin, regularly carried news items about members of the Johnson family, such as noting when Nels left the city for a business trip. The birth of Nels and Nellie’s youngest child, was also duly noted in 1898: “Mr. Nels Johnson, our merchant prince, has been passing around the cigars in commemoration of the arrival of a son at his house on Thurs. Mr. Johnson’s family now numbers four boys and four girls, and he can organize within his own family circle a game of progressive whist, a cotillion and many other forms of amusement.”<sup>40</sup> In 1899, the paper reported that Maurine Johnson, the couple’s oldest daughter, was home from the University of Wisconsin in Madison for the holidays.<sup>41</sup> In 1900, the Johnson family

<sup>39</sup> “An Elegant Home: The Largest, Finest and Most Modern Residence in the City,” *Wood County Reporter* (November 17, 1892).

<sup>40</sup> *The Centralia Enterprise*, March 5, 1898.

<sup>41</sup> *Wood County Reporter* (December 28, 1899).

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shared their house on South First Avenue with a twenty-five-year-old servant, Emma Buss, a Wisconsin native. All of the children were in school at that time except the two youngest, Leland and Malcolm, who were four and two years of age.<sup>42</sup>

Nels Johnson died unexpectedly in 1902 at the age of fifty-five, leaving Nellie responsible for all eight of Johnson children who ranged from four to twenty-two years of age. Lona Johnson died intestate on August 31, 1907. She may have been traveling to the wedding of her older sister Maurine to their neighbor James Nash, the son of local industrialist Thomas E. Nash, which took place on September 31 of that year in Denver, Colorado.<sup>43</sup> In 1910, the other six Johnson children still lived at home, some of whom continued operating the Johnson & Hill department store. Ray Johnson married Inez Witter in 1912 and became the manager of the establishment in 1919. Donald Johnson became manager of the clothing department in that year.<sup>44</sup> In 1920, five Johnson children remained in the house with their mother Nellie. Ray had moved out by that time. By 1930, Nellie lived alone in the house with her daughter Bernice.<sup>45</sup> Irma (Johnson) Bellow, daughter of Nels and Nellie, worked in the Johnson & Hill store in the 1930s and 1940s as a buyer in the china, gift and toy department.

Nellie Johnson died in her home at 850 South 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue on June 28, 1947 at the age of eighty-nine. One writer noted that she was a “well-known, highly respected pioneer resident, whose family has been closely identified with the business and civic life of this community for almost three-quarters of a century.” Her obituary also reported that Mrs. Johnson’s death, “severs one of the last remaining ties between the past and the present in the panorama of our city’s development. Coming here with her pioneer parents, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Hanifin, in infancy, she witnessed the growth of Wisconsin Rapids from its early days of rugged existence to its present stature as a modern and progressive municipality.”<sup>46</sup>

Three of the Johnson children preceded Mrs. Johnson in death: Maurine, Lona and Donald. Bernice Johnson lived in Los Angeles in 1947. Irma (Johnson) Bellow and Ray Johnson lived in Wisconsin Rapids with their families at the time of Nellie’s death. They were involved in running the Johnson & Hill Department store until 1952 when the family disposed of its interests. Leland Johnson then lived in Milwaukee and Malcolm Johnson lived in River Forest, Illinois.

<sup>42</sup> Ancestry.com. *1900 United States Federal Census*.

<sup>43</sup> “Johnson-Nash Wedding,” *Wood County Reporter* (September 5, 1907). “Notice of Application for Letters of Administration,” *Wood County Reporter* (September 19, 1907).

<sup>44</sup> Dave Engel, *The Fat Memoirs* (Wisconsin Rapid, Wisconsin: South Wood County Historical Corporation, 1988). “Ray Johnson Succumbs to Heart Attack,” *The Daily Tribune* (Wisconsin Rapids), (July 21, 1958).

<sup>45</sup> Ancestry.com. *United States Federal Census* for the years 1920 and 1930.

<sup>46</sup> “A Pioneer Passes,” *The Daily Tribune* (Wisconsin Rapids), June 30, 1947.

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The 13-acre Johnson property was sold late 1947 to the Sisters of St. Francis and construction began the following spring on a church and school for Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Parish. These buildings were situated on land formerly used as a pasture on the west side of the present-day 600, 700 and 800 blocks of South Tenth Avenue.<sup>47</sup> The Johnson House was used by the nuns as a convent. In 1968, the house was sold to William Foote, who in turn sold to James Manley in 1972. In 1983, the house was purchased by Bill and Kathern Ellen (“Nellen”) Sherwood. Nellen was the daughter of Irma (Johnson) Bellow and the granddaughter of Nels and Nellie Johnson. Nellen had memories of visiting her grandmother Nellie Johnson in the house as a child from their family home in Minneapolis and stated in 1984 that “The basic structure of the house has remained the same.”<sup>48</sup> The Johnson House was purchased by its current owners, Jackie and John Dietrich, in 2003.

Today, the Johnson House at 850 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South is the only extant building in Wisconsin Rapids associated with Nels Johnson and it was here that he resided for a decade during the peak of his career and influence. The previous house occupied by the Johnson family, located at 33 Grand Avenue, was razed long ago. The mill buildings associated with the Consolidated Water Power Company, as well as Johnson & Hill Building at W. Grand and 3<sup>rd</sup> avenues that once housed the department store that Nels co-founded, were built after his death. However, these enterprises were highly influential in the business and industrial development of the community. Consolidated became the largest employer in Wisconsin Rapids during the twentieth century. The Johnson & Hill department store—which was family-owned and operated until 1952—catered to the entire community and served as an important employer of women in Wisconsin Rapids, becoming a statewide chain of stores by 1960.

### **The Queen Anne Style and the Johnson House**

The Queen Anne was the dominant style of domestic building in the United States from about 1880 until 1910. An eclectic and picturesque style, it was used for urban, suburban and rural residences and less frequently for small commercial buildings. The style was named and popularized by a group of nineteenth-century English architects led by Richard Norman Shaw (1831-1912). From the early 1870s on, Shaw’s sprawling manor houses were published in the architectural press and thus came to be known, admired, and imitated by American architects. The name is rather inappropriate, for the historical precedents used by Shaw and his followers had little to do with Queen Anne or the formal renaissance architecture that was dominant during her reign (1702-1714). Instead, they borrowed most heavily from late medieval rural models of the preceding Elizabethan and Jacobean eras.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> “Plan to begin construction of St. Mary’s Church, School This Spring,” *The Daily Tribune* (Wisconsin Rapids), March 12, 1948.

<sup>48</sup> Nancy Langowski, “House becomes a home,” *Daily Tribune* (Wisconsin Rapids), (April 19, 1984).

<sup>49</sup> Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994) 268.

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H.H. Richardson's Watts-Sherman House in Newport, Rhode Island (1874) is generally considered to be the first American example of the style. Richardson followed Shaw very closely in the design for this half-timbered house, while providing a degree of American character by substituting shingles for tiles to sheath its upper walls, and stone for brick as cladding for the ground story.<sup>50</sup> A few high-style examples followed in the 1870s, and by 1880 the style was being spread throughout the country by widely circulated pattern books and the first architectural magazine, *The American Architect and Building News*.<sup>51</sup> The expanding railroad network also helped popularize the style by making pre-cut architectural details conveniently available through much of the nation. Industrialization and advanced manufacturing techniques allowed for the mass production of millwork and extravagant architectural detailing that was previously restricted to expensive, landmark houses.

