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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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 Merrell, Henry, House

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 505 East Cook Street N/A not for publication

city or town Portage N/A vicinity

state Wisconsin code WI county Columbia code 021 zip code 53901

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] 5/8/93
 Signature of certifying official/Title Date
 State Historic Preservation Officer-WI
 State of 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
Patricia Andrus

 Date of Action
7/8/93

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 | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> | buildings |
| <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | sites |
| <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | structures |
| <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | objects |
| <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> | 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

n/a

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone
walls Weatherboard

roof ASPHALT
other WOOD

Narrative Description

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

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7. Description

Erected between 1835 and 1839 (Butterfield, 1880a: 429-31; Williams, 1835), the Henry Merrell house is a fine, unelaborate interpretation of the Greek Revival style. The Merrell house sits at the northeast corner of East Cook and Monroe streets at 505 East Cook in Portage, Columbia County, Wisconsin. Located on lots 9 and 10 in block 182 of the original town plat, the dwelling is placed in a residential neighborhood three blocks northeast of the business district, two blocks northwest of the Portage Canal, and about three-quarters of a mile southwest of the site of Fort Winnebago. The dwellings along the adjacent streets date from a broad time period beginning shortly after the mid-nineteenth century. Facing southeast and sitting near the top of a rise above the canal, the house sits back from the street in the center of a lawn with scattered trees and low plantings. The property has historically included a rear alley, now the driveway to the garage behind the house. A recent board fence parcels off parts the rear and part of the east yard, and a concrete patio is placed just outside the rear (north) entrance. The resource is counted as one contributing building with a small, non-contributing frame garage.* The property's boundary follows the exterior limits of lots 9 and 10 including the alley. Despite its age and its move from its original site west of and across the canal from Fort Winnebago in 1867 (Rufus, 1868; Harrison and Warner, 1873; Smith Rogers Abstract Company, 1923; U.S. Army, 1851; Wisconsin State Register, 1869 [8/28]), the dwelling retains high physical integrity. It has lost additions in the rear which were probably not apart of the original building (Sanborn-Perris Map Co., 1901).

Enclosing two stories and an attic, the Merrell house is a 46.5 foot north-south by 36.5 foot east-west, rectangular plan building. It has a heavy timber frame, modified post and beam construction, and walls covered with weatherboard. The major framing members, which were finished with an adze, are tied with pegged mortise-and-tenon and notched joints visible in the attic and cellar. Although both are timber frame, the size of the members varies between the two floors suggesting different periods of construction. Low, random rubble, limestone foundation walls that are covered with cement on the visible exterior enclose a partial cellar that spans the middle third of the house, reaching both the east and west walls. The foundation is supplemented with brick and concrete block at the south end of the dwelling. Roof framing members include the 4 X 4 rafters, support beams, and post without a ridge piece. An asphalt shingle, gable roof covers the house. The existing brick chimney sits off-center from the ridge near the front of the house. All windows are double hung. All west elevation windows contain 6/6 lights while the main facade's first floor windows and all but one along the first floor of the east elevation have 12/12 lights. First floor windows along the rear elevation contain 6/6 lights to the west side and 12/12 lights to the east side. Windows have plain wood trim.

*The frame garage is non-contributing because it is outside of the period of significance.

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Like most Greek Revival buildings, this example displays limited detailing along the roof line and the main entrance. The building now has the simple front-gabled temple form. The main facade spans three bays with the entrance positioned off-center in the second, left bay. Sidelights and an overlight enframe the main entrance. Diamond-shaped latticework enhances these two features. A small wood panel occurs under each sidelight. A one-story, screened porch crosses the facade. Four tapered, paneled square piers and two half piers all placed on bases and elaborated with simple capitals support the flat roof of the porch. A balustrade composed of square balusters above the piers and shaped balusters between them runs along the porch roof. A pair of 3-light French doors are placed in the center of the facade's second floor and opens onto the porch roof. Crown molding, a wide frieze board with simple molding, and cornice returns mark the roof line. A triangular element decorates the front gable end.

Decorative detailing along the east and west elevations is limited to the cornice. Three symmetrically spaced bays organize the west elevation. A pair of French doors with 12|12 lights are centered on the first floor. The windows of each story of the east elevation are also symmetrically placed. While three openings occur across the second floor, four (with the center two closely spaced) are placed along the first. A smaller, 6/6 light window to the left of these two breaks the pattern. The heads of the second floor windows on both side elevations interrupt the frieze board below the cornice. A simple continuous molding outlines the window heads.

The roof line of the rear elevation duplicates that of the facade. A louvered vent is placed just under the peak of the roof. Two second story windows are symmetrically placed toward the side elevations. Four openings (two doors and two windows) occur along the first floor. The symmetrical pattern is not entirely retained. Corner boards decorate all four corners of the house and are quite narrow.

The interior of the first floor is arranged around the main entrance and its stair-hall, which is offset to the left or west. Two rooms of different widths and lengths are placed to the right and left of this hall. Behind the front rooms are two more rooms divided by a wide entryway, now the living room and dining room. A bedroom, kitchen, and pantry cross the rear of the house. The main stairs lead to a second floor hall, which runs down the center of the house. Three bedrooms open off the east side and two off the left side of the hall. The northwest corner of the second floor includes a bath and storage room. A simple molding embellishes the window and door trim, and the tall baseboards are plain. Most of the doors are solid wood and display two vertical panels. The open stair along the side of the main entrance hall has a railing supported by a turned walnut newel and balusters. The large, external front door lock appears original.

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to the building of the house.¹ Most of the ceilings are now covered with acoustical tile, and walls on the first floor are either papered or were paneled in the relatively recent past. One room on the second floor is paneled; the remainder are plastered or papered.

Changes to the property include the moving of the house from the fort area to its present location in 1867. A map of the military reserve dating to 1835 illustrates a one story dwelling with a wing to the left side at the dwelling's original location. It is possible that a second story was added to this building as suggested by the variation between the first and second floors in the timber frame construction. If this occurred, the mortise-and-tenon, timber frame construction indicates that this addition took place relatively soon after the initial building. Any side wing has been removed. The 1901 Sanborn-Perris map illustrating Cook Street also shows two small rear, one story, shingle roof, frame additions which were removed between 1918 and 1929 (Sanborn-Perris Map Company, 1901; 1910; 1918; 1929). Additional alterations include screening added to the porch, the replacement of a 6/6 window on the first floor of the east elevation with a pair of French doors, the removal of four side chimneys, and the possible alteration of a rear window into the center door. The right-hand rear door likely once led into the non-extant rear addition. The front porch with its railing appears original, at least to 1867 (Stoner, 1882). Although of some antiquity, the two French doors were not common to this style and are likely a later addition. The asphalt roof which replaces the original wood shingle roof (Sanborn-Perris Map Company, 1901; 1929) and the concrete block wall in the basement represent common modifications.

Interior alterations include the covering of first floor walls and the wall of one room on the second floor with paneling and the addition of ceiling tile. These changes mask but do not alter the original surfaces. The wall separating the front, southwest room and the room to its rear was added. The creation of three bathrooms, one between the east two front rooms on the first floor, one in the stairway to the attic once occupied by a second stairway to the first floor, and a third along with a storage area in the northwest corner of the second floor; the addition of a china closet in the current dining room; and the removal of the original chimneys constitute other changes.

Positioned in the original alley, a two-car garage was erected between 1918 and 1929 (Sanborn-Perris Map Company, 1918; 1929). This one-story and a loft building is frame covered with clapboards and it is sheltered by an asphalt shingle-clad gable roof. Two sets of double, vertical board, side-hinged doors

¹ The lock resembles those fashioned by John Walker of Birmingham, England after 1830. He manufactured hardware, saddlery, and Japanned wares (Winterthur trade catalogue).

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on the west elevation face Monroe Street. An open carport with fiber glass roof is placed immediately in front of the doors. Because of its materials, this frame outbuilding is not obtrusive. While the carport is, it is relatively temporary as is the modern board fence.

Although it continues to overlook the Portage Canal, the setting, of course, has altered with the move from its rural location along the canal opposite Fort Winnebago. The post-1867 location offers the house a relatively neutral setting in a residential neighborhood and it remains visually associated with the canal and the Portage area.

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.)

- 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

1835-1839 (1)

Significant Dates

1835-1839 (1)

1867 (2)

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

unknown

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 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:

Portage Free Library

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8. Significance

The Henry Merrell House gains significance under criterion C in the area of architecture. Representing the development of the Greek Revival style in the Portage area, the dwelling has significance at the local level. Elaborated with cornice moldings, frieze boards, cornice returns, gable motif, and sidelights and overlight surrounding the front door, the dwelling represents a simple interpretation of the Greek Revival style. Its period of significance is 1835 to 1839, its estimated building date (Butterfield, 1880a: 429-31; Williams, 1835). Despite being moved from block 68 and outlot 106 of the Webb and Bronson Plat on the west side of the Fox River west of Fort Winnebago to lots 9 and 10 in block 182 in 1867 (Rufus, 1868; Harrison and Warner, 1873; Smith, Rogers Abstract Company, 1923; Purdy, n.d.; De La Ronde, 1908 [1876]; U.S. War Department, 1851; Wisconsin State Register, 1869 [8/28]), the building possesses significance under criterion exception B because of its early building date, high level of physical integrity for a building dating to the late 1830s, and its fine representation of the Greek Revival style. Because it was moved, the dwelling does not possess significance under criterion B for its association with Henry Merrell.

Historical Background

The City of Portage lies along the narrow, one and a half mile strip of land (or the portage) which separates the Wisconsin and Fox rivers, a long-standing transportation route between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi. Individuals such as Laurent Barth, Jean LeCuyer, and Francis LeRoy who had purchased the right to transport goods across the portage from the Winnebago began settling near the portage in the early 1790s. By 1801, traders such as Augustin Grignon also located at the portage for brief periods (Titus, 1930 (2): 776). In this period, the area to the south and east of the Fox was generally associated with the Winnebago until the treaty of 1832. Until 1849-1851, the area northwest of the Fox River was associated with the Menominee. Thus, although Augustine Grignon received a government land grant which included much of the future site of the City of Portage in 1832, this area west of the Fox was not surveyed or opened to public sale until 1851 (Turner, 1904: 38, 46; De La Ronde, 1908: 358; Merrell, 1919: 11, 57). John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company gained control of the Wisconsin fur trade beginning in 1815, following the War of 1812. Pierre Pauquette became the company's agent at the portage in 1824. The importance of the fur trade waned after the Black Hawk War of 1832. Locally, the trade ceased shortly after Astor sold the post at Portage in 1836.

The Winnebago and other groups resisted the Euro-American settlement which had begun to spread from its initial nucleus in the mining areas of southwest Wisconsin in the 1820s and 1830s. To create a position of authority along the

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Wisconsin-Fox transportation link, thus protecting the fur trade route and settlement to the south and west, the American government established Fort Winnebago on a plateau along the east side of the Fox River in 1828, one year after the Winnebago War. The stockade was located along the boundary between Section 33, Township 13 North, Range 9 East and Section 4, Township 12 North, Range 9 East. Creating what became known as the military reserve, the government withdrew 4000 acres of lands associated with the fort from the market in 1835 (US General Land Office, 1851; Turner, 1898b: 65, 70-72, 99; Titus, 1930 (1): 264; Fay, 1986: 1-5; Curtis, 1974: 12-14).

The government completed the fort buildings between 1829 and 1832. It began the military road which connected Fort Winnebago to Fort Howard in Green Bay and Fort Crawford in Prairie Du Chien in 1833. This road gave settlers greater access to the Portage area. During the fort's occupancy by the troops, a small settlement grew up around the fort. Buildings adjacent to the fort included the sutlers stores, outbuildings, and dwellings of those who worked in association with the military. The troops left Fort Winnebago in the fall of 1846. The government sold the lands of the military reserve into private ownership in 1853. By the time of the departure of the military, additional businesses adjacent to the fort included a mill, Merrell's and several other mercantile stores, druggist, blacksmith, jeweler, and post office. Although the abandoned fort became the temporary residence of early settlers, the settlement dwindled after the military lands were sold and became farms (Federal Writer's Project of Wisconsin, 1938: 31, 34-35; Titus, 1930 (1): 245, 266; Turner, 1898b: 71; Cleland, 1968: 1-4; Butterfield, 1880a: 430).

Two additional settlements emerged near the site of Fort Winnebago between the Fox and the Wisconsin rivers. Established by the 1840s, one was a small settlement of dwellings, hotels, and taverns in what later became Ward I of the future city on the south side of the Portage Canal, which served those transporting logs to the Mississippi and other travelers as they traveled along the Wisconsin. The ward later contained some of Portage's early industries. The second settlement emerged near the current business district of Portage by the 1850s. The Town of Fort Winnebago, the Grignon Claim, was platted by Webb and Bronson in 1849. The Guppy plat of 1852 includes that area of the City of Portage west of the 1849 plat. Although Columbia County was created from Portage County in 1846, the county seat was not moved to Portage until 1851.

