

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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

1. Name *Hortonville Community Hall*

historic *Hortonville Opera House*

and/or common *Hortonville Community Hall (preferred)*

2. Location

street & number *312 W. Main Street* ___ not for publication

city, town *Hortonville* ___ vicinity of congressional district *Eighth*

state *Wisconsin* code *55* county *Outagamie* code *087*

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name *Village of Hortonville, Thomas Guyette, Village President*

street & number *111 S. Nash Street, P. O. Box 268*

city, town *Hortonville* ___ vicinity of state *Wisconsin* *54944*

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. *Outagamie County Register of Deeds*

street & number *410 South Walnut Street*

city, town *Appleton* state *Wisconsin* *54911*

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title *Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places* has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date *1977* ___ federal state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records *State Historical Society of Wisconsin*

city, town *816 State Street, Madison* state *Wisconsin* *53706*

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 type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The former Hortonville Opera House is located on West Main Street one block east of the business district in Hortonville, Wisconsin. The village retains most of its turn-of-the-century character, best-represented by the wealth of small-scale brick and frame commercial buildings, many with original storefronts intact.

Little has been done to alter the Community Hall. Ninety by fifty-five feet in size, the rectangular cream brick structure is one story in height, with an attic space in the gabled slate roof and a full basement below ground. A single large arched gable rises through the roofline on the north facade, pierced by a red brick-framed oculus; principal entrances on the ends of the north facade are marked by similar projecting shouldered gables above blind red brick arches. Simple painted wood canopies overhang the multi-paned double doors. Fan-transomed double-hung windows with sidelights are covered by red brick arches on all sides of the building; those on the east and west end have been covered with wood panels as a heat conservation measure. Large service doors on the west end, once used to bring in props for opera productions, have also been closed. The trussed-steel frame structure is set on a low poured concrete foundation.

With the exception of installation of acoustical tile ceilings over the original plaster ones, the interior of the building remains as originally constructed. The former opera hall, now the gym and dance hall, occupies most of the upper level, with a hall, stairways and storage area along the east end of the plan. At the west end, the stage extends into the open room. Storage areas, kitchen, boiler room, restrooms, and a coat room surround the large dining room in the basement. The original boiler room, windows, doors, hardware, and plumbing still serve the building. Walls are painted plaster throughout with maple door and window frames; floors are maple hardwood.

The community hopes to obtain grant funds to improve the services of the building and to increase access for elderly and handicapped citizens.

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

Specific dates c. 1915¹ **Builder/Architect**

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Architecturally and historically, the Hortonville Community Hall is one of the principal elements of community life in the village founded by lumberman Alonzo Horton in the nineteenth century. The building has served as the setting for recreational activities for all ages, ranging from light opera and plays to school dances and sports to elderly support programs. Surprisingly different from the conventional opera house, the building took the form of an early twentieth-century commercial-industrial building with minimal but pleasing decorative features.

Social/Humanitarian. Five different individuals are credited with the development of the Opera House, but of these five, only two are known: Ernest Lewis and Charlie Schultz. Plays, musicals, and dances were staged here, as well as the early silent two-reelers. The school prom was held here throughout the years as well as the May Ball. Local schools used the Opera House for their annual talent shows. On Memorial and Independence Days, the parades always ended with exercises and a get-together at the Opera House.²

Shortly after the opening of the Opera House, Lewis and Schultz bought out their partners and operated the concern much as it had been. However, the staging of plays and musicals brought in so little revenue that more often than not the hall was used for movies, dances, and public meetings. A typical offering would be: "Getting Into a Scrap" (a comedy), "Love's Savage Hate" (a drama), and "Tracked by the Hounds" (a special two-reel feature drama). Admission was five and ten cents. In 1925, the Farmers Institute began to sponsor lecture meetings in the Opera House for area farmers.⁴

In 1933, a foreclosure sale deeded the Opera House to the sheriff. That same year a number of transactions took place. Lawrence Schreiter took up the piece for a short time, later selling it to the Farmers & Merchants State Bank of Hortonville which in turn sold it to another bank. The Opera House changed hands several more times until the village of Hortonville assumed ownership in September, 1935.⁵

The village used the Opera House, since referred to as the Community Hall, as a meeting place and for storage until the late 1940s. The hall was then used by the public school for classrooms from 1949 until 1953 when the elementary school was built. It was used again for classrooms during the teachers' strike of 1972–75. The upper level of the hall had been used since 1920 for basketball games. This practice was discontinued when the new school gymnasium was constructed some ten years ago.

Today, the old Opera House is used regularly as an Outagamie County nutrition site and as a meeting place for senior citizens, the Lions Club, the American Legion, and other civic organizations.⁶ The upper level is seldom used although this may change as the high school has recently contracted to use the hall "gymnasium" for girls' varsity basketball practice. Another move in the direction of the revitalization of the hall was the production of the musical, "The Merry Widow," this past winter. Proceeds from the production will aid the hall's preservation, something the community believes will be beneficial to the village.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

UTM NOT VERIFIED

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.14

Quadrangle name Hortonville, Wis.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	6	3	6	9	1	6	0	4	9	1	0	2	1	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

The north one-half (N 1/2) of Lots Two (2) and Three (3), in Block One (1), of the original plat of the Village of Hortonville, Outagamie County, Wisconsin.

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

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael R. Matucheski, Preservation Assistant, Diane H. Filipowicz, Architectural Historian

organization State Historical Society of Wisconsin date September, 1980

street & number 816 State Street telephone (608) 262-3390

city or town Madison state Wisconsin 53706

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

Richard Kuey

title Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

date 10/29/80

For HCRS use only

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

Bob Brown
Keeper of the National Register

date 1/23/81

Attest: *Judea Hunt McClelland*
Chief of Registration

date 1-12-81

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Hortonville Community Hall



981

Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page 1

SIGNIFICANCE

Architecture

Well-suited in character and scale to the architectural climate of Hortonville, the unpretentious Opera Hall is nonetheless one of the largest and most unusual buildings in the village. Like most of the principal buildings there, the Hall retains its original appearance. The simple axial plan, large arched center gable and consistent rhythm of large fan-lighted windows suggest an early twentieth-century commercial or light industrial use as a depot, service station, or warehouse. The decorative contrast of cream and red brick and the appeal of its simple geometrical forms make the building a visual asset worthy of continuing efforts to prolong its serviceability.

Footnotes

¹Wisconsin State Gazetteer, 1913-14, p. 378; 1915-16, p. 369. The Opera House is first listed in the 1915-16 edition. Also, the May 6, May 13, and May 20 issues of the Hortonville Weekly Review have several features pertaining to the offerings at the "New Opera House." Elderly residents of Hortonville confirm the 1914-15 construction date.

²Hortonville Weekly Review. Weekly issues from May through December, 1915 illustrate the role played by the Opera House in Hortonville during the first part of the twentieth century.

³Hortonville Weekly Review, June 21, 1915, p. 5.

⁴Hortonville Weekly Review, April 16, 1915, pp. 1-3.

⁵Abstract of Title. Items 7-13 document the many changes of ownership during the 1930s.

⁶Appleton Post-Crescent, December 15, 1979.

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081

Hortonville Community Hall

Continuation sheet

Item number

9

Page 1

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Appleton Post-Crescent, December 15, 1979.

Goodspeed, Weston Arthur. History of Outagamie County, Wisconsin. Chicago: Goodspeed Historical Associations, 1911.

Hortonville Weekly Review. Weekly issues May through December, 1915 and April 16, 1925.

Sanborn Maps of the Village of Hortonville, 1909, 1923.

Wisconsin State Gazetteer, 1913-14, 1915-16.