NPS Form 10-900 (January 1992)

United States Department of 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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Place Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectura classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheet (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items

OMB No. 10024-0018

REGISTER, HISTORY

& EDUCATION

1. Name of Property	
historic name Sun Prairie Water Tower	·
other names/site number <u>Columbus Street Water Tower</u>	
2. Location	
street & number In right of way of intersection of Columbus, Church and Cliff Streets	N/A not for publication
city or town Sun Prairie	N/A vicinity
state Wisconsin code WI county Dane code 025 zip	p code <u>53590</u>
3. State/Federal Agency Certification	
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I I nomination _ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional request CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property <u>x</u> meets _ does not meet the National Register of this property be considered significant _ nationally _ statewide <u>x</u> locally. (_ See continuation comments.)	for registering propertiquirements set forth in 3 criteria. I recommend th
Signature of certifying official/Title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer-WI	12000
State or Federal agency and bureau	
<pre>In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)</pre>	Register criteria
Signature of certifying offical/Title	Date
State of Federal agency and bureau	

Sun Prairie Water Tower			Dane County, WI
Name of property			County, State
4. Na/tional Park Service/Certi	figation		
I hereby certify that the property is:     entered in the National Register.     See continuation sheet.     determined eligible for the     National Register.     See continuation sheet.     determined not eligible for the     National Register.     See continuation sheet.     removed from the National	f the Keepler	Date of scrip	4/6/00
Registerother, (explain:)			
5. Classification			
Ownership of Category of	1	Number of Reso	urces within Prope
Property (check Property (	Check	(Do not incl	lude listed resour
within as many only one bo	ox)	in the count	<b>=)</b>
boxes as apply)			
		Contributing	Noncontributing
private building	g(s)		buildi
<pre>x public-local district</pre>	-		sites
public-state site		1	structi
public-federal _x structur	ce		object
object		1	COT 0
Name of related multiple property (Enter N/A if property is not part of multiple property listing )			ntributing resource ted in the National Re
n/a		0	
6. Function or Use			
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)		Current Funct (Enter categories from	
Industry/Processing/	VACANT	NOT IN USE	
Extraction: Waterworks			
	***************************************		,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,
7. Description			
Architectural Classification	Mate	erials	
(Enter categories from instructions) Late 19 <sup>th</sup> and 20th	_	ategories from instruction	
Century Pavivals		undation <u>S</u>	tone

roof other Metal

\_\_\_\_\_Wood

#### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Sun Prairie Water Tower Section 7 Page 1 Sun Prairie, Dane County, WI

#### INTRODUCTION

The Sun Prairie Water Tower has been a landmark in the town for 100 years. It dominates a hilltop near the center of the small city, at an intersection of three streets. Two lead north from the main business street, a block away and one leads east. The limestone and the mason work seen in the water tower are both of exceptional quality. The stone was salvaged from one of the first grist mills in the area. The tower represents a milestone in the development of the village into a municipality with a modern infrastructure and with the necessary administrative structure to manage it. the City of Sun Prairie and the Columbus Street Water Tower Board (formed under city ordinance #294) restored the water tower and surrounded it with a small plaza paved with commemorative bricks sold to individual supporters as a fund raiser.

#### DESCRIPTION

The Sun Prairie Water Tower is 60' high, rising from a two-foot rusticated stone foundation which is now almost entirely below the level of the surrounding plaza and street. The tower is topped with a steel tank which adds 30' to its overall height of 92'. Its outside diameter at the foundation is 25'; the tower itself has an inside diameter of 20'. The first 11' of rise (approximately) is cylindrical. Above this base, marked by a setback of about 8", the circumference of the tower diminishes slightly as it rises. The rough-cut stone blocks, laid in courses, are unusually uniform, giving the tower an appearance of solidity and finish. The blocks are approximately 8" in height and up to 2' in length in the base, and somewhat smaller in the tower above the base. The top course

<sup>1</sup> Phone interview 11/98 with Ed Addison, Sun Prairie, who spearheaded the restoration of the tower between 1993 and 1995.

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of the base and some courses of the tower above the base are slightly higher and protrude slightly from the surface, giving the structure overall a pleasing texture and emphasizing the fineness of the stone cutting and laying. The stone used in the tower is a local dolomite limestone with a pale yellow color and an even texture. The stones, although not finished to a smooth surface, are cut in very regular pieces with precisely squared edges. Probably it was the work invested in the original cutting which made them desirable enough to warrant salvaging them from the Stevens Mill, which was about five miles to the northeast on the Columbus Road.

Facing south, the doorway to the tower is round-arched and is formed with radiating, rough-cut limestone blocks. At the center of the arch a finished limestone keystone reads "1899". The wooden door replaces the original that was defaced with carved initials. It is panelled and round-arched. There are five windows in the The highest of these is near the top and faces north. Opposite this window, in the south side of the tower, at the same level, is a door which gives access to a steel platform and ladder leading to the tank on the top of the tower. Punctuating the tower on its east side are two more windows, one just above the cylindrical base and one marking the half-way point between the top of the base and the top of the tower. Opposite these, facing west, are two windows centered on the intervals between the windows in the east wall. The windows are rectangular, approximately two feet wide and five feet high. The stone lintels and sills are of rough cut stone and continue the line of the adjacent coursing. The sash was replaced with new wooden sash during the 1994-95 restoration.

