

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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| DATE ENTERED | |

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

"Villa Louis"

AND/OR COMMON

Hercules Dousman II Estate

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Third and Bolyin Streets

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Prairie du Chien

__ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Third

STATE

Wisconsin

CODE
55

COUNTY

Crawford

CODE

023

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

(Curator, Donald L. Munson, Villa Louis, (608) 326-2721)

The State Historical Society of Wisconsin

STREET & NUMBER

816 State Street

CITY, TOWN

Madison

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Wisconsin

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Crawford County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Prairie du Chien

STATE

Wisconsin

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

unknown

DATE

__ FEDERAL __ STATE __ COUNTY __ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION | | CHECK ONE | CHECK ONE |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED (major) | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

House on the Mound

In 1843 Hercules Louis Dousman I built his House on the Mound, a large, and by frontier standards, luxurious, Georgian red brick house, befitting the chief agent of the Astor Fur Company who amassed one of the first fortunes of the Upper Mississippi. The Dousman House was constructed on a very prominent Indian mound on St. Feriole Island, overlooking the east channel of the Mississippi River about 200 yards to the west. Approximately 20 feet high, with a 200 foot base, and perhaps the largest in Wisconsin, this mound is believed to be a Hopewell site from the first millenium, A.D. The mound was also the site of two early forts and probably many Indian encampments. Shortly after the removal of the Fort Crawford garrison in 1829, Dousman began acquiring the land around the fort site. His land holdings eventually extended to about 4500 acres in the area.

As seen from the enclosed historic photograph, the House on the Mound was considerably different in basic composition and detail from the present Villa Louis. Usually described as Georgian in style, although one writer said it had "Federal accents,"⁴ the 1843 house appears to have been substantial, two and a half stories, rectangular, gable-roofed, with a one story gable-roofed addition at both ends. The red brick appears to have been trimmed in lighter material, probably stone, seen along the edge of the gable ends and on the lintels and sills. The end walls project above the gable cornice, producing a single step effect in the gable. There are double chimneys at each end of the house. The windows are symmetrically arranged, shuttered, with six-over-six sash on the second level. There are two small square windows on the end, with a small Palladian type window under the gable.

The house's most notable feature was a glassed-in wooden porch, painted white, which extended around at least several sides of the first story. The wooden detailing of the porch and roof cornice produced a scalloped effect. Actually the cornice decoration and porch are probably later additions to the house, since they contrast with the restrained style and materials of the basically Georgian brick structure. No construction history has been compiled on the house to date. The porch, which in this photograph covers the first story of the house on the east and south at least, is wooden and composed of a series of tall, slender, arched, multi-paned windows.

It is likely that the House on the Mound faced the river (west), in which case this photograph would be the rear and south end. Also seen in this view is the original one-story brick office, with gable roof and small columned porch, northeast of the house. Farther northeast (right) is a two-story building, probably the laundry. The house and outbuildings are enclosed within a white picket fence above some kind of retaining wall.

⁴Lee Budahl, "Architecture Before 1900 in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin unpublished master's thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1967, p. 135.

(Continued)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> ART | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | | |

SPECIFIC DATES

1870

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Edward Townsend Mix

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

Although long considered to be the remodeled 1843 house and estate of prominent fur agent and steamboat owner Hercules Louis Dousman I, the present Villa Louis complex is actually what remains of the grand post-Civil War estate built by his widow and son, Hercules Louis Dousman, II, including the completely new (in 1870) mansion, Villa Louis.

In 1843 Hercules Dousman I built a substantial brick Georgian-style mansion "House on the Mound" on the large Indian mound on the north end of St. Feriole Island, also the site of early Fort Shelby, 1814 (later McKay), and the First Fort Crawford, 1816-29. Dousman was major agent for the Astor-owned American Fur Company which monopolized trade in the Northwest Territory after 1817. He was government advisor on matters ranging from Indian affairs to land surveys, and later owner of river steamboats and a proponent of the railroads. Dousman was easily the most prominent man in 19th century Prairie du Chien, during the short period when it was a major center on the edge of the frontier.

The Dousman estate, begun by Hercules I in 1843, included a number of outbuildings (some extant) and approximately 4500 acres, much of it divided into several large farms. The elegantly furnished 1843 mansion, erected while Prairie du Chien was still very much a frontier town, was one of the early showplaces of the Upper Mississippi, well reflecting the wealth and position of its owner.

Hercules Dousman I died in 1868 and his wife, Mme. Jane Fisher Rolette Dousman was long believed to have "remodeled" and "Victorianized" the House on the Mound in 1872. However, recently discovered evidence proves that in 1870 Hercules Dousman II contracted with architect Edward Townsend Mix to tear down the original 1843 house and to building an entirely new structure on the same site, using some material from the first house.

Mme. Dousman resided at the new "Chateau Brilliante" until her death in 1882. After that Hercules Louis Dousman II and his wife and five children, regular visitors to the family home in Prairie du Chien, moved permanently to the estate and renamed it Villa Louis. They also developed nearby to the mansion and its outbuildings, Artesian Stock Farm, for horse breeding, complete with race track, large stable and Kentucky-bred horses (nothing extant of this farm but the carriage house).

(Continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See continuation sheet).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 17 acres

UTM REFERENCES

| | | | | | | | |
|---|------------|--------------------|----------------------|---|------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| A | <u>1,5</u> | <u>6,4,9,9,5,0</u> | <u>4,7,6,8,7,5,0</u> | B | <u>1,5</u> | <u>6,5,0,0,4,0</u> | <u>4,7,6,8,4,5,0</u> |
| | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING | | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C | <u>1,5</u> | <u>6,4,9,8,0,0</u> | <u>4,7,6,8,4,0,0</u> | D | <u>1,5</u> | <u>6,4,9,7,5,0</u> | <u>4,7,6,8,7,0,0</u> |
| | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING | | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See continuation sheet).

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Blanche Higgins Schroer, Landmark Review Project

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

1100 "L" Street, N. W.

(202) 523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Washington.

D. C.

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

| | |
|--|------|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER | |
| | DATE |
| DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION | DATE |
| ATTEST: | DATE |
| KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER | |

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Villa Louis

Villa Louis, designed and built by Milwaukee architect Edward Townsend Mix c. 1870 on the site of the 1843 House on the Mound, is Prairie du Chien's best known building, one of the town's most ornate structures, and probably the most famous house museum in Wisconsin. However, while it was the most ornate domestic structure locally, this sophistication is relative. Numerous houses throughout the United States, and probably in the Upper Mississippi region as well, displayed more intricate embellishments in the form and style of their decorative motifs.⁵

The most distinctive feature of the Villa Louis is its glassed-in porch, very similar in style to that of the previous Dousman house on that site, also of wood, painted white, but with much larger bays, larger panes and different woodwork. However, the porch on the northwest section of the house has a porch with window treatment very much like that seen in the photograph of the House on the Mound, probably actually from it.

Much of the material from the 1843 house is believed to have been utilized in the construction of the present Villa Louis. The walls of the house are very thick, and in places are of red brick up to the second story level, faced with a veneer of Milwaukee buff-colored brick. However, although the old material may have been reused, it appears from the many basic differences in dimensions, design and fenestration between the two houses, plus the new documentation, that the original house was completely demolished and replaced by Villa Louis.

The Villa Louis is a three-story, buff-colored brick structure with a basically square central section, plus a two-story square addition on the west, and a glass-in porch wrapping almost entirely around the first story. The low-pitched, hipped roof is broken by central gables on the east and west, and is surmounted by a flat deck with low railing. The west addition also has a hipped roof and there are several tall interior chimneys.

The cornice line is accentuated by wide eaves, large paired brackets with pendants, and decorative ventilation panels in the entablature band, all painted white. The arched windows have simple brick trim, with small keystones and there are small round windows with similar trim under the gables and in corners of the building. The fairly wide wooden porch is composed of a series of wide square bays with rounded corners and nine lights each. Decorative brackets along the porch cornice and wood-work cutouts along the foundation line are of typical 19th century patterns. The main entrance on the east is defined by a slight projection outlining the central

⁵Budahl, p. 194.

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porch bay and a small window with hood and a small balustraded porch on the second level, under the central gable.

Described by John Drury in Historic Midwest Houses as grand "in the florid post-Civil War style,"⁶ Villa Louis is one of the best known house museums in the Midwest. Its spacious interiors, with massive arched door frames, paneled ceilings and heavy moldings, today house an outstanding collection of elegant 19th century furnishings and historical artifacts of the region. Drury further wrote, "The interior of Villa Louis is probably the truest and most complete example of mid-nineteenth century style to be found, not only in Wisconsin, but in the entire United States."⁷ Mme. Dousman included a third floor ballroom in this second house.

However, the Villa Louis of today is only the central core of the extensive estate which once included 4500 acres and in the 1880's, Hercules Dousman II's Artesian Stock Farm, with cork-surfaced race track, a large stable complex with water piped from artesian wells to the paddocks. The once well-outfitted carriage house has been converted to a museum, with conventional interior displays. The gardens and tennis courts and docks of Nina Sturgis Dousman's residency (1886-1913) are gone also. (See enclosed photograph of an 1884 drawing of the estate of Hercules Dousman II.)

Outbuildings

Northeast of the mansion is a two-story buff-colored brick structure with hipped roof and deck similar to that of the main house. Constructed by Hercules Dousman II, the building was erected around the original 1843 red brick structure (now west section, first story). Interesting because of its gallery porches on the east and south, with an arcade effect on the second level, the structure had a billiard room next to the original office on the first level, and classrooms or governesses quarters on the second. It is now the visitor center.

Farther east is a plain, two-story, clapboarded, gable-roofed laundry building, painted white, reportedly built in 1843. Now in good repair, it was described in one 1930's pamphlet as "a picturesque ruin." In a 1904 photograph it had a bay porch with windows from the porch of the 1843 house.

North of the house itself are two small, one-story brick outbuildings, a preserve house and ice house. Both are dated 1843, but may have been somewhat remodeled by Hercules Dousman II.

⁶John Drury, Historic Midwest Houses, (Minneapolis, 1947) p. 154.

⁷Drury, p. 161.

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The old carriage house, c. 1870, is a one story brick structure, with a flat roof, except for the slightly raised gable over the large arched central entrance on the east. Brick detailing, simulating quoins outline the corners, the slightly projecting central block under the gable and the entranceway. The side windows were bricked over long ago. The building is a museum of regional history.

A reconstructed blockhouse, a replica of one from First Fort Crawford, is located northwest of the house. Near the northwest corner of the property is a municipal swimming pool which is slated to be removed.

A small duck pond and little gazebo are located south of the main house. Villa Louis and its outbuildings are located on the Indian mound, surrounded by approximately 17 acres, with the river on the west. St. Ferirole Island is very low land and the Villa's location on the mound barely saves it from the severe flooding that inundates the island each spring.

Potential Archeological Sites

The large mound (approximately 20 feet high on a 200 foot base) is believed to be a Hopewell site from the first millenium, A.D., and perhaps the biggest mound of its kind in Wisconsin. It was also known to be the site of Indian encampments, recorded as such when occupied by the Fox tribe during early fur trading days of the 18th century, and probably occupied by other groups previously.

In 1814, under the direction of Governor William Clark of the Missouri Territory, a force from St. Louis built a small stockade fort, Fort Shelby in the area of this same mound. A small garrison, backed by an armed boat on the river, was attacked and surrendered to a force of British and Indians. The British renamed the post Fort McKay and occupied it until the end of the war. Described as located on a mound, about 200 yards from the river, Fort McKay was burned at the time of the British evacuation.

In 1816-17 Fort Crawford, a much larger complex, a 340 foot square log structure with two-story blockhouses at the northwest and southeast was constructed on the mound. It is believed that the site of the southeast blockhouse of Fort Crawford occupied the site of Fort McKay. The Dousman house may stand on that area today.⁸ (The First Fort Crawford was the scene of some important Indian councils).

⁸Thomas M. Pitkin, NPS "Special Report on Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin" prepared for the Region II Office, May 28, 1937, p. 4.

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Also located within Villa Louis property is the site of an early British tavern, later an Indian agency, at the northeast corner of Bolvin and Third Streets, the dimensions of the building have been outlined and marked. This site was probably investigated in 1939 by Rev. Leland R. Cooper. Reverend Cooper undertook an archeological investigation to locate the walls of the First Fort Crawford in the summer of 1936. No other archeological research of the area is known to have been conducted to date.

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Therefore, the mansion and outbuildings of Villa Louis today best reflect the post-1870 period of Jane Rolette Dousman, Hercules Louis Dousman II, and his wife, Nina Sturgis Dousman, who lived there until 1913. It is not the remodeled 1843 house of Hercules Louis Dousman I, as indicated in the original 1959 Historic Sites Survey report, and is much more an illustration of a post-Civil War country estate, than the grand frontier house of a most successful fur agent.

History

Hercules Louis Dousman I was born August 4, 1800 on Mackinac Island, eldest of seven children. Educated at private school in Mackinac and then sent to Elizabethtown, New Jersey for high school, he went on for two years business training in a mercantile establishment in New York. Returning to Mackinac, he was hired as a clerk by John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company.

Dousman was sent to Prairie du Chien in 1826 as a confidential agent for that company. The Prairie du Chien post controlled trade with the Indians in the entire territory north to the British border and west to Red River Valley. Joseph Rolette was the first, and senior agent in Prairie du Chien, and a partner in the company, but Dousman apparently soon assumed management of the company business of the territory. It was a vast, unmapped region, embracing thousands of Indians of various, often warring, tribes. Fur traders were established at intervals, and voyageurs were entrusted annually with fortunes in merchandise.

Dousman proved an extremely well-qualified and ambitious agent, and became probably the most important man in the region. He was very knowledgeable in the topography and resources of the area and produced most accurate early maps--without the help of instruments. He also spoke several Indian languages and served as advisor to the government and mediator in several large councils with the Indians. Dousman was a colonel in the militia, but never held any other public offices.

Fortunes increased for Hercules Dousman as he was promoted and then made a partner in the company, through a series of reorganizations and deals. In 1834 Astor retired as president of the American Fur Company and Prairie du Chien became part of the northern division under Ramsey Crooks, with Dousman as a chief agent. Later Dousman and Joseph Rolette and Henry H. Sibley (later first governor of Minnesota), served as partners in a reorganized American Fur Company. By 1843 (the year he began to build the House on the Mound), when a deal was made between the American Fur Company and the firm of Pierre Chouteau of St. Louis, Hercules Dousman was an important man.

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Dousman has been called the first millionaire of the northwest territory, and his dealings in the fur trade alone would probably have made him quite wealthy. However, he also invested in other well-timed business ventures during the short period when Prairie du Chien was a busy river port and the center of activity on the edge of the frontier. For many years Dousman helped to finance various steamship lines, including the Prairie du Chien, the Northwest Union, and the Prairie du Chien, Hudson and St. Paul Packet Companies. He personally owned the steamers Milwaukee, Itasca, Oceanwave, Alhambra, and Henry Clay. Due considerably to Dousman's efforts, the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad line to Prairie du Chien was completed in 1857. Interestingly, when the railroad completed its luxurious big hotel on the waterfront, only about one-quarter mile south of House on the Mound, at the close of the Civil War, they named it the Dousman Hotel.

In 1844 Hercules Dousman married Jane Fisher Rolette, young widow of Dousman's former partner, and daughter of one of Prairie du Chien's first residents, Captain Henry Monroe Fisher. They had one child, Hercules Louis Dousman II. Their large estate, with the elegantly furnished House on the Mound, the center of 4500 acres which included extensive gardens and vineyards, became the showplace of the region.

Hercules Louis Dousman I died in 1868. Shortly afterwards, Mme. Dousman had the house rebuilt, apparently renamed it "Chateau Brilliante" and lived there until her death in 1882. Recently discovered evidence proves that it was actually Hercules Louis Dousman II who contracted with prominent Milwaukee architect Edward Townsend Mix to rebuild the estate. It was long believed that the original Georgian, red brick house had been remodeled and "Victorianized" under the direction of Mme. Dousman c. 1872. To quote a letter from the State Historical Society of Wisconsin to the Keeper of the National Register April 4, 1974:

"It has been discovered that the elder Dousman's son, Hercules Louis Dousman II, contracted with prominent Milwaukee architect Edward Townsend Mix to have the original house torn down and an entirely new edifice erected. The agreement was made on March 10, 1870 and the old house [was] torn down and the new one completed before the end of that year. Mix both designed and supervised the building of the new house. Much of the brick and other material from the first house was used in building the current Villa Louis."¹

Hercules Dousman II was born in Prairie du Chien in 1848 and educated in private schools and Racine College. In 1873 he married Nina Linn Sturgis, daughter of General Samuel D. Sturgis, commander of the 7th Cavalry. They lived in St. Louis where they established reputations as patrons of the arts, and Hercules was an active member of the St. Louis Jockey Club.

¹Letter from Donald N. Anderson, State Historical Society of Wisconsin to William J. Murtagh, Keeper of the National Register, April 4, 1974. Copy in national historic landmark files, with other letters on the subject.

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Hercules and Nina Sturgis Dousman and family moved to Prairie du Chien in 1883, renamed the estate Villa Louis, and developed a horse-breeding farm, Artesian Stock Farm, with a cork-surfaced race track, extensive stables, large carriage house and more than 100 fine-bred trotting race horses. He also added a second story to the original estate office, for game room and governess' quarters. The Dousmans' brought many pieces to Villa Louis from their fine St. Louis townhouse, which had a private art gallery.

In 1886 Hercules Dousman II died of appendicitis at the age of 36. Nina Sturgis Dousman took over management of the extensive estate. She sold the horses of the short-lived Artesian Stock Farm, and operated the large farms of the estate through tenant farmers. Even when their five children were sent East to school, Nina Dousman spent a good portion of her time at Villa Louis, later dividing her time between her Prairie du Chien and St. Paul homes, and she also lived in New York.

Nina Sturgis Dousman entertained lavishly, especially during the 1890's. She made some changes to the estate, especially to the grounds, and they included tennis courts, archery targets, a putting green, and swimming pool with open-top tent awning for spectators (on the site of old vineyards) on the rear lawn stretching to the river. The grounds of the present Villa Louis were probably at their prime 1895-1905.²

During the family's increasingly long absences, the Villa Louis was always maintained by a housekeeper and steward. In 1913, when Louis de Vierville Dousman, her only son, married and moved to Montana, Nina Dousman dismantled the Prairie du Chien estate and it was rented for various purposes for the next two decades.³ Mrs. Dousman lived for 17 years in New York, and later with a daughter in St. Louis, until her death in 1930.

In 1935 the Dousman family deeded the site to the city of Prairie du Chien to develop as Dousman Municipal Park. The park opened in 1936 and included a swimming pool, children's playground, and athletic field. A municipal golf course, (on the site of the old race track), was already in use. Violet Dousman Young was involved for many years in preserving the Villa Louis and interesting the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in the project. Restoration of the interior and gardens was undertaken in the 1930's, directed by Virginia Dousman Bigelow, a senior member of the New York Decorators Club, who also helped finance the work. Members of the Dousman family

²V. D. Bigelow, History of Villa Louis and of Nina Sturgis Dousman
(St. Paul, 1936) p. 30.

³Bigelow, p. 31.

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returned a considerable amount of furniture and original artifacts and documents to the house. In 1951, after negotiations between Prairie du Chien, the F. R. Bigelow and the State, the State Historical Society of Wisconsin assumed ownership of the property. They maintain the Villa Louis property as a house museum and the center of their historic sites in Prairie du Chien.

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Budahl, Lee "Architecture Before 1900 in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin," unpublished master's thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1967.

Drury, John, Historic Midwest Houses Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1947.

Evans, Constance M., and Earll, Ona B., La Prairie des Chiens. Prairie du Chien, 1937.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET

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All that part of original main Village Lots No. three (3) and four (4) lying east of Third Street; also all of that part of original main Village Lot No. five (5) lying east of Third Street, and that part of main Village Lot No. five (5) lying west of Third Street described as follows: Beginning in the Center line of Third Street extended at a point S 12 degrees E. 346.83 Chains from the intersection of the North line of main Village lot No. three (3) with the center line of Third Street extended; thence S 82 degrees W approximately 636.108 Chains to the West line of main Village lot No. five (5); thence S 5 1/2 degrees W. approximately 61.974 Chains to the Southwest corner of main Village lot No. five (5); thence N 78 degrees E along South line of main Village Lot No. five (5) to the center line of Third Street extended; thence N 12 degrees W along the aforesaid center line of Third Street extended approximately 14.718 Chains to the place of beginning. Also original main Village lots Nos. six (6) to twelve (12) inclusive; also lots Nos. one (1) to seven (7) inclusive of block No. two (2); lots Nos. one (1) to six (6) inclusive of Block No. three (3); lots Nos. one (1), two (2), and three (3) in block No. four (4); lots Nos. five (5) to eight (8) inclusive of block No. five (5); lots Nos. one (1) to eight (8) inclusive of block No. six (6); and lots Nos. one (1), two (2) and three (3) of block No. seven (7) according to the main village plat of Prairie du Chien, excepting the right of way of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad Co. across said land; also excepting the Highway which is an extension of Third Street; said premises being in the Fourth ward of the City of Prairie du Chien and comprising the Dousman Homestead called the Villa Louis with adjacent and surrounding land.