

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



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This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Merrill, Harry, House

other names/site number Harrington-Merrill House

2. Location

street & number 225 Washington Street W

☐ N/A

not for publication

city or town Hutchinson

☐ N/A

vicinity

state MN

code MN

county McLeod

code 085

zip code 55066

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide X local

Barbara Howard

Signature of certifying official/Title Barbara Mitchell Howard, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

June 13, 2012

Date

Minnesota Historical Society

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

☒ entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain):

for E. Olson & B. Beall

Signature of the Keeper

9-1-12

Date of Action

Merrill, Harry, House
Name of Property

McLeod County, Minnesota
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing
2	buildings
	district
1	site
	structure
	object
3	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT: Not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY: Greek Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: WOOD

roof: WOOD

other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Harry Merrill House is the oldest wood-framed structure in the city and one of the oldest in McLeod County. It is located in Hutchinson, Minnesota, a city of 13,000 residents in the central region of the state. The two-acre lot is situated two blocks west of the downtown commercial district (Minnesota State Highway 15) and two blocks south of the Crow River. Generally a residential area, Park Elementary School occupies a city block to the immediate south.

Narrative Description

The house was built in 1858 by Lewis Harrington, one of Hutchinson's earliest settlers. The lot is wooded and the house is set back from the street on a slight hillock (Photo #001). A site analysis noted the integrity of setting: "Set at the top of Hutchinson's highest hill, the Harrington's land sloped northward to Crow River that, in the 19th century, was likely marshy and may have flooded up to Franklin St. in the spring. A remnant Big Woods oak/maple canopy covered the hillside, much of which remains today in the neighborhood and on the site."ⁱ

The central core of the building is a two-story, Greek Revival house, completed in 1858 (Photos #002, #003, #004, #005). Key architectural elements include the front gabled entrance, facing east, with a moderately-pitched roof, with wide cornice lines ornamented with modillions. The one-story, shed-roof, front entry porch has been restored, as has the main entry door with a narrow transom and sidelights. Windows throughout are generally replacements.

After Harry and Martha Harrington Merrill acquired the house, following their marriage in 1886, the building was altered to reflect the new architectural fashions. A two-story bay window and one-story box bay window (with scroll brackets) were added on the south elevation. A one-story summer kitchen wing was added to the west side of the house sometime in this period (see Figure 3). Various other alterations also occurred in the years between 1890-1915, including the addition of a screened pavilion on the south and a bedroom on the north.

Their son, Lewis Harrington Merrill, brought new tastes to the house after World War I. The bays lost their Victorian detailing and the two-story bay became a one-story entry. The summer kitchen was removed and the porch portion of the kitchen wing was again altered and a second dormer window added (see Figure 4).

Fire in 2002 substantially damaged the west wing of the home. The property was acquired by the City of Hutchinson late in 2003 through the tax forfeiture process, and a local committee was formed in 2004 to manage the property. This committee completed the following changes:

- The kitchen wing on the west side was demolished and portions of the fire-damaged interior of the main house were removed. The kitchen wing was then restored based on early photographs.
- Because the original fieldstone foundation was failing, the building was lifted and the foundation was removed and replaced with a new concrete base. It will be faced in fieldstone.
- The east porch was removed and replaced with the current porch, based on early photographs of the house. A chimney, installed in the 20th century, was also removed.

A 1½-story barn-carriage house stands to the west of the main house (Photos #007 and #008). This dates from around 1880. The main block has a front gabled rectangular plan, with a 1-story, shed roof addition (after 1894) on the west. The structure has novelty siding with the roof sheathed in asphalt shingles. The south elevation shows two garage-type entries with roll-up doors, plus two upper windows, now boarded. There is a batten door on the west side, and a sliding farm entry door on the north side. Overall, except for the garage doors, it retains good integrity.

On the far west edge of the property, there is evidence of the foundation of a barn, which is considered to be a

ⁱ Claybaugh Preservation Architecture, *The Harrington-Merrill House Restoration* (Hutchinson, Minn.: Historic Hutchinson, Inc., 2006), 4.

contributing resource to the property. The rectangular plan is delineated by stones that remain in the ground, measuring roughly 30 x 30 feet (Photo #009). Given Harry Merrill's interest in agriculture and gardening, this site contributes to our understanding of the owner. The barn foundation and associated material (i.e. artifacts) could also add to our understanding of Harry Merrill through archaeological excavation and research. It is also likely that archaeological remains exist in other locations on the property.

Integrity

The period of significance is a benchmark for determining whether subsequent changes contribute to or detract from historic integrity. Alterations introduced after the period of significance generally detract from integrity. In the case of the Merrill House, the house has seen numerous incremental changes over the years. The building has undergone a series of small scale alterations (except for the kitchen wing) that leave the original form and plan of the house relatively intact in the elevation, mass, and spatial relationship between the house and street. The new material visually approximates the house's original material, design, and workmanship.

The property retains integrity of location and setting, still on the hillock in the "grove" as the lot was called in a town history. The front yard, sloping down to Washington Street with its entry loop drive, evokes nineteenth century photographs of the property and is a defining feature. The west portion of the property, with its carriage house and barn foundation, represents Harry Merrill's avocation of gardening and horticulture. Taken together, these property characteristics offer a sense of its feeling and association from its period of significance.

Merrill, Harry, House
Name of Property

McLeod County, Minnesota
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

Period of Significance

1886-1932

Significant Dates

1886

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Harry Merrill

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance includes the years that Harry Merrill and his wife owned the property.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Harry Merrill was likely the single most important educator in Hutchinson's distinguished history, having served as superintendent of schools for thirty-three years. Indeed, on his death, the *Hutchinson Leader* (July 5, 1932) declared, "[His passing] removes one who probably exerted more profound influence upon the community than any other one person."

