

SUGAR CITY COOPERATIVE CREAMERY  
140 East Sixth Street (Highway 212)  
Chaska  
Carver County  
Minnesota

HABS No. MN-163

HABS  
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1-

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C St. NW  
Washington, DC 20240

HABS  
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108 Lewis Avenue North (House) 1-  
(Lewis Avenue North Historic District)  
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

108 LEWIS AVENUE NORTH

Location: 108 Lewis Avenue North,  
Watertown, Carver County, Minnesota

Quad: Watertown, Minnesota

Date of Erection: Circa 1860

Architect: Unknown

Significance: This structure, together with neighboring 200 and 112 Lewis Avenue North (HABS No. MN-130 and HABS No. MN-128, respectively), are the surviving core of the initial settlement of Watertown. They are relatively rare examples of Minnesota's mid-nineteenth century, vernacular, residential architecture.

Project Statement: In May 1988, the City of Watertown received a Small Cities Block Grant for Flood Plain Redevelopment. The redevelopment plan called for removal of twelve properties, including 108, 112 and 200 Lewis Avenue North. Due to long-term damage from flooding and poor maintenance, renovation of the properties was considered unlikely given structural and financial considerations.

HABS documentation was thus initiated by an agreement between the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, the Minnesota Department of Trade, the Carver County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, the City of Watertown, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

Historians: Charlene K. Roise and Robert M. Hybben; Hess, Roise and Company, Minneapolis; September 1990.

### HISTORICAL INFORMATION

For a general history of the Lewis Avenue North Historic District, see HABS No. MN-130. On 14 April 1859, Ira Kingsley, a prominent Saint Anthony physician and the father-in-law of Isaac Lewis' brother Eli, purchased lots 1 through 5 of block 49 from the elder Lewis.<sup>1</sup> Although Eli Lewis owned a store on lots 4 and 5 as early as 1858, an historic structures report of neighboring 112 Lewis Avenue North by the architectural firm Miller Dunwiddie-Associates asserts that "the amount of the transfer (\$2,100) would suggest that more than one building was involved."<sup>2</sup> Of course, an earlier building may have occupied the same land, only to be later demolished to make room for 108 Lewis Avenue North. Judging from architectural detailing, however, the house dates to the late 1850s or early 1860s.

### DESCRIPTION

The small, 1½ story, gable-roofed house lies on a lot situated between Lewis Avenue at the property's west (front) edge and the Crow River to the east. It is directly south of 200 and 112 Lewis Avenue North just north of Watertown's downtown commercial district.

A one-story wing extends from the house's north wall. Modern, wide, composition-shingle siding covers the structure's exterior walls; modern composition shingles also sheath the roof, which is a very poor state of repair. A buff-colored brick chimney extends above the ridge of the roof of the 1½ story section. The ridge is protected by a metal strip finished off at each end by a metal ball. Roof rafters are encased. Gutters and downspots have been added. Exterior doors are modern with modern hardware. Windows are 2-over-2 sash, although some have been replaced by 1-over-1 sash. Aluminum combination storm/screen windows cover some of the windows. Simple built-up moldings project from the top edge of the window frame lintels, but the frames are otherwise flat, unadorned boards.

The building, which has a partial, unfinished basement, rests on a fieldstone foundation. The foundation is badly deteriorated, especially in the northeast corner where structural damage has resulted. Some sections of the foundation have been replaced by concrete block.

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<sup>1</sup> Carver County Deed Records, Book B, Carver County Recorder's Office, Chaska, Minnesota, 610.

<sup>2</sup> Miller-Dunwiddie-Associates, "Historic Structures Report: Residence at 112 Lewis Avenue North (Lot 1, Lots 49), Watertown, Minnesota," prepared for Doric Finn, 1640 Shadywood Road, Wayzata, Minnesota, 31 May 1989, 7.

The roof of the one-story wing extends west, supported by square-section posts, to create an open porch. The rafters of the porch roof are exposed. The roof protects the building's main entrance, which opens directly into a room with access to a smaller room to the north and three rooms to the south. A door to the rear (east) provides access to the remaining vestiges of a small, open, wooden entry porch. The house's south section also contains a steep, narrow stairway which leads to the attic, a single room with exposed, 5½-by-2-inch rafters. The rafters, which are butted at the peak, support circular-sawn roof boards measuring about 12-inches wide. Virtually all original trim and hardware have been removed from the interior. Studs and corner posts are both oak: the former measure 5½-by-2 inches, the latter 4½ inches square. The wood was presumably supplied by town founder Isaac Lewis and his brother Eli in 1858. Square nails were used for the building's construction.

The building has been vacant for some time and has suffered from vandalism and lack of maintenance.

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Site visits by Charlene K. Roise, historian, Hess, Roise and Company, 22 and 30 August 1990; and by Robert M. Hybben, historian, Hess, Roise and Company, 22 August 1990.