Form No. 10-300 REV. (9/77)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRES	ENTUSE
XDISTRICT	PUBLIC	XOCCUPIED	AGRICULTURE	MUSEUM
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STRUCTURE	вотн	WORK IN PROGRESS	EDUCATIONAL	XPRIVATE RESIDE
SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	ENTERTAINMENT	XRELIGIOUS
OBJECT	IN PROCESS	YES: RESTRICTED	GOVERNMENT	SCIENTIFIC
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7' DESCRIPTION

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

General Character

The West Main Street Historic District in Oconto is a three block residential neighborhood. It is located on both sides of Main Street of the business district, one and one-half blocks from the Oconto River. It is a serene treelined street lighted with 1920 vintage lamp posts. The homes are of varied styles of Victorian architecture, predominately 1860 to 1905, with some large landscaped lots. There are 21 houses and 1 church, the latter and the Gov. Edward Scofield Mansion are already on the National Register. Three of the homes within the district are of a later era but are compatible in architecture. Eleven are pivotal and 10 are contributing to the district; there are no intrusions.

The first Christian Science Church building in the world stands in the middle of this area in the fork made by the junction of Chicago and Main Streets. In the triangle of land in the front of this church is a tiny park containing a handsome hand-hewn stone horse-watering fountain erected in 1916 by the Oconto Woman's Club to replace a trough considered an eyesore after the street was first paved. In the base of this landmark is a dog watering basin. The fountain is now planted with summer flowers each year by the Woman's Club.

By the 1880's Oconto was a city of lumber piles and slab yards, along both sides of the entire river bank. Main Street, at one time called Mill Road, just one block away, became one of the elite residential districts. Lumber barons, prominent merchants and professional people resided in the elegantly furnished houses and mansions many of which were staffed with servants.

Over the years Main Street was often referred to as the "avenue of stately elms," and at one time beds of tulips lined the terraces, and wrought iron or picket fences surrounded each home.² Most of its buildings are in good repair. Some have been remodeled but many remain very close to their original state and have been well maintained. Two are in need of rehabilitation. All are private dwellings with the exception of the Christian Science Church which is still used for services.

The heyday of lumbering in Oconto is passed, and the city is now a quiet rural community dependent upon farming and four larger industries, along with several small shoe, leather-related, and boating-related factories. Many of its residents commute to surrounding towns to work, and the community has assumed an atmosphere more residential than industrial.



SPECIFIC DAT	ES	BUILDER/ARCH	HITECT		
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X1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	INDUSTRY	POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	XOTHER (SPECIFY) Associa-	
<u>_X</u> 1800-1899	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	TRANSPORTATION	
1700-1799	ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER	
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1500-1599		ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE	
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-PREHISTORIC	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	_LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTL	RERELIGION	
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The architectural and historical significance of the West Main Street Historic District are inextricably intertwined. The residents of the district were lumber era merchants, professional people, and lumber barons. These were the social economic, and political leaders of Oconto; several wielded influence beyond Oconto. The size of each house, its ornamentation, the building materials used, and often the type of roofing were all affected by the dominant industry: lumbering.

The West Main Street area contains the highest concentration of Victorian houses associated with the leaders of Oconto during its heyday of lumbering. A few other fine Victorian houses exist, especially along Park Avenue, but these houses appear singly among smaller and more contemporary structures.

The overwhelming majority of the houses in the district were built between the late 1860s and the turn of the century, a period when Oconto enjoyed great prosperity as a key center of the lumbering industry in northeastern Wisconsin. The quality of these houses reflects this period of stable prosperity. While these were not the homes of the lumber tycoons who had earlier founded the industry in Oconto, they were generally those of the second-generation lumber barons, the managers of the mills, and other civic and economic leaders of Oconto. The elegant houses of West Main Street, particularly those on the north side of the street, were an upper-class Victorian redevelopment of the western part of Oconto. They replaced less substantial dwellings which had stood there previously.¹

The first sawmill on the Oconto River was built by Colonel David Jones and his sons in 1849, and by the 1870's there were 14 mills including shingle and planing mills. Oconto had incorporated as a city in 1869, but her heyday was the lumber boom between 1880 and 1915, when the lumber baron and "spendthrift lumberjacks" reigned supreme.² A reporter for The Chicago Herald, wrote in the 1890's, "A strong odor of pine sawdust pervades Oconto, and with good reason. Its sawmills are the glory of the town."³ Lumbermills lined the Oconto River and out of the many, two companies survived the fierce competition, the Oconto Co. and the Holt Lumber Co. The Oconto Co. was begun in 1867 by George Farnsworth, lumberman and civic benefactor. His son-in-law, Oakman Ellis, whose large residence is within this historic district, was superintendent of the company until his death in 1930 at age 90. The Oconto Company was in 1881 "A rich corporation...Capital stock \$250,000, but \$500,000 is invested in the business."4 The Holt & Balcom Lumber Co. was a partnership begun in 1862 by Devillo Holt and Colonel Uri Balcom. In 1888 Devillo's son, W. A. Holt, whose home is also within this district, became the general manager and in 1922 its owner and president, a position he held until his death in 1953. He exerted a tremendous influence as an employer,

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet.