The Harry Merrill House's association with his contributions to education recommends it for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B. The house is locally significant in the area of Education. Suggesting the close link between his home and professional career, three schools were constructed on the public land located just south of the property. The period of significance begins in 1886, when Merrill moved into the house following his marriage to Martha Harrington, daughter of the home's first owner. It ends with his death in 1932.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

See attached continuation sheet.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

- Curtiss-Wedge, Franklyn, ed. *History of McLeod County, Minnesota*. Chicago: H. C. Cooper, 1917.
- Illustrated Album of Biography of Meeker and McLeod Counties, Minnesota*. Chicago: Alden, Cole & Company, 1888.
- Jordan, Philip D. "The Hutchinson Family in the Story of American Music," *Minnesota History* 22 (June 1941): 113-132.
- Prendergast, William. "Sketches of the History of Hutchinson," *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society* 10 (1901): 69-89.
- Archival Records*
- Harrington-Merrill Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, Minnesota.
- Newspaper*
- Hutchinson Leader*

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ 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 # _____

☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☐ Local government

☐ University

☐ Other

Name of repository: _____

Merrill, Harry, House
Name of Property

McLeod County, Minnesota
County and State

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	15	391560	4971958	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated property is described as McLeod County Parcels R 23.056.2875, R 23.072.0020, R 23.082.0040, and R 23.082.0070.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary of the nominated property includes the parcel of land historically associated with the house.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Daniel J. Hoisington		
organization		date	March 14, 2012
street & number	P. O. Box 13790	telephone	651-415-1034
city or town	Roseville	state	MN zip code 55113
e-mail	preservation@edinborough.com		

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Merrill, Harry, House
Name of Property

McLeod County, Minnesota
County and State

See attached continuation sheet.

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

2025-2026



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property: Merrill, Harry, House

County and State: McLeod County, MN

Section number: 8 page:1

Name of Multiple Property Listing (If applicable)

8. NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Historical Background

The Merrill House was completed in 1858 by one of Hutchinson's founders, Lewis Harrington, and survived an attack on the town during the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862. The *Minneapolis Tribune* called it "perhaps the most famous house in western Minnesota."¹

Lewis Harrington (1830-1884) was born in Ohio. After graduating with a civil engineering degree from Ohio University, he surveyed for railroads in Ohio and Pennsylvania until a visit to his brother, who lived along Lake Minnetonka, prompted him to move to Minnesota in 1855.

Uncertain about where he would settle, he attended a meeting at the home of John Stevens. There, he met the Hutchinson brothers — Asa, John, and Judson — for the first time. The Hutchinson Family Singers were a family singing group, and, in 1855, stood near the peak of their fame, among the most popular American entertainers of the era. They also had a reputation as reformers and advocates of antislavery, temperance, and gender equality. Although New Englanders, they were looking to the Midwest for a new home. In September 1855, while on a concert tour aimed to raise funds for anti-slavery settlers in Kansas, they were introduced to W. W. Pendergast, who convinced them to come to Minnesota.²

With Harrington and other interested investors, they formed the Hutchinson Company. Several members of this company traveled to the vicinity of the South Fork of the Crow River and selected a townsite in November 1855. With the site selected, the singers gathered in a "delightful grove" along the river and led the party in "The Star-Spangled Banner." A few days later, the Hutchinson Townsite Company adopted a constitution and bylaws for the new town. It declared, "No lot shall ever be occupied by any building used as a saloon, bowling alley, or billiard room." Furthermore, "in the future of Hutchinson, woman shall enjoy equal rights with man." Lots were reserved for public parks and schools. As the *St. Anthony Express* stated, "The town is to be on the liberal order."³

¹ *Minneapolis Tribune*, newspaper clipping, n.d., Harrington-Merrill Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, Minn. The clipping dates from 1922 when the state historical society acquired diaries kept by Lewis Harrington.

² Harry L. Merrill, "Hutchinson," typescript, n.d., Harrington-Merrill Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, Minn.

³ William Pendergast, "Sketches of the History of Hutchinson," *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society* 10 (1901): 69-89; Philip D. Jordan, "The Hutchinson Family in the Story of American Music," *Minnesota History* 22

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Name of Multiple Property Listing (If applicable)

Lewis Harrington played a central role in the company and the new town. In the bylaws, he was hired to survey the town and manage the sale of lots to settlers. In May 1856, he helped survey and build a road, with bridges, from Watertown. He also served as the city's first postmaster. Harrington erected his first home in 1855, constructing a cabin in five days.⁴ He married Ellen Pendergast — daughter of another of the city's founders — two days after Christmas 1857. With a child soon on the way, Harrington built this house "in the grove" in 1858. Active in politics, during the 1860 presidential election, Harrington hosted Senator Carl Schurz and Congressman Galusha Grow, author of the Homestead Act, at his home as they stumped for Abraham Lincoln.⁵

Only a few years later, the future of the town was threatened during the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862. In early September 1862, forces under Little Crow attacked Hutchinson. Citizens hastily erected a stockade around the center of town and chose Lewis Harrington as captain of the local militia. His house was located outside the stockade, but managed to survive while many other structures were burned to the ground. The home served as temporary barracks for soldiers through the following winter.⁶

Harrington continued to work as a surveyor and engineer, and later served in the state legislature. According to his son-in-law, Harry Merrill, he was the first surveyor of Hennepin County and "must have surveyed every road leading west of Minneapolis to Glencoe through Eden Prairie [and] the Old Territorial Road to Fort Ridgley." He worked for several early settlers, including the Pond brothers (influential Presbyterian missionaries to Minnesota), Col. John Stevens (owner of Minnesota's first house west of the Mississippi), and Pierre Bottineau (an important early surveyor in Minnesota). He was elected McLeod County Commissioner in 1857 and served as Justice of the Peace, 1858-1860.⁷

He died in 1884 while on a surveying project in Washington State. A local historian wrote of Harrington: "As one of the founders of Hutchinson it may be said that in all the enterprises for the right building of the community, he was a central figure. A born leader, men naturally appealed to his clear judgment and good will. His influence is stamped on the community he helped to found." Liberty Hall, the editor of the *Glencoe Register* joined the chorus of praise, stating: "For nearly thirty years Mr.

