

INVENTORY FORM FOR NOMINATED PROPERTIES

Name of property: Ephraim Moravian Church

Owner: Ephraim Moravian Church

Address: 9970 Moravia Street

Owner's address: 9970 Moravia Street

City: Ephraim County: Door

Ephraim, WI 54211

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

160 NRHP Certification (date)

- Listed in NRHP (LI)
- Determined eligible in DOE process (DD)
- Determined eligible in nomination process (DN)
- Additional documentation added to nomination (AD)
- Boundary increased (BI)
- Boundary Decreased (BD)
- Delisted (DL)

170 Thematic or Multiple Resource Nomination Name (code)

Multiple Resources of Ephraim

180 NRHP List Name Ephraim Moravian Church

190 Level of Significance

- national (NA)
- state (ST)
- local (LO)

200 District Classification

- pivotal (P)
- contributing (C)
- non-contributing (NC)

210 Applicable Criteria

- event (A)
- person (B)
- architectue/engineering (C)
- information potential (D)

215 Criteria Considerations

- religious property (A)
- moved property (B)
- birthplace or grave (C)
- cemetery (D)
- reconstructed property (E)
- commemorative property (F)
- less than 50 years old (G)

220 Area of Significance (code)

- 1. Ethnic Heritage - European (Norwegian)
- 2. Exploration/Settlement 3. Religion:
- Moravian

230 Period of Significance

1896-1934

340 Review Board Date _____

70 USGS Quad Map

Ephraim Quadrangle

80 UTM Coordinates (Format: 99-999999-9999999)

16-486740-4999930

85 Listed Acreage Less than one

60 Verbal Boundary Description 121-24-0030A - Ephraim Plat S 31.5' of W 100' Lots 25 and 26 ex E 325'. Nominated property excludes Lot 26 (parsonage).

Record No. _____

Address: 9970 Moravia Street, Ephraim, WI

Description

Situated on a limestone bluff overlooking the waters of Eagle Harbor and Green Bay, the Ephraim Moravian Church is a one story structure with a cross plan and extensive additions on the east (rear) of the building. The gable roofed church, surfaced with narrow aluminium siding, retains much of its nineteenth century design, including the original 1857 steeple. The steeple is bell cast and pyramidal in form, surfaced with wood shingles and further delineated by ornamental brackets along the cornice. Located beneath the belfry, which is delineated by arcaded and louvered openings, and leading into the original section of the church, is a door accented with three tiers of molded panels and surrounded by narrow sidelights and a fanlight. All of the colored glass windows on the church, donated by parishioners between 1916 and 1920, have semicircular arched heads.

The present exterior appearance of the church reflects several alterations since its construction in 1857. Originally designed by Reverend Iverson and built by local carpenters, including Abraham Aaneson and Jacob Smith, the church was a 40' x 24' clapboard surfaced rectangular building (probably constructed of logs) with a height of 16 feet and "a little steeple - too small according to my drawings and taste..."(E). It was built on the shoreline of Eagle Harbor, although some church members had wanted it on the bluff where it would be a prominent landmark overlooking the bay and surrounding forests.

In 1883 the church was moved to the bluff site, its present location (G). A complete remodeling

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Architectural/Engineering Statement of Significance

690 Bibliographic References (Sources)

- A- Church, Charles F., Easy Going - A Comprehensive Guide to Door County (Tamarack Press, 1977).
- B- Holand, Hjalmer Rued, History of Door County, Wisconsin Volume I and II (Chicago, S.J. Clarke Publishing
- C- Badger History, April, 1955 (Vol. 8, No. 8).
- D- Ephraim Foundation, "Ephraim, A Village of Values", (Publishing information unknown).

700 Study Units (code)

Religion - Protestant: Moravian - Lutheran

350 Demolished

360 Date Demolished

_____yes _____no

Historical Background

The Ephraim Moravian Church evolved from a settlement of Scandinavians living in Milwaukee during the 1840's. In 1849 Norwegian Andreas Iverson emigrated to the United States to help establish the first Scandinavian Moravian congregation in Wisconsin among the Fratrums, the formal name of the Moravian church, began in Europe as a pietist Protestant movement with an ecumenical approach to religion. Desiring a location more compatible with their generally rural artisan - craftsman backgrounds, the newly formed congregation moved to the Green Bay area in 1850, settling on land owned by Nils Otto Tank, a wealthy Norwegian Moravian missionary who sought to create a communal colony based on Moravian beliefs. Disagreements over communal vs private land ownership and personality differences between Reverend Iverson and Tank caused the community to break up (F). Iverson, along with three other men, began searching for a new location and in 1853 decided to establish a new settlement on the limestone bluffs of Door Peninsula. In his capacity as the church and community leader, Iverson had obtained a loan to purchase the land, which he then surveyed and divided into lots, making sure a ten acre parcel was reserved for church use (E).

Like many pioneer settlements in isolated areas, Ephraim, although its name means "doubly fruitful", was originally a community of less than thirty people that struggled to survive. Neither time nor expense could be spared to build a church at the outset so the Reverend Iverson's house at 9970 Moravia Street

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Historical Statement of Significance

Area of Historic Significance: Religion; Early Settlement; Ethnic Heritage - European (Norwegian)

The first church built in Door County and one of the first public structures in the pioneer settlement of Ephraim (Door County's oldest community), the Ephraim Moravian Church is historically significant as

the spiritual center of the Moravian colony, and as an important landmark in the history of Norwegian settlement in northern Door Co. . The church, built collectively by members of the Norwegian congregation who came to the remote location under the leadership of Reverend Andreas Iverson, one of Wisconsin's most influential Moravian leaders, was one of the first two public buildings constructed in the community. (The other, a log structure used as the first schoolhouse, is also included in the nomination.) More importantly, the church symbolized the development of a new stronghold of the Scandinavian Moravian faith after the original Ephraim colony in Green Bay succumbed to disunity. Under Iverson's leadership, the congregation and the community which grew around it, developed from a shaky pioneer settlement to a small but stable village recognized by scholars as one of the most successful and enduring religious communities in Wisconsin history. (The Historic Preservation Division study unit on Moravians has identified the Ephraim congregation as pivotal to the development of the church in Wisconsin). From this pulpit, Iverson and successive pastors, preached the pietistic theology which characterized the village and ventured forth to preach Moravian tenets and win new adherents throughout eastern Wisconsin. The simple communitarian values espoused

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Description

of the church occurred in 1896 when the original structure was incorporated into a cross shaped plan of frame construction as local carpenters again worked on the church (J). In 1916 a frame addition on the west was begun and new windows were installed and interior work completed. Another addition on the northeast, built around 1953, was designed by Architect Frank Shattuck, and in 1978 the interior was remodeled again (G). The majority of the twentieth century additions have been built on the rear (east) of the church, leaving the 1896 appearance of the church visible from the front.

Most of the interior of the church is not original although molded door trim with corner blocks and beaded wainscoating remains from the nineteenth century design. Also extant is a sturdy wood pulpit, characterized by an arcaded design similar to that on the steeple and built by Reverend Iverson. A stone fireplace, pews, and ornate brass ceiling lighting are later additions to the sanctuary. The interior color scheme, like the exterior is predominately white.

Architectural/Engineering Statement of Significance690 Bibliographic References (Sources)

- E- Iverson, A.M., "A Brief Account of the Activity (Its Commencement and Continuation since 1849) of the Evangelical Moravian Church Among the Scandinavians in Wisconsin" (Written between 1896-1899 and translated from the Norwegian by Jno. Boler, 1929). Located at Door County Library, Sturgeon Bay, WI.
- F- Naess, H.S., Unpublished "Introduction" to Reverend A.M. Iverson's Memoirs (see "E"), in possession of Reverend J. Groenfeldt, Sturgeon Bay, WI.
- G- "Through These Many Years, Commemorating the 125th Anniversary of the Ephraim Moravian congregation, 1853-1978"

700 Study Units (code)

350 Demolished

360 Date Demolished

_____yes _____no

Historical Background

was used for religious services, held two to five times per week, until the church, begun in 1857, was completed in 1859. Dedication services in December, 1859 were conducted in both German and Norwegian, the latter being the official church language until 1900 and used unofficially for many years after (E, G). The Ephraim Moravian Church, one of the oldest churches still in use in the northern half of Wisconsin, was the only church on the peninsula until 1860 (B, H).

Although Ephraim continued to remain relatively isolated until the early twentieth century, the local pastors, especially Iverson, began other Moravian congregations in and around Door County and increased the membership of the Ephraim Church. In 1895 church memberships had grown enough so that the local congregation was split into two congregations and the church building was enlarged. Rededication services were attended by 300 people and five Moravian pastors. By 1902, when services were conducted in both English and Norwegian, the church had begun serving summer visitors in the village as Ephraim became a popular resort area (H). It is a function the church still serves today.

Historical Statement of Significance

by this congregation included a belief in education, music and hymn singing, and missionary work.

The church is one of five extant buildings, all included in the nomination, that reflect different aspects of the early settlement of Ephraim. The others include the Anderson store and warehouse located in the Anderson Dock Historic District, significant for an association with the economic livelihood of the village and Reverend Iverson's house and the first school, built on Iverson's property at 9970 Moravia Street and significant for an association with the early settlement of Ephraim and pioneer education. But the cultural blend of the Moravian church and a Norwegian national heritage "that was responsible for the settlement and development of Ephraim is best reflected in the Moravian Church building" (D).

Inclusion of Moved and Religious property:

Because of its association with the Scandinavian Moravian community that founded and developed Ephraim, the Moravian church is historically significant to the growth of the entire community and therefore is eligible despite its religious function. The church building was moved to its present location in 1883 and completely remodelled in 1895. Therefore, the period of significance of the property begins in 1895, post-dating the move by over a decade.

Description

Architectural/Engineering Statement of Significance

690 Bibliographic References (Sources)

Located at Ephraim Village Library, Ephraim, WI.
(Publishing information unknown).

H- Holand, Hjalmer Rued, Early Days in Ephraim (Sturgeon Bay, WI, Door County Historical Society, 1929).

I- Reverend Fliegel, pastor Ephraim Moravian Church, July, 1984.

J- Door County Advocate, August 8, 1896 and October 24, 1896.

K- Door County Advocate, April 6, 1916.

L- Schafer, Joseph, "Scandanavian Moravians in Wisconsin" in 700 Study Units (code) Wisconsin Magazine of History, September 1940.

350 Demolished

360 Date Demolished

____yes ____no

Historical Background

Historical Statement of Significance