

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED FEB 4 1977
DATE ENTERED NOV 7 1977

**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

Painesville Chapel

HAIBS

AND/OR COMMON

Painesville Memorial Chapel

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

2740 West Ryan Road

__ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Franklin

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

__ VICINITY OF

4th

STATE

Wisconsin 53132

CODE

55

COUNTY

Milwaukee

CODE

079

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

__DISTRICT

__PUBLIC

__OCCUPIED

__AGRICULTURE

__MUSEUM

X BUILDING(S)

X PRIVATE

X UNOCCUPIED

__COMMERCIAL

__PARK

__STRUCTURE

__BOTH

__WORK IN PROGRESS

__EDUCATIONAL

__PRIVATE RESIDENCE

__SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

__ENTERTAINMENT

__RELIGIOUS

__OBJECT

__IN PROCESS

__YES: RESTRICTED

__GOVERNMENT

__SCIENTIFIC

__BEING CONSIDERED

__YES: UNRESTRICTED

__INDUSTRIAL

__TRANSPORTATION

__NO

__MILITARY

X OTHER: Meeting Place

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Painesville Memorial Association, Mrs. Harvey A. Davitz, President

STREET & NUMBER

5230 West Oakwood Road

CITY, TOWN

Franklin

STATE

__ VICINITY OF

Wisconsin 53132

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Milwaukee County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

901 North 9th Street

CITY, TOWN

Milwaukee

STATE

Wisconsin 53233

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1936

X FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

District of Columbia 20540

7 DESCRIPTION**CONDITION**

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built in 1851-1852, this is a very simply designed one-story **Greek Revival** building with a gable roof, returned eaves at the gable ends, pedimented doors and windows, and clapboard siding. It is small, measuring 24 x 36 feet. Windows are 9/9 double-hung sash. The front entrance consists of two tall, narrow, six-paneled doors. There is a side slope cream brick chimney with a corbeled cap near the left rear corner. The chapel is currently in a good state of preservation and is receiving good maintenance. "Inside are the original pews and pulpit and a stove bearing the date 1848. On the walls, just as described in the 1876 report [to the Bund], are portraits of Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Humboldt, and Thomas Paine. Unfortunately, the original hand-glazed windows were destroyed by vandals."¹ Field survey information indicates that the chapel is one of the oldest surviving buildings in the Franklin-Oak Creek area of Milwaukee County.

In November, 1935, it was decided that the chapel should be razed. It had been vandalized and was in poor condition. It had not been used for 40 years, windows were broken, the roof leaked, and birds nested in the interior.² A year later, however, Alexander Guth, who supervised Wisconsin's HABS program in the middle 1930's, measured the chapel for the Historic American Buildings Survey (WIS-114) and wrote a report praising it so highly that descendants of the original congregation decided to form an association for the purpose of restoring the chapel their ancestors had built. This was done faithfully and well, and the chapel was rededicated in 1942 as the Painesville Memorial Chapel.

Alterations, which have not adversely affected the integrity of the structure, consist principally of adding a basement and rebuilding the fieldstone foundation to support the walls. This was done in 1939.³ A simple, straight cement stair with iron pipe handrails was placed at the front entry, and the building was electrified. As indicated above, the interior was not altered but remains as it was originally. No artifacts have been added. The restored building serves principally as a meeting place of the Painesville Memorial Association, which owns and maintains the property. Although the chapel is not open on any regular basis, the interior may be seen by interested persons who wish to make special arrangements with the owner organization.

The building occupies its original site at the southeast corner area of the one-acre wooded Painesville Cemetery. The entire plot is included in the nomination as an integral part of the chapel's environment. The cemetery dates to 1851, the year when construction of the chapel began, and is the burial place of many members of the original congregation and their descendants, although the total number of burials is not large. Other descendants of the founders of the Painesville Freie Gemeinde (Free Congregation) remain in the area and some of them will undoubtedly be interred in the cemetery as time progresses.

¹Cooper, p. 58.

²Milwaukee Journal, July 17, 1972.

³Ibid.

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Wisconsin's Historic Preservation Plan, Volume II: The Inventory

1971

State

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

Madison

Wisconsin 53706

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		Ethnic History		

SPECIFIC DATES 1851-
1852; 1942

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Henry Roethe

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The architectural significance of the Painesville Chapel is perhaps best stated by Alexander Guth, the architect who measured it for the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1936 and was deeply impressed by it. He stated in his report, which rated the building as one of the most worthy to be preserved: "...For over 20 years a study has been made of the buildings of the past generations and my delight in finding each new and worth while example has always been without measure. I therefore ascribe this cemetery chapel as one of the outstanding buildings that I have found in my entire years of study of these older structures. The building, together with its unusual setting...of age old spruce trees and burial ground, represents a typical heritage of the past. A veritable bit of New England transplanted to Wisconsin, the building is the embodiment of the best spirit of the colonial type of architecture..."¹ Wisconsin's architectural historian Richard W. E. Perrin has also long cited the Painesville Chapel as one of the state's historic architectural survivals which ought to be preserved.²

In the areas of religion and ethnic history, the Painesville Chapel is also a very important survival. Between the 1840's and the early 1850's three organizations which drew largely from exiles of the German Revolution developed in Wisconsin, first in the Milwaukee area. One of these was the Freie Gemeinde or Free Congregation, a society of intellectual agnostics. Its history "began in Germany..., when both Protestant and Catholic groups revolted against authoritarianism in church government and in theological dogma and withdrew from their orthodox churches to become independent groups.... Those members who came to the United States brought with them the principles of independence of the congregation and freedom of thought for the individual which became basic in the organizations formed in thirty Wisconsin communities."³

"The first Free Congregation of Wisconsin was established at Painesville, south of Milwaukee. Some German Protestants from Wittenberg had settled in Oak Creek and Franklin townships. Displeased with the strict theology of their Lutheran pastor, they withdrew from the church and formed a Free Congregation...By 1851 they had incorporated with about 35 members and had been given an acre of land upon which to build a hall, which was completed in 1852. According to their report to the Bund [the national association of free congregations or Bund der freien Gemeinden von Nordamerika] in 1876, the membership in the 27 years of their history had increased to only 37, but their report explained that this seeming lack of growth was due to the fact that eight or ten families had moved..."⁴ and formed other congregations. Nonetheless the Painesville congregation, though very active, was never very large.

In 1857, Christian Schroeter, a brilliant preacher, left Germany and came to Milwaukee County in search of religious freedom. He farmed during the week and "served as a spiritual guide in Painesville on Sunday until 1890."⁵ After that, activities diminished.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Cooper, Berenice, "Die Freie Gemeinden in Wisconsin," Wis. Academy of Science, Arts and Letters Transactions, 53:53-65, 1964
 Historic American Buildings Survey, Wisconsin Architecture, (Narrative by R.W.E. Perrin, F.A.I.A.), (Washington, 1965), 44
 "Historic Painesville Chapel to Be Rededicated Sunday," Milwaukee Journal, July 17, 1942.
 Perrin, Richard W. E., Historic Wisconsin Architecture (Milwaukee, 1960), 19.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.0

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	6	4	2	2	2	1	5	4	7	4	6	9	3	0
ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING								

B

ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING							

C

ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING							

D

ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING							

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

Donald N. Anderson, Historian & Registrar, Historic Preservation Division

ORGANIZATION

DATE

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

16 November 1976

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

816 State Street

608/262-0746

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Madison

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 M. Munn

TITLE Acting Director

DATE

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

11/25/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

W. M. Smith
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

11/2/77

ATTEST:

Charles Anderson

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

11-2-77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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The congregation paid their dues for 1899, then "withdrew from the Bund...Occasional meetings were held until about 1905."⁶ The chapel then apparently stood unused until its restoration was prompted by Guth's HABS report and the building was restored and rededicated in the 1940's. It is now one of the few surviving Free Congregation halls built in Wisconsin and serves both as a memorial to the Painesville Freie Gemeinde and a meeting place for the Painesville Memorial Association which owns and preserves it and the cemetery surrounding it. Only one Free Congregation now remains active in the state, and that is located in Sauk City.

It should be noted that there was never an actual Wisconsin village or hamlet named Painesville, although Cooper points out that the 1878 Historical Atlas of Wisconsin, published in Milwaukee, identifies the chapel-cemetery site as Paynesville.⁷ The original congregation was formed as "The First Free Christian Church of the town of Franklin and Oak Creek. Many of the original members were...great admirers of Thomas Paine, and the chapel, which was used as a meeting place for everyone in the neighborhood, became known as the 'Painesville Chapel.'"⁸ This happened so early in the chapel's history that it is a more accurate historic name than any other. It was also long known as the "Painesville (or frequently Paynesville) Cemetery Chapel."

1. Milwaukee Journal, July 17, 1942
2. Perrin, Historic Wisconsin Architecture, 19
3. Cooper, "Die Freien Gemeinden in Wisconsin," 54
4. Ibid., 57
5. Milwaukee Journal, July 17, 1942
6. Cooper, op.cit., 57
7. Ibid.
8. Milwaukee Journal, July 17, 1942