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See Item #7			-			
LIST ALL STATES AND C	OUNTIES FOR PROPERTI	ES OVERLAPP	ING STATE OR COU	NTY BOUNDARIES		
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY		CODE		
ORGANIZATION Oconto County His STREET & NUMBER 917 Park Avenue	vart, Chairman, Historical Society		DATE June TELEPF	e, 1978		
CITY OR TOWN			STATE	······································		
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12 STATE HISTORIC P	PRESERVATION ATED SIGNIFICANCE OF 1					
NATIONAL	STATE	E	LOCAL	<u> X </u>		
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 OFFI	CER SIGNATURE	Viel	und ITA	lice /		
	e Historical Socie	ty of Wisco	onsin DATE	3/8/79		
FOR NPS USE ONLY I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER						
w Char	a alm		DATE	5.14.19		
ATTEST: Much B.	REGISTER Franklin	<	DATE	5.14.79 5.11.79		
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



CONTINUATION SHEET		ITEM NUMBER 4 PAGE 1
4.	OWNER OF PROPERTY (continued)	
	419 Main Street	\checkmark Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Chezek
	427 Main Street	🗸 Mr. John Messenger
	439 Main Street	√Harold Woods
	443 Main Street	✓ Mrs. Alice Windey
	451 Main Street	🗸 Nicholas Sylvester
	503 Main Street	\checkmark Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Van Den Bosch
	102 Chicago Street	Already listed on NRHP
	523 Main Street	\checkmark Dr. and Mrs. Forest Zantow
	527 Main Street	🖌 Mr. Ranny Rasmussen
	537 Main Street	✓ Mr. Darwin Ferris
	543 Main Street	√S. E. Roberts
	553 Main Street	✓ Mr. Walter T. Shier
	567 Main Street	✓ Mr. Carlton Peter DeWitt
	610 Main Street	Already listed on NRHP
	606 Main Street	✓ Leon Bond
	562 Main Street	✓ Peter DeCloux
	558 Main Street	\checkmark Hubert and Catherine Shepeck
	540 Main Street	Joseph Grinalde Estate c/o Mrs. Joseph Grinalde Townsend, Wisconsin 54175

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



CONTINUATION SHEET		ONTINUATION SHEET	ITEM NUMBER 4 PAGE 2
	4.	OWNER OF PROPERTY (continued)	
		532 Main Street	\checkmark George and Lucille Thompson
		522 Main Street	Mrs. Joseph Sylvester ✓ 328 Cook Avenue Oconto, Wisconsin 54153
		516 Main Street	✓ Mr. and Mrs. Garner Sowle
		510 Main Street	✔ Donald Holt

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 1

7. DESCRIPTION (continued)

Boundaries

The district includes one long block of twelve homes on the north side of Main Street from Duncan Avenue to Ontario Avenue (419-567 Main). Beginning with the intersection of Main Street and the northwestern-most property line at 419 Main, proceed northeasterly to the back property line, across Duncan Ave. to the back property lines of 427, 439, 443, 503, 523, 527, 537, 543, 553, 567 Main, then along the southeast property line of 567 on Ontario Ave. to Main Street. On the north side of Main St. include all buildings running west from Erie Ave. to 558 Main, then south to the railroad right of way marking the property lines for 510, 516, 522, 532, 540 Main, then north to Chicago St. Also include the small triangular piece of property between the junction of Chicago St. and Main St. To the north, west and south of the district are residential areas of Victorian houses of little architectural character intermixed with more modern structures. To the east, the original lumber baron houses have been demolished to make room for the expanding commercial core.

1. Photos from files of Oconto City Historical Society.

2. Ibid.

Inventory of Sites

419 Main Street, Victor O'Kelliher House. The O'Kelliher house is a one-story bungalow with shingled siding, a low-pitched gable roof, and an enclosed, recessed front porch on battered supports. It was built in 1914 as a wedding gift to Marjorie Best O'Kelliher from her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Best. The architect was P. Benton of Green Bay. Marjorie's husband, Victor O'Kelliher, was the son of Jerimiah O'Kelliher, a lumberman in Oconto in the fifties. Victor O'Kelliher became "mayor of Oconto and one of the best known and most successful attorneys...and since 1911 has been a member of the well known firm Classon & O'Kelliher, representing perhaps the best legal talent in the city."¹ During World War I he went to Washington, D.C. where he had the title of National Draft Inspector. In World War II he returned to Washington to work under General Lewis B. Hershey, Director of Selective Service. He was promoted to Colonel for his work in administering the U. S. draft laws.² The O'Kellihers lived in this home until 1945 and it has changed owners twice since. Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Chezek are the present owners.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

7. DESCRIPTION (continued)

Inventory of Sites (continued)

A dark shingled bungalow with a garage added and the eaves shortened in 1951, it remains in its original state including the Belgian-styled casement porch windows with one large stationary pane on top and a divided pane on the bottom.

References: G. E. Hall Abstract Co., Mrs. Pahl (Alice) Davis, Colonel Kelliher's ex-secretary.

- 1. Alice Baker Usher, <u>Wisconsin</u>, <u>Its Story and Biography</u>, 1848-1913 (Chicago: Lewis Publ. Co.), v.6, p. 1521.
- Scrapbook of Mrs. Cleo O'Kelliher Meeuwsen Flynn; <u>Oconto County Reporter</u>, Aug. 5, 1937, p. 1; and transcript of hearing of the Army Retiring Board, Washington, D. C., April 4, 1942.
- 3. Mrs. Arthur Chezek, present owner, says every piece of lumber used in this house has "V. O'Kelliher" stamped on it. The blue prints are available from Mrs. Chezek.

427 Main Street, <u>Thurman H. Phelps House</u>. On September 16, 1869, T. H. Phelps bought the land from Catherine Washburn for \$150.00, but the house now on this property was not built until ca. 1895. T. H. Phelps was the bookkeeper for the Holt and Balcom Lumber Co. of Oconto, a position of great importance in those days. He was a Massachusetts native and had come to Oconto in 1863. It is also known that at one time he was an insurance agent, and his wife, Margaret Lawler Phelps, was well known in the area for her painting of fine china.

This home was made from only the finest materials available. It is a Queen Anne style house with a large, curved porch trimmed with the original railings, brackets, and turned spindles. A round orielled turret at the corner with a witches' camp roof contains two windows with curved glass, and the double entry doors have beveled plate glass windows. Stained glass was also used. According to neighbors, this home is as frequently photographed as the Christian Science Church. The interior woodwork is oak and birch with the window frames to the floor and carving above. The newel post catches the eye on entering with its tall brass-based ornament and cut-glass globe.

The new roofing and rose artificial siding are the major alterations on the exterior. It was done in the 1950's.

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



CONTINUATION SHEET

3 7 **ITEM NUMBER** PAGE

7. DESCRIPTION (continued)

Inventory of Sites (continued)

The house remained in the Phelps family until 1937 when a local merchant, Mr. Fred Kahl, bought it. The Wm. Cain family owned it and then the present owner, John Messenger, bought it in 1974.

References: Hall Abstract Office; Interview with G. E. Hall. 1. From recollections of Mrs. Fred Kahl, former owner, and of Mr. Joseph Kinziger as related to his stepdaughter, Mrs. Arthur Chezek, History of Northern Wisconsin (Chicago, 1881), p. 663.

439 Main Street, Simon Murphy (Cleveland R. Keith) House. This house was built in 1881 by Simon Murphy, lumberman, and in 1890 was sold to Cleveland R. Keith, who worked for the Oconto Co. and later became a shoe merchant. He was a prominent layman in the Oconto Episcopal Church. It is a two-story frame Gree K Revival house with a gable roof. The large front Tuscan veranda is still attached and the leaded glass and sidelights at the front doorway have been preserved, but the gingerbread and spindles have been removed. Also, a side porch was removed by the Keiths. When the present owner, Harold Woods, city assessor and building inspector, was remodeling the home, he found it had been one of the many Oconto residences built from the rough 2 x 6's that had been chained together through holes at each end and used to hold lumber into secure piles as they were rafted from the sawmill to vessels in the bay. After the "ties" were used, the rough lumber was sold to anyone wishing to buy it.

References: Oconto County Register of Deeds, Vol. of Births: G. E. Hall Abstract Co.

1.

Conversations with local men who have worked in the sawmills.

443 Main Street, Thomas Morrison (Louis Oehlman) House. Built in 1881 by Thomas Morrison, an Irish wagon maker for Holt Lumber Co., and an early member of St. Joseph's Catholic Church, it became the home of Katherine and Ferdinand Armstrong in 1887 and then was bought by Louis and Margaret Oehlman in 1904. The Oehlmans owned the Oconto Monument Co. The frame construction is very plain with a fieldstone foundation, gabled roof, asbestos shingles and turned spindles on the large open front porch. Mrs. Alice Windey is the present owner.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE

7. DESCRIPTION (continued)

Inventory of Sites (continued)

References: Kenneth J. Augustine and Duane F. Ebert, <u>St. Joseph's Catholic Church</u>, <u>Oconto, Wisconsin</u> (Galion, Ohio, 1970), interview with Barbara Kiefe, and G. E. Hall Abstract Company.

451 Main Street, <u>Dr. F. E. Paramore House</u>, A rather plain frame house with returned eaves, double-door with a transom, and a shingled World War I era front porch was built ca. 1871. A breakfast nook was added to the kitchen area at some time. Dr. Paramore, a pioneer doctor in Oconto, was a medical officer in both the Mexican and the Civil Wars but returned to Oconto to practice medicine in 1866. Subsequent owners were local merchants and many were very active in local government. The present owner is Nicholas Sylvester.

References: West Shore of Green Bay (Chicago, 1896), pp. 476-477; History of Northeastern Wisconsin (Chicago, 1881).

503 Main Street, James Sargent House. James Sargent built this house in 1878. He and his brother, Henry, were lumber merchants and land owners, the most important parcel being the 200 acre cattle farm along Oconto's north bay shore. His wife, Laura Adams Sargent, was related to Boston's Adams family and kept in touch with the latest trends in the East. When Mary Baker Eddy's teachings on healing through prayer began to interest people "out west," she and her sister Victoria, Mrs. Henry Sargent, became charter members of Oconto's Christian Science faith. 1 Later Laura became the personal secretary-companion to Mary Baker Eddy in Boston. T. A. Pamperin, owner of Oconto's first electric company, and Walter DeWitt, president of the Holt Hardware Co. in the 1920's, have also owned this house. The present residents are Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Van Den Bosch. This Victorian house is unusual because it is a one-story cottage. It is constructed of frame with an intersecting gable roof. Segmentally arched moldings trim the windows and a fivesided bay. The porch features thin posts decorated with elaborately carved brackets. In the back of the house is a large carriage house still in good repair.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 5

7. DESCRIPTION (continued)

Inventory of Sites (continued)

The alterations that have been made have been the closing of the doorway at the far west front corner and the addition of a small porch on the east side. The wooden porch railings were replaced with wrought iron in 1977 but the pillars were retained.

References: Abstracts of title, <u>Oconto Reporter</u>, June 15, 1878. 1. George E. Hall, A History of Oconto (Oconto, 1969), p. 95.

102 Chicago Street, <u>First Church of Christ</u>, <u>Scientist</u> (NRHP). This church, built in 1886 at the cost of \$1,137.20 was the first building in the world erected for services by the Christian Science faith. "A small congregation was organized here in 1886 by the Reverend Lanson P. Norcross, who conducted the first services in the new church in October of that year ... A letter from Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy to 'this little church that built the first temple for Christian Science worship' has been preserved."¹ The "mother church" organized by Mrs. Eddy in Boston was built several years later and close ties existed between it and the congregation in Oconto. Inside and out, the church today looks practically the same as the day it opened for worship, and nearly all the furnishings are original. The little church seats about 100 people and is still used for Christian Science services.

Henry and Victoria Adams Sargent of Oconto donated the land and the plans for the building on June 15, 1886. Laura Adams Sargent, wife of James Sargent, (two sisters married two brothers), later became secretary-companion to Mary Baker Eddy in Boston. The building is carpenter gothic in style with board-and-batten siding, half-timber stickwork under the steeply pitched gable roof, a decorative bargeboard and cupola. It is in pristine condition.

References: George E. Hall, <u>Would You Believe It?</u> (Oconto Falls, 1951), pp. 46-47, George E. Hall, <u>A History of Oconto</u> (Oconto, 1969), pp. 95-97. 1. Wisconsin Writer's Project, <u>Wisconsin: A Guide to the Badger State</u>, (N.Y., 1941), p. 323.

510 Main Street, <u>Frank Schneider (Donald Holt)</u> House. This house was built in 1923 in the apple orchard owned by Victoria and Henry Sargent. It is a frame, local carpenter's interpretation of the colonial style with a steep, gabled roof, shed-roofed dormers, paned windows, shutters, molded cornices and a Federal Revival decorated doorway with a fanlight and columns. This house was built by Frank

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 6

7. DESCRIPTION (continued)

Inventory of Sites (continued)

Schneider, a hardware dealer, and was bought by Donald Holt in 1928. Donald Holt was vice-president and treasurer of the Holt Lumber Co., the firm started by his grandfather, Devillo Holt, and expanded by his father, W. A. Holt, both important names in Wisconsin's lumber industry. In the 1930's he and his father began to dispose of the company's large land holdings in northern Wisconsin, and after his father's death as executor of the Holt personal estate, he sold the remaining lands including Cathedral Pines in the Lakewood area. Thus ended the great lumbering era in Oconto, Wisconsin.

References: Abstract of title and statement of owner.

516 Main Street, <u>Henry Sargent House</u>. Henry Sargent was the first owner of this house built ca. 1867. Henry came from Canada in 1837 and was a prominent logger and lumber merchant. "Since 1869 he has been doing a jobbing business in lumber in both Marinette and Oconto counties and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan... furnishing employment to from fifty to two hundred men. He has also opened up a fine farm..."¹

Victoria Adams Sargent, his wife, was a leader in the early Christian Science movement in Oconto. On June 15, 1886, Henry donated the land and Victoria presented the Christian Science Association with the plans for the church which stands in this district at 102 Chicago Street. It became the first church building in the world for the Christian Science faith.²

The house is a two-story frame structure with returned eaves and a porch across the front. It has been altered considerably. In 1910-11 the porch was added and the east wing removed,³ but was later replaced with a garage and breezeway in the early 1950's. In the 1970's the present owners Mr. and Mrs. Garner Sowle, built an addition to the rear bedrooms and added a family room and wide aluminum siding. For a period of about ten years this home was also owned by Mr. Duane McCall, owner and editor of the Oconto County Reporter for many years.

References: Abstract and owner.

- 1. History of Northern Wisconsin (Chicago, 1881).
- 2. West Shore of Green Bay (Chicago, 1896), pp. 540, 541.
- 3. Photos in the files of the Oconto County Historical Society; Geo. E. Hall, A History of Oconto (Oconto, 1969), p. 95.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE

7. DESCRIPTION (continued)

Inventory of Sites (continued)

522 Main Street, <u>The Daniel Crawford House</u>. In 1853 the land in this area was bought by a Leonard Russel. It changed hands many times, one owner being Rodney Gillett of the founding family of Gillett, Wis. In 1869 the owner, Henry Sargent, sold one part of the property to Daniel Crawford for \$2,000 and another part was deeded to him by Victoria Sargent for \$1,000. Daniel Crawford, a timber cruiser, built the house between 1869-1870.

In 1903 Robert MacGregor Fleming, an engineer from Cedar Rapids, Michigan, came to Oconto and took a seven-day-a-week engineering position with the Holt Lumber Co. for \$67.50 a month. In 1912 he bought this house from a Whitney family who was connected with Oconto banking. It has been inherited within the Fleming-Williams family ever since.

The house is a simple frame Greek Revival building with returned eaves.

Major exterior alterations were made to the position of the front doorway and to the railings on the front porch, which wraps around two sides of the house. At one time the enclosed railings curved upward at the ends to form a base for twin pillars. There also was a railing around the top of the porch roof.

References: G. E. Hall Abstract Co., photo and letter from present owner, Mrs. Joseph Sylvester.

523 Main Street, Ira B. Pendleton (W. A. Holt) House. Ira Brooks Pendleton built this house in 1889. He and his brother Charles both built large homes approximately a block apart in this historic district. Three brothers, Ira, Charles and Frank, were lumberman. They had a large logging operation requiring large crews. The horse barns for the logging teams were for many years behind the Charles Pendleton home. It was in 1891 that W. A. Holt bought the house and he and his immediate family lived there over 60 years.

