

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED OCT 18 1979

NOV 19 1980

DATE ENTERED

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Stone Houses of Brownville <sup>Resources</sup> Thematic Group, Brown Mansion, Brownville Hotel, Vogt House, William Archer House and Arthur Walrath House

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Brown Mansion, Brown Boulevard; Brownville Hotel, Brown Boulevard; Vogt House, 110 Main Street; William Archer House, 112 Washington Street; and Arthur Walrath House, 114 Pike Street

CITY, TOWN

Brownville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

30th

STATE

New York

CODE

036

COUNTY

Jefferson

CODE

045

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

x - Thematic Group

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Multiple Ownership.

see continuation sheet

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

VICINITY OF

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Jefferson County Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

175 Arsenal Street

CITY, TOWN

Watertown

STATE

New York, 13601

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

none

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

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

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Jefferson County is noted for its fine collection of stone buildings. The five structures that comprise this nomination are located in the village of Brownville, a small hamlet located on the Black River, a few miles northwest of Watertown. The Black River Valley is characterized by heavy beds of limestone, belonging to the Trenton limestone group. This stone, extracted from the building site, was used in the construction of the Brown Mansion, the Brownville Hotel, the Vogt House, the Walrath House and the Archer House.

The Brown Mansion is a two-story limestone structure located on a large property originally designed as a public square. A rectangular block, the house is covered by a hip roof with eyelid dormers, punctuated by four endwall chimneys symmetrically placed on its north and south elevations. Dressed limestone ashlar is used to create smooth facades which are punctured by trabeated double hung sash windows with small panes. Stone steps lead to the entrance which is symmetrically placed in the center of the west facade facing the street. The main entrance door features an elliptical fanlight and two narrow sidelights. The first level of the east facade of the house is extended by a porch along its length. The side porch and the apartment on the north facade are a later addition. The walls of the Brown Mansion are about two feet thick. The house has twenty-two rooms, each with its own fireplace. Fine woods were used in the interior. The Brown Mansion is now owned by the village of Brownville and functions as a library, a museum and a center for youth programs.

The William Archer House and the Arthur Walrath House are the only houses in the group that are neighbors. Their similarity is the consequence of having been built at the same time for the same purpose. Both houses are rectangular two-story buildings capped by gabled roofs. Their masonry walls are laid in coursed ashlar and rubble, and the trabeated double-hung sash windows as well as the door openings have stone lintels. The north elevation of the Walrath House is provided with an exterior chimney and the main entrance on the west elevation facing Washington Street is protected by a roofed entrance porch. In the Archer House an interior chimney is built into the south elevation. Both houses are surrounded by lawns, shade trees and spacious yards. The Walrath House, whose present owner is a landscape gardener, features a landscaped flower garden including a nursery and a barn, which was built around the turn of the century. Both buildings are now privately owned. (The nursery and barn are not included in the nomination.) VOID - see revised Description (10/21/80)

The Brownville Hotel was constructed in 1820. A three-story square block with a hip roof, this building is also constructed of native limestone. Here the masonry walls are laid in broken faced coursed ashlar. The walls are punctured by trabeated double-hung sash windows with stone lintels and sills. Interior chimneys are symmetrically placed on the south and north elevations. The entrance door on the east elevation facing Brown Boulevard is protected by a gabled entrance porch. A former entrance on the south elevation facing Main Street is now closed. The hotel has been converted into apartments and is privately owned. It is in poor condition and in need of repair.

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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Stone Houses of Brownville  
Brownville, New York  
Jefferson County

CONTINUATION SHEET

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The Vogt House, built in 1826 of native limestone, is surrounded by a small front yard, shade trees and a back yard with garage. The two-story main block is built in the Federal style, featuring stepped gables with a semicircular window on the west facade and an interior chimney on the east elevation. The entrance door on the south elevation is terminated by a semicircular fanlight. The stone arch above the door is centered by a keystone. The door is framed by smooth ashlar quoins as are the trabeated windows that are provided with stone sills and lintels. Quoinage also appears on the four corners of the house. The stone quoining is twice as large as the rock-faced **coursed** ashlar of the walls. An entrance porch on the east facade is a later addition.

The present owner believes that the oldest part of the house is the one-story building of the north elevation. A later addition was the one and one-half story dwelling which abuts the main house. A recently added shed dormer does not fit the roofline. The limestone walls of these two earlier dwellings are laid in coursed random ashlar and rubble.

All buildings within this group are examples of fine workmanship. Special care was given to the front facade of the Brown Mansion by using dressed limestone blocks. Much attention was given to the design of the Vogt House in that the rock-faced coursed ashlar is accented by the smooth quoinage. The other three structures show less concern for finish in their stone work, with a higher level of craftsmanship in evidence in the Brownville Hotel than in the remaining two.

With the exception of the Archer House, which is being restored by its owners, all of the other buildings are in need of repair and restoration.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

R

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input 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 type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES 1811-1826

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The stone houses of Brownville were built of native limestone during the first three decades of the nineteenth century. The Brown Mansion, the Walrath House and the Archer House were connected with the War of 1812, while the Brownville Hotel and the Vogt House as well as the Walrath House were linked with the commercial and industrial development of the village.

The original owner of the Brown Mansion, Jacob Brown, the first white settler at the village site in 1799, came from Bucks County, Pennsylvania and gave his name to the village. A man of many interests, he served as the first supervisor of the town of Brownville in 1803 and was influential in the construction of roads and bridges which opened up the north country from Sackets Harbor to Plattsburgh.

