

**DOCUMENTATION SUPPORTING HERITAGE LANDMARK
DESIGNATION OF THE DANIEL F. AKIN HOUSE,
19185 AKIN ROAD**

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INTRODUCTION

This report documents the historical and architectural significance of the Daniel F. Akin House, located at 19185 Akin Road. The report makes the case for the property's eligibility for designation as a Farmington Heritage Landmark pursuant to §2-11-4 of the Farmington City Code.

Farmington Heritage Landmarks are the buildings, sites, and districts so designated by the City Council in recognition of their historical, architectural, archeological, or cultural significance. Properties are nominated by the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) following a public hearing. Under state law, the Minnesota Historical Society must also review each nomination. Once a property has been designated a Farmington Heritage Landmark, this report becomes part of the official designation and is used to guide planning for the preservation, protection, and use of the historic property.

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

Name: The name of the property being designated is the Daniel F. Akin House (also referred to as the D. F. Akin House).

Location: 19185 Akin Road.

HPC determination of eligibility: The HPC evaluated the Akin House and issued its finding of significance on May 15, 2000.

National Register status: The Akin House was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on December 31, 1979.

Historic function: Farm residence.

Current function: Residence; bed-and-breakfast.

DESCRIPTION

Architectural classification: Italian Villa style

Date of construction: ca. 1856-1860

Narrative description:

The historic Daniel F. Akin House is a two-story stone farmhouse with a gently sloped hip roof, a wide front porch, and a roof-top cupola. The design appears to have been adapted from Andrew Jackson Downing's *Architecture of Country Homes* (1850). The ca. 1860 house is characterized by its rectangular volume and distinctive Italian Villa style cornice treatment: the eaves of the roof project outward from the plane of the exterior walls, with scrolled wooden brackets attached to the cornice. The pattern of fenestration is symmetrical, arranged in four bays, with double-hung sash in tall, narrow windows with heavy wood moldings. The porch is open and elevated slightly above grade, without railings, and its hipped roof is supported by four wooden posts. Recently, the house was enlarged with the addition of a one and one-half story ell on the rear elevation - the addition cannot be seen from the front of the property and does not detract from the historic character of the stone house. The historic property occupies about three acres and is surrounded on all sides by suburban residential development. The broad front lawn features several mature shade trees, a flag pole, and a replica of a nineteenth century cannon.

The Akin House is in an excellent state of preservation. A detailed description of the house is included in the 1979 National Register nomination document (attached).

EVALUATION

Local historic context: The property was evaluated within the local historic context, "Agriculture and Rural Lifeways," as delineated in the 1995 historic context study.

Areas of significance: Architecture; agriculture/horticulture; science (meteorology).

Period of significance: ca. 1860 (date of construction) to 1909 (death of Daniel F. Akin).

Narrative statement of significance:

The Daniel F. Akin House is historically significant for its association with early settlement and agricultural development in the Farmington

area. Built ca. 1860 as a farmhouse, it is a notable, well preserved specimen of the mid-nineteenth century Italian Villa style and shows the influence of pattern book designs on domestic architecture. The property also derives historical significance from its association with Daniel F. Akin, an early settler who was a pioneer horticulturist and weather observer.

The house exhibits many characteristics historically associated with the Italian Villa (also called Italianate) style. Moreover, it shows the influence of nineteenth century pattern book designs, particularly the concepts espoused by Andrew Jackson Downing and his adherents. Like many early settlers, Akin came to Farmington from the Northeastern United States and brought with him many of the traditional attitudes of what a country house should look like. The house certainly reflects the era in which it was built as well as the cultural background and economic status of the builder. Built from locally produced, handcrafted materials, it combines the traditional vernacular house form with fashionable detailing inspired by pattern book designs. It is not known who built the house (Akin may have served as his own contractor/builder), but the quality of the stonework and carpentry indicates that one or more skilled artisans were involved in the construction.