(June 1941): 113-132; John Wallace Hutchinson, *The Story of the Hutchinsons* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1896), 342.

⁴ Lewis Harrington Diary, December 9, 1855, Harrington-Merrill Papers, Minnesota Historical Society. Grow would be elected Speaker of the House of Representatives in 1861.

⁵ Franklyn Curtiss-Wedge, ed., *History of McLeod County, Minnesota* (Chicago: H. C. Cooper, 1917), 51.

⁶ See Pendergast, "Sketches of the History of Hutchinson," 80-89.

⁷ Harry L. Merrill, "Fragments of Notes," typescript, n.d., Harrington-Merrill Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

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Harrington has stood in the very front rank of the more prominent men of McLeod county, and his name is written on every page of its history."⁸

Harry Merrill, Educator

Lewis's daughter, Martha, and her husband, Harry Merrill, subsequently owned the home. Merrill, a native of Maine and graduate of Bates College, came to Hutchinson in 1882 to serve as school superintendent. He replaced William Pendergast, who had managed the district for nearly twenty-five years and would go on to become state instructor of public instruction from 1893 to 1899. It was a pivotal time, as a historian noted, "The year that Mr. Merrill began his duties was the year that the Minnesota high school law went into effect, giving special aid and designating the character of the schools entitled to receive it. Hutchinson was among the first to go on the list."⁹

On his arrival in Hutchinson, he contracted pneumonia, and was nursed back to health by Ellen Harrington and her daughter, Martha. Four years later, in 1886, he married Martha — a schoolteacher — and both were feted with a reception on the home's lawn. The occasion brought together some of the founders of the city, as the local newspaper reported:

Dinner was announced but before leaving the house Uncle John Hutchinson was asked to sing. He responded in his pleasing manner, and then, forming in couples, the entire company led by the newly married couple, sought the shade of the gigantic oaks, which fill the grounds and were seated at a table, which fairly groaned under the load of eatables that has been placed upon it. Before leaving the table the gray haired pioneer, John Hutchinson, was called on for a song. He responded and prefaced the song in which he was accompanied by O. D. Hutchinson, with some remarks speaking of pioneer life and saying that in almost the same spot on which we were now enjoying the wedding feast he in the company with others kindled the first fire started by a white man in Hassan Valley.¹⁰

⁸ Curtiss-Wedge, ed., *History of McLeod County*, 518; Liberty Hall quoted in *Illustrated Album of Biography of Meeker and McLeod Counties, Minnesota* (Chicago: Alden, Cole & Company, 1888), 548; *St. Paul Daily Globe*, August 25, 1884. His widow, Ellen, remained in the house until her death in 1915.

⁹ Curtiss-Wedge, ed., *History of McLeod County*, 525; 374-375. Pendergast would become Merrill's uncle following his marriage in 1886.

¹⁰ *Hutchinson Leader*, June 21, 1886.

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Name of Multiple Property Listing (If applicable)

Ellen Pendergast Harrington continued to live here until her death in 1915; so new rooms were added on the north side of the house for the young couple. These rooms were later removed. The Merrills used the home for school functions, and often took in students who worked for room and board.¹¹

Merrill had a substantial impact on his adopted hometown, holding the post of superintendent for thirty-three years. As was the usual practice, he continued to teach classes while serving in the administrative position. His influence is measured by traditional standards of education. When he arrived in 1882, the town of some 700 citizens had 150 enrolled pupils and three teachers. On his retirement, there were 800 students and twenty-eight teachers. Three school buildings were erected during his years, including a new high school that opened in 1912 and was named after the superintendent.¹²

Merrill came at a crucial time, as the city's schools responded to new state educational initiatives. Although the first high school in the state opened in 1852, there were only thirty-nine in all of Minnesota in 1882 when Hutchinson opened its secondary school and Merrill began his tenure in Hutchinson.¹³ Especially in a farm-oriented community, Merrill's most important task might have been to get students to attend. In 1885, the state adopted mandatory attendance through age eighteen, but with a major exemption for young people needed to work on farms. According to reminiscences from students, he often paid visits to parents to persuade them to leave their child in school. Assessing his impact on the school system, George Afton, state inspector of high schools for more than twenty years, noted,

Hutchinson is somewhat distinctive for the large enrollment in the high school as compared with the whole number of pupils in the school system. Considerable of this is due to the fact that the community has been educated against taking children out of school in the seventh and eighth grades, and to the attraction a good high school has for children from the country, but credit must be given, too, to the personality of the superintendent.¹⁴

This might be reflected in a statistic from 1912, when a Minnesota survey showed that McLeod County was the only one outside of Ramsey and Hennepin to send more than eighteen students to universities and colleges per 10,000 inhabitants.

¹¹ His son remembered, "The student generally began in their freshman year and stayed there through his senior year." "Remarks regarding his Father," Lewis Merrill, transcript of interview with Daniel Jenson, 1958, Harrington-Merrill Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

¹² The Merrill School suffered a fire in 1975 and was subsequently demolished. *Hutchinson Leader*, June 13, 1975.

¹³ Curtiss-Wedge, ed., *History of McLeod County*, 374. Under an 1881 act, state aid was given to districts that offered high school classes. Hutchinson was one of the first to qualify.

¹⁴ *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, June 20, 1913.

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In 1878, Minnesota enacted its first law providing state funds for each high school that maintained a minimum course of study. Of course, that carrot opened the doors for educators to take a greater interest in establishing that "minimum course of study." Modes of education expanded, notably in domestic science, agriculture, physical education, and industrial arts classes. These programs were encouraged by the state, and Hutchinson was an early adopter, especially notable in a rural community. An article in the *Minneapolis Tribune* noted, "Merrill guided the school through its evolution from the three 'R' stage into an institution wherein every stage of life is considered. . . . When manual training courses began to elbow their way into school curricula, he was ready for them. So with physical education, domestic science, agriculture."¹⁵

After the state authorized vocational training through the Putnam Act of 1909 and the Benson-Lee Act of 1911, Merrill began agriculture, manual training, and domestic classes in Hutchinson. Comments from former students suggest that he was not just an administrator, but remained closely involved in the details of course instruction. He insisted on practical education, and his methods were referred to as "Harry Merrill's way." For example, he was "adverse to cluttering up the domestic science department with a lot of equipment such as was unknown in the homes of the children of Hutchinson." Rather than sew outfits from fashion magazines, young women learned patching and darning skills. The school system also began a commercial program in 1913, offering classes in shorthand, bookkeeping, typewriting, and salesmanship.¹⁶

His influence extended beyond Hutchinson through the teachers trained at the Hutchinson Normal School. Although Minnesota began a teacher training program in 1894, it remained relatively low-key until 1909, when the state superintendent issued guidelines that exempted its graduates from teachers' examination. Minnesota's program was "planned to train students directly for the country school experience" and required "training centers located and organized to most effectively serve the state." At its peak, in 1924, ninety-six departments had been established in sixty-five counties across the state.¹⁷

The students were typically eighteen to twenty-one-year-old women who had grown up in rural communities or on a farm.¹⁸ The curriculum was a mix of instruction and practice teaching. A state report described the duties of the department:

¹⁵ *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 6, 1915.

¹⁶ *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 6, 1915; Curtiss-Wedge, ed., *History of McLeod County*, 374-75.

¹⁷ H. E. Flynn, Inspector of Teacher Training Departments, in *State of Minnesota, Department of Education, Report, Teacher Training Departments in High Schools, 1920* (Saint Paul, Minn.: Department of Education, 1920): 3.

¹⁸ Minnesota Department of Education. Teacher Training Dept., "Records of Teacher Training Departments, 1920-1936" folder, Minnesota Historical Society; *Dodge County Republican*, October 14, 1920.

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The training teacher is expected to teach physiology, school management, rural sociology, both special and general method, to supervise and organize practice teaching, either in the grades or a demonstration school, to give her students an insight into rural life and its needs, and to inspire them with enthusiasm for teaching in the country, to visit former graduates and confer with them on their work; and to conduct an information bureau for the rural teachers for miles around.¹⁹

The teacher's responsibility went well beyond simple classroom instruction, as described, "She is also expected to participate in the affairs of the school in which the department is located, write papers for the country teachers' institute, speak at farmers' clubs, and attend rural life conferences." In addition, "The training teacher can be relied upon to cooperate fully in promoting, under guidance of proper authority, garden and canning club work, Red Cross activities, thrift work clubs, conservation measures."²⁰

There were few professions open to a woman living in rural Minnesota, and this program was especially attractive since it did not require (in fact, discouraged) relocation to the city. Indeed, one observer noted the popularity of the state program "because they permit girls to receive training who could otherwise have none."²¹

Beginning in 1912 Merrill initiated a Normal School in association with the high school — the only such school in McLeod County, and for more than two decades, many of its graduates staffed rural schools in the surrounding area.²²

A measure of Merrill's influence on education is seen in the respect that he had within the profession, evidenced by his time as president of the Minnesota Education Association in 1914-15. Following his retirement in 1915, he worked with the Teachers Retirement Fund, a program begun during his tenure as president.

¹⁹ Lotus D. Coffman, *Teacher Training Departments in Minnesota High Schools* (New York: General Education Board, 1920), 20.

²⁰ Ibid., 10.

²¹ Lotus D. Coffman, *Teacher Training Departments in Minnesota High Schools*, 75; also see Liberty Hyde Bailey, "Women's Place in the Scheme of Agricultural Education" in *The Cornell Reading-Courses: Lesson for the Farm Home 2* (April 1, 1913).

²² *Hutchinson Leader*, August 23, 1912, May 15, 1915; H. E. Flynn, *Minnesota Department of Education, Report, Teacher Training Departments in High Schools, 1920*, 3; also, *Minnesota Department of Education, Statistical Tables Relating to Teacher Training Departments in High Schools* (Saint Paul, Minn.: Department of Education, 1920), 10-24.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property: Merrill, Harry, House

County and State: McLeod County, MN

Section number: 8 page: 7

Name of Multiple Property Listing (If applicable)

For all the professional advancement made under Merrill, former students most often remembered him as a role model, beginning an honor system in the high school, and introducing Boy Scouts to town in 1911. A local historian noted, "From nearly every home in the locality, children have come to him for instruction, and some of the best known and most successful men in the state, and some of its most useful and admired women, have gone out from this school."²³

The *Minneapolis Journal*, reporting on his reception honoring his thirty-three years of service, noted, "Mr. Merrill is in reality what he is sometimes termed, the foster parent of the town." The room was filled with "prosperous appearing businessmen, distinguished looking physicians and attorneys, college professors and men and women from all vocations. [All] there to pay their respects to 'teacher.'"²⁴ At the end of the next school year, when he retired, the Hutchinson newspaper was just as generous, stating that Merrill was "rich in the love and gratitude of the community," and that "he will retire with the well wishes of every man, woman, and child in the community."²⁵

Merrill was also a civic leader. In later years, he wrote, "With me in going to Hutchinson, I took along the New England idea that the place where I was to teach school was to be home for me. I never could see why the school superintendent should not take root in a community and make it his home just as well as the banker, the lawyer, the doctor, the grocer, and the plumber." To that end, he served in numerous posts, including president of the Electric Light Company and president of the Commercial Club. As a politician, he held the post of city councilor for several years, but was defeated in his only run for the state legislature. Merrill and his wife, Martha, were elected as members of the city's first library board in 1901. During his tenure, he served on the committee that acquired funds from Andrew Carnegie for a library building, completed in 1904.²⁶

Merrill's avocation was farming. His son, Lewis, remembered, "Father always had a large garden." He also recalled, "In Maine, everyone had a big orchard, so he started putting in apple trees on the north slope of our place until he had a sizeable orchard." Harry also owned a small farm, located just north of Hutchinson, where he raised prize chickens. His personal interest, as was often the case, found its way into the schoolroom. One writer noted that Merrill's home garden "had no little to do with the success of the agricultural department of the Hutchinson high school, a department said to have more students yearly

²³ Curtiss-Wedge, ed., *History of McLeod County*, 525-526.

²⁴ *Minneapolis Journal*, November 29, 1914.

²⁵ *Hutchinson Leader*, June 5, 1915.

²⁶ *Hutchinson Leader*, July 5, 1932; *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, June 20, 1913; *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 6, 1915. Merrill was subject of several stories in the *Tribune*, encouraged by the city editor, Harry Wakefield, a former student.

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than any other of its kind in the state. . . . [Merrill] could see the connection between spelling 'botinney' and weeding the garden."²⁷

Harry Merrill died in 1932, followed by his wife, Martha, in 1945. On his death, the *Hutchinson Leader* declared, "[His passing] removes one who probably exerted more profound influence upon the community than any other one person."²⁸

Subsequent History

Harry and Martha's son, Lewis, born in October 1887, was the next owner of the house. Following in his grandfather's footsteps, he earned a degree as a civil engineer and subsequently worked for the Milwaukee Road and the Luce Line. Lewis served as both Hutchinson city engineer and McLeod County surveyor, also working with nearby communities as a consulting engineer. His engineering career took a brief break in 1940, when he was appointed Minnesota Game and Fish Commissioner by Governor Harold Stassen. He died in 1970.²⁹

The house fell into disrepair, and in 2002, a fire destroyed the kitchen wing and severely damaged the interior of the rest of the house. The property was acquired by the City of Hutchinson late in 2003 through the tax forfeiture process. Managed through the city's park system, a local committee supervises its upkeep and interpretation.

Conclusion

Few people have had the impact that Harry Merrill had on Hutchinson — a fact that was said over and over by his contemporaries. Entrusted, through marriage, with one of the county's oldest homes, Merrill and his wife made changes that transformed the house from the Greek Revival home of Lewis Harrington into the late nineteenth century style of residence as it appears today. On the spacious grounds, they planted trees and maintained a garden. More importantly for Merrill's vocation, he lived across the street from the city's public schools, including the 1912 high school that was named after him. That building is no longer extant — indeed, no school buildings remain from Merrill's years of service. His home reflects his educational career and his personal interests, and so is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as locally significant under Criterion B.

²⁷ Lewis Merrill, transcript of interview with Daniel Jenson, 1958, Harrington-Merrill Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

²⁸ *Hutchinson Leader*, July 5, 1932.

²⁹ *Hutchinson Leader*, December 12, 1960.

United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property: Merrill, Harry, House

County and State: McLeod County, MN

Section number: Additional Documentation page: 1

Name of Multiple Property Listing (If applicable)

PHOTOGRAPHS:

Name of Property: Harry Merrill House

City or Vicinity: Hutchinson

County: McLeod County

State: MN

Name of Photographer: Daniel J. Hoisington

Date of Photographs: October 2011

Location of Original Digital Files: 122 Demont Avenue E, Little Canada, Minnesota

Photo #1 (MN_McLeod County_Harry Merrill House_0001)

House and carriage house, south elevations, camera facing northeast.

Photo #2 (MN_McLeod County_Harry Merrill House_0002)

South elevation (left) and east facade, camera facing northwest.

Photo #3 (MN_McLeod County_Harry Merrill House_0003)

North elevation (right) and east facade, camera facing south southwest.

Photo #4 (MN_McLeod County_Harry Merrill House_0004)

North elevation (left), camera facing southeast.

Photo #5 (MN_McLeod County_Harry Merrill House_0005)

West elevation (left) and south facade, camera facing north northeast.

Photo #6 (MN_McLeod County_Harry Merrill House_0006)

Interior, first floor stairs, camera facing northwest.

Photo #7 (MN_McLeod County_Harry Merrill House_0007)

Carriage house, west elevation (left), camera facing northeast.

Photo #8 (MN_McLeod County_Harry Merrill House_0008)

Carriage house, north elevation (right), camera facing southwest.

Photo #9 (MN_McLeod County_Harry Merrill House_0009)

Barn, stone foundation, camera facing southwest.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

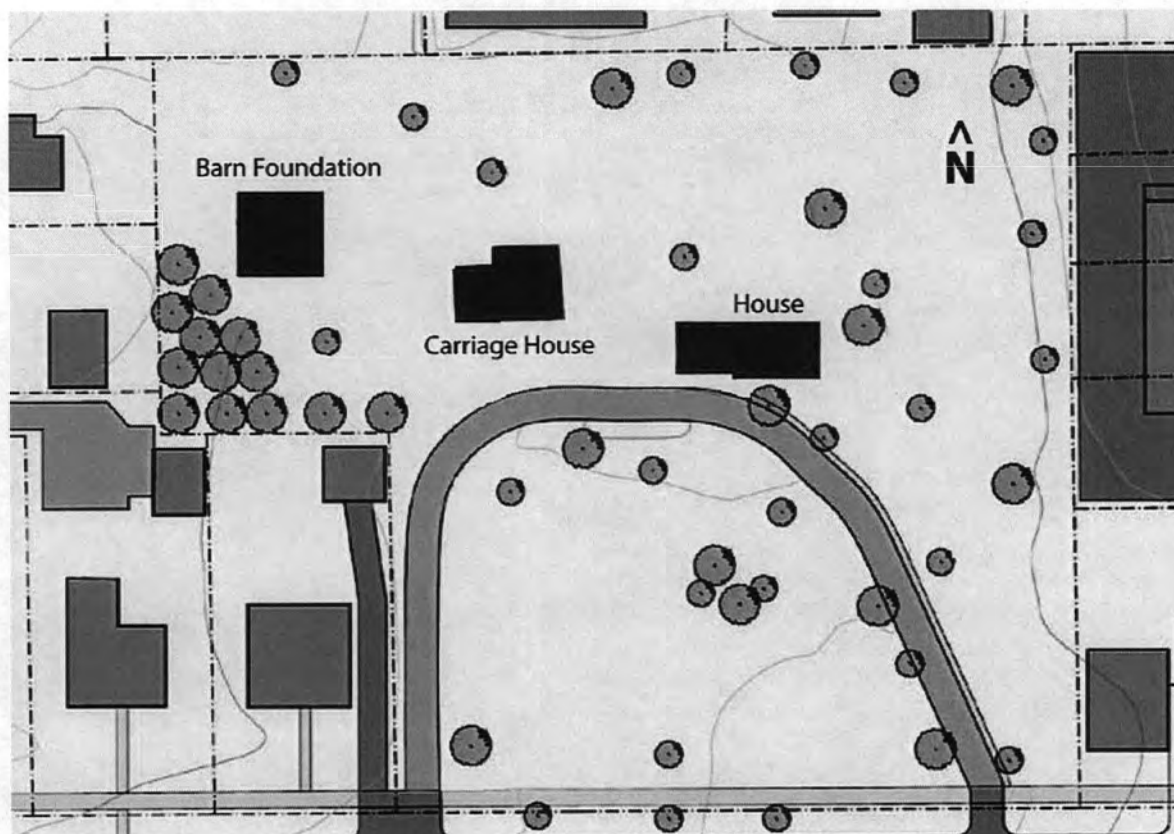
Name of Property: Merrill, Harry, House

County and State: McLeod County, MN

Section number: Additional Documentation page: 2

Name of Multiple Property Listing (if applicable)

Figure 1: Site Map



**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property: Merrill, Harry, House

County and State: McLeod County, MN

Section number: Additional Documentation page: 3

Name of Multiple Property Listing (If applicable)

Figure 2: Photograph, circa 1875 (Minnesota Historical Society)



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National Park Service

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Name of Property: Merrill, Harry, House

County and State: McLeod County, MN

Section number: Additional Documentation page: 4

Name of Multiple Property Listing (if applicable)

Figure 3: Photograph, circa 1890 (MHS). Harry Merrill is standing in the foreground.