Combining the three settlements, Portage became incorporated as a city in 1854. By the 1850s, the City of Portage grew rapidly as a trading center serving the farms within a 60 mile radius. Although work on the two-and-a-half mile Portage Canal had begun as early as 1838 to facilitate Portage's role as a shipment point, the project did not reach completion until 1876. The city gained a railroad connection in 1857. Its residents developed industries such as saw mills, flour mills, tannery, breweries, iron works, about ten mercantile stores

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by 1853, hotels, and numerous small businesses, crafts, commercial warehouses and grain elevators. The city served as a shipping point for its agricultural as well as its industrial products. Its businesses provided supplies to lumber camps to the north. As the pineries began to rely more on the railroad and long distance trade centers for supplies between the 1860s and 1880s, Portage's economy refocused on agricultural processing, storage of these products, shipment of wheat and other agricultural goods, and industries which served local agriculture. This industrial emphasis did not alter until the 1880s. Continuing to serve its broad agricultural hinterlands, its retail businesses continued to flourish (Turner, 1904: 38; Jones, 1914: 55, 186-87; Wisconsin State Register, 1874 [6/13]; 1875 [11/6]; Butterfield, 1880a: 588-89; McKay, 1981: 30-41).

Henry Merrell played a role in the economic as well as the social development of Portage from his arrival in 1834 to his death in 1876. Merrell was born in Utica, New York in 1804. In 1819, he moved with his family to Sackett's Harbor, New York where he later became a clerk in the mercantile store of his brother, Gordon Merrell. In 1834, Henry Merrell became sutler at Fort Winnebago, initially shipping his supplies from Buffalo. He placed his store of goods at the small settlement surrounding the fort in what has been identified as the fort's commissary, a one story log store located just southwest of the military road and the fort on the east side of the Fox. One of the last buildings immediately associated with the fort to remain standing, this building was removed in about 1912. Merrell also served as the postmaster for the area from 1834 to 1846. He utilized the commissary and lived at the fort until 1835. Merrell erected a one story dwelling opposite the fort west of the Fox, and north of the later location of the Portage Canal. His dwelling was located on the northeast corner of the 640 acre tract formally patented to Augustine Grignon in 1832. This tract had been deeded to others as early as 1828, and was finally transferred to Benjamin Webb in 1842. Section 4, on which the Merrell house stood, was also a part of the Military Reservation established by the army in 1835. However, Webb and Bronson platted a portion of it in 1849. Merrell acquired clear title to the land on which his dwelling stood by purchasing 12.48 acres described as lot 7 in section 24, about equivalent to outlot 106, from the military in 1853, and block 68 and other lands from Webb and Bronson in 1855, after government surveys reached completion (Columbia County Tile Company, n.d.; Purdy, n.d.; Jones, 1914: 54-55; Turner, 1898a: 64, 82; Williams, 1835; Cleland, 1968: 30).

Merrell served as sutler at Fort Winnebago until 1838, when he established his own general mercantile business, and he also continued the post office in a store on the west side of the Fox, probably near his dwelling. His brother, Gordon Merrell, may have joined him in his business. Since he is listed as operating a foundry in the 1860 census, he may have retired from active involvement in the mercantile store (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1860). Sometime between 1835 and 1839, Merrell either erected a new dwelling or as likely added a second story to

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the 1835 one-story residence (Williams, 1835; Butterfield, 1880a: 429-31). By 1838, this dwelling also served as a hotel. It continued to have this function into the 1860s (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1850; 1860; Butterfield 1880a: 429). Merrell served as Benjamin Webb's land agent, selling the lots platted by Webb and Bronson in 1849. Eventually he owned considerable property adjacent to the fort and either he or his son operated the property as a farm (Merrell, 1876: 366-404; Butterfield, 1880a: 418, 430, 526-27; Williams, 1835; Purdy, n.d.; Turner, 1898a: 82; Wisconsin State Register, 1874 [6/13]; Jones, 1914: 184-85; Cleland, 1968: 33; Curtis, 1974: 45).

Merrell's role as a resident in the City of Portage is less well known. In 1867, he moved his dwelling from the Fort Winnebago area to 505 Cook Street (Rufus, 1868; Harrison and Warner, 1873; Smith, Rogers Abstract Company, 1923; U.S. Department of War, 1851; Wisconsin State Register, 1869 [8/28]). Webb and Bronson had sold lots 9 and 10 in block 182 with other lands to Chauncey J. Pettibone in 1853. Edward Lewis purchased the property from Pettibone in 1858, and Lewis sold the property to Alvin Alden in 1861. Merrell acquired it from Alden in 1867, (Smith, Rogers Abstract Company, 1923). The date of the dwelling which stood on the lot prior to the Merrell house (Rufus, 1868) and conforms in size to the present cellar is unknown. After the late 1850s, Merrell appears to have reduced his merchandising business. Property associated with his business enterprises in the City of Portage remains unidentified. He probably speculated in real estate in the Portage area from at least the 1840s (Columbia, County of [tax assessments] 1848-49). In 1863, he also attained partial ownership of a La Crosse foundry known as Smith and Merrell. The company produced threshing machines and engaged in jobbing, primarily of agricultural implements. He continued this business until his death in 1876. In 1871, Merrell was listed as a clerk, probably with his son-in-law Edmund Purdy. Purdy operated a drug store in the city of Portage (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1870; Butterfield, 1880a: 527; 1880b: 636; Chapin, 1870: 33; Portage Daily Register 1959 [7/7: 4]; Sanborn-Perris Map Company, 1901; Wisconsin State Register, 1869 [7/28]).

Merrell served in several civic and community offices. He served as clerk of courts as well as justice of the peace in the mid to late 1830s. Merrell took the federal census of 1840. In 1848, he represented the first senatorial district of the state as a whig in the second session of the state legislature. He was also active in the founding, leadership, and support of St. John's Episcopal Parish at Portage from its founding in 1853 (St. John's Episcopal Church, 1978; Jones, 1914: 54, 216; De La Ronde, 1908 [1876]: 360; Portage Daily Register, 1959: 4; Wisconsin State Register, 1875 [11/6]; Turner, 1904: 27; Merrell, 1904 [1876]: 366-404; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1840).

At his death in 1876, Merrell left his lands near Fort Winnebago and lots 9 and 10 in block 182 in Portage to his three children, Henry L. Merrell, Helen Merrell Purdy, and Benjah Merrell. His wife, Elizabeth Law, had died six years after

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their marriage in 1847. Henry Merrell received the real estate on Cook Street. In 1899, the dwelling and property were transferred to Adeline and Charles L. Derling. After the death of Adeline or Sarah Derling, the property was sold to Charles J. Kutze in 1923. After his death, Edith P. Beil received the house in 1945. At her death in 1947, Hazel Nyberg and her husband Nils and Anna Murphy inherited the property. Hazel Nyberg who operated the house as a rest home sold it to Michael Drury, the present owner, in 1957 (Smith, Rogers Abstract Co., 1923; Columbia, County of [will] 1869; 1875).

Area of Significance: Architecture

The Henry Merrell House gains its significance in the area of architecture as an early example of the vernacular interpretation of the Greek Revival style. In Wisconsin, settlers brought the style west primarily from New York and Ohio. Wisconsin Examples were erected from 1820 to the 1860s (Perrin, 1967: 63-64; Hamlin, 1944: 262, 303; Perrin, 1979: 45). The Greek Revival is a symmetrical, formal style. With low-pitched roofs, these buildings have a heavy appearance and are simple in their decoration. Although many Wisconsin examples are ell-shaped, the Merrell dwelling retains the temple form, a form common to western and central New York. Leaving walls generally unaffected, decorative elaboration is applied primarily to the doors, windows, gables, eaves, and corners of the building. Detailing common to these simple interpretations also includes regular fenestration, returned cornices, doorway with rectangular transom, and sidelights (Godfrey, 1986: 2-3; Hamlin, 1944: 28; Perrin, 1979: 45-47).

The Merrell house illustrates these Greek Revival characteristics. While the Merrell house lacks a portico, pilasters detailed with Grecian orders, classical cornices, or the heavy moldings of more elaborate examples, its gables, eaves, and the main entrance door frame carry simple moldings. Its design displays regular symmetry, although the four openings across the facade with offset door and hall is less common. In addition, the house has a simple cornice and its frieze boards below the eaves also incorporate the second floor window heads. The lattice work across the sidelights and overlight and the triangular motif in the gable are unusual details. Crossing the width of the facade, the one-story porch detailed with the shaped balusters of the railing and the tapered, paneled piers appears to be original to at least 1867. The early Greek Revival designs often retained a central hall with two flanking rooms of equal width and depth (Hamlin, 1944: 303). The Merrell house partially retains this form: its first floor hall is offset and runs less than one-half the length of the house while the upstairs conforms to this early plan. Thus, the Merrell house displays typical characteristics of vernacular Greek Revival design in Wisconsin.

The dwelling's date of significance, 1835 to 1839, represents the probable period in which the dwelling was erected. Merrell did not arrive at Fort

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Winnebago until 1834. He initially lived within the fort. Williams' map of the area of the fort indicates that there was a one-story residence in the area of the dwelling's first location just west of the fort and canal by 1835. The presence of the house was noted by De La Ronde in 1836. Its construction and use as a hotel is placed at 1838-1839 by the county history. Variation in the heavy timber frame construction between the first and second floors suggests a slightly later date for the erection of the second floor. Since sawn timber would soon be available from nearby mills supplied by the Wisconsin lumber region by the 1840s, the house presumably acquired its second story by 1839 (Williams, 1835; Butterfield, 1880a: 429-431; U.S. Department of War, 1851; n.d.; Merrell, 1904 [1876]: 401; Cleland, 1968: 33; De La Ronde, 1908 [1876]: 357; Purdy, n.d.). The decayed fort was completely demolished in 1866, entirely removing this initial focal point of settlement (Cleland 1968: 4). Probably choosing to relocate closer to the center of business, Merrell very likely moved his dwelling in 1867, the date he purchased lots 9 and 10 in block 182 in the City of Portage. In 1869, Merrell built a walk at his Portage property (Rufus, 1868; Harrison and Warner, 1873; Smith Rogers Abstract Company, 1923; Wisconsin State Register, 1869 [8/28]; U.S. Department of War, 1851).

Despite being a moved building, the dwelling retains significance under Criterion Consideration B because it represents a very early, intact example of the Greek Revival style. Its current setting is a residential neighborhood that contains dwellings displaying styles dating from the second half of the nineteenth century. In addition, most of the buildings near its original location such as Fort Winnebago and its support buildings are no longer extant, making it one of the few survivors from that era.

The dwelling also gains significance at the local level as one of a small number of intact examples of Greek Revival architecture in the City of Portage. The Wisconsin site inventory records three examples of this style in addition to the Merrell house.

The temple portion of the two-and-a-half story, cream brick Corning-Clark house (CO 4/12) at 532 Wisconsin Street was erected by Cornelius Helms between 1853 and 1855. The dwelling displays a full pediment and a porch supported by a doric colonnade. A rectangular overlight and entablature and sidelights surround the main entrance. The kitchen side ell represents a later addition.

The example (CO 5/18) at 214 West Howard was erected as a church in ca. 1852 by the Society of Methodists under the direction of Reverend Isaac Smith. By about 1910, it was converted to a residence. The frame, T-shaped, one-story building carries full pediments at its three gables and pilasters finish its corners. It has lost its steeple and the double front entrance has been closed (data provided by Kathy Taylor, Portage). While the building continues to retain Greek Revival features, it was not erected as a dwelling and therefore is not directly

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comparable to the Merrell house.

The final example at 316 East Cook is a two-and-a-half story frame dwelling with its main entrance in the gable end. It also represents the temple form and has a one story addition placed at the rear. Its three openings are symmetrically arranged across the facade. Cornice returns elaborate the gable ends. Any other decorative features are now covered by aluminum siding. Relatively recent additions occur along the east side elevation, and an enclosed porch covers its front.

The Merrell house represents a very early example of the Greek Revival style in Portage. It and the Corning-Clark house compose the two relatively intact, identified examples in the city. Although its setting was altered with its move from the rural Fort Winnebago area to an urban setting, its early date and physical integrity give the house significance under criterion C. Other relatively minor exterior changes include the screening of the porch, the addition of the French doors, the opening of a rear door, and the conversion of a rear window into a door. Interior changes are for the most part reversible: the covering of walls with paneling and the lowering of ceilings with tile. The floor plan has been altered in some areas of the house with the conversion of the rear stair area to a bathroom, the creation of a second bathroom, the dividing of one bedroom into a storage area and a third bathroom, and the addition of a dividing wall between the current living room and front bedroom. However, these changes fail to compromise the overall Greek Revival detailing or the spatial qualities of the building.

(1) Butterfield, 1880: 429-31; Williams, 1835.

(2) Rufus, 1868; Harrison and Warner, 1873; Smith, Rogers Abstract Company, 1923; U.S. Department of War, 1851; Wisconsin State Register, 1869 [8/28]; Purdy, n.d.; De La Ronde, 1908 [1876].

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Merrell, Henry House
Name of Property

Columbia Co., WI
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

| | | | |
|---|------|-------------|---------------|
| 1 | 1 6 | 3 0 1 7 8 0 | 4 8 2 3 8 1 0 |
| | 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 Joyce McKay, Cultural Resources Consultant

organization private consultant date 7/2/92

street & number P.O. Box 258 telephone 608-424-6315

city or town Belleville Wisconsin state Wisconsin zip code 53508

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 Michael Drury

street & number 505 East Cook telephone 608-249-7426

city or town Portage state Wisconsin zip code 53901

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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National Park Service

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10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary of the property extends along the outer limits of lots 9 and 10 and the rear alley in block 182 in the original town plat of Portage.

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries enclose all the land associated with the property after 1867 (Smith, Rogers Abstract Company, 1923).

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Section number _____ photo _____ 1
Page _____

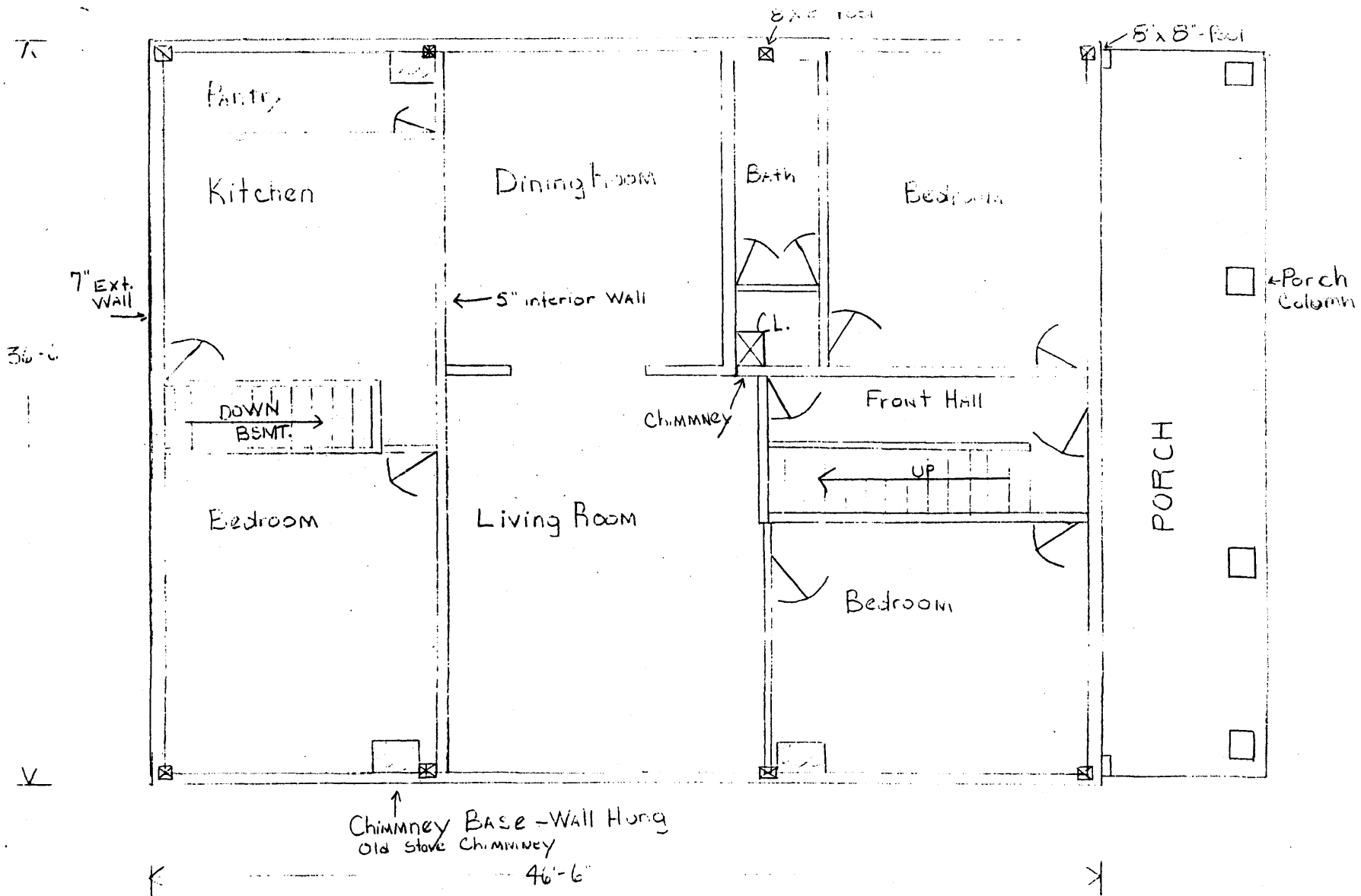
Photographic Documentation

Property Name: Merrell, Henry House
Location: Portage, Columbia County, Wisconsin
Photographer: Joyce McKay
Date of photographs: May 20, 1992
Repository: State Historical Society of Wisconsin

Description:

1. View of the south facade and west elevation facing north.
2. View of the south facade and east elevation facing northwest.
3. View of the west elevation facing southeast.
4. View of the rear or north elevation facing southeast.
5. View of the garage facing northeast.
6. View of the main entrance facing northwest.
7. View of the main stair and front entrance hall facing southwest.
8. View of the lock along the main entrance door facing southwest.

1st FLOOR

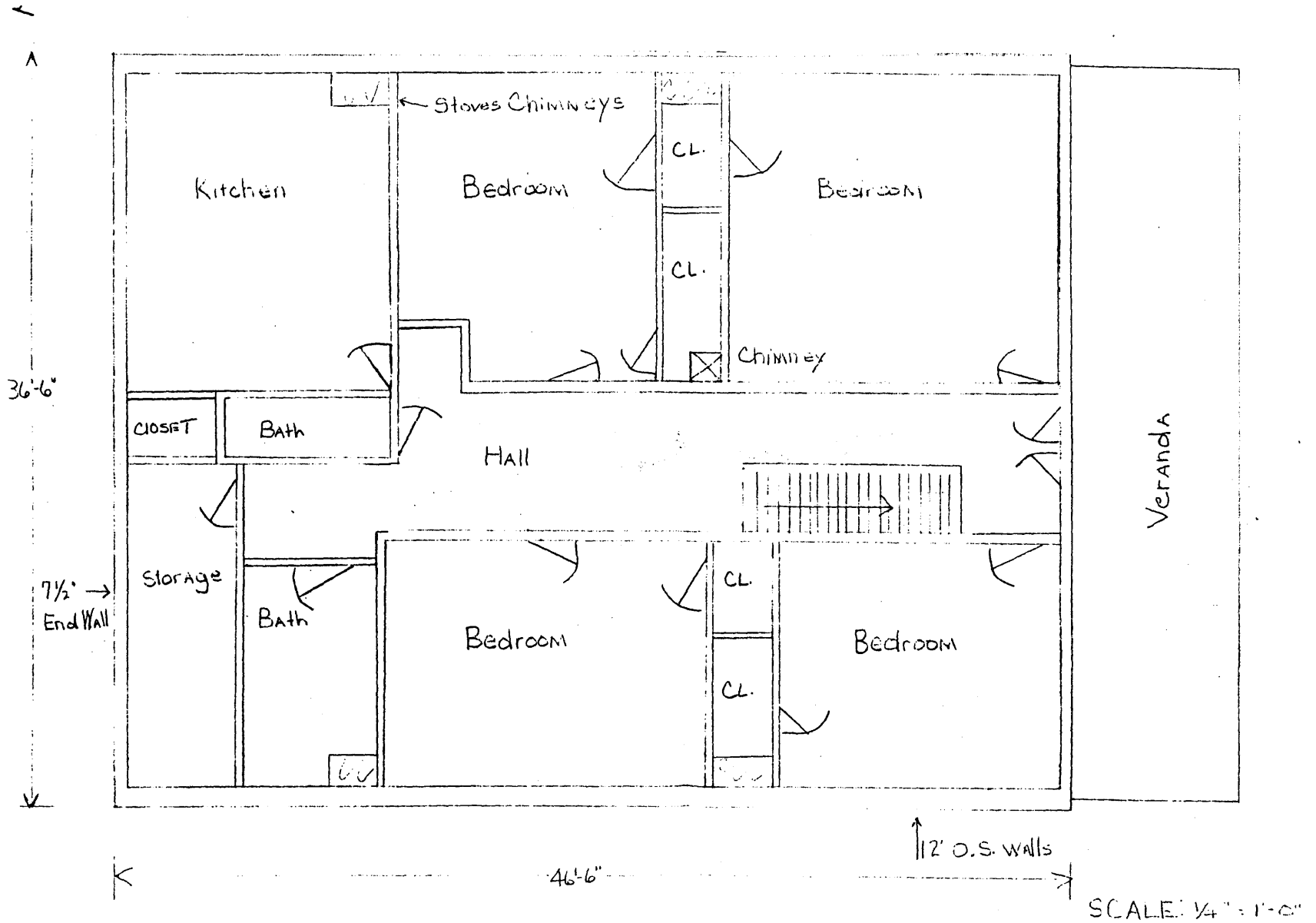


SCALE: 1/4" = 1'0"

J. D. HUNT

Merrell, Henry House
Portage, Columbia Co, WI

2nd Floor



Merrell, Henry House
Portage, Columbia Co., WI