

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

St. Germain dit Gauthier House  
Name of Property

Crawford County, Wisconsin  
County and State

NA  
Name of multiple property listing

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

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**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

NRIS Reference Number: 100002411  
Property Name: St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House  
County and State: Crawford County, Wisconsin

This has been approved in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the documentation.

 6-11-18  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**Amended Item in Nomination: Associated Historic Contexts**

The purpose of this Supplementary Listing Record is expand the period of significance to include the single year 1894, the year the house was moved to its present site. The site and components of the nominated building that date to 1894 are considered contributing.

The State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

**Distribution List**

National Register files  
Nominating Authority, without nomination attached

56-2411



**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**

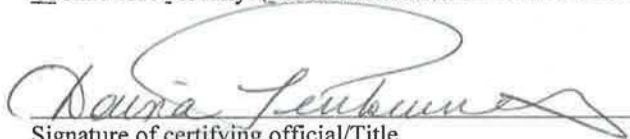
historic name St. Germain dit Gauthier House  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**

street & number	419 Fifth Street	N/A	not for publication
city or town	Prairie du Chien	N/A	vicinity
state Wisconsin	code WI	county Crawford	code 023
			zip code 53821

**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

3/23/2018  
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

St. Germain dit Gauthier House

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#### 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.

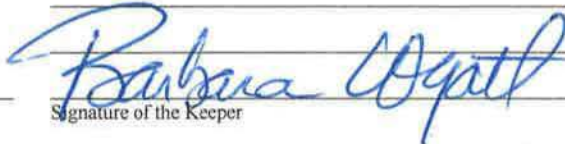
See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain):

  
Signature of the Keeper

5-10-18  
Date of Action

#### 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
(check as many boxes as apply)

private  
 public-local  
 public-State  
 public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

building(s)  
 district  
 structure  
 site  
 object

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

contributing	noncontributing
1	buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
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)

VACANT

#### 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: *pièce sur pièce à queue d'aronde* (French-Canadian)

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls Log

roof ASPHALT

other

#### Narrative Description

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

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## 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)

Architecture

### Period of Significance

ca. 1837

### Significant Dates

ca. 1837

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

### Architect/Builder

Unknown

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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## 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 less than one acre

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

1 15 650280 4768470  
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>	Elizabeth L. Miller, Historic Preservation Consultant	<b>date</b>	1 May 2017
<b>organization</b>		<b>telephone</b>	608-233-5942
<b>street &amp; number</b>	4033 Tokay Blvd	<b>zip code</b>	53711
<b>city or town</b>	Madison	<b>state</b>	WI

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### 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.  
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**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>	Dave Hemmer, Mayor	<b>date</b>	1 February 2016
<b>organization</b>	City of Prairie du Chien	<b>telephone</b>	608-326-6406
<b>street &amp; number</b>	214 E Blackhawk Avenue	<b>zip code</b>	53821
<b>city or town</b>	Prairie du Chien	<b>state</b>	WI
<b>name/title</b>	Mary Antoine	<b>date</b>	1 February 2016
<b>organization</b>	Prairie du Chien Historical Society (on behalf of the owner)	<b>telephone</b>	608-326-4410
<b>street &amp; number</b>	214 East Blackhawk Avenue	<b>zip code</b>	53527
<b>city or town</b>	Prairie du Chien	<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.

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Section 7 Page 1St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House  
Prairie du Chien, Crawford County, Wisconsin

Start description on line below

**INTRODUCTION**

The St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House is situated in the city of Prairie du Chien, Crawford County, Wisconsin. It is a small, one-story, side-gabled cabin of hewn logs set on a rock-faced stone foundation (photo 1). A front-gabled, frame addition clad with vertical boards is attached to the rear of the cabin (photo 2). The addition rests on a poured concrete foundation. Both sections were re-roofed with asphalt shingles in 1992.<sup>1</sup> The cabin is an example of the French-Canadian method of construction known as *pièce sur pièce à queue d'aronde*, in which logs are laid horizontally, and fitted with dovetail joints (photo 3). In addition to the form, the St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House displays other distinguishing characteristics of this building tradition, dating to Wisconsin's fur trade era: the logs average five inches in width, and are marked with Roman numerals; and the length of the house is a multiple of 13 feet. The house was likely erected for Guillaume and Magdelaine (Brunet) St. Germain *dit* Gauthier ca. 1837.<sup>2</sup> It was moved to its current site in 1894, and the addition constructed in 1916.<sup>3</sup>

**DESCRIPTION**

The St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House stands on the southwest corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Boilvin streets, on St. Feriole, a small island close to the east bank of the Mississippi River. St. Feriole was the location of the original Euro-American settlement at Prairie du Chien (Main Village), separated from the mainland by the Marais de St. Friole (Marais), a narrow, marshy, back channel of the Mississippi River. The island was prone to flooding, and following the devastating flood of 1965 and major floods over the next ten years, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers undertook a flood reduction project on the island in the late 1970s.<sup>4</sup> This resulted in the relocation of the residents of the Main Village, and the removal of all but a handful of buildings. Presently, the St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House faces 5<sup>th</sup> Street, on a grid of narrow, concrete streets that crisscross the island. On the east side of 5<sup>th</sup> Street is a modern picnic shelter. Empty blocks of green space are found north, south, and east of the house. A very limited number of buildings remain on the island, including Villa Louis, the Astor Fur Warehouse, the Brisbors House, and the Dousman Hotel, all National Historic Landmarks.

The St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House (photo 1) is rectangular in plan, with the ridge of the roof oriented north-south, parallel to 5<sup>th</sup> street. The addition is off-set to the south and extends westward, the ridge

<sup>1</sup> Mary Elise Antoine, president, Prairie du Chien Historical Society, and distinguished Prairie du Chien historian.

<sup>2</sup> Crawford County Deeds, Office of the Register of Deeds, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, C:54-55, 1836; Crawford County Deeds, D:326-327, April 19, 1838; and Crawford County Deeds, E:125-126, March 7, 1840.

<sup>3</sup> City of Prairie du Chien Assessor's Office, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, Tax Rolls, 1890-1920.

<sup>4</sup> "On Wisconsin: Remembering the St. Feriole Island Community and the 1965 Flood," *Wisconsin State Journal*, April 26, 2015.

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of its roof perpendicular to 5<sup>th</sup> street. The footprint of the original section measures 26 feet (north-south) by 22 feet (east-west). The addition measures about 16 feet square. A brick chimney rises through the center of the ridge of the cabin's roof. Another brick chimney pierces the south slope of the roof of the addition. Although the exterior of the log cabin is currently exposed, the whole house was finished with clapboards at one time, and surfaced with rolled asphalt siding simulating brick sometime between 1937 and ca. 1955. These finishes were removed ca. 1981, and the logs re-mortared.<sup>5</sup> The house possesses several different types of windows: 6/6 double-hung sash; 1/1 double-hung sash; a fixed cottage window; and 9-pane windows in the gable ends. The 6/6 windows are a pre-Civil War configuration, and likely original. Door and window openings display simple, wooden surrounds. Since 1987, vertical board shutters have been installed over all the openings to keep the house secure.

The St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House faces east, toward 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The east (front) façade is three bays wide, symmetrical about a central entrance, with a window flanking either side. A wooden stoop with wooden railings leads up to the front door; it was installed between 1981 and 1987.<sup>6</sup> The paneled wooden front door displays a pane of glass in the upper half; it matches the doors in the addition, so likely dates to 1916. To the south, a 6/6 window appears. A cottage window with a leaded-glass header in lozenge pattern is found north of the door. This configuration was common in the 1890s, so may have been installed when the house was relocated in 1894. The opening for the cottage window is likely original, but was enlarged to accommodate the new window.

The north façade overlooks Boilvin Street. Both the cabin and the addition can be seen on this façade (photo 4). The cabin (east) displays a centrally-placed, 6/6, window and at the east end of the façade, a doorway filled in with horizontal boards. This doorway may have accessed a small addition, such as a lean-to, which was demolished when the house was relocated. The gable end is clad with clapboards, and exhibits two, 9-pane windows, installed in the 1980s. The addition (west, photo 2) is set back and possesses an off-center, paneled wooden door, with glass (boarded) in the upper half, which matches the front door. At one time, a porch extended across the north façade of the addition. It was removed between 1981 and 1983.<sup>7</sup>

The cabin and the addition are both visible on the south façade (photo 5). The cabin (east, photo 6) features one 6/6 window (east), and a pair of 1/1 windows (west). The single window may be original; the paired windows were either installed after the house was moved in 1894, or perhaps as part of the

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<sup>5</sup> Richard H. Zeitlin, "Prairie du Chien: Urban Consolidation and Decline, 1858-1930," Report to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, St. Paul Minnesota, ca. 1980, 45; and Tom Nelson, Prairie du Chien, personal communication, April 13, 2017. Nelson directed a crew of high school students to remove finishes and non-historic additions, and stabilize the building, in the summers of 1981-1983.

<sup>6</sup> Zeitlin, 45. Not present in Zeitlin's description of the house.

<sup>7</sup> Nelson.



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addition, in 1916. The gable end is finished with clapboards, and a 1980s multi-pane window in a reduced opening lights the loft. In the addition (west, photo 4), a paneled wooden door matching the front door appears at the west end of this façade. There is a 1/1 window adjacent to the door. To the east is another opening. A concrete foundation at the west end of the addition marks the location of an entry porch (demolished between 1981 and 1983).<sup>8</sup>

The addition projects from the south end of the west façade of the cabin (photo 2). A 1/1 window lights the cabin north of the addition. An off-center window can be seen on the west façade of the addition. Clapboards cover the gable end of the addition. A small, boarded opening is set near the peak of the gable.

On the interior, the plan of the cabin is a single room (photos 7 through 10). Originally, it was divided into two rooms. A partition ran east-west just south of the chimney (near the center of the single space, photo 8). The partition was removed in the 1980s. The chimney rests on a wooden cupboard; it does not extend to the floor. West (behind) the chimney and cupboard, a staircase enclosed in plasterboard projects into the room (photo 9). The straight, steep wooden staircase is accessed through the addition, and dates to 1916. Originally, the loft was reached through an opening in the southwest corner of the cabin, perhaps by a ladder mounted on the wall (photo 10). The opening was filled with boards, probably when the addition was completed. Presently, the walls and ceilings in the cabin are exposed; the interior finishes were removed between 1981 and 1983.<sup>9</sup> Traces of the original whitewashing and axe marks remain. The ceiling beams display a decorative beaded edge, which probably faced down into the room originally, but was turned upward toward the loft floor when the cabin was relocated. This may have been done to compensate for sagging beams. In the early 1980s, posts and a beam running north-south were installed to stabilize the structure. The floor boards are not original; they display uniform, machine-made saw marks, and show little wear. The loft above the log cabin was divided into two rooms at one time; it is unclear when that was done, and the partitions have been removed.<sup>10</sup>

The addition is also a single room (photo 11). The walls are finished with lath and plaster, the ceiling is exposed, and wooden tongue-and-groove boards cover the floor. The openings possess simple, Craftsman surrounds (photo 12). In the northeast corner of the addition, a built-in, wooden cupboard forms part of the framing for the staircase that climbs to the loft (photo 13). The loft above the addition was accessible at one time, and there was a double-dormer on the north slope of the roof of the addition, increasing the height of the loft. The dormer was removed after the city acquired the property in 1978.

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<sup>8</sup> Nelson.

<sup>9</sup> Nelson.

<sup>10</sup> Dennis Au, "Architectural Analysis and Preservation Recommendations: St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin," April 1990, 2.

