

PH 0663 069

L.A.A. 00000

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED FEB 15 1978
DATE ENTERED JUL 1978

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

HISTORIC
Merrill City Hall
AND/OR COMMON
Merrill City Hall

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
717 East 2nd Street
CITY, TOWN
Merrill
STATE
Wisconsin 54452
VICINITY OF
CODE
55
COUNTY
Lincoln
CODE
069 ✓
NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
12th 7th

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: vacant
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
City of Merrill
STREET & NUMBER
717 East 2nd Street
CITY, TOWN
Merrill
VICINITY OF
STATE
Wisconsin 54452

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Lincoln County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
1110 East Main Street
CITY, TOWN
Merrill
STATE
Wisconsin 54452

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places
DATE
1976
DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS
State Historical Society of Wisconsin
CITY, TOWN
Madison
STATE
Wisconsin 53706
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Merrill City Hall is constructed of red brick with a cream brick foundation. Rusticated lintels and stringcourses are composed of tan sandstone quarried south-east of Wausau. A hipped roof covers the two-and-one-half-story structure with squat, square towers at the rear (west) corners, and two squat round towers with conical roofs on the northeast. A tall octagonal brick tower at the southeast corner is crowned by a frame turret, decorated with elaborate Moorish arches which were originally open. The flat, clapboarded portion of the tower was meant to contain the faces of a tower clock which was never installed. Entrances on the east, north, and south facades were originally marked with large round-arched openings and were unsympathetically altered with enclosed porches in the 1950's or 1960's. Above the front entrance is a curved balcony which served as a podium for speeches and announcements.

The interior was heavily altered during the 1950's-'60's remodeling campaign. Wall paneling, partitions, dropped ceilings and cement staircases were added. The council chambers on the third floor and the jail in the basement have remained relatively intact, as have some hardwood flooring, doors, and decorative knobs and hinges. A bandstand stood in the triangular patch of grass in front of the city hall, but was replaced at an unknown date by a cannon.

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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1888-1889¹

BUILDER/ARCHITECT T. D. Allen, Oshkosh²

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built on the logging frontier of Wisconsin for the newly-formed city of Merrill, the Merrill City Hall was a nexus of community life from the time of its construction in 1888-1889 to the opening of the new city hall on the outskirts of town in December 1977. The pioneer settlers who had recently carved their community out of forested wilderness chose to build an unusually imposing and monumental structure to symbolize their civic pride. Situated in the heart of Merrill's oldest commercial district, the City Hall towers over its neighboring buildings and is the focal point of one of the city's main streets (STH 64).

History

All phases of city government as well as a variety of community services were carried on at the city hall. In 1889, the fifteenth library in the state was established through a \$10,000 gift from the estate of Thomas B. Scott. Scott, a northwoods lumberman, was a state senator from 1873 to 1882 and the first mayor of the city of Merrill. The library opened in the city hall in March 1891, one of the first three libraries established in northern Wisconsin. To meet the needs of immigrant loggers, the library formed one of Wisconsin's first traveling libraries in 1898. The library sent books to small towns and lumber camps throughout the county. In 1905 the first English language classes for foreigners run by a library in Wisconsin were held at the city hall. The library moved to a separate Carnegie-funded building in 1911.

The City Nurse Service also began in the City Hall. Miss Theta Mead, the county nurse who had gained much respect both locally and regionally for her pioneering efforts in establishing the county-wide visiting nurse service, instituted the city service, shaping it to include health education and home nursing.³ This program served as a model for others in the Midwest.

The Merrill City Band, which has given Wednesday night concerts in the park for over fifty years, met and practiced in the Council Chambers from 1915 to 1977. They gave their first concerts from the now-demolished gazebo on the east lawn of the City Hall.

In addition to these and other activities associated with city government, the building housed the police station and city jail, the first Boy Scout and Girl Scout council offices, the World War I and II Services agencies, the Gold Star Mothers, the Red Cross, the Merrill Benevolent Society, the Golder-Agers Drop-In Center, the Humane Society, the City Water Utility, the Merrill Youth Council,

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	6
---	---

2	8	8	6	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

5	0	0	6	3	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lot lines of the city hall.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Katherine E. Hundt, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE

January 4, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

816 State Street

TELEPHONE

608/262-2970

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Richard K. Murray

TITLE Director

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE

2/1/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

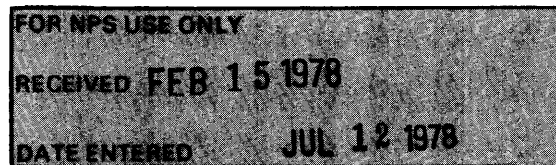
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Katherine E. Hundt
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 ATTEST: *Katherine E. Hundt*
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE *2/1/78*
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 DATE *6-29-78*

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**



CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

the Chamber of Commerce, and many other social and humanitarian agencies throughout the years.

Activities in the City Hall have helped to shape the lives of many citizens in Merrill. Among the more notable were William P. Evjue, publisher of the Madison Capital Times, who began his career as a cub reporter covering Common Council and police activities in the City Hall. Clifford ("Tiny") Krueger, State Senator, began his political career as the Fifth Ward alderman. Hans von Kaltenborn (1878-1965), nationally-known journalist and broadcaster, lived across the street from the City Hall and visited the T. B. Scott Library frequently as a youth.⁴ Later he spent many hours in the City Hall as city editor of the Lincoln County Advocate.

Now vacant, the City Hall faces an uncertain future. Although the building is still a symbol of civic pride to the people of Merrill, financial exigency prohibits the city from providing more than minimum maintenance. It is hoped that the benefits of National Register designation may encourage a private owner to acquire and restore the structure.

-
1. Minutes of the Merrill city council meetings, 1887-1889; Lincoln County Advocate, July 28, 1888, and November 17, 1888.
 2. Minutes of the Merrill city council meeting, July 9, 1888.
 3. Signe S. Cooper, Wisconsin Nursing Pioneers, p. 17.
 4. Kaltenborn's home was demolished five years ago to make way for a parking lot. His appreciation for the library was made evident by two large donations to the library fund and by a letter written to the library, stating, "I owe to your library so many hours of pleasure and profit..." (June 12, 1930).

