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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JAN 12 1988

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Wakeley-Giles Commercial Building
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 117-119 E. Mifflin St. NA not for publication
city, town Madison NA vicinity
state Wisconsin code WI county Dane code 025 zip code 53558

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> objects
			<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

x [Signature] 1/5/88
Signature of certifying official Date
WI SHPO

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Beth Bersven Boland 2/20/88

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade - professional

Commerce/Trade - business

Commerce/Trade - professional

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other - Commercial Vernacular

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Wakeley-Giles Commercial Building is a three-story frame vernacular commercial building with a painted brick veneer. It has a rectangular shape with a small two-story addition at the rear. On one side of the building is a party wall with the adjoining building; on the other side, a small space exists between buildings. A tall parapet covers the original gable roof of the building. This parapet was made larger using different bricks than that of the original brick veneer. And, the first floor storefront was also re-veneered with bricks unlike those of the original veneer. The building was built around 1869 as a rental property. Because of the existing gable peak at the rear of the building and the fact that the property was originally a multiple dwelling, it is likely that the original structure was a simple rectangular house. But by 1885 it had received the original brick veneer and probably had its appearance as a commercial block.

There are few exterior details to this building. The eight symmetrically placed windows on the front facade and four windows of the rear addition are simple sash types decorated with segmental brick arches and stone sills supported on the front by tiny brackets. The original openings have been covered with modern aluminum storm-screen windows and a small segment of the arch has been filled in to make a square opening. The first floor front facade appears to have been altered in the early twentieth century. It features red brick pilaster strips between the show windows and doors. These strips have concrete trim at the top and bottom. There is also a simple pressed metal cornice separating the first and second floors, accenting the storefront.

The interior of the building has almost been completely altered. The first floor has dark wood paneling and false ceilings. Original interior windows can be seen at the rear of the store, along with an old service elevator unit. The second story has also had dropped ceilings installed and paneling placed along the walls. This floor is divided up into small rooms. The third floor is much like the second, but in one area, which has decayed, the original nineteenth century interior of plain plastered walls and plain woodwork on windows and doors can be seen.

Currently the first floor is the only one occupied by the owner's decorating business. The upper two floors are to be renovated into apartments by the owner, returning them to their original function. And, while much of this building is altered from its mid-nineteenth century state, its exterior has the appearance it did during the period of significance, when it was primarily a printing plant and the offices of an important Norwegian-American writer and newspaper.

See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Ethnic Heritage-European

Period of Significance

1911-1922¹

Significant Dates

1869²

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Anderson, Rasmus B.

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Wakeley-Giles Commercial Building is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places because it is significant under criterion A, as the place of publication for a small, but important Norwegian-American newspaper. More importantly, the building is also significant under criterion B, because it was the office of Rasmus B. Anderson, the editor of the Norwegian-American newspaper, Amerika, and one of the most important Norwegian-American citizens in the country during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Norwegians were an important immigrant group in Wisconsin. Settlement of Norwegians occurred throughout the state, but especially in the southern and western regions of Wisconsin. Dane County was at the center of much of this settlement and many prominent Norwegian-Americans lived in the county. The Norwegians had a lively and extensive Norwegian-language press in America and some papers had more than a local readership. Rasmus Anderson became a leader in the Norwegian-American community because of his extensive work promoting Scandinavian literature, history, culture, and politics at the University of Wisconsin, in his position as minister to Denmark, and as editor of his newspaper, Amerika.³

Historical Background

Prior to the occupancy of Rasmus B. Anderson and his paper, Amerika, the Wakeley-Giles Commercial Building was a rental-residential property. Probably built as a house around 1869, it was, by the 1880s, converted to a commercial block. The first owner of the building was attorney Charles Wakeley, although there is no indication it was used as his office or residence. It was probably built as an investment property and was a residential rental unit. H. H. Giles owned the building from the late 1870s until around 1898, but he, too, never occupied the building. When Anderson moved into the structure, the building became primarily commercial. During the period of significance, the first floor housed the printing shop of Tracy Gibbs & Co., a printer and publisher of textbooks, and the printer of Anderson's newspaper, Amerika. The second floor housed residential tenants, and the third floor housed the offices of Anderson and his son, George. In 1922 Anderson retired and the paper suspended operations. At this time the building was completely taken over by the printing company, then known as the Tracy and Kilgore Printing Company, owned by the Kilgore family. The printing company, later known as the Kilgore Printing Company, occupied the building until the early 1970's, when William Wiedholz, the current owner, purchased the building. Wiedholz operates his decorating business from the building at the present time.⁴

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Anderson, Rasmus B. (with Albert O. Barton). Life Story of Rasmus B. Anderson. Madison: Rasmus B. Anderson, 1915.
- Curti, Merle, and Vernon Carstensen. The University of Wisconsin A History, Vol. I. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1949.
- Dictionary of Wisconsin Biography. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1960.
- Hustvedt, Lloyd. Rasmus Bjorn Anderson Pioneer Scholar. Northfield, MN: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1966
- Madison City Directories, Library, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.
- Tax Rolls for the City of Madison, Preservation Planner's Office, City of Madison, WI.
- Wyatt, Barbara, Ed. Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, Vol. I. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986, Settlement.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property less than one

UTM References

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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Southwest 26' of Northeast 88' of Lot 2 and the Southwest 26 1/3' of Northwest 33' of Northeast 88' of Lot 3 of Block 101 of the Original Plat of Madison.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the intact portion of the property lot historically associated with the Wakeley-Giles Commercial Building.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carol Lohry Cartwright, Historian

organization Consultant date September, 1987

street & number R. 2, 5581A Hackett Rd. telephone (414) 473-6820

city or town Whitewater state WI zip code 53190

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Continuation Sheet

Wakeley-Giles Commercial Building, Madison, Dane County, WI

Section number 8 Page 1HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE - ETHNIC HERITAGE - EUROPEAN

The Wakeley-Giles Commercial Building is significant for Ethnic Heritage-European because between 1911 and 1922 it was the office of one of the most important Norwegian-Americans in the country, Rasmus B. Anderson, and because it was the place of publication for Anderson's newspaper, Amerika. In fact, it is one of only two resources extant in Madison that are associated with Anderson's long, varied, and important career. And, it is the only extant resource related to Anderson's newspaper, Amerika, the publication of which was Anderson's main occupation between 1898 and 1922.

According to Wisconsin's Cultural Resource Management Plan, Norwegian-Americans are a significant ethnic group in the state. The entire state was a settlement area for Norwegian immigrants, but large groups of Norwegians located in the southern and western regions in the state. Dane County, especially, had large settlements of Norwegians. In fact, by 1900, according to information in the Plan, 25 percent of the Norwegians in the United States lived in Wisconsin. This concentration of Norwegian-Americans created both a leadership and an active press. The first Norwegian-American newspaper was published at Muskego, Wisconsin in 1847. Soon, there were many more papers in all the major centers of Norwegian population in the state. Between 1865 and 1914, 565 Norwegian-American papers and magazines appeared in the country, and it is thought that these newspapers played an active role in perpetuating Norwegian-American traditions and formulating and promoting Norwegian-American opinion.⁵