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ALTERATIONS

The St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House was relocated from its original site north of Villa Louis and overlooking the Mississippi River in 1894. A lean-to or other small addition that attached to the north façade was removed, and the doorway into it boarded up. Shortly after the move, the cottage window on the east (front) façade was installed. A second window opening was enlarged to accommodate a pair of 1/1 windows sometime between 1894 and 1916. The addition was erected in 1916, utilizing what was probably an original doorway in the west (rear) wall of the cabin, and creating a new opening and a staircase that projects into the cabin. The original opening into the loft above the cabin was boarded up at that time. In the 1980s, multi-pane windows were installed in the loft. Moving the St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House from its original site means that the house has lost its association with the St. Germain *dit* Gauthier family, and the fur trade era, under *Criterion A*. However, the alterations do not compromise the integrity of the cabin's historic architecture. The placement of the addition to the rear of the building minimizes its impact, and it could be removed without further damage to the log house. Two window openings in the cabin have been enlarged, one doorway has been filled and another cut in, but the log house is still clearly identifiable as an intact example of a rare method of construction, the *pièce sur pièce à queue d'aronde*, built by early French-Canadian settlers in Quebec province, and disseminated via the fur trade routes through the Great Lakes, and the Mississippi River Valley.

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#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House is significant at the state level under *Criterion C* as a good example of the *pièce sur pièce à queue d'aronde* method of construction, built by French-Canadian settlers in Quebec province, and disseminated with the fur trade through the Great Lakes, and into the Mississippi River Valley. Only six examples of French-Canadian log construction have survived in Wisconsin, including the St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House. The rarity of this method of construction, representing the fur trade and early settlement era before Wisconsin statehood, lends the house significance at the state level. The St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House incorporates features characteristic of this method of construction, including the length of the house, which is a multiple of 13; the width of the hewn logs, which averages five inches; and the Roman numerals scratched into most of the logs in the house, which French-Canadian builders used to assemble the house. The symmetrical façade may be French-Canadian, or it may be an influence of the Federal style, built in Wisconsin between about 1830 and 1860. The pitch of roof of the St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House (less than the 45 degrees typical of French-Canadian colonial houses), the lack of a bell-cast eave (*coyau*), and the lack of the knee wall that created more headroom in the loft, may also derive from the Federal style and reflect the influence of the Yankees settling in Prairie du Chien beginning in the late 1820s. The blend of two cultures, predominantly French-Canadian, overlaid with a Yankee aesthetic, makes the St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House a unique representation of the transition of the fur trade in Prairie du Chien, and of the community itself, from French-Canadian to American domination in the early-nineteenth century. The St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House was erected ca. 1837, near the end of Wisconsin's fur trade era. From its construction until its acquisition by the city of Prairie du Chien in 1978, it was owned and occupied by families of French-Canadian ancestry. Although the house was moved from its original location in 1894, it retains good integrity. The period of significance coincides with the date of construction, ca. 1837.

#### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

##### The North American Fur Trade

French explorer Jacques Cartier undertook some of the earliest trading between Native people and Europeans in the 1530s and 1540s, while exploring the Gulf of St. Lawrence, where the waters of the Great Lakes enter the Atlantic Ocean. Cartier traded for furs to be used in trimming clothing, not the beaver pelts that would become fashionable in Europe later in the sixteenth century. European fishermen harvesting cod on the Grand Banks near the coast of present-day Newfoundland were the first Europeans to trade for beaver pelts. To preserve the fish so that it could be shipped to Europe, fishermen would dry the cod on the shore. This brought them into contact with Native people, and they

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bartered metal goods for beaver robes, which kept the fishermen warm on their return voyage. European hat makers soon discovered that the beaver pelts were easy to felt, and waterproof as well as warm. Beaver felt hats quickly became popular in Europe, and demand rapidly increased. The fur trade would drive French and British territorial expansion and remain the leading economic pursuit among Europeans and Euro-Americans in North America into the nineteenth century.<sup>11</sup>

In 1608, Samuel de Champlain (1574-1635) established the settlement of Quebec on the St. Lawrence River. From Quebec, the French fur trade expanded westward as traders traveled up the St. Lawrence River and into the Great Lakes. Indian nations played the primary role, with their skilled hunters and trappers, and Champlain sent young Frenchmen, such as Etienne Brule (1592-1632), to live among them and learn their languages and customs, in order to promote trade with the French. Brule traversed the Great Lakes in 1622-23, and may have been the first European to visit present-day Wisconsin on that journey, but he kept no record of his travels. Jean Nicolet (1598-1642) is generally regarded as the first European to set foot in Wisconsin, in 1634. Nicolet landed at Red Banks, near what is now the city of Green Bay, where he met Menominee and Ho-Chunk people, who had lived in the area for centuries.<sup>12</sup>

Champlain established trade monopolies, licensed through royal charters, in an attempt to control the French fur trade; however, unauthorized independent traders swiftly cut in. These *coureurs des bois* ("runners of the woods") adapted to the Native way of life, and many married Native women, improving their trade connections and gaining a competitive advantage. The goods that the *coureurs des bois* traded were European made, and valued for their durability, technology or novelty. Items included metal cooking equipment, fire steels, firearms, steel traps, clothing, glass and porcelain beads, silver ornaments, and alcohol.<sup>13</sup>

Champlain also strategically allied the French with the Algonquian and Huron nations. The Huron acted as middlemen between the French and Indian nations in the region around the Great Lakes. This alliance marked the beginning of Europeans and Indian nations working together, and in competition, to extend their own economic and political influence. Champlain and the French supported the Algonquian and the Huron against the Iroquois Confederacy, which dominated the area south of the St. Lawrence River and east of lakes Ontario and Erie. From about 1660 through 1763, the Iroquois allied with the Dutch and the English, and fought a series of wars to gain control of the fur trade and expand their territory. Known as the Beaver Wars, or the Iroquois Wars, these bloody conflicts caused

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<sup>11</sup> Harold A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada*, 1930, (Reprint, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 200), 9-12; and Robert C. Nesbit, *Wisconsin: A History*, (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), 17-20.

<sup>12</sup> Innis, 25-31; Nesbit, 17-22; and Barbara L. Wyatt, ed., *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*, (Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), I:1-1.

<sup>13</sup> Innis, 40-42; Nesbit, 20-21; and Wyatt, I:1-1.

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a massive population shift as neighboring tribes fled west and north of Lake Michigan to escape the violence.<sup>14</sup>

The Iroquois Wars were also a part of the conflict between France and Great Britain, competing to extend the territory they claimed and to control the European fur trade. The English entered the fray with the formation of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670. In 1659-60, *coureur des bois* Pierre-Esprit Radisson (1636-1710) and his brother-in-law, Médard Chouart des Groseilliers (1618-1684), had ventured north and west of Lake Superior, where they visited what is now known as Hudson Bay. They learned that the bay gave easy access to inland fur trading, and returned to Montreal with an extremely valuable load of beaver pelts. Not only were French bureaucrats uninterested in financing an exploration of the fur-producing potential of the Hudson Bay region, they confiscated Radisson and Groseilliers' furs, as the traders were unlicensed. This prompted the pair to look elsewhere for funding. After a failed attempt financed by Boston businessmen, the brothers-in-law traveled to London in 1665, where they secured the sponsorship of Prince Rupert of the Rhine, and were granted two ships to explore possibilities of trade. This expedition was highly successful, and led King Charles II to grant a royal charter to the Hudson's Bay Company, giving the firm a fur trade monopoly over much of what is now northern and central Canada.<sup>15</sup>

The Hudson's Bay Company quickly undermined French influence, driving French traders west into the Great Lakes region; just as eastern tribes fleeing the Iroquois Wars were settling there, helping extend the French network. However, as the French fur trade moved westward in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the increasing length of the trip for each canoe load of trade goods diminished profits, driving independent *coureurs de bois* out of business. The French fur trade was soon dominated by wealthy merchants in Montreal, who could afford to wait for a once-a-year delivery of furs (and another year or two to transport furs to Paris, sell them, and receive the proceeds) for their return on their investment. They employed licensed *voyageurs* ("travelers," also known as *engagés*, or "contractors") to transport goods along water routes deep into the wilderness to the northwest. The *voyageurs* would pack large canoes with thousands of pounds of pelts for the annual return trip to Montreal.<sup>16</sup>

The fierce competition between France and Great Britain continued and would culminate in the French and Indian War. This was the North American conflict in the European Seven Year's War, both of which were launched in 1754. At the war's conclusion in 1763, France would cede the territory it

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<sup>14</sup> Innis, 46-49; and Nesbit, 21-23.

<sup>15</sup> Innis, 46-49; and Nesbit, 24-29.

<sup>16</sup> Innis, 55-57; and Nesbit, 25.

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claimed east of the Mississippi River to Great Britain, and Great Britain would take control of the North American fur trade.<sup>17</sup>

The Fur Trade in Wisconsin

The first European fur traders to come to Wisconsin were Radisson and Groseilliers, in 1659-60. This was more than 20 years after Nicolet landed at Red Banks; the Iroquois Wars had made European exploration of Wisconsin a hazardous proposition. The brothers-in-law returned to Montreal not only with furs, but also with tales of a great river flowing south: the Mississippi. Although they were unable to explore the river at that time, Father Marquette soon would. In 1668, Jesuit priest Jacques Marquette (1637-1675) established missions in the western Great Lakes, at Saulte Ste. Marie in what is now Michigan, and in 1671, at St. Ignace, Michigan and at La Pointe, Wisconsin on present-day Madeline Island. Father Marquette was not the first European missionary in what is now Wisconsin. Father René Menard (1605-1661) had accompanied Radisson and Groseilliers, but became separated from them and disappeared in northern Wisconsin in 1661, before establishing a mission. Father Claude Allouez (1622-1689) established missions among the Potawatomi in Wisconsin between 1667 and 1669, and at Green Bay (La Baie Verte, or La Baye). Trading posts operated adjacent to the missions at Green Bay and later, La Pointe (1693). At La Pointe, Marquette heard that the Mississippi River was a major trading route, and thought it could be an avenue for expanding his missionary work. In 1673, Marquette joined French-Canadian trader Louis Jolliet (1645-1700) and traveled with Indian guides and French-Canadian and French-Indian boatmen from St. Ignace through Lake Michigan and up the Fox River to the two-mile portage (at present-day Portage, Wisconsin). The party followed the portage path to the Wisconsin River, and reached the Mississippi River near what is now the city of Prairie du Chien. They were the first European and Euro-Canadians to explore and map the upper Mississippi. After traveling most of the length of the Mississippi, the group turned north, following the Illinois, Des Plaines and Chicago rivers back to Lake Michigan.<sup>18</sup>

René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle (1643-1687) was another French explorer and trader endeavoring to secure trade with Indian nations south of the Great Lakes. La Salle established outposts at Kingston, Ontario (Fort Frontenac, 1673), at Green Bay (1679), on the Illinois River near present-day Peoria (Fort Crèvecoeur, 1680), and on the Mississippi River where the city of Memphis is now located (Fort Prudhomme, 1682). Nicolas Perrot (ca. 1644-1717), a French fur trader known for bartering guns for furs, built several posts on the upper Mississippi River, the first of which was Fort St. Nicolas, at Prairie du Chien (1685). This was the first European fort erected at Prairie du Chien; it was not manned, but was used for storage. The French erected a fort at Green Bay in 1717. By the

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<sup>17</sup> Innis, 47-49; and Nesbit, 27-29.

<sup>18</sup> Wyatt, I:1-1; and Nesbit, 24-27.