Having served as Military Secretary to Alexander Hamilton and as Militia Captain of Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties, Brown was promoted to Brigadier General in 1811, when he commanded troops at Ogdensburg, Sackets harbor and Lundy's Lane. During the war with England, Brownville became a military capital, second in importance only to Sackets Harbor.

General Brown's mansion became a focal point while its owner was military commander of the northern division. Apart from being used as a hospital during the War of 1812, it served as headquarters for the northern division of the Federal Army until 1812 at which time General Brown became Commander-in-Chief of the United States Army. Later General Brown's mansion saw well-known visitors such as President Monroe, Joseph Bonaparte, Commander Perry and Major General Winfield Scott.

According to records deposited in the Brown Mansion, the Arthur Walrath House and the William Archer House were built to give shelter to prisoners of the War of 1812. A tall narrow cupboard for gun storage (now removed) along the stairway in the Walrath House provide a link to its military past. The land on which both houses stand was once owned by Judge John Brown, brother of General Brown, as was most of the land from the corner of Main Street and Brown Boulevard north along Philomel Creek. The Vogt House was the home of Thomas I. Knap who was associated with the manufacture of linseed oil, white lead, and lithic paint in Brownville.

Until the erection of public buildings in the county seat of Watertown, Brownville was one of the most progressive and prosperous settlements in Jefferson County. The stone houses of Brownville are significant in the region as surviving examples of the town's past history. They illustrate its military and commercial importance as well as unique building techniques and architectural styles of the first part of the nineteenth century.

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
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Stone Houses of Brownville

Continuation sheet

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The Stone Houses of Brownville thematic group consists of five structures in the hamlet of Brownville which illustrate the distinctive characteristics of limestone building practices in the St. Lawrence region during the early nineteenth century. The five buildings, the Brown Mansion (c. 1811), the Brownville Hotel (c. 1820), the Vogt House (c. 1826), the William Archer House and the Arthur Walrath House (c. 1811), survive as the only substantially unaltered limestone structures in the village. As representative local examples of regional limestone architecture, they reflect a range of building styles. Individually, and as a group, they are significant in the early architectural history of the St. Lawrence region and embody the distinctive characteristics of the type, period and method of construction.

The Brown Mansion (c. 1811) is the most imposing structure within the group. Constructed of limestone in a smooth surface, coursed ashlar technique, and incorporating numerous Georgian/Federal stylistic features, it reflects the prominence and sophisticated taste of its owner, General Jacob Brown. During his distinguished military career, Brown held many prestigious positions. In 1812, he became General-in-Chief of the United States Army and entertained many prominent individuals at his stately residence, including President James Monroe, Joseph Bonaparte and Commodore Perry.

The Archer and Walrath Houses (c.1811) are five-bay, two-story vernacular structures with random ashlar, limestone, loadbearing walls. They are excellent surviving examples of modest dwellings typical of most houses constructed in the St. Lawrence region during this period. The two neighboring structures temporarily housed prisoners during the War of 1812. It appears that the ells on the Archer House were added during the mid-nineteenth century period.

The Brownville Hotel (c. 1820), a three-story limestone structure, is an uncommon surviving example of the vernacular, commercial, stone buildings once common in the region. The hotel continues in its original commercial use at the village crossroads and is a conspicuous local visual landmark. The long continuity of use contributes to its local significance.

The Vogt House (c. 1826) is a two-story, three-bay, stepped gable residence with a stone kitchen wing. Built of random ashlar limestone masonry, the residence is an outstanding example of a modest Federal period stone dwelling which survives largely intact.

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                                  Jefferson Co.

The availability, strength and durability of limestone as a construction material made it the frequent choice of early nineteenth century builders in the region. The stone was fine in texture and generally free from seams and other imperfections. The most important feature of limestone was its ability to withstand the exceptionally cold climate of the St. Lawrence region without cracking. Numerous examples survive and form a distinctive part of the historic landscape. However, at present there is no regional comprehensive inventory of such buildings.

The five structures included in this nomination are the village of Brownville's representative examples of the limestone architecture once characteristic of the St. Lawrence Valley. The Stone Houses of Brownville represent a rare and significant group of limestone buildings concentrated within a single crossroads community.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Johnsen, John H. The Limestones of Jefferson County, New York. Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1971.

Smock, John C. "Building Stone in New York." New York State Museum Bulletin, vol. 2, Nr. 10, September, 1890.

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Brown Mansion 4.2 A., Brownville Hotel .46 A., Archer House .83 A., Walrath House 7.6 A., Vogt House 2.3 A.

UTM REFERENCES see continuation sheet

A	_____	_____	_____	B	_____	_____	_____
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____	_____

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The nominated parcels are identified on the attached sketch map. All are located in Brownville, New York, Jefferson County. For Brown Mansion, Walrath House, Archer House, Vogt House, see tax map 73.72. For Brownville Hotel, see tax map 73.71.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

Edited by Alice Jean Stuart, 518-474-0479  
Division for Historic Preservation

NAME/TITLE

Evamaria Hardin, Consultant May, 21, 1979.

ORGANIZATION

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

117 Terrace Rd.

TELEPHONE

(315) 479-9993

CITY OR TOWN

Syracuse, New York, 13210

STATE

New York

**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

*Stephen H. [Signature]*

TITLE Director, Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau

DATE 10/9/79

**FOR NPS USE ONLY**

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*[Signature]*  
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE November 19 1980  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER