

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Wisconsin	
COUNTY: Crawford	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
FEB 1 1972	

1. NAME

COMMON:
Rolette House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
NE Corner N. Water and Fisher Streets

CITY OR TOWN:
Prairie du Chien

STATE: **Wisconsin** 53821 CODE: **55** COUNTY: **Crawford** CODE: **023**

Congressmen to be notified:
Sen. William Proxmire
Sen. Gaylord A. Nelson
Rep. Vernon W. Thomson

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Both <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Not currently in use</u>

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
State Historical Society of Wisconsin

STREET AND NUMBER:
816 State Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Madison** STATE: **Wisconsin** 53706 CODE: **55**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Crawford County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **Prairie du Chien,** STATE: **Wisconsin** CODE: **55**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
None

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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COUNTY: Crawford	
ENTRY NUMBER: FEB 1 1972	DATE: FEB 1 1972

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Rolette house is a two-story frame structure of generally Federal style with some New England Colonial influences. It has a shallow pitched gable roof with plain boxed cornices and returns at the ends. The roof is shingled with wood shingles and the exterior of the house is clapboarded. The gable ends have two bays and the front and rear are divided into five bays with a simple center doorway at the first floor level in the rear and center doorways at both first and second floor levels in the front, indicating that there was at one time a porch on the front, two stories high, onto which the second floor door opened. Other structural features also indicate the location of the porch. First floor joists and beams are extremely large and possess strength quite out of proportion to the load they would normally be expected to bear. The north and west walls are infilled with brick. The foundation is of heavy rubble.

The house was discovered by chance inside a larger building which was about to be razed and which had last been used as a hotel or rooming house. Both the front and rear sides of the original house were exposed during the disassembling. The gable ends had remained exposed and were apparently unchanged or little changed from their original condition, but the front and rear walls had been enclosed and altered. Original front and rear door and window openings were found, however, so that the exterior of the Rolette house could be quite well determined. The exterior has been restored, using the original walls. Windows and doors were rebuilt in all original locations. Currently, however, the house remains a shell. Restoration and/or rebuilding of the interior will be undertaken when the desired adaptive use of the structure has been decided upon.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

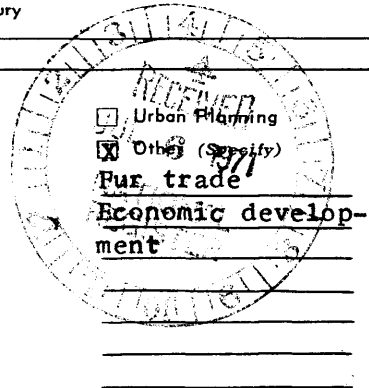
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the Rolette house is historical and lies in the association with Joseph Rolette, one of the most important and influential of the early settlers and fur traders of Prairie du Chien. Rolette, who was born in Canada in 1781 and educated in Quebec in preparation for becoming a Jesuit priest, gave up his studies and entered the fur trade. He arrived in Prairie du Chien in the early 1800's, carried on a highly profitable fur trade business and was soon the settlement's wealthiest resident. He entered into other business ventures and invested heavily in real estate. It is said that Rolette's land holdings "became so extensive at one time that he paid about seven-eighths of the real estate tax at Prairie du Chien."¹

"In 1811 Rolette and his partners associated with John Jacob Astor...and about 1820 he joined Astor's American Fur Co., managing the business at Prairie du Chien until Hercules Dousman arrived in 1826."²

Crawford County records indicate that the land on which the Rolette house stands was purchased by him in 1834. In 1842 Rolette willed to his daughter Elizabeth the "new dwelling house" on the property in question, and later in the same year--on December 1--he died. The house, therefore, was apparently built not long before 1842. Its location is on the river front in the area in which most of the fur trade occurred and at one end of the same block of North Water Street on which stand two important survivals of the fur trade era, the Astor Fur Warehouse and the Brisbois house.

Because of its age, its original ownership by Joseph Rolette, and its location in the important fur trade area of Prairie du Chien, it is believed that the Rolette house possesses sufficient significance to merit inclusion in the National Register. The house is now the property of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin and is scheduled for adaptive use in the plan for future development of the historic fur trade area complex in Prairie du Chien.

1. Scanlan, Peter L., p. 189.
2. Dictionary of Wisconsin Biography, 305-306.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Scanlan, Peter L., Prairie du Chien: French, British, American, George Banta Publishing Co., Menasha, Wisconsin, 1937, passim.
 Dyrud, Martinus J., "Report of Living History Committee, Crawford County," October 30, 1962, n.p.
 Newhouse, John, "Historic Rolette House 'Found,'" Wisconsin State Journal, Madison, July 26, 1964.
 Folsom, W.H.C., Fifty Years in the Northwest, Pub. by Pioneer Press Co., St. Paul, 1888, 24.
Dictionary of Wisconsin Biography, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 1960, 305-306.

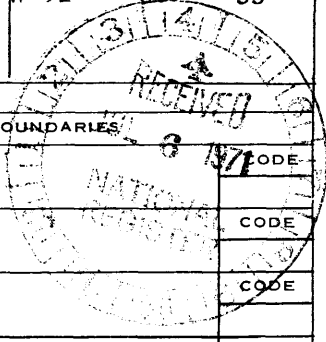
10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		N 43° 03' 14"	W 91° 09' 33"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 0.4

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	STATE:	CODE	COUNTY



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Donald N. Anderson, Assistant Director, Historic Sites & Markers Division

ORGANIZATION: State Historical Society of Wisconsin DATE: 6/4/71

STREET AND NUMBER:
816 State Street

CITY OR TOWN: Madison STATE: Wisconsin CODE: 55

12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

<p>As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name: <u>James Morton Smith</u> Title: <u>Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin</u> Date: <u>June 29, 1971</u></p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p><u>Ann + A Connelly</u> Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>FEB 1 1972</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>ATTEST: <u>[Signature]</u> Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date: <u>January 14, 1972</u></p>
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