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1720s, French trading posts extended from Montreal through the Great Lakes, along the Fox-Wisconsin and Illinois rivers, and down the Mississippi River to New Orleans.<sup>19</sup>

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, French and French-Canadian traders were very active in Wisconsin, yet French influence did not last. With the end of the French and Indian War in 1763, the British gained control of the fur trade. Many French traders remained in the upper Mississippi River valley and the Great Lakes region, employed by British merchants, and trading at La Baye (Green Bay), La Pointe, and Prairie du Chien. Today, French heritage is reflected in the many French place names, in the system of lot division at Prairie du Chien and Green Bay (along the lower Fox River), and is celebrated by the descendants of *coureurs des bois* and *voyageurs* who live in Wisconsin.<sup>20</sup>

The British took over the posts at Green Bay and La Pointe, and established trade centers at Mackinac and Detroit, and at Grand Portage (Minnesota). Prairie du Chien, long a gathering place where Indian nations traded among themselves, and later with the French, became especially important as a rendezvous during British domination of the fur trade, 1763 to 1815. The British had relinquished the lands east of the Mississippi River, south of the Great Lakes, and north of the Ohio River at the end of the Revolutionary War in 1783. However, the British continued to occupy the Northwest Territory, and control the fur trade in the region, a major source of revenue. Increasing hostilities between the Americans and the British over trade, as well as the impressment of American sailors to serve on British ships, sparked the War of 1812. The British captured Mackinac early in the war, and dispatched an agent to Prairie du Chien to enlist tribes in support of the British. In response, the Americans constructed Fort Shelby in Main Village in 1814. Soon thereafter, the British captured the installation and renamed it Fort McKay. The British burned the fort in 1815, shortly before they withdrew from the Northwest Territory.<sup>21</sup>

In 1816, the U.S. Congress authorized the construction of military forts at Prairie du Chien and Green Bay, in conjunction with government-operated trading houses, to consolidate control over the fur trade. A number of British- and French-Canadian traders remained in Wisconsin, contracting with John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company. A handful, such as Joseph Rolette of Prairie du Chien, continued to operate independently. The American Fur Company convinced Congress to eliminate the government-operated trading houses in 1822, and by 1830, monopolized the fur trade in the U.S. In Wisconsin, Prairie du Chien and La Pointe increased in importance as trading centers.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Wyatt, I:2-1 through 2-3; Nesbit, 17-18; and Peter Lawrence Scanlan, *Prairie du Chien: French, British, American*, (Menasha, WI: George Banta Publishing Company, 1937), 27.

<sup>20</sup> Wyatt, I:2-3; and Nesbit, 31-33.

<sup>21</sup> Wyatt, I:3-1 through 3-3; and Nesbit, 39-43 and 62-74.

<sup>22</sup> Wyatt, I:4-1; and Nesbit, 64-70, 74-75, and 81-100.

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Hercules L. Dousman (1800-1868) settled in Prairie du Chien as an agent for the American Fur Company in 1826. Dousman was a successful trader. However, the fur trade had declined steeply in Wisconsin by 1830, as over-hunting had severely depleted fur-bearing animals in the state, shifting trapping north and west. Following the end of the Black Hawk War of 1832, Wisconsin Indian nations were compelled to cede their homelands and, bit by bit, were forced west of the Mississippi River, or onto small reservations, devastating communities and destabilizing their society as a whole. Euro-American settlement in Wisconsin, which had begun with the encroachment of lead prospectors on Ho-Chunk land in the southwestern corner of the state in the 1820s, rapidly increased. The American Fur Company declared bankruptcy in 1842. Wisconsin became the 30<sup>th</sup> state in 1848. By 1850, the fur trade era in the state was over. Fur traders either moved on, or stayed in Wisconsin and turned to farming, lumbering, land speculation, and other pursuits.<sup>23</sup>

Brief History of Prairie du Chien

‘Prairie du Chien’ was the French name for the nine-mile long prairie just north of where the Wisconsin River flows into the Mississippi. The name, “Prairie of the Dog,” is believed to derive from a Meskwaki (also known as Fox) leader or family by that name that lived on the prairie in the mid-eighteenth century. The site had been a neutral gathering place for the Indian nations in the region for many centuries before Europeans and Euro-Americans arrived in the seventeenth century. French fur traders traveling the Fox-Wisconsin Rivers to the Mississippi in the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries found the prairie to be a logical and convenient spot to rendezvous and trade with the Natives. Fox, Sauk, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Dakota, Ojibwe, and Potawatomi people all came to Prairie du Chien to trade for several weeks every spring beginning in the 1730s.<sup>24</sup>

Native people (probably the Fox) had established a permanent village at Prairie du Chien when Jonathon Carver visited in 1766.<sup>25</sup> Carver, a New Englander, had been dispatched by Robert Rogers, governor of Mackinac, to search for the Northwest Passage. He was the first to record the place-name of Prairie du Chien (*La Prairie les Chiens*), and described the community,

[I]t was a large town and contained about three hundred families... This town was the great mart where the adjacent tribes, and even those who inhabited the remote branches of the Mississippi,

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<sup>23</sup> Wyatt, I:4-1; and Nesbit, 64-70, 74-75, and 81-100.

<sup>24</sup> May Elise Antoine and Lucy Eldersveld Murphy, eds, *Frenchtown Chronicles of Prairie du Chien: History and Folklore from Wisconsin's Frontier*, (Madison, WI: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2016), xiii; Wyatt, I:4-1 through 4-8; and Nesbit, 43-44.

<sup>25</sup> Scanlan, 59-61.



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annually assembled, about the latter end of May, bringing with them their furs and peltries, to dispose of to the traders.<sup>26</sup>

Conflicts between the French and the Fox, and the French and the British, prevented Euro-American settlement at Prairie du Chien until the 1770s. French and French-Indian fur traders and their families, mostly from the settlements to the south at Kaskaskia and Cahokia, on the Mississippi River, in *Pays des Illinois* (Illinois Country) were the first Euro-Americans to make Prairie du Chien their home. In the 1780s, French-Canadians, and a few British-Canadians, began settling at Prairie du Chien as well. These newcomers selected sites for their houses, for trading posts, and for farming. In 1781, the British officially bought the land at Prairie du Chien from the Fox. Most of the land had been subdivided by 1800, using a system of land partitioning employed in New France that was based on the *arpent*, a unit of linear measurement equivalent to about 190 feet. Streambeds and other natural features were used to determine property boundaries, and lots could have different widths. The configuration at Prairie du Chien, in which land owners had a lot in a village, and a farming lot outside the village, was characteristic of French settlements in Illinois Country. Prairie du Chien had three sets of subdivided property: Main Village had 37 lots of different widths; 20 lots on the mainland, some in the Village of St. Friole on the east bank of the Marais, and some in Upper Village (later known as “Frenchtown”) about two miles north on the east bank of the Mississippi River; and there were 43 *roture* (long lots), set perpendicular to the river, for grazing and farming on the mainland east of the villages. The lots in Frenchtown had been partitioned from four of the long lots.<sup>27</sup>

In 1800, Thomas G. Anderson came to Prairie du Chien on a trading expedition. Anderson described Main Village as,

...a little village of perhaps ten or fifteen houses...Except one framed one, the houses were all built of logs, plastered with mud, and covered either with cedar, elm, or black ash bark. The people were nearly all Lower Canadians [French-Canadians from Quebec province].<sup>28</sup>

In 1805, Zebulon Pike visited Prairie du Chien while exploring the upper Mississippi River valley. He wrote,

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<sup>26</sup> D.S. Durrie, “Captain Jonathon Carver and ‘Carver’s Grant,’” *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, VI (1872), 226.

<sup>27</sup> Mary Antoine de Julio, “The Vertefeuille House of Prairie du Chien: A Survivor from the Era of French Wisconsin,” *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 80, no. 1 (Autumn 1996): 40-43; Zeitlin, 4; and Allen G. Noble, *Wood, Brick, and Stone: The North American Settlement Landscape*, (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984) 2:88.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas G. Anderson, “Personal Narrative of Capt. Thomas G. Anderson,” *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, IX (1882): 147.

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[there are] eighteen dwelling-houses in two streets; sixteen in Front Street and two in First Street. ...[These, with others] scattered about the country...[made] in the village and vicinity, thirty-seven houses.<sup>29</sup>

Nicholas Boilvin (1761-1827), Indian Agent at Prairie du Chien from at least 1811 until his death, wrote to the U.S. Secretary of War in 1811, recommending that a fort and a government trading house be built at the site, to end French-Canadian dominance in the regional fur trade. Boilvin noted, "the village contains between thirty and forty houses, and...about 100 families. The men are generally French Canadians..."<sup>30</sup>

To forestall British attempts to recruit western tribes to the British side during the War of 1812, Americans constructed Fort Shelby in Main Village in 1814. Soon thereafter, the British captured the installation, with the assistance of local residents, and renamed it Fort McKay. The British burned the fort in 1815, and then withdrew from the Northwest Territory.<sup>31</sup>

When the United States gained control of the area in 1815, about 600 people lived in Prairie du Chien, and most families were headed by French-Canadians involved in the fur trade. In June 1816, American troops arrived in Prairie du Chien. The commandant, Colonel Talbot Chambers, believed that the local people were traitors, and confiscated lots 1 through 12 in Main Village for a military reservation. Talbot directed the people to remove themselves, their houses, and their cemetery. There may have been a house on lot 7 at that time, where the St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House would later be built. In 1820, Jean Baptiste Caron was confirmed as the legal claimant of lot 7, as Pierre Lapointe and Michel Brisbois testified that the property had been continually occupied from about 1790 until 1816. If Caron had a house on lot 7, it is long gone. The first Fort Crawford, a structure of earth and timber, was constructed on lots 10 through 12, on top of the Indian mound on which Villa Louis (the Dousman estate, NRHP, NHL) now sits. Fort Crawford was named in honor of the U.S. Secretary of War, William Crawford. Severe flooding in the 1820s caused the fort's evacuation in 1826, and its abandonment in 1828. The second Fort Crawford (Fort Crawford Hospital, extant) was constructed on the mainland in 1829-32.<sup>32</sup>

In 1821, Prairie du Chien was incorporated as the *Borough of Prairie des Chiens*, in Michigan Territory, which had been established in 1818. Prairie du Chien was one of only two municipalities in

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<sup>29</sup> Elliott Coues, ed., *The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike*, (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1895), I: 303-304.

<sup>30</sup> Nicholas Boilvin, "Prairie du Chien, 1811," *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, XI (1888): 250

<sup>31</sup> Wyatt, I:3-1 through 3-3; Nesbit, 39-43, and 63-70; and Mary Elise Antoine, *Prairie du Chien*, (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2011), 14.

<sup>32</sup> Scanlan, 185-195; Antoine, *Prairie du Chien*, 15; Nesbit, 81-82; and *American State Papers, Public Lands*, (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1834), IV: 873.

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what would become Wisconsin. Green Bay was the other. The Borough was a short-lived form of government, ending in 1825.<sup>33</sup>

French-Canadians continued to migrate to Prairie du Chien to work in the fur trade through the 1820s. Among them was Guillaume St. Germain *dit* Gauthier (ca. 1803-1882). As the fur trade declined in the late 1820s, some French-Canadians in Prairie du Chien followed the trade northwest. Jean Baptiste Caron, for example, worked for the American Fur Company on the Des Moines River, in what is now Iowa. The American Fur Company maintained an office in Prairie du Chien, in Main Village, until declaring bankruptcy in 1842. Others employed in the fur trade, including St. Germain *dit* Gauthier, became farmers or found other work, such as loading and unloading cargo on the steamboats that regularly stopped at Prairie du Chien beginning in 1823.<sup>34</sup>

In a series of treaties between 1825 and 1830, the Ho-Chunk, Sauk and Fox, Menominee, Iowa, Chippewa, Ottawa, and Potawatomi nations were forced to cede land in southwestern Wisconsin to the United States government. This opened the region to Euro-Americans, who had been illegally encroaching on Indian land, and had been clamoring for the removal of the Indians, so they could have unfettered access to the rich lead deposits in the region. Beginning in the late 1820s, growing numbers of English speakers, Yankees from New England and New York, settled in Prairie du Chien. This trend accelerated after the end of the Black Hawk War in 1832. In that conflict, the Sauk tribal leader tried to re-establish the Sauk and Fox nation in their Rock River Valley homeland, and was chased by American troops for four months. Black Hawk saw most of his people massacred at the Bad Axe River, where they tried to cross the Mississippi.<sup>35</sup>

Many of the newcomers to Prairie du Chien built their homes and businesses on the mainland, south of the second Fort Crawford, in the area called Lower Town. The inauguration of ferry service crossing the Mississippi River from a landing in Lower Town helped stimulate development in that area. By 1836, the year that Wisconsin Territory was organized, the Yankees outnumbered the French speakers in Prairie du Chien. Main Village remained predominantly French-Canadian, as did the farmlands at the north end of the prairie (Frenchtown).<sup>36</sup>

In 1837, the Reverend Richard Cadle, chaplain at Fort Crawford, noted that the Indian Agency, the post office, and the Crawford County Courthouse were all situated in Upper Town (which had swallowed up the Village of St. Friole), and described Main Village as follows:

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<sup>33</sup> Scanlan, 190-192; and *The History of Crawford and Richland Counties, Wisconsin*, (Springfield, IL: Union Publishing Company, 1884), I:635.

<sup>34</sup> Antoine, *Prairie du Chien*, 15.

<sup>35</sup> Nesbit, 109-116.

<sup>36</sup> Antoine, *Prairie du Chien*, 15.

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...more compact than the other settlements, [it] contains an establishment of the American Fur Company, and is principally a French population..." Cadle concluded, "The whole population of Prairie du Chien is from 1000-1200 persons."<sup>37</sup>

Prairie du Chien experienced an economic downturn in the 1840s, as the fur trade moved on and the Fort Crawford garrison was reduced. However, Hercules Dousman, and Joseph Rolette (ca. 1780 - 1842), fur traders who had expanded into land speculation and become the wealthiest men in Wisconsin Territory, built new residences in Main Village. Joseph Rolette erected a two-story, frame house (extant, NRHP) in 1842. Dousman's large, brick Greek Revival house (not extant), completed on the current grounds of Villa Louis in 1843, was particularly imposing.<sup>38</sup>

In the early 1850s, the economy in Prairie du Chien began to improve in anticipation that the community would be selected as the terminus for a railroad line extending from Milwaukee to the Mississippi River. Over 300 new buildings were erected in Prairie du Chien between 1852 and the arrival of the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railway in 1857. Of these, 17 were constructed in Main Village. In 1853, Main Village was re-platted, gaining its current layout. Fort Crawford closed in 1856.<sup>39</sup>

The railroad depot and freight facilities were initially located in Lower Town. Freight terminated at Prairie du Chien, and then was shipped on the Mississippi River, or ferried across it. Prairie du Chien had become the junction of a rail-steamboat transportation system, launching a period of growth that would last 20 years. The train brought Irish, German, and Bohemian immigrants to Prairie du Chien to work in new businesses, including sawmills, lime kilns, brickyards, breweries, and a steam-powered flour mill.<sup>40</sup>

During the Civil War, Prairie du Chien boomed. As many as 100 carloads of wheat passed through daily en route to Milwaukee. In 1864, the Milwaukee and Prairie du Chien Railroad (a successor to the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railway) moved the principal depot to Main Village. The company constructed a freight and passenger depot, and platforms for trains, steamboats, and ferries, as well as the sprawling Railway House (extant, renamed Dousman House Hotel ca. 1885). The stone "Diamond Jo" warehouse, a flour mill, and several smaller hotels and boarding houses were erected nearby in

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<sup>37</sup> Reverend Richard Cadle, November 8, 1837, cited in Zeitlin, 4.

<sup>38</sup> Nesbit, 212-213; and Edgar Oerichbauer, *Prairie du Chien: A Historical Study*, (Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1976), 99-100.

<sup>39</sup> *The History of Crawford and Richland Counties, Wisconsin*, I:638-39; and Antoine, *Prairie du Chien*, 25.

<sup>40</sup> Scanlan, 209; Zeitlin, 6; and Antoine, *Prairie du Chien*, 25.

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Main Village. The docks were enlarged, and a bridge was installed across the Marais on Bridge Street.<sup>41</sup>

After the Civil War, railroad and steamboat shipping remained leading enterprises in Prairie du Chien. The grain elevator in Main Village could load up to 275 railcars a day. The depot in Lower Town was enlarged, and a car works was constructed. In 1874, John Lawler opened the pile pontoon bridge, an engineering marvel that allowed rail cars to cross the Mississippi, eliminating the need for some of the stevedore work. The Milwaukee Road (successor to the Milwaukee and Prairie du Chien Railroad) would continue to extend its rail network westward during the 1870s and the 1880s, and the wheat the trains would bring east would pass through Prairie du Chien.<sup>42</sup>

Prairie du Chien incorporated as a city in 1872, with a population of about 2,700. This consolidated the three parts of Prairie du Chien: Lower Town was designated the First Ward, Upper Town became the Second and Third Wards, and Main Village was made the Fourth Ward. By this time, the relocation of the principal depot and the construction of facilities for shipping and transportation had changed the Mississippi waterfront of Main Village into an industrial and commercial center. Prairie du Chien's principal business district had developed in Upper Town, along what is now Blackhawk Avenue. Most of the churches, the post office, and the Crawford County Courthouse were located in Upper Town, as well. Church Street (now Beaumont Road) was extended south, to connect Upper and Lower towns, destroying parts of the second Fort Crawford.<sup>43</sup>

Other enterprises that added to the growth of Prairie du Chien in the 1870s included a lath and shingle mill with a lumberyard, located in Main Village north of the railroad depot; the Harris and Benson Company (1870), producing plows and cultivators; and a dozen artesian wells, the first of which began pumping in 1876. The first fire-fighting companies were established during the 1870s. Two private schools opened, and the Prairie du Chien public school district was organized.<sup>44</sup>

In 1880, Prairie du Chien counted 2,777 residents. The arrival of second railroad in 1885, the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railway (now part of BNSF Railway), briefly boosted the economy, but this north-south line contributed to a decline in steamboat shipping, and the population of Prairie du Chien dropped after reaching 3,326 in 1885. Clamming became an important part of the local fishing industry during the 1880s. The catch was taken to shacks on the river in Main Village, and opened

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<sup>41</sup> Zeitlin, 7; Antoine, *Prairie du Chien*, 35-36; Nesbit, 190-194; and *The History of Crawford and Richland Counties, Wisconsin*, I:477.

<sup>42</sup> Zeitlin, 8; Antoine, *Prairie du Chien*, 57; and *The History of Crawford and Richland Counties, Wisconsin*, I:544.

<sup>43</sup> A. Ruger, *Prairie du Chien, Crawford County, Wisconsin, 1870*, (Chicago Lithog. Co.), 1870; and Antoine, *Prairie du Chien*, 47.

<sup>44</sup> Antoine, *Prairie du Chien*, 45; and *The History of Crawford and Richland Counties, Wisconsin*, I: 640-652.

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with hot water. A factory that made buttons out of discarded clamshells was established in Prairie du Chien in 1899. The factory employed 30 hands at its peak, closing in 1909 when clams had become scarce. Another factory that started during this time was the Prairie du Chien Woolen Mills, where wool was spun, dyed, and woven into cloth and blankets. The mills employed 135 people at its peak. By 1935, the company had gone out of business, its plant purchased by Burgess Cellulose, which produced insulation and sponges.<sup>45</sup>

Prairie du Chien grew very slowly through the twentieth century, developing as a regional service center. Between 1900 and 1930, Main Village became more residential, as steamboat traffic fell and transshipment lost its importance to the local economy. The erection of the first automobile bridge (not extant) across the Mississippi at Prairie du Chien in 1932 signaled the end of transshipment as a factor in the local economy. Truck transport soon outpaced rail shipments, even as the bridge and the expanding road system increased the commercial importance of the city in the region. Homes were built in Main Village during the period, and census records suggest that the island's population remained overwhelmingly of French ancestry through at least 1940. In 1940, the population of Prairie du Chien numbered 4,622.<sup>46</sup>

In 1931, Glen Trewartha, University of Wisconsin professor of geography, visited Prairie du Chien, noting,

Upper Town contains the only retail commercial core of the entire city...[Lower Town] is almost exclusively residential in character...[In Main Village, t]he principal streets are surfaced but without curbs; others are grown over with grass. No retail core exists. The waterfront has not been altered greatly in the past half century...the grist mill has disappeared, but the ferry landing, the Diamond Jo warehouse and part of the grain elevator exist...The residential section, which lies back from the railroad zone along the river, is composed almost exclusively of poor or ordinary small frame houses, many of them old, dilapidated, and in need of paint.<sup>47</sup>

Since World War II, Prairie du Chien has maintained its role as a regional service center. Major employers include county and local government, and 3M. Originally called Minnesota Mining and Engineering, 3M acquired the Burgess Cellulose plant in 1965, and manufactured synthetic sponges in Prairie du Chien until 2001. In 2017, the Prairie du Chien plant makes a variety of cleaning, automotive, commercial and construction products. Cabela's, selling outdoor recreational equipment,

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<sup>45</sup> Antoine, *Prairie du Chien*, 72-73; and Zeitlin, 11-13.

<sup>46</sup> Antoine, *Prairie du Chien*, 101; Zeitlin, 14; and U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940*.

<sup>47</sup> Glen T. Trewartha, "The Prairie du Chien Terrace," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 22, no. 2 (June 1932): 146-150

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represents another important employment sector in Prairie du Chien: tourism. The natural beauty of the city's location on the Mississippi River and nearby Wyalusing State Park attract many visitors. The Euro-American history of Prairie du Chien draws tourists as well. The Fort Crawford Museum is housed in the second Fort Crawford's hospital. In 1921, the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) purchased the property on which the remnants of the hospital, the last surviving portion of the second Fort Crawford, were located. In 1933, the city of Prairie du Chien received a grant from the federal Civil Works Administration to restore the hospital. In 1996, the Prairie du Chien Historical Society formed to take charge of the property, and operate it as a museum. The Dousman family gave Villa Louis (NRHP 66000123) to the city in 1935. The large estate in Main Village features the elegant Italianate mansion designed for Louis Dousman, son of Hercules Dousman and Jane (Fisher) Dousman in 1870 by the distinguished Milwaukee architect, Edward Townsend Mix. Villa Louis was transferred to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in 1950, and opened as a historic site in 1952. Since 1975, French fur trade history has been celebrated at the annual Rendezvous, held in Main Village on Father's Day weekend, in June. In 2010, the population of Prairie du Chien stood at 5,911.<sup>48</sup>

The appearance of Main Village has changed drastically in the past 40 years. A series of devastating spring floods beginning with a record-breaking rise in the crest of the Mississippi in 1965 caused extensive damage, and the estimated costs in property loss and cleanup were astronomical. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) and the city of Prairie du Chien studied options for flood control, and decided to relocate everyone out of the flood plain. This was the first and only relocation project the Army Corps ever undertook. Nearly all the property in Main Village was identified for acquisition, and relocation or demolition. The Army Corps commissioned a study to determine which buildings were potentially historic, and should remain. Most prominent among these was Villa Louis and the buildings and structures associated with it. The Dousman House Hotel (1864, NRHP 66000122), the Brisbois House (1837, NRHP 66000801), and the Brisbois Store (1850) were also preserved. The St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House was another. The city began purchasing property in 1978. By 1983, 69 families had been moved. All businesses and families had been relocated by 1993. Today, Main Village is largely parks and green space, with a grid of narrow streets, interspersed with a few buildings.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Antoine, *Prairie du Chien*, 72-73; "History of Villa Louis," <http://villalouis.wisconsinhistory.org/About/History.aspx>, (retrieved 11 April 2017); "History: Fort Crawford D.A.R.," <http://www.fortcrawfordmuseum.com/history/fort-crawford-dar>, (retrieved April 11, 2017); "History: Fort Crawford Museum," <http://www.fortcrawfordmuseum.com/history/fort-crawford-museum>, (retrieved 11 April 2017); and "Welcome to 3M Prairie du Chien," <http://www.3m.com>, (retrieved April 12, 2017).

<sup>49</sup> Antoine, *Prairie du Chien*, 106-108; "On Wisconsin: Remembering the St. Feriole Island Community and the 1965 Flood," *Wisconsin State Journal*, April 26, 2015; *The Great Flood of 1965*, (Prairie du Chien: Courier Press, 2015), 50, <https://issuu.com/courierpress/docs/flood>, (retrieved 9 April 2017).

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The History and Families of the St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House

It is uncertain exactly when the St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House was erected, or when the St. Germain *dit* Gauthier family settled on lot 7, in Main Village. The house postdates 1829, when construction of the second Fort Crawford began on the mainland, and it is unclear when the U.S. government released the lots it had confiscated for the military reservation for the first Fort Crawford. The first owner of record was Jean Baptiste Caron, in 1820. There is no record of Caron transferring the property. The first reference to a transfer is from Michel and Dometille Brisbois to Hercules Dousman, in 1836, for \$50. Dousman then sold the lot to Magdelaine (Brunet) St. Germain *dit* Gauthier on April 19, 1838 for \$1,000.<sup>50</sup> That the price of the property had increased twenty-fold in two years suggests that a house was probably there, although there was rampant real estate speculation going on in Prairie du Chien at the time. The house was certainly present by March 1840, when Magdelaine St. Germain *dit* Gauthier deeded the property, composed of "...one house one Lot...in return for love, affection, and one dollar" to her daughter, Magdelaine Cherrier.<sup>51</sup> From 1838 until 1890, through the ownership of three generations of St. Germain *dit* Gauthier women, the family made the residence their home.

Magdelaine Brunet (1801-1879) was born in Green Bay, the daughter of Perrish Brunet and a Menominee woman whose name has not been recorded. Magdelaine was baptized at Detroit on July 23, 1823, and married the following day to Guillaume St. Germain *dit* Gauthier.<sup>52</sup> The term "*dit*" comes from the French word "say," and can be interpreted "also known as." A "*dit*" name was sometimes used to differentiate between families with the same surname, or could refer to a place of origin, or could reflect a personal preference. In the case of the St. Germain *dit* Gauthier family of Prairie du Chien, historical records find them listed under "St. Germain," "Gauthier," or the Anglicized version, "Gokey."

Guillaume and Magdelaine had two daughters, Magdelaine (1821-1895) and Pauline (1822-1853), who were born in Green Bay, before their parents were formally married. Guillaume (ca. 1801-1882) was born in Quebec province, and worked in the fur trade. The family lived in Green Bay, and moved to Prairie du Chien in 1825. In 1830, the family appears to have lived on the mainland: the Strange Powers family was their immediate neighbor. The Powers House (NRHP 79000067) stands at 338 North Main Street and was erected in 1824.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Crawford County Deeds, C:54-55; and Crawford County Deeds, D: 326-327.

<sup>51</sup> Crawford County Deeds, E:125-126.

<sup>52</sup> *Detroit St. Anne Autres Registres, 1819 – 1831*, 16, <https://www.ancestry.com>, (retrieved April 11, 2017).

<sup>53</sup> John Edmonds, "Notebook of John Edmonds," (U.S. Indian Agent, 1837), 6, <http://s3.amazonaws.com/labaye/data/Notebook%20of%20John%20Edmonds%20Page7.pdf>, (retrieved April 11, 2017); U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Fifth Census of the United States, 1830*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, (retrieved April 11, 2017); and Wisconsin Historical Society, Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory (AHI) #003888, <http://www.wisahrd.org/index>, (retrieved March 4, 2017).



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In 1831, Guillaume St. Germain married Therese Chalifoux (?-1836), although he does not appear to have divorced Magdelaine. Therese was the widow of Francois Gagnier, the French fur trader and farmer who had been killed by Ho-Chunk tribal leader, Red Bird, in 1827. Guillaume and Therese had two children, David (1832-1912) and Harriet (1834-?). After Therese's death, Guillaume returned to Magdelaine; he, David, and Harriet were recorded in the same household with Magdelaine in the 1850 census.<sup>54</sup>

In 1837, Magdelaine St. Germain *dit* Gauthier and her daughters and son-in-law (Oliver Cherrier) traveled to Green Bay to obtain treaty payments, as Magdelaine's mother was Menominee. Magdelaine St. Germain *dit* Gauthier testified to Indian Agent John Edmonds that she and her family had lived in Prairie du Chien for 12 years, that her husband, Guillaume St. Germain, was a day laborer, and that her daughter, Magdelaine (then 15) had married Oliver Cherrier. Magdelaine St. Germain was awarded \$400, her son-in-law received \$400, and Pauline (14 years old) was awarded \$200. This may have been the \$1,000 that Magdelaine St. Germain *dit* Gauthier paid Dousman for lot 7 in Main Village. Interestingly, a note in the margin of the record states, "cousin to Carron," so perhaps Magdelaine was related to Jean Baptiste Caron, who had owned the lot before the U.S. government confiscated it.<sup>55</sup>

In 1840, Magdelaine St. Germain *dit* Gauthier deeded the house and lot to her daughter, Magdelaine Cherrier. Oliver (1815-1905) and Magdelaine Cherrier had thirteen children. Oliver Cherrier was a farmer. In 1852, Magdelaine Cherrier transferred lot 7 back to her mother. Guillaume and Magdelaine St. Germain *dit* Gauthier sold all but the western 300 feet of lot 7 to Hercules Dousman in 1853. In 1857, the first year for which tax records for Crawford County are found, Guillaume St. Germain *dit* Gauthier was listed as the owner of the property, valued at \$350. Magdelaine became sole owner of the property in 1872, and passed away in 1879.<sup>56</sup> That year, Magdelaine's heirs transferred the house and lot to Harriet (Rousseau) Gardepie, with the condition

...That the said Harriet Gardepie shall clothe and support and care for Guillaume St. Germain, grandfather of said Grantee, during his natural life.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, (retrieved April 11, 2017).

<sup>55</sup> Edmonds, 7.

<sup>56</sup> Crawford County Deeds, E:125-126, March 7, 1840; Crawford County Deeds, G:71-72, April 18, 1852; Crawford County Deeds, G: 296, September 20, 1853; Zeitlin, 45; and Crawford County Deeds, 34:246, December 7, 1872.

<sup>57</sup> Crawford County Deeds, 39:183, December 18, 1879.

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Harriet (Rousseau) Gardepie (1841-?) was the daughter of Pauline St. Germain *dit* Gauthier and Joseph Rousseau (1806-?). Harriet married Joseph Gardepie (1827-?), a steamboat pilot. Guillaume St. Germain *dit* Gauthier lived in the house until his death in 1882. The Gardepie family continued to live there, selling the property to Nina (Sturgis) McBride, the widow of Louis Dousman, in 1890.<sup>58</sup> Mrs. McBride, who lived at Villa Louis, likely rented out the St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House, perhaps to Charles Gremore. In 1894, Gremore moved the house to its current location, 419 Fifth Street (lot 1, block 11, Main Village). The value of the lot, with the house on it, was assessed at \$45.<sup>59</sup>

Charles Gremore (1864-1930) was of French descent; his surname was Anglicized from the original, Grimard. A clam fisherman, Gremore had married Edna or Edvish LaBonne in 1891. Although Gremore had paid the taxes on the property at 419 Fifth Street since 1894, Joel and Josephine Jones retained an interest in the lot until 1901, when they sold it to Gremore for \$1. Charles and Edvish Gremore divorced in the fall of 1901, and she sold the property to Mary Nugent for \$250. Nugent did not keep the property long; by 1903, George Coorough was paying the property taxes, and had purchased lot 4, block 11, adjacent to lot 1.<sup>60</sup>

George Coorough (1857-1939) was born in New York state. His parents, William D. Coorough and Mary (Trudell) Coorough were French Canadian. They moved to Prairie du Chien after the Civil War. George married Mary Effinecker (1867-1928) in 1889. He worked as a teamster, and later as a farmer. In 1914, the Cooroughs bought lots 2 and 3, in block 11, giving them a parcel that measured 111 feet along Fifth Street, and 140 feet along Boilvin Street. In 1916, the Cooroughs built the frame addition at the back of the house. After George Coorough's death, his daughters, Frances (1890-1948) and Merilla (1894-1992) continued to live in the house. Frances Coorough was a finisher at the Prairie du Chien Woolen Mills, and Merilla kept house. Merilla Coorough sold the St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House to the city of Prairie du Chien in 1978.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>58</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, (retrieved April 11, 2017); U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, (retrieved April 11, 2017); Crawford County Deeds, 50:603, October 1, 1890.

<sup>59</sup> City of Prairie du Chien Tax Rolls, 1890-1894. A notation on the 1894 tax roll for lot 1, reads "house," indicating that a house had been moved to the lot.

<sup>60</sup> City of Prairie du Chien Assessor's Office, Tax Rolls, 1894-1903; Crawford County Deeds, 53:56, July 1, 1901; Crawford County Deeds, Miscellaneous 3:334; Crawford County Deeds, 66:236; and Zeitlin, 45.

<sup>61</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880*; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, (retrieved April 11, 2017); U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, (retrieved April 11, 2017); U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, (retrieved April 11, 2017); U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, (retrieved April 11, 2017); U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940*; City of Prairie du Chien

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ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE: PIÈCE SUR PIÈCE À QUE D'ARONDE – FRENCH-CANADIAN LOG BUILDING TYPE

The St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House is significant at the state level under *Criterion C* as a good example of the *pièce sur pièce à queue d'aronde* method of construction, built by French-Canadian settlers in Quebec province, and disseminated with the fur trade through the Great Lakes, and into the Mississippi River Valley. The St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House also displays the influence of the Federal style in the proportion and details of its roof, reflecting the aesthetic of the Yankees who began settling in Prairie du Chien in the late 1820s. The blend of two cultures makes the St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House a unique representative of the transition of the fur trade in Prairie du Chien, and of the community itself, from French-Canadian to American domination in the early-nineteenth century.

French Canadian Log Houses

French colonists brought masonry building traditions from France, but the abundance of timber, with its superior insulating properties and resistance to extreme fluctuations in temperature inspired the colonists to construct log buildings. They were called *pièces de bois sur pièces des bois* (“timber upon timber”), soon shortened to *pièce sur pièce*, and spread quickly in the St. Lawrence River Valley in the 1660s and 1670s. The logs were squared on the faces that would form the interior and exterior walls. A stone foundation was laid, and a log sill placed on the foundation. If the construction was to include posts (*coulisse*), the vertical timbers were channeled on two opposing sides. A *coulisse* was set at each corner of the foundation, and at intervals along each side, creating the frame. A tenon was carved at either end of the horizontal members; the horizontal members were then marked with a Roman numeral. Beginning with Roman numeral I, the logs were laid by fitting the tenons into the grooves in the *coulisses*, and sliding them, one on top of the other, to form the wall. The logs were then fixed in place with wooden pegs. A log cabin built in this way was called *pièce sur pièce en coulisse*. Dovetailing (*à queue d'aronde*) the corners became widespread in French Canada in the early-nineteenth century, perhaps because it required less precision to construct. The walls were generally extended above the height of the ground floor ceiling, two to three feet, forming a short knee wall on which the roof members would rest, raising the height of the loft. The gable or hip roof was quite steep, generally pitched at about 45 degrees. The eave terminated in a slight bell cast, or *coyau*. The spaces between the logs were filled with a mortar made from sand and lime. The interior was whitewashed. Masonry chimneys, tongue-in-groove board flooring, and roofing of overlapping boards were typical. The exterior was often clad with boards; in Prairie du Chien, some log houses were covered with bark.<sup>62</sup>

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Assessor's Office, Tax Rolls, 1903 – 1920; *Find A Grave*, <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi>, (retrieved April 11, 2017); and Zeitlin, 45.

<sup>62</sup> Mary Antoine de Julio, “The Vertefeuille House of Prairie du Chien: A Survivor From the Era of French Wisconsin,”

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As early as 1805, the presence of French-Canadian log houses in Prairie du Chien was documented, as Zebulon Pike described *pièce sur pièce en coulisse* homes without knowing the term,

[S]ome of them are framed and instead of weather boarding, there are small logs let into the mortises made in the uprights joined close together daubed on the outside with clay and handsomely whitewashed within.<sup>63</sup>

Dennis Au, a historic preservationist with extensive expertise in French fur trade history and architecture, conducted an architectural analysis of the house in 1990.<sup>64</sup> Au noted that the house generally conforms to French-Canadian log houses of the *pièce sur pièce à queue d'aronde* type. He observed similarities with the Navarre-Anderson Trading Post (1789, NRHP) in Monroe, Michigan, and the McGulpin House (ca. 1780, NRHP) in Mackinac, Michigan, both of which were associated with French-Canadians employed in the fur trade, and which Au documented.<sup>65</sup> Au wrote that all three buildings had lengths that are multiples 13 feet,

Joists, rafters, and facades [of French-Canadian log houses] were generally constructed of modules of thirteen feet. Modules which are divisions of thirteen feet, such as evidenced in the Navarre-Anderson house [sic] in Monroe, Michigan and the McGulpin house on Mackinac Island, Michigan, are also known. The front façade of the St. Germain *dit* Gauthier house, which is twenty-six feet long, conforms to the latter pattern and may be evidence of French influence.<sup>66</sup>

The St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House also possesses logs that average five inches in width, as was typical of French-Canadian log houses. Other ethnic groups in North America during the nineteenth century also erected log houses, as Au acknowledged, but

[T]he French seemed to have been rather particular about the size of the timbers they used. The *en pièce* structures I am familiar with all utilize logs hewn to a width of about five inches; the

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*Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 80, no. 1 (Autumn 1996): 47; Peter N. Moogk, *Building a House in New France*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Ltd., 1977), 29-36; and James H. Lockwood, "Early Times and Events in Wisconsin," *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, 2 (1903): 119.

<sup>63</sup> Elliott Coues, ed., *The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike*, (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1895), three volumes, I: 303-304

<sup>64</sup> In 2017, Au is historic preservation officer for the city of Evansville, Indiana.

<sup>65</sup> Dennis Au, "Standing for Two Centuries: The Navarre-Anderson Trading Post," *Michigan History*, 73 (November/December 1989): 32-36, recounts Au's findings about one of these buildings.

<sup>66</sup> Au, "Architectural Analysis and Preservation Recommendations: St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin," 6.

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German/Scotch-Irish logs, in my experience, are much thicker. The timbers in this house are on average five inches wide”<sup>67</sup>

Observing the Roman numerals on the logs in the St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House, Au continued,

[n]early every French structure I have looked at in [the Great Lakes region] has numerals carved or scratched on their timbers. Most of these utilize a Roman numeral system. I noted such numerals carved into nearly every timber in this house.<sup>68</sup>

The St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House is joined with dovetailing (*à queue d’aronde*), rather than the *coulisses* that were employed in areas of French-Canadian in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Au observed that the presence of *coulisses*

would be definitive evidence of French influence. Their absence, however, does not rule out the possibility of this connection. My belief is that the *coulisse*, a very complex member to hew and fit, was one of the first French building traits abandoned...The lack of this feature may, thus, simply point to construction postdating 1830.<sup>69</sup>

Further, as architectural historian Peter Moogk corroborated, dovetailing the corners had become common in French-Canadian log construction by the early nineteenth century.<sup>70</sup>

Au described three other components of the roof St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House that did not conform to standard French-Canadian log construction: the lack of a knee wall, the pitch of the roof, and the lack of a *coyau*. He concluded that all of these elements did not make the house less likely to be French-Canadian, but rather, indicated a post-1825 date of construction and the influence of the Federal architectural style.<sup>71</sup> Au wrote,

I have documented a French house in Monroe, Michigan that did not have a knee wall. This house, built in 1825 by Edward Loranger, eliminated this feature as a concession to keep its proportions more in line with the Federal style. This might be the case with the St. Germain *dit*

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<sup>67</sup> Au, “Architectural Analysis and Preservation Recommendations: St.Germain *dit* Gauthier House, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin,” 6.

<sup>68</sup> Au, “Architectural Analysis and Preservation Recommendations: St.Germain *dit* Gauthier House, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin,” 6.

<sup>69</sup> Au, “Architectural Analysis and Preservation Recommendations: St.Germain *dit* Gauthier House, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin,” 6.

<sup>70</sup> Moogk, 30.

<sup>71</sup> John I. Rempel, *Building with Wood and Other Aspects of Nineteenth-Century Building in Central Canada*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. revised, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 152.

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Gauthier House, too... Even in Canada, when the French building traditions moved west with the fur trade in the 19th century, the wall construction retained the French methods, but the roof was built after simpler English construction... in other French-Canadian communities in the Midwest, I have noted that by the middle of the 1820s, the roofs of the French house began to conform to the proportions of the Federal mode which was the popular academic style in America at the time.<sup>72</sup>

Au added that the orientation of the house on its original site, close to the Mississippi River and facing it, was another indication of French-Canadian origin.<sup>73</sup> Au concluded that because the St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House was built in the period when Yankee settlers were outnumbering the earlier French-Canadian residents and transforming the culture of Prairie du Chien, historical research would be critical to establishing the house's association with French-Canadians. Mary Antoine, distinguished Prairie du Chien historian specializing in the French influence on her community, collected evidence that demonstrates that the St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House definitely has French-Canadian roots (History and Families section, above). It was the home of Guillaume St. Germain *dit* Gauthier, born in Quebec province, and his descendants from ca. 1837 until 1890. After the house was moved to its present location, it was the home of the Charles Gremore family, and then the George Coorough family, all of whom had French-Canadian ancestry. In 1978, Merilla Coorough sold the house to the city of Prairie du Chien, ending the French-Canadian association.

Four French-Canadian log houses have survived in Prairie du Chien, including the St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House. The other three remain on their original sites. The Strange Powers House at 338 North Main Street (NRHP) was erected in 1824, and is the only known example of *pieu sur pieu a' tenon en coulisse* construction in the U.S. Rather than logs set between posts, the Powers House walls are constructed of saplings or poles laid horizontally. The walls are no longer visible. The Francois Vertefeuille House (NRHP 93000142, figure 4) on County Highway K (Frenchtown Road) in the Town of Prairie du Chien was constructed between 1810 and 1820, with an addition built between 1820 and 1825. It is one of the few known examples of *pièce sur pièce en coulisse* in Wisconsin, and retains its *coyau*. The LaChapelle-Erdenberger House at 113 Villa Louis Road is located south of the St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House in Main Village. Built sometime before 1860, it is a two-story log residence (figure 5) of *pièce sur pièce à queue d'aronde* construction.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Au, "Architectural Analysis and Preservation Recommendations: St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin," 3-4.

<sup>73</sup> Au, "Architectural Analysis and Preservation Recommendations: St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin," 2; and Allen G. Noble, *Wood, Brick, and Stone: The North American Settlement Landscape*, (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), 2:11.

<sup>74</sup> National Register of Historic Places, "Francois Vertefeuille House," Town of Prairie du Chien, Crawford County, Wisconsin, Reference #93000142; and Antoine de Julio, 45-52.

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There are only two other French-Canadian log residences that have been identified in the state. Both have been moved to Heritage Hill State Park near Green Bay. The original section of the Tank Cottage (NRHP), erected for fur trader Joseph Roy ca. 1803, is a *pièce sur pièce* building; it has several additions and the logs are covered. Another fur trader's cabin, believed to have been erected ca. 1800, its original owner unknown, is of *pièce sur pièce en coulisse* construction.<sup>75</sup> Both retain good integrity.

Conclusion

The St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and is significant on a statewide level as a good and intact example of the French-Canadian method of construction, *pièce sur pièce à queue d'aronde*. The St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House blends features characteristic of this method, with elements drawn from the Federal style. Architecturally, the house demonstrates Prairie du Chien's cultural transition from predominantly French Canadian, to Yankee ascendance, and makes the St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House a unique representative of the community's early history.

CRITERION CONSIDERATION B: MOVED FROM ORIGINAL SITE

Ordinarily, buildings that have been moved from their original site are not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. For this reason, the St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House does not qualify under *Criterion A*, in exploration and settlement, or ethnic heritage. However, a property that has been moved can be eligible if it is significant primarily for architectural value. The St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House is a good example of the *pièce sur pièce à queue d'aronde* method of construction, and retains integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The property is eligible under *Criterion C* in the area of Architecture; therefore, it meets the requirements of the criteria consideration.

STATEMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

No previously recorded archaeological sites or human burial sites are present at this location. However, the location of the building on St. Feriote Island and the discovery of an almost continuous deposit of pre-contact materials on the island suggest that excavations adjacent to this building may result in the discovery of pre-contact materials, some deeply buried. While the building was moved to this location in 1894, and an addition built it may have been set up at the location of an earlier post-contact building and of course the occupation and use of the parcel since 1894 will have created cultural deposits. The nature and extent of all of these archaeological deposits was not evaluated for

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<sup>75</sup> Wisconsin Architectural and History Inventory (AHI) #47316, Wisconsin Historical Society, <http://www.wisahrd.org/index>, (retrieved April 8, 2017).

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the current nomination. Their potential presence must be taken into consideration if restoration projects are considered for this building.

**Acknowledgements**

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Section 10 Page 1

St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House  
Prairie du Chien, Crawford County, Wisconsin

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House is located in the city of Prairie du Chien, Crawford County, Wisconsin, on Lots 1-4, Block 11, Main Village of Prairie du Chien. The legal and historic boundary follows the back line of the pavement along Fifth Street, a distance of 111 feet, and the back line of the pavement on Boilvin Street, a distance of 140 feet. The boundary encloses a rectangular parcel of less than one acre.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary of the St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House encloses all those resources historically associated with the property since it was relocated to its current site in 1894. It coincides with the legal boundary.