W. A. Holt was born in 1865 in Lake Forest, Ill. He entered his father's lumber business in Chicago when he was 17. D. R. Holt and Colonel Uri Balcom of Oconto had become partners in the Holt and Balcom Lumber Company in 1862, and W. A. Holt came to Oconto to become the general manager in 1888. "The Holt Lumber Co. is one of the largest and best known in the northwest, and with its founder and his sons, commands the confidence and respect of the trade."¹ In 1881 there were "100,000 acres of land owned by the firm situated in Oconto and Marinette counties."²

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7. DESCRIPTION (continued)

Inventory of Sites (continued)

The company owned a sawmill, store, boarding house, blacksmith and carpenter shops, a feed mill, horse barns for 40-50 horses and 15 pair of oxen, besides 600 acres of farm land in Oconto County. It kept 5 vessels constantly employed **throughout the season to ship** lumber.³ The addition of a planing mill, shingle mill, and a hardwood flooring mill made this company a real competitor in the lumber business. In 1902 it had "established the Oconto Electric Company using waste from the mill to develop power for that plant as well as for the sawmill, and supplying light and power to the public."⁴ In 1922 W. A. Holt bought out his brother Charles and became owner and president of the company. Besides the Holt Lumber and the Holt Hardwood Companies, he was president of the Oconto Canning Co., forerunner to the Bond Pickle Co. (today Oconto's largest industry), and director of the Oconto Falls Manufacturing Co.⁵ All through his life in Oconto, his influence was felt as an employer, church leader and mayor.

The Pendleton house is a large, two-story Queen Anne house. A front veranda with thin doubled Tuscan columns wraps around the east side of the house and shelters a double doorway. The steeply pitched gables of the roof are trimmed with large geometrically-designed bargeboards and the chimney stack pierces the roofline. The house has not had any exterior changes made since 1900.⁶ It was then that a' bay window and an addition to a room on the east rear side was built. In 1954 Dr. and Mrs. Forest Zantow became the third owners. They have kept the house as it was and returned the original iron fence to its place along the front terrace.

References: Abstract and Register of Deeds, Oconto.

- 1. George W. Hotchkiss, <u>History of the Lumber and Forest Industry of the</u> <u>Northwest</u> (Chicago, 1898).
- 2. <u>History of Northern Wisconsin</u> (Chicago, 1881), p. 658.
- 3. <u>Illustrated Historical Atlas of Wisconsin</u> (, 1881).
- 4. W. A. Holt, "Founder's Ideals" American Lumberman (Dec. 17, 1938), pp. 52-56.
- 5. Ellis B. Usher, History of Wisconsin (Chicago, 1914).
- 6. Photos in the files of the Oconto County Historical Society.

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7. DESCRIPTION (continued)

Inventory of Sites (continued)

527 Main Street, John Noonan, Jr. House. A Victorian house with a rather unusual gerkin-headed roof, front veranda, and plain windows, the Noonan house remains essentially unchanged. It was probably built by Lucy Morgan, who owned the property from 1889-1894. From 1894-1907, J. M. Garvey and his family occupied the structure. In 1907 it was sold to John Noonan, Jr., who lived in it for quite a long time. The present owner, Mr. Ranny Rasmussen, has carefully remodeled it into two apartments with a new side entrance.

References: Property abstract, 1899 photograph of house in collections of the Oconto County Historical Society, remembrances of residents of Oconto.

532 Main Street, The Abel Tourtillotte House. The original owner of the land was Leonard Russel when in 1854 he sold it to Henry and Abel Tourtillotte. Henry sold part of the land to Abel and his wife who built a small house circa 1860. Abel Tourtillotte was an expert canoeman who transported passengers and cargo on the Oconto River and along the shores of Green Bay.

Abel and his wife, Mary, sold the house in 1864 to Barney Brophy, a telegrapher for many years, and it appears that they added the front portion of the house. It changed hands many times over the years and the livelihoods of the owners were as varied and numerous as the changes. Some of them were directors of banks, mayors, bookkeepers for the Oconto company, and railroad workers.

A frame Italianate house, it features a front veranda with delicately carved balustrade and a denticulated cornice. The side porch has decoratively-carved woodwork, including a spindled balustrade and a spindled soffit. A side bay is two-stories high and is trimmed with brackets as are the eaves of the house. The windows and the door are sheltered by segmentally-arched window moldings. Windows on the first floor in front are French windows and the front door is framed by sidelights and a transom light.

During the ownership of Mary Doran in the 1940's, the house was remodeled inside and divided into three apartments. The present owners are George and Lucille Thompson, supermarket owners, who purchased the property in 1965.

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7. DESCRIPTION (continued)

Inventory of Sites (continued)

Whereas the original selling price of the house in 1864 was \$1,000, the sale in 1965 amounted to approximately \$9,000.

References: Richard L. Hall, "A Centennial History of Oconto County" (manuscript, 1876). Abstract of title.

537 Main Street, H. W. Landreth House. In 1903 H. W. Landreth, an Oconto cannery owner, laid the cornerstone of this 2-1/2 story, late Queen Anne house. Along with the date, he inscribed on it the name, "Twilight," and it is the only home in Oconto endowed with a name. J. B. Chase, lawyer, 14 years mayor of Oconto, district attorney, and state senator was a distinguished owner of this home, along with several doctors and the current resident, Darwin Ferris, an electrical contractor. The large front porch with turned spindles and Roman Ionic columns, a third floor balcony recessed under a wide arch, large second floor brackets and beveled leaded glass. 270 pieces in the oval window of the front door alone, are the outstanding exterior features of this shingled, symmetrically-designed house. The grounds surrounding "Twilight" have undergone extensive landscaping and the curved drive in the rear is lined with turn-of-the-century lamp posts. This house has had few exterior changes over the years. The back entrance porch has been extended across the whole back of the house and incorporated into a family room with an open porch added.

References: Abstract of title, statement of owner, Oconto County Reporter, v.13, 1969.

540 Main Street, <u>Oakman A. Ellis House</u>. Built ca. 1880. Oakman A. Ellis (1840-1930), originally from Maine, came to Oconto in 1866. He had worked in the lumber business since he was 16 and in 1869 became manager of the Oconto Company, a large lumber concern organized in Oconto in 1867 by George Farnsworth, an early pioneer. Under his direction the Oconto Co. by 1881 employed 250 hands. It consisted of a sawmill, shingle, planing, and flour mills producing 120,000 feet of lumber, 2500 shingles, and 80 barrels of flour per day. It sold a load (all a good team of horses could pull) of Grade-A lumber for \$1.00. It also owned a foundry, a general store carrying on a business of about \$175,000 per year, a boarding house,

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7. DESCRIPTION (continued)

Inventory of Sites (continued)

and 2 farms in Oconto. In Chicago it owned and ran a box factory and a barrel factory.¹ Ellis was the son-in-law of George Farnsworth and his only daughter later married George I. Scofield, son of Wisconsin's governor, Edward Scofield. Oakman Ellis was a civic leader holding the position of Chairman of Oconto County Board of Supervisors for over 20 years. Ellis, a staunch Republican, was also a delegate to several national conventions, among them the one that nominated William McKinley. In 1910 he became president of the Citizens' National Bank and was on the Board of Trustees of the Farnsworth Public Library of Oconto, which had been donated by George Farnsworth, his father-in-law.² He was also interested in experimental tobacco farming and secured a man to "experiment as to the adaptability of Oconto County for the culture of the leaf...."³

The Ellis mansion, formerly one of the showplaces on Main St., is Victorian style, with parquet floors, fireplaces, an open stairway, elegant furnishings, and an "estate-like" yard. It is two-stories high with a multiple roof, eave brackets and modillions and several two-story bays. It is now considered the most endangered home on Main St. In 1938 the Elks Lodge acquired it; in 1952 a private owner restored and remodeled the inside; in 1967 it became a nursing home, and is now the Oconto Rooming House. It is covered with rose and white artificial siding; a porch on the east corner and the tower have been removed; and the lawn is not well kept. Its owner, Joseph Grinalde, of Lakewood, Wisconsin, has been trying to sell it for some time.

- 1. History of Northern Wisconsin (Chicago, 1881), pp. 658-660.
- 2. Usher, Ellis B., History of Wisconsin (Chicago, 1914), pp. 1528
- 3. Oconto County Reporter, April 3, 1903.

543 Main Street, <u>Charles Hall House</u>. The century old Charles Hall house of yellow brick has remained one of Main Street's most impressive homes. A native of England, Hall came to Oconto as a boy and became one of the most influential citizens. He served as mayor and also represented Oconto County in the state assembly from 1889-93. He built the town's first music hall and when that burned, built a second, more impressive building of brick in 1872. He operated a hardware store on the first floor.

Hall's 2-1/2 story house was built ca. 1878 and was one of four in the city with a mansard roof. It features round-arched dormers, elaborate eave brackets, stilted segmentally-arched windows with keystones and an elaborate, rectangular frame bay on

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7. DESCRIPTION (continued)

Inventory of Sites (continued)

the east side. In earlier years, the house had a glassed-in cupola, or observation tower. The ornate fountain that once graced the front year was given to Hall by Gov. Edward Scofield and is now on the grounds of the Beyer Home Museum. The elaborate cast iron fence is gone and the porch has been replaced by an enclosed porch. The original porch was a portico with graceful steps. Other changes include the enclosure of the west side porch and removal of the railing on the upper level balcony. At this time, the house needs rehabilitation.

Hall's wife, Elizabeth Lindsay, was daughter of Oconto's first permanent settler, Thomas Lindsay, and the first white child born in Oconto.

In 1907 the house was sold to Charles A. Best, who came from a family of bankers on his mother's side (Wolf). He took an active part in the organization of the State Bank of Kiel and was its cashier until 1900. "In that year he played a similar role in the establishment of the Citizens' National Bank at Oconto...It is in respect to its deposits and general facilities and strength the largest institution of its kind in Oconto County."¹ It was Charles and Mrs. Best who gave their daughter Marjorie and their son-in-law, Victor O'Kelliher, the gift of the house at 419 Main, also within the historic district. Later owners included three physicians. The home is now owned by S. E. Roberts.

References: George E. Hall Abstract Co., G. E. Hall, <u>A History of Oconto</u> (Oconto, 1969), <u>Oconto County Reporter</u> files, <u>Green Bay Press Gazette</u> files, bible and diary in possession of descendants.

 Usher, Ellis B., <u>History of Wisconsin</u> <u>1848-1913</u>, Vol I, (Chicago, 1914), pp. 1519-1520.

553 Main Street, <u>W. K. Smith House</u>. This house was constructed in the typical Victorian style of wealthy owners of the era. The home is still referred to as "the Banker Smith home" after William Smith who had it built ca. 1883 for his wife, the former Ella Newbanks, while she was on a trip to Alaska. Smith was president of Farnsworth and Smith Bank, one of Oconto's first financial establishments, begun in 1860, nine years before the city was chartered.

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7. DESCRIPTION (continued)

Inventory of Sites (continued)

The Smith House is a Late Victorian frame house with an intersecting gable roof. The pitch of the roof is steep. A wide veranda encircles the front gable of the house and is trimmed with a pediment at the entrance decorated in a reticulated pattern. Several picture windows feature stained glass panels at the top of the window. At the second level of the main gable is a three-sided bay with a decorative frieze. The side of the house has a two-story frame bay.

The home boasted fireplaces in the master bedroom, library and front parlor. The major alteration to the exterior is a two-story attached garage at the rear.