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

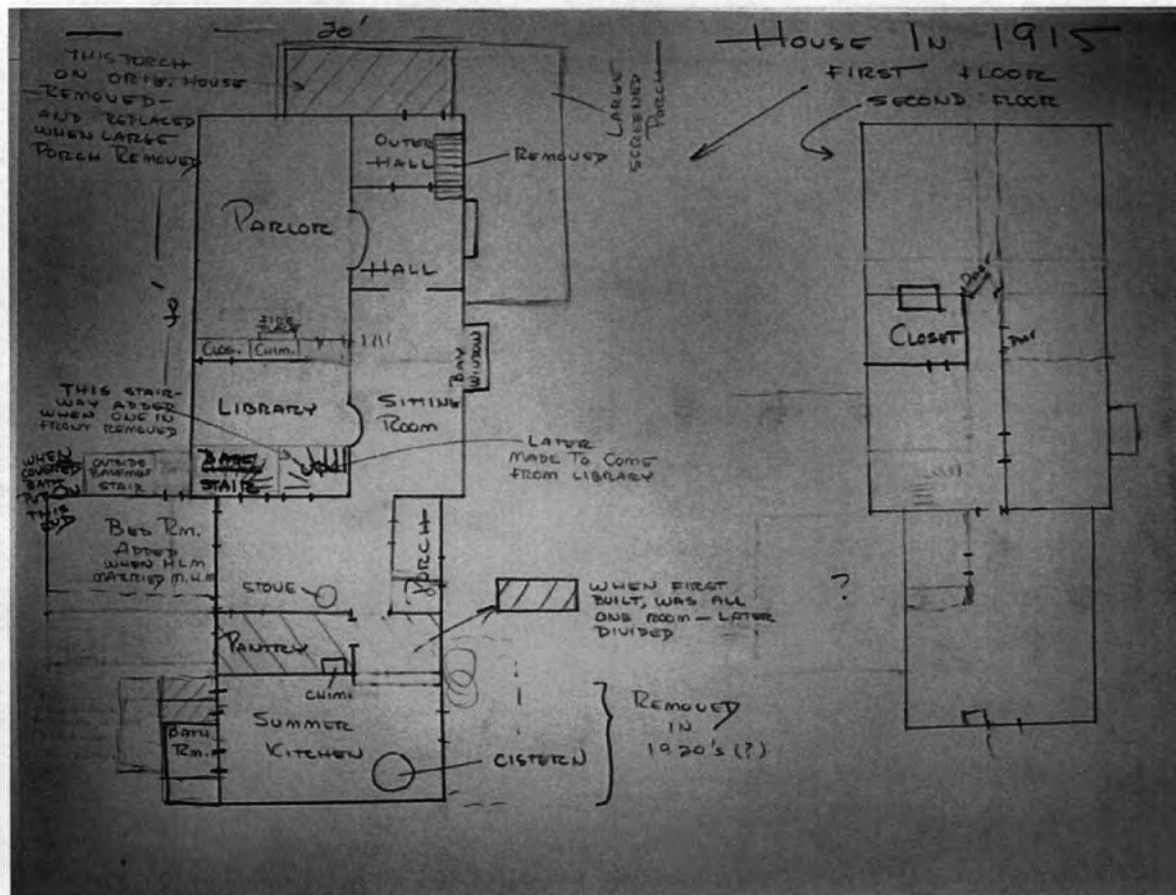
Name of Property: Merrill, Harry, House

County and State: McLeod County, MN

Section number: Additional Documentation page: 5

Name of Multiple Property Listing (If applicable)

Figure 4: Floor plan, 1915 (MHS)



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Merrill, Harry, House

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MINNESOTA, McLeod

DATE RECEIVED: 6/15/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 6/13/12
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 7/30/12 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/01/12
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 12000460

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 8.1.12 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



MN McLeod County Harry Merrill House 0001



MN McLeod County Harry Merrill House 0002



MN McLeod County Harry Merrill House 0003



MN McLeod County Harry Merrill House 0004



MN McLeod County Harry Merrill House 0005



MN McLeod County Harry Merrill House 0006



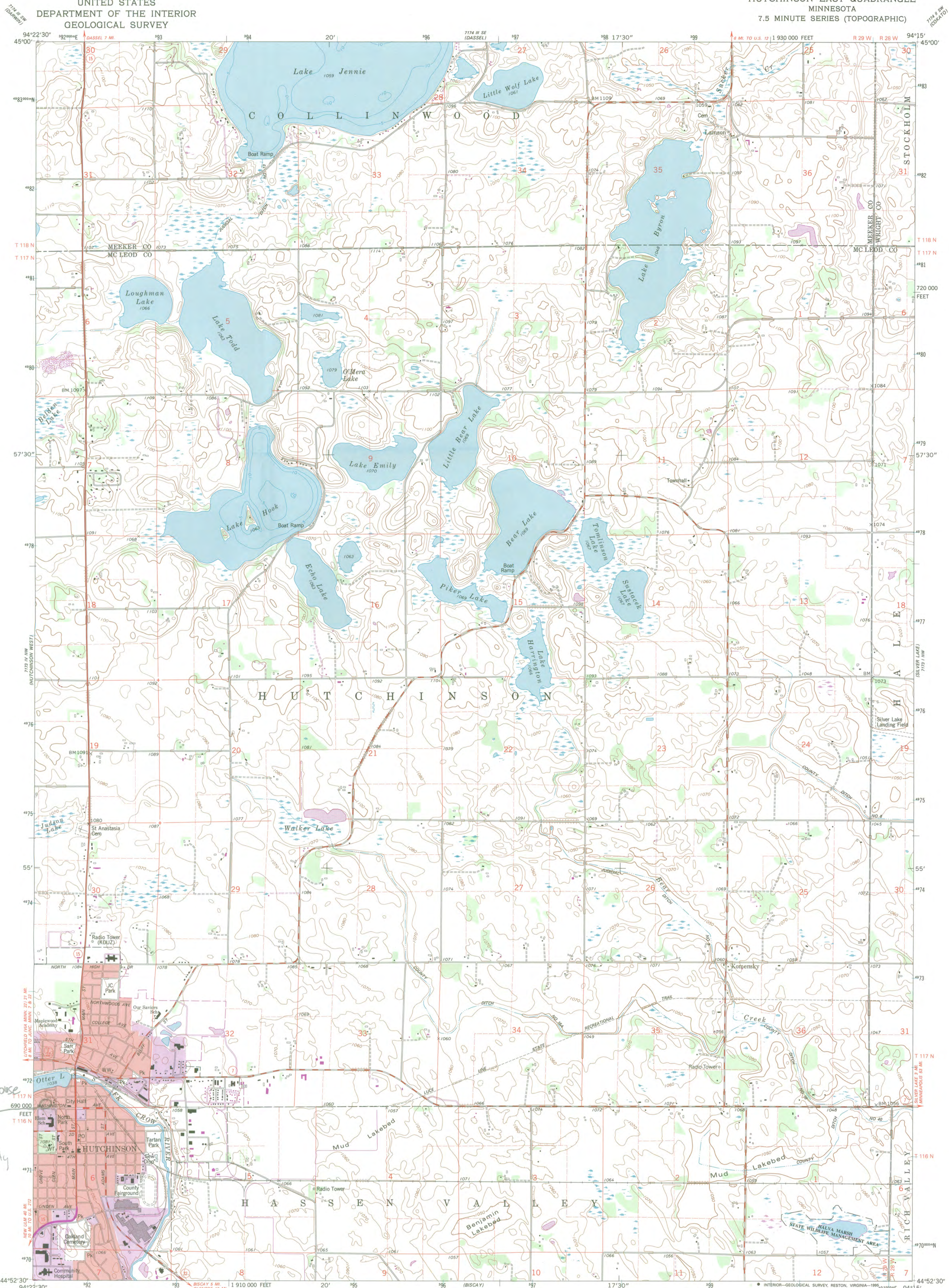
MN McLeod County Harry Merrill House 0007