In the lowest of the windows, just above the base and facing west,

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the glass is etched in commemoration of Martin O. Feuling, a long-time postman in Sun Prairie. Mr. Feuling died in 1995 and his widow offered the memorial gifts she received to the restoration fund, as he had been particularly fond of the tower. The amount was sufficient to restore the window sash in the tower and the glass was etched as a memorial.<sup>2</sup> It reads: "In memory of Martin O. Feuling Dec. 19, 1936 to Dec. 3, 1995."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Interview, Addison, Sun Prairie, July 27, 1998

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The steel tank on top of the tower dates from 1912, when it replaced the original wooden tower. (A picture of the original tower in the archives of the State Historical Society, Madison, shows the wooden tank.) The steel tank is surrounded at its base by a metal walkway which extends about two feet outside the circumference of the tower. The walkway was accessed from inside the tower through the doorway just below its summit on the south side. The metal platform, railing and ladder to the tank are intact. From the walkway around the tank a steel ladder surrounded by safety rings leads up the side of the tank to its conical steel roof. The roof overhangs the sides of the tank and is topped by a small steel ball. The tank and metal parts were painted with silver paint in 1987.4

Only the remains of the water mains and the supporting beams of the wooden structure providing access to the door at the top of the tower are present inside the tower. The tower never contained a pump or a well: water was pumped to it from a pump house a distance away.

The plaza surrounding the tower separates it from the four roads that radiate from it: Church Street, Cliff Street, Columbus Street

The Sun Prairie Countryman September 7, 1911, April 22, 1912.

<sup>4</sup> Minutes of the Sun Prairie Water Tower Board, 1994

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going south and Columbus Street going north. The plaza is enclosed by bollards and chain, painted black. It is paved with bricks inscribed with the names of donors to the restoration fund. The patio is a rounded, asymmetrical triangle, with its base on the south side of the tower, in front of the door, extending approximately 12' to the south. This area is seen in the pre-1912 photo to have been grass and weeds before the streets were paved. The shape of the plaza is slightly irregular, as it responds to the design needs of street improvements which in 1992 would have included demolishing the tower. In order to give as much width to Church Street, on the east, as possible, the plaza extends only two feet from the wall of the tower at its narrowest point on that side. The curved outline of the plaza allows considerably more room on the west side of the tower than on the east.

#### SETTING

Sun Prairie is a small city located approximately 10 miles from the state capitol, at Madison. Its history is closely tied to that of Madison as it was a party commissioned to build the earliest state capitol building who named the place Sun Prairie, and one of the members of that party, Augustus Bird, and his descendants, who later settled it. Sun Prairie has a rapidly growing population of over 16,000 and has become a commuter suburb of Madison. Nonetheless it has preserved a lively downtown and a community identity. Until the construction of a bypass in the 1960s the main road north from Madison to Green Bay and the Fox River Valley passed through Sun Prairie, passing the water tower at a point where two streets leading north from the main street converge. The street thus formed was the historic Columbus road (now Columbus Street.) At the same intersection are two religious properties whose histories are significant in the story of Sun Prairie's

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Sun Prairie Water Tower

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development, the Methodist Episcopal Church, <sup>5</sup> and Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Catholic Church and school. Three more churches were located within a few hundred yards of the tower along Columbus Street. <sup>6</sup> The corner was a landmark for thousands of travelers using Highway 151 as it led north to Columbus, Beaver Dam, Fond du Lac and beyond. Today the water tower overlooks the downtown from a neighborhood of older houses, some of them well-preserved historic structures, situated on carefully kept, wooded lawns.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> The Sun Prairie Countryman reported 11/3/1898 the relaying of the cornerstone of the Methodist church: "The church edifice as now completed is one of the handsomest and most convenient houses of worship in the state..." The original building dates to 1867, according to local historian Peter Michael Klein. It was later converted to the Foresters' Hall and is still in use for community functions.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Interview with Peter Michael Klein, Sun Prairie, July 27, 1998.

Name of Property	County and State
8. Statement of Significance	
Applicable National Register Criteria  (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)	Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)
x A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.	Politics/Government Architecture
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.	Period of Significance
x 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.	1899-1912  Significant Dates
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.	Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked
Criteria Considerations (Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)	above)n/a
<ul> <li>A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.</li> <li>B removed from its original location.</li> <li>C a birthplace or grave.</li> <li>D a cemetery.</li> </ul>	Cultural Affiliationn/a
<ul><li>E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.</li><li>F a commemorative property.</li></ul>	Architect/Builder Stegerwald, Frank*
G less than 50 years of age achieved significance within the past 50 years.	*village board minutes

Dane County, WI

Narrative Statement of Significance

Sun Prairie Water Tower

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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#### INTRODUCTION

The Sun Prairie Water Tower, built in 1899, is locally significant under Criterion A because it represents the transition of the village from an aggregation of households each provided with its own water source and other comforts to a modern small city with an infrastructure of utilities paid for by taxes and administered by its government. It is also significant under Criterion C for the exceptionally fine quality of its stonework and as an example of a building type.

