

BUILDING-STRUCTURE INVENTORY FORM

DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
NEW YORK STATE PARKS AND RECREATION
ALBANY, NEW YORK (518) 474-0479

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
UNIQUE SITE NO.	<u>03347.0000s 8</u>
QUAD	_____
SERIES	_____
NEG. NO.	_____

YOUR NAME: G. Carver Rice Inc DATE: 7/5/83
 YOUR ADDRESS: 34 Main St S.L. TELEPHONE: 518-891-4170
 ORGANIZATION (if any): Historic Saranac Lake

IDENTIFICATION

1. BUILDING NAME(S): Rice Furniture (Tousley Hardware)
 2. COUNTY: Franklin TOWN/CITY: Harrietstown VILLAGE: Saranac Lake
 3. STREET LOCATION: 34 Main St now 43 MAIN 2/9/2011 ✓
 4. OWNERSHIP: a. public b. private
 5. PRESENT OWNER: G. Carver Rice, Inc ADDRESS: 34 Main St S.L.
 6. USE: Original: Hardware Present: Furniture
 7. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: Yes No
 Interior accessible: Explain _____

DESCRIPTION

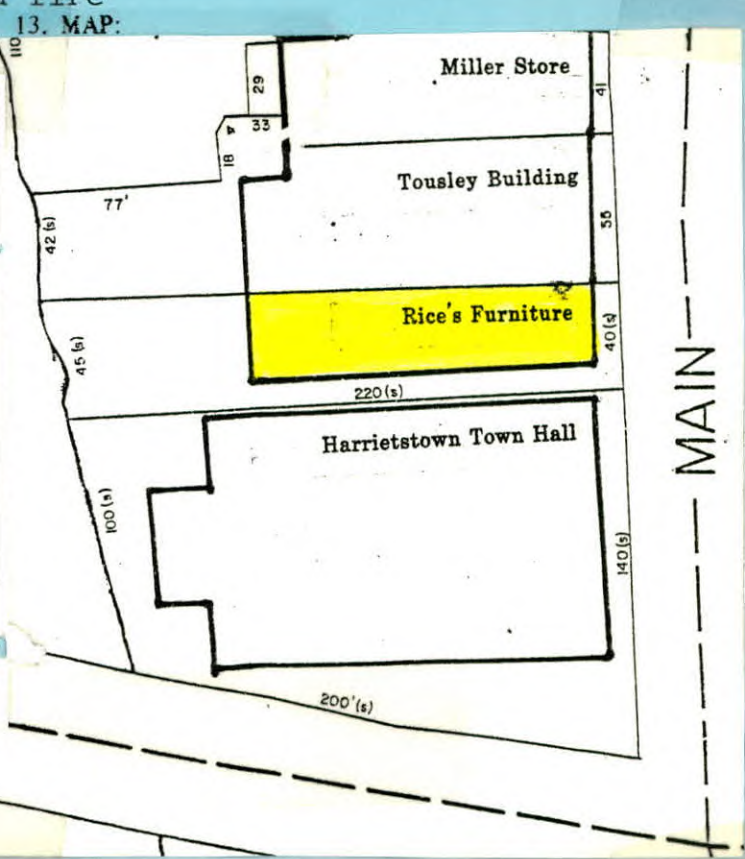
8. BUILDING MATERIAL: a. clapboard b. stone c. brick d. board and batten
 e. cobblestone f. shingles g. stucco other: _____
 9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: a. wood frame with interlocking joints
 b. wood frame with light members
 (if known) c. masonry load bearing walls
 d. metal (explain) _____
 e. other _____

10. CONDITION: a. excellent b. good c. fair d. deteriorated
 11. INTEGRITY: a. original site b. moved if so, when? _____
 c. list major alterations and dates (if known):
 c. 1912 - addition in rear
 1960 - third floor front removed & facade redone following a fire

12. PHOTO:



HP-1



14. THREATS TO BUILDING: a. none known b. zoning c. roads
d. developers e. deterioration
f. other: _____

15. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS AND PROPERTY:
a. barn b. carriage house c. garage
d. privy e. shed f. greenhouse
g. shop h. gardens
i. landscape features: _____
j. other: _____

16. SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING (check more than one if necessary):
a. open land b. woodland
c. scattered buildings
d. densely built-up e. commercial
f. industrial g. residential
h. other: _____

17. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS:
(Indicate if building or structure is in an historic district)

In the Berkeley Square Historic District.

