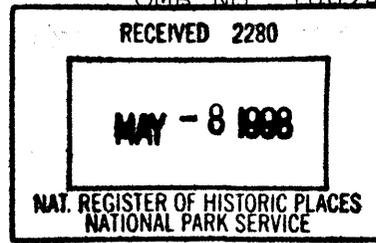


United States Department of Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



RESULTS

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 Places 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, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name FREEWILL BAPTIST CHURCH

other names/site number Prospect Aid Meeting House; Muskego Meeting House

2. Location

street & number 19750 West National Avenue n/a not for publication

city or town New Berlin n/a vicinity

state Wisconsin code WI county Waukesha code 133 zip code 53146

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide x locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official/Title
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer-WI

4/27/98
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State of Federal agency and bureau

Freewill Baptist Church
Name of Property

Waukesha, Wisconsin
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

- 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 Register.
 - other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Dex Boland Date of Action 6/27/98

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (check many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include listed resources within as the count)	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-state	<input type="checkbox"/> site		sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		objects
		<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
			Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION-Religious Structure
SOCIAL-Meeting Hall

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL-Meeting Hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
Greek Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)
foundation stone
walls weatherboard
roof shingle
other

Narrative Description

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

Freewill Baptist Church
Name of Property

Waukesha, Wisconsin
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.)

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 of age achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL HISTORY

ARCHITECTURE

RELIGION

Period of Significance

1859-1946

Significant Dates

1859*, 1925

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Church, Quincy W.*

*HABS/HER Documentation,
WIS-12, 1936, 1937

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Freewill Baptist Church
Name of Property

Waukesha, WI
County and State

Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Prospect Hill Restoration Foundation/Kenneth Weston
street & number 5470 So. Overlook Drive telephone (414) 679 2862
city or town New Berlin state WI zip code 53146

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 a 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 hours 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 to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
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Section 7 Page 1 Freewill Baptist Church
New Berlin, Waukesha County, WI

INTRODUCTION

The Freewill Baptist Church is a striking example of the Greek Revival style. Although modest in size, containing a single room beyond the choir loft and entry hall, it displays an elegant finish and proportion, particularly in its finely detailed mouldings and the unusual sunburst design in its pediment. Built in 1859, the church has been a landmark building throughout its 138-year history, and was documented in 1936-37 by the Historic American Building Survey (HABS). In 1985 it was the victim of an arsonist; the roof, belfry and much of the interior were lost. However, the exterior has been carefully restored according to the HABS documentation and the building today presents its historic appearance. The church and its small privy occupy a lot in the hamlet of Prospect Hill, now part of the City of New Berlin, in Waukesha County. It faces southeast, and is oriented to the old Milwaukee to Mukwanago Road, which passes close to its front facade.

DESCRIPTION

The church was designed and built by Quincy W. Church, a member of the congregation.¹ It is a frame, rectangular building, covered in plain, white-painted weatherboard, measuring 46'8" long and 32'8" wide.² The gable front rises approximately 25'; the steeple adds an additional 15'. There is a low, poured concrete stoop, of undetermined date, across the front of the building.

The building retains its historic appearance. With the exception of replacement windows, most of the building below the cornice is original. The existing siding was repaired and reused where possible. The trim around the windows and doors was retained. Three of the four corner pilasters survived the fire and are extant. The current windows are based on the nine-over-nine sashes noted on the HABS drawings and not the four-over-four windows present at the time of the fire. The four-over-four sashes were present in 1936 when

¹ Nolan, Libbie, "Wisconsin's First Freewill Baptists," Landmark, Spring 1984 p.6 and interview with Libbie Nolan, 6/21/96.

² HABS drawings are attached. Building measurements are all from the HABS documentation. The accompanying notes, by Alexander Carl Guth, District Officer, and dated 2/8/37, characterize the church as an "excellent rendering of typical Colonial work..." in the "true spirit of the style."

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Section 7 Page 2 Freewill Baptist Church
New Berlin, Waukesha County, WI

the HABS team documented the church. However, the drawings note: Windows shown on elevations conform to measurements taken of original windows, which were recently removed and stored at a neighborhood farmhouse. The upper portion of the building, including much of the cornice, was rebuilt following the measured drawings. The chimneys indicated on the HABS drawings were omitted from the restoration.

The carefully composed gabled front elevation presents a centered entrance with panelled double doors, each 3' by 8', framed by pilasters with capitals and an entablature with overhanging cornice, wide, plain frieze and simple architrave. The door is flanked by a single window on either side and panelled corner posts (pilasters) with capitals. The windows are double-hung, with 9 panes in each sash. The window surrounds are ornamented with a shouldered architrave trim extending down each side approximately one third of the window length. The simple entablature below the pediment has a deep cornice, and plain frieze and architrave. It continues around the side walls to the rear wall, where it ends in the "gable returns" typical of the Greek Revival style. The sunburst pattern, consisting of weatherboards radiating from a central disc, is emphasized by a wide frieze, framed with mouldings. The eaves and rake are decorated with mouldings. The belfry is set back from the gable peak approximately 1'. It is square, with a pyramidal roof, louvered panels on four sides framed by small pilasters with capitals and an entablature matching those below but smaller in scale.

While much plainer, the east and west walls also display a careful symmetry and elegant finish, with three symmetrically placed windows, identical in size and ornamentation to the two front windows. At the rear corners are pilasters identical to those at the front of the building. There is a plain wooden water table. As the lot slopes to the rear, the fieldstone foundation is seen on the side elevations and at the rear. (The building has no basement and there are no openings in the foundation.) Two chimneys, which the HABS documentation shows rising through the roof on the side walls, just forward of the center window, have been omitted in the restoration. (These chimneys were paid for by the Ladies Aid, founded in 1886. A picture, property of Libbie Nolan, shows the church with one chimney, centered in the rear wall.) The rear wall has no openings. The roof is covered in asphalt shingles.

Behind the church, down the hill and nearly buried in the dense foliage of the copse at the rear of the lot is a small shed-roofed privy. The privy is frame, with white clapboards, a vertical board door and a small window in its front wall. The church building lacks running water or toilets, so this is the only sanitary facility on the property. It is in good condition.

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New Berlin, Waukesha County, WI

According to Libbie Nolan, there were once sheds, now gone, for the horses and buggies of parishioners, in the northeast corner of the property.

INTERIOR

Church records, preserved in the library of the Waukesha Historical Society, indicate that the anticipated cost of the church was \$1200. An extra \$300 was provided by Rev. Cheney, and Deacon Hiram Hale, a miller. Hale was so determined to have a choir loft that he paid for it himself. The loft, over the front entrance, occupies the entire width of the building. It was originally reached by narrow, enclosed, curved staircases at each front corner of the building. Space under the stairs was enclosed to provide closets which opened into the entry hall. The east staircase was later removed to provide a pantry, with access from the entry hall; the west stairs and closet are intact. Two doors, spaced symmetrically at a 17' interval, open into the entry hall from the sanctuary. The doors giving access to the stairs, closets and sanctuary are all panelled, with ceramic handles. The depth of the choir loft and the entry hall below it is 9'. Seen from the sanctuary, the choir loft presents a handsome panelled balustrade.