#### HISTORY OF SUN PRAIRIE

First settled in 1839, Sun Prairie by 1899 had become a village of some 1100. The road leading north from the new state capitol at Madison was surveyed in 1840 and it led past the incipient village, which was also on the approach to Madison from the east via the Aztalan Highway from Lake Mills, already constructed by that date. Water was a determining factor in the origins of the village: Sun Prairie owes its location to a decision to skirt a marsh to the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Klein, Peter Michael, <u>Sun Prairie's People Part I</u> <u>Shadows and Dreams</u>, 1993, Sun Prairie Historical Society, p. 16

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> 1900 census: 1119

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Klein, p. 27 and Eldred, Charles H. "Indian Trails," typewritten manuscript in the archives of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Frederic Cassidy, in <u>Dane County Place</u>
<a href="Mames">Names</a> gives the date for the Sun Prairie road from Madison as 1846 and notes "The present (1968) course (of US Hwy 151) is only slightly changed."

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north rather than the south, its name to the gratitude felt by a party of engineers and workmen who came upon it under sunny skies after 11 days of rain on the road from Milwaukee to build the state capitol, and the path of its main street to the track taken by teamsters to avoid the mud of the surveyed route. North of Sun Prairie is a ridge of limestone leading north, enabling travelers to avoid, at least for awhile, the marshes of central Wisconsin. By 1847 Colonel William Angell had a sawmill at Sun Prairie, and by 1850 he and William Hardwick each operated a hotel. By lucky chance, the railroad, which reached the village in 1859, ran out of funds at that point and so Sun Prairie was a terminus for the products of the rich farmlands that surrounded it.<sup>4</sup>

Public services were almost non-existent in the nineteenth century village, although it was incorporated in 1868. A lockup was built at that time, and a village clerk's office, and wooden sidewalks. A 1959 clipping, "Things You Will Never Again See in Sun Prairie," included with a paper on the Twentieth Century Club, mentions three public pumps, including a wooden one on Columbus Street. The first business of the Twentieth Century Club, founded in 1901, was to agitate for a public library, and for trash receptacles on the streets. A volunteer fire department was formed in 1891, served by a bucket brigade and public cisterns. As the village recovered

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Hayden, Estelle, and Nora Noyes Philpot, et.al. <u>Early</u> <u>History of Sun Prairie</u>, scrapbook by the Sun Prairie Twentieth Century Club, 1935.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Klein, p. 60

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Hayden, Estelle, "Letters and articles, 1855-1948," archives of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Klein, p. 74

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from the 1892 depression, a new city hall, a magnificent structure in two colors of brick, with a tower, went up on Main Street. By petition of the fire department, it included a 1000 gallon cistern and a fire station, as well as community meeting space and a dance hall and auditorium.<sup>8</sup>

On February 2, 1898 The Sun Prairie Countryman, a weekly, published an editorial: "Sun Prairie still grows...a score of years ago you could no more stir the residents of this place to build anything for its improvement than you could move the rock of Gibraltar ... "(but now, because of) "...the go-ahead and push of the younger businessmen...our village has taken on a citified appearance. several years past large new brick blocks, new hotels, a new city hall, new churches, a new creamery, and many new residences have been erected. But the coming year will see even greater growth than has any year before. An electric lighting system will be in operation. A telephone exchange will be established and the question of a waterworks will be the stirring element at next spring's election. A petition will be circulated among our voters and presented to the present board asking for the right of a popular vote for or against the putting in of waterworks, and it is made the especial interest of every man, that wants to see things move, to take off his coat and work for these improvements..."

In April, 1898 the <u>Countryman</u> published an editorial: "It will not be long now before the bonds for the city hall will all be paid and now the talk runs in favor of macadamizing our streets. The material for such work is close at hand and the expense of making permanent improvements of that kind would be light. Let's talk the matter over." That summer the creamery burned and there ensued an argument over whether to form a cooperative to replace it. One of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Klein, pp 77-80

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the writers to the paper expounded: "Wake Up Sun Prairie! You have neither street cars, electric lights nor water power..." In October of that year the paper noted hopefully that "C.B. Hayden, proprietor of the electric lighting franchise, is displaying some activity and it is indicated that we will have electric lights before the snow flies." A village ordinance was published giving Hayden the franchise for "light, heat and power," within 60 days. According to Klein, "Charles B. Hayden, Robert E. Davis, and William Mosel formed the Sun Prairie Electric and Laundry Company in October 1897....The company's charter from the village authorized the company to furnish electric lights and power, and to run a steam or electric powered laundry...The electric company installed the electric wires along Main Street in February 1900. Village trustees signed a contract for electric street lights on March 26, 1900. The contract specified that the "Lights to burn on a moonlight schedule until 12 o'clock." One traditional tale claimed the lights were only used on dark and stormy nights.9 (Hayden never did deliver an adequate system, and in 1911 he was bought out by the village "to avoid hard feelings." In February of that year \$9000 was authorized for a village lighting system, and in March all-day service was begun. However, in May the batteries which provided back-up to the engine were depleted while pumping water to flush the hydrants, and when the engine failed, the village had a black-out. 10)

#### ENGINEERING

The first water main system in this country was installed in Boston

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Klein, p. 85-86

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Countryman, 2/16/1911, 3/2/1911, 5/4/1911.