Queen Anne houses feature asymmetrical façades with an emphasis on verticality. Irregularities in ground plan were facilitated by the widespread adoption of balloon framing techniques in the late nineteenth-century. Wall surfaces typically feature a mixture of cladding materials and textures, such as brick or stone on the ground level and upper floors covered with horizontal boards, stucco, or shingles shaped in varying designs. In masonry houses, texture is created through differing patterns of brick courses or the insertion of terra cotta panels. Half-timbering, when used, is typically seen in the gables, which also may feature patterned shingles or more elaborate motifs, such as appliques of stylized sunbursts or sunflower motifs.

In their book, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, Virginia and Lee McAlester identified two decorative detailing subtypes that comprise the vast majority of Queen Anne style house: the spindlework and the free classic types. The American spindlework interpretation became dominant during the 1880s and featured wood detailing that was turned on a lathe and typically displayed on porches. About half of Queen Anne style houses have delicate turned porch supports and spindlework ornamentation, which most commonly occurs in porch balustrades or as a frieze suspended from the porch ceiling. Spindlework detailing is also used in gables and under the wall overhangs left by cutaway bay windows. Lacy, decorative spandrels and knoblike beads are also common ornamental elements of this subtype. Spindlework detailing is sometimes referred to as gingerbread ornamentation, or as Eastlake detailing (after English designer and critic Charles Eastlake, whose taste in ornament was adopted by Americans for exteriors).<sup>52</sup>

The free classic adaption became widespread during the decade of the 1890s. This decorative subtype features the use of classical columns, rather than delicate turned posts with spindlework detailing, as

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<sup>50</sup> Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles* (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1988) 117.

<sup>51</sup> McAlester, 268.

<sup>52</sup> McAlester, 264.

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porch supports. These columns may be either the full height of the porch or raised on a pedestal to the level of the porch railing; the railings normally lack the delicate, turned balusters of spindlework type of detailing. Porch-support columns are commonly grouped together in units of two or three. Palladian windows, cornice-line dentils, and other classical details are frequent, such as swags and garland applique.<sup>53</sup>

The fully developed Queen Anne floor plan moved away from classical symmetry and became much more open, allowing light and air into the rooms from all directions. Sliding pocket doors opened up the rooms to each other, creating one large space, or smaller, private room. The dominant interior feature was a large entrance hall, featuring a central circulation space with both fireplace and grand staircase. Walls often featured paneled wainscoting with wallpaper above and fully paneled walls were popular among the well-to-do in the late nineteenth century. Built-in furniture was common and almost every room had baseboard molding. Door and window surrounds—both exterior and interior—tend to be simple in Queen Anne style houses. Fireplaces were important decorative features and the stylish types were Rococo Revival models in marble and Renaissance Revival design with incised decoration on marble or wood.<sup>54</sup>

The Queen Anne style was popular in small towns, suburbs and cities in Wisconsin. The publication, *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*, edited by Barbara Wyatt, identifies two residential examples of the style: the Frank Chenoweth House (NRHP 1976) at 10th Street and 20th Avenue in Monroe (1888), which has brick walls and third story gables covered with wood shingles, an octagonal-shaped tower with pyramidal-roof, and a rambling veranda. In Madison, the more subdued Daniel Campbell house at 125 East Gilman Street in Madison (1883), has a round tower and walls sheathed in both wood clapboard and shingles. The Chauncey Hall Building (1883) (NRHP 1980) at 340 Main Street in Racine is one of the state's best examples of a Queen Anne style commercial building.

The Nels and Nellie Johnson House is a very good example of the Queen Anne style in Wisconsin Rapids featuring the spindlework subtype and exhibits many hallmarks of this style. If the aluminum siding were removed and the wood restored, the house would likely be eligible in the area of architecture, considering it has an abundance of the design hallmarks of the style. The three-story house features a vertical silhouette, irregular massing, and a complicated roofline. The wall planes on three elevations are broken by projecting pavilions with hip and gable roofs. Three asymmetrically placed spindlework porches—along the east, west and south façades—contribute to the home's

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Stephen Calloway (ed.), *The Elements of Style: An Encyclopedia of Domestic Architectural Detail* (Buffalo, New York: Firefly Books, 2005) 289.



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picturesque appearance. They feature slender turned supports, as well as spindled railings, fan-like brackets, and knob-like ornaments attached to the porch ceilings. The east porch also has a spindle frieze. Tall one-over-one wood sash windows flood the interior with light. The two chimneys with patterned brick masonry serve as important design elements.

The interior of the Johnson House exemplifies the Queen Anne style in terms of its plan and decorative elements. The residence features a formal entrance hall with a grand oak reverse-flight staircase featuring square newell posts with sunken panel ornament and lattice-like balusters. High quality craftsmanship is displayed by identical pairs of oak doors that grace both the exterior and interior of the front interior vestibule, which feature etched glass, finely detailed carving, and decorative knobs. Both the parlor and living room exhibit colorful stained glass transoms in their central window bays. The use of wood trim and paneling were important elements of Queen Anne interiors and the Johnson House features tall baseboard molding, picture rails, and finely carved door and window casings. Its entrance hall and dining room are both surrounded by oak wainscoting. Wood panel doors are featured throughout the house, including three sets of pocket doors—a must for every grand Queen Anne style house. The Johnson House is also graced by two fireplaces—one in the parlor and the other in the living room—that have wood mantels surmounted by mirrors, both detailed with carved floral motifs.

### **Architect William H. Parker**

William Parker, a native of New York State, established an architectural practice in Milwaukee in 1876 following his graduation from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. He arrived in La Crosse, Wisconsin, in 1884 and was listed in that city's business directory until 1893 when he moved to Galesville, Wisconsin. Parker's works in La Crosse include three Queen Anne style houses, two of which were built on the same block in 1885: His own residence at 416 South 14<sup>th</sup> Street and the Sam Anderson House at 410 14<sup>th</sup> Street. The Henry Esperson House at 1414 Cass Street (1884) is another Queen Anne style work by Parker. The Fred Easton House at 1317 Cass Street in La Crosse (1886), an example of the Tudor Revival, is a good example of Parker's versatility in then-popular styles. Parker's commercial works include the Queen Anne style Exchange State Bank at 800 Rose Street (1887) in La Crosse, a brick masonry building that features a rounded corner bay with conical roof.<sup>55</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The Nels and Nellie Johnson House is locally significant under National Register Criterion B due to its

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<sup>55</sup> Joan Rausch and Richard Zeitlin, Final Report Intensive Historical-Architectural Survey: City of La Crosse (La Crosse: City of La Crosse and Architectural Researches, Inc., 1984; Addendum, 1996) 62-63, 101.

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association with Nels Johnson (1847-1902), a prominent nineteenth-century merchant, industrialist, and political leader in Wisconsin Rapids. Johnson was at the height of his career and influence during the decade that he lived in this house, which is the only extant building associated with him in the city. Nels was the co-founder of the Johnson, Hills & Company department store, which in December 1891 was considered “the largest and most prosperous firm in Wood County,” according to the local newspaper. This thriving dry goods establishment served the entire community and remained its most important retail establishment for decades. Johnson was elected mayor of Centralia in 1894 and in this capacity he spearheaded important municipal improvement, such as the construction of a waterworks and a bid to secure cheaper telephone service from the Wisconsin Telephone Company. In 1895 Johnson became first president of the Consolidated Water Power Company, which subsequently furnished building sites to manufacturing plants along the Wisconsin River and supplied them with electric power at a moderate price, thus playing a major role in attracting industry to Wisconsin Rapids in the early twentieth century. Johnson was also president of the Grand Rapids Pulp & Paper Company, and in 1895 he supervised the building of a dam and paper mill upstream at Biron, which linked the interests of that community with those of nearby Centralia and Grand Rapids. Upon his unexpected death in 1902, one writer noted that Johnson was “a leading factor in the upbuilding of Grand Rapids, and associated with many of her leading industries.”<sup>56</sup>

Although the house has been altered by the application of aluminum siding, it retains its design features and would be recognizable to Nels and Nellie Johnson if they were to see it today, especially given the highly intact interior. The Johnson House has very good overall integrity, retaining its original massing, roofline, porches, fenestration, doors, and decorative detailing. The interior exhibits high quality craftsmanship and features its original floor plan, grand front staircase, doors, wood moldings, wainscoting, fireplaces, flooring and finishes.

