

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

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **MAY 15 1985**
date entered **JUN 19**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic L. A. LARSON & CO. STORE

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 306 South Third Avenue not for publication

city, town Sturgeon Bay vicinity of

state Wisconsin code 55 county Door code 029

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name J. Ronald McBride

street & number P.O. Box 501

city, town Sturgeon Bay vicinity of state Wisconsin 54235

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Door County Courthouse

street & number 138 S. Fourth Street

city, town Sturgeon Bay state Wisconsin 54235

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places/
title Sturgeon Bay Intensive Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1975/1982 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin

city, town Madison state Wisconsin 53706

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	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The L. A. Larson & Co. Store is located at the intersection of Pennsylvania and South Third Avenue, adjacent to the principal manufacturing district of Sturgeon Bay. Nearly surrounded by parking lots, the store is a two-story frame commercial structure with a one-story residence attached to its southeast corner.

The store building form is boomtown with a gabled roof. The roofing materials are asphalt shingles, the siding clapboard, and the foundations random stone; four small windows on the first floor are contemporary, the balance original double-hung with multipaned sash. Distinctive features of the principal western facade include a denticulated cornice with scroll brackets, racetrack paneled frieze with applied scrollwork, bracketed window caps, and a classical storefront composed of entablature, unfluted columns, and pilasters. The store windows have been reduced to accommodate a dropped ceiling on the interior, which once consisted of a single store on the first floor, now divided into offices. The second floor remains in its original condition as a meeting hall, now used for storage.

The attached residence is vernacular with both mansard and hipped roof forms. The roofing materials are asphalt shingles, the siding is clapboard, and the foundations are random stone (obscured in photographic documentation by subterranean insulation in progress); the windows are all double-hung with multi-paned sash, except in the bay on the southern facade where the sash is single-paned. Distinctive features include paired scroll brackets at the roofline, arched window caps, and a bay heavily ornamented with rope molding, brackets, and incised floral motifs. The interior has been subject to several alternate uses yet still exhibits decorative woodwork and parquet comparable in articulation to exterior features.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
..... prehistoric	..... archeology-prehistoric	..... community planning	..... landscape architecture	..... religion
..... 1400–1499	..... archeology-historic	..... conservation	..... law	..... science
..... 1500–1599	..... agriculture	..... economics	..... literature	..... sculpture
..... 1600–1699	X architecture	..... education	..... military	..... social/
..... 1700–1799	..... art	..... engineering	..... music	..... humanitarian
X 1800–1899	X commerce	..... exploration/settlement	..... philosophy	..... theater
..... 1900–	..... communications	..... industry	..... politics/government	..... transportation
		..... invention		..... other (specify)

Specific dates 1875¹ 1878 addition² Builder/Architect L. Adolph Larson³

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The L. A. Larson & Co. Store is commercially significant as the sole remaining facility of an important 19th century Door County furniture manufactory. Influenced by the Italianate period of construction, it is also architecturally significant as a notable example of the "boomtown" form of vernacular construction as interpreted by Norwegian craftsman.

COMMERCE

Settled by Norwegian Moravians in 1852, Sturgeon Bay developed around a 19th century economy dominated by lumber-related industries. Among these was the manufacture of furniture by L. A. Larson & Co. Cabinetmaker L. Adolph Larson immigrated to this country in 1867 and settled four years later in Sturgeon Bay.⁴ First operating from a downtown store, Larson enjoyed a virtual monopoly in the retail and manufacture of furniture and cabinetry in Door County.⁵ In 1875 Larson relocated the business to be near the planing mills and lumber yards of the Third Avenue milling district. From this location in a building designed and constructed by the firm, Larson diversified his operations to include residential construction (Joseph Harris Sr. House, 201 W. Maple St.) and undertaking.⁶ With the store serving as headquarters Larson also embarked on a mail order business (the second floor hall being rented out to the Temple of Honor). By 1885 L. A. Larson & Co. had established its manufacturing in a factory south of the store, with a warehouse and workshop added to the north by 1891.⁷ For more than 20 years L. A. Larson & Co. was the regional source of fine furniture and custom cabinetry. Then in 1893 larger manufacturing concerns gained access to the Door County market. With the completion of the Ahnapee and Western Railway Door County was no longer isolated by the winter freeze of Green Bay. Larson's monopoly was also broken, precipitating a decline in business that forced the factory closed by 1904, the store by 1911.⁸ Today only the store remains of this singular Door County enterprise.

ARCHITECTURE

The L. A. Larson & Co. Store is a notable example of the "boomtown" form of vernacular construction. Three other examples of this form are extant in Sturgeon Bay (154 S. Third, 44 S. Madison, and 29 E. Oak), but none exhibit the same creative application of high style features: the denticulated cornice with scroll brackets, the racetrack paneled frieze with applied scrollwork, and the bracketed window caps would otherwise recommend this building as a fine example of the Italianate period of construction. When completed in 1875, the Door County Advocate wrote that "the front⁹ is the most beautiful of any business house in the village, and a credit to the builders."⁹ L. A. Larson and his brother Emmanuel were trained cabinet makers from Norway and took over a year to execute the decorative features.¹⁰ The same care and attention to detail carried over into the attached residence, seemingly to exhibit the application of their skill to home building. The residence was added in 1878 and continues to be used by Larson descendants.

(continued)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Holand, Hjalmar R., History of Door County. S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1917. Chicago, Ill.
Kriviskey, Bruce and Zeitlin, Richard, Intensive Architectural/Historical Survey. Printed
privately, 1983. Sturgeon Bay, Wisc.
Quinlan, Albert and Kahlert, John, Early Door County Buildings. Meadow Land Publishing Co.,
1978. Bailey's Harbor, Wisc.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.26 acres

Quadrangle name Sturgeon Bay East, WI

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	6	4	7	0	4	6	0	4	9	6	4	1	4	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D

Zone				Easting				Northing						

E

Zone				Easting				Northing						

F

Zone				Easting				Northing						

G

Zone				Easting				Northing						

H

Zone				Easting				Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

Assessor's Map: westerly 100 feet of northerly 25 feet of lot 9, and westerly 100 feet of lot 10, block 10.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state N/A code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Peter J. Adams & Jeffrey H. Mulvey

organization Peter J. Adams & Associates

date February 5, 1985

street & number P.O. Box 341

telephone (414) 722-8963

city or town Neenah

state Wisconsin 54956

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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title DIRECTOR OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

date APRIL 26, 1985

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date

6-19-85

for 
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation sheet L. A. Larson & Co. Store Item number 8

Page 1

FOOTNOTES

¹Door County Advocate: April 1, 1875; page 3, column 2.

²Quinlan, Albert and Kahlert, John, Early Door County Buildings. Meadow Lane Publishing Co., 1978; Bailey's Harbor, Wisconsin. P. 91.

³Door County Advocate: March 2, 1876; page 3, column 1.

⁴Ibid: February 24, 1922; page 1, column 1.

⁵Ibid: May 28, 1874; page 3, column 2.

⁶Ibid: August 23, 1877; page 3, column 2.

⁷Sanborn-Perris Insurance Maps, Sturgeon Bay, 1885 and 1891.

⁸Ibid: 1904, 1911.

⁹Door County Advocate: March 2, 1876; page 3, column 1.

¹⁰Ibid: February 8, 1877; page 3, column 3.

¹¹For the years 1887-8 to 1902-3, the L.A. Larson Co. was the only furniture manufacturing concern located in the Sturgeon Bay/Door County region, as noted in the Wisconsin State Gazetteer & Business Directory for the time period.