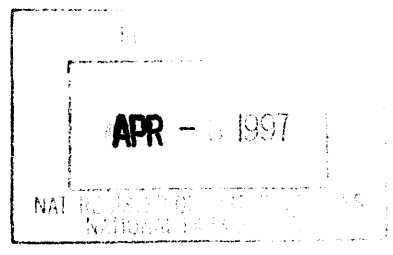


NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8/86)
Wisconsin Word Processor Format (1331D)
Approved 3/87



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Vorous General Store

other names/site number Hide Side Casuals

2 Location:

Street & number: 4153 Highway 42 N/A Not for Publication

city, town: Fish Creek N/A vicinity

state: Wisconsin code WI county: Door code 29 zip code 54212

3 Classification

| Ownership of property | Category of Property | No. of Resources within Property | |
|---|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | contributing | noncontributing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-local | <input type="checkbox"/> district | <u>1</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> buildings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-State | <input type="checkbox"/> site | <u> </u> | <input type="checkbox"/> sites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public - Federal | <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <u> </u> | <input type="checkbox"/> structures |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> object | <u> </u> | <input type="checkbox"/> objects |
| | | <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> Total |

Name of related multiple property listing: _____
N/A
No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Vorous General Store
Name of Property

Door Co., WI
County and State

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

[Signature] 3/27/97
Signature of certifying official Date
State Historic Preservation Officer-WI
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet

 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet

 determined not eligible for the National Register.

 removed from the National Register.

 other, (explain:)

Edson H. Beall 5/9/97
bar Signature of the Keeper Date

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade

Commerce/Trade/specialty store

Vorous General Store
Name of Property

Door Co., WI
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian/Italianate

foundation stone

walls aluminum

roof asphalt

other concrete

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

x See continuation sheet

Vorous General Store
Name of Property

Door Co., WI
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

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

Applicable National Register Criteria x A ___ B ___ C ___ D

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

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Period of Significance

circa 1895-1945¹

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

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

x See continuation sheet

¹Door County Register of Deeds, book/page; 466/111, 444/428, 215/94, 58/436, 35/424, Z/499, 30/112, A/237, 15/154. The period of significance extends from the date of construction to 1945, the National Register fifty-year cut-off date.

Vorous General Store
Name of Property

Door Co., WI
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

x See continuation sheet

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 # _____

- Primary location of additional data:
- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|--------------------|----------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| A1/6 | <u>4/8/0/6/3/0</u> | <u>4/9/9/6/9/3/0</u> | B | <u>/</u> | <u>/</u> | <u>/</u> | <u>/</u> | <u>/</u> | <u>/</u> | <u>/</u> |
| Zone | Easting | Northing | Zone | Easting | Northing | | | | | |
| C | <u>/</u> | <u>/</u> | <u>/</u> | <u>/</u> | <u>/</u> | D | <u>/</u> | <u>/</u> | <u>/</u> | <u>/</u> |

Verbal Boundary Description

The northeast corner of Lot 1 of Block 4, thirty three feet on Main Street, seventy-two feet deep, of the Asa Thorp Plat of Fish Creek, Wisconsin

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Vorous General Store.

11. Form Prepared By
name/title Rebecca Sample Bernstein

organization for Gibraltar Hist. Assoc. date February 26, 1993

street & number 601 South Dickinson Street telephone (608) 251-4615

city or town Madison state WI zip code 53703

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7. Architectural Description

The Vorous General Store is located within the unincorporated village of Fish Creek, in the town of Gibraltar on the western shore of the Door County Peninsula. The village is situated with Green Bay on the north and a rocky bluff on the south.

Built circa 1895,² the Vorous General Store is a two story vernacular Italianate commercial building located on the northeast corner of a central block in the heart of Fish Creek. The building stands alone on its corner, the only other building on the square block is the Alexander Noble House. The rest of the block is filled by grassy open space, which borders the east and south sides of the building. This setting has remained the same since the building was constructed. The building faces Main Street, also known as Highway 42. The east side of the building runs along Pine Street. The location, setting, and feeling of the site have remained the same for one hundred years.

Rectangular in plan, the store is two bays wide and three bays deep, as is typical of small scale commercial buildings of this time period. The store rests on a stone foundation. Its flat roof is obscured from view by the parapet front and side walls. The original clapboard walls are now clad in narrow aluminum siding.

The building's handsome pressed metal cornice is particularly indicative of the Italianate style with its heavy corner brackets, cornice moulding, dentils, and fascia. The first floor storefront features original cast iron details including corner pilasters and an ornamented metal cornice dividing the first floor from the second. This first floor cornice is a diminutive version of the building's main cornice and also displays side brackets and dentils. The original recessed main entrance door is surmounted by a fixed transom window. The original display windows were fixed-sash with four large lights on each side. Each large light was replaced with twenty-five small panes when the cost of replacing the large lights became prohibitive. This change was done in the early 1990s.³ The design of the bulkheads is original although some material was replaced during the window rehabilitation.

²Door County Register of Deeds, book/page; 466/111, 444/428, 215/94, 58/436, 35/424, Z/499, 30/112, A/237, 15/154.

³Virginia Kinsey, Fish Creek resident, mother of the craftsman who replaced the windows, conversation with Rebecca Bernstein, 1993.

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The second story of the main elevation features a single double-hung wood sash window on the left and a pair of double-hung windows on the right. Other fenestration is uneven. The east elevation features a new bay window, a small double-hung window and a rear picture window on the first floor. Two double-hung windows flank a pair of double hung windows on the second floor. The rear of the shed roof section features one double hung window and a monitor window. The rear of the main block features two horizontal fixed sash windows. The west elevation features irregularly spaced double hung windows on the first and second floors. All windowframes are clad in aluminum siding and house aluminum storm window sets.

The shed roof addition to the rear was added between 1935 and 1945.⁴ Other alterations include a second story porch on the west elevation which has a shed roof and solid half walls. The porch is supported by four square wooden posts. A bay window has been added on the east elevation. New door hoods surmount the doors on the east elevation.

The first floor interior consists of two primary rooms, one in front and one in the back. Originally both rooms comprised the general store. As time passed, both rooms were used for a car dealership and service station. After 1935, the main room housed the community post office and the back room was used for the service station. A variety of retail shops occupied the front room after 1959 when the post office moved. The service station left in 1970. The main room is currently a large open retail space with four evenly spaced original load-bearing metal columns. The tin ceiling was recently replaced after water and fire damage destroyed the original one. The second story has been and is an apartment consisting of a living room and a bedroom in the front, a bathroom in the middle on the east side and a bedroom and kitchen in the back.

Interestingly, the property lines of the land this commercial building rests on exactly coincide with the walls of the building itself.

The Vorous General Store retains its integrity of location, setting, feeling and association. These elements of integrity are the most important in understanding this building's significance in the area of the commercial history of Fish Creek. In particular, this building has always stood alone on this corner. Its site was carved out of an entire block owned by Alexander Noble, and still shares the square block only with the Noble House, which was recently listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

⁴Norman Stenzel, conversation with Rebecca Bernstein, May, 1995.

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The Vorous General Store gained visual strength through the design details of the cornices and the pilasters, while the rest of the building was more simply detailed. These important design features retain integrity of design, materials and workmanship. As the most important applied design features on the building, they would still be recognizable to a person living at any point during the period of significance from 1895 to 1946. Although window alterations and artificial siding affect the design of the store front, they are reversible alterations and do not affect the ability of the building to convey its significance in the commercial history of Fish Creek.

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8. Statement of Significance

The Vorous General Store is locally significant under Criterion A of the National Register of Historic Places in the area of Commerce as a largely intact example of retail building built as Fish Creek was on the brink of becoming a resort destination. Over the period of significance from construction in 1895 to the National Register fifty-year cut-off date of 1945, the building was home to a variety of uses each reflecting the growth of the community and the broad patterns of history affecting the community.

Historical Background

The village of Fish Creek was settled by Increase Claflin in 1842 "and prospered on the strength of local timber supplies and a fine harbor."⁵ In 1857 Asa Thorp organized Gibraltar Township and platted the village of Fish Creek. The entire peninsula of Door County was isolated until the late 19th century; there were no dependable roads and the railroad did not reach Sturgeon Bay until 1894.⁶ Steamers hauled huge shipments between Green Bay and Milwaukee and Chicago. Some of the "boats" could carry 250,000 to 1,500,000 board feet of lumber.⁷ The weight of the cargo required several refueling stops. One of these stops was Fish Creek, where visitors extolled the beauties of the area.

By the post-Civil War period, Fish Creek became the major fishing port of Door County. Asa Thorp started to take traveling teamsters and salesmen as paying guests into his private home in the 1860s. By 1870 Fish Creek was a thriving fishing port and lumbering center with two stores, a sawmill, and two large piers. The availability of lumber was good, and substantial quantities of fish, stone, line, and fish barrels accompanied raw timber and cut lumber as exports

⁵Edward Schreiber, "Fish Creek Then and Now," Fish Creek Voices, an Oral History of a Door County Village, William Caxton, LTD., Sister Bay, Wisconsin, 1990, 5.

⁶John Enigl, "Old R.R. Depot Has Seen Lots of History," Door County Almanak No. 5, The Dragonsbreath Press, Sister Bay, Wisconsin, 1990, 151.

⁷Barbara Wyatt, Project Director, Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin: Vol. 2, A Manual for Historic Properties, Madison, Wisconsin: Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986, Industry 16-1, 4-1.

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from the community.⁸

By 1881, Fish Creek could boast four merchants, five pier owners, one blacksmith, one wagonmaker, two hotels and one carpenter.⁹ A telephone line between Horseshoe Bay and Fish Creek was completed in 1889.¹⁰ Although difficult times were reported in Door County in 1894¹¹, advancements continued as community members donated labor and materials for the construction of sidewalks. Four thousand feet of sidewalks would reach all the stores, churches, public buildings and the principal residential streets.¹² Fortunately for the lagging economy, a prosperous summer resort community providing lodging for a seasonal population was emerging in Fish Creek. Brought by steamship from Chicago, Kenosha, and other western Lake Michigan cities, these new visitors required housing accommodations, and hotels began to spring up in Fish Creek. Asa Thorp would greatly expand his home, transforming it into a hotel. By early in the twentieth century, he could accommodate 125 people.

As soon as dependable transportation came to Fish Creek, so did more seasonal visitors. The year after the railroad reached Sturgeon Bay, the Crundon and Clark families of St. Louis began house construction on Cottage Row, which became the largest enclave of summer homes in Fish Creek.¹³ In 1896 Dr. Herman Welcker established Welcker's Resort as a "health spa." In the same year, the permanent population of Fish Creek was 250. By then, the community had a total of three hotels, two general stores, two dry goods purveyors, a meat market, a produce

⁸The Advocate, Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, 4/25/186, p. 2; The Advocate, Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, 2/21/1887, p.2.

⁹Chas. I. Martin, History of Door County, Wisconsin, together with biographies of nearly seven hundred families and mention of 9,00 persons., Expositor Job Print, Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, 1881, p. 185.

¹⁰The Independant, Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, 6/23/1889, p.3.

¹¹The Advocate, Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, 4/14/1894, p. 2.

¹²The Advocate, Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, 2/17/1894 p. 3.

¹³Hjalmar R. Holand. History of Door County, Wisconsin, the County Beautiful, The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company: Chicago, 1917, 360; Door County Almanak No. 5: Tourism, Resorts, Transportation, Sister Bay, Wisconsin: The Dragonsbreath Press, 1990.

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supplier, a farm implement dealer, two milliners, two carpenters, a shoemaker, a cooper, a mason, a barber, a sawmill, a physician, a blacksmith, a livery, and lawyer and a temperance saloon.¹⁴

By 1903, the village population had increased to 300. Commercial enterprises had also increased - there were now three general stores, three meat markets, three boatbuilders, three masons, two blacksmiths, a restaurant, a dentist, a veterinarian, two music teachers, and a string band.¹⁵ By 1911, the population had dropped to 200, there were only two hotels, one meat market, and less than half as many miscellaneous professionals.¹⁶ Four years later, however, Welcker's Hotel is listed for the first time in the state gazetteer, along with the Schreiber's hotel, for a total of four hotels in Fish Creek.

The first two decades of the twentieth century were golden years for the resort business in Fish Creek. Summer residents have reminisced about entire summers spent swimming, sailing, playing tennis, and picnicking.¹⁷ By 1917 Welcker's could accommodate 150 guests.¹⁸ There were also five other hotels and resorts in Fish Creek, the majority of which could accommodate over 50 people each.

The great depression of the 1930s affected Fish Creek in ways similar to the rest of the country. An immediate effect was felt in the resort business and resulted in the revitalization of a Fish Creek tradition evident since Asa Thorp first took travelers into his home in the middle of the 19th Century. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s a significant number of private residents either converted, adapted, or moved structures to serve as cottages or cabins on their property for the specific purpose of renting to Fish Creek tourists, apparently in an effort

¹⁴Polk's Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1895-96, R.L. Polk and Company, Chicago, 1895, p. 315.

¹⁵Polk's Gazetteer, 1903-04, p. 365-66.

¹⁶Polk's Gazetteer, 1911-12, p. 330.

¹⁷Betsy Guenzel, Fish Creek, The Summertime, privately printed, 1991.

¹⁸"The Summer Resort Business," Door County Almanak No. 5, The Dragonsbreath Press, Sister Bay, Wisconsin, 1990, 19.

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to augment otherwise sagging incomes.¹⁹ The development benefitted both the owners of these properties and the tourists they served. Due to shrinking incomes of the very wealthy and the growth of a middle class interested in getting a break from everyday life, vacationing was changing from long term seasonal occupancy to short term stays. Small cottages on private property provided an affordable place for a pennywise market to lodge.

Advertisements for these cottage complexes was minimal, and makes documentation difficult. It is not unlikely that frugal property owners were unwilling to reduce their additional income by paying for advertising. Most cottage complexes had repeat customers, and developed new customers via word of mouth.²⁰

From the late 1890s to the Depression of the 1930s, summer visitors had been summer residents and an integral part of the Fish Creek population. Summer residents used services any resident used - although perhaps at an elevated rate of consumption. From the 1930s on, tourism - visitors staying from one night to a few weeks - had greatly increased, resulting in at least eleven complexes comprised of a major building surrounded by smaller cottages. Shorter term vacationers used many of the same services that residents used, but also began to support a wider variety of retail business. By the 1990s, tourism in Fish Creek expanded into the autumn and winter seasons as well, and supports hotels, restaurants, clothing stores, gift shops and novelty stores. Economic dependence on tourism has continued to the present day.²¹

Historic Background: Vorhouse General Store

Originally, this property was part of Alexander and Marie Noble's holdings. In 1895, the Nobles sold the land to Levi Vorous. Vorous had the nominated building

¹⁹Rebecca Sample Bernstein, Intensive Architectural and Historical Survey of Fish Creek, Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin: Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, February, 1993, 30.

²⁰Author interviews with Fish Creek residents Chris Falk-Pedersen, Virginia Kinsey, 1993-1996.

²¹Mittermann, 197. Harwood W. Hill, "Transportation Conquers Distance," Door County Almanak No. 5, The Dragonsbreath Press, Sister Bay, Wisconsin, 1990, 134-6.

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constructed shortly thereafter.²² At the time it was the third general store in Fish Creek. C. A. and Alice Lundberg had established their store at 4160 Highway 42 in 1881, and the Hill Brothers began the Fish Creek General Store at 4164 Highway 42 a few years later at the end of the 1880s. It is not at all unlikely that Levi Vorous recognized the potential growth of the community as it became a summer resort destination. His building would be built with more elaborate details than any other commercial enterprise in Fish Creek.

When Levi Vorous died in 1915, the property passed to his wife Rachel. During Vorous ownership, it appears that the store was run by Levi and Rachel's son-in-law Mr. LePere (first name unknown).²³

In 1920 Rachel Vorous sold the building to Henry Eckert, Henry Stenzel and Carl E. Seiler. After serving in World War I, Henry Stenzel had gone to motor school in Milwaukee and returned to Fish Creek to start a car dealership, repair shop and gas station. He went into business with Carl Seiler. Stenzel and Seiler used the front room of the building as a showroom for the dealership, selling Ford, Nash, and Chevrolet automobiles at various times. A hand cranked gas pump was located on Pine Street at the side of the building. According to Norman Stenzel, son of Henry Stenzel, the showroom in the front also accomodated a pool table frequented by the chauffeurs of the wealthy summer residents on Cottage Row.

Stenzel and Seiler built a new gas station across Pine Street in 1932. In 1935, Carl Seiler was appointed postmaster for the Town of Gibraltar, and the front rooms were used as the post office. The post office was one room in the front of the building, with the garage in the larger back part. The post office room was divided by a partition. One half was the lobby, the other half was the work

²²Door County Register of Deeds, book/page; 466/111, 444/428, 215/94, 58/436, 35/424, Z/499, 30/112, A/237, 15/154.

²³Edward and Lois Schreiber, editors, Fish Creek Voices, An Oral History of a Door County Village, (Sister Bay, WI: Wm Caxton Ltd), 1990, p. 28 and 48; Tape recording 12 December, 1984, by Gibraltar Historical Association, of community members, including Gertrude Howe, Roy and Virginia Kinsey, Duncan and Ann Thorp, Ed and Lois Schreiber.

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area.²⁴ The shed roof "lean-to" on the back of the building was added between 1935 and 1940 to house the repair shop.²⁵

The building housed the post office until 1959, when a new post office was constructed across Highway 42. The Post Office currently shares space in the Community Center constructed in 1990 on the east side of Fish Creek. Seiler became a rural mail deliverer when Anita Schultz was appointed postmaster in 1941.

Stenzel and Seiler dissolved their partnership in 1946. Henry and Minnie Stenzel sold their share of the building to Carl Seiler and his wife Linea. Stenzel retained the gas station. Stenzel rented the back of the building from Seiler and continued to operate the repair shop from there, while the filling station was across the street. Henry Stenzel retired in 1957 and his son Norman maintained the business.

The Seilers sold the property to Richard and Mary Uhl in 1970. At that time, the repair shop in the back of the building, then run by Arnold Reinhardt, stopped doing business. A variety of retail shops occupied the space through the 1970s.

In 1989 the property went from Nancy Murray, Colleen Murray, Thomas Murray and Gary Spellman to Michael and Judith Surges. The path from the Uhls to the Murrays is unclear.²⁶

The other historic buildings constructed as retail establishments in Fish Creek Alwes Grocery Store (originally Lundberg's) at 4160 Main Street, the Fish Creek General Store (also known as Hill Brothers and later as Schreibers) at 4164 Main Street and the simple store at 4143 Main Street. The Vorhous Store was constructed with more architectural detailing than any of the other stores and has had a history reflecting the changes in the community's nature. It is the

²⁴Fish Creek Voices; Helen Allen "A Sampling of Historic Structures and Sites In Fish Creek - May 1990", typed manuscript of walking tour. Printed privately; Ann Thorp "Fish Creek post office remains focal point of village activity" The Door County Advocate, 3 October, 1990.

²⁵Norm Stenzel, conversation with Rebecca Bernstein, May, 1995. "Lean-to" is Stenzel's term.

²⁶Door County Register of Deeds.

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perfect embodiment of the history of Fish Creek, with the changes in uses contributing to and enhancing its historic significance.

Significance

The commercial property at 4153 Highway 42 is historically significant as the home of significant commercial enterprises in Fish Creek. Constructed as the village of Fish Creek entered a new phase of history, over its life the building has housed enterprises reflective of the life and times of the village - first a grocery store, then an automobile dealership, gas station and service station, then a post office, then a candy store and a variety of tourism oriented retail establishments.

The Vorous general store is a vernacular interpretation of a Commercial Italianate building unique in Fish Creek. As the only commercial building in Fish Creek with a moderate level of decorative details, the store embodies the important transformation from a fishing- and lumber-based economy into a resort-based economy, and then, after the second World War, into a tourism-based economy. This property is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A for its association with the commercial history of Fish Creek. While the building has been sided, inappropriate window shutters have been added, and a bay window has been added to one side, the building retains the plan, form, massing, materials, location, and setting from the historic period 1895 to 1945.

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Photography List

Vorous General Store

4153 Highway 42

Fish Creek, Door County, Wisconsin

photographer: Rebecca Sample Bernstein

May, September, 1992; November, 1993

Negatives located at the Division of Historic Preservation, State Historical
Society of Wisconsin, 816 South State Street, Madison, Wisconsin.

1. Vorous General Store
view from the north east
2. Vorous General Store
view from the south east
3. Vorous General Store
view from the north west
4. Vorous General Store
view from the north (front elevation)
5. Vorous General Store
front entrance detail
6. Vorous General Store
interior, facing north (toward the front)
7. Vorous General Store
interior, facing south (toward the rear)

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9. Bibliography

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Vorhous General Store
Fish Creek, Door County, WI

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Tape recording, 12 December, 1984, by Gibraltar Historical Association, of community members, including Gertrude Howe, Roy and Virginia Kinsey, Duncan and Ann Thorp, Ed and Lois Schreiber. Owned by the Gibraltar Historical Association, Fish Creek, Wisconsin.

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National Park Service

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Section Photos Page 2

Vorous General Store
Fish Creek, Door County, Wisconsin

The photos of the Vorous General Store accurately reflect the current appearance of the building at the time of listing.