Following the death of Mrs. Smith in the 1930's, the house was used as a funeral home until purchased by Walter T. Shier about five years ago. Mr. Shier is manager of the Oconto operation of Wisconsin Public Service.

Charles Smith, state treasurer, is a grandson of the builder.

References: Hall Abstract Office and Oconto County Reporter files.

558 Main Street, <u>The Edward Barber House</u> (rental). This is one of the original lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 which were known as "The Brunquist Addition." Robert and Hanna McGiven owned the original property and sold it to Edward and Anna Barber in 1869. Barber, a carpenter, had built his own home and several years later this house right next door. This home must have been rental property and when Samuel Klass bought both Barber houses, he also rented this one until 1911 when it was sold to Allan V. Classon, an Oconto attorney. It is a simple 1-1/2 story frame house with an intersecting gable roof and an enclosed porch. Classon remodeled the house with a front addition to enlarge the living room and this necessitated a change in the small front entry porch. The fancy bargeboard similar to its neighboring house was also removed in about 1935. Since then this residence has been owned by 2 doctors and a dentist. The present owners, Hubert and Catherine Shepeck bought the house in 1951.

References: Abstract of title.

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7. DESCRIPTION (continued)

Inventory of Sites (continued)

562 Main Street, <u>The Edward H. Barber House</u>. This house is located on the corner of Main and Ontario Streets. It is one of the original lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 which were known as "The Brunquist Addition."

John Smith was the original owner of this property in 1857. He sold this property to Edward H. Barber on February 8, 1864.

Edward H. Barber was originally from Ohio and was a carpenter. He passed away in 1867, leaving the property to his widow, Anna Kane Barber. She remarried Hannibal Tibbetts in 1869 who was a Civil War veteran. He owned and operated a livery business in the area later occupied by the Davis Livery business. Mr. and Mrs. Tibbetts lived at this location for about 35 years (1865-1899) until the property was sold.¹

The record shows that the property was held in the name of Anna Tibbetts with the names of Myron Rogers, William Alexander, Walt Phillips, Henry Cody and Sarah Watson also appearing until the sale of the property (all the original lots) to Samuel W. Klass on April 11, 1899 for \$1200.00. He left the property to his daughter, Nora Klass, who was private secretary to W. A. Holt of the Holt Lumber Company for fifty years. Samuel Klass owned a jewelry store and also operated a restaurant in downtown Oconto.

The house is simple, 1-1/2 story frame structure decorated with a carved bargeboard and pediment over the entrance porch. The Klass family made many improvements, enlarging the original structure (living room, dining room and kitchen on the first floor, two bedrooms and unfinished attic area on the second floor).

The present owner, Peter DeCloux, added a 2-stall garage and an enclosed side porch in 1975-76.

References: Letter to Oconto County Historical Society from Barbara Starr, Abstract of title.

1. The original home built by Edward H. Barber is believed to be the small rear structure which was later incorporated into the main front section of the present house by Samuel Klass in 1899.

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7. DESCRIPTION (continued)

Inventory of Sites (continued)

567 Main Street, Charles Pendleton House. This impressive 2-1/2 story frame house was built ca. 1880-1882 by Charles I. Pendleton, who with two other brothers, Frank and Ira B. Pendleton, ran a large logging operation in Oconto County. In 1887 his son, Frederick sold the house to Fred Schedler, who had started as a lumberjack and "by judicious investments and able management had become one of the most influential men in financial and civic affairs in Oconto County."¹ He was a director of the Oconto Canning Co. and a director of the Oconto National Bank from the time it was organized in 1866. From 1867-1897 Schedler was the owner and operator of a popular Main St. hostelry, the Schedler House. The Main St. house remained the home of his widow and daughter, Hermine Mooney, until the death of the latter in 1931. From 1931 until 1968 it was the home of Donald DeWitt, son-in-law of W. A. Holt, prominent lumberman and founder of Holt Hardwood and Holt Lumber Companies. DeWitt became the president of the Holt Hardwood Co. and was on the board of directors of the Marinette Marine, Four-wheel Drive of Clintonville, and Carver Boat of Pulaski. He was also president of the First National Bank of Oconto and Marinette. It is presently the home of his son, Carlton Peter DeWitt, president of Holt Instrument Laboratories, Inc. and general manager of C. P. D. Engineering, Inc.

Both the exterior and interior of the home have remained essentially unchanged with the exception of the wooden step railing which has been replaced by wrought iron, and the addition of a porch on the west side. It is a massive Queen Anne house with clapboard on the first floor and fish-scale shingles above. Elaborate brackets and carved trim decorate the front porch and a balcony on the east side.

References: G. E. Hall Abstract Co., Hall, George E., <u>A</u> <u>History of Oconto County</u>, (Oconto, 1969), Register of Deeds, Oconto County Courthouse, Statement of C. P. DeWitt, present owner.

1. Usher, Ellis, History of Wisconsin, Vol. VI, (Chicago, 1914), pp. 1520-21.

606 Main Street, Leon Bond House. This house was built in 1929 by Leon Bond after purchasing the land from the Gov. Edward Scofield heirs. It is a white stucco, one-floor Spanish-styled home with a tile roof. Balustrades decorate the roofline of the house and of the semi-circular front entrance porch, which is supported by Roman Ionic columns. Low stuccoed piazza walls and formally trimmed evergreens complete the symmetrical composition.

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7. DESCRIPTION (continued)

Inventory of Sites (continued)

In the 1920's four Bond brothers, one of them Leon, had started the Oconto based Bond Pickle Co. and by 1938 had expanded it into the largest U. S. pickle processing plant under one roof.¹ Leon Bond was the president of that company for many years and at the time it was sold to Beatrice Foods in 1965. The house is unaltered except for an addition of a room on the south side.

References: Abstract of title. G. E. Hall, <u>A</u> <u>History of Oconto</u> (Oconto, 1969), p. 197.

610 Main Street, <u>Gov. Edward Scofield House</u>, NRHP. Wm. Brunquist, early Oconto lumberman and general store owner, built this large cream-colored brick mansion ca. 1868 for \$6,500. Major Edward Scofield, a title he received "for meritorious conduct upon the field" during the Civil War, had come to Oconto about the same year it was built. In the early 1870's, after he had married, he acquired the home. He bought a small mill in Oconto in 1881 and in 1894 acquired a large interest in the Scofield, Arnold Lumber Co. headquartered in Marinette, Wis. The mills furnished employment to about 140 men, and manufactured from 25-30 million feet of finished lumber annually. However, he and his family remained in Oconto. It was in 1887 that he was elected to the state senate. In 1897-1901 Scofield was elected governor of Wisconsin and served two terms.

Subsequent owners have been Scofield's granddaughter, Marion Scofield, Dr. Raymond Rogers, and Judge James Martineau. For a few years it was rented or vacant and it fell into disrepair. Thomas Schuh bought it in 1977 and renovated the interior and added a family room to the east side. The upstairs was made into apartments. The house is two-stories high with a low hipped roof. Special features include round arched dormers with finials, bracketed eaves, stilted segmentally arched windows and elaborate frame bays. The original porch across the front of the house was removed by Marion Scofield in the 1930's.

The Scofield Mansion was added to the National Register of Historic Places in April, 1973.

References: <u>History of Northeastern Wisconsin</u> (Chicago, 1881), p. 659. <u>West Shore</u> of Green Bay (Chicago, 1896), p. 475. George E. Hall, <u>A History of Oconto</u> (Oconto, 1969), pp. 103-108.

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

church leader, and mayor, on Oconto and its residents all during his lifetime.⁵ He and his son, Donald Holt, who resides in this district, sold the company's vast holdings during the 1930-1940's, marking the beginning of the end of the lumber era in Oconto. Another historic figure of this district was the last lumber-baron governor of Wisconsin, Major Edward Scofield, elected for two terms, 1897-1901. Gov. Scofield had at one time a shingle mill in Oconto which made pine shingles.

Other residents of the Main Street who contributed to the historical significance of this district were three women who were part of the original Christian Science movement in the United States. Although Mary Baker Eddy never visited what she called her "mission church," she approved the plans, "go right on and build," for what is known to be the first building in the world for Christian Science worship.⁶ Mrs. Victoria (Henry) Sargent, her sister, Mrs. Laura (James) Sargent, and Mrs. Charles Pendleton were members of the church committee for planning the church building. The homes of these three women are part of this historic district. Later Laura Sargent became secretary-companion to Mary Baker Eddy in Boston.

The district conveys a sense of historic and architectural cohesiveness by the fact that it was developed during the lumber boom in Oconto County and during the Victorian era. Nearly all of the homes in this district were built of quality materials--individually wrapped bricks brought in by boat, or Grade-A pine from the local mills--and in most cases, expert craftsmen were used. Studdings and rafters of several homes in the district still bear witness to the fact that they were built of lumber made from the rough 2 x 6's used to "tie" piles of lumber as they were rafted from the sawmills to the vessels waiting to be loaded at Green Bay.⁷

The Victorian architectural features include fish-scale shingles, large porches with turned spindles, double-entry doors, leaded glass, diamond panes, finials and pendants, fancy bargeboards and cut-back eaves.

The **rem**inders of the old Oconto of the lumber boom period remain in its buildings, and especially in the West Main Street district. Most of the buildings which make up the district were built during the lumber boom. Made of pine lumber from the local mills, many were covered with metal roofs which, according to local legend, would protect them from sparks escaping from the mills burning waste sawdust. The once elegant Oakman Ellis house in this district still has its metal roof as do several others. The wealth of virgin pine in the area contributed to the building of the majority of the houses in this district, so the pineries provided work for the laboring class, and at the same time, prosperity for the wealthy who built the large elaborate homes on Main Street.

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

The Committee for the Preservation of Historic Oconto believes that designation of this district to the National Register will promote the rehabilitation, and in several instances, the restoration of the homes in this area. It will also help to prevent any more of them from being sold for offices or nursing and rooming houses. The Committee also feels that the designation of this district will make the entire city conscious of the value of its vintage character and will encourage restoration of its large porches and Victorian ornamentation, as well as its vintage lamp posts.

1. T. M. Fowler and H. H. Bailey, "Bird's-Eye View of Oconto, Wis." (Milwaukee, 1871).

2. John Emmett Nelligan, The Life of a Lumberman (n.p., 1929), p. 37.

- 3. Chicago Herald Tribune, 24 Sept. 1891.
- 4. History of Northern Wisconsin (Chicago, 1881).

5. W. A. Holt, "Founder's Ideals are Continued for 91 Years, 1847-1938," American Lumberman (17 Dec. 1938), 1, 51-58.

6. George E. Hall, A History of Oconto (Oconto, 1969), pp. 95-97.

7. Statement of Harold Woode, owner of 439 Main.

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CONTINUATION SHEET ITEM N

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (continued)

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11.	FORM PREPARED BY (continued)				
	Katherine E. Hundt, Architectura State Historical Society of Wisc 816 State Street Madison			September, 608-262-29 Wisconsin	70
	David A. Donath, Historian State Historical Society of Wisc 816 State Street Madison	consin		September, 608-262-33 Wisconsin	90

