

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of PropertyHistoric name: Foss, Ole and Anne, HouseOther names/site number: Foss Cabin

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. LocationStreet & number: 301 Foss Street NorthCity or town: Underwood State: MN County: Otter TailNot For Publication: N/AVicinity: N/A**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___national ___statewide ___local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A ___B ___C ___D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

☐

Public – Local

☒

Public – State

☐

Public – Federal

☐

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
District	<input type="checkbox"/>
Site	<input type="checkbox"/>
Structure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Object	<input type="checkbox"/>

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Name of Property

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: pre-railroad Midland Log House Tradition

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

foundation: concrete

walls: wood

roof: wood

other (chimney): brick

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Foss House is located at 301 Foss Street North at the intersection of Foss Street North and Oak Avenue East. The Foss House is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Exploration/Settlement for its association with early European settlement in Underwood, Minnesota and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture for its association with the pre-railroad Midland Log House Tradition. Constructed in 1869 by one of the first Norwegian immigrant families to the Underwood area, Ole and Anne Foss, the building is a rare example of a log house constructed in the Midland Tradition with a single-pen plan with adjacent shed room. The one and a half story, side-gabled house has a non-original concrete foundation, walls of historic square-hewn logs, an original brick chimney, and roof composed of timbers covered with original birch bark and replacement hand-split cedar shakes, which convey its historic integrity. The period of significance is 1869 to 1881; this corresponds with the house's date of original construction and arrival of the earliest Norwegian immigrants to the Underwood area in 1869 and the formal platting of the village of Underwood in 1881, the site of which the house still sits on today.

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

Narrative Description

Site and Setting

The Foss House is located in the east part of Underwood, Minnesota in Otter Tail County at the southwest corner of the intersection of Oak Avenue East and Foss Street North at 301 Foss Street North. Underwood, Minnesota is a small, rural town with a population of 356 as of 2020 (Figure A). Foss Street North and Oak Avenue East are residential streets with houses widely spaced; large trees and grass lawns are abundantly interspersed with the homes and garages on both streets. Foss Street, which runs north and south, is the easternmost residential street in Underwood, though the town's geographical boundaries extend further east across a field that is located east of Foss Street North (Figure B).

The Foss House is located on an irregular-shaped parcel with Oak Avenue East to the north, Foss Street North to the east, and adjacent residential properties to the south and west. The house is surrounded by a leveled grass lawn, and the site is lightly landscaped with short metal fencing enclosing flowers at the south elevation of the house and between Oak Avenue East and the house's west elevation. Non-historic benches have been placed at each elevation, and signage indicating the house's construction and restoration dates as well as information on the platting of Underwood stands at the southwest corner of the house. A stone marker indicating Underwood's centennial and a time capsule sits at the base of the sign. Large trees stand near the house's east elevation and continue south along Foss Street North.

Exterior (Photos 0001-0007)

The Foss House is a two-room, one-and-a-half story, side-gabled log house built in the Pre-Railroad Midland Tradition of folk log houses. It has a single pen plan with an original adjacent shed room on the east side. The non-original concrete foundation features original cornerstones, and walls on the main building are constructed of original square-hewn mountain ash logs with full dovetail notches and replacement wooden pegs; a mixture of replacement and original logs comprise the square hewn dovetailed logs of the shed room.¹ Wood has also been replaced near the foundation and at small portions of each elevation. Logs are chinked with non-original cement. The house's roof is composed of treated original roof timbers covered with original birch bark topped with replacement hand-split cedar shakes. The shed room roof is built of original boards and birch bark with replacement hand-split shakes and features gables clad with replacement vertical wooden planks.² The central brick chimney is original. Replacement and non-original features were installed from 1977 to 1980, when the building was restored to

¹ In the 1930s, the shed room's square-hewn log walls were replaced with siding, but some of the original logs were retained by owner Chester Leitch. When the house was restored in the late 1970s, the siding was removed and a combination of original and replacement logs installed to restore the shed room back to its original appearance.

² Foss Log Cabin Scrapbook by Delores Peterson, 1981, II. c10 – Scrapbooks box 2, Otter Tail County Historical Society, Fergus Falls, Minnesota.

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

more closely resemble its original appearance (for more information on the restoration, see Historical Significance section).³

The primary façade faces south (away from Oak Avenue East) with the main entrance located on the shed room's south elevation (Photo 0001). The entrance has a non-original painted wood door in a wooden frame with a rectangular window. The façade features a centered six-over-six, double-hung window in a non-historic wood frame.

The east elevation is the east wall of the shed room and contains no fenestration. Non-historic wood signage displays the house number "301" on the east elevation. The north elevation contains one, six-over-six, double-hung wood window centered at the house's north elevation and one divided-light, wood, awning window centered at the shed's north elevation, both in replacement wood frames. The west elevation contains one wood window at the loft level; it is framed in replacement wood and features three horizontal wood muntins.

Interior (Photos 0008-0014)

The house's entrance opens into the rectangular shed room, which historically functioned as a kitchen. The west wall of this space contains two interior doorways evenly spaced on either side of the centered brick chimney. Both doorways enter into the main room of the house, which has a square plan and historically functioned as a bedroom.

At both rooms, floors are composed of replacement painted basswood planks, and walls are original exposed or painted square-hewn logs and replacement chink.⁴ Interior window frames, doors, and door frames are replacement painted wood. Shed room kitchen ceiling boards are original exposed wood, while original ceiling boards and log beams in the bedroom are painted wood.⁵

At the northeast corner of the bedroom, a trap door is located at the floor; at one time, this led to a root cellar that was filled in during 1970s restoration efforts. Above the trap door, there is an opening in the ceiling with non-original, wooden ladder that provides access to a loft above the bedroom. The loft's flooring is composed of historic wood planks, walls are composed of exposed logs, and the ceiling features original exposed beams, axe-hewn rafters, and roof boards.

Integrity

The Foss House retains integrity to its period of significance, 1869 to 1881.

Location

The building has not been moved and retains integrity of location.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ "Green Thumbers began work on old Foss cabin restoration," *Battle Lake Review* (Battle Lake, MN), Aug. 17, 1978, in Foss Log Cabin Scrapbook, II. c10 – Scrapbooks box 2.

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

Setting

The property retains sufficient integrity of setting as it remains in a rural, residential setting. Though there are more residential dwellings in close proximity than there were during the period of significance, the number of surrounding houses did increase during the period of significance as factors such as impending arrival of a railroad branch line drew an increasing number of settlers to the area.

Design

The property retains integrity of design. At the exterior, the building's massing and plan remains the same as during the period of significance, and the building retains its original fenestration patterns, entrance location, gabled roof, and other architectural features of the pre-railroad Midland Tradition. At the interior, the building maintains its original layout, including interior doorways opening each room into the other, central brick chimney, and a sleeping loft.

Materials

The property retains integrity of materials. At the exterior, much of the original square-hewn logs, roof birch bark, foundation cornerstones, and original brick chimney have been retained. Where replacement materials were installed during the 1970s restoration, these materials replicate or closely resemble the historic, such as hand-split cedar shakes at the roof and wood door and window frames. Additionally, replacement logs that originally composed the shed room were re-notched and used for restoration. At the interior, the ceiling beams, ceiling boards, and loft wood flooring are original, and replacement materials such as the main level wood flooring, doors, and sleeping loft ladder likewise replicate or closely resemble the historic.

Workmanship

The property retains integrity of workmanship. At the exterior, the historic square-hewn logs and dovetail notching represent the work of early Norwegian settlers to the area, as do replacement materials such as hand-split cedar shakes put on straight in the Norwegian style and shed room logs, which were dovetailed and hewn to fit using traditional and old methods. At the interior, the exposed hewn logs at the walls, hewn rafters at the loft ceiling, and hewn roof boards at the main building ceiling have been retained to convey integrity of workmanship.

Feeling and Association

The property retains integrity of feeling and association as it is regularly used for cultural and city festivals and to educate residents about the history of the Underwood community. The house is distinguishable from the surrounding single-family homes because of its architectural style and massing; this signals its historic function as a mid-nineteenth century folk residence. While the house is no longer actively utilized as a residence, it retains integrity of association with its original occupants. The very street on which the house stands, Foss Street, is named for the house's original builder, owner, and inhabitant, one of the earliest European inhabitants of the

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

land on which the town of Underwood now stands, and signage near the house conveys
information about the Foss homestead and platting of Underwood.

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1869-1881

Significant Dates

1869

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Foss, Ole

Seem, Andreas

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Foss House is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Exploration/Settlement for its association with early European settlement in Underwood, Minnesota and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture for its association with the pre-railroad Midland Log House Tradition. Constructed in 1869 by one of the first Norwegian immigrant families to the Underwood area, Ole and Anne Foss, the building is a rare example of a log house constructed in the Midland Tradition with a single-shed plan with adjacent shed room. The period of significance is 1869 to 1881; this corresponds with the house's date of original construction and arrival of the earliest Norwegian immigrants to the Underwood area in 1869 and the formal platting of the village of Underwood in 1881, the site of which the house still sits on today.

Though the house is over 150 years old, it still retains many original materials, such as original square-hewn logs and birch bark underlayment at the roof. In the 1970s, the building was restored to its original massing and plan with the removal of a circa 1930s lean-to, and missing historic features, such as hand-split cedar shakes and four-over-four, double-hung windows, were replicated in kind, giving the property the excellent integrity that it maintains today.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Norwegian Immigration to the United States

The construction of the Foss House in 1869 represented large scale immigration patterns occurring in the United States around this time. In Norway specifically, changing life circumstances led to the exodus of a huge number of families and individuals to other lands of opportunity.