18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING AND SITE (including interior features if known):

SIGNIFICANCE

19. DATE OF INITIAL CONSTRUCTION: c. 1900

ARCHITECT: _____

BUILDER: _____

20. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:

SEE ATTACHED.

21. SOURCES: Franklin County Clerk's records, Malone, N.Y.

22. THEME: Pioneer Health Resort

RICE'S FURNITURE BUILDING

Of all Captain Pliny Miller's descendants, the one who had the greatest impact upon the village center was Milo Bushnell Miller (1846-1917). A grandson of the Captain's through Pliny H. Miller, Milo became, according to one historian, "the most prosperous and largest holder of real estate in the community".

In 1865 or 1866, Milo spent \$250 to buy five acres of land that had originally belonged to his grandfather. The five acres was bounded on the south by the present site of the Harrietstown Town Hall, on the north by the present site of the Fowler Block; and it ran from the east bank of the Saranac River to the west side of Main Street. It is now the site of ten commercial buildings.

The first of these buildings, by order of address, is the G. Carver Rice Furniture store at 34 Main St. Other than Rice, this building has had only one other documented occupant: Walton and Tousley, hardware suppliers.

William A. Walton had joined in a hardware partnership with George L. Starks and Michael J. Callanan in 1895. (For more on Starks and Callanan see discussion of Starks Hardware Building). After five years, Walton sold his interest to those two men. There is no evidence of what he was doing until March 31, 1906; but, on that date, he and Henry H. Tousley formed Walton and Tousley, Inc.

Milo Miller had only one child, a daughter, Mary, whom H.H. Tousley married. In June, 1912, Miller sold the property at 34 Main St. to Walton and Tousley, Inc. for \$3,000.

This seems like a very low price for a lot with a three-story brick building; but the style of stonework in the foundation seems to indicate that it was built around or before 1900. The decade 1900 to 1910 in Saranac Lake saw the evolution of more "finished" foundation work with more uniformity of stone size and type and also the introduction of poured concrete.

Documents have not been found to suggest whether there was a building on the property prior to 1912; but it seems tenable that the structure was there in 1906 and that Miller leased it to Walton and Tousley with rent going toward purchase and thereby substantially reducing the price tag six years later.

Walton and Tousley soon established themselves as the smaller

but equally expert alternative to Starks Hardware. They were in the general hardware business, but they made a specialty of electrical and plumbing supplies. Furthermore, when they sold said supplies, they provided the electricians and plumbers to do the installations. There are still claw-footed bathtubs in use throughout the village that have the words "Walton and Tousley, Saranac Lake, N.Y." embossed on the overflow-drain faceplate.

Milo Miller left such a vast estate upon his death in 1917 that it was incorporated for administrative purposes. The first president of the Milo B. Miller Estate, Inc. was H. H. Tousley.

After William Walton's death (Tousley was more a financial partner rather than being actively involved in the hardware operation), Walton and Tousley began a long, slow slide under several business managers. Especially damaging to the company was a decline in plumbing expertise over the years. Finally, in July, 1948, the corporation liquidated and its real estate assets were purchased by G. Carver Rice, Inc.

Carver Rice was a mattress salesman during WWII, and Saranac Lake was part of his territory. He always liked the area and looked for an opportunity to stay. He found it when the local branch of Lake Placid's F. S. Leonard furniture store was offered to him. Soon thereafter, he acquired the property at 34 Main Street, and it has been called "Rice's" ever since.

The Rice Building is actually two structures, the rear segment having been added probably during the early years of the Walton and Tousley ownership. Both buildings were three stories, but the addition was built on lower ground and the roof levels of the two did not match. In 1960, fire ravaged Rice's. As part of the repair process following the blaze, the top story of the front building was removed and its facade redone in a "contemporary" (for 1960) mode which bears no relation whatever to the original structure.