Rasmus Anderson was an important Norwegian-American leader and writer. He was born in Albion, Dane County, Wisconsin, to a family who were some of the first immigrants to America. He formulated his goal in life at an early age, and it was a goal that he strove for during his entire career. That is, to promote Norwegian-Americans as a powerful ethnic group in America without losing their important cultural heritage brought with them from the old country. He was known to promote his views in a forceful, even antagonistic way, and rarely backed down from a point of view, although many of his attitudes changed gradually over the years. He attended Luther College in Iowa, but as would be typical of his career, he became involved in a controversy and in 1865 he was expelled for leading student protests. He began a teaching career at Albion Academy in 1866, and in 1869 he was hired as an instructor in modern languages at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. He immediately began promoting Scandinavian Studies as an addition to the curriculum, in part to lure more Scandinavian students to Madison. Gradually successful, in 1875 he was finally given a professorship in Scandinavian languages at Madison. This is considered the first such position established in the country. While he was not an innovative scholar in the subject, Anderson did write extensively about Scandinavian history and literature and edited a number of works during his University years. His career at Madison can be summed up as follows. While there he established the teaching of Norwegian and Old Norse, he promoted higher education to Norwegians, he wrote frequently for the Norwegian and American press, he published original and translated works, and he promoted Norwegian cultural life. As his biographer Lloyd Hustvedt states, "he made himself the most generally respected man in Norwegian-American affairs" by the time he left the University in 1883.⁶

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Wakeley-Giles Commercial Building, Madison, Dane County, WI

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While Anderson's career at the University of Wisconsin was highly significant, it was only the first phase in his life's work. The second phase was as businessman, writer, and as minister to Denmark. Anderson had left the University for a business career. His pay at the university was always low and because of his pugnacious style, he had begun to make enemies of other university scholars, and he felt it was time to move on. He was fairly successful selling insurance, since his work at the university had given him prominence in the Norwegian-American community. But in 1885, he was named minister to Denmark, a position he sought. As minister, he continued to write extensively for the Norwegian-American press and his prestige only heightened in his diplomatic post. He returned to the United States in 1889 and continued his business career. That he was totally engaged in a new phase in his work life is indicated by the fact that he brushed off two significant academic opportunities, the presidency of the University of South Dakota and a professorship at the University of Chicago. It was also during this time that he was extremely popular, primarily because he published, in 1895, his First Chapter in Norwegian Immigration, a well-received historical work.⁷

Beginning in 1898, Anderson's career began its third phase. Always at odds with editors of the Norwegian-American press, Anderson was presented with an opportunity to write and publish a Norwegian-American newspaper of his own. In his autobiography, Anderson states that he began the newspaper as a result of his association with John C. Spooner and his anti-LaFollette forces. LaFollette had garnered the support of one of the top-circulated Norwegian newspapers in the country, Skandinaven, and Spooner, acknowledging that Anderson's name and opinions carried a great deal of weight in the Norwegian community, helped him acquire Amerika to support his viewpoints in the Norwegian community. Hustvedt, though, indicates that this was not the only factor in Anderson's wishing to control a newspaper. Anderson also knew that his name and opinions carried considerable weight in Norwegian circles and that a regularly published newspaper could be an outlet for his opinions on numerous issues he felt were significant at that time. Amerika was a newspaper that had begun in 1884 in Chicago. It was a financial loss and moved in 1896 to Madison where it did not thrive either. In 1898, Anderson and his political friends raised \$4,000 to purchase the paper, and after absorbing several smaller papers, it became a moderately successful Norwegian-American paper.⁸

"For 24 years Amerika was Anderson and Anderson was Amerika," so states Lloyd Hustvedt. And because of Anderson's reputation, within five years Amerika's circulation went from 6,000 to 10,000. It did decline after that, but in 1912, when its circulation was 8,000, it was ranked the seventh largest Norwegian-American paper in the country. The largest of the Norwegian-American papers at the time were the Decorah-Posten of Decorah, Iowa, the Skandinaven of Chicago, and the Minneapolis Tidende, all with circulations of more than 30,000. But after these papers, circulation figures drop off considerably. The three other papers ahead of Amerika in 1912 had circulations of only 17,000, 11,000 and 9,000. But the fact that Amerika was in the top ten of all the Norwegian-American papers in circulation meant that it was a small important paper of the hundreds of Norwegian-American papers that existed in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.⁹

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Wakeley-Giles Commercial Building, Madison, Dane County, WI

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Even more significant, though, than circulation figures, was the impact Amerika had on the Norwegian-American leadership. Anderson's opinions were obviously important enough, and his paper seen by enough important Norwegians, that the larger Norwegian newspapers felt compelled to comment and attack Anderson and his paper frequently. If Anderson and Amerika were of no consequence, it would have been ignored. But because Anderson was such a significant person, even at this time, during the last phase in his career, Norwegian-American leaders and editors had to treat him and Amerika as a serious contender for the opinions of Norwegian-Americans throughout the country.¹⁰

Anderson's Amerika commented vigorously on political issues, especially when they related to Norwegian ethnic issues. He published many articles on Norwegian-American history and Norwegian writing, and actively criticized other's works. But there were two major issues that Anderson crusaded against in his paper. One of them was the ideas in modern Norwegian literature, which he considered anti-Christian and immoral. The other was against the advertising of patent medicines, which he considered misleading at best. He was lauded for his writing regarding patent medicines, which at the time were under attack by the federal government. But his attacks on literature often fell on deaf or critical ears. During the later years of the paper, Anderson's attacks became so outrageous, especially compared to the new, more objective journalism being fostered in America at that time, that eventually his circulation for Amerika began to decline. He continued to publish the paper, though, until his retirement in 1922, and overall, Amerika is seen as one of Anderson's major contributions to his goal of promoting Norwegian-Americans as a powerful ethnic group in America while retaining their unique and important cultural heritage.¹¹

Rasmus Anderson was, without a doubt, one of the most important Norwegian-Americans in Wisconsin and the country. His work at the University of Wisconsin, where he established his reputation as a leader in Scandinavian studies and culture, was extremely important and is represented by the extant resources existing at the Madison campus. But his two other career phases are also significant because they incorporate his contributions outside of the university. Anderson's career did not come to a halt when he left the University of Wisconsin. In fact, he remained a vital and significant force within the Norwegian-American community until his retirement in 1922, via his further writing, his ministry to Denmark, and his publication of Amerika. There were few resources associated with his career after the university. They consisted of his home, where he had an office, his first location of Amerika, and this building. His home at 316 N. Carroll St. has been demolished, and his first Amerika office, at 123 E. Washington St., has been demolished. Only this building remains, and, as the only extant office of Rasmus Anderson and the only extant place of publication for Amerika, it is significant. This building represents a different aspect of Anderson's productive life as an important person in Norwegian-American history. And, since the activities Anderson was engaged in here were of historical significance, this building, which has the appearance it did during his tenure there, is eligible for the National Register.

Notes

¹The period of significance deals only with the period R. B. Anderson was located in the building. While the other years are interesting, they are not significant.

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Wakeley-Giles Commercial Building, Madison, Dane County, WI

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²Tax Rolls for the City of Madison, Preservation Planner's Office, City of Madison, Madison, Wisconsin.

³Barbara Wyatt, Ed., Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, Vol. I, Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986, pp. Settlement 5-1--5-9.

⁴Tax Rolls; Madison City Directories, Library, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

⁵Wyatt, pp. Settlement 5-1--5-9.

⁶Lloyd Hustvedt, Rasmus Bjorn Anderson Pioneer Scholar, Northfield, MN: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1966, pp. 40-136; Dictionary of Wisconsin Biography, Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1960, pp. 11-12; Merle Curti and Vernon Carstensen, The University of Wisconsin A History, Vol. I, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1949, pp. 340-343.

⁷Hustvedt, pp. 179-234; Rasmus B. Anderson (with Albert O. Barton), Life Story of Rasmus B. Anderson, Madison: Rasmus B. Anderson, 1915, pp. 574-575.

⁸Anderson, pp. 576-577, 662; Hustvedt, pp.234-235.

⁹Hustvedt, p. 236.

¹⁰Hustvedt, pp. 235-306.

¹¹Ibid.