Norwegians began coming to the United States in large numbers in the late 1840s; in 1882, they numbered 28,500 persons.⁶ Only Irish immigrants fleeing famine in their home country would surpass the number of Norwegian immigrants to the United States in the nineteenth century. Around this time, and similar to other European nations, Norway experienced wrenching economic and social changes as well as the simultaneous doubling of its population between 1815 and 1865, the result of a declining infant and child mortality rate. A combination of overpopulation, food shortages, mechanization, and shifts in market structures causing farm foreclosures all contributed to the mass emigration of the mid-1860s. Poor crops and a bad spring herring run at the Norwegian coasts also resulted in starvation, a rise in infant mortality, and a decline in the agricultural labor force. With this decline, farm owners began to invest in mechanizations such as harvesting and sowing machines, potato diggers, and self-

⁶ Carlton C. Qualey and Jon A. Gjerde, "The Norwegians," in *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups*, ed. June Drenning Holmquist (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981), 220.

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

binders. Many small farmers could not afford to mechanize and were forced to sell their farms. Along with displaced farm laborers, they moved to the slowly industrializing Norwegian cities. Information about the United States and the rich farmlands of the American Midwest, however, presented another, more attractive choice, and people like Ole and Anne Foss would seize the opportunity to farm their own land.⁷

Around the same time, a pietistic religious movement and a romantic nationalism, which regarded rural society as truly Norwegian and the urban community as compromised by ties to other colonial Scandinavian nations, was spreading across the country.⁸ These movements disseminated new ideas and contributed to an increasingly assertive and nationalistic peasant class, which resented the pretensions of the official and clerical classes, distrusted colonial Danish language and culture, and was devoted to perpetuating Norwegian rural life and culture.⁹ By emigrating, they believed their rural way of life would be maintained without the overpopulation and socioeconomic problems of their homeland.¹⁰ Despite a primary motivation to emigrate for economic reasons, rural Norwegians' goal to replicate rural life and their distrust of the city provided a cultural context that was important to the development of the nineteenth and early twentieth-century Norwegian-American community.

By the 1860s, "America fever" reached epidemic proportions fanned by America letters written by friends and relatives who had moved to the United States. These letters often enthusiastically described an abundance of land, higher wages, and other wonders of the new country.¹¹ These letters not only determined patterns of emigration, they also dictated Norwegian settlement patterns upon arrival in the United States as emigrating Norwegians followed the letters to existing Norwegian settlements in the United States. This process resulted in fairly homogeneous rural communities where only certain Norwegian areas or parishes were represented. As settlement progressed over time, the groups became more diverse but retained a commonality of Norwegian heritage.¹²

The earliest wave of Norwegian emigrants arrived in New York around 1825 and moved on to ultimately settle in Illinois; by the late 1830s, Norwegians were locating in parts of Wisconsin that would become "mother settlements" for the first influx of Norwegian immigrants to Minnesota in the 1850s.¹³

Norwegian-Americans in Minnesota and Otter Tail County

⁷ Ibid, 220.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid, 221.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

Norwegians became Minnesota's third largest ethnic group, attracting more of the approximately 850,000 immigrants who arrived in the United States between 1825 and 1928 than any other state.¹⁴ In the 1850s, Norwegian immigrants began to turn their attention from Wisconsin to Minnesota, and in 1865, groups of Norwegian settlers traveling from Wisconsin established the first permanent colonies along the Mississippi River in southeastern Minnesota.¹⁵ These settlements were plentiful by 1880, and they soon became overcrowded due to high birth rates and the arrival of more and more people.¹⁶

As the first generation of Norwegian American came of age in Minnesota, they also frequently found it necessary to move away from where they had been raised in order to find nonfamily members who could become marriage partners.¹⁷ Similarly, new arrivals often stayed only long enough at the first settlement to learn about American farming methods and earn a little money before moving on.¹⁸ Additionally, they might send pre-paid tickets back to Norway as the need for farm laborers at second settlements increased; 39% of those who left Oslo between 1872 and 1875 did so with prepaid tickets.¹⁹

The pattern of newcomers arriving at established settlements and staying a short time before moving further west is visible in the movement of Ole and Anne Foss. The Fosses initially arrived in Quebec and traveled to stay in Fillmore County in southern Minnesota before moving west across the state to Otter Tail County.²⁰ Apparently, the fertility of the land and beauty of the area appealed to the Fosses, who traveled with the Seem and Medjaa families by covered wagons north from Fillmore County in search of cheaper and better land for farming (Ole Foss is listed in United States census records as a farmer).²¹

A large number of immigrants settled in Otter Tail County in the mid to late 1800s. Norwegian, Swedish, German, and English were the primary languages spoken in the county at the time. The first records for naturalization papers reveal 177 names recorded in Otter Tail

¹⁴ Ibid, 220.

¹⁵ Ibid, 222.

¹⁶ Ibid, 227.

¹⁷ Jon A. Gjerde and Carlton C. Qualey, *The People of Minnesota: Norwegians in Minnesota* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2002), 13.

¹⁸ Qualey and Gjerde, "The Norwegians," 222.

¹⁹ Ibid, 222, 224.

²⁰ Ibid, 220; "Owned Land On Site of Village of Underwood," *Daily Journal* (Fergus Falls, MN), July 25, 1968, in Foss Log Cabin Scrapbook, II. c10 – Scrapbooks box 2; *Passenger Lists, 1865–1935*, Microfilm Publications T-479 to T-520, T-4689 to T-4874, T-14700 to T-14938, C-4511 to C-4542, Library and Archives Canada, n.d. RG 76-C, Department of Employment and Immigration fonds, Library and Archives Canada Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

²¹ "Owned Land," in Foss Log Cabin Scrapbook, II. c10 – Scrapbooks box 2; Ronald Shebeck, Jr., comp., *Underwood Minnesota Through the Years 1881 thru 2013* (printed by comp., 2013), 5; "History of Underwood," *Underwood Independent* (Underwood, MN), n.d., in Foss Log Cabin Scrapbook, II. c10 – Scrapbooks box 2; Minnesota Historical Society, *Minnesota State Population Census Schedules, 1865-1905*, St. Paul, MN, USA: Minnesota Historical Society, 1977, microfilm, reels 1-47 and 107-164, accessed on ancestry.com; United States of America, Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900*, Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1900, T623, 1854 rolls, accessed on ancestry.com.

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

County in the early 1870s, and of this number, “twenty-one were natives of England, thirty-three of Germany, twenty-five of Sweden, ninety-two of Norway, five of Denmark and one each from Switzerland and Canada,” providing a glimpse into the cultural makeup of the area in the mid to late 1800s.²² Sverdrup Township was primarily Norwegian from the days of its first European settlers, the first village of which was Southvick, later known as the village of Underwood.²³ The majority of its European immigrant population was always Norwegian with a large number of immigrants originally from the Trondhjem district of Norway, and it was here that the Fosses settled in 1869.²⁴

Early European Settlement of Underwood and Otter Tail County

Prior to the eighteenth century, the Ojibwe and Dakota inhabited present-day Underwood, Minnesota, and French explorers seem to have traveled into the Otter Tail County area as early as 1800 without ever establishing any permanent settlements within its limits.²⁵ The newly-formed territorial legislature of Minnesota established counties by public statute in 1858; Otter Tail County was formally organized with county officers ten years later.²⁶ The county was sparsely populated in these early years between establishment and organization with a census return of 240 in 1860, a figure which, though informative, may be difficult to use as a definitive count as the actual number of residents living within the county borders.²⁷ John W. Mason (the first mayor of Fergus Falls and a state legislator, attorney, early settler of Otter Tail County, and county historian) asserts that it is reasonable to assume most residents at this time were concentrated around Otter Tail Lake and the county seat of Otter Tail City, which could boast five log cabins in 1858.²⁸

Following the establishment of counties in the state, surveyors were sent to the north part of the state to ready the territory for new arrivals.²⁹ By halfway through 1860, nine congressional townships had been surveyed and several individuals had made claims and entries.³⁰ Prior to the Homestead Act of 1862, settlers bought land directly from the government; however, once the Homestead Act was passed, adult heads of families could legally claim 160 acres of “unappropriated,” surveyed public land for a minimal fee if they lived on and cultivated the land for a minimum of five years.³¹ This resulted in a huge number of settlers moving west to

²² John W. Mason, ed., *History of Otter Tail County Minnesota: Its People, Industries and Institutions*, Vol. 1, (Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen & Company, Inc., 1916) 115, 165.

²³ *Ibid*, 239.

²⁴ “UNDERWOOD,” *Daily Journal* (Fergus Falls, MN), July 25, 1968, in Foss Log Cabin Scrapbook, II. c10 – Scrapbooks box 2; Shebeck, Jr., *Underwood Minnesota*, 3.

²⁵ Shebeck, Jr., *Underwood Minnesota*, 3; Mason, *History of Otter Tail County*, 95.

²⁶ Mason, *History of Otter Tail County*, 95.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 83, 95.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 96.

²⁹ *Ibid*.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 84.

³¹ Act of May 20, 1862 (Homestead Act), Public Law 37-64 (12 STAT 392), May 20, 1862.

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

homestead lands that were not yet occupied by European or American settlers. After the Minnesota territorial government established counties and sent surveyors into far-flung parts of the state as early as 1858, much of the state was effectively open for claims once the Homestead Act went into effect in 1863, and families like the Fosses took full advantage of these benefits in the years to come.

By the time the Homestead Act was passed, a number of European settlers already resided in Otter Tail County. According to Sewall's map of Minnesota for 1860, there were four settlements in the county: "Otter Tail City, on the eastern side of the same name; Echota, eight miles northeast of the present site of Fergus Falls...Bonita, at the southwest end of Otter Tail lake; Waseata...about four miles southwest of Fergus Falls; [and] Marion, on the south side of Otter Tail lake."³² Then, from 1862 to 1865 or 1866, the county experienced a large decline in population due to the Civil War as well as tensions between Native Americans and European settlers, which caused many settlers to leave the area.³³ With the close of the Civil War and news of the railroad's impending arrival in Otter Tail County, immigration and settlement became very active again; during the second half of the 1860s, there were nearly 2,000 individuals in Otter Tail County.³⁴ The 1870 census returned 1,968 residents; as Mason notes, "Parkers Prairie, with 653 inhabitants, was the most densely populated township in the county, followed closely by St. Olaf with 572, Tordenskjold with 536, Clitherall with 515 and Perham with 505...The village of Fergus Falls had a population of 656, while Fergus Falls township had a population of 122."³⁵ Tordenskjold is located directly south of Sverdrup Township, where the city of Underwood is located.

According to *Underwood Through the Years 1881 to 2013*, settlers in the areas of Sverdrup, Aurdal, Maine, Tordenskjold, and Dane Prairie Townships as early as 1869 included Hans P. Bjorge, Berge O. Lee, Hans Juelson, Knud Olson, the families of Andreas Seem and Lars Medjaa, and Ole and Anne Foss.³⁶ According to a 1872 plat map of Township 133, the Fosses settled specifically on the site of the current city of Underwood, while Hans P. Bjorge settled in Tordenskjold, the Seems settled on the northern shore of Bass Lake, and Knud Olson settled on the southern border of Sverdrup Township east of the Fosses (Figure C).³⁷ Andreas Seem appears to have been a carpenter, and so he assisted the Medjaa and Foss families in constructing log houses, an arrangement which was likely helpful for the Fosses, who were nearing their forties at this time.³⁸ Ole Foss appears to have submitted a declaration of intent to naturalize between 1869 and 1873, and in 1878, land records reveal that his homestead certificate

<https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/homestead-act>.

³² Mason, *History of Otter Tail County*, 85.

³³ *Ibid*, 110.

³⁴ *Ibid*.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 98, 110.

³⁶ Shebeck, Jr., *Underwood Minnesota*, 4.

³⁷ *Ibid*.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 5, 12; Foss Log Cabin Scrapbook, II. c10 – Scrapbooks box 2.

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

was granted.³⁹ The 1872 plat map also shows a Lars Jansen and a Peter Larsen, who had settled near but not directly on the site of the current city of Underwood (Figure C).

Log Houses in Pre-Railroad United States

The Fosses' decision to erect a log house reflects the relative ease, sturdiness, and speed of this style of construction. Due to the abundance of available materials, the log cabin and house were a prevalent residential building type across the United States in the years before the railroad arrived. In the construction of log folk houses that occurred in the United States in the pre-railroad era, architectural historian Virginia McAlester identifies three traditions: the New England tradition, the Tidewater South tradition, and the Midland Tradition. The Foss House is representative of the Midland Tradition. This style

originated with early colonization along the Atlantic seaboard. It began in the middle colonies (Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland), where Germanic immigrants from heavily wooded areas of central and northern Europe introduced techniques of building with logs hewn square and then placed horizontally, one on top of the other, to make a solid wooden wall. This massive structure was held together by various systems of carefully interlocking or notching the squared timbers where they joined at the corners of the buildings...such construction contrasted sharply with the frame buildings of the adjacent English colonies to the north and south, where open frameworks of hewn timbers were covered by lighter planks or shingles to make them weatherproof.⁴⁰

Specific parts of Europe served as source areas for American Midland Tradition log buildings; Scandinavian countries were the most influential, followed by the Czech-Polish-eastern German borderlands and parts of the Alps-southwestern Germany region.⁴¹ The Scandinavian settlers who constructed the first log buildings in the United States did so as early as 1638 in the New Sweden colony in the Delaware Valley.⁴² Early Germanic settlers in Pennsylvania and nearby colonies built large log houses with "an almost square, three-room plan and a central chimney," a pattern which continued as settlement spread both west and south from this core area.⁴³ As Scotch-Irish and English joined Germanic settlers, they adopted this building technique, constructing their houses with a one-room deep linear plan and an external chimney.

³⁹ United States, Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records, *Automated Records Project; Federal Land Patents, State Volumes*, <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/>, Springfield, Virginia: Bureau of Land Management, Eastern States, 2007, accessed on ancestry.com; *Naturalization Records*, Iron Range Research Center, <http://www.ironrangeresearchcenter.org/search/>, accessed on ancestry.com.

⁴⁰ Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), 126.

⁴¹ Thomas M. Brandon, "Folk Log Structures in Pennsylvania" (Historic Thematic Survey, Pennsylvania, 2011), 1-2. <https://gis.penndot.gov/CRGISAttachments/Survey/LOG%20-%20Archives.pdf>

⁴² Terry G. Jordan, *American Log Buildings: An Old World Heritage* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 41.

⁴³ McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 128.

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

This tradition was brought across the Appalachian Mountains and became the dominant tradition across the eastern half of the country, which was heavily forested and thus provided ideal resources for log construction.⁴⁴

Midland Tradition log buildings can be categorized into two generations delineated by the time period of settlement as well as the level of sophistication of the carpentry. The first generation of these buildings is defined by more primitive methods of construction, such as the use of rounded logs and crude notching, earthen floors, clapboard-covered roofs, log or mud and pole chimneys, and the absence of windows, whereas “logs carefully flattened before placement in the walls, notching done with care and precision, plank floors, and chimneys of mortared stone or brick characterized the second generation of dwelling. The walls were made tight, and the roof shingled.”⁴⁵ According to both McAlester and cultural and historical geography specialist Terry G. Jordan, while the first generation of buildings with rounded logs can accurately be referenced as log “cabins,” this second generation of buildings with flattened or square-hewn logs, such as the Foss residence, are most appropriately called “houses.”⁴⁶ This second generation for the most part displaced the first within roughly a decade after initial settlement of an area, though McAlester further asserts that the use of rounded logs persists even to the present day in “isolated areas” of the western mountains.⁴⁷

Midland Tradition log houses were generally composed of one or two room-sized square or rectangular units (or “pens”) with one or two chimneys, often with an upper loft. Expansion often proved difficult when additional space was needed, but frame units could be added behind, in front, or adjacent to the core building in the form of extensions, shed rooms, or a front porch and room addition (Figure D). An additional story could sometimes be added when additional space was needed.⁴⁸

The Foss House is representative of the Midland Tradition of log houses in materials, features, and construction methods as it was entirely constructed of chinked, hewn logs with dovetailed notches and features a sleeping loft, plank flooring, shingled roof, presence of fenestration, and a brick chimney. While originally it appears to have had a sod roof, shingles or shakes were added at an unknown date sometime before Ole Foss’ death in 1915 (Figures E and F). The Fosses furthermore may have whitewashed the exterior of the house or added wood siding at an unknown date prior to 1915 (Figure F).

Shed rooms, when they appear on log houses, are most commonly placed at the rear. The Foss House, however, features a rare adjacent shed room at one gable end, which also contains the house’s main entryway (Photo 0001). The adjacent placement is categorized by both

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Brandon, “Folk Log Structures,” 3.

⁴⁶ McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 130.

⁴⁷ Brandon, “Folk Log Structures,” 3; McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 120-121, 130.

⁴⁸ McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 127-128.

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

McAlester and Jordan as rarely occurring.⁴⁹ This shed room was an original component of the Foss house as evidenced by a discovery (made during the 1970s renovation) of stringers connecting the main and shed rooms.⁵⁰ The chimney's central placement is likewise unusual; it might more commonly be placed on the side of the house.

Underwood 1869-1881

The early growth of Underwood from initial Norwegian settlers such as the Fosses into a fully-fledged community was largely triggered by the building of a railroad branch line, which brought with it an influx of new inhabitants, the large majority of which were still Norwegian. As noted by the "Railroads in Minnesota, 1862-1956" Multiple Property Documentation Form, "in the years from 1865 to 1873, there was a burst of [railroad] construction, and the pioneer mainlines were partially or completely built across the state. From 1877 and through the 1880s, the mainline routes were completed and numerous branch lines were built to provide interconnecting networks."⁵¹ By the 1870s, settlers were pouring into the prairie lands of western Minnesota.⁵² The state's population grew from approximately 430,000 to 780,000 between 1870 and 1880, and by 1890, it had reached 1.9 million.⁵³ Many new inhabitants had emigrated from Europe to settle along rail lines, encouraged by the subsequent growth in commerce and opportunity that habitually accompanied the appearance of the railroad.⁵⁴ As more people arrived in the Underwood area, Ole Foss "obligingly sold some of his farmland as store owners and settlers came into the area."⁵⁵

In 1872, it became clear that the railroad expansion would not pass through Otter Tail City but instead through Fergus Falls. Consequently, the county seat was moved to Fergus Falls, and Otter Tail City's population soon after experienced a dramatic decline.⁵⁶ However, the community of Underwood would soon benefit from a branch line completed in 1881 by the newly-reorganized Northern Pacific Fergus and Black Hills Railroad. The branch line, which connected Wadena Junction to Fergus Falls, included a stop in the as-yet unorganized village of Underwood at Southwick Station.⁵⁷

In the 1870s, when the branch line was in the conceptual phase, the Fosses were in their forties and likely working hard to cultivate the land upon which they had homesteaded. The

⁴⁹ Jordan, *American Log Buildings*, 30; McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 127.

⁵¹ Andrew J. Schmidt, Andrea C. Vermeer, Betsy H. Bradley, and Daniel R. Pratt, "Railroads in Minnesota, 1862-1956" (Multiple Property Documentation Form, Minnesota, 2013), Section E, 8.

⁵² *Ibid*, Section E, 9.

⁵³ *Ibid*, Section E, 11.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*.

⁵⁵ John Hatling, "Restoration begins on Underwood settler's cabin," *Daily Journal* (Fergus Falls), July 5, 1978 in Foss Log Cabin Scrapbook, II. c10 – Scrapbooks box 2.

⁵⁶ Mason, *History of Otter Tail County*, 102-103.

⁵⁷ Schmidt, et al, "Railroads in Minnesota," Section E, 130.

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

population of Sverdrup Township increased by approximately 30 households between 1872 and 1878; an 1878 tax duplicate lists 37 males as tax payers for the township, among them an Ole Erikson (likely Ole Ericson Foss).⁵⁸ Underwood additionally saw the construction of a small store called Van Pelt's Store in 1881 just before the railroad was built, and the Turtle Lake Post Office began operating east of present-day Underwood; it was moved into town in 1881 once the railroad branch line was complete.⁵⁹

When manufacturer Timothy Kellogg arrived in Underwood in 1881, he accurately anticipated the town's future as a stop along a railroad branch line, and consequently decided to establish a village there.⁶⁰ In 1881, he purchased a tract of land from Ole Foss at \$30 an acre and commissioned Robert Miller to plat the land for him in the fall just after the railroad branch line was completed.⁶¹ In 1881, the Fosses granted the Northern Pacific, Fergus and Black Hills Railroad Company "a strip of land 50 feet wide on each side of the center line of the railroad line where it is now located across the SE 1/4 containing about 4.08 acres more or less conveying the right of way for R.R. Co. across part of said SE 1/4 not already conveyed to Timothy Kellogg" for \$49.⁶² By selling portions of their land to early Underwood settlers, Kellogg, and finally the railroad, the Fosses played an important role in the early European-American settlement of Underwood (Figure J to see how the Foss property ownership had been divided by 1912).

Underwood 1881 – Present

The end of Underwood's early settlement era was marked by the formal platting of the town in 1881.⁶³ Businesses and institutions soon followed, such as the Southwick Train Station in late 1881, the official incorporation of the "Free Christian" or Unitarian Church of Underwood, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sverdrup, a school house, the First State Bank of Underwood, the Underwood Co-operative Creamery Company, and the Farmers' Mercantile Corporation, all appearing in the ensuing years before Underwood was officially incorporated in 1912.⁶⁴ Frame residences on Underwood's main street appeared in the 1880s.⁶⁵ By the close of the first decade of the twentieth century, the city would also boast two grain elevators, a feed and flour mill, a shipping association, a baseball diamond, a pool hall, a meat market, a blacksmith, numerous shops, and a band pavilion, all examples of the vibrancy brought by the railroad.⁶⁶

⁵⁸ Mason, History of Otter Tail County, 239.

⁵⁹ Shebeck, Jr., *Underwood Minnesota*, 13.

⁶⁰ Shebeck, Jr., *Underwood Minnesota*, 5, 12; Marv Kester and Delores Peterson, comps., *Underwood Centennial 1881-1981* (printed by comps., 1981), 8.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² N.F. Field Abstract Company, Warranty Deed no. 2 recorded in Book N of Deeds, 1881, 52, reproduced in Kester and Peterson, *Underwood Centennial 1881-1981*, 7.

⁶³ Shebeck, Jr., *Underwood Minnesota*, 5; Kester and Peterson, *Underwood Centennial 1881-1981*, 5.

⁶⁴ Shebeck, Jr., *Underwood Minnesota*, 6-8, 13.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 37.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 8, 18-19, 38-39.

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

Underwood was formally incorporated in 1912. According to Mason, the town's incorporation was "a result of a petition signed September 30, 1912, by...legal voters residing in the proposed incorporation...The petition stated that the village contained a total population of two hundred and four and the territory incorporated comprised three hundred and twenty acres."⁶⁷ Ole Foss would pass away just three years later in 1915 and, perhaps due to declining health or simply age, is not listed as a signer of the petition to incorporate nor as an original officer of the town that he had seen expand from two houses to over 200 residents.⁶⁸

Anne Foss lived in the Foss House until a few months before her death in October 1929, and Johannes Thronson, who owned land adjacent to the Fosses according to an atlas from 1912, was the next owner of the house (Figures H and I).⁶⁹ During Thronson's ownership in the early 1930s, a second lean-to was added to the house.⁷⁰ Chester Leitch purchased the home in 1941 and appears to have temporarily utilized the house as a chicken coop before remodeling and converting it back to a residence. Renters Leona, Marvin, and Allen Hansen, who occupied the property from 1945 to 1958, recall the loft serving as a bedroom, storage, and closet, the bedroom doubling as a living room during the day, and an unused cellar located under the kitchen.⁷¹ George Jensen was the house's next occupant, residing here from 1958 until 1970.⁷² Various individuals occupied the building for a short time between 1970 and 1976.⁷³ At some point before 1977, a second chimney was added to the building as well as painted wood board siding on the original and 1930s lean-tos (Figures G and H).

In 1977, Chester Leitch sold the house to the City of Underwood and the Woman's Study Club of Underwood with the stipulation that while the City would own the property, the club would be responsible for restoration, operation, and management of the building's historical significance.⁷⁴ Between 1977 and 1980, the house was restored by workers employed through the Green Thumb program (over age 55 with an annual income below the federal low income guidelines) and donated efforts of the community under local supervision in consultation with the Minnesota Historical Society.⁷⁵ Restoration involved some original log replacement, application of preservative, digging out and filling in the root cellar with a concrete foundation, window frame and door replacement, replacing the modern synthetic roofing and wood shingles

⁶⁷ Mason, History of Otter Tail County, 239-240.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ "Owned Land" in Foss Log Cabin Scrapbook, II. c10 – Scrapbooks box 2; Kester and Peterson, *Underwood Centennial 1881-1981*, 6.

⁷⁰ Pat Walkup, "Underwood club preserves cabin as part of history," *Daily Journal* (Fergus Falls, MN), August 11, 1977, in Foss Log Cabin Scrapbook, II. c10 – Scrapbooks box 2.

⁷¹ Kester and Peterson, *Underwood Centennial 1881-1981*, 7.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Foss Log Cabin Scrapbook, II. c10 – Scrapbooks box 2.

⁷⁴ Kester and Peterson, *Underwood Centennial 1881-1981*, 5; Walkup, "Underwood club" in Foss Log Cabin Scrapbook, II. c10 – Scrapbooks box 2.

⁷⁵ Walkup, "Underwood club" in Foss Log Cabin Scrapbook, II. c10 – Scrapbooks box 2; "Green Thumb makes great progress at the Ole and Anne Foss log cabin in Underwood," *Battle Lake Review* (Battle Lake, MN), Dec. 21, 1978, in Foss Log Cabin Scrapbook, II. c10 – Scrapbooks box 2.

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

with hand-split cedar shakes, replacing the flooring with basswood planks, re-chinking, removal of layers of paint at the interior walls and ceilings, and removal of the second, non-original chimney, a concrete entryway step, and the 1930s lean-to (Figure K depicting the Foss House post-renovation).⁷⁶ In 2009, improvements to the house, such as re-chinking with cement, straightening walls, and preserving old logs, occurred.⁷⁷

Since restoration was completed in 1980, the Foss House has remained a locally-recognized historic site and has been opened to the public annually for Underwood's Harvest Festival in the fall. It is also open by appointment for special occasions and school field trips.⁷⁸

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Foss House is locally significant under Criterion A for its representation of the early Norwegian exploration and settlement of the Underwood, Minnesota area. It is furthermore locally significant under Criterion C as an excellent example of a pre-railroad Midland Tradition log house built with a rare adjacent shed room. The property retains integrity to its period of significance, 1869 to 1881, and continues to serve as an important asset to the community of Underwood.

⁷⁶ "Green Thumb" in Foss Log Cabin Scrapbook, II. c10 – Scrapbooks box 2; Foss Log Cabin Scrapbook, II. c10 – Scrapbooks box 2.

⁷⁷ Tom Hintgen, "Log cabin gets facelift," *Daily Journal* (Fergus Falls, MN), June 17, 2009.

⁷⁸ Tom Hintgen, "Log cabin gets facelift," *Daily Journal* (Fergus Falls, MN), June 17, 2009; Johanna Armstrong, "150 year anniversary: Underwood cabin celebrates 150 years at Harvest Festival," *Daily Journal* (Fergus Falls, MN), Aug. 23, 2019.

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Reports and Published Materials

Brandon, Thomas M. "Folk Log Structures in Pennsylvania." Historic Thematic Survey, Pennsylvania, 2011, <https://gis.penndot.gov/CRGISAttachments/Survey/LOG%20-%20Archives.pdf>.

Gjerde, Jon A. and Carlton C. Qualey. *The People of Minnesota: Norwegians in Minnesota*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2002.

Jordan, Terry G. *American Log Buildings: An Old World Heritage*. Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985.

Kester, Marv and Delores Peterson, comps. *Underwood Centennial 1881-1981*. Printed by the compilers, 1981.

Koop, Michael. "Rural Finnish Log Buildings of St. Louis County, Minnesota, 1890-1930s." Multiple Property Documentation Form, Minnesota, 1989.

Mason, John W., ed. *History of Otter Tail County Minnesota: Its People, Industries and Institutions, Vol. 1*. Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen & Company, Inc., 1916.

McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015.

Qualey, Carlton C. and Jon A. Gjerde. "The Norwegians." In *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups*, edited by June Drenning Holmquist, 220-247. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981.

Schmidt, Andrew J., Andrea C. Vermeer, Betsy H. Bradley, and Daniel R. Pratt. "Railroads in Minnesota, 1862-1956." Multiple Property Documentation Form, Minnesota, 2013.

Shebeck, Ronald, Jr., comp. *Underwood Minnesota Through the Years 1881 thru 2013*. Printed by the compiler, 2013.

Archival Collections

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

Peterson, Delores. Foss Log Cabin Scrapbook. II. c10 – Scrapbooks box 2. Otter Tail County
Historical Society. Fergus Falls, Minnesota.

Government Documents

Act of May 20, 1862 (Homestead Act), Public Law 37-64 (12 STAT 392). May 20, 1862.
Enrolled Acts and Resolutions of Congress, 1789 – 2011. General Records of the United
States Government, Record Group 11. National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
<https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/homestead-act>.

Ancestry.com:

Minnesota Historical Society. *Minnesota State Population Census Schedules, 1865-1905*.
St. Paul, MN, USA: Minnesota Historical Society, 1977. Microfilm. Reels 1-47
and 107-164.

Naturalization Records. Iron Range Research Center.
<http://www.ironrangeresearchcenter.org/search/>.

Passenger Lists, 1865–1935. Microfilm Publications T-479 to T-520, T-4689 to T-4874,
T-14700 to T-14938, C-4511 to C-4542. Library and Archives Canada, n.d. RG
76-C. Department of Employment and Immigration fonds. Library and Archives
Canada Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

United States. Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records. *Automated
Records Project; Federal Land Patents, State Volumes*.
<http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/>. Springfield, Virginia: Bureau of Land
Management, Eastern States, 2007.

United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Twelfth Census of the United States,
1900*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1900.
T623, 1854 rolls.

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☒ Other

Name of repository: Otter Tail County Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): OT-UWC-00007

10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property 1

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 15 | Easting: 279105 | Northing: 5130033 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The city-owned property is bound by North Foss Street to the east, East Oak Avenue to the north, and by property lines with the adjacent parcel to the south and west (Figure L).

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Historically, the property owned by Anne and Ole Foss included dozens of acres of farmland surrounding the Foss House. Today, this surrounding acreage has been developed with single family residences and other buildings and no longer retains integrity to the period of significance. Therefore, the National Register property boundaries were chosen to align with current city-owned property adjacent to the public right-of-way and a privately-owned parcel.

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Shannon Storey, Associate Director
organization: New History
street & number: 575 Southeast Ninth Street, suite 215
city or town: Minneapolis state: MN zip code: 55414
e-mail: storey@newhistory.com
telephone: 612-843-4140
date: May 7, 2024

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
County and State

Name of Property

Photo Log

Name of Property: Foss House

City or Vicinity: Underwood

County: Otter Tail

State: MN

Photographer: Shannon Storey

Date Photographed: July 2023

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 14: View of south elevation, looking north.
- 2 of 14: View of east and south elevations, looking northwest.
- 3 of 14: View of east elevation, looking west.
- 4 of 14: View of north elevation, looking south.
- 5 of 14: View of west elevation, looking east.
- 6 of 14: View of a window at the south elevation, looking north.
- 7 of 14: View of main entry doorway at the south elevation, looking north.
- 8 of 14: View of shed room kitchen, looking northeast.
- 9 of 14: View of shed room kitchen, looking southwest.
- 10 of 14: View of entryways to main building bedroom, looking west.
- 11 of 14: View of main building bedroom, looking southwest.
- 12 of 14: View of main building bedroom, looking southeast.
- 13 of 14: View of main building loft, looking southwest.
- 14 of 14: View of main building loft entry from below, looking northeast.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Name of Property

Otter Tail County, Minnesota

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number ____ Page 1

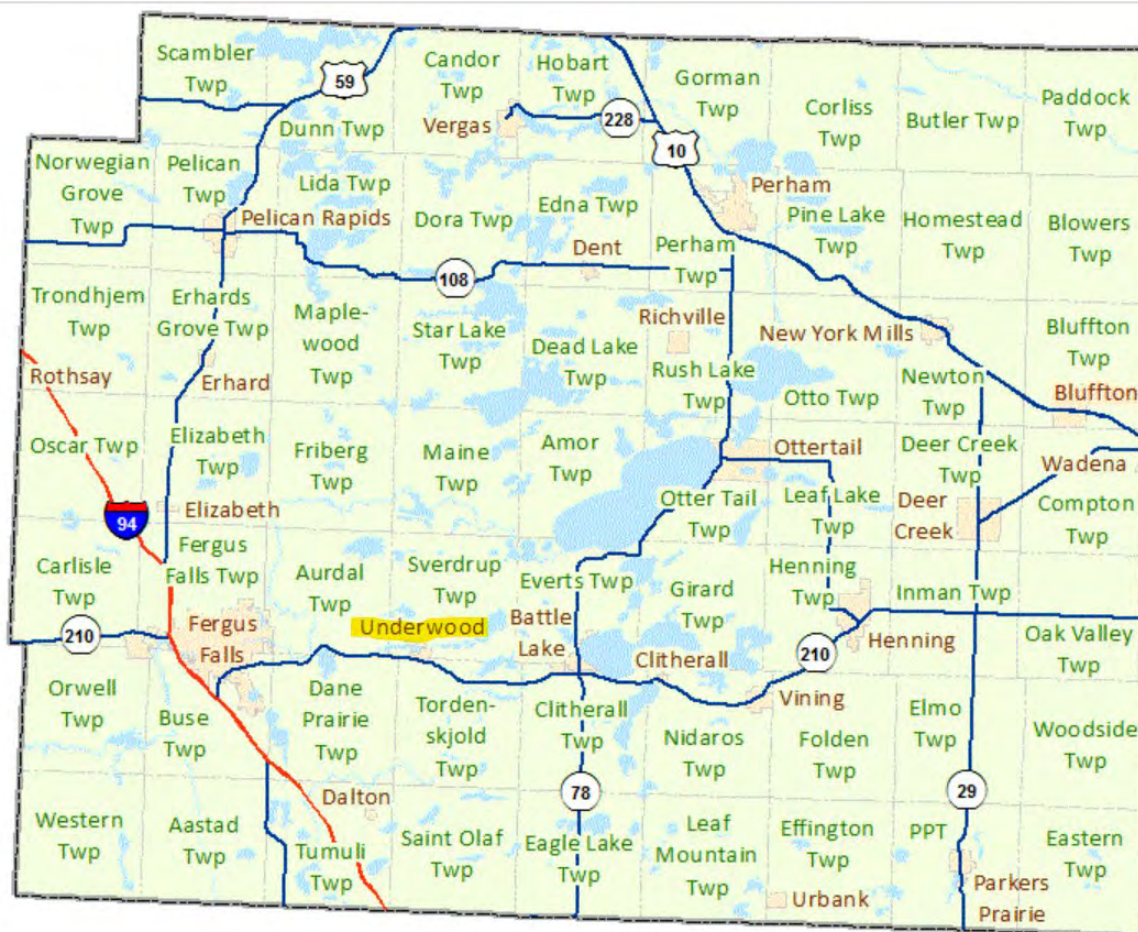


Figure A: Map of Otter Tail County. Underwood highlighted in yellow. Image courtesy of Minnesota Department of Transportation.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Name of Property

Otter Tail County, Minnesota

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number ____ Page 2

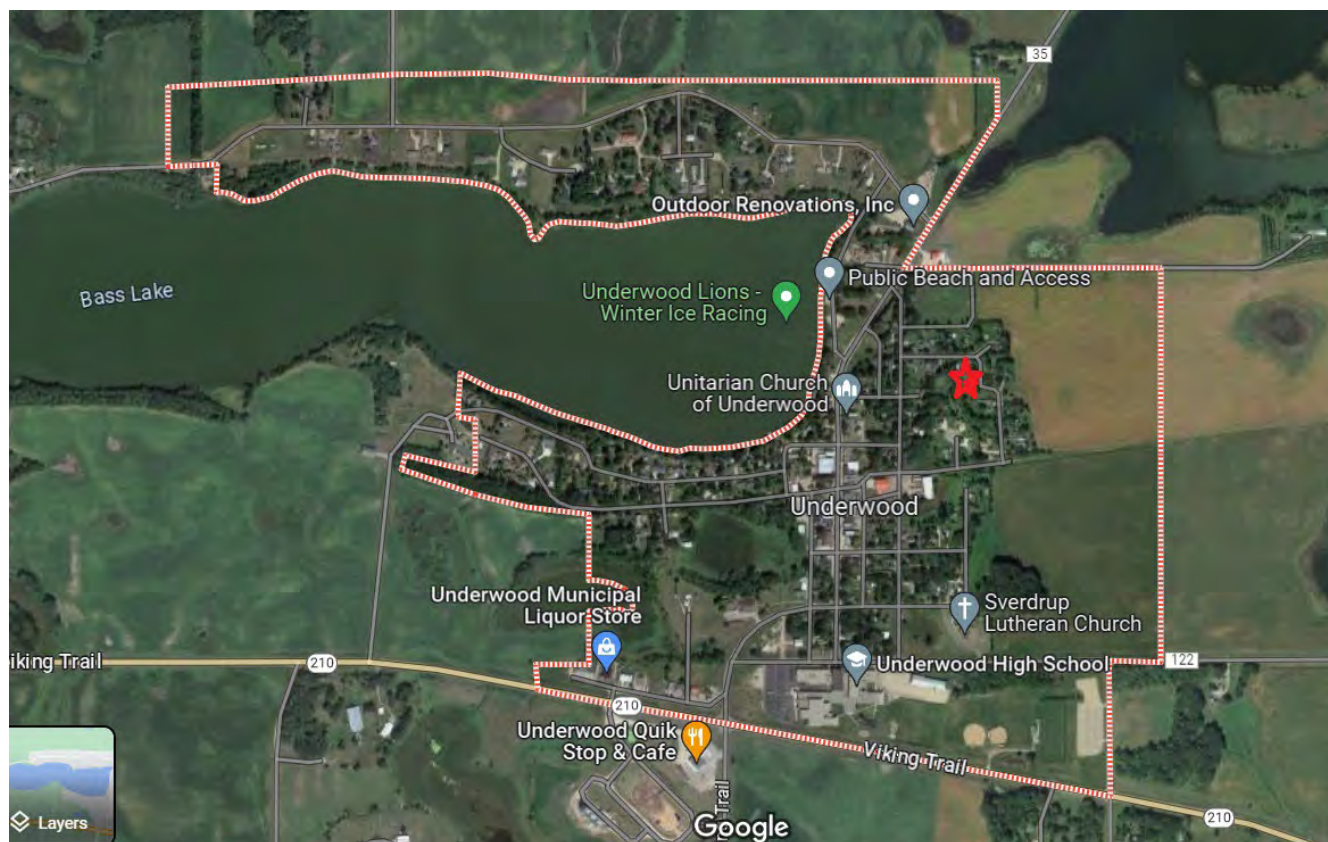


Figure B: Aerial view showing geographical boundaries of Underwood, Minnesota; site of the Foss House indicated with red star. Image courtesy of Google Maps.

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure C: 1872 independent plat map of Township 133, Range 44, W. 5TH Meridian. Ole Ericson (Foss) home indicated with red arrow. Courtesy of General Land Office Historic Plat Map Retrieval System.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Name of Property

Otter Tail County, Minnesota

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

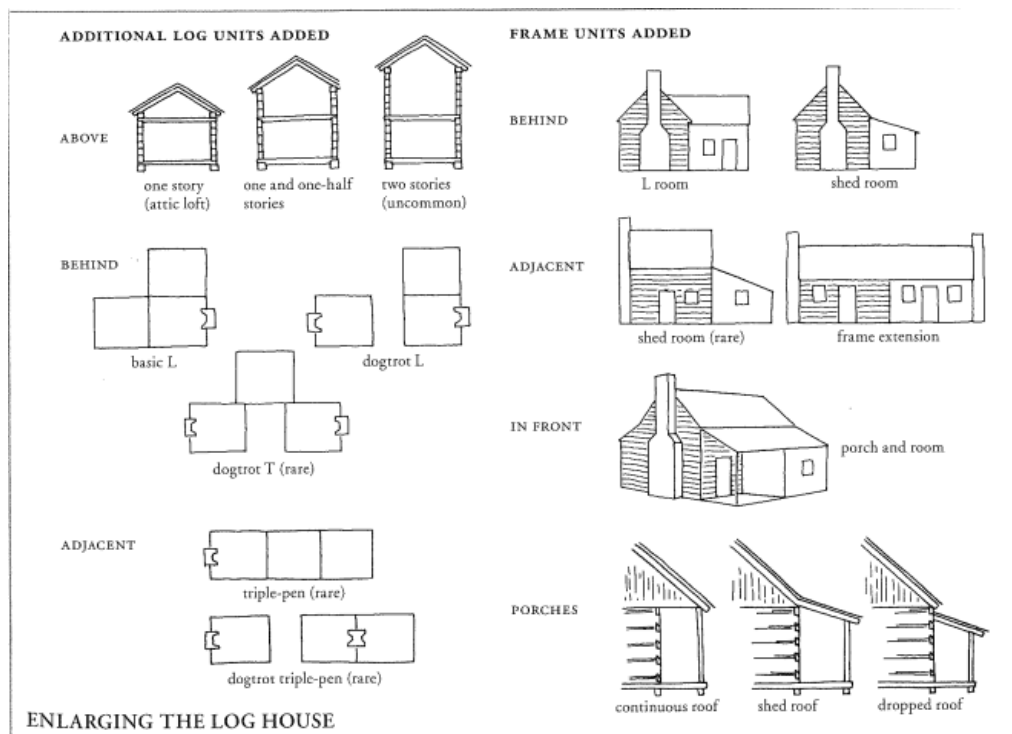
Section number ____ Page 4

Figure D: Illustration depicting common ways to expand space in Midland Tradition log houses. Note the rarity of the adjacent shed room addition and placement of chimney on the outside of the house, rather than between the main house and adjacent shed room. Image reproduced from *A Field Guide to American Houses* by Virginia McAlester, page 127.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Name of Property

Otter Tail County, Minnesota

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number ____ Page 5



**The earliest photo available of the Ole and Anne Foss Log Cabin,
with original sod roof prior to shingles.**

**Peter Medjaa, Ole Foss, Josefa Medjaa, Gunda Hanson, Anne
Foss; their livestock. (Photo courtesy of Lyla Eggen)**

Figure E: South elevation of the Foss House, looking north, unknown date prior to 1915. Image reproduced from *Underwood Centennial 1881 – 1981* compiled by Marv Kester and Delores Peterson, page 6.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Name of Property

Otter Tail County, Minnesota

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number ____ Page 6



Figure F: The south elevation of the Foss House, looking north, unknown date prior to 1915. Note shingled roof and possible siding added. Image courtesy of "150 year anniversary: Underwood cabin celebrates 150 years at Harvest Festival" by Johanna Strong in Fergus Falls' *Daily Journal*.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Name of Property

Otter Tail County, Minnesota

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number ____ Page 7

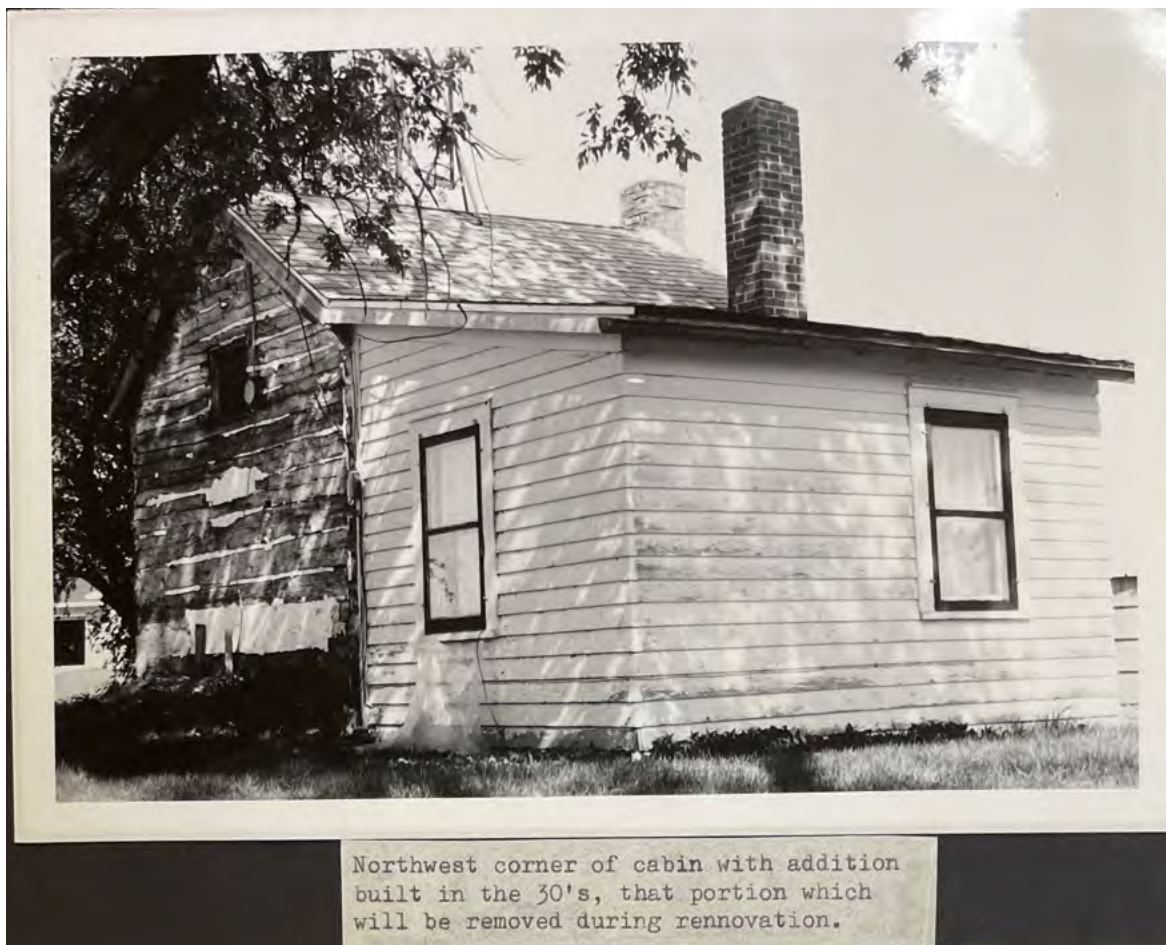


Figure G: West and south elevations of the Foss House, looking northeast, circa 1978. Note the 1930s lean-to addition and second chimney. Image courtesy of Otter Tail County Historical Society.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Name of Property

Otter Tail County, Minnesota

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number ____ Page 8



Figure H: South elevation of the Foss House, looking north, circa 1978, prior to the removal of the 1930s lean-to. Note siding on original shed room. Image courtesy of Otter Tail County Historical Society.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Name of Property

Otter Tail County, Minnesota

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

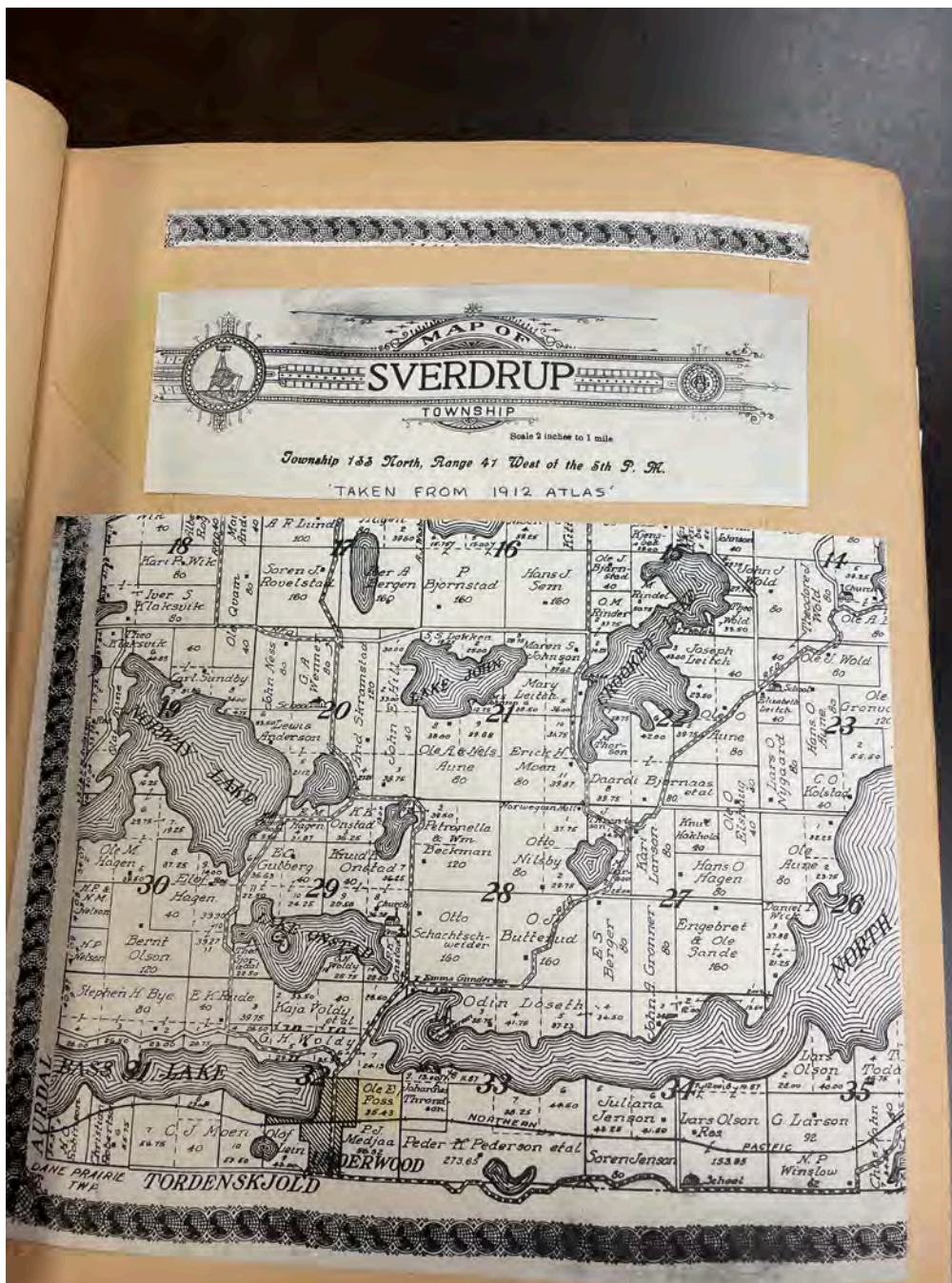
Section number ____ Page 9

Figure 1: 1912 atlas of Sverdrup Township with Ole Foss' property highlighted. Note Johannes Thronson's property to the east of Foss property. Image courtesy of Otter Tail County Historical Society.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Name of Property

Otter Tail County, Minnesota

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number ____ Page 10

Figure J: 1912 atlas of Underwood, Minnesota with Ole Foss' original homestead property highlighted (property extends east of the map). Image courtesy of Otter Tail County Historical Society.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Foss, Ole and Anne House

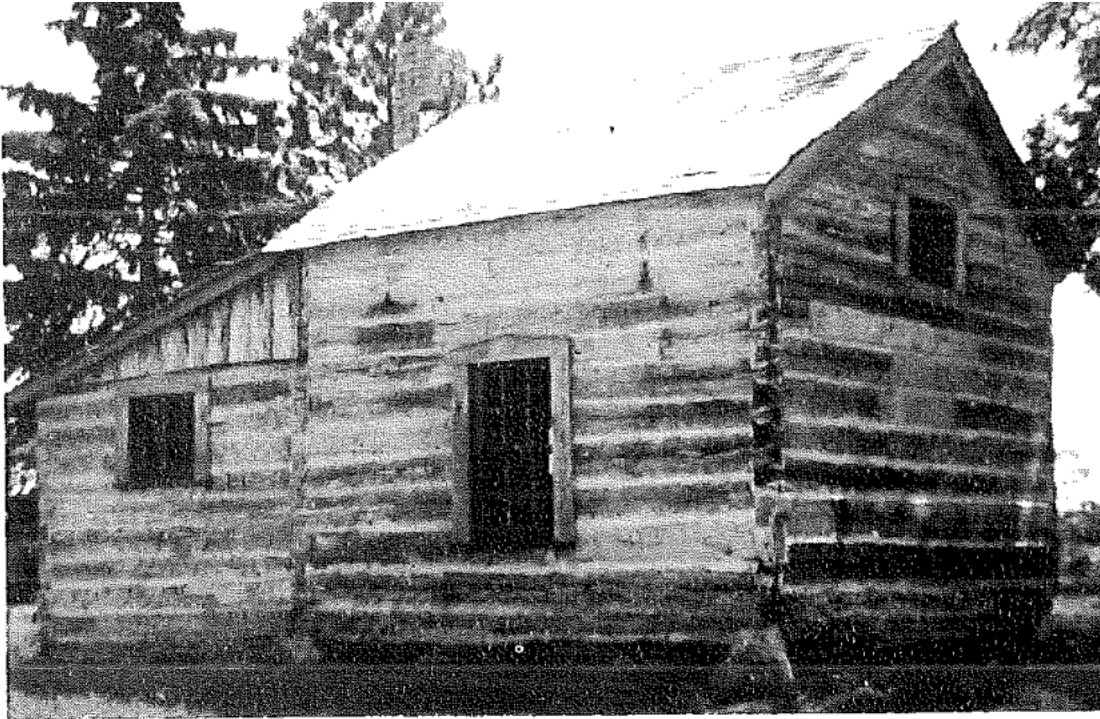
Name of Property

Otter Tail County, Minnesota

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number ____ Page 11



The Foss Log Cabin restored, as it stands on its original site in 1980. (Courtesy of Mrs. LeRoy Peterson)

Figure K: North and east elevations of the Foss House in 1980 after 1977 to 1980 renovations. Photo reproduced in *Underwood Centennial 1881 – 1981*, page 7, courtesy of Delores Peterson.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Foss, Ole and Anne House

Name of Property

Otter Tail County, Minnesota

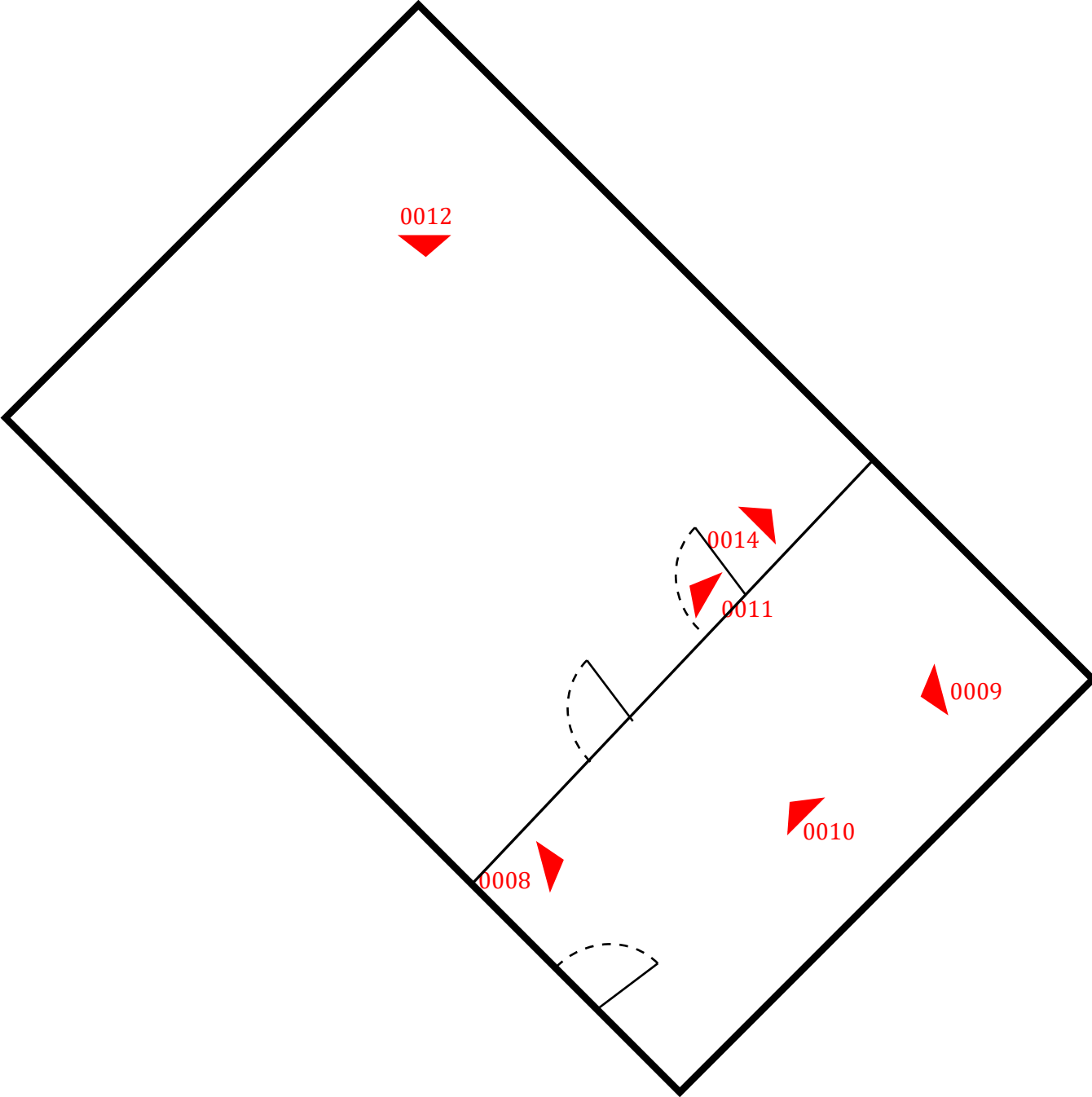
County and State

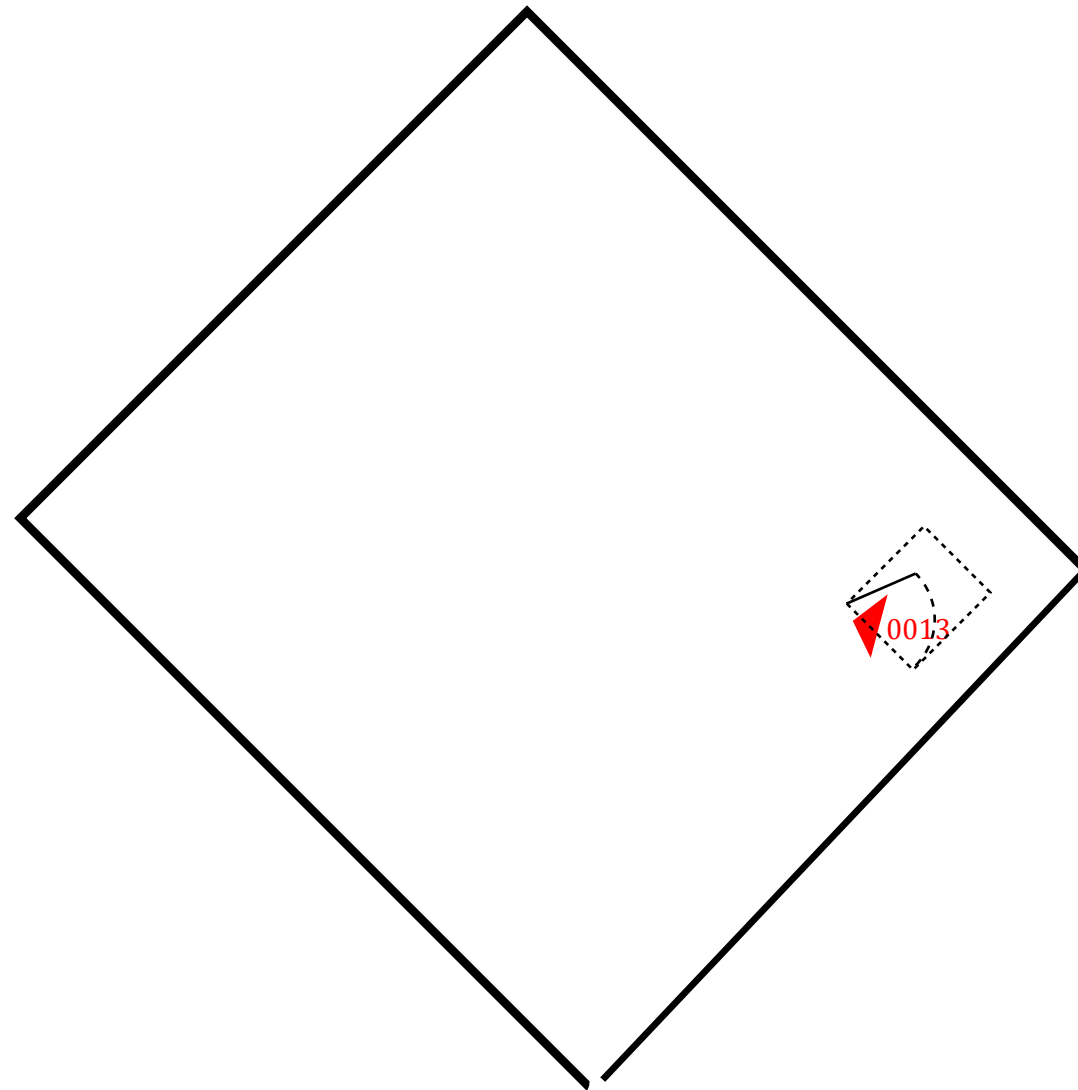
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

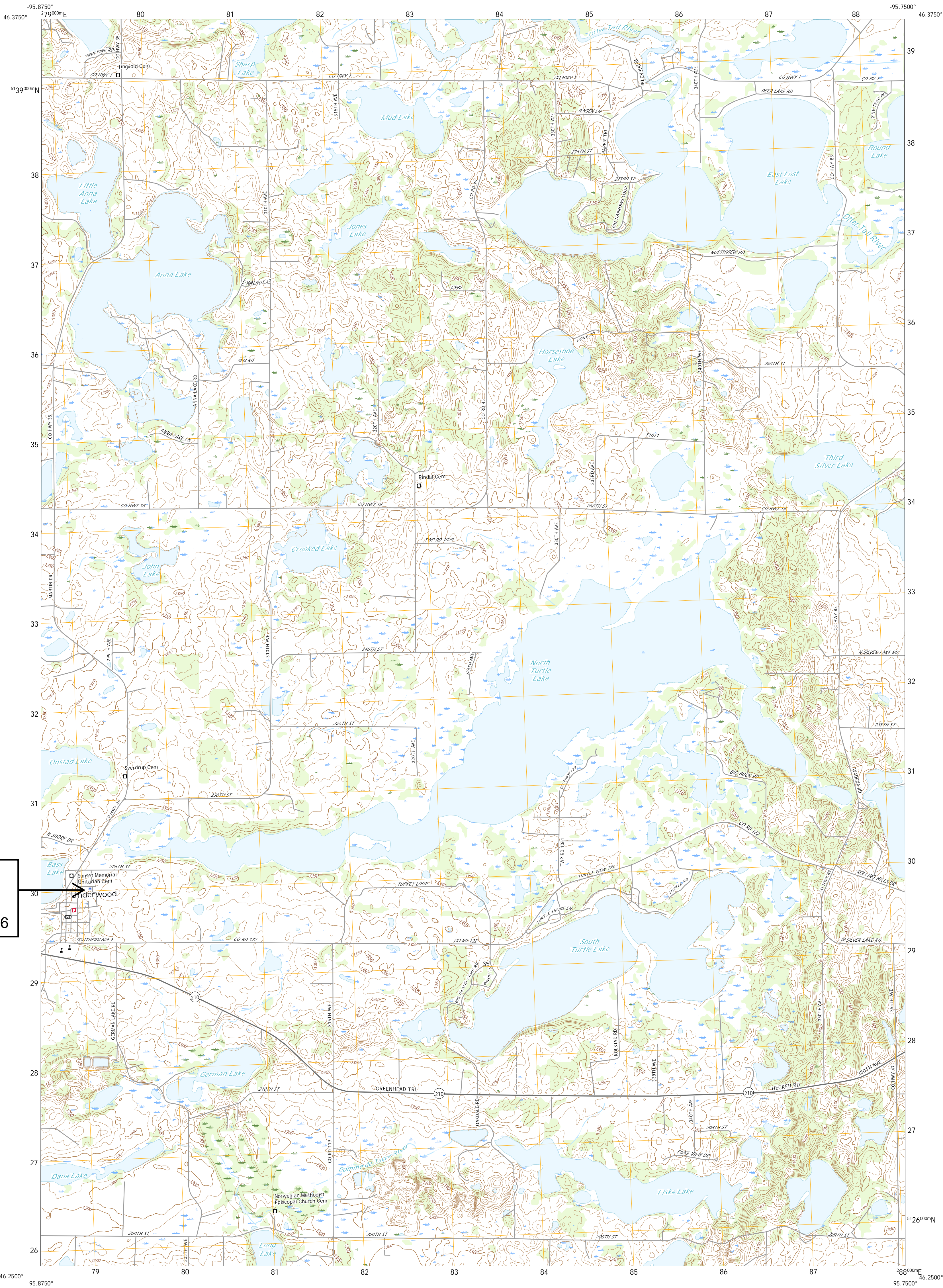
Section number ____ Page 12

Figure L: The Foss House sits on city-owned property adjacent to the public right-of-way and a privately-owned parcel to the southwest; proposed boundaries outlined in blue. Image courtesy of Otter Tail County.





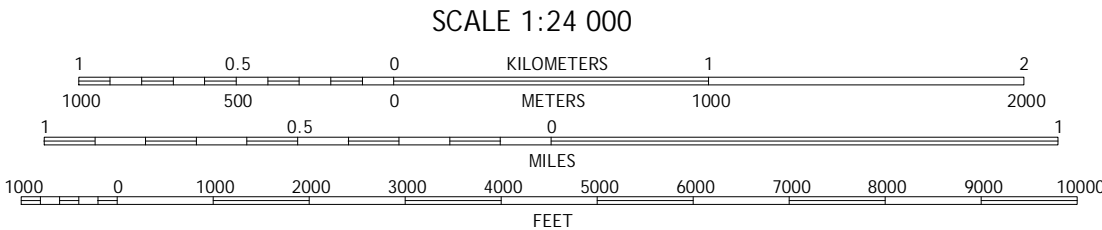
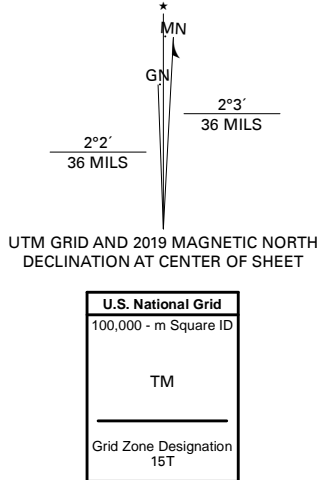




Foss, Ole and Anne
House
301 Foss Street North
Underwood, MN 56586

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)
World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS84) Projection and
1 000-meter grid/Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 15T
This map is not a legal document. Boundaries may be
generalized for this map scale. Private lands within government
reservations may not be shown. Obtain permission before
entering private lands.

Imagery.....NAIP, July 2017 - November 2017
Roads.....U.S. Census Bureau, 2016
Names.....GNIS, 1980 - 2016
Hydrography.....National Hydrography Dataset, 2002 - 2018
Contours.....National Elevation Dataset, 2011 - 2012
Boundaries.....Multiple sources: see metadata file, 2017 - 2018
Public Land Survey System.....BLM, 2017
Wetlands.....FWS National Wetlands Inventory, 1982



1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

ADJOINING QUADRANGLES

1 Heilberger Lake
2 Phelps
3 Walker Lake
4 Wall Lake
5 Battle Lake
6 Dalton
7 Stalker Lake
8 Eagle Lake

ROAD CLASSIFICATION		
Expressway	Local Connector	
Secondary Hwy	Local Road	
Ramp	4WD	
Interstate Route	US Route	State Route