### **Preservation Activity**

The Johnson House is virtually unchanged from its original appearance. The primary exterior change is the installation of aluminum siding, which is reversible; however, this change disqualifies the house from being individually eligible in the area of Architecture. The interior plan of the house has been retained throughout its history. Current owners Jackie and John Dietrich, who purchased the house in 2003, installed period wallpapers on the first floor and updated its bathroom with period fixtures, such as a double slipper claw foot tub and a high tank toilet. The Dietrichs also modernized the kitchen in a manner sympathetic to the home’s late nineteenth-century appearance. This included the installation of custom oak cabinetry, granite countertops, icebox style refrigerator, an apron front fireclay sink,

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<sup>56</sup> “Sudden Summons: Nels Johnson Succumbs to Heart Failure,” *The Marshfield News and Wisconsin Hub* (Marshfield, Wisconsin), December 18, 1902.

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period lighting and reclaimed maple hardwood flooring.

**Acknowledgements**

The Fuldner Heritage Fund paid for the preparation of this nomination. This endowed fund, created through a generous donation by the Jeffris Family Foundation and administered by the Wisconsin Historical Society, supports the nomination of historically and architecturally significant rural and small town properties.

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**Verbal Boundary Description:**

The boundary is the entire parcel associated with the Johnson House and the address 850 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South in Wisconsin Rapids. It is situated on a corner lot bounded by 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South to the east and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South to the south. Residential parcels are located to the north and west of the Johnson House parcel.

**Boundary Justification:**

The boundaries encompass the entire parcel of land historically associated with the Johnson House at 850 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South in Wisconsin Rapids, Wood County, Wisconsin.



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Name of Property: Johnson, Nels and Nellie, House  
City: Wisconsin Rapids  
County: Wood  
State: Wisconsin  
Photographer: Jean L. Guarino, Ph.D.  
Independent Architectural Historian  
Date Photographed: August 28, 2018

Location of Original Digital Files: State Historic Preservation Office, Wisconsin  
Historical Society, Madison, WI

Description of Photograph(s) and Number:

Photo #1 (WI\_Wood County\_Johnson,NelsandNellie,House\_0001)  
Front (east) and side façades, view looking northwest.

Photo #2 (WI\_Wood County\_Johnson,NelsandNellie,House\_0002)  
Front (east) façade, view looking west.

Photo #3 (WI\_Wood County\_Johnson,NelsandNellie,House\_0003)  
Front porch, view looking southwest.

Photo #4 (WI\_Wood County\_Johnson,NelsandNellie,House\_0004)  
Front doors with etched glass and frosted glass transom etched with the year 1892.

Photo #5 (WI\_Wood County\_Johnson,NelsandNellie,House\_0005)  
Side (north) façade, view looking southwest.

Photo #6 (WI\_Wood County\_Johnson,NelsandNellie,House\_0006)  
Rear (west) façade, view looking east.

Photo #7 (WI\_Wood County\_Johnson,NelsandNellie,House\_0007)  
South façade, view looking northeast.

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Photo #8 (WI\_Wood County\_ Johnson,NelsandNellie,House \_0008)  
View of front entrance hall.

Photo #9 (WI\_Wood County\_ Johnson,NelsandNellie,House \_0009)  
Doors to entrance vestibule with etched glass and decorative carving.

Photo #10 (WI\_Wood County\_ Johnson,NelsandNellie,House \_0010)  
Front hall staircase.

Photo #11 (WI\_Wood County\_ Johnson,NelsandNellie,House \_0011)  
Sliding pocket doors to parlor.

Photo #12 (WI\_Wood County\_ Johnson,NelsandNellie,House \_0012)  
Parlor, view looking east.

Photo #13 (WI\_Wood County\_ Johnson,NelsandNellie,House \_0013)  
Parlor fireplace.

Photo #14 (WI\_Wood County\_ Johnson,NelsandNellie,House \_0014)  
View from parlor into living room, looking southwest.

Photo #15 (WI\_Wood County\_ Johnson,NelsandNellie,House \_0015)  
Stained glass transom in living room.

Photo #16 (WI\_Wood County\_ Johnson,NelsandNellie,House \_0016)  
View from living room into den, looking north.

Photo #17 (WI\_Wood County\_ Johnson,NelsandNellie,House \_0017)  
Living room fireplace.

Photo #18 (WI\_Wood County\_ Johnson,NelsandNellie,House \_0018)  
Den, view looking north.

Photo #19 (WI\_Wood County\_ Johnson,NelsandNellie,House \_0019)  
Dining Room, view looking northeast toward living room.

Photo #20 (WI\_Wood County\_ Johnson,NelsandNellie,House \_0020)  
Pantry off kitchen at rear of house with built-in cabinets.

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Photo #21 (WI\_Wood County\_ Johnson,NelsandNellie,House \_0021)  
Second floor stair hall, view looking northeast.

Photo #22 (WI\_Wood County\_ Johnson,NelsandNellie,House \_0022)  
Second floor office, view looking southeast.

Photo #23 (WI\_Wood County\_ Johnson,NelsandNellie,House \_0023)  
Second floor bedroom, view looking southwest.

Photo #24 (WI\_Wood County\_ Johnson,NelsandNellie,House \_0024)  
Detail of stair balustrades and newell posts.

Photo #25 (WI\_Wood County\_ Johnson,NelsandNellie,House \_0025)  
Second floor bedroom, view looking northwest.

Photo #26 (WI\_Wood County\_ Johnson,NelsandNellie,House \_0026)  
Second floor hall at rear of house, view looking north.

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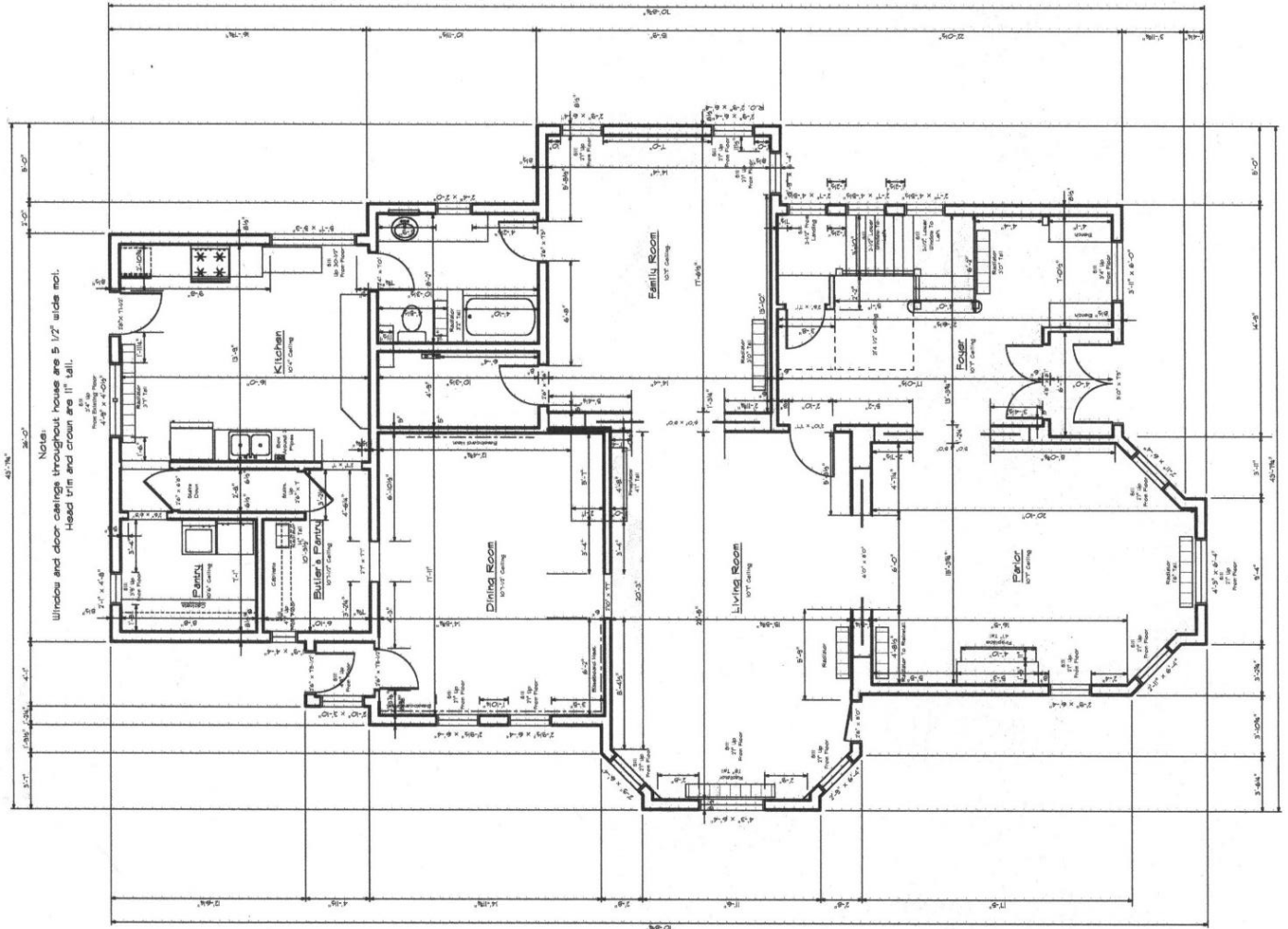


Figure 1: Current First Floor Plan.

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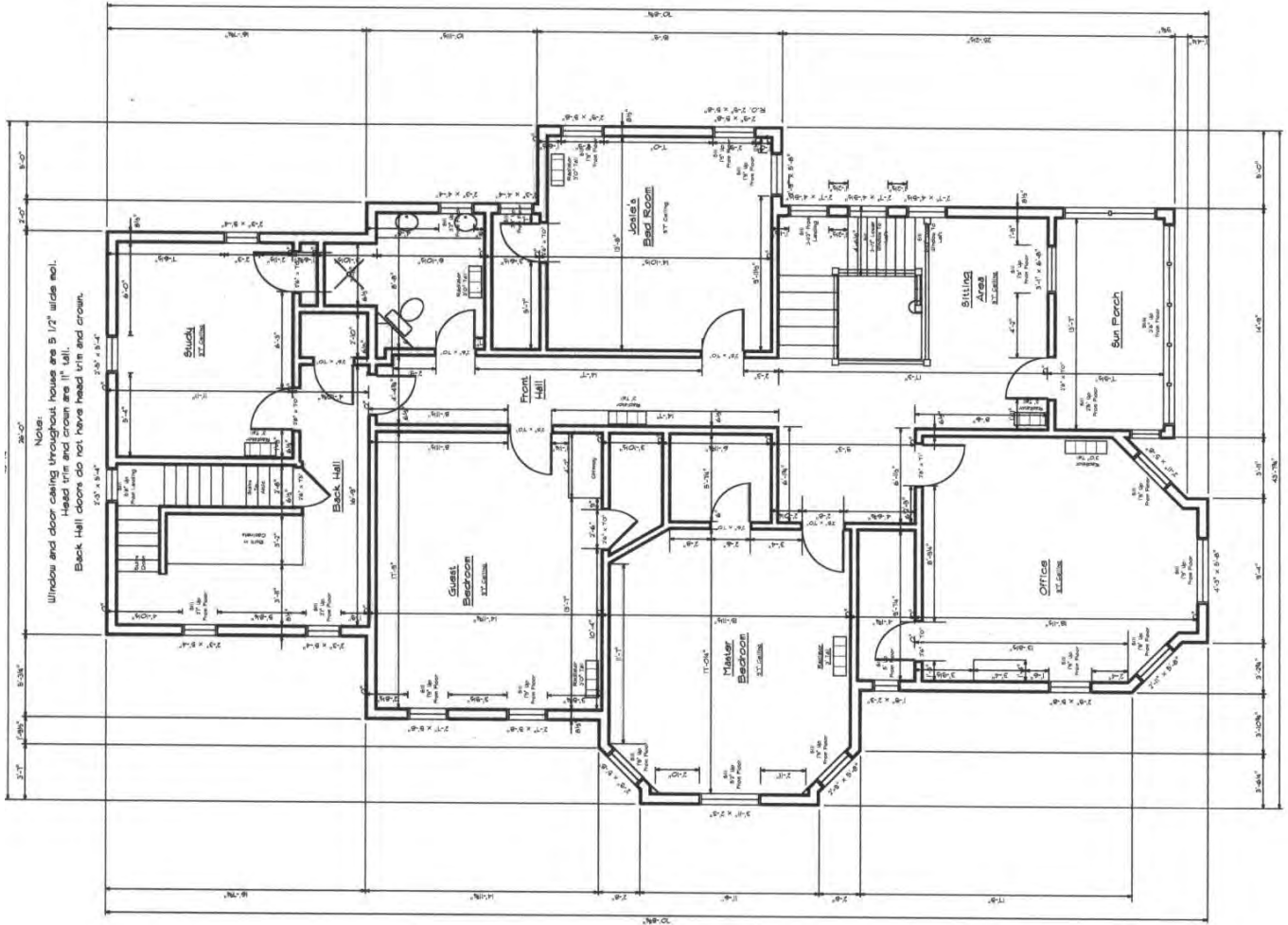


Figure 2: Current Second Floor Plan.

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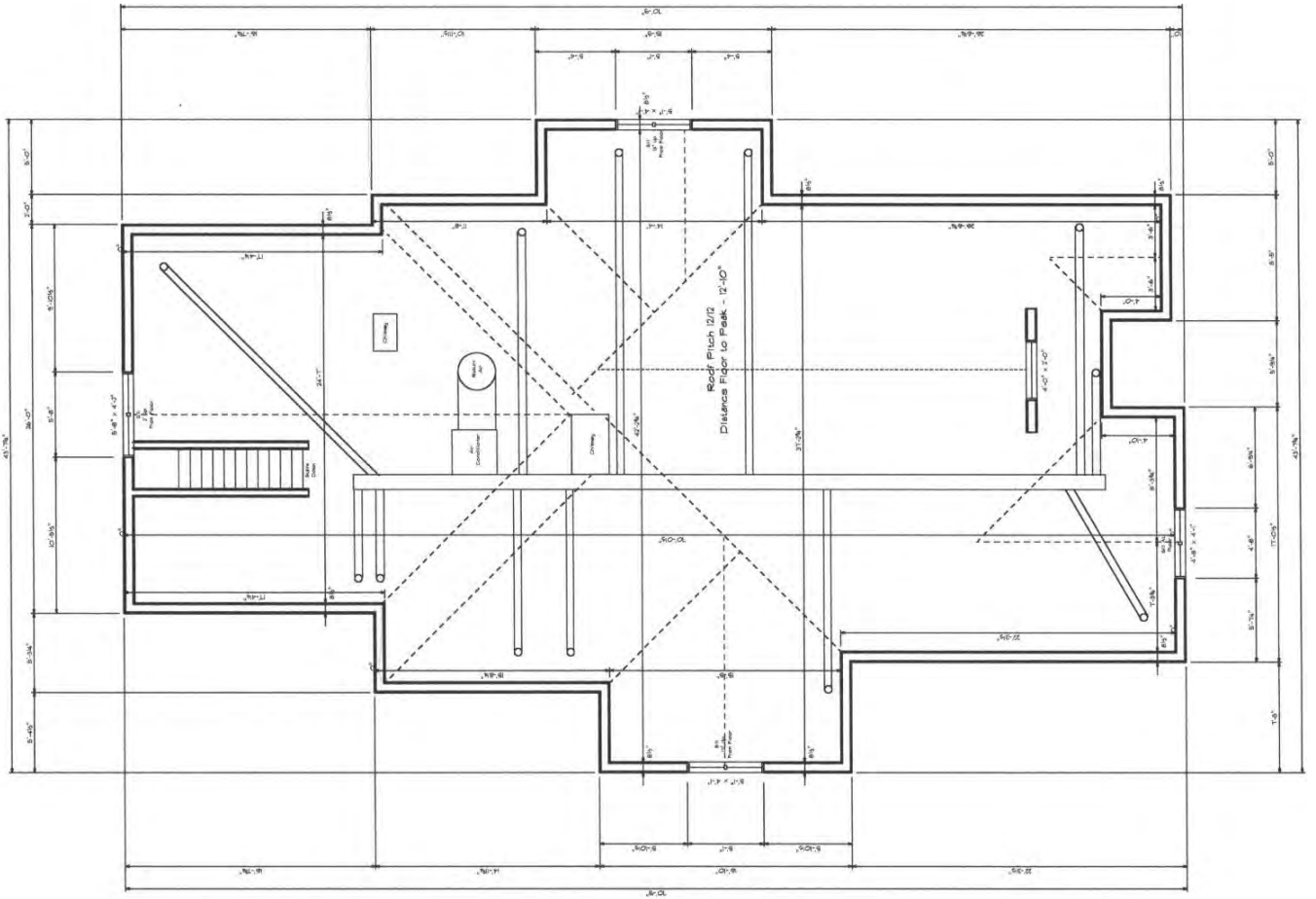


Figure 3: Current Attic Plan.



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Figure 4: Undated photo of Nellie Hanifin Johnson. Source: "A First-Class Residence," *Artifacts*, June 2014.



Figure 5: Undated photo of Nels Johnson. Source: "A First-Class Residence," *Artifacts*, June 2014.

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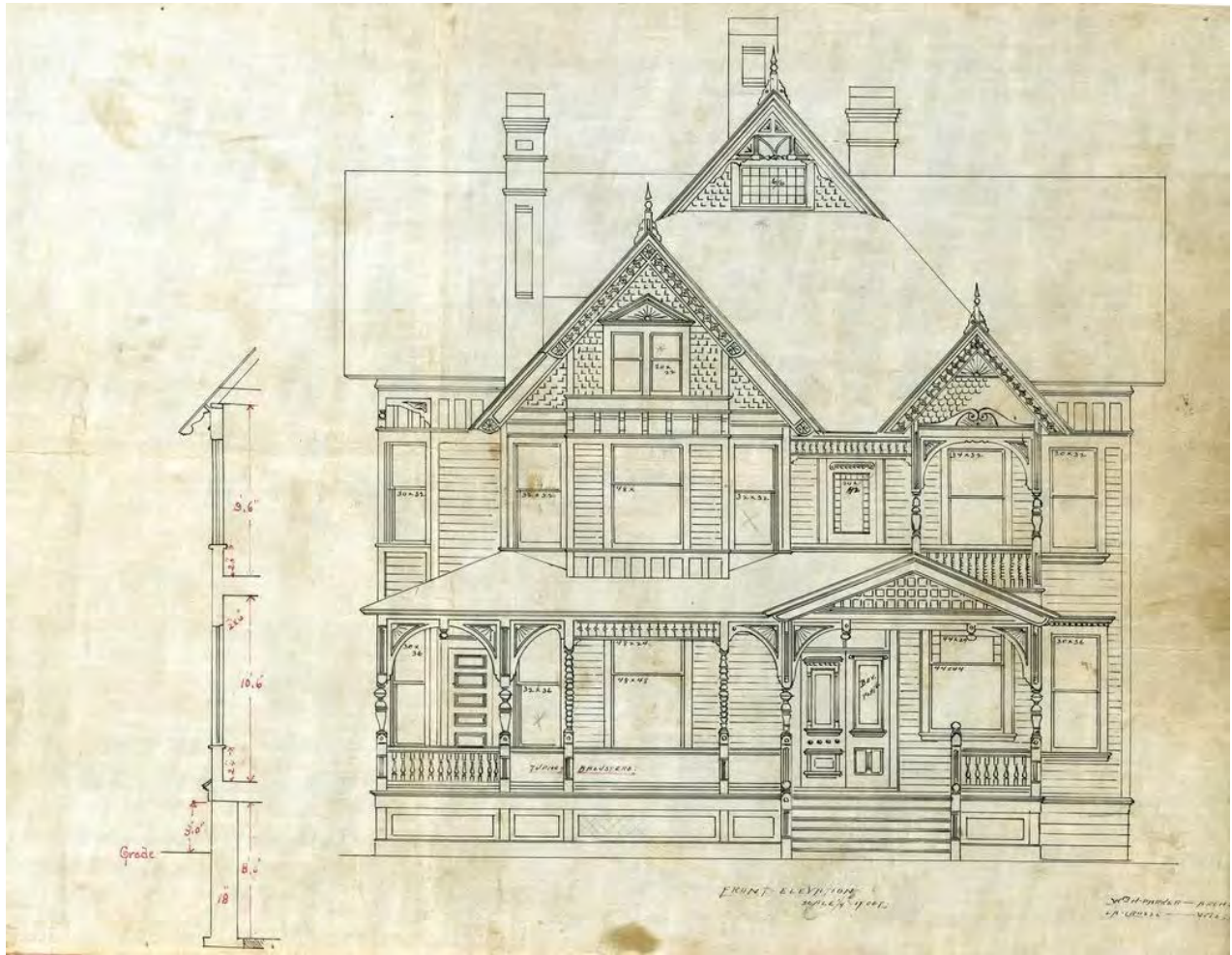


Figure 6: Front (east) façade drawing of Johnson House, 1892.

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Figure 7: North (side) façade drawing of Johnson House, 1892.



Figure 8: Section (left) and rear (west) façade drawings of Johnson House, 1892.

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Figure 9: South (side) façade drawing of Johnson House, 1892.

