

REC 11579

INVENTORY FORM FOR NOMINATED PROPERTIES

Name of property: J. W. Corwith Livery (Reedsburg MHA)

Owner: Bernien Company

Address: 121 South Webb Avenue

Owner's address: 121 South Webb Avenue

City: Reedsburg County: Sauk

Reedsburg, Wisconsin 53959

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

- 160 NRHP Certification (date)
Listed in NRHP (LI)
Determined eligible in DOE process (DD)
Determined eligible in nomination process (DN)
Additional documentation added to nomination (AD)
Boundary increased (BI)
Boundary Decreased (BD)
Delisted (DL)

170 Thematic or Multiple Resource Nomination Name (code)
Multiple Resources of Reedsburg

180 NRHP List Name J. W. Corwith Livery

- 190 Level of Significance
national (NA)
state (ST)
X local (LO)

- 200 District Classification
pivotal (P)
contributing (C)
non-contributing (NC)

- 210 Applicable Criteria
X event (A)
person (B)
architectue/engineering (C)
information potential (D)

- 215 Criteria Considerations
religious property (A)
moved property (B)
birthplace or grave (C)
cemetery (D)
reconstructed property (E)
commemorative property (F)
less than 50 years old (G)

220 Area of Significance (code)
Transportation: Early Mass Transportation

230 Period of Significance
1911-1934 (Date of Construction: 1911)
Source: A

340 Review Board Date 10/19/84

70 USGS Quad Map
Reedsburg West Quadrangle

80 UTM Coordinates (Format: 99-999999-9999999)
15-741660-4824000

85 Listed Acreage Less than one

60 Verbal Boundary Description City of Reedsburg, (Lots 15, 16 and N 10' Lot 17) and Com. NW Cor Lo 20, Th S 76', Th E 33', Th S to S line of lot, Th E 63', Th N to alley and W to point of beginning Block 20.

Description

The Corwith Livery and Feed Barn is a rectangular

building constructed of Chicago brick. It has a 60'

frontage on Vine Street and extends north 160' to the

alley (A). The livery is one story with a monitor roof

covered with asbestos shingles, although was once clad

with metal (B,C). The sides of the monitor roof are

faced with metal stamped to look like brick. The

south facade has a parapet roofline and four bays of

4/1 vertical pane windows on the upper section. A

large door, for carriage or car entry, is centered

on this facade. A door on the east part of the south

facade is wood and has a scrolled design on it and an

overlight above. This used to lead into a ladies

waiting room and office (A). All that remains of this

is a concrete slab; all partition walls are gone. The

interior of the building reveals solid brick walls with

a wood frame roof and beams. The rear third of the

building has been blocked off and is used as a workroom,

the front or south of the building is used for storage.

Although the side of the livery has had many of the win-

dows bricked over, the building has retained its essen-

tial integrity. The livery is now attached to a later

twentieth century building on the northwest corner. The

new section, fronting South Webb Avenue, is a non-

contributing element as far as the historic significance

of the livery is concerned. The livery itself was built

by Johnson Lumber Company of Reedsburg while Sweeney

brothers, also of Reedsburg, did the cement work.

(The addition at 121 S Webb Ave. is now used for storage

by Bernien Company (tractor sales). Bernien also used the

old (c. 1911) livery facing 121 Vine Street for

storage and work space. The store itself is at 121 S Webb

avenue. The company was founded by John Bernien c. 1892.

It sold farm implements then (B).)

Architectural/Engineering Statement of Significance

690 Bibliographic References (Sources)

A - "The Reedsburg Times", April 21, 1911.

B - "Wisconsin Industrial Review", March 1912 (Vol. XIII,

No. 147).

C - Sanborn-Perris Maps at State Historical Society of

Wisconsin, Madison.

D - French, Mrs. Bella (ed.), History of Reedsburg, Wisconsin

1875, an issue of The American Sketchbook (LaCrosse,

Sketchbook Company, 1875).

E - Dwinell, Solomon A., Sauk County, Town of Reedsburg.

This was written in 1872 and reproduced in 1980 by Donald

V. Hyzer, Reedsburg.

F - Bensen, A. A., Bensen's Sauk County Directory (Fond du Lac,

P. B. Haber Printing House, 1890).

G - "The Reedsburg Times", December 19, 1924.

See other side of sheet

700 Study Units (code)

Partly Mass Transportation

350 Demolished

360 Date Demolished

yes \_\_\_\_\_  
no \_\_\_\_\_

## Historical Background

Although Reedsburg had only a few liveryies throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the liveryies, whether run in connection with a hotel or operated separately, were an important part of the commercial life of the community. They transported people to and from the depot and between other locations, provided a personal service by caring for horses and carriages, and often bought and sold horses on special request. All this occurred at a time when horses and carriages were a main form of transportation both inside the city and for longer distances. Only the railroad could provide a faster mode of transportation.

In 1911 William Corwith built this livery and feed barn. He had been in the livery and feed business about one year and had a "first class up-to-the-times livery" (B). In addition to the building extant, Corwith had a 90' x 30' barn east of it (gone). He could accommodate 120 horses and had 19 for livery use, in addition to buying and selling horses. In 1925 Corwith had 27 horses, stable room and carriage room. A large part of his business was then concerned with funerals, weddings and private parties.

Corwith's livery was built west of the Bates Hotel (gone) on Vine Street, south of the City Hotel at 125 Main Street, one block southwest of the Hotel Stolte at 204 Main Street, two block southeast of the railroad passenger depot and near the southwest edge of the commercial district. Residences and warehouses are also nearby. This was a central location as far as potential business was concerned.

Three liveryies were operating in Reedsburg c. 1912 when "It was predicted with the incoming of automobiles that the livery business would be put out of commission as a profitable vocation, but such has not proved the case. Automobiles seem rather to have stimulated the business by introducing riding to people who otherwise might never have become converts. People ride for business and pleasure more now than ever before, so we find livery men prospering" (B). In 1924, 20 years after the first automobile had arrived in Reedsburg, they were still considered a rarity in the city (C), although livery barns were now beginning to be used for automobile storage also (H), including the Corwith Livery.

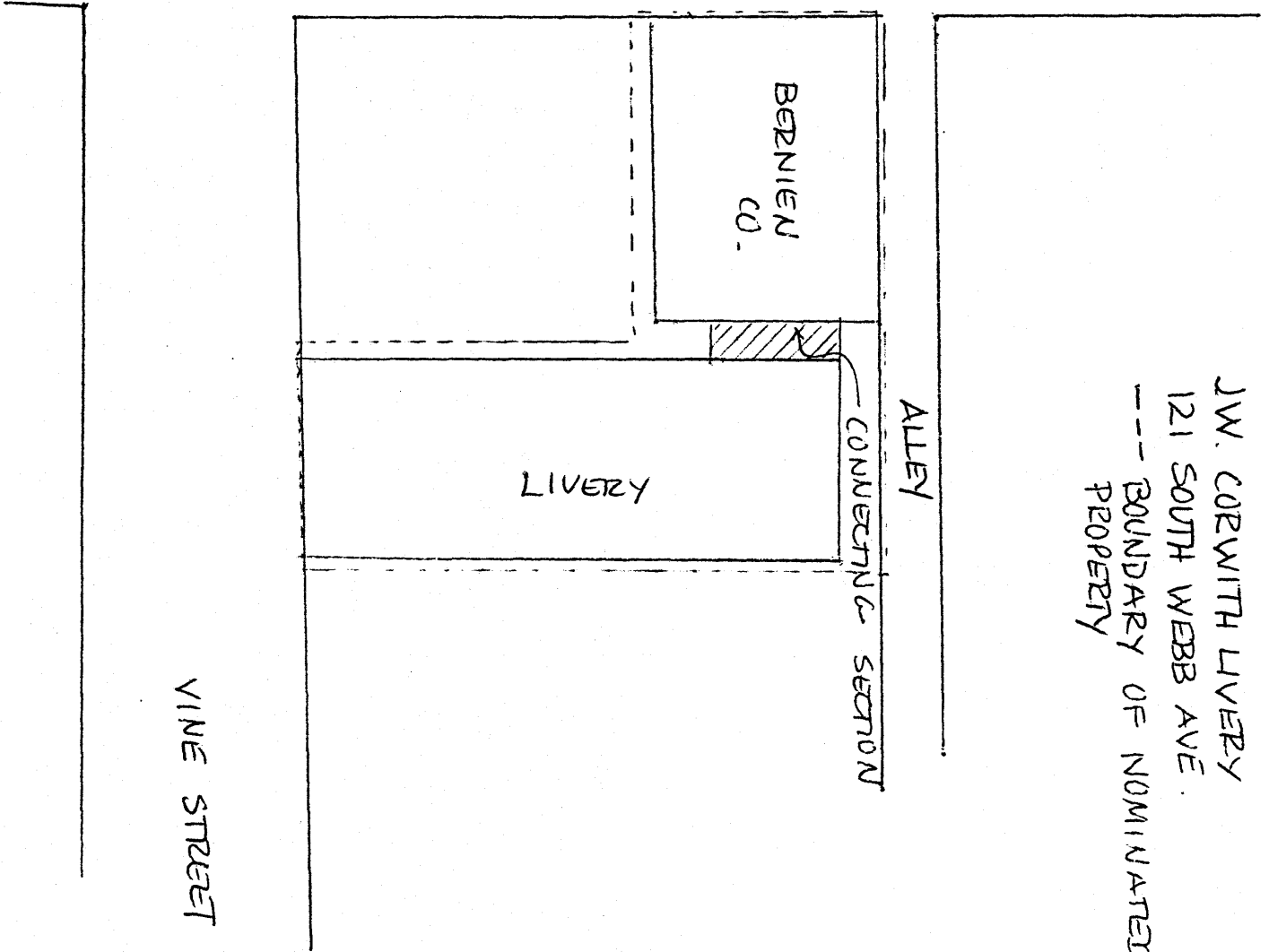
## Historical Statement of Significance: Transportation

The J. W. Corwith livery and feed barn has local historical significance because of its association with the development of transportation in Reedsburg. It provided an important commercial function in the city by servicing horses and carriages and providing a basic form of transportation, all of this before the popularity of the automobile changed transportation styles. In addition to its service function, the livery represents what was once one of the focal points of the community's transportation system (another being the railroad). The Corwith Livery is the last extant structure in Reedsburg associated with this important form of turn of century transportation. Because of its high degree of integrity, the livery is an excellent physical representation of transportation history in Reedsburg and has historic significance.

## Bibliographic References (sources) con't:

H - Sanborn-Perris Maps at State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.

SOUTH WEBB AVENUE



JW. CORWITH LIVERY  
121 SOUTH WEBB AVE.  
--- BOUNDARY OF NOMINATED  
PROPERTY

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