MN McLeod County Harry Merrill House 0008

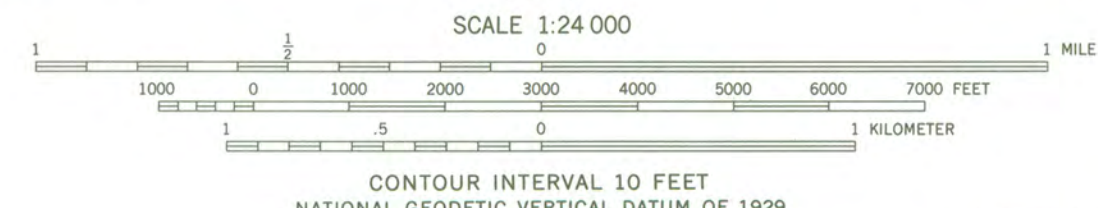
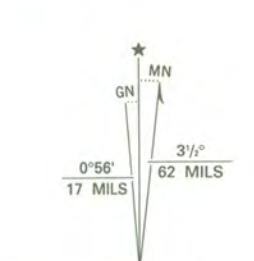


MN McLeod County Harry Merrill House 0009



Harry Merrill House
15 391560 E
4971958N
Hutchinson,
MN McLeod County

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1975. Field checked 1977. Map edited 1982
Hydrography compiled from information furnished by
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27). Projection and
10 000-foot ticks: Minnesota coordinate system, south zone
(Lambert conformal conic)
Blue 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator ticks, zone 15
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed
corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83
for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic
Survey NADCON software
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of
the National or State reservations shown on this map
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



ROAD CLASSIFICATION	
Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U. S. Route
	State Route

Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with
State of Minnesota agencies from aerial photographs
taken 1991 and other sources. Map edited 1994
Information shown in purple may not meet USGS content
standards and may conflict with previously mapped contours
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

HUTCHINSON EAST, MINN.
44094-H3-TF-024
1982
REVISED 1994
DMA 7173 IV NE-SERIES V872

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

1984



Hutchinson City Center

111 Hassan Street SE
Hutchinson, MN 55350-2522
320-587-5151/Fax 320-234-4240

May 10, 2012

State Review Board
State Historic Preservation Office
345 Kellogg Blvd. West
Saint Paul, MN 55102-1906

Dear State Review Board Members,

On behalf of the Hutchinson City Council, I wanted to express our gratitude that the Harry Merrill House is being considered for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. As the oldest structure in the city and the only structure in the city to survive the Dakota War of 1862, the Harry Merrill House, better known locally as the Harrington-Merrill House, is a significant link to the community's founders and early history.

Preservation of the house is the cornerstone of our community's local historic preservation initiative. This initiative began in earnest in 1999 with the formation of Historic Hutchinson, a volunteer based local non-profit whose mission is to help restore, preserve and protect the living and structural history and the spirit of the Hutchinson area and to showcase these assets now and for the future. The City became a more active participant in historic preservation when it acquired the Harry Merrill House in 2003. Since then local historic preservation efforts have been an ongoing partnership between the City, Historic Hutchinson, community volunteers and donors. In addition, the MN Historical Society and State Historic Preservation Office have been invaluable resources.

Our historic preservation effort took another step forward in 2011 when the City purchased our local historic Episcopal Church adjacent to City Hall in downtown Hutchinson. Built in 1892, the church is the oldest church in Hutchinson and retains much of its original look and interior. However, since the church had been vacant for several years and was on the market for sale its future preservation was uncertain. With its purchase by the City the property's preservation will be made possible through a community partnership similar to that associated with the Harry Merrill House.

The Hutchinson City Council expressed their continued support of our local historic preservation efforts when they voted unanimously at our May 8, 2012, council meeting to affirm their support to seek National Register of Historic Places designation for the Harry Merrill House. We believe that its history, architecture, construction and link to Harry Merrill and the community's education history make it well qualified for inclusion to the National Register. We thank you for your consideration and ask for your support as we continue our efforts to preserve and share our local history for the benefit of our current and future generations.

Sincerely,

Mayor Steve Cook
City of Hutchinson

SP-10010

**Minnesota Historical Society
State Historic Preservation Office
345 Kellogg Blvd West, St. Paul, Minnesota 55102
651/259-3451**

RECEIVED 2280

JUN 15 2012

NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

TO: Carol Shull, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Denis P. Gardner

DATE: June 12, 2012

NAME OF PROPERTY: Harry Merrill House

COUNTY AND STATE: McLeod County, Minnesota

SUBJECT: National Register:
☒ Nomination
☐ Multiple Property Documentation Form
☐ Request for determination of eligibility
☐ Request for removal (Reference No.)
☐ Nomination resubmission
☐ Boundary increase/decrease (Reference No.)
☐ Additional documentation (Reference No.)

DOCUMENTATION:

- ☒ Original National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
- ☐ Multiple Property Documentation Form
- ☒ Continuation Sheets
- ☐ Removal Documentation
- ☒ Photographs
- ☒ CD w/ image files
- ☒ Original USGS Map
- ☒ Sketch map(s)
- ☒ Correspondence
 - ☐ Owner Objection
 - The enclosed owner objections
 - Do ☐ Do not ☐ constitute a majority of property owners

STAFF COMMENTS: