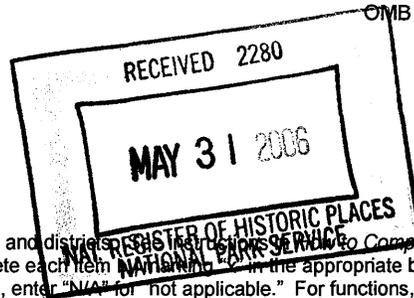


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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item 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, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Walnut Grove Creamery Association

other names/site number Walnut Grove Cooperative Creamery

2. Location

Street & number 521 Main Street not for publication N/A

city or town Walnut Grove vicinity N/A

state Minnesota code MN county Redwood code 127 zip code 56180

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.)

Britta L. Bloomberg
Signature of certifying official/Title

Britta L. Bloomberg, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

5/23/06
Date

Minnesota Historical Society

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 certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson W. Beall

7.12.06

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
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: processing

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

No style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls CONCRETE

roof METAL/STEEL

other

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

X 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: N/A

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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed on 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
X Other

Name of repository:

Southwest Minnesota Regional Research Center, Marshall

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Industry

Period of Significance

1930-1953

Significant Dates

1930

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Saffert Cement Construction Company (builder)

Schutt, Edward Albert (builder)

Walnut Grove Creamery Association
Name of Property

Redwood County, Minnesota
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

Walnut Grove, Minn., 1967

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 302810 4899370
Zone Easting Northing

2

3 Zone Easting Northing

4 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

name/title Susan Granger and Scott Kelly

organization Gemini Research date March 13, 2006

street & number 15 East 9th Street telephone 320-589-3846

city or town Morris state MN zip code 56267

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.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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 Report (1024-0018), Washington DC 20503.

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Walnut Grove Creamery Association
Walnut Grove, Redwood County, Minnesota

7. DESCRIPTION

The Walnut Grove Creamery Association, built in 1930, is in the city of Walnut Grove, a community of about 600 people in southwestern Minnesota. Walnut Grove is in southern Redwood County, which is in the Minnesota River Valley.

The creamery (or butter factory) stands on Main Street, the principal commercial street in Walnut Grove, and faces north. The property is surrounded by commercial structures to the west, north, and east, and by residential structures to the south. The former Chicago and Northwestern railroad tracks (now Burlington Northern-Santa Fe) are about one block to the north.

East of the building is a public alley that is outside of the property boundary. In front of the building is a small grassy lawn and a concrete public sidewalk that extends to the curb. Behind the building is a gravel parking area. Along the west side of the building is a narrow bituminous-surfaced driveway. Most of the rest of the 70' x 140' lot is covered with gravel and small areas of grass. One timber utility pole stands about 8' behind the building. In 1950 the creamery association sold a strip of land along the western edge of its property to the neighboring Tri-County Cooperative Oil Association for its gasoline and service station.

The Building

The Walnut Grove creamery is a one-story building that measures 42' wide x 54' deep with a 36' x 17' covered receiving dock on the eastern side.

The creamery is a well-designed and well-built structure with balanced proportions, stylized detailing, and excellent craftsmanship that combine to create a simple but handsome building with modest Classical Revival elements. The design and craftsmanship seem to honor the creamery's central role in the community and dignify its industrial function.

The creamery is largely the work of the Saffert Cement Construction Company (later called American Artstone) of New Ulm, Minnesota. The Saffert company likely designed the building. It also manufactured the building materials and held the contract for construction, although Saffert subcontracted the actual construction work to builder E. A. Schutt of Sleepy Eye.

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Walnut Grove Creamery Association
Walnut Grove, Redwood County, Minnesota

The exterior of the creamery is faced with the Saffert company's distinctive "Rainbow"-colored concrete block in units that measure about 5" x 12". The building's trim is finely-crafted cast concrete. Most of the cast concrete is tan except the watertable, which is gray.

The creamery's main facade features a concrete cornice with stylized detailing that includes a dot and square motif. Beneath the cornice is a name band with concrete serif letters that spell "Walnut Grove Creamery Ass'n."

The main entrance has a concrete surround with a stylized classically-inspired design. Above the door is a bracketed overhang whose two original hanging lamps are in storage awaiting re-installation. The entrance has a single-leaf door (the door itself is recent) and a multipaned transom. Flanking the entrance are two concrete brackets that originally supported concrete urns.

At the western edge of the main facade is a concrete cornerstone, placed in August 1930, that reads: "A. D. 1930 - Artstone" and "Creamery Board: J. A. Sabin, Pres., Paul Grunden, V. Pres., J. S. Pederson, Sec'y., A. L. Dahlgren, Treas., Wm. Bondeson, S. Collin, J. Mathiason."

The building's north, west, and east facades are topped by a low parapet wall with concrete coping. On the main facade the parapet rises to a triangle, and on the side walls it is stepped. Tall coping blocks at the building's front corners create a pilaster effect. A separate parapet wall over the receiving dock meets the main building with an elegant curve.

As is typical for creameries of its age, the building has a generous number of windows and doors. All openings are rectangular with concrete sills and lintels and all retain their original size and shape. Some of the window openings are filled with circa 1990 double-hung sash with interior false-muntins. Other openings are filled with glass block and/or plywood. In addition to the main entrance on the north facade, the building has a pedestrian entrance on the west facade (with glass block sidelights and a recent single-leaf door), a vehicle door on the west facade (blocked with plywood), and a loading dock opening on the rear facade (blocked with plywood). Around 1980 a large door opening was cut into the center of the rear facade. This opening is now covered with plywood.

The creamery's roof is slightly sloped and is covered with corrugated metal that dates from 1990. The chimney, still visible inside the creamery at the southwestern corner, originally rose several feet above the roofline. The upper portion of the chimney was removed in 1990.

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Walnut Grove Creamery Association
Walnut Grove, Redwood County, Minnesota

Along the eastern side of the building is the former cream can receiving dock (36' x 17'), which is sheltered by a canopy. The platform's canopy or roof is supported by four columns of Rainbow block. The columns are connected at their bases by a low balustrade wall. The platform's poured concrete floor is raised a few feet to facilitate wagon deliveries and to allow the cream to flow via gravity into the first piece of creamery equipment. At the north end of the receiving dock is a short drive (edged with an original concrete retaining wall) that slopes slightly downward as it approaches the platform. At the south end of the receiving dock is a short drive that rises to form a ramp as it approaches the platform. The receiving area's large rectangular openings were enclosed in 1977 with smooth gray concrete block and roll-up garage doors. Part of the north end is now faced with tan corrugated metal.

The interior of the creamery has been altered, although it retains most of its original arrangement of several small rooms with concrete block partition walls. Some of the poured concrete floors slope toward drains. Interior window and door trim is very simple. While most walls are painted concrete block, most ceilings and floors have been covered with modern materials.

The building has had several owners and uses since the creamery closed in 1953. It is currently an antique, gift, and printing shop.

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Walnut Grove Creamery Association
Walnut Grove, Redwood County, Minnesota

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Walnut Grove Creamery Association is locally significant and eligible for the National Register under Criterion A, significance to the broad patterns of history, in the area of Industry. Built in 1930, the creamery is a well-preserved example of the type of small creameries that proliferated in Redwood County (and elsewhere in Minnesota) in the early 20th century and were the primary processors of milk from the region's extensive dairy farming industry. The property is associated with the statewide historic context "Railroads and Agricultural Development, 1870-1940." The period of significance is 1930-1953.

The Walnut Grove creamery was built in 1930 to replace the community's 40-year-old, first-generation creamery, a gable-roofed woodframe structure that had been built circa 1889. (The first creamery was on a downtown site a short distance from the 1930 creamery building.)

The City of Walnut Grove

The small community of Walnut Grove was named for a stand of black walnut trees growing a few miles south of the Cottonwood River in southern Redwood County. There were only a few settlers in the vicinity in 1872 when railroad tracks were built through the area. Train service began in the spring of 1873 and the town of Walnut Grove was platted in 1874. The railroad line, the Winona and St. Peter (later the Chicago and Northwestern), was Walnut Grove's principal connection with the rest of the state and region.

Walnut Grove's economy was focused on agriculture, and the city became a commercial center that served surrounding farms. In 1916 the town's agricultural processors and exporters included four grain elevators, a stockyard for livestock shipping, and a creamery. Retail and service businesses that catered to farms included a lumberyard, two hardware stores, two banks, an implement dealer, and three general stores, among others. In 1910 Walnut Grove was the fifth-largest town in Redwood County with 366 people.

Dairying in Redwood County

Most of Redwood County's early farmers, like those in other parts of western Minnesota, grew wheat and other small grains. Some also raised free-range beef. In the late 1880s and early 1890s, a significant dairy industry developed as farmers diversified their operations to include more livestock. Redwood County had 2,500 milk cows in 1880. Dairy farming increased steadily, and in 1940 the number of milk cows reached a peak of 20,300. After 1940 dairying's

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Walnut Grove Creamery Association
Walnut Grove, Redwood County, Minnesota

role relative to other livestock farming decreased somewhat as some local farmers shifted to hog- and beef-feeding (in part taking advantage of new corn hybrids) and to egg production. In 1954 the number of milk cows in Redwood County was down to 11,300, about 56 percent of the 1940 level (Webb and Swedberg 1964: 277).

Dairy farming was also critically important statewide, and in the early 20th century only Wisconsin exceeded Minnesota in dairy production. Dairy farming increased significantly in Minnesota between 1915 and the 1930s, with income from milk and butterfat accounting for nearly 30 percent of total farm income. By the 1930s “fully 90 percent” of Minnesota farms kept milk cows. In 1938 Minnesota milk production was 40 percent higher than 1920 levels, despite a shortage of feed during the drought years of the Depression (Koller and Jesness 1940: 3-4). In the 1950s dairy farming was still a leading component of Minnesota agriculture.

Creameries in Redwood County

Redwood County’s creameries (also known as butter factories) were the primary means by which the county’s dairy output was handled and marketed. Most of Redwood County’s milk was processed into butter, with very little made into cheese or sold as fluid milk. Most of the skim milk was fed to livestock. The predominance of butter was repeated statewide: in 1938, soon after the Walnut Grove creamery was built, 73 percent of Minnesota’s milk was being separated for creamery buttermaking, with another 2 percent being made into butter on farms (Koller and Jesness 1940: 9).

Redwood County’s first two creameries were established in the towns of Redwood Falls and Lamberton, both circa 1887. The county’s third creamery was established in 1889 in Walnut Grove. As was typical of early creameries in Minnesota, all three of Redwood County’s first creameries were owned by individual independent proprietors.

During the next ten years the number of creameries in Redwood County multiplied, rising with the number of milk cows. Small creameries were built in both villages and at rural crossroads. Each served dairy farmers in a 10- to 15-mile radius. Most of Redwood County’s creameries were small operations whose ownership structure changed periodically. Some closed for a time and were later reopened by different owners.

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Walnut Grove Creamery Association
Walnut Grove, Redwood County, Minnesota

In 1898 Redwood County had 15 creameries – all of which were farmers' cooperatives. Farmers' cooperatives had arisen in Minnesota around 1890 as a way for farmers to share the risk of bringing dairy processing equipment to their communities, and to exercise some local control over butter marketing and the price they were paid for their cream. The prevalence of cooperative creamery associations in Redwood County helped spur the subsequent organization of cooperative grain elevators in the early 20th century, according to one source (Webb and Swedberg 1964: 267). (See Keillor 2000 for an overview of the development of cooperative creameries in Minnesota and Peterson 1999 for a detailed history of the cooperative creamery in Viola Township, Olmsted County.)

In 1898 the creamery at Walnut Grove was the fourth-smallest in the county with 40 patrons (Curtiss-Wedge 1916: 398).

In 1901 the number of creameries in Redwood County was at its peak, with 20 plants. Redwood was among the top seven counties in the state in number of creameries. Seventeen of Redwood County's 20 creameries were then cooperatives. About 12 of the 20 were located in towns or villages. The 20 creameries collectively served 1,123 patrons and produced 1.1 million pounds of butter in 1901 (Webb and Swedberg 1964: 280).

Through the 1910s the number of creameries in Redwood County decreased to about 14 plants, a trend that was typical as individual creameries became more efficient. The creameries' ownership structure varied, with farmers' cooperatives owning more than half of Redwood County's creameries at any given time. Total collective butter production stayed at about 1.1 million pounds per year (Curtiss-Wedge 1916: 399-400).

In 1930, when the current Walnut Grove creamery was built, it was one of 845 creameries operating in Minnesota. About 79 percent of these were cooperatives.

Redwood County's butter production peaked in 1933 when 3.56 million pounds were produced (Webb and Swedberg 1964: 280). A statewide peak occurred in 1938. Much of Minnesota's butter, including that from Redwood County, was shipped to East Coast cities where Minnesota butter was renowned for its quality. In 1938, 17 percent of the nation's butter was made in Minnesota. During the 1920s and 1930s, New York City was the largest market for Minnesota butter, and Minnesota was the leading supplier of butter to Philadelphia (Koller and Jesness 1940: 12, 19).

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Walnut Grove Creamery Association
Walnut Grove, Redwood County, Minnesota

In 1945 Redwood County had ten operating creameries. World War II brought substantial changes to the industry, however, and over the next 18 years all but one of the ten creameries closed. The war created a strong new market for dried milk powder which, along with cheese, eventually supplanted butter as the primary Minnesota dairy product. In the 1940s and early 1950s many Minnesota creameries were faced with the choice of installing expensive new milk-drying equipment or closing (Hanson 2001: 6).

The Walnut Grove creamery, which folded in 1953, was the second of the county's ten creameries to close after World War II. By 1961 there were only three creameries left in Redwood County. The three produced 327,000 pounds of butter, about one-third of the 1901 level (Webb and Swedberg 1964: 280). Redwood County's last operating creamery, located in the town of Vesta, closed sometime after 1962.

In a statewide context, the Walnut Grove creamery was one of 667 creameries operating in Minnesota in 1950. Statewide, the number of creameries had risen to 855 in 1915, remained above 800 through 1940, and decreased after World War II. As the industry changed after the war, Minnesota lost 179 creameries in the 1940s, 244 in 1950s, and 300 more in the 1960s (Wayne 1977: 39-40).

The Walnut Grove Creamery

Walnut Grove's first creamery building was a gable-roofed woodframe structure, built circa 1889.

Like other creameries in Redwood County (and many throughout Minnesota), Walnut Grove's creamery passed back and forth between individual and cooperative ownership. The creamery was founded in 1889 by an individual, was organized as a cooperative around 1900, was back under individual ownership in 1914, and was reorganized as a cooperative in 1917 (Curtiss-Wedge 1916: 400; Webb and Swedberg 1964: 283).

The Walnut Grove Creamery Association (the cooperative founded in 1917) first operated in the circa 1889 building. For several years the group apparently discussed replacing the aging creamery, and in early 1930 finally reached a decision to build. At this time the creamery business was flourishing, the cooperative had amassed a sizable building fund, and, while the Great Depression had begun, it apparently had not deepened to the point of dissuading area farmers from proceeding with the project. In addition to providing more efficient (and therefore more profitable) buttermaking, a new creamery would allow the cooperative to move the

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Walnut Grove Creamery Association
Walnut Grove, Redwood County, Minnesota

business to Main Street, which would more be convenient and accessible than the previous location ("Creamery Holds" 1930; "New Creamery Ready" 1930).

The cream association had about 200 patrons in March 1930. This number included a sizable group of new members who had been recruited in early 1930 to make construction of a new creamery possible. Most of the cooperative's members were local farmers who purchased ownership shares and also pledged to deliver their cream to the cooperative for the next five years. Most lived within a 10- to 15-mile radius of Walnut Grove ("Creamery Holds" 1930; "Stockholders Decide" 1930; "Annual Meeting" 1931).

As the cooperative was considering building a new creamery, a group of Walnut Grove businesses working through the local Commercial Club donated funds to the cooperative for the purchase of the Main Street site. The cooperative briefly considered constructing a two-story building that it would share with the local Oddfellows lodge (which was seeking a new meeting hall), but in the spring of 1930 these plans were dropped.

The creamery chose a firm from New Ulm, the Saffert Cement Construction Company (later called American Artstone), to manufacture and supply the building materials, as well as serve as general contractor. (See Saffert below.) The quality of the creamery's design suggests that the Saffert company may also have been the architect. Saffert subcontracted with E. A. Schutt of Sleepy Eye for the actual construction work. During construction the local newspaper praised the workmanship, and at the creamery's formal dedication in December 1930, the creamery president thanked both the Saffert company and E. A. Schutt and crew for their "satisfactory and conscientious work" ("New Creamery Ready" 1930; "New Creamery Building" 1930).

Construction began in July 1930 and the cornerstone was laid in August. The new creamery was occupied in mid-November. It cost approximately \$9,000 to construct, an amount equivalent to about \$102,000 in 2004 dollars. The new creamery was financed with the cooperative's building fund of about \$4,500, with proceeds from the sale of new shares, and with loans from the St. Paul Bank for Cooperatives and Land O'Lakes Creameries (Bannick 1997). The building project was overseen by three members of the cooperative's board of directors.

A big crowd gathered to dedicate the new creamery on December 11, 1930. According to the *Walnut Grove Tribune*, "The large attendance was evidence that the farmers are interested in the venture and determined to make it a success. There were also a number of visiting creamery men from neighboring communities, and the turnout at the program in the afternoon was too large for the hall to accommodate all" ("New Creamery Building" 1930). The dedication

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Walnut Grove Creamery Association
Walnut Grove, Redwood County, Minnesota

included an open house for public inspection of the creamery, followed by a free lunch and program at the Opera House. There were musical performances, interpretive readings, speeches by dignitaries, and an evening dance. Musical groups included the Walnut Grove High School Orchestra and the Walnut Grove High School Girls' Glee Club, further evidence of the creamery's central role in the community. The keynote speaker was John Brandt, president of Land O'Lakes Creameries ("New Creamery Building" 1930).

Representative of the Property Type

The Walnut Grove creamery is an excellent representative example of the hundreds of small creameries that operated throughout Minnesota in the early 20th century. (Further information on Minnesota creameries can be found in Hanson 2001, which contains detailed descriptions of about 25 creameries in southern Minnesota's Steele County, and in Martens 1993 and Peterson 1999. See also the Minnesota Historical Society's photograph collection, which contains about 200 photographs of post-1920 creameries.)

Like many creameries operating in early 20th century Minnesota, the Walnut Grove creamery is a second-generation facility, built to replace an earlier woodframe structure (Hanson 2001). The Walnut Grove creamery was built for a local farmers' cooperative, and built by a construction firm from the area, both common occurrences.

The Walnut Grove creamery is a one-story building, which is common, but is made of concrete block, which is atypical. A University of Minnesota study of 173 Minnesota creameries in 1934, for example, revealed that only 7 of the 173 were made of concrete block (Martens 1993: 9). A combination of brick and hollow clay tile construction was more common.

According to the *Walnut Grove Tribune*, the new facility was "a modern creamery building that is not only arranged for efficiency but attractive to the eye as well" ("Creamery Dedication" 1930). The size and layout of the Walnut Grove creamery are typical, as are its architectural form and modest detailing. Most creameries built in Minnesota in the early 20th century had either Craftsman-inspired forms with hipped or gabled roofs, or were built in simpler commercial forms with some Craftsman- or Classical Revival-style detailing.

At 2,268 square feet, the Walnut Grove creamery is comparatively small. The University of Minnesota's study of 173 creameries in 1934 found the average size to be 2,697 square feet (Martens 1993: 9). The Walnut Grove Creamery is in the middle of the size range reported by Hanson in his study of about 25 creameries in Steele County (Hanson 2001).

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Walnut Grove Creamery Association
Walnut Grove, Redwood County, Minnesota

The Walnut Grove creamery has a typical interior arrangement with a central processing room and several smaller rooms for the boiler, cream scale, butter cooler, packing, office, and storage for supplies such as butter tubs and salt (Hanson 2001; Martens 1993). In Walnut Grove, receiving and weighing occurred on the eastern side of the building, and the boiler was in the southwestern corner. In a description of the new creamery the *Walnut Grove Tribune* reported, "The storage and refrigeration department is placed on the west side, the offices in the front and the testing room on the east side. This leaves an ample space for the main workroom, where the machinery and equipment for pasteurizing and churning have been installed" ("New Creamery Ready" 1930).

As is typical, the Walnut Grove creamery has a poured concrete floor, which is durable and washable, and a receiving dock and testing area that are elevated higher than the rest of the building to allow cream to flow (rather than be pumped) into the pasteurizing vat (Hanson 2001: 7).

The Walnut Grove creamery is one of only two creameries in Redwood County that retain a high degree of physical integrity among approximately 20 creameries that once existed. A 2006 windshield survey of 13 towns in Redwood County – including the ten in which creameries were still operating in 1945 – found only one other creamery with physical integrity comparable to the Walnut Grove creamery. It is the Lamberton Cooperative Creamery, built in 1929 in Lamberton.

Equipment and Operations

When the Walnut Grove creamery was completed in November 1930, the *Walnut Grove Tribune* reported, "Without doubt it will mean much to the future of the dairy industry of this community to have the convenience and working facilities of a modern creamery. It will mean more certain and definite results in producing a good quality of butter, and on top of that a saving of both time and work in the handling of the cream and manufacture of the butter" ("New Creamery Ready" 1930).

Creameries built in the late 1920s and early 1930s were generally more efficient than their earlier counterparts. They often incorporated labor-saving and cost-reducing devices such as more efficient steam generating equipment, stokers, mechanical refrigeration equipment, electric lights, and electric motors (Koller and Jesness 1940: 18).

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Walnut Grove Creamery Association
Walnut Grove, Redwood County, Minnesota

The Walnut Grove cooperative moved some of its existing equipment, including a recently-purchased boiler and churning equipment, from the old creamery into the new building. It also bought new equipment including a \$14,500 ice-making machine. (Ice machines were a considerable savings in labor over the earlier practice of farmer-members cutting and hauling ice to the creamery.) The *Walnut Grove Tribune* wrote that the new creamery was as “convenient as can be devised, and will undoubtedly be found to be a great improvement to those who have been working in the old creamery building” (“New Creamery Ready” 1930).

Many Minnesota creameries bought equipment from manufacturers and distributors located within the state. Dairy equipment suppliers in Owatonna and Albert Lea, for example, served many creameries in southern Minnesota (Hanson 2001: 2). The new Walnut Grove creamery featured equipment from some of these suppliers including a ventilation system from the King Ventilating Company of Owatonna (Bannick 1997).

Walnut Grove’s butter yield was typical for a small creamery. In 1930 – a year when it was still operating largely from the old plant – the Walnut Grove creamery produced 164,000 pounds of butter and paid out \$46,000 to local farmers. The previous year’s production was 152,000 pounds. In 1935, average butter output per Minnesota creamery was 312,000 pounds per year. About 31 percent of Minnesota’s cooperative creameries were making 125,000 to 250,000 pounds in 1934 (“Annual Meeting” 1931; Koller and Jesness 1940: 16; Peterson 1999: 8.13).

In 1930 Walnut Grove’s buttermaker was A. H. “Abe” Quiring. In addition to running the creamery, Quiring helped plan the new building and supervised the transfer of operations. The creamery also had a part-time bookkeeper. This was a typical workforce for a small Minnesota creamery, although some also had an assistant buttermaker. The buttermaker’s salary in August 1931 was \$100 per month. In October 1931 the creamery hired a new buttermaker, William Posthumus of Valley City, North Dakota, whose salary was \$50 per month plus a commission of \$.05 for each pound of butter that scored 90 or better when tested. (Creamery butter was graded on flavor, body and texture, color, salt content, and packaging, with a score of 93 or above considered top grade and a score below 90 generally considered inferior.)

Historian Bernie Hanson, whose father was a buttermaker, has written a good description of buttermaking at a small Minnesota creamery in the mid-1930s. During this era, most milk was separated on the farm with small cream separators, and farmers hauled only the cream to town, keeping the skim milk for feed. (During earlier years, whole milk was hauled to the creamery to be separated and the skim was hauled back by the farmer, and during later years whole milk was again collected and processed.)

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Hanson explains that farmers delivered their cream every other morning, forming a line of wagons near the creamery receiving dock and visiting with fellow farmers as they waited their turn. Most hauled the cream in 5-, 8-, or 10-gallon steel cans. Hanson writes:

“The cream was dumped from the cans into an open tank sitting on a scale. . . . After the weight was recorded and the [butterfat] sample taken, a valve was opened to allow the cream to flow by gravity into a pasteurizing vat via a sloped, tinned copper trough. . . .” [The butterfat sample helped determine the payment the farmer received.]

“After the last cream was in the pasteurizing vat, the pasteurizing process was started. . . . During the heating of the cream, hot water was circulated through the [vat’s outer] jacket and through the coil agitator [in the center of the vat]. After the cream reached a temperature of 160-170 degrees Fahrenheit the covers on the vat were closed and the temperature held for 30 minutes before the steam was turned off and cold well water was circulated through the water jacket and the coil agitator. . . . The cream needed to be cooled to about 40 degrees.”

“The next step was to start pumping chilled salt brine water through the jacket and coil [to further cool the cream]. The salt brine was stored in an elevated tank in the butter cooler. The brine was cooled by direct expansion of anhydrous ammonia gas compressed with a mechanical compressor. Before the mechanical compressors were available, ice water from melting ice blocks was used to cool the cream. . . . The cream temperature of 40 degrees was reached in about 45 minutes to one hour. The cream pasteurizing process was complete. At this time a cultured starter was added. . . . Cultured butter starters were a favorite discussion topic between competing butter makers. Each butter maker kept his recipe as his own and each butter maker’s starter culture was unique.”

“Washing of the equipment and floors was done while the cream was being pasteurized. Along with the butterfat testing done twice each month, butter boxes were made for the following day, bookwork was brought up to date, maintenance and repairs were done, and hobbies could be worked on. Usually the noon meal could be worked in after the water for cooling was turned on. . . .”

“The next day was churning day. . . . As soon as there was enough steam to drive the engine, water was put into the wooden churn and it was rotated to wet all the

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surfaces and cool the wood. After this the water was dumped and the cream was pumped from the vat into the churn. The belt driven churn was slowly rotated so the paddles inside the churn would whip the cream. It took about 45 minutes for the cream to form small kernels of butter. . . . The churn was stopped; a screen was inserted in the drain spout on one end of the churn. This was for straining off the buttermilk”

“After all of the buttermilk was drained from the butter curd, cold well water was put onto the butter curd inside the churn. . . . After complete drainage of the rinse water, salt was added to the butter curd. . . . As the butter neared completion the operator would listen for just the right slapping sound of the paddles on the butter to indicate to him that the salt and water was all worked into the butter. . . . The butter was one large mass inside the churn. . . .”

“Packing the butter consisted of scooping the butter out of the churn, weighing out 68 pounds of butter and hand packing it into wooden boxes. . . . The boxes were lined with wet parchment paper to seal the moisture in during cold storage. . . . After the butter was packed, the butter-filled boxes were wheeled into the cold storage cooler where they stayed until being picked up by a team of horses or later by truck that loaded the boxes onto a rail car for delivery to the buyers in eastern states” (Hanson 2001: 6-9).

Like many Minnesota creameries, the Walnut Grove Creamery Association marketed its butter through, and received other support from, Land O’Lakes Creameries, a statewide alliance of cooperative creameries organized in 1921 as the Minnesota Cooperative Creameries Association. (The federation was renamed Land O’Lakes shortly after it began collective marketing in 1924.) Two of Land O’Lakes founders were active in Walnut Grove in 1930: A. J. McGuire, a university of Minnesota dairy specialist and general manager of Land O’Lakes, spoke at a “well attended” March 1930 meeting in Walnut Grove at which the new creamery was discussed, and John Brant, a Litchfield dairy farmer and president of Land O’Lakes, spoke at the creamery dedication. McGuire and Brandt were “truly crusaders” for the development of cooperative creameries in Minnesota, according to one historian (Wayne 1977: 41).

The Walnut Grove creamery served the community for 23 years, and was owned during this entire period by the cooperative. Business declined after World War II as local farmers shifted to other types of agriculture. At the same time, the dairy processing market was retooling to make more dried milk and cheese, and butter was continuing to face strong competition from

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another product popular with consumers: vegetable-based oleomargarine. Unable to remain profitable, the Walnut Grove creamery closed in 1953.

Saffert Cement Construction Company

The Saffert Cement Construction Company was established in New Ulm in 1916 by partners George Saffert and William Gugisberg. George Saffert had been making concrete blocks in the nearby town of Fairfax since 1910, and Gugisberg became Saffert's business partner in 1916 and remained so until 1921. By 1920 the company was a major employer in New Ulm with 65 workers. In 1932 Saffert reorganized the firm as the American Artstone Company. American Artstone is still in business in New Ulm (Hoisington 2003).

The multi-colored block used to build the Walnut Grove creamery was one of the company's most distinctive products. Called "Rainbow" block, it was made with red, green, and yellow pigments that penetrated the outer 1/8" to 1/4" inch of the concrete, giving the blocks a rich coloration. The company began producing Rainbow block around 1926, four years before the Walnut Grove creamery was built (Hoisington 2003). (Saffert or Artstone products and construction may have significance within Minnesota architectural history, but no studies outside the city of New Ulm have yet been conducted.)

The Saffert Cement Construction Company maintained a construction division until 1932, and also employed professional architects (Hoisington 2003). It not only supplied the materials for the Walnut Grove creamery, but it served as general contractor, and may have designed the building as well.

Edward Albert Schutt

Little is known about Edward Albert "E. A." Schutt, the builder from Sleepy Eye who constructed the creamery. Schutt lived near Bemidji until about 1914, and eventually moved to Sleepy Eye. He was married to Marie (Siems) Schutt, who died in 1914, and then to Zelma (Miner) Schutt. At least one son, Ronald "R. J." Schutt (1917-2002), worked with his father in the construction business and continued a life-long career as a building contractor.

Summary

The Walnut Grove Creamery, built in 1930 of the Saffert Cement company's "Rainbow" concrete block, is an excellent representative example of a small, early 20th century Redwood

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County butter factory. Such plants were built across Redwood County (as they were in hundreds of other small Minnesota towns in areas where cows were milked) and for many decades played a vital role in the region's successful dairy industry.

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA, CONTINUED

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the nominated property are shown by the dashed line on the accompanying map entitled "Walnut Grove Creamery Association, Walnut Grove, Redwood County, Minnesota."