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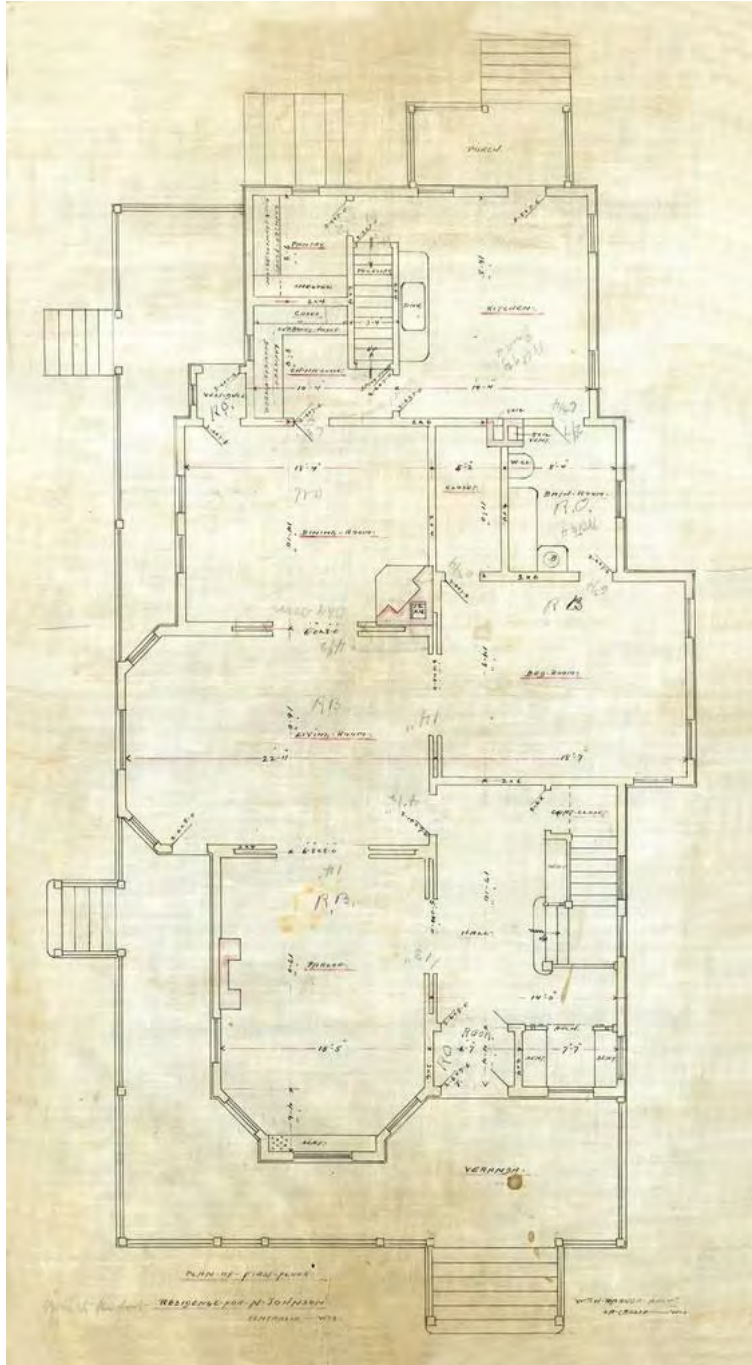


Figure 10: First floor plan of the Johnson House, 1892.

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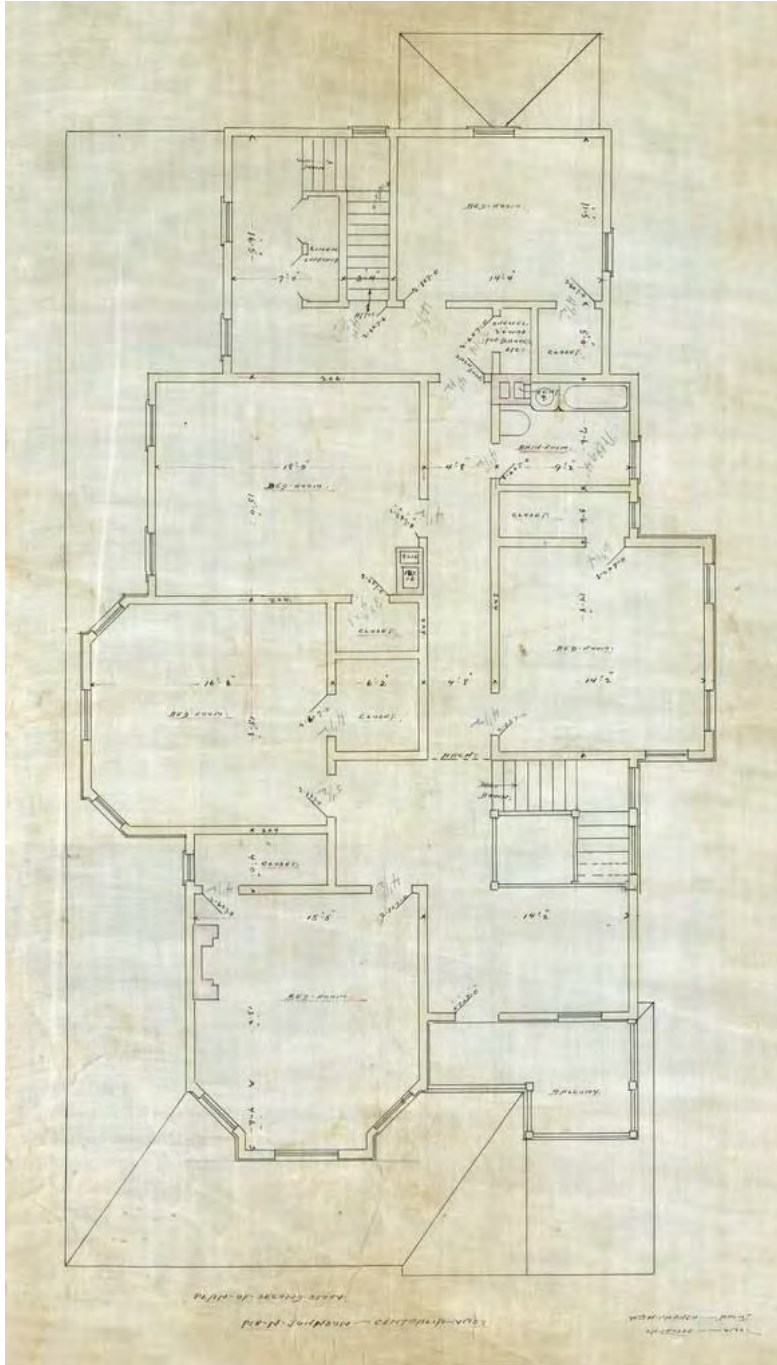


Figure 11: Second floor plan of the Johnson House, 1892.

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Figure 12: Johnson family members in front of the Johnson House, ca. 1940. Nellie Johnson is likely one of the women on either side of the little girl, Nellen, who later purchased the house in the 1980s.

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Figure 13: Pre-1947 view of the Johnson House looking northwest showing screened-in veranda.



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Figure 14: Pre-1947 view of the Johnson House looking northwest.

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Figure 15: Pre-1947 view of the Wisconsin River from the Johnson House, looking northwest.

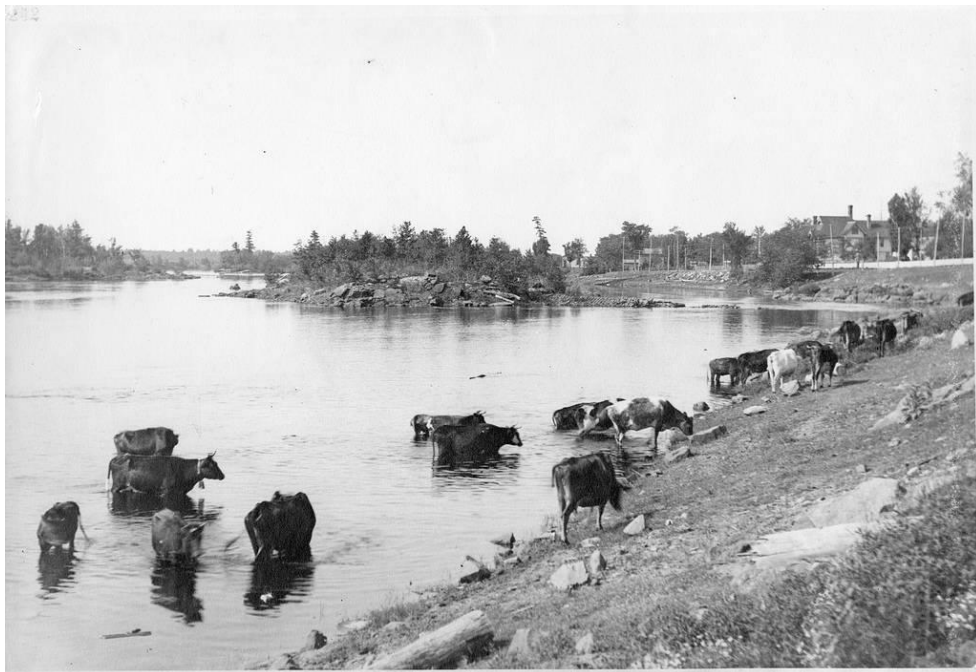


Figure 16: Pre-1947 view of the Wisconsin River with Johnson House in the background to the right.

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Figure 17: Pre-1947 view of the Johnson House looking northwest.

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Figure 18: Fireplace in front parlor, 1947.



Figure 19: Front parlor looking east, 1947.

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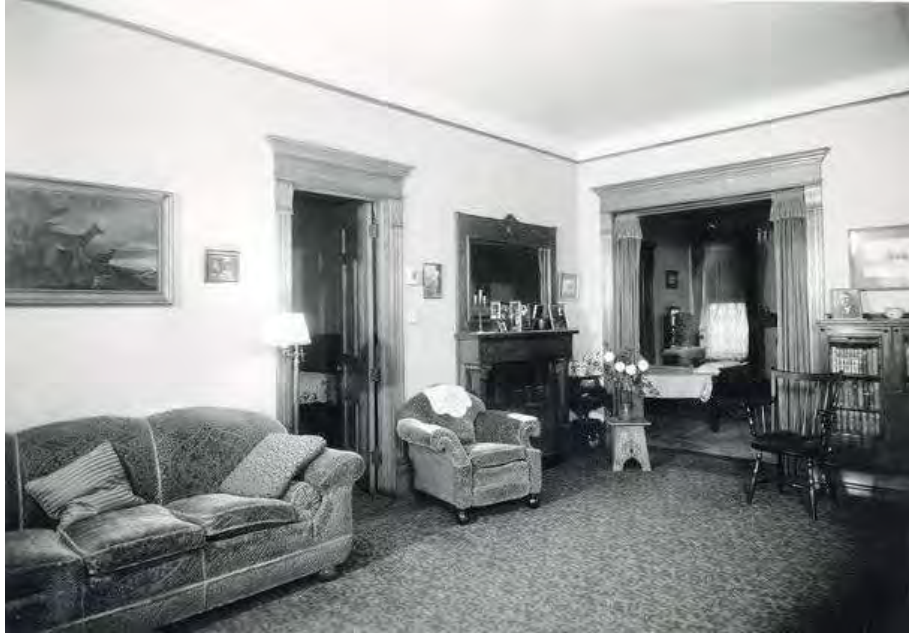


Figure 20: Sitting room, looking northwest, 1947.



Figure 21: Sitting room, looking south, 1947.

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Figure 22: Dining room, looking southeast, 1947.



Figure 23: Dining room, looking west, 1947.

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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
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Figure 24: Kitchen, looking northeast, 1947.



Figure 25: Bathroom, 1947.

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Figure 26: First floor bedroom (current den),1947.



Figure 27: Second floor bedroom, 1947.



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Figure 28: Second floor bedroom, 1947.



Figure 29: Second floor bedroom, 1947.

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Figure 30: Second floor bedroom, 1947.



Figure 31: Second floor bedroom, 1947.

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Johnson, Nels and Nellie, House  
Wisconsin Rapids, Wood County, Wisconsin



Figure 32: Johnson, Hill & Company store (right), 1890s.

## Blustery March

**Plays havoc with  
the lips and hands.**

It does not require much exposure to subject you to the annoyance of rough and red skin or chapped lips. The usual remedies—glycerine, cold cream and petroleum jelly—are either sticky or greasy; you can only use them conveniently on retiring, even then your feelings are not the most agreeable.

**...EPIDERMOL CREAM....**

may be used at any time and is soothing and healing every time you use it. Apply it—not gently—and it vanishes; it's absorbed. It doesn't form a thick disagreeable layer.

**20 CENTS.**

**JOHNSON, HILL & CO.**  
DRUG DEPT.

PURE DRUGS  
AND MEDICINES  
SOAPS, PERFUMERY  
TOILET ESSENTIALS  
AND FANCY GOODS

Figure 33: Display advertisement for Johnson, Hill & Co. Source: *The Centralia Enterprise*, March , 1898.

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Johnson, Nels and Nellie, House  
Wisconsin Rapids, Wood County, Wisconsin

**Johnson, Hill & Co.**  
CENTRALIA, WISCONSIN.

---

We are headquarters for  
**FLOUR, FEED**  
— AND —  
**GROCERIES**

Of all kinds, such as  
**Canned Goods, Dried**  
**Fruits, Sugar,**

And all other staple goods that are  
kept in a first class store, which we are  
selling at lowest prices.

~~~~~

**If You Are Looking** —

For bargains in any of the  
above, go to

— **Johnson, Hill & Co.'s.**

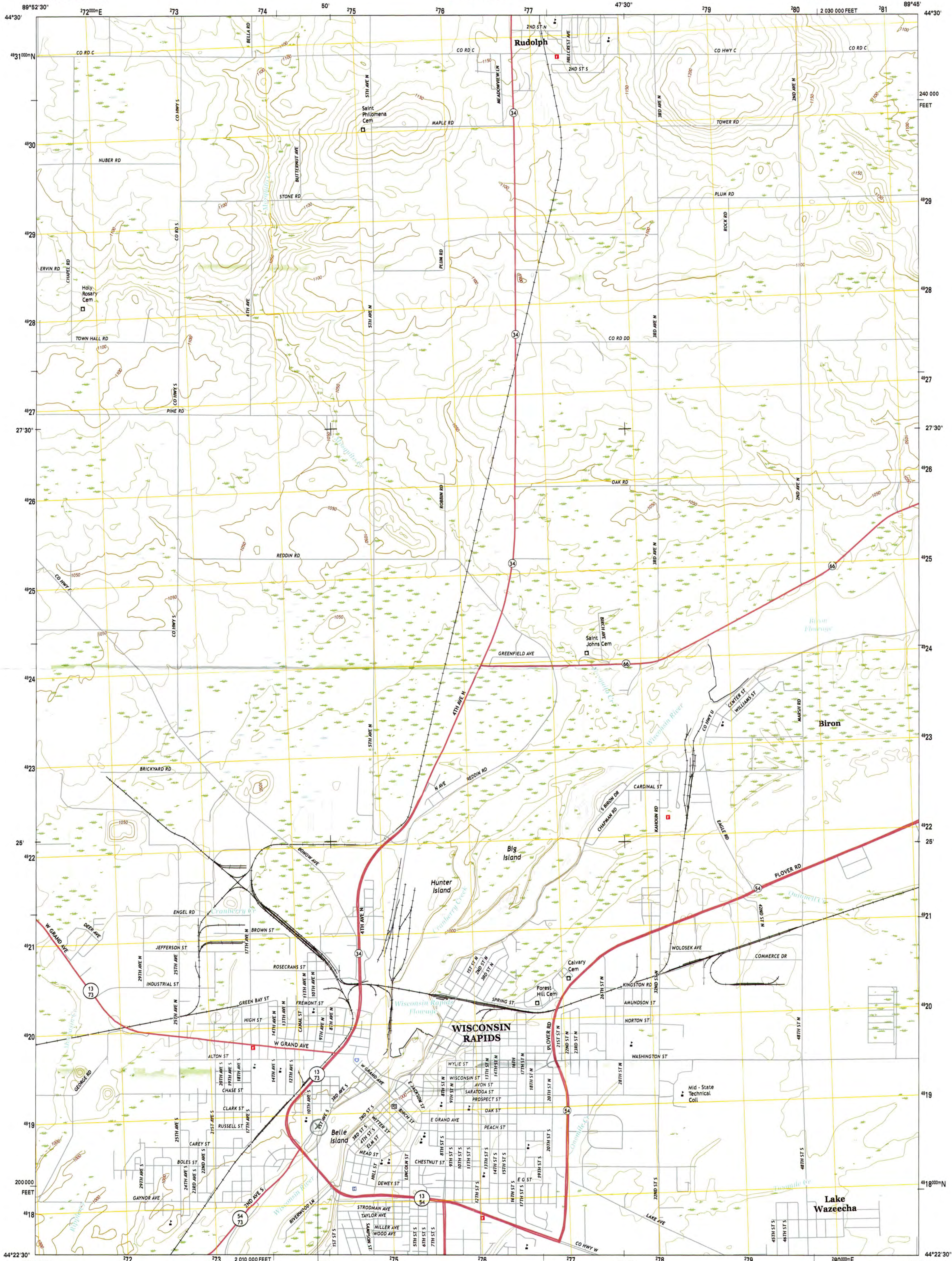
Figure 34: Display advertisement for Johnson, Hill & Co. Source: *The Centralia Enterprise*, March 9, 1895.



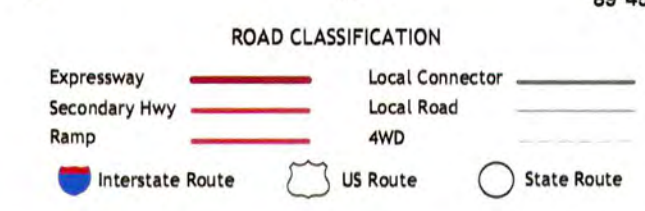
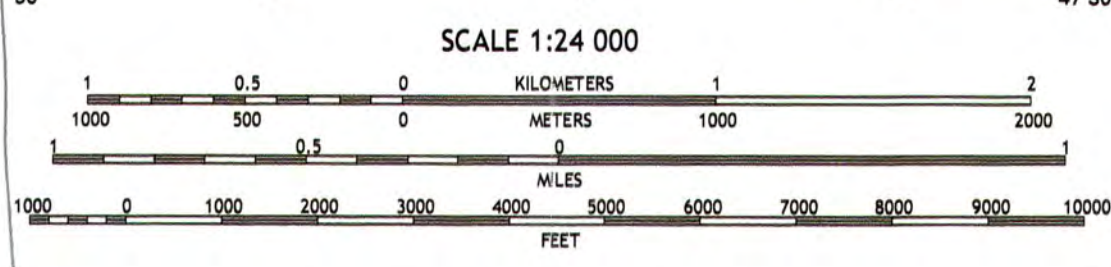
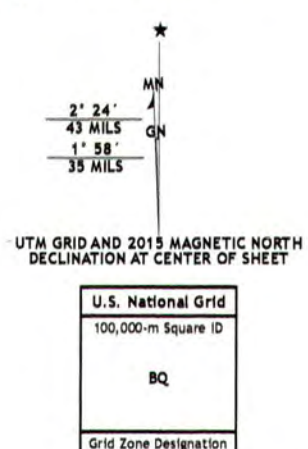
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



WISCONSIN RAPIDS NORTH QUADRANGLE  
WISCONSIN-WOOD CO.  
7.5-MINUTE SERIES



Produced by the United States Geological Survey  
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)  
World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS84). Projection and  
1:500-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 16T  
10 000-foot ticks: Wisconsin Coordinate System of 1983 (central  
zone)  
This map is not a legal document. Boundaries may be  
generalized for this map scale. Private lands within government  
reservations may not be shown. Obtain permission before  
entering private lands.  
Imagery: N.A.I.P., August 2013  
Roads: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 - 2015  
Names: G.N.I.S., 2015  
Hydrography: National Hydrography Dataset, 2013  
Contours: National Elevation Dataset, 1999  
Boundaries: Multiple sources; see metadata file 1972 - 2015  
Public Land Survey System: BLM, 2014  
Wetlands: FWS National Wetlands Inventory 1977 - 2014



ADJOINING QUADRANGLES

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 |   |

1 Sherry  
2 Junction City  
3 Rocky Run  
4 Vesper  
5 Meehan  
6 Nekosa  
7 Wisconsin Rapids South  
8 Kellner

WISCONSIN RAPIDS NORTH, WI  
2015

850 1st Avenue South  
44. 387821, -89. 83461









1892



LETTERS











































Advice from a  
**RIVER**



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UGH







follow  
your  
dreams



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 7/30/2019      Date of Pending List: 8/28/2019      Date of 16th Day: 9/12/2019      Date of 45th Day: 9/13/2019      Date of Weekly List: 9/13/2019

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- |                                       |                                          |                                                     |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal       | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape       | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver       | <input type="checkbox"/> National        | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other        | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP             | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years         |
|                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG             |                                                     |

Accept       Return       Reject      9/12/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary  
Comments:

Recommendation/  
Criteria

Reviewer Barbara Wyatt      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2252      Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.





W I S C O N S I N  
H I S T O R I C A L  
S O C I E T Y



TO: Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Peggy Veregin  
National Register Coordinator

SUBJECT: National Register Nomination


The following materials are submitted on this Twenty-sixth day of July 2019, for the nomination of the Nels and Nellie Johnson House to the National Register of Historic Places:

- 1 Original National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form
- 1 CD with NRHP Nomination form PDF
- Multiple Property Nomination form
- 26 Photograph(s)
- 1 CD with image files
- 1 Map(s)
- 34 Sketch map(s)/figures(s)/exhibit(s)
- 1 Piece(s) of correspondence
- Other:

COMMENTS:

- Please ensure that this nomination is reviewed
- This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- The enclosed owner objection(s) do or do not constitute a majority of property owners
- Other:

**RON KIND**  
THIRD DISTRICT, WISCONSIN  
SENIOR WHIP  
WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

**COPY**  
LA CROSSE OFFICE  
205 5TH AVENUE SOUTH, SUITE 400  
LA CROSSE, WI 54601  
(608) 782-2558 FAX: (608) 782-4588  
TTY: (608) 782-1173

WEBSITE: [kind.house.gov](http://kind.house.gov)

April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019

Wisconsin Historic Preservation Review Board  
c/o Peggy Veregin  
Wisconsin Historical Society  
816 State Street  
Madison, WI 53706



Dear Ms. Veregin:

I am writing in support of several nominations before the Wisconsin Historic Preservation Review Board: New Hope Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Town of New Hope (Portage County); St. Lucas Evangelical German Lutheran Church in the Town of Glendale (Monroe County); Benjamin and Wilhelmina Fay House in Prairie du Chien (Crawford County); the Otto and Ida Loeffler House in La Crosse (La Crosse County) and the Nels and Nellie Johnson House in Wisconsin Rapids (Wood County). These five nominations reflect the rich heritage of their area and with this designation can be accessible for future generations.

As the U.S. Representative for Wisconsin's 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District, I have an interest in supporting projects that preserve the architectural as well as cultural history of the area. Given its merit and potential benefits, I encourage the Review Board to give full consideration to these nominations. Please don't hesitate to contact my office if I can provide further assistance with this request.

Sincerely,



Ron Kind  
Member of Congress

EAU CLAIRE OFFICE  
131 SOUTH BARSTOW STREET, SUITE 305  
EAU CLAIRE, WI 54701  
(715) 831-9214 FAX: (715) 831-9272

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