

PH 0501573

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED JUL 27 1977  
DATE ENTERED JAN 20 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 Johnson, Albin, Log House

AND/OR COMMON "Our Yesterday House"

## LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER *W. Ogema* NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CITY, TOWN Ogema  VICINITY OF CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
STATE Wisconsin CODE 55 COUNTY Price CODE 099

## CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY  | OWNERSHIP                                   | STATUS   | PRESENT USE   |
|---|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT               | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC             | <input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED              | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input checked="" 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                   | <b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>                   | <b>ACCESSIBLE</b>                              | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input 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 type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED     | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION     |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> NO                    | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:               |

## OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Gene A. Meier  
STREET & NUMBER Route 1, Box 164  
CITY, TOWN Ogema  VICINITY OF STATE Wisconsin 54459

## LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Price County Courthouse  
STREET & NUMBER  
CITY, TOWN Phillips STATE Wisconsin 54555

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

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

# 7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION                                     |                                       | CHECK ONE                                     | CHECK ONE  |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD                 | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS        | <input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE <u>1969</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR                 | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED    |   |  |

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Albin Johnson log house, built in 1885 by Swedes, is now sited on a hill facing east, among pasture, cornfields, and wood barns, where it harmonizes with and contributes to the surrounding rural landscape just as it did in its original location. The current owner moved the house to this location in 1969 to avoid demolition on its original site, which was about 1-1/2 miles northwest of the present location in the NW 1/4, NE 1/4, Section 26, T-34-N, R-3-E. When the building was about to be razed, removal of the asbestos shingling revealed an excellently preserved log structure. The house was moved intact to preserve the totality of its construction techniques. The move, therefore, can be justified fully as necessary to the preservation of the building. Essentially, the current setting replicates the original on the J. A. Johnson farm in the N 1/2 of the NW 1/4, Section 22, T-34-N, R-3-E.

The log house itself is a 1-1/2 story gable roofed structure constructed of pine, tamarack, and some hemlock. The log construction is typical of Swedish craftsmanship. The sides of the logs are hewn straight, and the corners are dovetailed. In order to fit the logs as the walls were built upward, logs were adzed into concave form on the bottom and left round on the top. As each log was added, moss was placed on the rounded top surface of the one below, then the concave bottom portion of the next log fitted down tightly. Consequently, very little space is visible between the logs; chinking was not used nor necessary. Holes in the logs about one inch in diameter (visible in the photograph) were placed at points in order to serve as scaffolds while building the structure. After completion, these holes were fitted with a wood piece.

The foundation is loose rock on the south side and cinder block on all other sides. The original shake roof was badly deteriorated so Meier has replaced it with a new one of asphalt shingles. For the most part, the 2/2 hung sash windows are the originals. Subsequent owners after Albin Johnson made the following changes in the fenestration: a door on the northeast side was added by August H. Manthey; at the same time, he closed off the back door on the west side and replaced it with a window. In addition, Roy Meier has removed the dilapidated original chimney, replacing it with a dummy visible only from the interior.

The interior consists of two equally sized rooms divided by a fireplace. Leading upstairs to one large sleeping room is a small steep staircase, added in the early twentieth century; originally there was only a ladder. The ceiling, of tamarack planks, was put in ca. 1917 by Manthey. Parts of Swedish newspapers, dating from the turn of the century, line portions of the downstairs exposed log walls. The interior combines these early structural and decorative elements with domestic and cultural artifacts of the era collected by the Meiers. The items pertain mainly to the local history of the Ogema vicinity, although some artifacts come from as far as Bayfield County. Among the significant items is a photograph of the house's builder, Amandus Johnson, and early maps of the area.

# 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 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)<br>Ethnic technology |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION                         |   |  |

SPECIFIC DATES 1885<sup>1</sup>

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Amandus Johnson

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Architecture & Ethnic Technology

The significance of the Johnson log house lies in its excellence as an example of an ethnic type of log construction and in its place within the early settlement history of Price County. Built in 1885 in one of the last settled regions of Wisconsin, it is representative of a pioneering Swedish settlement of loggers and farmers in southeastern Price County. Today it is one of the oldest remaining log structures in Price County and surrounding counties. As a well-preserved remnant of Swedish homesteads and as a local museum, the Johnson house serves as a visual and cultural focal point in this still-rural and sparsely settled area of Northern Wisconsin. Historical information pertaining to the log house and its place in regional settlement history follows below.

### Settlement

Around 1878, Charles Hilmar Olson, who worked on a Swedish boat that brought immigrants to the upper peninsula of Michigan to work in the mines, heard of the giant white pine stands on the Spirit River in north central Wisconsin. As he was more interested in logging than sailing, he brought his family and friends to the area on his next trip west. These included Amandus, Albin and Peter Johnson and A. P. Wolfstran. They looked for homesteads along the Spirit River but found that the land had been taken already by a group of German immigrants. The Swedes, therefore, filed their homesteads on the tributaries of the Spirit River, which was a main stream of the area. They were all good woodsmen, but Amandus Johnson was a superior craftsman, expert with the adz and broad-ax, and a good supervisor as well. As a result, the Swedish settlers of the area built their houses with his help and supervision. The Albin Johnson house is an important survival of both the settlement and the craftsmanship with which the log houses were built.

Information furnished by Roy R. Meier in interview by Gail Hunton, June 18, 1976.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Letter, Roy R. Meier to James Morton Smith. March 27, 1976

Interview with Roy R. Meier by Gail Hunton. June, 1976

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

45° 24' <sup>37</sup>27.8" N. Latitude  
90° 04' 19.6" W. Longitude

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.15

UTM REFERENCES Map with U.T.M. ticks not available.

|   |      |         |          |   |      |         |          |
|---|------|---------|----------|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING | B | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C |      |         |          | D |      |         |          |

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is centered in an area of approximately 80' x 80' in the Meier farmyard.

## 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

Gail Hunton

Historic Preservation Consultant

ORGANIZATION

DATE

April 2, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

422 Castle Place

608/255-0399

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Madison

Wisconsin 53703

# 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 W. Penney*

TITLE

Acting Director

DATE

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

1/7/20/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

1-20-78

ATTEST:

*Charles A. [Signature]*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

1-17-78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

12 May 1977

816 State Street

608/262-0746

Madison

Wisconsin 53706