The interior of the church was finished in lath and plaster. This has been almost entirely destroyed by the arson fire and subsequent ill-advised clearing of the debris, leaving the original frame construction of the sanctuary exposed. Before the fire, the original pews had been removed. The lectern was spared destruction, although badly singed. The interior of the church remains to be restored. The floor and the choir loft are intact; parts of the wall separating the entry hall from the sanctuary, and the front and side walls of the entry hall, which are wainscotted, remain.

The bell, acquired through the patient effort of the Ladies Aid³ survived and has been hung in the restored belfry.

SETTING

The original church lot was a quadrangle, 246 feet deep on its longest (west) side. West National Ave., (also designated County Hwy ES) running southwest, forms its southern border and the church building is oriented to the road, facing southeast. The modern right-of-way has taken 33 feet from the

³ Nolan, Libbie, "A Burned Building, Its Bible and Bell,"
Landmark Spring-Summer, 1985

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Section 7 Page 4 Freewill Baptist Church
New Berlin, Waukesha County, WI

original lot, (see attached plat of survey) leaving the building only 4 feet from the right-of-way at its nearest point. At the rear of the lot Barton Road subtracts another 25' from the original lot, leaving its dimensions at 179' on the west, 81.5' on the east and 117.5' from east to west. Frontage on National Ave. is 149'. Behind the church the lot falls off steeply to the north, ending in a wooded copse. The side yards are grassy, with small shrubs. Against the west wall of the building is an apple tree, a "volunteer" variety descended from the antique apple orchard adjoining the church property on the west.⁴ The apples proved to be saleable, and the variety is christened "Church Apple" by Dr. Kenneth Weston, owner of the orchard.

The church stands near the summit of Prospect Hill, at 600 feet above lake level the highest point between the hamlet and Lake Michigan, some 15 miles to the east. Although still rural and ex-urban in character, the area is part of the city of New Berlin. (As late as 1907, it was one of only three settled hamlets in the old New Berlin township. At that time, it had a population of 200.⁵) Near and east of the church is a crossroads, now a busy intersection with several businesses and a stop light, where early routes running north to Waukesha, south to Racine, east to Milwaukee and west to Mukwanago and Beloit intersect. A roadhouse occupies the former site of the hamlet's general store and post office, across National Ave. from the church. Slightly to the west is the Spengler-Winton house. The Wintons were prominent in the early history of the church. The house has been preserved along with several historic buildings that have been moved to that site, to form the New Berlin Historical Park. Recently the 1863 schoolhouse which once stood east of the church was moved to the historical park. Surrounding the hamlet, on the slopes of Prospect Hill, is a mixture of orchards, nurseries and rapidly expanding suburban development.

⁴ The orchard, Weston's Antique Apples (Orchard) and its buildings have been listed in the Register. The story of the "church apples" is recounted in Landmark (journal of the Waukesha County Historical Society) Autumn, 1990.

⁵ Memoirs of Waukesha County, Madison, Western Historical Society, 1907, p. 261 and History of Waukesha County, Chicago, Western Historical Society, 1880 p. 319.

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Section 8 Page 1 Freewill Baptist Church
New Berlin, Waukesha County, WI

INTRODUCTION

The Freewill Baptist Church, also called the Prospect Aid Meeting House, and the Muskego Meeting House, in New Berlin, Wisconsin, is locally significant under Criterion C as a fine example of the Greek Revival style in a small church building, and under Criterion A, because throughout the period of significance it was the focal point of social life in the hamlet of Prospect Hill, one of the earliest settlements in New Berlin township. It is also significant to religious history for its association with Rufus Cheney, pioneering minister of the Freewill Baptist sect in the middle west, and as the only surviving site associated with this sect in the state. The New Berlin Freewill Baptist congregation was the first in Wisconsin, being founded July 11, 1840.¹ The period of significance of the building extends from its construction in 1858-59 to 1946, (50 years prior to this nomination) although its role as a focus of community activity has continued uninterrupted to the present. The building was listed in 1956 by the Waukesha Historical Society as an historic building. It was the first site designated a landmark by the New Berlin Landmarks Commission, in 1989. In 1985 the church was the victim of an arson fire, but has since been restored using HABS documentation originally prepared in 1936-37. The church is owned by the Prospect Hill Restoration Foundation, Inc.

SIGNIFICANCE UNDER CRITERION C

Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, Vol. II, "Architecture," 2-3 says of the Greek Revival style: "...symmetrical, formal and orderly...eaves...are typically detailed as classic cornices, and prominent gables are framed with heavy moldings...The Greek Revival was the first national style to have a wide-ranging impact on Wisconsin building...Architectural pattern books, such as those written by Asher Benjamin, Edward Shaw and Minard Lafever, played a crucial role in the dissemination of the style."

HABS documentation characterizes the style of the church as "an

¹ Private communication, Libbie Nolan, September, 1996.

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New Berlin, Waukesha County, WI

excellent rendering of the typical Colonial work. The mouldings, entrance-way, cornices, and cupola are all carried out consistently in the true spirit of the style." ² Roth ³, writing on the influence of Greek models upon Federalist design in New England, and the transfer of this development in high style architecture to the vernacular, states: "(Asher) Benjamin ...was beginning to exert an enormous influence on rural architecture in New England through the publication of his own books patterned after those of Nicholson...Such quality of design--well studied, well proportioned, well detailed, but rather conservative--appeared throughout the seven books by Benjamin, beginning in 1797...Variations on the traditional meetinghouse design presented in (his) The Country Builder's Assistant appeared throughout New England." Roth goes on to mention several Congregational churches, including one in Tallmadge, Ohio, showing "a refined New England Federalist style as the style of the newly opened West..."

It is not surprising that the New England style, and specifically the characteristics of New England Congregational Churches, should appear undiluted in frontier Wisconsin. The settlers to Prospect Hill came, many of them directly, from the Congregationalist churches of New England. The well-known Wisconsin suffrage leader and clubwoman, Theodora Winton Youmans, grew up in the Prospect Hill church; she was the daughter of T.S. Winton, who kept the grocery across the road. In a paper read to the Waukesha Historical Society in 1925 ⁴ she states that the church was built up by "New Yorkers and New Englanders." "No doubt a standard plan of architecture was adopted," she says, "since churches of this type are common, both in this vicinity and elsewhere." Rufus Cheney, the founder of the Prospect Hill congregation, was born at Antrim, New Hampshire in 1780, the same year that Benjamin Randall

² By Alexander Carl Guth, District Officer, initialled and dated February, 1937.

