

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received FEB 7 1985

date entered MAR 7 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic CHURCH OF THE ATONEMENT

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number Fire Number 9410 (SW Corner, Main/Cottage Row) not for publication

city, town Fish Creek vicinity of

state Wisconsin code 55 county Door code 029

3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | <input type="checkbox"/> in process | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other: |

4. Owner of Property

name Episcopal Diocese of Fond du Lac, c/o Rt. Rev. William Louis Stevens

street & number Grafton Hall, 39 N. Sophia St.; P.O. Box 149

city, town Fond du Lac vicinity of state Wisconsin 54935

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Door County Courthouse

street & number 138 S. Fourth Street

city, town Sturgeon Bay state Wisconsin 54235

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1975, 1984 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin

city, town Madison state Wisconsin 53706

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 Church of the Atonement is situated on a secluded half-acre of land two blocks from the commercial district in the village of Fish Creek. Secluded in a cedar grove, the church is a one-story frame building with a two-story, cross-gabled belltower. The foundations are random stone, the siding is rough-sawn board-and-batten, and the roofing materials are wood shingles. The building plan is cruciform and the windows are double-hung with multi-paned sash. These windows are hooded with molded gables, assembled from pieces of batten creating the appearance of elaborate millwork. The church entrance at the base of the tower is also hooded with molded gables, as are the belltower louvers. These tower features appear to be of 20th century design, but the tower was constructed in 1896 and these features are documented in late 19th century photographs of the building.¹ An example of the Gothic Revival period of construction often referred to as "Carpenter Gothic," the church is distinguished from the refined vernacular buildings of white bevelled clapboard which constitute the bulk of comparable construction in the village.

The interior is simple with the tower entrance, wainscotting, and ceiling finished in tongue-and-groove panelling. The flooring is painted planks, the alter screen and alter railing (dedicated in 1944) are pine, and the free-standing pews are oak.² The alter furnishings are original and free-standing, as are the pump organ and the central hanging oil lamp (not shown in photographic documentation).

Two sides of the church grounds are closed by stone walls.

¹ _____, "Celebrating One Hundred Years." Printed privately, 1978. Fish Creek, Wisconsin. P. 12.

² Church railing plaque, Church of the Atonement.

8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| prehistoric | archeology-prehistoric | community planning | landscape architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion |
| 1400-1499 | archeology-historic | conservation | law | science |
| 1500-1599 | agriculture | economics | literature | sculpture |
| 1600-1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | education | military | social/ |
| 1700-1799 | art | engineering | music | humanitarian |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | commerce | exploration/settlement | philosophy | theater |
| 1900- | communications | industry | politics/government | transportation |
| | | invention | | other (specify) |

Specific dates 1878¹, 1896² **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Church of the Atonement is locally significant as one of the few remaining religious buildings still in use from the peak years of church growth in Door County. A modest example of the Gothic Revival period of construction, the church is an important link between the log structures and refined frame buildings which characterize the village of Fish Creek.

RELIGION

During the 1870's the development of religious institutions in Door County experienced a four-year boom, unparalleled at any other time during the 19th century. Between 1874 and 1878 eighteen congregations were formed and thirteen churches built, representing 36% of all congregations formed and 28% of all churches built during the 19th century.³ Communities such as Brussels, Bailey's Harbor, Forestville, Jacksonport, Egg Harbor, and Fish Creek experienced the development of diverse religious institutions including Catholic, Episcopal, Baptist, Methodist, and German, Norwegian, and Swedish Lutheran congregations. Sustained by a major increase in population, these churches served numerous small villages isolated during the winter closing of Green Bay, the principal transportation route. Church membership was invariably limited, served by a home missionary or the clergy of nearby congregations. The church buildings were similarly modest, often times constructed of donated materials and later replaced by more pretentious brick structures as the congregations grew and prospered.⁴ Of the thirteen church buildings from this period, only seven remained standing at the turn of the century.⁵

The Church of the Atonement in Fish Creek was among those seven. It was built in 1878 for an Episcopal congregation led by Mrs. L. M. Griswold, wife of a sawmill owner; and by Sarah Jeffcott, a widowed schoolteacher.⁶ At the time Fish Creek was experiencing a decline in its fishing industry and a peak in its logging activities. Built of lumber donated from Mr. Griswold's sawmill, the church utilized the abandoned foundations of an unfinished house begun for a local fisherman. The congregation consisted of twenty members and was served by itinerant Episcopal clergyman Rev. Joseph Jameson. The first Episcopal church in Door County, the Church of the Atonement received diocesan attention as a mission church, its development assisted by Bishop Brown during his early years as the first bishop of the Diocese of Fond du Lac.

Construction of the Church of the Atonement was followed by the Seventh Day Adventist Church (1892) and the Fish Creek Community Church (1917).⁸ After the turn of the century the congregation declined until the growth of tourists and summer residents brought about a resurgence in attendance.

ARCHITECTURE

In the village of Fish Creek the oldest buildings are the log homes of local fishermen, many within a few hundred feet of the church. Also in the immediate vicinity are the numerous cottages, hotels, and stores constructed for the early tourist trade of the

9. Major Bibliographical References

Holand, Hjalmar R., History of Door County. S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1917. Chicago, Illinois.

_____, "Celebrating One Hundred Years." Printed privately, 1978. Fish Creek, Wisconsin.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .5 acres

Quadrangle name Ephriam, Wisconsin

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

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| Zone | | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

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| Zone | | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

Asa Thorp Addition, Lots 7 and 8 of Block 7: Beginning at the southwest corner of the intersection of Main and Cottage Row; south 165 feet; then west 132 feet; then north 165 feet; then east 132 feet to the point of beginning.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state N/A code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Peter J. Adams

organization Peter James Adams and Associates date November 1, 1984

street & number P.O. Box 341 (537 E. Wisconsin Ave.) telephone (414) 722-8963

city or town Neenah state Wisconsin 54956

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.

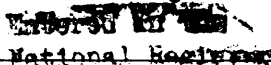
State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

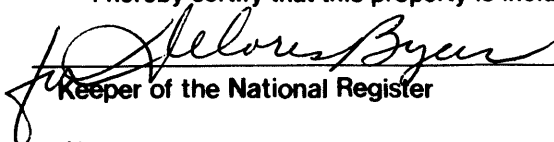
title DIRECTOR OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

date JAN. 22, 1985

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register




Keeper of the National Register

date 3-7-85

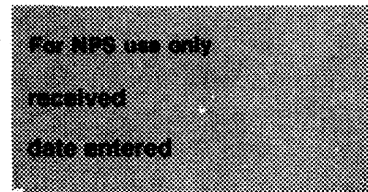
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
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CHURCH OF THE ATONEMENT; Fish Creek, Door County, Wisconsin
Continuation sheet Item number 8

Page 1

late 1890's. The log structures are simple and unadorned, the white frame buildings vernacular with narrow-gauge clapboard siding. The rise of logging appears to have produced little in the way of stylistic architectural expression, with the exception of the Church of the Atonement. A modest example of the Gothic Revival period of construction often referred to as "Carpenter Gothic," its rough-sawn board-and-batten siding is virtually unfinished lumber, the marks of the mill saw still visible under layers of white paint. The decorative features are similarly of local origin: the molded window caps are neatly assembled sections of batten, simple enough to be the work of an ingenious parishoner. The interior, equally spartan, reiterates themes of isolation and missionary zeal. The oil lamps have been put away and the pot-bellied stove taken out to increase seating, but the pump organ---brought in by boat after a spring thaw---still plays on Sundays, creating a palpable sense of time and place.

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- ¹ _____, "Celebrating One Hundred Years." Printed privately, 1978. Fish Creek, Wisconsin. P. 7.
 - ² Ibid., P. 12.
 - ³ Holand, Hjalmar R., History of Door County. S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1917. Chicago, Illinois. PP. 191-214.
 - ⁴ Quinlan, Albert and Kahlert, John, Early Door County Buildings. Meadow Lane Publishing Company, 1978. Bailey's Harbor, Wisconsin. P. 108.
 - ⁵ Holand, pp. 191-214.
 - ⁶ "Celebrating One Hundred Years," p. 7.
 - ⁷ Curtiss, Alonzo Parker, History of the Diocese of Fond du Lac. P. B. Haber Printing Company, 1925. Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. P. 8.
 - ⁸ Holand, p. 50.