The property is legally described as the East 70' of Lots 6 through 10 and the East 70' of the North 15' of Lot 11, Block 11, Original Plat of Walnut Grove.

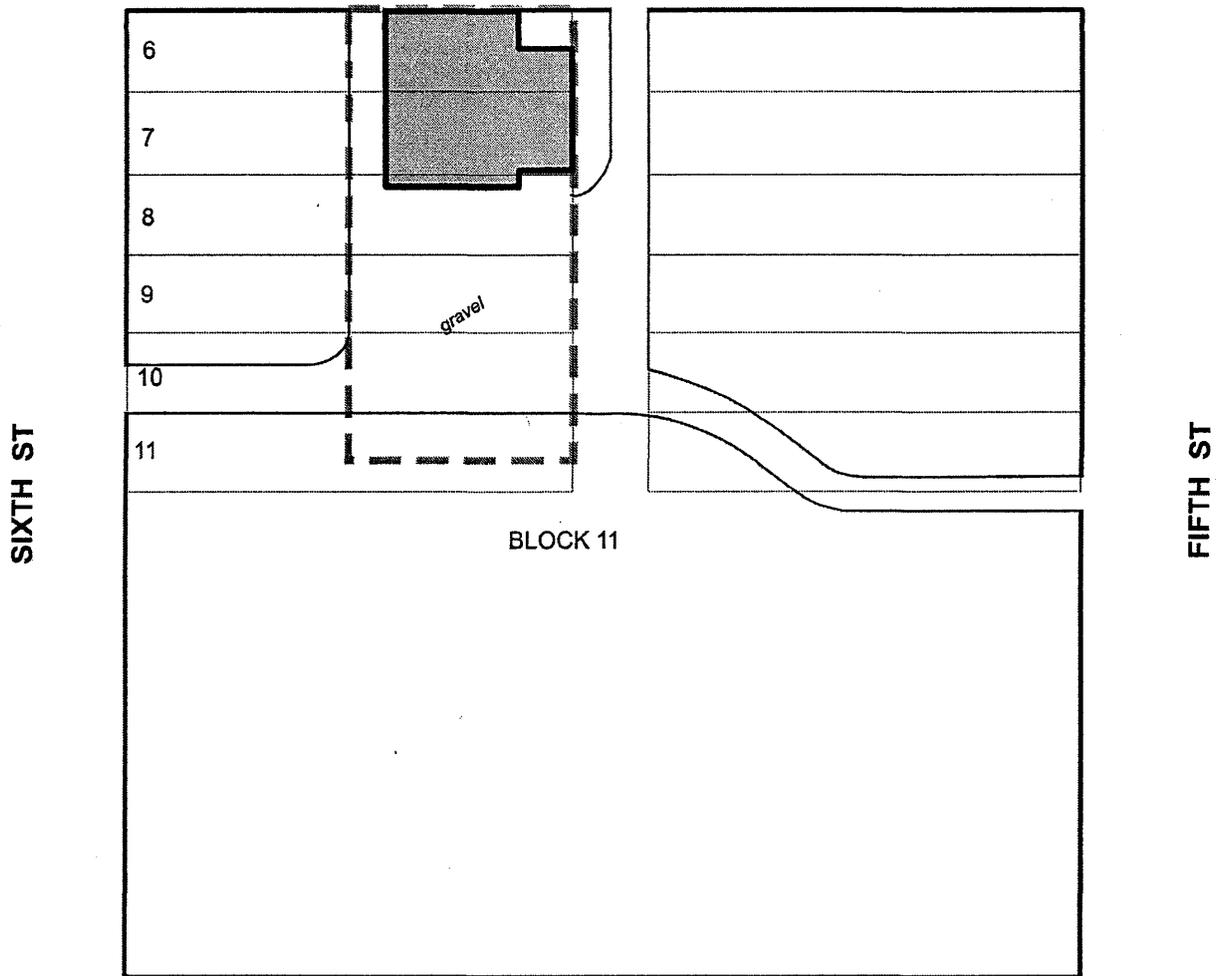
Boundary Justification

The nominated property is comprised of the parcel of land historically associated with the Walnut Grove Creamery Association, less the western edge of the original creamery property which the creamery association sold to Tri-County Cooperative Oil Association in 1950. (That western strip of land was altered and paved by the Oil Association as part of its gasoline and service station.)

Walnut Grove Creamery Association
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Redwood County, Minnesota



MAIN ST



BLOCK 11

WASHINGTON ST



--- Boundary of nominated property



Ca. 1931 (Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum, Walnut Grove, MN)
Redwood Co., MN