

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

**NRIS Reference Number:** 97001645

**Date Listed:** 1/26/98

Lord, Charles, House  
**Property Name**

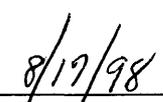
Vernon  
**County**

WI  
**State**

**Multiple Name**

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of the Keeper**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date of Action**

=====  
**Amended Items in Nomination:**

The photographs are several years old, but the SHPO explained that it took quite a while for this nomination to get through the nomination process. The photographs still depict the property accurately. This information was provided by Jim Draeger of the WI SHPO staff.

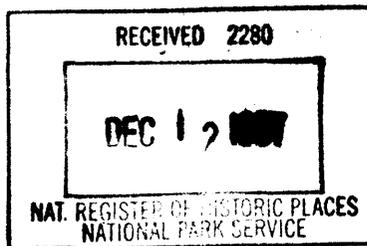
**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

1645

NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 8/86)  
Wisconsin Word Processor Format (NRF.txt)  
(Approved 3/87)

OMB No. 1024-0018



United States Department of Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries. Use letter quality printer in 12 pitch, using an 85 space line and a 10 space left margin. Use only archival paper (20 pound, acid free paper with a 2% alkaline reserve).

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Lord, Charles, House

other names/site number Inn at Wildcat Mountain

**2. Location**

street & number 113 South Street

N/A Not for Publication

city, town Ontario

N/A vicinity

state Wisconsin code WI county Vernon code 123 zip code 54651

**3. Classification**

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>   </u>	<u>   </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>   </u>	<u>   </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>   </u>	<u>   </u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0



Charles Lord House  
Name of Property

Vernon Co., WI  
County and State

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials  
(enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

foundation Stone  
walls weatherboard

roof Rubber  
other Wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

**Description**

The former Charles Lord House is a two-story residence located on the west side of South Street, one mile south of the Ontario central business district. It is sited on the top of a knoll on a large lot giving it visual prominence. The house faces east.

The Lord house is a Neo-classical, shed-roofed, two-story, balloon frame, weatherboard clad building resting on a raised foundation. This elegant home has a square plan which features an ashlar limestone foundation, a full-height entry porch, and a full-height curved portico on the north side. The Lord house, built by local craftsmen, is a local example of Neo-classical revival influenced architecture that continues to stand as a stately and prominent structure in a rural countryside. The house was built in 1912.

The foundation is visible on all sides of the home. It is constructed of regular courses of natural ashlar limestone. The limestone foundation wall extends to support the entry porch on the east. Glass block windows on the south side of the structure mark the location of the openings once used for loading coal to the basement boiler. A cellar door and window are also located on the south foundation. The west foundation wall extends to support a wood back porch, and also has a cellar window. On the north side of the house, the foundation supports the curved portico and two cellar windows.

The main entry is framed by a full-height rectangular porch ornamented with six wooden Corinthian columns supporting an entablature with cornices, roof-line balustrade and parapet. On the first floor, the glazed and paneled main entry door is complemented by two sidelights. A picture window and a single double hung sash window are also located on the first floor of the main elevation. Window and door surrounds are plain milled boards with no moulding.

X see continuation sheet

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Ontario, Vernon County, Wisconsin

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**Description** (continued)

The first floor of the south side of the house is accented by a double-hung sash window. A modern double-hung sash window was added in the 1950s when the kitchen was remodeled. Wooden stairs here provide access to the enclosed back porch.

The entrance level at the rear of the house includes a fixed porch window and a pair of sash windows.

The north side of the home features a full-height curved portico supported by 5 Corinthian columns. The portico entrance door is highlighted by an oval beveled light. A picture window and a sash window complement the portico on the first floor.

At the second story level, the most dramatic feature of the home is the cantilevered semi-circular balcony above the front entry. The balcony is emphasized by a graceful wood rail. Three leaded double-hung sash windows at this level add balance to the facade.

Three leaded windows are also located on the south and north sides of the home on the second level. Two sash windows are also located on the second floor on the west side of the home.

Perhaps the most dramatic exterior feature is the overscaled entablature and cornice. This feature is constructed as falsework, essentially being a parapet concealing the slope of the shed roof. The broad overhang, modillion blocks and spindled balustrade serve to exaggerate the size and scale of the house, creating a sense of opulence beyond the essential simplicity and modesty of the house itself.

The exterior of the home has been little altered from its original state and is in good condition retaining much of its integrity. All windows are original with the exception of the kitchen window. The floor boards on the front porch and side portico have been replaced, and concrete stairs have been added. An eight foot section of the foundation was replaced and the back porch was extended and enclosed when plumbing fixtures were added in the 1920s. The home was constructed with a gently sloping metal shed roof. This was replaced with insulated rubber in 1990.

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Ontario, Vernon County, Wisconsin

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Description (continued)

The interior of the home is features an oak staircase and extensive oak floors and trim. The trim is composed of flat boards with simple crown moldings. The staircase has a simple craftsman design with square spindles and newel post. The most elaborate interior feature is the colonade with eight-foot oak pillars that frames the opening from the entry hall to the front sitting room. The original wood lath-and-plaster walls remain, although one interior partition wall on the second floor was moved in the 1950s. During the 1980s, the plaster ceiling in the front sitting room and some ceilings in the second floor bedrooms were replaced. Plumbing fixtures were added to the home in the 1920s by the original owner. During the 1950s, the kitchen was remodeled and a half bath was constructed on the enclosed back porch.

A cowbarn and garage were added to the southwest side of the property in the 1930s. Both of these structures are not considered significant to the nomination.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:    nationally    statewide   X   locally

Applicable National Register Criteria    A    B   X   C    D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)    A    B    C    D    E    F    G

Areas of Significance  
(enter categories from  
instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Architecture

1912

1912

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

N/A

Sullivan Brothers

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Charles Lord home is being nominated to the National Register for its local significance in the area of architecture. In terms of criterion C, the building is architecturally significant as an important local example of a vernacular adaptation of Neo-classical design. This 1912 building reflects the turn of the century interest in classical architecture through its incorporation of two full-height porticos, use of classical columns, cornice, and roof balustrade. The Charles Lord home offers a stately contrast to the modest rural character of the homes in surrounding communities and serves as a testament to the enormous profits generated from the cultivation of ginseng at the turn of century.

**Historic Context**

The town of Ontario, Wisconsin was settled during early 1800s by Norwegian, Irish and German immigrants. Ontario is located along the Kickapoo River, a secluded area of wooded ridgetops, steep hillsides and a fertile river valley. Lumber milling and dairy farming were the principal occupations when the village of Ontario was founded in 1857.<sup>1</sup> These two occupations worked hand in hand, as the lumbermen cleared the land, pioneer families would then purchase it and begin dairy farming. The town has retained its small population and quiet rural character since the turn of the century.<sup>2</sup>

  X   see continuation sheet

<sup>1</sup> Nixon, Josephine, Ontario Centennial 1857-1957, LaCrosse: LaCrosse Printing Company, 1957, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

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Ontario, Vernon County, Wisconsin

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Significance (continued)

Charles Lord and his brother Edward, were both residents of Ontario in 1905. On the 1905 census, Charles listed his occupation as photographer and Edward was listed as a barber.<sup>3</sup> It was during this time period that they began to cultivate ginseng.

Just prior to this time, wild ginseng growing on the wooded hillsides was gathered by pioneers and sold to the Asian market. Because of increasing demand, cultivation of ginseng began in Wisconsin around 1900. Ginseng farming required a large investment and mature crops took seven years to cultivate.<sup>4</sup> The Lord brothers were among the first ginseng farmers in the state. During the time that their first crops were harvested, ginseng was being sold for six dollars a pound.<sup>5</sup> As a result of this substantial profit, Charles Lord was able to build a home that reflected his earnings.<sup>6</sup>

Construction on the Lord home began in 1910, and the structure was completed in 1912. Oak columns for the home were shipped by train from Kentucky. The home was built by two local craftsman known simply as "the Sullivan Brothers".

**Architecture**

The Charles Lord house is locally architecturally significant as a fine vernacular adaptation of Neo-Classical Revival architecture. The building is notable among other residences in Ontario and surrounding communities for its design and scale, and most notably because of the high level of integrity the house represents in relation to the original design. The building stock of Ontario consists mainly of vernacular forms, few other buildings exhibit any stylistic pretenses. Perhaps the most comparable building in terms of the level of architectural elaboration would be the combination store and residence at the corner of Garden and State streets. This simple, essentially vernacular, building exhibits high style Greek Revival detailing in its pilasters and cornice.

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<sup>3</sup> Wisconsin State Census 1905.

<sup>4</sup> Van Fleet, Walter, The Cultivation of American Ginseng, United States Department of Agriculture Farmers Bulletin no. 551. Washington D. C.: General Printing Office, 1913.

<sup>5</sup> Norwalk Star, 25 September 1908.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Patricia Barnes, current property owner, 9 March 1992.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

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Ontario, Vernon County, Wisconsin

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According to Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin (Wyatt), the Neo-Classical Revival style was inspired by the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. Built between 1895 and 1935, NeoClassical Revival is characterized by formal compositions with a symmetrical facade, monumental columns (Greek Order), and decorated moldings, entablatures and cornices surmounted by a parapet or balustrade.<sup>8</sup> The Charles Lord House incorporates all these features.

Although the house has a grand appearance, it is essentially a simple, cubic form structure with minimal decoration. The most dominant elements of the structure clearly representing the Neo-classical Revival style are the reference to symmetry, full height main entry porch with Corinthian columns, and the full height side portico and columns. The mass of the building is exaggerated by the heavy overscaled false work cornice and entablature. The broad cornice is ornamented with modillion blocks creating a greater sense of building scale.

The Lord house reflects the broad vernacularization of high style architecture, as builders take inspiration from the popular architectural styles of the time and reinterpret them to reflect the economic, cultural and technical limits of their region. Through this process of borrowing and invention, academic classicism was brought to a more diverse and broader demographic. The Lord house illustrates how this "trickle-down" architecture is part of the process by which the broader culture is reinvigorated by invention and adaptation.

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<sup>8</sup>Barbara L. Wyatt, ed., Cultural Resource Management In Wisconsin, (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), 2:2-18.



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Barnes, Patricia. Current property owner, interview: March 9, 1992.

Nixon, Josephine. Ontario Centennial 1857-1957. LaCrosse: La Crosse  
Printing Co., 1957.

Norwalk Star, 25 September 1908.

Van Fleet, Walter, The Cultivation of American Ginseng, United  
States Department of Agriculture Farmers Bulletin no. 551.  
Washington D.C.: General Printing Office, 1913.

Wisconsin State Census 1905.

Wyatt, Barbara, ed. Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin vol.2, Madison, WI:  
State Historical Society of WI, 1986.

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Charles Lord House  
Ontario, Vernon Co., WI

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

Commencing 22 rods East of SW corner of SE 1/4 NW 1/4, Sec. 2, Twp. 14 N., Rge. 2 W., and 47 rods, 10 feet North from the South line of said forty acres in the center of the highway, thence West about 5 rods, thence South 8 rods, thence West 17 rods, thence North 4 rods, thence West 42 rods to the center of the Kickapoo River, thence North along the center of the Kickapoo River, the way it now runs, to the center of the bridge of Wisconsin State Highway 33, thence following the center line of the highway back to the place of beginning, being about 6 acres of land, more or less, and being a part of the SE 1/4 NW 1/4 and SW 1/4 NW 1/4, Sec. 2, Twp. 14 N., Rge. 2 West.

**Boundary Justification**

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Charles Lord house with the exclusion of the following parcel, which was sold in 1946.

Commencing 22 rods East of Southwest corner of SE 1/4 NW 1/4 of 2-14-2W, and 39 rods and 10 feet North from South line of said forty in the center of highway for a point of beginning, thence running Northerly, in center of highway 4 rods, thence West 8 1/4 rods, thence South 4 rods, thence East to place of beginning.

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Photo #1 of 7  
LORD, CHARLES, HOUSE.  
Ontario, Vernon County, WI.  
Photo by C. Whittlinger, March 1992  
Neg. at WI Historical Society  
View looking West.

Photo #2 of 7  
LORD, CHARLES, HOUSE.  
Ontario, Vernon County, WI.  
Photo by C. Whittlinger, March 1992  
Neg. at WI Historical Society  
View looking West.

Photo #3 of 7  
LORD, CHARLES, HOUSE.  
Ontario, Vernon County, WI.  
Photo by C. Whittlinger, March 1992  
Neg. at WI Historical Society  
View looking West.

Photo #4 of 7  
LORD, CHARLES, HOUSE.  
Ontario, Vernon County, WI.  
Photo by C. Whittlinger, March 1992  
Neg. at WI Historical Society  
View looking South.

Photo #5 of 7  
LORD, CHARLES, HOUSE.  
Ontario, Vernon County, WI.  
Photo by C. Whittlinger, March 1992  
Neg. at WI Historical Society  
View looking South.

Photo #6 of 7  
LORD, CHARLES, HOUSE.  
Ontario, Vernon County, WI.  
Photo by C. Whittlinger, March 1992  
Neg. at WI Historical Society  
View looking Southeast.

Photo #7 of 7  
LORD, CHARLES, HOUSE.  
Ontario, Vernon County, WI.  
Photo by C. Whittlinger, March 1992  
Neg. at WI Historical Society  
View looking North.