³ Roth, Leland M., A Concise History of American Architecture, New York, Harper and Rowe, 1979, p. 64-66

⁴ Preserved in the library of the Society, Waukesha, WI

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New Berlin, Waukesha County, WI

founded the Freewill Baptist Church. "By the time he (Randall) founded the Freewill Baptist Church in New Durham, New Hampshire, in 1780, his theology had passed through four major changes: unconverted piety, Congregational, Calvinistic Baptist, and Freewill Baptist."⁵ Thus, while architecturally the building reflects its origin in 18th century New England church design as interpreted by Asher Benjamin, its style expresses a contemporaneous religious parallel, i.e. the origin of the Freewill Baptists in the New England Congregationalist churches.

The designer and builder of the church was Quincy W. Church.⁶ His father, Daniel Church, was the first storekeeper on Prospect Hill.⁷ They are listed among the earliest members of the congregation.

The Freewill Baptist Church is among the buildings described by Richard W.E. Perrin in Historic Wisconsin Buildings; a survey in pioneer architecture, 1830-1870,⁸ Also described in the book are the nearby Scotch Covenanter meeting house in the Town of Vernon, and the First Baptist church in the village of Merton, both in Greek Revival style. Landmark, the publication of the Waukesha County Historical Society, has provided descriptions of many of the county's early churches. "Waukesha's Early Churches"⁹ states that the Congregationalists were the first group to organize, in 1838. Their wood frame meeting house, built

⁵ Baxter, Norman Allen, History of the Freewill Baptists. A Study in New England Separatism, Rochester, NY, American Baptist Historical Society, 1957 p. 29

⁶ Youmans, Theodora W. "A Pioneer Church at Prospect," Wisconsin Magazine of History, 9:328, 1926. HABS also records Church as the builder.

⁷ Winton, Mary Vanderpool, "Waukesha County's Early Country Stores Recalled," Waukesha Freeman, June 28, 1938.

⁸ Milwaukee Public Museum, 1962, 1975, p.52

⁹ Keller, Fred H., Landmark, Winter, 1984

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New Berlin, Waukesha County, WI

in 1840, is no longer extant. A Baptist church built in Waukesha in 1844 survived until 1970; described in 1969 by Willard S. Griswold¹⁰, it was Greek Revival in style, with pediment, pilastered columns, and architrave. It once had a cupola, and was documented by HABS. Three churches that are contemporary with the Prospect Hill church survive. A United Presbyterian church, to the west on National Avenue from Prospect Hill, has several modern additions, including a front entry porch. Its pediment contains a sunburst design similar to that of the Prospect Hill church. Nearby is the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Vernon (Covenanter.) It was organized by Scottish settlers in 1848, the building dates from 1854.¹¹ Closed in 1920, it is in an excellent state of preservation, both interior and exterior. There are extensive grounds and cemetery; the buggy sheds, a common feature of early churches that is almost never preserved, are intact. The building itself is very plain, and lacks the elegant proportions and detailing that distinguish the Prospect Hill church. The First Baptist Church at Merton was built in 1845. It is also documented by HABS. It is somewhat larger than the Freewill Baptist church at Prospect Hill, and also features Greek Revival detailing. In 1962 it was given a two-story entry porch, hiding most of its front facade. Thus, the Freewill Baptist Church is the best surviving example of early Federal/Greek Revival church architecture in Waukesha County.

SIGNIFICANCE UNDER CRITERION A

At Prospect Hill, the Yankee settlers of the 1840s formed a community based on the tenets of the Freewill Baptist sect. The group dominated the social, religious and intellectual life of the thriving rural hamlet, a center of abolitionist sentiment, of aid to soldiers in the Civil War, and later, the temperance movement. In 1926 the church became a meeting hall and social center owned and managed by the Prospect Aid Society and is of interest for its association with a strong and independent women's organization which was able to make a meaningful

¹⁰ "Old Waukesha Buildings," Landmark, Spring-Summer, 1969.

¹¹ Nolan, Libbie, "Lost Denomination". Landmark April, 1958.

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Section 8 Page 5 Freewill Baptist Church
New Berlin, Waukesha County, WI

role for itself and the building in changing economic and social conditions. Well-known Wisconsin clubwoman Theodora Winton Youmans was raised in the Freewill Baptist congregation at Prospect; her life is an expression of the strong role of women's organizations in the early 20th century.¹²

The Freewill Baptist sect from its beginnings in New Hampshire intended to transform the lives of its adherents, and to enlist them in a community which would regulate the behavior of its members. The founder, Benjamin Randall, was outraged that, "It was not enough that the people lived godless lives; the (Congregationalist) church ignored their sin and failed to employ discipline..." He "stood before the homes of his friends and prayed for their salvation."¹³

In 1840, on Prospect Hill, Rufus Cheney and his wife, Ruth, invited two other couples, Aretas and Lydia Whitcomb and Daniel and Caty Gilbert, to found a new Freewill Baptist Church.¹⁴ Cheney arrived in Wisconsin in 1836, Daniel Gilbert, also from New Hampshire, came in 1839. In 1841

¹² Obituary, Waukesha Freeman August 18, 1932. She is identified as a widely known suffrage worker and club woman, appointed by Governor Robert M. LaFollette to the Board of Normal School Regents, President of the State Federation of Women's Clubs, 1900-1902, press chairman of the Wisconsin Women's Suffrage Association during the campaign of 1912, led the Wisconsin campaign to victory in 1919, was active in the national campaign, ran for State Senate in 1924, and was an officer in the Republican Women of Wisconsin and the League of Women Voters. She was the daughter of T.S. Winton, who bought the Prospect Hill store from Daniel Church in 1866.

¹³ Davidson, William Franklin, An Early History of the Free Will Baptists: The Origin of Free Will Baptists in America, a Continuing Witness from Infancy to Identity (1727-1830). Nashville, Randall House, 1974 (dissertation, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary) p.29

¹⁴ Youmans, Theodora W. "A Pioneer Church at Prospect," Wisconsin Magazine of History, 9:321-332, 1926.

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five more couples, including sons John Cheney and Harry B. Cheney and their wives, and Rebecca Houck and Almon Holcomb were added to the role. The first baptism took place in 1843. The same year a member was expelled for "unchristian conduct." Membership was "by covenant," which laid down a strict code of behavior. "Any member violating it shall be considered subjects of labour by the Church."¹⁵ In 1845 Rufus Cheney was recognized as official pastor. (He is referred to as "Elder Cheney" by Davenport in 1853.) He never accepted payment. The record shows visits to "delinquent" members in 1845, and in 1846 a dispute over whether members may drink alcohol. Dues were set at 10 cents a year in 1846. The group had no paid minister until 1886, but was visited by ministers who held communion and baptisms and conducted monthly meetings. Weekly prayer meetings were held in the Cheney home.¹⁶ There was a special vocabulary to describe the efforts of the congregation to enforce a code of conduct. Those who were found errant were urged to "take up the walk," and this failing, there might be a vote to "withdraw the hand of fellowship." Not surprisingly, growth was slow, and many meetings were recorded as "a low time," with "but few present." Two of the original six members, the Gilberts, were excluded in 1844. Libbie Nolan concludes from the records that "in the first twenty years (to 1860) 135 members had been received into the church, about half staying as permanent members." In 1843 Cheney began a school in his house for the children of members. A school building was raised in 1844. Immediately there was a dispute over the siting and "doors being opened for random members," i.e., children who were not from member families. "It was a cold time and there appears to be a great deal of hardness in the church," according to the records. (The school was moved to the top of the hill in 1848. A frame public school building, now preserved in the historical park across the road, was built beside the church in 1863.)

¹⁵ Record books preserved in the Waukesha Historical Society library. The first membership list includes 79 names, in columns separating men and women. Of these, 22 had been "excluded."

¹⁶ Nolan, Libbie, "Wisconsin's First Freewill Baptists," Landmark, Spring, 1984.

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Section 8 Page 7 Freewill Baptist Church
New Berlin, Waukesha County, WI

Nonetheless, the congregation did grow. Letters written in 1853 and 1854¹⁷ include a map and list of 9 log houses, 12 frame houses (including the frame houses of "Elder Cheney" and "Deacon Church," and the latter's post office and store), a stone house, the school house, a grist mill, an inn, a blacksmith and various barns, etc. By 1858 the congregation was able to raise \$1200 to build the church. Libbie Nolan lists the features of Prospect Hill in the period 1870-90:¹⁸ in addition to the Freewill Baptist Church, there were two stagecoach inns (and later a resort hotel), four blacksmith shops, a sawmill, a creamery, two general stores, a post office, a race track, a cider mill, a grist and flour mill and a planing mill, a school, two public halls, a nursery, a cobbler shop and a greenhouse. By 1886 the Freewill Baptists were able to hire a full time minister, and build a parsonage.¹⁹ "An Old Time Merchant's Account Book," by Theodora W. Youmans, points to "...a state of society very different from the present. A little hamlet like Prospect Hill was not a suburb of anything then but a real center with localized character and interests."²⁰ The Freewill Baptists were the dominant group in the small community, and their church, located near the crossroads at the the top of the hill, was certainly its landmark building.

Theodora Winton Youmans in her description of the Winton store says: "He (her father) kept a little stock of the common drugs, supplementing and

¹⁷ Written from "Prospect Hill" by J. Davenport, Jr. Courtesy of Anne W. Hayden, Concord MA and Jackie Hermann, New Berlin, WI

¹⁸ "Prospect Hill Home is Historic Site" Waukesha Freeman August 20, 1970.

¹⁹ Landmark, Spring 1984, op.cit.

²⁰ Septmber 20, 1917? Paper for the Waukesha County Historical Society, printed in the Freeman and preserved in the New Berlin Public Library.

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Section 8 Page 8 Freewill Baptist Church
New Berlin, Waukesha County, WI

sometimes supplying the medicine case of Dr. Ingersoll." ²¹ Mary Vanderpool Winton, interviewed by the Freeman June 28, 1938, recalled that the Winton boys, grandsons of Theodore S. Winton, and nephews of Theodora Winton Youmans, often played with the sons of Dr. Ingersoll. The brother of Dr. John Ingersoll, Robert Green Ingersoll was considered the "...foremost orator of the English-speaking world," according to the "Special Ingersoll Issue" published by Landmark, Summer 1990. He was a lawyer, advisor to presidents, a colonel in the Civil War, and the "premier civil libertarian" of his day. (He was also a Freethinker, who stood against the power of organized religion.) Their father was a Congregationalist preacher, an abolitionist who came to Waukesha in 1848. Son Robert attended Carroll College. His brother John attended Rush Medical College. In 1849 John came to the hamlet where Daniel Church had just opened a store. It was Ingersoll who named the place Prospect Hill. He married Theresa Cheney, granddaughter of Rufus Cheney. "He was devoted to his famous brother, Robert, though he himself often went to church...Once when a pastor of the Free Will Baptist church on the Hill attacked Robert from the pulpit one Sabbath morning, Dr. Ingersoll quit attending church until the pastor was replaced."

Members of the congregation also formed a Literary Society and a Singing Society. Daniel Church was, according to Libbie Nolan, great-great granddaughter of Rufus Cheney, the singing master of the Singing Society, which included non-Church members. It continued into the 20th century. The Literary Society was not so long-lived. It included the illustrious Ingersolls, and met in Winton's hall, above the Winton store. It promoted elocution, recitation and dramatics. ²²

Youmans²³ notes that the congregation were "all abolitionists," and that

²¹ "An Old-Time Merchant's Account Book," Waukesha Freeman, September 20, 1917 (?) preserved in the New Berlin public library.

²² Libbie Nolan, interview, June 21, 1996, New Berlin, WI.

²³ Paper read to Waukesha Historical Society, September, 1925 In addition to the record books which were also consulted by Libbie Nolan and the author, Youmans was able to interview the son of Thomas

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there was a Soldiers Aid Society during the Civil War, which sent food to the Union army. Rufus Cheney was "a dyed-in-the-wool abolitionist." The denomination urged its members to "...use their best exertions to secure abolition of slavery" in 1835, and held that they had a right to protect a fugitive slave.²⁴ Libbie Nolan adds²⁵ that "Nancy Faulkner served as secretary of the Soldiers' Aid Society, the congregation and other New Berlinites meeting at the Hill Church. Her records listed money and goods collected for their 'boys in blue' including blankets, potatoes, horseradish, home-knit socks, caps and underwear and home made catsup."

Rufus Cheney also preached against the Demon Rum. A temperance society, Good Templars, was organized and met in 1866 and 1867. Viola Faulkner produced a handwritten newsletter, The Temperance Garland.²⁶

The Ladies Aid Society was formally constituted in 1886.²⁷ By 1916 there were three surviving members of the original group. It was recalled that: "The poor and unfortunate were ministered unto and comforted, the church treasury was increased, the social life of the community was quickened." The group sponsored oyster suppers, held at the Winton hall across the road, which even the priest at the Catholic church advised

Faulkner, longtime clerk of the congregation, who joined in the 1840s.

²⁴ Libbie Nolan, "Of Slavery, Ardent Spirits and Women," Landmark, Summer, 1986.

²⁵ Landmark, Spring 1984, op.cit.

²⁶ "Of Slavery, Ardent Spirits and Women," op.cit.

²⁷ "Free Baptist Church Has Interesting History," The Milwaukee Times, April 27, 1916. In "Of Slavery, Ardent Spirits and Women," op.cit. Libbie Nolan points out that women were admitted as delegates to the Quarterly and Yearly Meetings in 1868, and to the ministry in 1886. The daughter of a pastor at Prospect Hill, Milisin Sowles, became the youngest pastor in the country in 1899.

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Freewill Baptist Church
New Berlin, Waukesha County, WI

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his congregation to attend.²⁸ In 1889 the ladies bought the bell which hangs today in the rebuilt belfry: "How long and patiently did we work and save to get the money with which to buy it." The ladies also made quilts which were donated to an Indian children's home in Council Bluffs, Iowa, to the Deaconess Home, and Associated Charities in Milwaukee, and to the neighborhood poor. In 1916, the Ladies Aid celebrated its 30th birthday with a reunion at the Winton home.²⁹ They had recorded 580 meetings, and had enrolled 53 members. (Current membership was 18.) Besides the quilts, they had made and sold aprons, held fairs, and had raised enough money to contribute to the pastor's salary, repair the church, buy chairs and a Bible, curtains, wallpaper, carpets, a new chimney and to shingle the roof.³⁰ In 1930 the ladies, now reconstituted as the Prospect Aid Society, "newly painted and papered the building" again.³¹ In 1942, the Aid Society celebrated the 80th birthday of Mrs. Mary Vanderpool Winton, a charter member of the Ladies' Aid Society, and sister-in-law of Theodora Winton Youmans. Governor Julius P. Heil sent flowers, remembering that he had worked in the Winton store as a boy.³²

Shortly after the congregation was disbanded in 1925, Theodora Youmans set down the history of the acquisition of the building by the Prospect Aid Society³³: "Meanwhile the church was not receiving accessions in the same degree as it lost membership. Conditions were changing. It became

²⁸ Interview with Libbie Nolan, June 21, 1996

²⁹ "Church Auxiliary Attains Thirtieth Year," Waukesha Freeman, April 20, 1916.

³⁰ Libbie Nolan, "Wisconsin's First Freewill Baptists," Landmark, Spring, 1984.

³¹ Records in the library of the Waukesha County Historical Society.

³² Waukesha Freeman, September 29, 1942.

³³ 1926, op.cit. p 331-32

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more and more difficult to keep up the congregation and maintain a pastor. New Yorkers and New Englanders had built up the church, but the fathers had passed away and most of the sons and daughters had gone elsewhere. Those who came to take their places were of a different religious faith. The Prospect post office had been discontinued when rural free delivery was instituted.³⁴ The hamlet lost its character as a neighborhood center. The church dwindled. A deceased member, Mrs. Jane Killips Harris, had left a bequest of \$1000, the interest of which was to be used in keeping up preaching in the church. But the will was so worded that the administration was in the hands of the Free Will Baptist Association and this organization would pay no expenses except for ministers of its own denomination... The burden became too heavy... But a way was opened by which they could retain the building and have it of use in the community. By arrangement with the Ladies Aid Society, that organization changed its constitution to include any church members, men or women, who might wish to join, changed its name to the Prospect Aid Society, and the church property was legally deeded to this society. The only conditions provided were that it should never be used for dancing, card-playing, or raffling, and that if the Aid Society should cease to exist the property should revert to the American Red Cross Society."

A whole new chapter in the significance of the building to the community began with the converted ownership. Some of the pews were converted to tables, a cookstove was installed and one stairway was converted to a pantry. Dinners, quilting bees and summer Aid meetings were held in the building.³⁵ During the 1930s and '40s ham suppers were held on St. Patrick's Day. (Water for events was hauled in.) These activities raised enough money to keep the church in repair and painted and to support several charities. (The hostess for each meeting had the duty to specify which charities received specified gift donations.) In its

³⁴ The post office closed in 1902, according to Libbie Nolan, interview, op.cit. Church records show that between 1894 and 1917, 72 members were recorded. By 1895 attendance, however, was down to under a dozen. A paid minister was retained, at \$400 a year, until 1922.

³⁵ Interview, op.cit.

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New Berlin, Waukesha County, WI

new incarnation, "...the Cheney's church has been a community home, a voting place, and a temporary place of worship for three other denominations..."³⁶ Eventually, the Aid Society, with the agreement of the Red Cross, gave up the restrictions in the title, and obtained unrestricted ownership of the building. At the time of the arson fire, in 1985, the 23 members of the Aid Society held monthly card parties, with the proceeds going to local food pantries, other charities, and building maintenance.³⁷

FREEWILL BAPTISTS IN WISCONSIN

The Freewill Baptist denomination in New England was founded in 1780 by Benjamin Randall. It adopted the same name as a group in North Carolina, which had existed since 1727. Also called General Baptists, the North Carolina sect organized a Yearly Meeting by 1729, but found it difficult to maintain organization beyond the local level. By 1829 it claimed 33 ministers and 26 churches, all in North Carolina. The northern group became the larger of the two, uniting with the Northern Baptists in the early 20th century.³⁸ "The denomination's first century of progress witnessed the development of a strict code of conduct and a conservative platform of theology. These early patterns have not changed in the movements' more than 200 years of existence. The denomination still pleads for a consecrated, separated membership, and it has never

³⁶ Libbie Nolan "History Preserved on the Hill," Muskego Sun, April 12, 1984. Congregations included the West Allis Presbyterians and Muskego Congregationalists. The most active, meeting in the building during the 1930s, were the Church of the Nazarenes, who held two Sunday services, a Sunday school, and a spring revival. They paid only for utilities. Eventually the Aid Society found that there was too much wear and tear on the building, and no longer let it out to other groups.

³⁷ Milwaukee Journal, April 11, 1985

³⁸ Davidson, William Franklin, An Early History of the Freewill Baptists, p.24.

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feared the terms 'conservative' and 'fundamental.'" ³⁹

Cultural Resource Management Vol. III, "Religion," 2-1 states: "The modern Baptist church is traceable to the early seventeenth century when a separatist movement formed within Massachusetts' Puritanism... By the last decades of the nineteenth century, Baptists were the most numerous evangelistic group in America, although organized in several separately functioning 'conventions.'" Section 2-8 "Minor Baptist Sects" cites Rufus Cheney as the founder of the state's first Free Will Baptist organization, in New Berlin in 1840, followed by congregations in Walworth County and in Janesville in 1841. The Yearly Meeting was organized in 1845, and soon had 18 churches and 41 members. ⁴⁰ The sect peaked in 1871 with 74 churches and 3,085 members.

Rufus Cheney's great-great-granddaughter, Libbie Nolan, has become the principal historian of the church and the Prospect Hill settlement. Among her numerous articles, "Wisconsin's First Freewill Baptists" and "Of Slavery, Ardent Spirits and Women" ⁴¹ give the fullest account of Rev. Cheney. He was ordained in 1810. He had already established congregations in New York and Ohio before arriving, at age 57, in New Berlin in 1837, one year after the first settlers. He claimed several hundred acres of land at Prospect Hill. In addition to the Prospect Hill congregation, he also founded the Honey Creek and Pike's Grove congregations the following year, 1841. "He was the father of the Honey Creek Quarterly Meeting and with others, built the Wisconsin Yearly

³⁹ Ibid. p. 218

⁴⁰ Selah Hibbard Barrett, Memoirs of Eminent Preachers in the Freewill Baptist Church, Rutland, OH, 1874, states on p. 166 that in June, 1845 the Wisconsin branch "received dismissal, in order to form the Wisconsin Yearly Meeting. This consisted of what is now known as the Honey Creek Quarterly Meeting. Mr. Cary received an appointment from the Home Mission Board in 1843, to act as missionary for Illinois and Wisconsin,...to the great comfort and edification of the settlers."

⁴¹ Landmark, Spring 1984, and Summer, 1986, respectively.

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Meeting." Rufus Cheney died in 1869, at the age of 89. The 1880 History of Waukesha County⁴² contains biographical entries for two of Rufus Cheney's ten children. John Cheney was born in Vermont in 1807, his brother Harry in New York state in 1815. Both sons acquired land at Prospect Hill from their father, in 1839 and 1840, respectively. Harry cleared land and lived at Prospect for 16 years, moved on and eventually returned, but had no living children. John had four children, all born before 1840. His daughter Theresa married Dr. John Ingersoll.

CONCLUSION

The Freewill Baptist Church is an exception to Criteria Consideration A. Although constructed as a religious building, it is eligible for listing for both architectural significance and for historic and cultural significance related to the social function of the church as a local meeting place and for its role in the history of religion.

Following its damage by arson in 1985, the church was restored following the HABS documentation of 1936-37. In the restoration, most of the original fabric below the cornice was retained. The building retains the dignity of its original design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and presents its original appearance, as documented by HABS and by photographs taken before the fire, with the exception of two interior chimneys that were located on the side walls. The interior has not been restored. However, the choir loft and stair, and the wainscotted entry hall are substantially intact. The interior of the building was remodelled soon after 1926 (during the period of significance), when it became a meeting hall. The intent of the owner, the Prospect Hill Restoration Foundation, is to fully restore the building to its appearance just before the fire.

THREATS TO PRESERVATION

The church is situated close to the right-of-way of County Highway ES, also called National Avenue. Although it has been replaced as the main route leading southwest from Milwaukee, National Avenue is busy with local traffic.

⁴² Chicago, Western Historical Society, 1880

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After the 1985 fire, the City of New Berlin Highway and Transportation Committee and the Plan Commission placed conditions on their approval of plans to repair the church. The Highway committee wanted an agreement that the building would be abandoned or moved if the road was widened, while the Plan Commission wanted it moved before restoration could begin. Following creation of the city's Landmark Commission in 1988, and its designation of the building, the City Council allowed the restoration to proceed on the original foundation. The Prospect Hill Restoration Foundation, made up of Prospect Aid members, New Berlin Jaycees, and other residents, acquired title to the building and set about raising the estimated \$120,000 needed to restore it. Restoration began in 1989. ⁴³

⁴³ Information from a clipping file of articles from the New Berlin Citizen (6/30/88, 11/2/89) and the Waukesha Freeman (6/20/85, 7/16/85, 8/2/85,) at the New Berlin Public Library and interview with Libbie Nolan, June 21, 1996.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

"In the Northwest 1/4 of Section 32, Town of New Berlin, commencing at a stake on the section line at the Northwest corner of the school house lot, running west one chain and 78 links, thence south parallel with the school house lot three chains, 52 1/2 links, thence Northeasterly on the center line of the Mukwonago Road two chains and 26 links, thence north two chains and 16 links to the place of beginning."

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary description is taken from the 1858 indenture transferring the church lot from Nelson Lindsay and wife to the Trustees of the First Freewill Baptist Church of New Berlin. It corresponds to a survey map by a registered land surveyor, dated 1987 and attached to this nomination. It describes the lot historically associated with the building. (See 1987 survey map.) The Mukwanago Road is today known as West National Ave. The "Place of beginning" in the 1858 document is shown on the surveyor's map as being on the north section line, 476.60 feet from the Northeast corner of the Northwest 1/4 of Section 32.

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Section _____ Photos _____ Page 1 Freewill Baptist Church
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Photo #1 of 6 FREEWILL BAPTIST CHURCH
New Berlin, Waukesha County, Wisconsin
Photo by Jane Eiseley, June 21, 1996
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin
View from southeast, showing privy

Photo # 2 of 6 FREEWILL BAPTIST CHURCH
New Berlin, Waukesha County, Wisconsin
Photo by Jane Eiseley, June 21, 1996
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin
View from northwest, showing "Church Apple" tree

Photo # 3 of 6 FREEWILL BAPTIST CHURCH
New Berlin, Waukesha County, Wisconsin
Photo by Jane Eiseley, June 21, 1996
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin
View from southwest

Photo # 4 of 6 FREEWILL BAPTIST CHURCH
New Berlin, Waukesha County, Wisconsin
Photo by Jane Eiseley, June 21, 1996
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Detail of exterior ornamentation

Photo # 5 of 6 FREEWILL BAPTIST CHURCH
New Berlin, Waukesha County, Wisconsin
Photo by Jane Eiseley, June 21, 1996
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Interior, stair to choir loft

Photo # 6 of 6 FREEWILL BAPTIST CHURCH
New Berlin, Waukesha County, Wisconsin
Photo by Jane Eiseley, June 21, 1996
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Interior, choir loft and door from sanctuary to entry hall

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New Berlin, Waukesha County, Wisconsin
HABS drawings, WIS-12 1936

Exhibit # 2 of 5 FREEWILL BAPTIST CHURCH
New Berlin, Waukesha County, Wisconsin
HABS notes, WIS-12, 1937

Exhibit # 3 of 5 FREEWILL BAPTIST CHURCH
New Berlin, Waukesha County, Wisconsin
Floor plan sketch (proposed wiring plan)
1992

Exhibit # 4 of 5 FREEWILL BAPTIST CHURCH
New Berlin, Waukesha County, Wisconsin
Photo taken before the fire

Exhibit # 5 of 5 FREEWILL BAPTIST CHURCH
New Berlin, Waukesha County, Wisconsin
1987 survey map

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Section OWNER Page 1

Freewill Baptist Church, Prospect Hill,
New Berlin, Waukesha County, WI

The owner of the Freewill Baptist Church is the Prospect Hill
Restoration Foundation, Inc.

Contact: Kenneth Weston
5470 South Overlook Drive
New Berlin, WI 53146

414-679-1784

SUBURBAN SURVEYS, INC.

PLAT OF SURVEY



17620 W. National Ave.
New Berlin, Wisconsin 53151
414-784-7971

FOR: PROSPECT HILL RESTORATION FOUNDATION



SCALE 1" = 30'

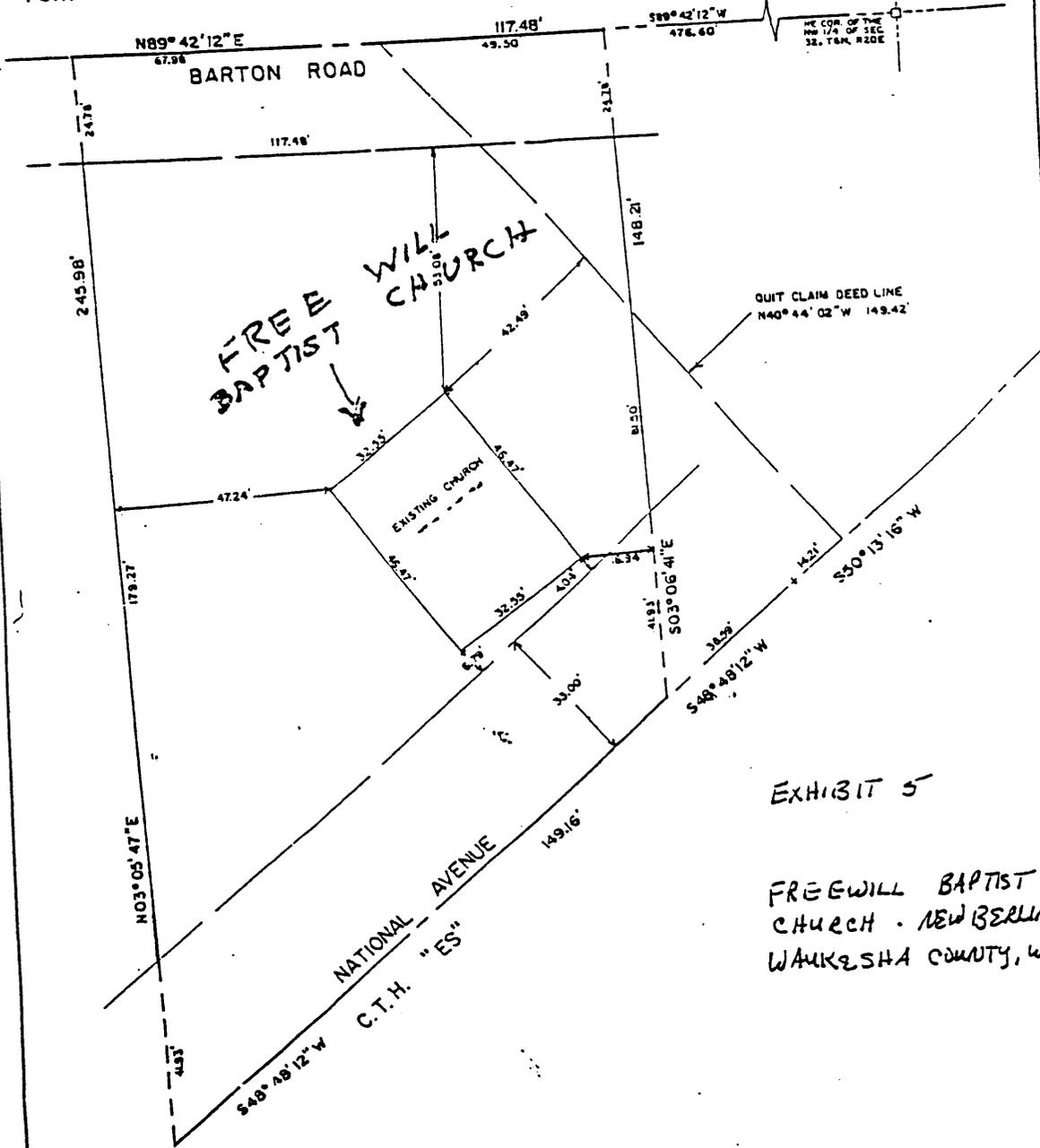


EXHIBIT 5

FREEWILL BAPTIST
CHURCH - NEW BERLIN
WAUKESHA COUNTY, WI

CERTIFICATION
 "I HAVE SURVEYED THE ABOVE DESCRIBED PROPERTY, AND THE ABOVE MAP IS A TRUE REPRESENTATION THEREOF AND SHOWS THE SIZE AND LOCATION OF THE PROPERTY, ITS EXTERIOR BOUNDARIES, THE LOCATION AND DIMENSIONS OF ALL STRUCTURES THEREON, FENCES, APPARENT EASEMENTS AND ROADWAYS AND VISIBLE ENCROACHMENTS, IF ANY. THIS SURVEY IS MADE FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF THE PRESENT OWNERS OF THE PROPERTY AND ALSO THOSE WHO PURCHASE, MORTGAGE, OR GUARANTEE THE TITLE THEREOF, WITHIN ONE (1) YEAR FROM DATE HEREOF; AND AS TO THEM I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT SAID SURVEY AND THE ABOVE MAP WERE MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH ACCEPTABLE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND THAT THE INFORMATION CONTAINED THEREON IS, TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, INFORMATION AND BELIEF A TRUE AND ACCURATE REPRESENTATION THEREOF."

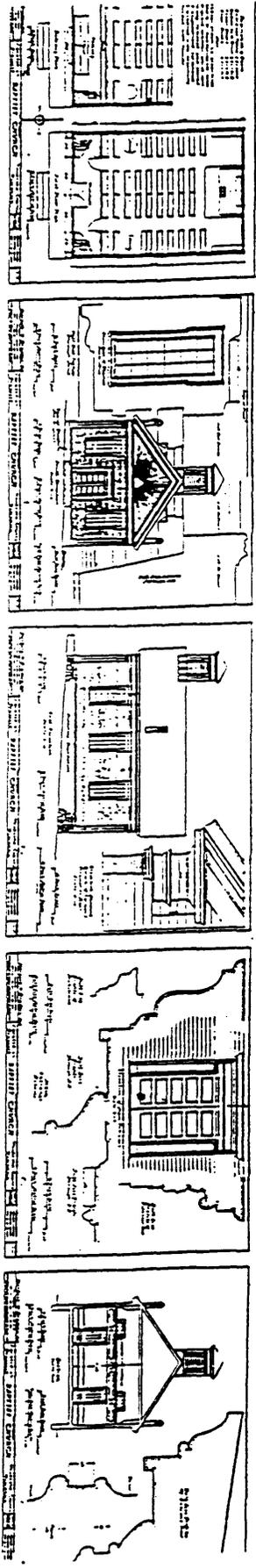
DATED THIS 29th DAY OF MAY, 19 87
 REGISTERED LAND SURVEYOR



Prospect WAUKESHA COUNTY (67)

FREEDWILL BAPTIST
CHURCH - NEWBERLIN
WAUKESHA COUNTY, WIS.