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Section photos Page 1

St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House  
Prairie du Chien, Crawford County, Wisconsin

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Name of Property: St. Germain dit Gauthier House  
City: Prairie du Chien  
County: Crawford County  
State: Wisconsin  
Name of Photographer: Elizabeth L. Miller  
Date of Photos: March 2017  
Location of Original Data Files: Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI

WI\_CrawfordCounty\_StGermainditGauthierHouse\_0001  
East (front) and north façades, camera facing southwest

WI\_CrawfordCounty\_StGermainditGauthierHouse\_0002  
West (rear) and north façades, camera facing east-southeast

WI\_CrawfordCounty\_StGermainditGauthierHouse\_0003  
North façade, dovetail corner with Roman numerals, camera facing south-southeast

WI\_CrawfordCounty\_StGermainditGauthierHouse\_0004  
North façade, camera facing south-southeast

WI\_CrawfordCounty\_StGermainditGauthierHouse\_0005  
South and west (rear) façades, camera facing northeast

WI\_CrawfordCounty\_StGermainditGauthierHouse\_0006  
South and east (front) and façades, camera facing northwest

WI\_CrawfordCounty\_StGermainditGauthierHouse\_0007  
Interior of log house, from door into addition, camera facing north

WI\_CrawfordCounty\_StGermainditGauthierHouse\_0008  
Interior of log house, from front door, showing chimney on cabinet, camera facing west-northwest

WI\_CrawfordCounty\_StGermainditGauthierHouse\_0009  
Interior of log house, showing enclosure of staircase (white, behind cabinet), camera facing west

WI\_CrawfordCounty\_StGermainditGauthierHouse\_0010  
Interior of log house, from front door, dark boards in ceiling show location of former access to loft, camera facing southwest.

WI\_CrawfordCounty\_StGermainditGauthierHouse\_0011  
Interior of addition, from door into log house, camera facing southwest.

WI\_CrawfordCounty\_StGermainditGauthierHouse\_0012  
Interior of addition, from west (rear) wall looking into log house, camera facing east

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Section photos Page 2

St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House  
Prairie du Chien, Crawford County, Wisconsin

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WI\_CrawfordCounty\_StGermainditGauthierHouse\_0013

Interior of addition, from southwest corner, showing cupboard and entrance to staircase, camera facing northeast.

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St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House  
Prairie du Chien, Crawford County, Wisconsin

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     Insert Figures

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Figure 2. St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House, Site Plan with Photo Key

Figure 3. St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House, Site Plan with Photo Key

Figure 4. Francois Vertefeuille House (NRHP), Town of Prairie du Chien, Crawford County, a comparison property.

Figure 5. LaChappelle-Erdenberger House, Prairie du Chien, Crawford County, a comparison property.



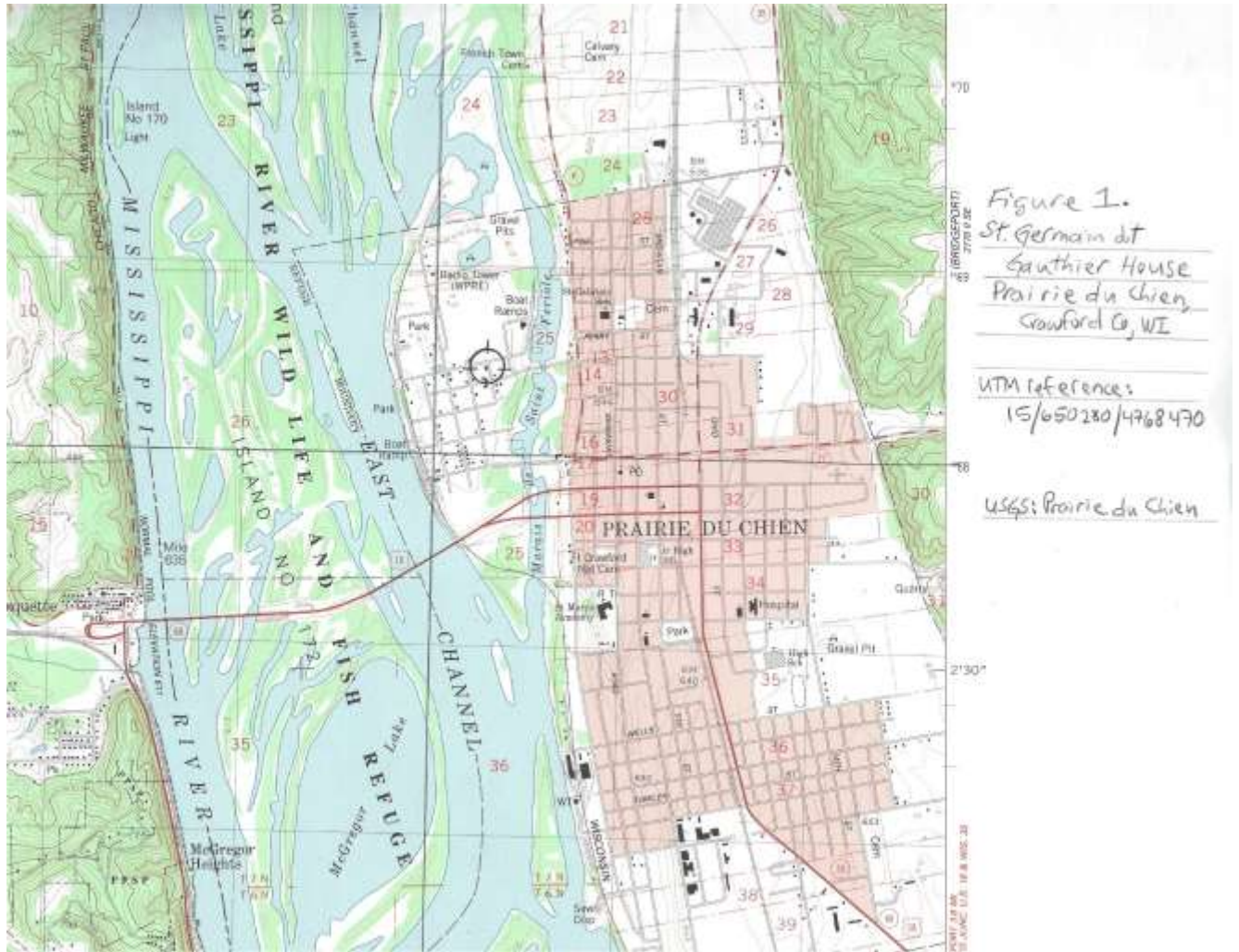
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St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House  
Prairie du Chien, Crawford County, Wisconsin

Section figures Page 4

Figure 1. St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, USGS Map with UTM Reference



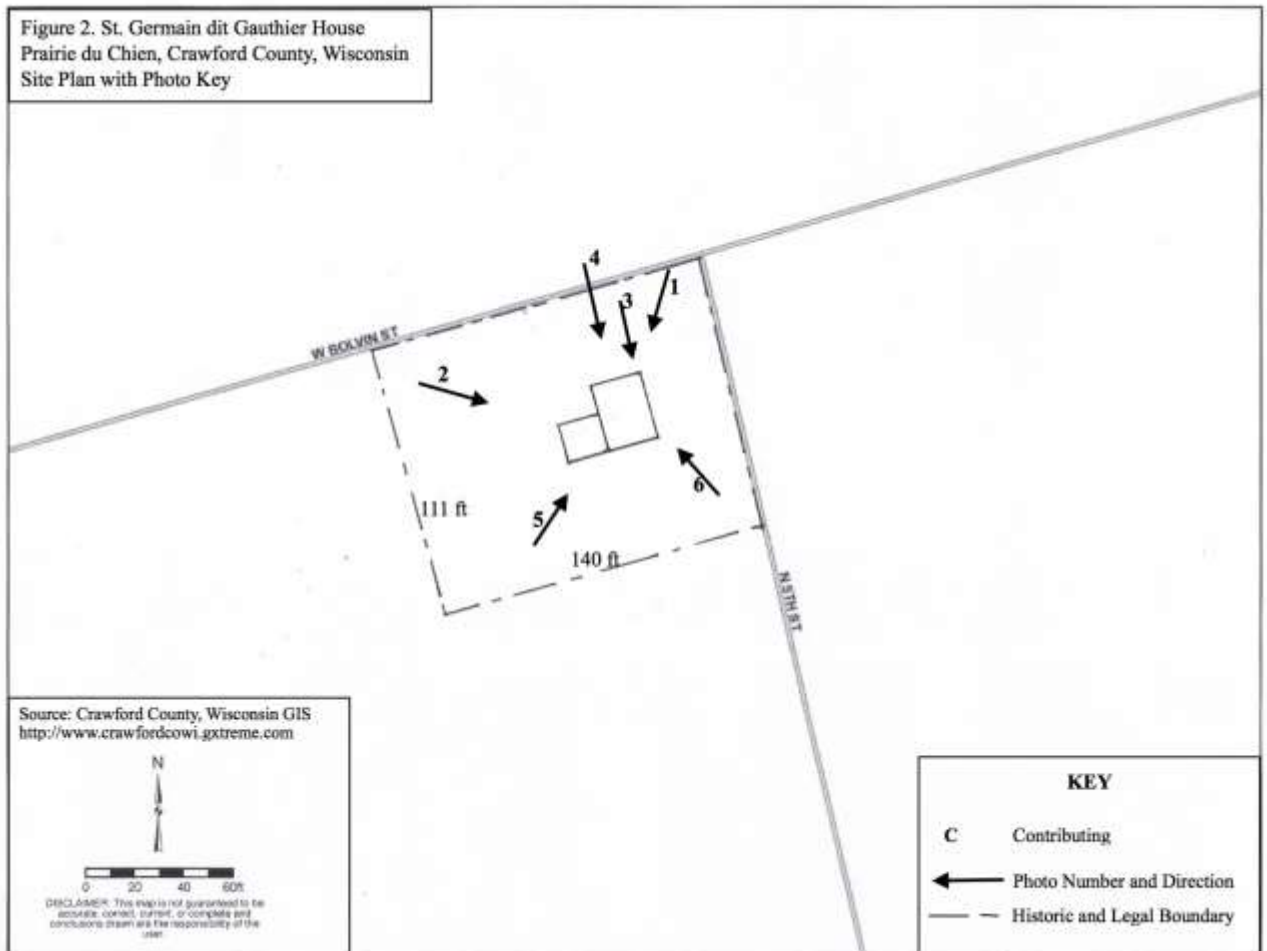
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St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House  
Prairie du Chien, Crawford County, Wisconsin

Figure 2. St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House, Site Plan with Photo Key