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in 1652. New York and Philadelphia had water systems by 1799. It was nearly a century later, in the 1870s and '80s that water systems spread rapidly in other places.<sup>11</sup>

Municipal water systems were a hot topic in turn-of-the-century engineering literature. A Santa Rosa, California, councilman lauded the rise of public services, which, he said, would produce "healthy, educated, happy and contented people." The same article cited justice to the poor and disease prevention, freedom from the expense and annoyance of bill collection, and increase in land value, as arguments for free water service. Many other articles, however, cited the growing expense of wasted water, and articles promoting metering multiplied in the journals.

European models were reported in the American engineering journals. The same journal that carried the article cited above noted in a brief item titled "Masonry Towers: "[I]t is the common practice in Europe to support the tank on a masonry structure, and also to enclose it with masonry or wood. This form of construction readily lends itself to architectural treatment and should be more often adopted in this country. The bottom details are arranged as shown...The tank resting upon the wall..."

By 1918 American technology had taken on a life of its own, and

<sup>11</sup> Earle L. Watermann, <u>Elements of Water Supply Engineering</u>, New York, Wiley, 1934, p. 5

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Sources are shown in the bibliography. The quote is from J.W. Keegan, "Should Water be Served by Municipalities Free?" Municipal Journal and Engineer, 12:251, June, 1902.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> p. 734

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more precise information was offered on the stresses involved and details of tank and pipe construction. Edward Wegmann explained, "When steel tanks were first introduced, about 40 or 50 years ago, (i.e. 1870-80) their bottoms were flat... This plan is, however, very costly. Some tanks were made with conical bottoms, but this plan has no advantages. Finally, in 1894, the bottoms were made spherical, and this plan is now generally adopted, as it gives great strength to the bottom."

Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin does not discuss waterworks nor stone towers. Stone water towers are listed in the Register as part of historic districts in Beloit and Clinton. The tower at Beloit was built in 1889. While much larger, it was similar in having had a wooden tank, which collapsed in 1914, to be replaced by a steel tank, according to the nomination. There is a stone water tower similar in size and appearance to the one in Sun Prairie in Benton, Wisconsin; it was successfully nominated to the State and National registers in 1998. Neighboring Columbus has a stone water tower but it is not centrally located, lacks the refinement of design and fineness of stone cutting seen in Sun Prairie, and is in poor repair.

#### SUN PRAIRIE BUILDS ITS WATERWORKS

<sup>14</sup> Conveyance and Distribution of Water for Water Supplies, New York, Van Nostrand, 1918, p. 384. On page 377: "in flat regions, the elevated tank is preferable to a standpipe, as practically its whole capacity is available for fire protection. For this purpose, however, its bottom should be placed at least 80 to 100 feet above the top of the highest building in the town." The greater height required by this later standard would make masonry towers impractical.

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"When the Sun Prairie water tower was erected, beautiful quarry stone from this old mill (the Stevens Mill) was used in the construction of the tower. This was done at the suggestion of James Melville, then principal of Sun Prairie high school, who knew durable stone. Thus, Sun Prairie's water tower is not only useful and sightly, but composed in large part of historic material, earlier also happily associated with flowing water." This poetic view is offered by Estelle Hayden in the scrapbook of the Twentieth Century Club, assembled in 1935.

Peter Klein, writing in 1993, described the creation of the waterworks in more detail: "The creation of a public waterworks was of immense importance to the community. Prior to the construction of the waterworks, residents relied upon private wells and cisterns, as well as the three public cisterns. The village council sent delegations to examine established waterworks ...Stegerwald and Lessner of Bristol Township constructed the tower and pumphouse. The base of the tower contained over seventy-five

The author of this nomination prepared a Determination of Eligibility for the Stevens house, next to the mill site, in 1989. The mill was the nearest grist mill to Sun Prairie, which lacked water power for a mill site. Madison, Dane County and Surrounding Towns, Madison, William J. Park, 1877, states that the mill was built in 1857 by Nathaniel Aiken and later improved by Stevens, who acquired it in 1865. A deed to Stevens, dated 1880, provides for the "flowing" of more land by raising the height of the dam. The present owner of the property, Harold Skrenes, recalled that the mill pond remained a favorite picnic and fishing spot until 1958, when the highway department obliterated it. In 1989 an earthwork marked the site of the mill; it has now been wiped out by a widening of the highway.