Daniel F. Akin (1828-1909) was a native of New York who immigrated to Minnesota in 1856 and settled at this location sometime before 1860. A graduate of Yale University, Akin was employed as a land surveyor but soon turned to agriculture for his livelihood. In Minnesota during the nineteenth century, changes were enacted which brought about revolutionary changes in farming, and Akin was at the forefront of that revolution. He had an abiding interest in scientific farming and served as president of the county agricultural society during the 1870's. Akin was especially prominent among Minnesota's early horticulturists and was one of the first apple growers in Dakota County. His work in agricultural science extended into the fields of meteorology and climatology, where he was a long-serving member of the corps of volunteer weather observers who provided data to the United States Weather Bureau.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Curtiss-Wedge, Franklyn, editor. *History of Dakota County, Minnesota*. Chicago: H. C. Cooper, Jr. & Co., 1910.

Dakota County Tribune, December 25, 1975. [Article regarding weather observations.]

Vogel, Robert C. *Farmington Historic Context Document*. Unpublished report prepared for the Farmington HPC, 1995.

ATTACHMENTS

1. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for the D. F. Akin House (1979).
2. View of the Akin House, showing current conditions.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Akin, D.F., House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 19185 Akin Road not for publication
city, town Farmington vicinity of congressional district First
state Minnesota code 22 county Dakota code 037

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Jerome Akin
street & number 19185 Akin Road
city, town Farmington vicinity of state Minnesota

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dakota County Government Center
street & number 1560 West Highway 55
city, town Hastings state Minnesota 55033

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Statewide Survey of Historic Resources
has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1979 federal state county local

depository for survey records Minnesota Historical Society -- 240 Summit Avenue - J.J. Hill House

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Akin House stands in a formerly rural area that is now experiencing suburban development. The house was built with limestone quarried on the surrounding farm land. The walls are of coursed ashlar. The main portion of the house is a 2-story cube with a low-pitched hip roof. The rear extension is a 1½-story rectangle with a gable roof. There are two interior chimneys. The main portion of the building is a very simplified version of the Italianate style. Features showing Italianate influence are the cube shape and low-pitched roof and tall, narrow windows extending almost from floor to ceiling on the first floor. A wooden cupola was removed when the house was re-roofed in the early 20th century. The interior has been remodeled.

8. Significance

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"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
			<input type="checkbox"/> science
			<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
			<input type="checkbox"/> social/
			<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
			<input type="checkbox"/> theater
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates c. 1856-60 Builder/Architect Daniel F. Akin

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The D.F. Akin House is significant as an important site of meteorological observation, as well as for its distinctive stone construction and for its association with pioneer farmer and civil engineer Daniel Akin. The house is one of the few stone farmhouses in the county, and is built of limestone quarried on the farm in a simplified version of the Italic style. Daniel Akin (1828-1909) was born in New York State and educated at Yale University. He was one of a group of East Coast settlers who arrived in Minnesota in 1856. Akin surveyed land for the village of Farmington and was active in agricultural improvement, serving as president of the Dakota County Fair Association (1872-76) and as its secretary for several years. The Akin family, which still owns the house, has been active in local government and civic affairs for four generations. During the 1880's, Daniel Akin became official weather recorder for the area, a tradition continued to the present. According to a statement by Bruce F. Watson, a consulting meteorologist who has done extensive research on the Minnesota climate, the Akin site is nationally important as a site of continuous meteorological observations since 1885. Coupled with earlier observations taken at Ft. Snelling, located several miles north with the same microclimate the Twin Cities area now has 160 years of continuous daily weather records free from heat island effects; this consistent record is thought to be unique. Watson is continuing research efforts at the site.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Jerome Akin, Tape #0008 & 9F, Dakota County Living History Project, 1974
Interview, Jerome Akin, April 1979.
Dakota County Tribune, September 13, 1935

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than 1

Quadrangle name Farmington

Quadrangle scale 7.5

UMT References

A

1	5	4	8	6	4	0	0	4	9	4	6	2	6	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

Sec. 24, T114N, R20W - 3AC. Part of NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Com. NW corner S. on W. Line 825.7 ft. E at right angles 1170.6 ft. to beginning N 86D 55M E 287.75 ft. S 4 D 30 M 57 S E 454.15 ft. S 86 D 55 M W 287.75 ft. N 4D 30 M 57 S W 454.15 ft. to beginning.

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan Pommering Reynolds, Survey Analyst

organization Minnesota Historical Society date June 6, 1979

street & number 240 Summit Avenue-J.J. Hill House contact Dennis Gimmedstad
telephone 612-296-9545

city or town St. Paul state Minnesota

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Russell W. Fridley

title State Historic Preservation Officer date

For HCRS use only

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

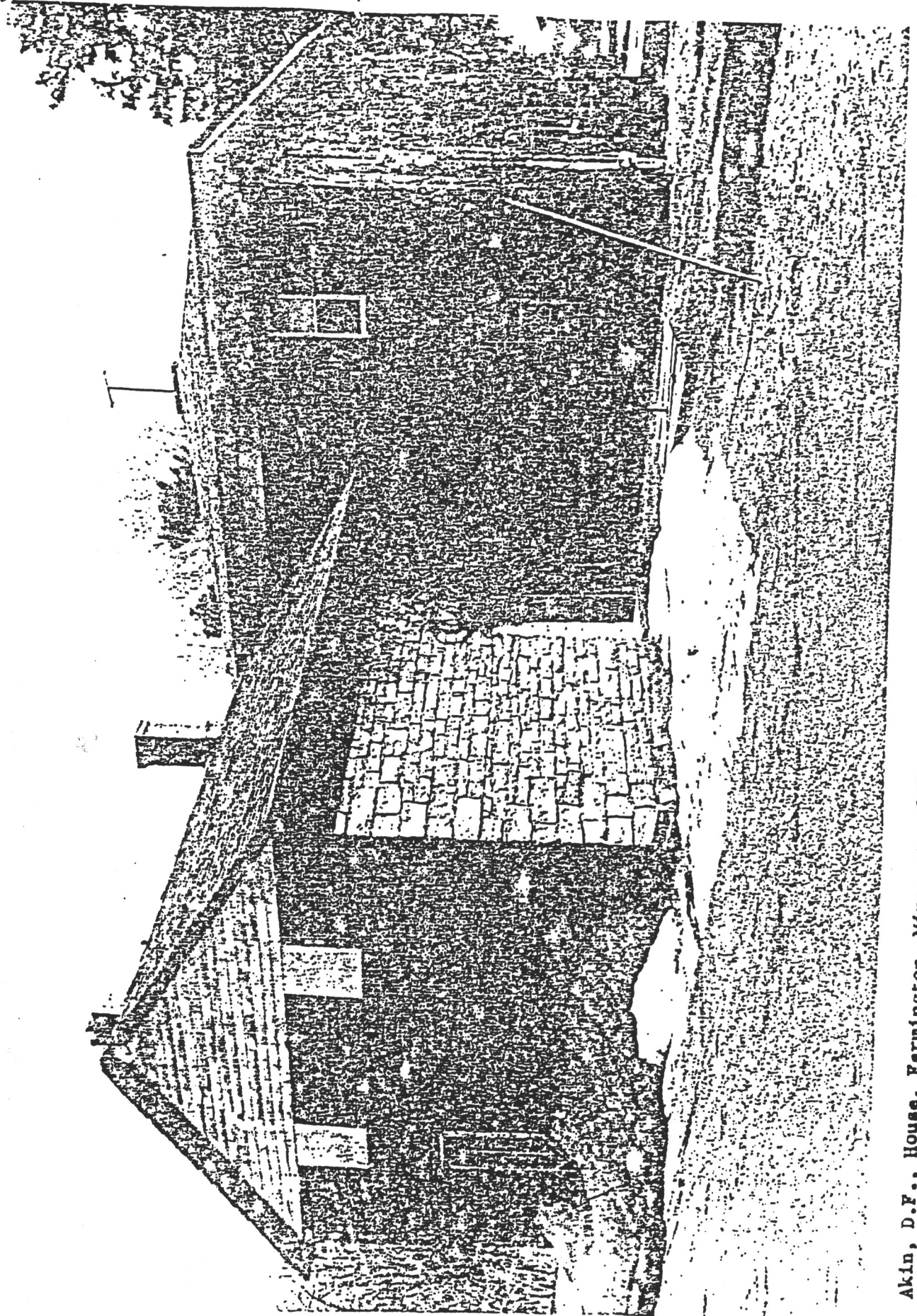
date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



Akin, D.F., House, Farmington, Minnesota; 1978, View: Looking Northeast, 02913/4



McIn, D.F., House, Farmington, Minnesota; 1976, View: Looking West, 02913/2