BAPTIST CHURCH 1859; Wis. 15. Clapboard; single tier of windows; sunburst in pediment; square cupola; plaster treatment. Quincy W. Church, builder. (WIS-12: 5 sheets, 1936; 3 ext. photos, 1936; 2 data pages, 1937.)



Masterly illustration
(See also Baptist Church)
Fig. 12
Page 1

Fig. 212
67-100

BAPTIST CHURCH
Village of Prospect, Waushara County, Wisconsin

Baptist Ladies Aid Society of Prospect (owner)

Erected in 1859

Architect & Builder - Quincy W. Church

The building is in excellent state of preservation. It sits on its original foundation and remains intact today as built. It is a one story structure with a gallery.

The foundation walls are of field stone and the rest of the entire structure including the roof is of wood. The chimney is of brick.

The regular church services in this building have been discontinued because of the declining population of the locality. The building is now used for general community purposes. It is owned and controlled by the Ladies Aid Society of Prospect.

The church building is an excellent rendering of the typical Colonial work. The moldings, entrance-way, cornices, and cupola are all carried out consistently in the true spirit of the style. It is recalled that one named H.F. Hulse a member of the original building committee, was so anxious to have a gallery that he paid for it himself. An article in the Wisconsin Magazine of History states that "the doubt a standard plan of architecture was adopted since churches of this type are common both in the vicinity and elsewhere - a dignified churchly type." But the writer would like to disagree on this point because he has searched far and wide for similar churches and has found but a very few and these

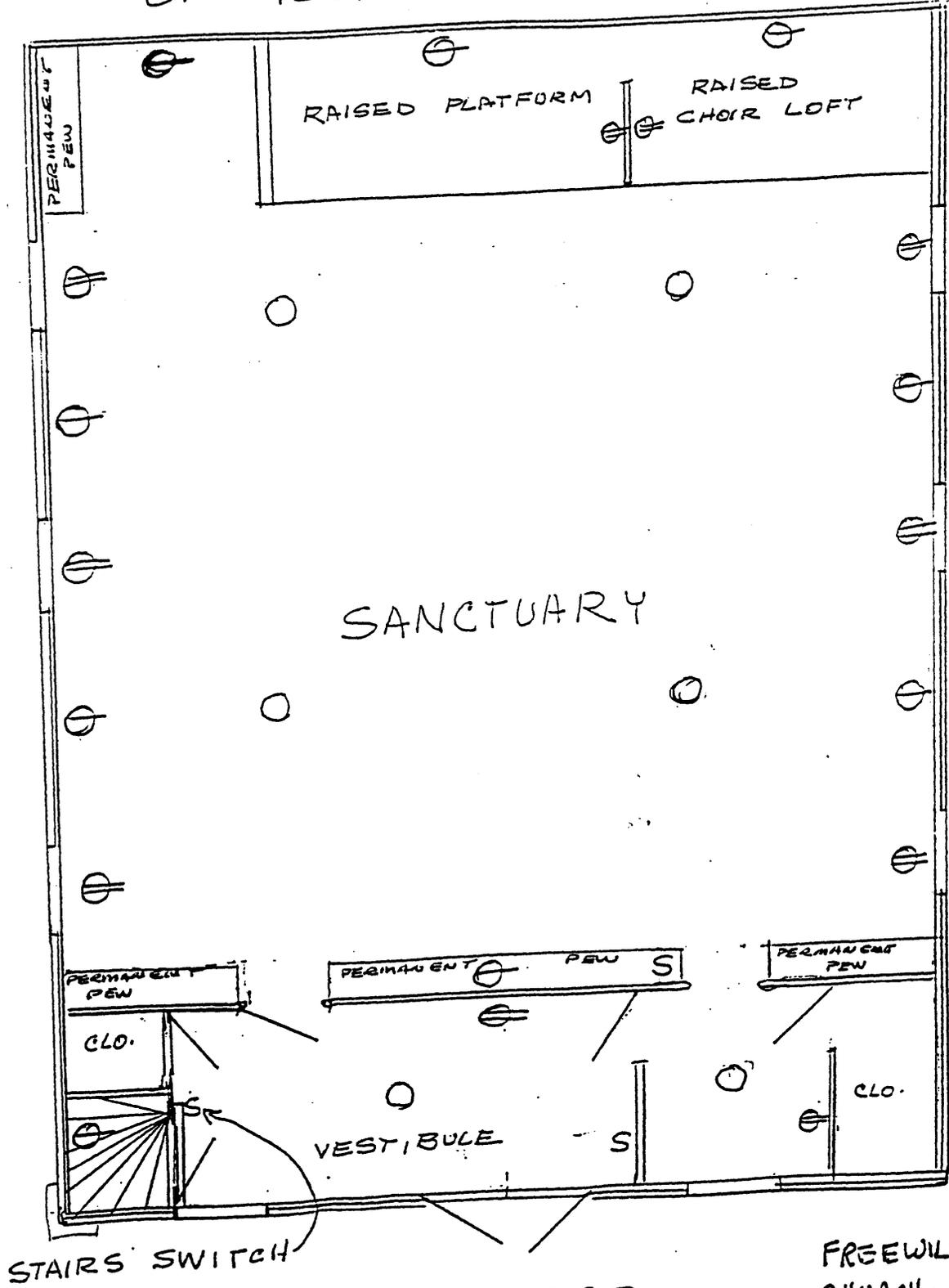
are not nearly as interesting as this church at Prospect. The inhabitants far and wide are especially proud of the "ringing new treatment" in the pediment. This large and unusual treatment is typical of what is more generously known as the ornament which occurs frequently over doorways in the eastern states.

The foregoing information was obtained from old time inhabitants in Prospect as well as from an article appearing in the March 1936 issue of the Wisconsin Magazine of History.

Alexander Carl Galt
District Officer

SUGGESTED ELECTRICAL WIRING FOR FIRST FREEWILL BAPTIST CHURCH OF NEW BERLIN

EXHIBIT 3



MAIN FLOOR

FREEWILL BAPTIST
CHURCH - NEW BERLIN
WAUKESHA COUNTY, WI

- CEILING LIGHT
- ⊖ WALL LIGHT
- ⊕ RECEPTACLE OUTLET
- S SWITCH: CEILING LIGHTS

LIBBIE NOLAN
JUNE 1992

EXHIBIT 4

FREEWILL BAPTIST
CHURCH - NEW BERLIN
WAUKESHA COUNTY, WI