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cords of stone; most of the stone coming from the old Stevens Mill on the Manesha River (Waterloo Creek)...The waterworks did not service the entire village. Citizens had to petition for the extension of water lines into their neighborhoods.... The village also constructed wooden drinking fountains at the intersection of Bristol Street and Main Street and at the intersection of Church and Main Street... The ordinance governing the use of the waterworks passed on December 5, 1899. The ordinance, carefully thought out by the trustees, contained astonishing details about the fees for using the public waterworks. It even contained a water rationing Water could only be used on gardens and for washing windows from six to eight o'clock in the morning, and from four to eight o'clock in the afternoon and evening. Any resident with a yard fountain could use the fountain for six hours a day during the months of April 1 through November 1. The ordinance proved to be ungovernable in the establishment of a complicated series of water The trustees set separate rates for consumers, bakeries, banks, barber shops, bath tubs in public places, billiard rooms, blacksmith stables, boarding houses, churches, cemeteries, etc. Rates for water varied from ten cents to fifteen dollars per month. This irrational system only lasted for a brief interval; then the trustees devised a rational rate system. Edwin Beers was hired as the first engineer for the waterworks, and Baxter B. Cobb was appointed the first superintendent of the waterworks. The first winter proved to be a trying period for the new system. the water pipes in Center Street froze. Center Street became a hill of ice much appreciated by the youngsters of the village. A tradition began; Center Street continued as a sledding hill in subsequent winters...

"A conceptual flaw in the water system allowed water into the homes without allowing for waste water to leave the homes, leading to the idyllic days of summer when the scent of ground water wafted

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throughout the community. Diseases abounded. The waste water problem percolated throughout the village until 1918, when a waste water treatment plant went into operation. $^{16}$ 

A reading of The Sun Prairie Countryman and the minutes of the village board of trustees gives an even more complex picture of the political process that led to the building of the waterworks and the stone tower. On February 9, 1899 a proposed waterworks ordinance was published in The Sun Prairie Countryman. have given authorization to W. H. Wheeler, of Beloit, to construct, maintain and operate a system, to be "of good material and workmanship, ... (and) handsome architectural design..., " and was to include a steel tank 18' in diameter on a steel substructure 60' in height...also a reservoir in the ground...30 hydrants..." was to be free to the village, with an elaborate rate structure for evervthing from bottling works to houses with and without The village was to pay a monthly rent of \$5 apiece for each of the 30 hydrants, however. The village had the option to buy the system for \$21,500. The advantage of the proposal was that it did not require the selling of bonds but would be paid for from its earnings. The Countryman initially advocated for the proposal. But on March second it reported "Another long talk on waterworks was held before the meeting of the newly organized businessmen's club...The substance...was that our village ought to have waterworks and electric light and that the two systems should be merged into one concern and that the whole thing complete would cost, at a rough estimate, \$22,500....We do not favor granting a franchise to anyone nor do the majority of our voters... It is a subject on which some of our citizens need to post themselves before casting their ballot either way."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Klein, pp 83-84

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On March 6, minutes of the board of trustees contain a resolution: "Whereas the subject of a system of waterworks for our village has been agitated for several months and whereas from reliable information received from the visiting of several plants throughout the country it has been ascertained that a plant adequate for the wants and needs of the village can be erected for about \$12,000... resolve to have a vote..."

The following week the paper reported that a committee had been appointed to visit "any city or village of which they may chose, to inspect waterworks systems for the benefit of the village, in reference to kinds and prices. On March 16th: "[I]n our mind to vote right is to vote for any improvement to our town that may be enjoyed by all alike. To grow, it becomes a necessity to keep along with the times. To induce others to settle with us we must have the conveniences that they are used to. To get factories here we must have better fire protection and in order to better our facilities we must have a waterworks." A vote was reported on April 6; 210 votes were recorded, but "many eluded the waterworks question, but a vote of 93 for and 63 against a plant not to exceed \$12,500 was registered."

On April 27, the paper observed: "We are in a state of partial incubation so far as the question of electric lights and waterworks are concerned. The regulator on the machine is out of order or busted, we are uncertain which. At any rate something will have to be done soon or the summer will pass and then we will have to wait over another year. One thing is certain, and that is, that no manufacturer or tobacco buyer wants to risk his stock in a place where fire protection is as inadequate as it is here. Turn on the steam and let us either hatch or die trying." The same issue reported that the village board had moved to ask W. G. Kirchoffer of Baraboo to write specifications and plans for a waterworks.

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			Sun Prairie Water Tower
Section	88	<u> Paqe</u> 11	Sun Prairie, Dane County, WI

June 8: "Flames the Victors...\$5000 Worth." A saloon and restaurant had burned, and it would have been "worse if not for rain." In the next issue: "Waterworks or No Waterworks? Did the bonds for the city hall raise taxes? No...as for going around whining...because we have to pay taxes--why we are proud that we have something to pay taxes on." The paper pointed to the example of Lodi, where "the waterworks are to be owned and operated by the village and any talk the other way is all bosh." An unsigned letter in the next issue pointed out, prophetically, that if the waterworks was built, there would be need of a sewage system. A special election was set.