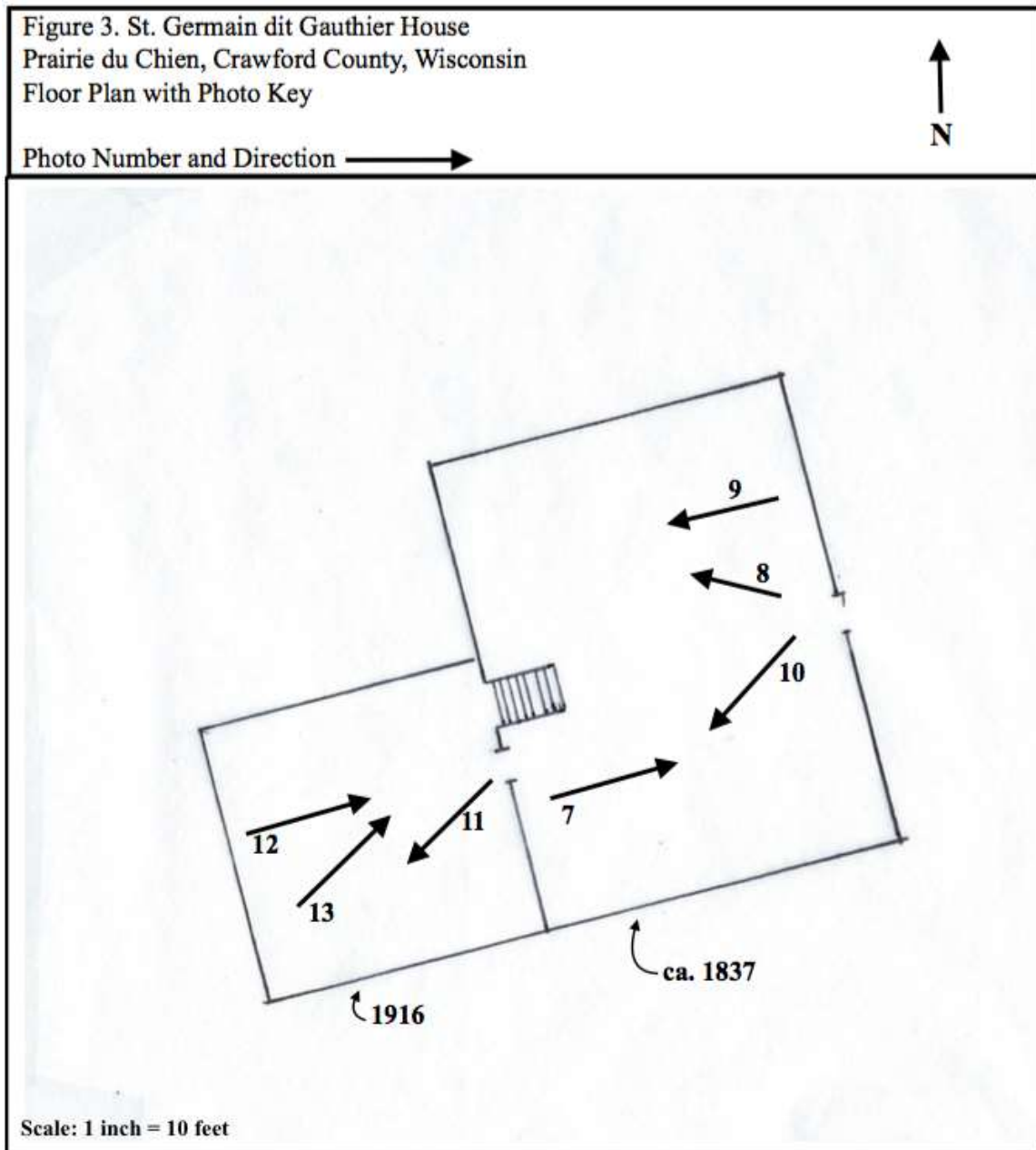
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St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House  
Prairie du Chien, Crawford County, Wisconsin

Figure 3. St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House, Site Plan with Photo Key



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St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House  
Prairie du Chien, Crawford County, Wisconsin

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Figure 4. Francois Vertefeuille House (NRHP), Town of Prairie du Chien, Crawford County.



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St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House  
Prairie du Chien, Crawford County, Wisconsin

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Figure 5. LaChappelle-Erdenberger House, Prairie du Chien, Crawford County.





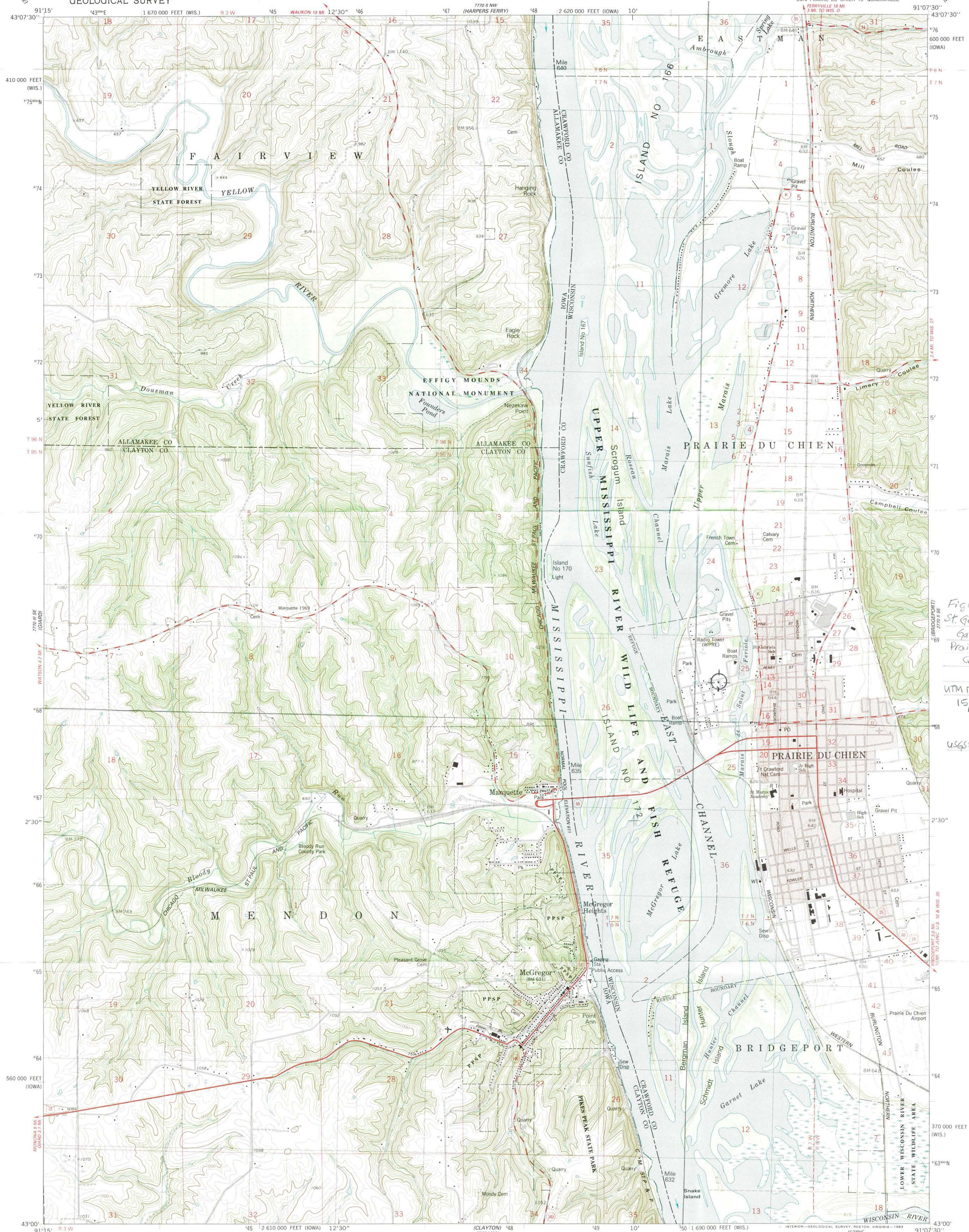
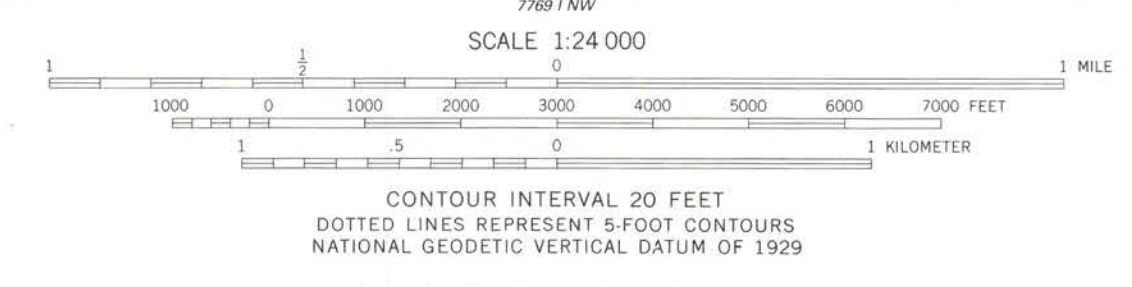
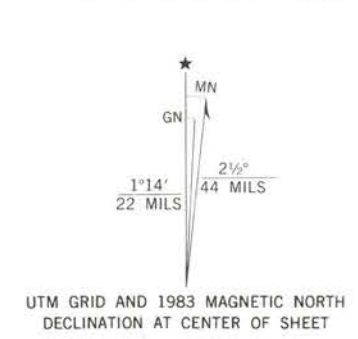


Figure 1.  
St. Germain dit  
Gauthier House  
Prairie du Chien,  
Crawford Co, WI

UTM reference:  
15/650280/4768470

USGS: Prairie du Chien

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey in cooperation with the Wisconsin Division of Highways and Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey. Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA. Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1965 and planimetric surveys 1967. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1980-81. Field checked 1981. Map edited 1983. Projection: Iowa coordinate system, north zone (Lambert conformal conic). 10,000-foot grid lines based on Iowa coordinate system north zone and Wisconsin coordinate system, south zone. 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 15 1927 North American Datum. To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 5 meters north and 12 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks. 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.



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092 IOWA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, IOWA CITY, IOWA 52240 AND WISCONSIN GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY, MADISON, WISCONSIN 53706 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, IOWA-WIS.  
SW/4 PRAIRIE DU CHIEN 15' QUADRANGLE  
N4300-W9107.5/7.5  
1983  
DMA 7770 II SW-SERIES V876







The  
Courthouse

















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Sorry for any inc  
Big River Long Rifles, Inc





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REGIST

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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: 3/26/2018      Date of Pending List: 4/18/2018      Date of 16th Day: 5/3/2018      Date of 45th Day: 5/10/2018      Date of Weekly List: 6/15/2018

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal           | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL            | <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP             | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG             |   |

Accept       Return       Reject      5/10/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary  
Comments:

Recommendation/  
Criteria

Reviewer Barbara Wyatt      Discipline Historian

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

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : **Yes**

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





**LEE NERISON**

**96<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT**

**Capitol:**

Post Office Box 8953

Madison, WI 53708-8953

(608) 266-3534

Toll-Free: (888) 534-0096

Fax: (608) 282-3696

Rep.Nerison@legis.wi.gov

**District:**

(608) 634-4562

*Serving Crawford, Monroe,*

*and Vernon Counties*

July 17, 2017

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

Dear Board Members:

I am writing in support of the nomination of the St. Germain dit Gauthier House in Prairie du Chien to the Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places.

As you know, the St. Germain dit Gauthier House was built on historic St. Feriole Island, which was a major hub for the Upper Mississippi River Valley fur trade. The Gauthier House was built consistent with French-Canadian construction techniques, symbolizing the influence French-Canadian fur traders and settlers had upon the development of Prairie du Chien from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

As State Representative for Prairie du Chien, I hope you will approve the nomination of the St. Germain dit Gauthier House, as this will add to the city's rich history. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lee Nerison  
State Representative  
96th Assembly District

RECEIVED  
AUG 02 2017

BY: .....



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017

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



Dear Ms. Veregin:

I am pleased to support the nomination of the St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin for the Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places.

The St. Germain *dit* Gauthier House is one of three remaining homes on St. Feriole Island which was once a robust French-Canadian fur-trading community. This house was constructed in the 1820's and occupied until the 1980's when Prairie du Chien underwent a relocation project on this site. The construction of this house is consistent with French-Canadian construction called *piece sur piece a que d'aronde* and is an example of the French influence in the region at that time. Prairie du Chien Historical Society plans to restore it and use it as a museum of Prairie du Chien's French history.

As the U.S. Representative for Wisconsin's 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District, I have an interest in supporting projects that preserve a key bit of history to the area which will add to the tourism and provide history lessons to visitors. Given its merit and potential benefits, I encourage the Review Board to give full consideration to this nomination. Please don't hesitate to contact my office if I can provide further assistance with this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron Kind".

Ron Kind  
Member of Congress



WISCONSIN  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY



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-third day of March 2018, for the nomination of the St. Germain dit Gauthier 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
- 13 Photograph(s)
- 1 CD with image files
- 1 Map(s)
- 5 Sketch map(s)/figures(s)/exhibit(s)
- 2 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: