



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

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Gunning – Purves Building
other names/site number Adams County Heritage Center

2. Location

street & number 311 Main Street N/A not for publication
city or town Friendship N/A vicinity
state Wisconsin code WI county Adams code 001 zip code 53934

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.)

Jim Draeger
Signature of certifying official/Title
State Historic Preservation Officer - Wisconsin

1/14/15
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau

Gunning - Purves Building

Adams

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
 - entered in the National Register.
 - See continuation sheet.
 - determined eligible for the National Register.
 - See continuation sheet.
 - determined not eligible for the National Register.
 - See continuation sheet.
 - removed from the National Register.
 - other, (explain:)

Ethan H. Beall

3-3-15

[Signature]

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1	0
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> site		structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		objects
		1	0 Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce: financial institution

Commerce: specialty store

Commerce: business

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture: Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th and EARLY 20th CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENT/ Commercial Style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls metal, vinyl

roof rubber

other

Narrative Description

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

Name of Property

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1904

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

George L Mesker & Company

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographic References

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

Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less Than One Acre

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

1	<u>16</u>	<u>274077</u>	<u>4872581</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

See Continuation Sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Patricia Lacey	date	2-26-2014
organization		telephone	715-743-4799
street & number	W5055 US HWY 10	zip code	54456
city or town	Neillsville	state	WI

Name of Property

County and State

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/title	date
organization	telephone
street & number	zip code
city or town	state

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Section 7 Page 1

Gunning – Purves Building
Friendship, Adams County, Wisconsin

Introduction

The Gunning – Purves Building, at 311 Main Street in Friendship, Wisconsin, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The building is significant as an excellent representation of an early 20th Century two-part commercial block building which were being constructed in towns of various sizes all across America. The most distinguishing feature of the building is the George L. Mesker & Company pressed and stamped metal storefront. Individuals who wanted to construct a high style commercial building in a small town may not have had access to either an architect or a skilled builder. The Mesker Company offered an affordable alternative, offering a wide selection of pre-fabricated metal architectural elements and wall coverings, available through a catalog. Building owners could combine elements, patterns and decorative features how they liked, order the components from the catalog, and after the selections were made, these elements were often shipped to the depot in closest proximity to town by rail and subsequently delivered to the construction site. The pressed and stamped metal pieces were light weight, produced in a size that were easily handled, and could be nailed to a waiting building by local carpenters.

Site Description

The Gunning – Purves Building, 311 Main Street, is located within the corporate limits of the Village of Friendship in Adams County. The Gunning – Purves Building is set among the oldest buildings of the three block commercial district in Friendship. All of the commercial buildings in Friendship are free standing and do not have common walls with the building on either side. The building is sited on the west side of Main Street (State Highway 13), overlooking the 1914 Adams County Courthouse. The courthouse is one of the few buildings that are set back from the sidewalk and resides in a charming park-like setting with large trees. State Highway 13 travels north-south through Friendship, bisecting the village.

Exterior Description

The Gunning – Purves Building is a two-part commercial style block building constructed in 1904. The building is 66' x 42' and two-stories in height. The perimeter of the building rests on a stone and mortar foundation. A small concrete block basement, which was added at a later date, is located under the rear of the building. The skeleton of the building was constructed utilizing the balloon framing method. The joists are of 2" x 12" construction and the walls are of 2" x 4" construction. In order to prepare for the application of the George L. Mesker & Company storefront and secondary wall coverings, the building was sheathed with 1" x 6" pine planks. The light-weight metal pieces were overlapped and nailed into position on the planks. The overlapping made the seams invisible from a distance.

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Gunning – Purves Building
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East (Main) Façade- First Floor

The building presents a strong symmetrical image to the street. The main, facade of the building abuts the sidewalk which parallels Main Street. The first floor housed the public spaces. The facade has a centered, recessed, three-door angled entry. The door which is set the furthest back from the sidewalk is the entrance to the enclosed stairwell. This stairwell accesses the second floor of the building. The north door at the first floor angles at 45° to the northeast from the central stairwell door. The south portion entry door of the first floor angles at 45° to the southeast from the central stairwell entry door. Each of the doors contains a large single light. Two recessed panels appear beneath the light of each door. The panels are identical to those of the main window bulkheads. Above each door is a single light transom; the transoms are covered but extant. Only the centered stairwell door transom is uncovered, allowing natural light into the stairwell.

The north and south ends of the facade have large flat metal pilasters, above which the sign board traverses the width of the building between the first and second stories. The flat portions of the pilasters are stamped with a mirrored scroll pattern. A shell motif is pressed into the center area created by the mirrored scrolls. The large brackets at the top of the first floor pilasters are stamped with a ribbon design on the top panel, morning glories on the sloped panel of the bracket, and a shell pattern on the lower panel of the bracket. The morning glory was an identifying motif for the George L. Mesker & Co. and is often found on his storefronts.¹ Identical pilasters flank the central three-door angled entry stoop. The bases of each of these four pilasters have G. L. MESKER & CO EVANSVILLE IND stamped into the base panel.

Between the pair of pilasters to the north of the entrance are two large wood-framed single light display windows. The two display windows rest on a wood frame bulkhead. Each bulkhead has four recessed panels. Above each single display window is a two light transom which has been boarded over. An additional narrow, single light display window is located just east of the north entrance. This window also rests on a wood frame bulkhead. The bulkhead below this window has two recessed panels. The narrow display window has a single light transom which has been boarded over.

Appearing to the south of the entry stoop and between the south building edge pilaster and the south entry stoop pilaster is a wood framed Chicago window. The horizontal window consists of a large, rectangular, fixed, central light with narrow vertical double-hung sash on either side. The window unit rests on a wood frame bulkhead. Each bulkhead has four recessed panels. Above the window unit are two single-transoms which have been boarded over. An additional narrow single light display window is located just east of the south entry door. This window also rests on a wood frame bulkhead. The

¹ *Historic Illinois*, (Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, Division of Preservation Services, Vol. 28, No. 6, April 2006) page 8.

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Gunning – Purves Building
Friendship, Adams County, Wisconsin

bulkhead below this window has two recessed panels. The narrow display window has a single light transom which is extant but has been boarded over.

East (Main) Façade- Second Floor

The second floor housed the more private spaces. The second floor facade has seven windows. A single double-hung sash is located at the center point of the second floor. This window sheds light into the stairwell which accesses the second floor. This same window also transfers light through a window which is located on the wall of the closet of the north portion's funeral parlor. This transfer of light provides additional light to the stairwell and the second floor hallway.

The remaining six double-hung sash windows are placed in two groups of three windows. One of the window groupings appears at either side of the centered single window. The original double-hung sash wood windows have been replaced with double-hung vinyl windows that have a transom above each window. Appearing at either side of the single window and at either side of the three-window groups are flat stylized pilasters. The face of the pilaster has a narrow band of sheet metal which is stamped with a stacked shell pattern. A square panel appears both at the top and at the bottom of the band of sheet metal. A pattern of decreasing open circles creating a stylized shell pattern is stamped on these panels. Stamped metal siding, which appears as fourteen rows of hewn stone block, covers the surface of the four areas between the three window grouping and the single window.

A metal belt course traverses the width of the building becoming the sills for the seven double-hung sash windows. Directly above the second floor windows is a flat panel of stamped metal which spans the width of the building. A repeating rolling wave pattern is stamped into the panel. Four additional rows of stamped metal siding having the rock-faced appearance are above the rolling wave panel. Another panel across the width of the building appears above the four rows of metal block. A repeating pattern of a stylized urn with tendrils and scrolls is stamped into the panel.

Each additional decorative metal element added above the windows of the second floor facade protrudes successively outward culminating in the metal bracketed cornice. A pressed metal cornice traverses the width of the top of the building. It features small molded brackets whose face is stamped with a single morning glory on a slender stem. The panels between the brackets are embossed with the head of a large flower. The ends of the cornice are supported with large brackets which have a flower motif on the top panel and a grouping of morning glories on the sloped panel of the bracket.

A metal alarm box appears at the south end of the second floor. This alarm box is not original to the building and was added at a later date. The roof of the building slopes from the front of the building to the rear of the building. This slope is concealed behind a parapet, which remains a constant height from the front to the rear of the building. The parapet is three feet high at the rear of the building. The roof is covered with a 45 mil rubber membrane surface.

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Gunning – Purves Building
Friendship, Adams County, Wisconsin

North, South and West (Secondary) Facades

The north, south and west facades are treated in a utilitarian manner. Originally, they were covered with the same stamped metal siding that appears on the front façade of the building. The original metal sheeting has been removed and has been replaced with vinyl clapboard siding.

The south facing wall has five evenly spaced double-hung sash windows on the first floor and four evenly spaced double-hung sash windows on the second floor. These are the original window openings; however, the original wood windows have been replaced with vinyl windows.

The north facing wall never had any windows on the first floor as it is very close to the building to the north. The six original second floor windows have been covered up with the vinyl clapboard siding; however, they are extant on the inside of the building in their original form.

The rear west facing wall has had the windows on the first floor removed and the openings covered over with the vinyl clapboard siding. An original door is located at the north end of the rear façade and accesses an interior hallway. The second floor has a central door flanked by two window openings north of the entrance and two window openings south of the entrance. The window and door openings are original but the original wood windows have been replaced with vinyl windows and the original wood door has been replaced with a steel insulated door. There is a contemporary balcony with no exterior stairs to the ground.

The exterior front façade of the Gunning – Purves Building remains in excellent condition. The exterior, including most of the architectural elements found on the George L. Mesker & Co. metal façade, have been painted a soft khaki color. The bulkheads, transom covers, pilasters that flank the second story windows, and the brackets of the cornice have been painted a turquoise blue. A study was made of the existing layers of paint and colors were selected to match the original.

The exact patterns stamped on the metal of the corner pilasters, window pilasters, linear decorative panels and the designs presented within the cornice were discerned with the use of a magnifying glass on the c1905 photo labeled; *Ornate iron beds visible in furniture store windows*. The building has been painted many times over the last one hundred and ten years, so that even when viewing it in person it is difficult to determine the exact motifs of some of the pressed metal.

Interior Description

The first floor of the building contained a furniture store on the north half; the south half had a bank at the front of the building and an abstract and title office at the rear. On the second floor, the north half of the building had a funeral parlor at the front of the building; the south half had an attorney's office at the front and a newspaper office at the back. One is immediately struck by the extensive use of

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Gunning – Purves Building
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stamped metal sheeting which appears on all of the walls and ceilings of the first and second levels of the Gunning - Purves Building. In addition, heavy pressed metal cornices with massive outside corners appear at the top of the 12' ceilings of the first floor. Smaller scale pressed metal cornices appear at the top of the 10' foot ceilings of the second floor. The stamped metal walls and ceilings exhibit motifs of swags, urns, floral wreaths, tendrils, leaves, shells, and geometric patterns. The most repeated pattern utilized throughout the building is that of a burning torch. The torch is similar to the torch of the 1886 Statue of Liberty. The symbolism of the torch conveys a sense of honor, integrity and trustworthiness which describes the theme of several of the businesses originally housed in the Gunning – Purves Building.

The interior configurations, or plan, of the first and second floors remain intact. The first floor retains the spaces used for the bank, bank vault, abstract office and front portion of the furniture store. Portions of the rear of the furniture store have had a small kitchen, office area, two bathrooms, and a closet partitioned out of its original floor space. The storage room, which is located at the rear of the building, was fire-proofed with concrete block, more than likely by the second owner of the abstract business. As more files accumulated, the concrete bank vault did not provide sufficient storage space.

The most interesting artifact that remains on the first floor of the building is the small walk-in concrete abstract and title vault. The vault is in the southwest corner of the gift shop (formerly the space used by the Friendship State Bank). It is secured with two original steel doors, one in front of another. A barrel vaulted ceiling is on the inside. The free-standing Diebold safe that was installed by the Friendship State Bank remains in the vault as does the alarm system. The alarm system was installed at a later date.

The second floor is accessed by an interior stairwell which is reached through the middle door of the main entrance. The second floor retains its original plan with the exception of a proposed bathroom that has been framed out in the small room west of the funeral parlor. The various patterns of pressed metal sheets used on the second floor reflects the use of each space. The funeral parlor, which is located in the northeast corner of the second floor, has an elaborate swag pattern stamped into its metal wall covering. The attorney's office, which is located in the southeast corner of the second floor, exhibits ten different patterns which are stamped into the metal walls, ceiling and cornices. The pressed metal ceiling of the attorney's office also features a decorative dropped molding band. The molding band is located well away from the side walls of the room and travels completely around the ceiling of the room. The attorney's office is the only room in the building which has a maple hardwood floor. The remaining floors in the building are covered with pine planking of various widths.

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Gunning – Purves Building
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The walls of the newspaper office, which was located in the southwest corner of the second floor, are very simply covered with pressed metal resembling clapboard siding. The metal clapboard siding is applied vertically.

A main hallway extends from the top of the stairs to the west entry door. A smaller hallway exits the south side main hallway, providing an entrance to the attorney's office. Two windows are located on the south wall of the smaller hallway. Light from a room located on the other side of the south wall of the hallway transfers into the hallway.

The six north-facing second floor windows which have been covered with vinyl clapboard siding on the exterior are visible in their original form on the inside of the north wall.

Alterations

The main, east facing, façade of the Gunning – Purves Building, retains its pressed metal George L. Mesker storefront, and is marked by a high degree of historic integrity. The only changes that have been made to the facade are reversible: 1.) The original seven wood windows have been removed from the second floor. They have been replaced with vinyl windows which were installed in the original openings. 2.) The first floor transoms have been covered with the exception of the transom of the stairwell to the second floor. 3.) The original finials that were located above the large end brackets of the cornice have been removed.

The remaining original windows on the north, south and west sides of the building have also been replaced with vinyl windows of the same size.

The stamped metal siding has been removed from the south, north and west facades. It has been replaced with vinyl clapboard siding. When the vinyl siding process was executed, the windows on the second floor of the north facing facade were covered over. However, they do appear in their original form on the inside of the north wall of the second floor. The rear (west) facade has had the windows on the first floor removed and also covered with vinyl clapboard siding.

Integrity

The main façade of the Gunning – Purves Building, with its pressed metal George L. Mesker & Co. storefront, retains its integrity and remains in excellent condition. This statement is supported by the historic photographs included with this nomination which show that the current and historic appearances are very similar. The façade's most important element, its decorative Mesker cladding, remains intact.

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Minor alterations have been made to the interior of the building to meet the needs of the past owner. The plan of the first and second floors of the building remains intact with the exception of those discussed previously in this nomination. The interior metal wall and ceiling coverings remain intact and are in excellent condition.

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Section 8 Page 1

Gunning – Purves Building
Friendship, Adams County, Wisconsin

Introduction

The Gunning – Purves Building is located at 311 Main Street (State Highway 13) in Friendship, Wisconsin. The free standing, two-part commercial block building is located on the west side of Main Street within Friendship’s three-block commercial district. This concentration of retail buildings provided a consolidated area in which to shop and conduct business.

The building eligible for the National Register under Criterion C, in the area of Architecture, significant as an excellent representation of an early 20th Century two-part commercial block. The Gunning – Purves Building is distinguished by its George L. Mesker & Co pressed and stamped metal storefront.

The period of significance is 1904, the year the building was constructed. The primary façade exhibiting the George L. Mesker & Co. pressed metal storefront retains excellent integrity as does the interior of the building.

Brief History of Friendship, Wisconsin

The first settler in Adams County was Jared Walsworth. In 1838 Walsworth established a supply post at what would become the town of New Haven. Walsworth supplied food for the lumbermen who were traveling to the pineries of central and northern Wisconsin. Additional Adams County settlers began to arrive to the area via the Territorial Road which ran from Milwaukee to Stevens Point. The settlers arriving to Adams County found extensive wetlands and very sandy soil. The poor soil quality did not support farming very well, so many did not stay but continued traveling to other destinations.

Areas along the Wisconsin River are quite scenic. Cold Water Canyon and Witches Gulch, which are part of “The Dells of Wisconsin”, are located in southwestern Adams County. The balance of the county features a rolling landscape which is occasionally punctuated with sandstone outcroppings. Some of these features are very steep and others are rounded and covered with tree growth.

Adams County was created on March 11, 1848, by an act of the Wisconsin State Legislature. It was formed with land taken from Portage County.² An additional act on March 8, 1849 greatly enlarged the county to 919,000 acres. The Wisconsin State Legislature enlarged Adams County once again on March 14, 1853.³ Then on March 8, 1855, after much controversy and considerable bitterness on the part of Adams County residents, the Wisconsin State Legislature again changed the boundaries of

² A. T., Andreas, *History of Northern Wisconsin*, (Western Historical Co., Chicago, 1881), pages 59-60.

³ *Historical Atlas of Wisconsin*, as transcribed on this web site from the text for Adams County, (Compiled and published by Snyder, Van Vecten & Co., Milwaukee, 1878), www.formycousins.com/1878/1878atlas-Adams.html.

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Gunning – Purves Building
Friendship, Adams County, Wisconsin

Adams County. The State of Wisconsin made the Wisconsin River the western boundary of Adams County and the county of Juneau was formed.

The last configuration of Adams County left the county seat, Quincy, on the western boundary of the county. Adams County citizens did not like this location as it required them to travel a considerable distance to conduct business. They desired a more central location for their county seat. On March 24, 1858, the Wisconsin State Legislature approved a referendum which allowed the citizens of Adams County to vote for where they wished to locate their county seat. An election was held and a 155 vote majority voted to move the county seat to Friendship.⁴

Friendship was first settled in 1856 by people who had traveled to the area from Friendship, Allegany Co., in western New York. Luther Stowell and W. Burbank erected the first grist mill on the Little Roche-a-Cri Creek, which is a short distance north of Friendship. L. Hecock erected the first residence which was later enlarged and became the Atcherson Hotel.⁵ By 1880, the village of Friendship had a population of 400 people. The community had several residences, a large two-story court house, a two-story school, and the Congregational Church.⁶

Hopes for a railroad

Having a rail line running through the community ensured successful growth and prosperity. By the end of the 1870s, tracks from various rail lines surrounded Adams County on all sides, but none had entered or crossed the county. J. E. Jones was quoted in 1910 as saying, “Nothing is more conspicuous in the development of a county than the building of railroads....nothing in the way of products or resources begins to count until the railroads come along....then new towns spring up almost in a night, rich farms are developed, factories are put in operation and the wilderness becomes a garden of wealth.”⁷

Several times over a thirty-year period, attempts were made to entice a railroad to build a line to and through Friendship. The closest that any railroad came before 1910 was sixteen miles east of Friendship at Liberty Bluff, located in Marquette County. Any local products had to be transported to the rail line, which added expense to every item. As a result, the population growth of Adams County was stymied. The population of Adams County was 6,492 in 1860. As a result of the absence of a railroad, the population of Adams County only grew by 397 individuals during the next thirty years. This was the slowest growth of any county in Wisconsin. In 1890, the population of Friendship was

⁴ A. T. Andreas, *History of Northern Wisconsin*, (Western Historical Co., Chicago, 1881), pages 59-60.

⁵ Ernest Klicko, *A History of Adams County*, Courtesy of the Office of the Adams County Clerk, 2005, www.wiroots.org/wiadams/history.html.

⁶ A. T. Andreas, *The History of Northern Wisconsin*, (Western Historical Co., Chicago, 1881), pages 59-60.

⁷ Michael J. Goc. *From Past to Present The History of Adams County*. (New Past Press Inc., Friendship, WI) page 82.

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still only around 400 people. That made it the least populous county seat in Wisconsin, as well as the only county seat which was not connected to a railroad. In 1890, the Adams County Board issued an invitation to any railroad that if they built a line into the county, the county would provide public aid.

In 1892 hopes were raised that the Chicago & NorthWestern Railroad would build a line from Princeton to Necedah. That route would bring the rail line right through Friendship. In 1893, the railroad surveyed the route. The rail line would approach the city from the southeast and leave the city heading northwest. In anticipation, County Treasurer Sophronius Landt, newspaper editor Solon Pierce, and hotel owner William Knight purchased land and platted the Oak Lawn Subdivision in Friendship. Several homes were built in the subdivision during 1893, but by winter of that year it was apparent that the railroad was not coming.

The population of Adams County began to grow somewhat in the late 19th Century. Since the most conducive lands for farming in Wisconsin had already been purchased, the immigrants from Bohemia, Germany and Poland gave Adams County another look. Dairy farming began to develop. Crops such as potatoes and rye did well in the loose sandy soil and the techniques of irrigation were explored. By 1900, the population of Adams County had grown to 9,141.

Railroad fever struck once again in 1900. R. A. Crandall and W. S. Syrett brought forth the old 1893 Chicago & NorthWestern Railroad survey. The men formed the Princeton & Wisconsin River Railroad and called out Adams County on their old promise to provide aid. They submitted a petition signed by 1182 county residents and called upon the county to issue bonds in the amount of \$100,000. Much to Crandall and Syrett's surprise the remaining people in Adams County, as well as several Adams County Board members, were less than excited by this bold approach. It appeared that this corporation was formed on shaky ground. A legal battle and court case ensued. Adams County won the lawsuit and they were not obligated to provide funding to the Princeton and Wisconsin River Railroad.

Perhaps sensing that eventually *some* rail line would be put through Friendship, John W. Gunning and John W. Purves built the Gunning and Purves two-part commercial block building in 1904.

In 1909 the Chicago & NorthWestern Railroad decided to build a new line from just north of Milwaukee to Necedah, where it would meet up with their existing lines. The new rail line was to be located one mile *south* of Friendship. According to the Chicago & NorthWestern Railroad and the surveyor crew, this pathway was selected to avoid building curves in the Friendship area.

When the residents of Friendship realized the railroad would miss them by one mile a group of prominent businessmen petitioned the railroad to reconsider. The railroad was unyielding. Some of

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the residents of Friendship blamed John W. Gunning, John W. Purves and John and Augustus Hill. All four men had purchased the land along the old 1893 railroad survey. Speculation indicates that the men demanded too high a price for their lands so the railroad bought cheaper land to the south of Friendship. Others speculated that there was not enough dry high land near the village to build a good rail bed. Regardless, with location of the railroad one mile to the south, Friendship's destiny was sealed. The town of Adams, which developed at the site of the rail line, eventually surpassed Friendship in population.⁸

Gunning – Purves Building

The Gunning – Purves Building was built in 1904 on the original site of the A. J. Hill Wagon & Carriage Co. The free-standing building was constructed as a two-part commercial block, which was the most common type of composition used for small and moderately sized commercial buildings throughout the United States. The street level story was used for public spaces such as retail, hotel lobbies or banks. The upper story was used for more private spaces such as offices, hotel rooms or meeting halls.⁹

The Gunning – Purves Building is an example of Vernacular Commercial style of architecture found in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as identified in *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*. Simplified period motifs are implied, but without any overt stylistic character.¹⁰

With the growth of villages and towns, businesses clustered together in a central location along the primary route through town. This essential spine of the community, Main Street, housed specialized transactions such as banking, land purchases, professional offices and retail stores. Main Street buildings tended to abut the sidewalks. In many instances, they also abutted the building on either side.

Nineteenth- and early twentieth- century commercial buildings were designed to be seen from the front, with the exception of corner buildings that feature two primary street facades. Many building owners selected prefabricated pressed metal architectural elements such as cornices, pilasters, columns, window hoods and decorative patterned surfaces for use on the exterior front façade of their buildings. These details provided elegance at a much lower cost than brick, stone, or wood construction. The side and rear elevations were treated in a utilitarian manner. In many instances these

⁸ Michael J. Goc, *From Past to Present: The History of Adams County*, (Adams County Historical Society, New Past Press Inc, 1999), pages 82-92.

⁹ Richard Longstreet, *The Buildings of Main Street, A Guide to American Commercial Architecture*, (Alta Mira Press, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2000) page 24.

¹⁰ Barbara Wyatt, *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin Volume 2, A Manual for Historic Properties*, (Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, June 1986) Architecture section, page 3-10.

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surfaces did not receive the decorations that were present on the front facade. Commercial buildings were generally rectangular in nature and were deeper than they were wide.

By the early 20th century, the two-part commercial building drifted away from its elaborate Victorian nature and Italianate style features. Ornamentation became more restrained retaining a sense of order but exhibiting few if any references to past architectural periods.¹¹

In 1887, John W. Gunning located his abstract and title business in a new building which he had built at the north end of Court House Square. In 1893, Gunning relocated his business to a building just south of the A. J. Hill Wagon & Carriage Co. With the marriage of John W. Gunning's daughter Ina E. to John W. Purves in 1895, father-in-law John W. Gunning made his son-in-law a full partner in his businesses in 1896. Gunning & Purves purchased the A. J. Hill property in 1899 and after completing renovations to the building they opened a furniture store and funeral business. In the summer of 1904, the old wagon and carriage building was torn down and construction began on their new commercial building.

Since Friendship did not have a volunteer fire department, Gunning and Purves seized upon the responsibility entrusted to them to protect the vital real estate records which they held. They were determined to make their building as fireproof as possible. Every surface of their building's exterior and interior was covered with metal. The building was completed by the end of 1904 and in January of 1905 it was occupied with several businesses and professionals. Now all of the businesses of Gunning & Purves could be housed in one building.

The south portion of the first floor housed the Gunning & Purves abstract and real estate offices. In March of 1910, A. F. Hill, John W. Gunning and John W. Purves formed and incorporated the Friendship State Bank. The bank was in the front portion of the south half, and the abstract and real estate offices remained in the rear portion of the south half of the first floor. A Diebold Safe, for use by the bank, was installed in the abstract and title vault.¹² John Purves was the first bank cashier.¹³ Later, A. C. Moors was hired to be the cashier. The bank remained in operation through the early years of the Great Depression, but had to close its doors on December 7, 1935. After the death of John W. Gunning, in November of 1910, John W. Purves continued to operate the bank, and abstract and real estate business. Purves continued in the abstract and title business until his death in 1948. At that time, the estate of John W. Purves sold the building and the abstract business to Charles A. Tuttle.

¹¹ Richard Longstreet, *The Buildings of Main Street, A Guide to American Commercial Architecture*, (Alta Mira Press, Walnut Creek, CA, 2000), pages 12-54.

¹² Dennis M. McFarlin, *Friendship Landmarks – Gunning-Purves Building*, (Revised November 9, 2011) pages 1-11.

¹³ Milo Milton Quaife, *Wisconsin, its History and its People, Vol. 4, 1634-1924*, (S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., Chicago, 1924) pages 618-619.

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The north portion of the first floor housed the Gunning & Purves furniture business. After the death of John W. Gunning in 1910, John W. Purves sold the furniture business to A.S. Hamilton and L. A. Roseberry. In 1912, Hamilton and Roseberry expanded their furniture business to include sewing machines, wallpaper and framing. By 1922 the store also featured appliances. As time went on, the store was expanded to include home improvement materials. L. A. Roseberry died in 1929 and his sons took over the operation of his portion of the furniture and funeral businesses. Upon the death of A. S. Hamilton in 1937, the Roseberry brothers purchased Hamilton's interest in both the furniture and funeral businesses from his heirs. The Roseberry brothers sold the furniture store to L. Picus and Sons in 1945, but retained the home improvement portion of the store. The home improvement store remained in business until the spring of 1956 when the Roseberry brothers closed the doors so that they could devote more time to their funeral business.

The north portion of the second floor housed the Gunning & Purves funeral business. In the early years embalming was not practiced. The funeral business would provide a selection of caskets and a reception room where family and friends could gather before the body was taken to the cemetery for burial. A. S. Hamilton and L. A. Roseberry purchased the funeral business at the same time that they purchased the furniture business. L. A. Roseberry's son Robert Roseberry graduated from the Goodman School of Undertaking in Milwaukee in 1929 and son Edmund received his embalmer's license from the University of Minnesota. Robert and Edmund Roseberry purchased A. S. Hamilton's portion of the funeral business upon his death in 1937. In 1947 the Roseberry brothers purchased the former home of John W. Gunning and moved their funeral business from the Gunning - Purves Building to that location.

The south portion of the second floor offered several individual office spaces. It seems every doctor, lawyer or dentist who came to Friendship took up office space in the Gunning – Purves Building. In addition the Friendship Reporter newspaper also operated out of the south portion of the second floor from 1907 to 1938. Over the years the newspaper had several editors and many different owners and part owners including John W. Purves.¹⁴

John W. Gunning

John W. Gunning was born (b. 5-1-1847, d. 11-20-1910) in Rochester, New York. John received a common school education and became a mechanic. In 1855 John came with his family to Wisconsin where they settled in Walworth County.¹⁵ On January 4, 1862, at the age of sixteen, John enlisted into the 4th Wisconsin Calvary as a musician.¹⁶ By the end of his enlistment, John became the Chief

¹⁴ Dennis M. McFarlin, *Friendship Landmarks-Gunning-Purves Office Building*, (Revised November 9, 2011), pages 1-11.

¹⁵ *The Blue Book of the State of Wisconsin 1889*, (Published by Ernst G. Timme, Secretary of State, 1889), page 501.

¹⁶ 1890 Special Schedule – Surviving Soldiers, Sailors and Marines and Widows, Adams County minor civil division.

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Bugler for the unit.¹⁷ The 4th Wisconsin Calvary fought at the Siege of Vicksburg, the battle of Port Hudson and the occupation of Baton Rouge in 1862-63. From 1864 until one year after the war ended the 4th Wisconsin Calvary policed the occupied territory in Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas.¹⁸ John was discharged on May 28, 1866.¹⁹

After leaving the military, John married Elizabeth A. Borroughs (b.2-13-1846, d. 11-6-1897) on June 1, 1867. Elizabeth was born in Chenango County New York. In May of 1846, her parents moved to Jefferson County, Wisconsin, and later they moved on to Rock County, Wisconsin.²⁰ Together they had five children: Jennie W. (b. c1869), Gertrude J. (b. 1-22-1871, d. 12-30-1957), Ina E. (b. 6-21-1873, d 12-10-1914), John W. (b. 5-26-1885), and Effie M. (b. 4-21-1881).²¹

In 1870, the Gunning's moved to Barnum in Adams County where John worked for the Weed Lumber Co. as a millwright. John was the town clerk from 1873 to 1878. In 1878, John was elected Register of Deeds for Adams County and in December of 1879, the Gunning's moved to Friendship.²² John remained the Register of Deeds until 1890.²³ In addition to holding public office, John's entrepreneurial spirit had him participating in several businesses: clock and watch repair, picture framing and a fire insurance agency. In 1887, John took over Mr. Perkins abstract and title business. At that time he built a building at the north end of the courthouse square to house his new business.²⁴

In 1889 John W. Gunning was elected to the State Legislature as a Republican by a vote of 2,230 to 1,437.²⁵ In 1890, John became the Postmaster of Friendship, a position that he held for four years. The Friendship Post Office was housed in the abstract and title building. In 1893, John moved his abstract and title business to a building on the west side of Belfast Street adjacent to and south of the A. J. Hill Wagon and Carriage Factory.²⁶

John's wife Elizabeth died in November of 1897. Upon Elizabeth's death, John formed a partnership with his son-in-law John W. Purves.²⁷ The partnership of Gunning & Purves bought the Hill Wagon and Carriage Factory in 1899 and opened a furniture store and funeral business within the renovated

¹⁷ U.S. Civil War Pension Index: General Index to Pension Files, 1861-1934.

¹⁸ Dictionary of Wisconsin History, Term: Civil War: 4th Cavalry, Wisconsinhistory.org.

¹⁹ 1890 Special Schedule – Surviving Soldiers, Sailors and Marines and Widows, Adams County minor civil division.

²⁰ *Adams County Press*, November 13, 1897, Elizabeth A. Gunning obituary.

²¹ *Adams County Press*, November 13, 1879, Elizabeth A. Gunning obituary.

²² *Adams County Press*, November 13, 1897, Elizabeth A. Gunning obituary.

²³ *The Blue Book of the State of Wisconsin*, (Published by Ernst G. Timme, Secretary of State, 1889), page 501.

²⁴ Dennis M McFarlin, *Friendship Landmarks – Gunning-Purves Office Building*, (Revised November 9, 2011) pages 1-11.

²⁵ State Legislators Elected From Adams County, www.scls.lib.wi.us/acl/localhistory/past_present/images/00000014.pdf.

²⁶ Dennis M McFarlin, *Friendship Landmarks-Gunning-Purves Office Building* (Revised November 9, 2011), pages 1-11.

²⁷ *Adams County Press*, November 26, 1910, John W. Gunning obituary.

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building. Gunning & Purves expanded from abstracts and titles to real estate, insurance, furniture and undertaking. The undertaking business sold caskets and burial robes as well as providing the site for the wake. In 1904, Gunning and Purves demolished the Hill wagon and carriage building and constructed the subject building, which allowed them to consolidate all of their business ventures underneath one roof.²⁸

In 1907, John W. Gunning, John W. Purves, A. F. Hill, C. W. Waterman, and William Sweet petitioned the county court to incorporate the village of Friendship using the current village survey. The residents voted 45 to 20 in favor of the incorporation.²⁹

On August 16, 1904 John married Nellie Leone (Pierce) (b. 3-17-1872, d 2-18-1943) a widow.³⁰ Together they had a son Richard J. Gunning (b. 5-23-1906). Nellie's seventeen year old son Thorton and fourteen year old son Burton also lived in the Gunning home.³¹

In March of 1910, John W. Gunning, A. F. Hill and John W. Purves incorporated the Friendship State Bank with a capital of \$10,000. The new bank was located in the front portion of the south half of the Gunning-Purves building. The bank was set to open in late 1910 but was delayed because of the death of John W. Gunning on November 20, 1910.³² John died at St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester, Minnesota after surgery.³³

John W. Purves

William D. Purves (b. 6-14-1831, d. 1915) was born in St. Lawrence County, New York. In 1861, at the age of thirty, William migrated to River Falls, Wisconsin. After one year of farm employment William purchased a 200-acre farm in Troy Township, St. Croix County, Wisconsin. William married Esther Kern on May 12, 1867. Esther Kern (b1841, d. 1928) was born in Madison County, New York. Their son John W. (b. 7-15-1868, d. 4-15-1948) was the eldest of six children. He grew up on the family farm.³⁴ He attended the district school and then went on to graduate from the State Normal School at River Falls, Wisconsin, in 1890.

After earning a teaching degree, John taught school in Adams and Marinette counties. In 1895, John W. Purves married Ina E. Gunning the daughter of John W. Gunning. By then John W. Purves had

²⁸ Dennis M. McFarlin, *Friendship Landmarks-Gunning-Purves Office Building*, (Revised November 9, 2011), pages 1-11.

²⁹ Michael J. Goc, *From Past to Present: The History of Adams County*, 1999, pages 88, 89 and 92.

³⁰ *Adams County Press*, February 1943, Nellie Gunning obituary.

³¹ Ancestry.com, 1910 United States Federal Census.

³² Dennis M. McFarlin, *Friendship Landmarks – Gunning-Purves Office Building*, (Revised November 9, 2011), pages 1-11.

³³ *Stevens Point Journal*, November 22, 1910.

³⁴ Augustaus B. Easton, *History of the St. Croix Valley*, (H. C. Cooper Jr. and Co., 1909), pages 622-623.

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become the principal of the Waunakee Schools. The first two years of their marriage was spent in Waunakee before returning to Friendship in October of 1897.³⁵ Together they had one child, daughter Mabel H. (b. 8-20-1897, d. 3-11-1986). Mabel followed her father's example and graduated from Lawrence College. She then taught history and geography at the high school level in Beloit, Wisconsin.³⁶ Mabel married Arthur C. Moors and together they resided in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.³⁷

After marrying Ina Gunning, John W. Purves became a partner in his father-in-law John W. Gunning's various businesses in 1897. In 1907, he participated in the petitioning process for the incorporation of Friendship. Upon the death his partner John W. Gunning in 1910, John W. Purves sold the furniture and funeral business but retained both the bank and the abstract and title businesses. John's wife Ina died on December 14, 1914.

John was the president of the village of Friendship from 1915 to 1920. He was a member of the school board and he served for several years as Adams County Poor Commissioner, administering county services to those who needed assistance. On April 12, 1917³⁸ John married Jennie Mae Jones (b. c1868), the widow of Norman M. Jones. Jennie was the daughter of S. W. Pierce, a pioneer settler of Adams County.³⁹ John W. Purves continued ownership of the Friendship State Bank until it closed in 1936. He continued in the abstract and title business until his death on April 6, 1948.

George L. Mesker & Company Architectural Irons Works (1885 – 1974)

John Bernard Mesker (1823-1899) immigrated to the United States from Germany settling in Cincinnati, Ohio. He trained as a *tinner* working with tinfoil. Tinfoil was a small sheet of iron dipped into molten tin. John started his working on his own in 1844 and in 1850 he opened a store in Evansville, Indiana. There he produced and sold stoves, copper, tin, sheet-iron ware, and eventually began creating galvanized iron for buildings.⁴⁰ John had seven sons (Bennet[sic], Henry, George, Frank, Edward, William, and John).⁴¹ All of the brothers were well educated and attended private business schools. Several of these men would take the metal working skill taught to them by their father and transform that skill into successful nation-wide metal companies.

³⁵ *Friendship Reporter*, December 17, 1914, Ina Gunning obituary.

³⁶ Milo Milton Quaife, *Wisconsin, its History and its People Vol. 4, 1634-1924*, S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., Chicago, 1924) pages 618-619.

³⁷ Ancestry.com, 1930 United States Federal Census.

³⁸ *The Friendship Reporter*, April 19, 1917.

³⁹ Milo Milton Quaife, *Wisconsin, its History and its People, Vol. 4*, (S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., Chicago, 1924), pages 618-619.

⁴⁰ *Historic Illinois*, (Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, Division of Preservation Services, Vol. 28, No. 6, April 2006) pages 4-9.

⁴¹ 1870 United States Federal Census, ancestry.com.

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In 1874, John Bernard Mesker changed the name of his business to J. B. Mesker & Son.⁴² Oldest son Bernard (1851-1936) began working with his father, but five years later he sold his interest to his brother George. Bernard wanted to seek his fortune elsewhere and decided to search for silver in Colorado. On his way to Colorado, he stopped in St. Louis to visit his brother Frank (1861-1952). Frank convinced him to stay in St. Louis and become a partner in a sheet-metal business with him.⁴³ In 1879, Frank and Bernard formed the company Mesker Brothers Iron Works, St. Louis, Missouri. For of twenty-three years, Mesker Brothers Iron Works created more than 5,200 store fronts across the United States, Hawaii, Mexico, Canada, Cuba, and India. They held sixty-two patents for various improvements they made to the sheet-metal process. Using these new innovations, they took galvanized sheet-metal and stamped the metal into architectural elements such as window hoods, pilasters and cornices. In addition, large sheets of sheet-metal were rolled and stamped with patterns of flowers, geometric designs, and brick and stone patterns. One of Mesker Brothers' significant patents was inventing a process to create steel columns which replaced the out-dated cast-iron column.

The sheet-metal was pre-fabricated by their company to the dimensions sent in by the building owner. The perspective customer utilized the catalogs sent out across the country by the brothers. Customers could browse the pages of the catalog and either select an exact model design or create a-one-of-a-kind building through the selection of various architectural details. Sheet-metal was light weight, easy to handle and was suitable for use on a new or existing building. The process worked on either a frame or a masonry building. Once completed, the customer's order was shipped by rail.

This pre-fabricated process was approximately 1/5 of the cost of finishing the exterior of a building the traditional way. This method eliminated two costly steps: 1.) the hiring of an architect who often was not available in small isolated towns, and 2.) the middleman or local wholesale dealer. The erection of the steel architectural elements could be done in as few as two days with the assistance of local carpenters.

The designing of the storefronts and architectural details are thought to have been done by Bernard Mesker. An identifying design element which would indicate that the storefront was a Mesker Brothers product was the use of the fleur-de-lis motif.⁴⁴

Bernard had developed a friendship with St. Louis architect Joseph W. Givens. Givens urged the brothers to submit a bid of the sheet metal work for the St. Louis Art Museum. The company's low bid

⁴² *Historic Illinois*, (Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, Division of Preservation Services, Vol. 28, No. 6, April 2006) pages 4-9.

⁴³ Mesker Brothers Iron Works Records 1879-1953, State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center, University of Missouri, St. Louis www.umsi.edu/whmc/guides/whm0331.htm.

⁴⁴ *Historic Illinois*, (Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, Division of Preservation Service, Vol. 28, No. 6, April 2006) pages 4-9.

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secured the commission. Then in 1883, the Mesker Brothers Iron Works produced the metal work for the facades of the St. Louis Exposition and Music Hall. These contracts launched the popularity of the Mesker Brothers Iron Works as well as the popularity of the metal façade.⁴⁵ When the fashion of the metal building façade faded in 1910, the company concentrated on producing metal windows. During World War I, the Mesker Brothers produced large quantities of ranges and bread ovens for the war effort. During World War II, the Mesker Brothers produced airplane landing mats, fragmentation bombs, ammunition lockers, and oil and water tanks for submarine chasers.

Bernard Mesker died in 1936. When Frank Mesker died in 1952, his sons and grandsons took over the company operating it until the mid-1960s when it was sold. The company continued to operate under the same name until 1980 when the company was moved to Huntsville, Alabama. Once in Alabama, the name was changed to Mesker Door. Mesker Door focused on producing steel doors and frames and is still in business today.

John Bernard and sons John Henry, Edward and George continued to work with their father. In 1885, George left the employ of his father and established the George L. Mesker & Company in Evansville, Indiana. This company eventually became the largest architectural ironworks in the United States. The George L. Mesker Company was the manufacturer for the Gunning – Purves Building in Friendship, Wisconsin.

The George L. Mesker & Company and the Mesker Brothers Iron Works were in intensive competition with each other for the available market share. George had the advantage of seeing the successful strategies of his brothers, Bernard and Frank, and utilized their practice of sending out elaborate catalogs. George offered the same basic storefronts and architectural components as did Mesker Brothers Iron Works. He also produced metal storefronts from his client's measurements and encouraged his clients to select architectural details from his catalogs. The George L. Mesker & Company storefronts were also shipped by rail and also assembled by local carpenters.

George never held any patents on his products and he never changed from iron columns to steel columns, perhaps because he did not hold that patent. George greatly benefited from Bernard and Frank's transitioning away from producing storefronts to the production of metal windows. George sold almost as many storefronts from 1908 to 1913 as he did during the previous twenty-three years.

In 1913, at the age of fifty-six, George married eighteen year old Elizabeth Diana MacEachen. Three years later, in 1916, George retired and turned the everyday running of the company over to Henry Koch. He and Elizabeth moved to New York. Now a millionaire, he modified his frugal nature and

⁴⁵ Mesker Brothers Iron Works Records 1879-1953, State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center, University of Missouri, St. Louis, www.umsl.edu/whmc/guides/whom0331.htm.

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spent more freely on luxuries such as a lavish house in Palm Beach, Florida. The house featured life-size sculptures and was designed around his wife's collection of fine art and furnishings.

George L. Mesker died in 1936, however the company continued forward. During World War II, the George L. Mesker & Company secured numerous government contracts. George's company continued to produce storefronts as well as structural steel components such as roof trusses.⁴⁶ During the 1950s and 1960s the company produced outdoor drive-in theatre screen supports, parking canopies for drive-in restaurants and gas stations as well as prefabricated steel buildings.⁴⁷ By 1974 the company began to decline and it was sold to Fabsteel Company.

George L. Mesker the philanthropist donated forty acres of land in 1900 to the City of Evansville, Indiana, for the purpose of creating a park and a zoo which bears his name. In 1915, George donated an additional \$25,000 to acquire more land for the park.⁴⁸ Upon his death in 1936, the Mesker Music Trust was created by his estate in the amount of \$250,000. This facilitated improvements to the park and zoo and the construction of the Mesker Amphitheater. Monies continue to be given to the community from this trust.⁴⁹

The interesting reality is that both Mesker companies operated in a similar fashion and offered similar products. They both relied on a mailed catalog to promote sales. The catalogs of both companies offered storefront assemblies, cornices, window hoods, columns, stairs, elevators, skylights, steel roofing, stamped steel ceilings and glass for storefronts. Both company's catalogs illustrate that the products that they offered remained the same for almost one-quarter century.

Even though the three brothers were very competitive in their business practices, they retained a close family relationship. Other family members were also operating metal businesses. John Bernard Sr. and his son Edward operated a stove and range manufacturing company until 1898. Brother John Henry Mesker founded a metal company in 1883 that produced iron fences, railings and building components.

Both Mesker Brothers Iron Works and George L. Mesker & Company produced a product which proved to have great longevity. Many Mesker storefronts remain today throughout the United States as a testament to the quality of the products which they produced. Which Mesker Company produced a storefront is easily determined by the name plate either molded into the base of a column or with a

⁴⁶ *Historic Illinois*, (Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, Division of Preservation Services, Vol. 28, No. 6, April 2006), pages 4-9.

⁴⁷ www.flickr.com/photos/gotmesker, site of photographs of Mesker buildings.

⁴⁸ Historic Evansville, *History of Mesker Park*, www.historicevansville.com/site.php?ID=meskerpark.

⁴⁹ *Evansville Courier & Press*, article "Mesker Grants Bestow \$33K to Local Organizations," www.courierpress.com/news/2013/jul/04/mesker-grants-bestowed.

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name plate bolted on to the building.⁵⁰ Their popularity is still celebrated by many Mesker aficionados who exclaim: “Got a Mesker?” These Mesker fans diligently try to discover new Mesker storefronts not listed in the ongoing inventory blogs on the internet.

Conclusion: Criterion C – in the area of Architecture

Two-part Commercial Vernacular style

Vernacular architecture is described as architecture without the intervention of a professional architect. These buildings tend to be unpretentious and are often constructed by local carpenters. Many times these buildings have been ignored, becoming only the backdrop for buildings with recognized architectural style. Even if they were not designed by a trained architect, these buildings still follow well-tested forms. In many instances, these buildings appear more utilitarian than what the technology of the time was capable of producing.

Barbara Wyatt in *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin Volume 2, A Manual for Historic Properties*, refers to the simply-designed commercial buildings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as appearing less specific to a visual type than other significant building forms. Wyatt refers to their architectural style as “vernacular commercial.” Generally, these buildings exhibit large retail show windows on the first floor level and simple window openings on the upper stories. Wyatt suggests that simplified period motifs are implied, but without overt stylistic character. The free-standing vernacular commercial building as represented in the Gunning – Purves building is not as common as those joined with common walls.⁵¹

The most outstanding feature of the Gunning – Purves Building is the George L. Mesker & Co pressed metal storefront, which has been retained on the main east-facing façade. Intensive architectural surveys conducted throughout Wisconsin show that, of those that have been identified, fewer than six intact Mesker & Company metal storefronts may remain.⁵² The Gunning-Purves Building is one of two commercial buildings in Adams County with a pressed and stamped metal façade, and of the two, has higher integrity. Further, it may be the most ornate and best preserved example of its type in Wisconsin.⁵³ A 1911 promotional map from a Mesker & Co. catalog, indicates that 292 storefronts had been sold to date in Wisconsin. (See Figure 8).⁵⁴ Most of these have not been identified.

⁵⁰ *Historic Illinois*, (Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, Division of Preservation Services, Vol. 28, No. 6, April 2006), pages 4-9.

⁵¹ Barbara Wyatt, *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin Volume 2 a Manual for Historic Properties*, (Historic Preservation Division State Historical Society of Wisconsin, June 1986), Architecture section, page 3-10.

⁵² Joe R. De Rose, Wisconsin Historical Society, Survey and Registration Historian.

⁵³ Rick Bernstein, Field Services Representative, Wisconsin Historical Society.

⁵⁴ <http://www.illinois.gov/iHPA/Preserve/Pages/gotmesker.aspx> www.flickr.com/photos/gotmesker/, site of photographs of Mesker buildings.

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Most commercial buildings were façade orientated exhibiting architectural elements from the foundation to the cornice. The pre-fabricated metal storefront exhibited at least one pair of plain pilasters which appeared at the corners. Many of the early metal storefronts that were assembled during the Victorian age utilized elaborately decorated window hoods, multiple heavily detailed pilasters on the corner edges of the building and alongside the windows as well as heavily detailed cornices that were topped with large galvanized iron pediments. These elaborate cornices created a distinctive profile for the buildings. Bringing light inside the long narrow store was always a problem which was solved by the transom, at least until electricity was brought to the community.⁵⁵

The architectural elements found on the main façade of the Gunning – Purves Building are somewhat reserved in nature. The windows are relatively un-decorated and the pilasters are simple. The two three-window groups found on the second floor and the Chicago window located at the southeast corner of the front façade are more representative of 20th century design than the Victorian age. The Gunning – Purves Building's George L. Mesker & Co. pressed metal storefront bridges the transition from the overdone to the understated. The building did not house a flamboyant dress or hat store but contained the serious businesses of banking, finance, real estate, legal advice and the solemnity of death. Since the George L. Mesker & Co. customer made the selection of each architectural element from the Mesker Catalog it can be assumed that John W. Gunning and John W. Purves were looking to design the front of their commercial building to have a reserved and dignified appearance.

John W. Gunning and John W. Purves were optimistic in 1904 that the railroad would shortly be extended to and through their city. They whole-heartedly expected that Friendship would become a hub for commercial activity. That belief influenced their decision to build their 1904 two-part commercial block building. By 1904, the Victorian age was ending and the Craftsman and Prairie styles, emphasizing horizontal simplistic lines, were gaining favor. A simple vernacular building, understated in its decorative elements, became a modern example of the type of architecture gaining favor across America.

The building is significant at the local level as one of the few intact pressed and stamped metal storefronts remaining in Wisconsin. The building exhibits a high degree of integrity, featuring an extant metal storefront facade, interior plan and interior features including the pressed and stamped metal walls, ceilings and cornices. It remains a glimpse into the early techniques of pre-fabricated materials that began to adorn Main Street.

⁵⁵ Herbert Gottfried, *American Vernacular Buildings and Interiors 1870-1960*, (W. W. Norton & Co., New York, 1988), pages 233-264.

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Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 15

Gunning – Purves Building
Friendship, Adams County, Wisconsin

Acknowledgements

The Fuldner Heritage Fund paid for the preparation of this nomination. This endowed fund, created through a generous donation by the Jeffris Family Foundation and administered by the Wisconsin Historical Society, supports the nomination of historically and architecturally significant rural and small town properties.

Preservation Activities

The initiation of a search to find a larger facility in which to display the multitude of research materials accumulated by the Adams County Historical Society was begun in 2010 by Margaret Delores Chervey with an initial contribution of \$5,000. The members of the Adams Historical Society purchased the Gunning – Purves Building on March 31, 2012. This purchase was aided by an anonymous individual donation in the amount of \$50,000 and a realized bequest in the amount of \$40,000. The building was re-named the Adams County Heritage Center.

The society members immediately sought advice from the Resource Evaluation Committee of the Wisconsin Historical Society as to the building's possible eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. With the advice of this body and a grant provided by the Fuldner Heritage Fund a National Register Nomination was pursued.

The first several months of occupation were spent moving reference materials into the building. The first floor was in excellent move-in condition. To date, a gift shop, conference and display room and the office for the Adams County Historical Society are housed in the rooms of the first floor. The Adams County Historical Society has removed the walls that were not original to the 1904 plan of the second floor. One of the second floor rooms, the former newspaper office, in addition to the enclosed second floor stairwell have been completed restored. The restored newspaper office now houses the old deed and mortgage books from the Adams County Court House.

The building remains a work in progress for the volunteers of the Adams County Historical Society. Their future restoration plans include the uncovering and restoration of the storefront transoms and the replacement of the vinyl windows found on the second floor fenestration of the main east facing façade with wood windows appropriate to the time period.

The Adams County Heritage Center is open for research on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday from noon to 5:00 pm or by appointment.

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Section 9 Page 1

Gunning – Purves Building
Friendship, Adams County, Wisconsin

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Gunning – Purves Building
Friendship, Adams County, Wisconsin

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Section 9 Page 3

Gunning – Purves Building
Friendship, Adams County, Wisconsin

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Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 1

Gunning – Purves Building
Friendship, Adams County, Wisconsin

Verbal Boundary Description:

PLAT: FR66-FRIENDSHIP-VILLAGE-OF N52 FT LOT 11 & 12 BLOCK 5 EX W1 RD

05-17N-06E NW SW

469517

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries enclose all of the land that has historically been associated with the Gunning-Purves Building.

United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation Sheet

Section Photographs Page 1

Gunning-Purves Building
Friendship, Adams County, Wisconsin

Name of Property: Gunning – Purves Building
City or Vicinity: Friendship
County: Adams
State: Wisconsin
Name of photographer: Patricia Lacey
Date of photograph: February 2014
Location of Digital Files: Wisconsin Historical Society
Number of Photographs: 11

Photo #1

East facing façade, camera facing west

Photo #2

East facing main façade, camera facing northwest

Photo #3

Southeast corner showing south facing façade, camera facing northwest

Photo #4

Rear façade, camera facing northeast

Photo #5

George L. Mesker & Co. name pressed into pilaster base, camera facing southwest

Photo #6

North wall of Friendship State Bank, now gift shop, camera facing northwest

Photo #7

Friendship State Bank safe within Abstract and Title vault, camera facing west

Photo #8

Stairwell to second floor, showing light transfer, camera facing east

Photo #9

Rear portion of upper hallway, camera facing west

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Section Photographs Page 2

Gunning-Purves Building
Friendship, Adams County, Wisconsin

Photo #10

Pressed metal wall of funeral business, camera facing south

Photo #11

Pressed metal ceiling of attorney's office, camera facing north

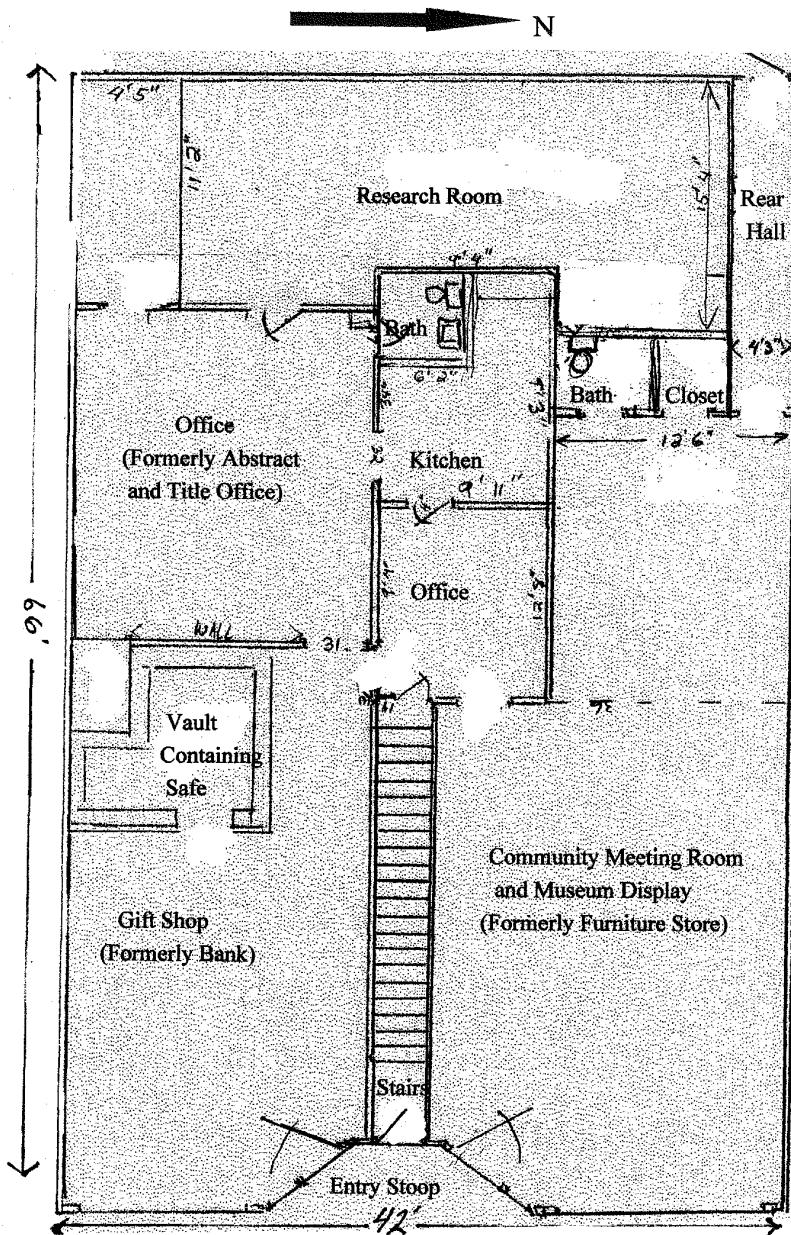
United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation Sheet

Section Figures Page 1

Gunning-Purves Building
Friendship, Adams County, Wisconsin

Figure 1: First Floor Plan



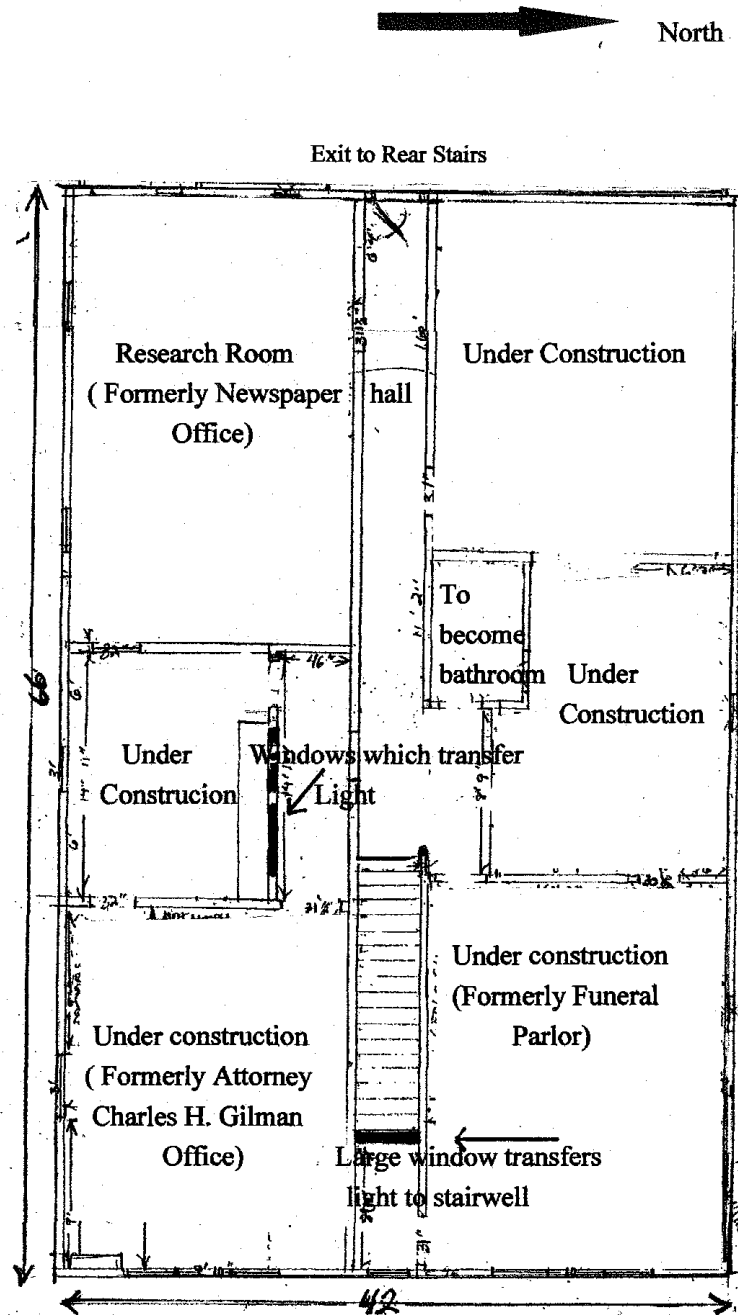
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Gunning-Purves Building
Friendship, Adams County, Wisconsin

Section Figures Page 2

Figure 2: Second Floor Plan



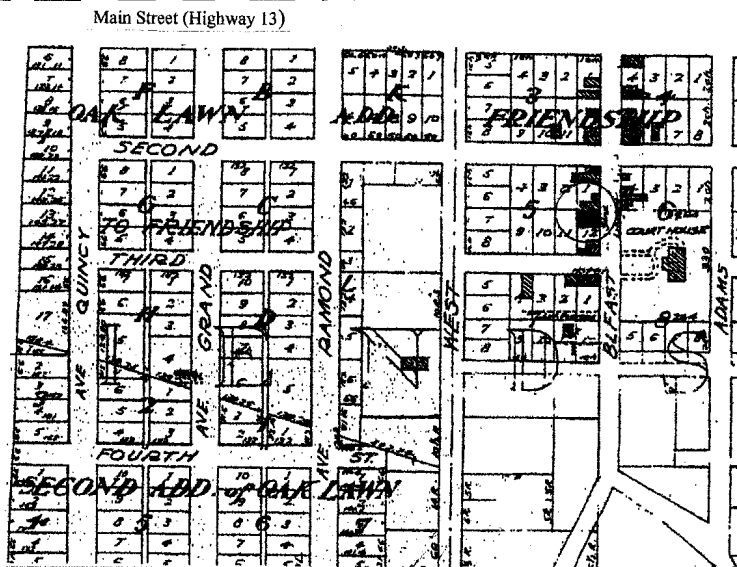
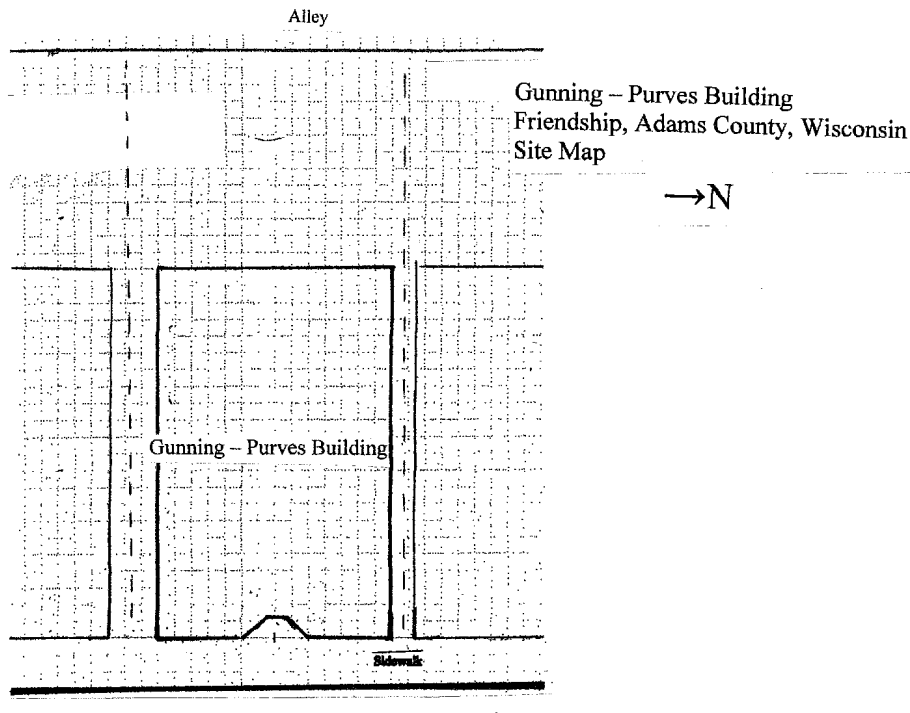
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Continuation Sheet

Section Figures Page 3

Gunning-Purves Building
Friendship, Adams County, Wisconsin

Figure 3: Location Maps



Location of the Gunning-Purves Building (as indicated by the circle)
On Belfast (now known as Main Street or Highway 13) as it appeared
On the 1919 plat map.



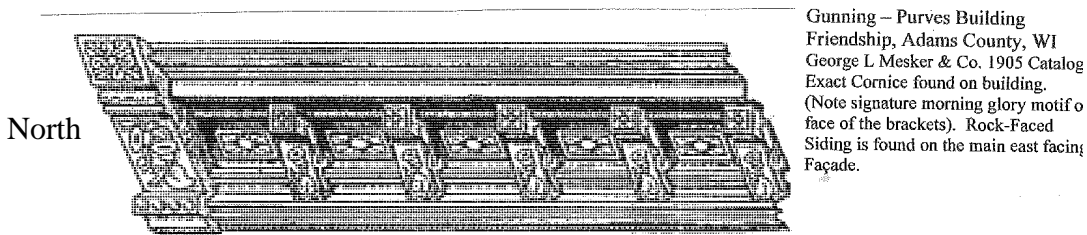
United States Department of the Interior
 National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
 Continuation Sheet

Gunning-Purves Building
 Friendship, Adams County, Wisconsin

Section Figures Page 4

Figure 4: Mesker & Co. Catalog Page

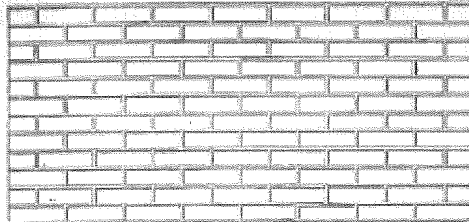


Gunning – Purves Building
 Friendship, Adams County, WI
 George L. Mesker & Co. 1905 Catalog
 Exact Cornice found on building.
 (Note signature morning glory motif of
 face of the brackets). Rock-Faced
 Siding is found on the main east facing
 Façade.

No. 533

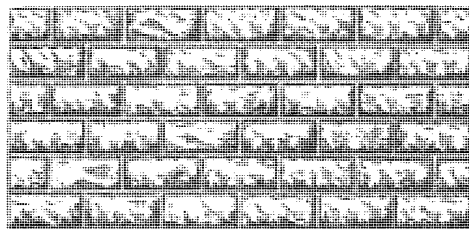
Height 32 inches, projection 16 inches. Price \$1.80 per lineal foot.

STEEL ROOFING AND SIDING.



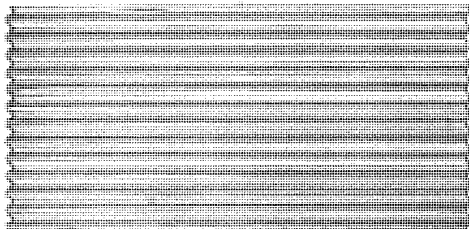
No. 226.
 Steel Brick Siding.

This material has come largely into general use in the past few years as
 better and cheaper article. We make it with galvanized rough face of sheet steel
 painted and also of galvanized steel. We furnish it in sheets 2 1/2 feet wide,
 carefully crated for shipment. It can be put on a building by any mechanic,
 and can be put up in one-half the time necessary to put on wood siding.



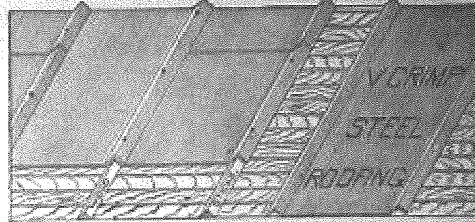
No. 228.
 Rock-Faced Siding.

This siding is made in sheets 2x8 feet. By some it is preferred to
 the plain brick siding on account of the rough surface. It makes a hand-
 some finish for a frame building, giving it the appearance of stone. Any
 mechanic can put it on easily. We furnish this material in 2 1/2 foot
 sheets with joints 1/2 inch in imitation of rough-faced brick.



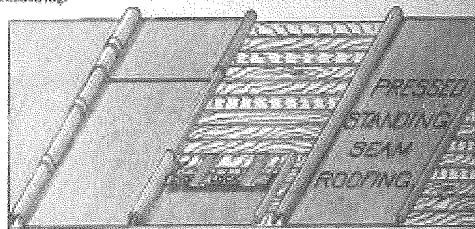
No. 229.
 Corrugated Steel Roofing or Siding.

This is the most convenient material in the market for roofing or
 siding. You simply roll it on without any heading or seaming, and the
 work is done. All roofings should receive a coat of mineral paint after
 they are put on, to protect any scratches that they may have received.
 We furnish corrugated steel in 4 to 12 foot lengths. Corrugated steel should
 not be used on very hot roofs.



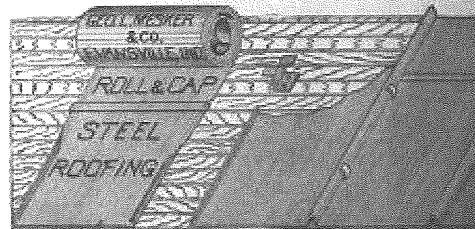
No. 227.
 V-Crimped Steel Roofing.

Our V-crimped steel roofing can be put on new or old buildings by any
 mechanic. We furnish it in black steel, painted, or galvanized steel, in
 sizes from 6 to 22 feet long and 24 inches wide from center to center, with
 all necessary triangular wood slats to go under the crimps. This roofing
 can be put on over old shingles by using nails long enough to reach the
 sheathing.



No. 229.
 Standing Seam Steel Roofing.

This is a popular form of steel roofing, and it makes a good sound roof
 when put on properly. We furnish tools for putting it on, which can be kept
 for future use or we will allow the full price charged for them if returned
 in good order, freight paid.



No. 229.
 Roll and Cap Steel Roofing.

This is the best form of steel roofing, and if properly put on and kept
 covered with paint will last almost indefinitely. It there is any possibility
 which will cause the roof to sweat it should have a layer of roofing paper
 under it. We furnish tools for putting on this roofing at a low price and
 will buy them back again if returned freight paid and in good order.

GEO. L. MESKER & CO., EVANSVILLE, IND.

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Continuation Sheet

Section Figures Page 5

Gunning-Purves Building
Friendship, Adams County, Wisconsin

Figure 5: Historic Photograph, c1904



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Section Figures Page 6

Gunning-Purves Building
Friendship, Adams County, Wisconsin

Figure 6: Historic Photograph c1905



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Continuation Sheet

Section Figures Page 7

Gunning-Purves Building
Friendship, Adams County, Wisconsin

Figure 7: Historic Photograph, Interior View, c1908-1918



Gunning – Purves Building
Friendship, Adams County, WI

Photo c1908-1918. Office of
Attorney Charles H. Gilman who was
Appointed county judge in 1918.

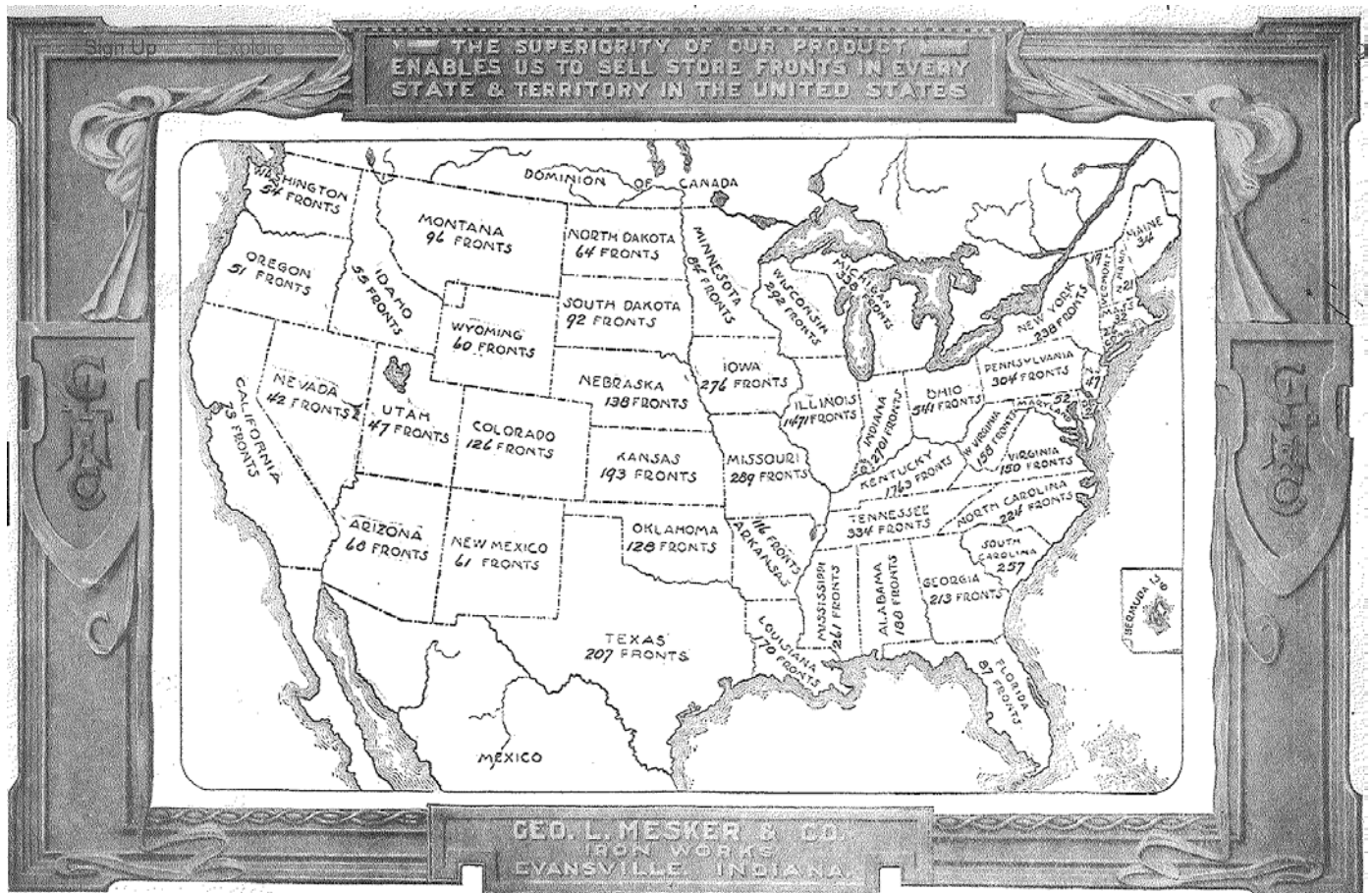
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Continuation Sheet

Section Figures Page 8

Gunning-Purves Building
Friendship, Adams County, Wisconsin

Figure 8: Mesker & Co. Catalog Map, 1911





BURGLAR
ALARM

HERITAGE
BOOKS & GIFTS

ADAMS COUNTY
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

ADAMS COUNTY
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

Duke



BURGLAR
ALARM

ADAMS COUNTY
HERITAGE
MUSEUM

ADAMS COUNTY
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

ADAMS COUNTY
HERITAGE
CENTER

Who Cares?
BAR & GRILL



**BURGLAR
ALARM**
18 MILL STREET, CO.
HARRINGTON, W.V.

HERITAGE
BOOKS & GIFTS

ADAMS COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY





LIVESKJA
250
WINSVILLE



200 MAY
4 30 00



THE
MS
YEAR
PUBLISHED

Victorian Children
read
HANDBOOK

Prentend You Don't See Her
DECELY E. SWEETS
BROWN









UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Gunning--Purves Building
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: WISCONSIN, Adams

DATE RECEIVED: 1/16/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 2/06/15
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/23/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/03/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000056

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 3.3.15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



JOAN BALLWEG

WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE

PO Box 8952, State Capitol
Madison, Wisconsin 53708-8952
Toll-free: (888) 534-0041
Fax: (608) 282-3641
Rep.Ballweg@legis.wi.gov

41st ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

May 12, 2014

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

RECEIVED

MAY 14 2014

DIV HIST PRES

Dear Ms. Veregin,

I write to support the nomination of the Gunning-Purvis Building to the Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places and National Register of Historic Places.

The Gunning-Purvis Building is located at 311 Main Street in Friendship, Wisconsin, and is part of the 41st Assembly District. As the state representative for that area, I'm happy to speak to the merit of granting the Gunning-Purvis Building the status of a historically registered building. I had the opportunity to visit the building recently and was so impressed by the efforts and accomplishments of the Adams County Historical Society to date.

Built in 1904, this building is among the oldest in Friendship, WI. The defining feature of this building is its near complete collection of pressed and stamped metal pieces. True to the time and reality of constructing a storefront in rural America at the turn of the 20th century, the Gunning-Purvis Building is a great example of the efforts of local businessmen bringing a special touch to their community. The history of this storefront is a true testament to the development of the village of Friendship as the Adams County seat.

I encourage you to add the Gunning-Purvis Building to the Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places and National Register of Historic Places. It will help the village preserve the materials and history of rural America to share with future generations.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Joan Ballweg
State Representative
41st Assembly District



TO: Keeper
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Peggy Veregin

SUBJECT: National Register Nomination

The following materials are submitted on this 14th day of January 2015,
for the nomination of the Gunning-Purves Building to the National Register of
Historic Places:

1 Original National Register of Historic Places nomination form

 Multiple Property Nomination form

11 Photograph(s)

1 CD with NRHP Nomination Form Word Document

1 CD with electronic images

1 Original USGS map(s)

8 Sketch map(s)/figure(s)/exhibit(s)/historic photograph(s)

1 Piece(s) of correspondence

 Other _____

COMMENTS:

 Please insure that this nomination is reviewed

 This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67

 The enclosed owner objection(s) do _____ do not _____
constitute a majority of property owners.

 Other: _____