On June 29 a vote was reported of 89 for the waterworks and 86 against. "[T]he village officials would not be justified in proceeding," reported the paper, "...the majority includes our most influential business men (but also includes an) element which always favor anything and everything--men who pay no taxes ... (while) the opposition is almost entirely tax payers and property owners. The cost of maintenance would be \$1500 to \$2000 a year, bringing an increased burden of taxes...We cannot afford to jeopardize our present growing prosperity...the unity of effort which pervades the whole community." Clearly, the Countryman was cutting its losses.

However, according to the village board minutes, a special meeting of the board on July 5 authorized bonds for \$12,500 "for the erection of pumps, water-mains, reservoirs and doing whatever may be necessary to fully complete and equip a system of waterworks...in order to furnish Fire protection...and a water supply..."

On July 20 the paper reprinted from the Columbus Democrat:

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"[O]wing to an irregularity in not giving sufficient notice to the public another election must be held on the 31st instead...Echoes of the inconceivable differences of opinion and the unfair way in which they are being combatted came floating over the hills and dales and we learn that the experience of our own city is being involved in the controversy...and as usual the truth is being hidden behind walls of windy fabulations." In Columbus, it was said, property had increased 30 to 50% in value after installation of a waterworks and "no sane man is here known to have been opposed...who does not today approve."

With this encouragement the issue was joined again. A copy of a letter sent to other villages was printed with the statement that all were satisfied with their waterworks. L.V. Lewis (who was later the first householder to apply for service) showed that revenues from city licenses were enough to pay off the debt in 12 years, while "no one is forced to take water." He quoted the specifications, including a brick pumping station, 30' by 40', a 60 hp steam engine, a 70 hp boiler, a 260 gallon-a-minute pump, 31 hydrants, two or three wells, and a water tank 20' in diameter, 25' high upon a stone tower 60' high, to be located upon the threecorner piece of ground between Church and Center streets where they join to become Columbus Street. "If such a plant can be placed in the village without taxing the property of citizens one cent, how can it be an injury to the village?" he concluded. On August 3 the paper at last reported "Waterworks It Is." Of 212 votes, 117 were cast for and 95 against. Bids were due by August 16, with bonds to be issued as the bills came due. Land was bought for a pumping station and power house. William Jennings Bryan, making a whistle stop in his campaign for the Presidency, asked what he should talk about. Upon being informed of the waterworks vote he "complimented the people of Sun Prairie upon the wisdom they had shown in voting to own and operate their own waterworks system...fighting free of

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private franchises."

The board had advertised for bids on the plans drawn up by W.G. Kirchoffer and had committed \$275 to buy the south part of Lot 5, Block 17 for a pumping station. The new vote on July 31 authorized bonding of \$12,500 to build a waterworks, to be issued in \$500 increments coming due between 1901 and 1913, to be paid by an annual levy "on all the taxable property in said village ... sufficient to pay when due the interest...and discharge the principal."

On August 17 the paper reported that a score of contractors were in the village but refused to submit bids until the bonds were sold. Nine bids for the bonds were opened on August 22. Seven came from firms in Cleveland, Chicago and Minneapolis. Two were from local The bid of the First National Bank of Columbus, which offered a 3 1/2% premium, was accepted. By August 24 the paper reported the contracts let, with the exception of the tower. specifications had to be revised, with a reduction in the number of hydrants and the size of the gas engine. Work had begun on digging Village board minutes record that John M. Healy of the wells. Chicago received the contract to furnish and lay the pipe. Challenge Wind Mill and Feed Mill Company of Batavia, Illinois, provided the wooden tank. On September 20, 1899 the board received two bids for construction of the water tower. L.A. Giles of Waterloo bid \$1850. The winning bid, by the local firm of Stegerwald and Lessner, was for \$1750. On November 7th, the board made part payment to Stegerwald of \$1000 on the tower.

By October 10, according to <u>The Countryman</u>, the stone was "on the ground." By November 11: "The water tower is about half way up." The engine and pump had arrived. By November 23 the pipes were being flushed. A new waterworks ordinance was published on

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December 7, allowing for the appointment of a superintendent and an engineer, and the licensing of plumbers. On December 14 the fire department tested the pressure from the tower, and found pebbles in the hydrants.

The new water ordinance allowed households, for \$8 a year, to have one wash basin. Extra taps were \$2 each, a toilet, \$1.50, and it must have an automatic valve. The job of water engineer must have been considered a plum; nine bids were received including one from the electric franchise company, and ranged up to \$47 a month. R.B. Kanouse and E.E. Beers were awarded the contract, for \$100 a year.

On March 1, 1900 the <u>Countryman</u> reported a fire at Sacred Hearts school, and pointed out that if the fire department had had their old fire apparatus, "the church would have been ashes now as the available water was frozen." But in three minutes they had water from the hydrants.

The yearly account of the finances of the village, delivered to the board on April 2, reported an expenditure for the year of \$22,689 and a balance on hand of \$128.09. In August, "after considerable discussion," the board agreed to extend the water mains. In March of the following year the village petitioned the bank to change the date of payment on the bonds from January to July, as they were having trouble meeting the payment. These facts suggest that the village had not yet fully committed to doing what was necessary to provide water and maintain the system without recurrent discussion and special actions of the board.

Nonetheless, on March 8, 1900, the <u>Countryman</u> observed: "With waterworks, electric lights, an efficient fire department, the finest stores...three good lumber yards, a canning factory, several tobacco warehouses, a steam laundry and everything else up to date,

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what better place could you find to live in?" Sun Prairie was getting ready for the 20th century.

Both the telephone and lighting franchises, held by C.B. Hayden, proprietor of the local hardware store, 17 and the first waterworks proposal can be seen as attempts by the village to avoid creating a municipal utilities department, and to somehow acquire these modern conveniences without having to levy taxes to support them. It had been necessary to overcome a lot of opposition to commit the village to owning and running a public utility system. March 1900, the North and East Bristol Telephone Company approached the board about providing telephone service. (Hayden never activated his franchise for a telephone company, but service was eventually provided by the North and East Bristol Telephone But it was not until February 2, 1911 that The Company. 18) Countryman reported a meeting to authorize \$9000 for a village lighting system. Bonds and a tax to pay for them are recorded in the April 10, 1911 minutes of the village board. The May 1 minutes record the ordinance to regulate a public electric lighting system and create a committee, superintendent, rates and rules. On August 7 of that year the board established a Board of Health and a Health Officer.

In March, 1911, the village Board of Water Commissioners reported that water rent totaled \$1347.66 for the year. Gasoline had cost \$591.66, repairs \$145.77, the engineer's salary \$328 and the superintendent \$177.50. A secretary was paid \$30. 1500 feet of new mains had been laid that year.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Countryman, 10/6/1898 and 10/27/1898

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Klein, p. 85

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Sun Prairie Water Tower

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On September 7, 1911, W.G. Kirchoffer was employed to draw plans and specifications for a steel tank to replace the wooden tank, and advertise for bids. The paper, somewhat confused, reported "The water plant is in good shape with the possible exception of the water tower that will soon be replaced by a more modern stone tower..." On September 26 the bid of Kennicott Water Softener, of Chicago Heights, was accepted. On November 6, a tax was authorized to pay one half the cost (\$1350) of the tank. The balance of \$1350 was paid on October 9, 1912. In May the village hired August Hein "to point up the water tower." For this and "labor on the streets," Hein was paid \$88.45.

On December 9, 1912 the post of village treasurer was created, to collect the "light money." On March 3, 1913, Mr. A.A. Johnson of the Wisconsin Tax Commission made a presentation to the board on the new system of accounts that would be required by the state. The era of progressive reforms promulgated by the Wisconsin State administration of Robert M. LaFollette in Madison had reached Sun Prairie only a few months after the steel tank atop the water tower was installed. Thus the water tower today recalls the entire period in which Sun Prairie moved from being a rural village to become a modern municipality with responsibility for services to its residents. The period of significance, 1899-1912, corresponds to this period of change and encompasses the years from the tower's construction to the addition of the steel tank.

#### RESTORATION

In 1992 a street improvement project proposed to demolish the historic Sun Prairie water tower. Public outcry led to the formation of the Water Tower Board, which first met on August 16, 1993. The Board was allotted \$18,860 in city funds that would have

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Sun Prairie Water Tower

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gone to demolish the tower. The original bid for restoration was a staggering \$124,000. However, through a "penny power" campaign in the schools, raffling a quilt, selling mugs, conducting a house tour and a garage sale of old City furniture, and through many hours of donated labor and the use of donated city and private equipment and materials, the Water Tower Board managed to restore the tower. The largest fundraiser was the sale of commemorative bricks for the small plaza surrounding the tower. By 1998, 676 bricks had been sold, and a total of over \$38,000 had been raised. The tower was cleaned and tuck pointed and a decorative plaza constructed around it. A ceremony was held November 11, 1995. The tower was dedicated to Jim Reininger, an alderman who died that year.

In 1997 a second dedication was held, honoring Martin O. Feuling, whose widow made possible restoration of the windows.

#### CONCLUSION

The stone water tower in Sun Prairie is important to the community's political history, as the establishment of public utilities in Sun Prairie was a difficult, important stage in its development. The construction of the water tower led to improvements in fire fighting and changes in the lifestyles of Sun Prairie's residents through the introduction of municipal water service.

The stone water tower is also significant as one of only a few instances of stone water towers in the state and for the quality and excellent state of preservation of its fine, stone masonry construction. The stone base tower is an example of the evolution of this property type. Early standpipes led to stone base towers, which later became the modern, metal towers. Sun Prairie's stone

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Sun Prairie Water Tower

<u>Section 8 Page 18 Sun Prairie, Dane County, WI</u>

base water tower is a rare example of its type in Wisconsin and retains a high degree of integrity related to its areas of significance. The fact that the stone was salvaged from the Stevens Mill and that for 60 years the tower was a landmark on the main route north from Madison adds to its interest.

Sun Prairie Water Tower	Dane County, WI
Name of Property	County and State
9. Major Bibliographic References	
Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one continuation sheets.)	or more
Previous Documentation on File (NPS):	Primary location of additional data:
preliminary determination of individaul 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 #	_x_ State Historic Preservatic Office Other State Agency Federal Agency Local government University Other Name of repository:
10. Geographical Data	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
Acreage of Property <u>less than 1 acre</u>	
UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation	n sheet.)
1 <u>1/6</u> <u>3/2/0/3/4/0</u> <u>4/7/8/3/7/8/0</u> 3 <u>/</u> Zone Easting Northing Zon	e Easting Northing
Zone Easting Northing Zon	e Easting Northing see continuation sheet
Verbal Boundary Description (Describe th continuation sheet)	e boundaries of the property on a

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Sun Prairie Water Tower

Section 9 Page 1 Sun Prairie Dane County, WI

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Sun Prairie Water Tower
Section 10 Page 1 Sun Prairie Dane County, WI

Verbal Boundary Description

The Sun Prairie Water Tower sits in a triangle formed by Cliff, Columbus and Church streets. The entire triangle is historically part of the right-of-way. Surrounding the water tower is a small plaza bounded by a curb, paralleling the outside curbs of the three intersection streets but rounded at each point of the triangle and along its sides. The boundary is being drawn from the center of the water tower, the radius of which is 12.5 feet and by adding 12 feet forming a circle with a diameter of 49 feet. This boundary includes all of the water tower and plaza.

Boundary Justification

Since the entire area where Church, Cliff and Columbus streets intersect was historically public land, no property description exists which pertains specifically to the water tower. The modern curb, installed in 1995, permanently defines a space uniquely and specifically related to the water tower. This space has been enclosed with metal bollards and chain and is paved with commemorative bricks, which appropriately sets the water tower apart from the street and points to its significance as a local landmark.

Sun Prairie Water Tower	Dane County, WI	
Name of Property	County and State	
11. Form Prepared By		
name/titleJane_Eiseley		
organization	date <u>January 1,</u>	1999
street & number <u>3433 Richard Street</u>	telephone <u>608-249-8</u>	818
city or town <u>Madison</u> stat	te <u>WI</u> zip code <u>5371</u>	4
Additional Documentation		
Submit the following items with the completed form:		
Continuation Sheets		
Maps		
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series)includ	ding the property's location.	
A Sketch Map for historic districts and p resources.	roperties having large acreag	ge or numerou
Photographs Representative black and white photogreaph	ns of the property.	
Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional i	items)	
Property Owner		
Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO	0.)	
name <u>City of Sun Prairie, Wisconsin</u>		
street & number <u>300 East Main Street</u>		
city or town <u>Sun Prairie</u> ,	state <u>WI</u> zip	code <u>5359</u>

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications 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 benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hour per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, I 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018) Washington, DC 20503.

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# Section Photos Page 1

Sun Prairie Water Tower
Sun Prairie Dane County, WI

Photo 1 of 8
SUN PRAIRIE WATER TOWER
Sun Prairie, Dane County, WI
Photo by Jane Eiseley
July, 1998
Negative at State Historical
Society of Wisconsin
View looking northwest

Photo 2 of 8
SUN PRAIRIE WATER TOWER
Sun Prairie, Dane County, WI
Photo by Jane Eiseley
July, 1998
Negative at State Historical
Society of Wisconsin
View looking northwest

Photo 3 of 8
SUN PRAIRIE WATER TOWER
Sun Prairie, Dane County, WI
Photo by Jane Eiseley
July, 1998
Negative at State Historical
Society of Wisconsin
Detail of tank

Photo 4 of 8
SUN PRAIRIE WATER TOWER
Sun Prairie, Dane County, WI
Photo by Jane Eiseley
July, 1998
Negative at State Historical
Society of Wisconsin
Setting looking south

Photo 5 of 8
SUN PRAIRIE WATER TOWER
Sun Prairie, Dane County, WI
Photo by Jane Eiseley
July, 1998
Negative at State Historical
Society of Wisconsin
Detail, memorial window

Photo 6 of 8
SUN PRAIRIE WATER TOWER
Sun Prairie, Dane County, WI
Photo by Jane Eiseley
July, 1998
Negative at State
Society of Wisconsin
Detail, doorway and plaza

Photo 7 of 8
SUN PRAIRIE WATER TOWER
Sun Prairie, Dane County, WI
Photo by Jane Eiseley
July, 1998
Negative at State Historical
Society of Wisconsin
View, looking southwest

Photo 8 of 8
SUN PRAIRIE WATER TOWER
Sun Prairie, Dane County, WI
Photo by Jane Eiseley
July, 1998
Negative at State
Society of Wisconsin
View looking north east

