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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

FEB 19 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 Salem Evangelical Church
other names/site number Ragatz Church; Salem United Methodist Church of Honey Creek

2. Location

street & number SW corner of Sauk County Highway PF & Church Road not for publication
city, town Town of Honey creek vicinity
state Wisconsin code WI county Sauk code 111 zip code 53583

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>	_____ 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>1</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.

[Signature] Date 2/11/88
Signature of certifying official
State Historic Preservation Officer
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. Beth Boland 3/29/88

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion - religious structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion - religious structure**7. Description**Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)Gothic Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestonewalls Limestoneroof Asphaltother Wood**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Ragatz Church was built in 1875 of locally quarried limestone in a vernacular style typical of the locality. It stands in open country in a wide, level valley surrounded on three sides by limestone-sandstone bluffs of the unglaciated or "driftless" area of Wisconsin. The church is approximately five miles south of the glacial moraine. Large white pines, planted when the church was built, surround it on three sides. A parsonage, built in 1923, is adjacent on Church Road. A cemetery, established in 1846, remains in use at the rear of the church, along county highway PF. The church property excluding the parsonage and the cemetery is 200' wide (along Church Road, north-south) and 400' deep (along PF east-west)

The church is rectangular, 38' wide and 62'6" long, and has a rectangular central entrance tower 14' wide and extending 10' to the front. Five steps, the same width as the entrance tower and flanked by a low stone balustrade, are of modern construction. On the tower, above the Gothic-arched doorway, is a carved marble tablet stating that the church was built in 1875 and rebuilt in 1904. The wooden belfry was struck by lightning in 1904 and the belfry, steeple, roof and interior were completely replaced immediately after the ensuing fire. The new steeple is said to be 25' lower than the original. As can be seen from an 1875 picture, the belfry and steeple are similar to the original design. The belfry is square with beveled wood siding, slatted fenestration and small gables in each elevation. The cross shown in the early photo has been replaced by a weathervane.

The interior was again remodelled in 1942. A concrete block entryway leading to the sanctuary and to a basement meeting and Sunday School room has been added to the south wall of the building just forward of the chancery. There are also stairs leading to the basement from the north-west corner of the chancery and from the rear of the sanctuary. Original inside chimneys on the interior side walls have been replaced by an inside chimney behind the altar on the rear wall. The interior is wainscotted with varnished shiplap. Wooden 2x4s are let into the masonry on the interior walls to support a lathe and plaster finish. There are four Gothic-arched windows in both the north and south walls. Two identical windows flank the entrance tower in the front (east) wall. Each window memorializes a member or members of the church in the period preceding 1904.

The exterior masonry treatment is similar to that found on some fifty existing houses, schools, churches and commercial buildings of the same period (1850 to 1885) in southwestern Sauk and adjacent Dane counties. An early (1858) but well developed example of this method of stone construction, already on the National Register is the Kehl house, at the Kehl winery near Roxbury in Dane County. It has been

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)

Architecture

Ethnic Heritage - European

Period of Significance

1875 - 1933

Significant Dates

1875

1904

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Builders: Steuber, Casper ; Felix, John
Kindschi, Peter.

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

The Salem Evangelical Church is architecturally significant as a fine example of 19th century vernacular Gothic design. It is distinguished by a unique masonry style in which ashlar blocks alternate with areas of rubblestone. The style is found only on the prairie surrounding the church, in the nearby villages of Sauk City and Prairie du Sac, and in neighboring Dane County (Perrin, p. 111). Examples date from the early 1850s to about 1885. The church is also significant under criteria A for its role in maintaining the religious and ethnic identity of its membership and as a continuing symbol of the unique Swiss/German heritage of the Honey Creek area.

The period of historic significance of the church is from its construction in 1875 to 1933 when, according to a church history written by member Erhart Mueller, the German language was no longer used in the Sunday School or services. The dates of architectural significance are the date of construction and the date of reconstruction following a fire.

Historical Significance

Pressure to emigrate was intense in Switzerland in the 1840s due to overpopulation, industrialization and economic stagnation. While the emigration from the Canton of Graubuedon was not as formally organized as the immigration society which led to the Swiss settlements in Green County from the Canton of Glarus, family and friendship ties have had similar results in Sauk County in molding a community which has maintained continuity for six generations. The Salem Evangelical Church or Ragatz Church is so called for Bartholomew Ragatz, the first settler on the western extension of the Sauk Prairie. He came to the Wisconsin frontier from Graubuendon via New Orleans and St. Louis, in 1842. Ragatz was an adherent of the Swiss Reformed faith. However, his efforts to attract a Reformed minister to the area were unsuccessful. He conducted lay services in his home until German speaking, circuit-riding missionaries of the Pennsylvania-based Evangelical Church reached Wisconsin. Their work has been called "a potent force in attracting German-speaking elements in the the state." (Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin Vol. 3 Religion, Vol 1 Settlement)

The Salem church was organized in 1847, and a revival meeting in 1853 converted some of the neighboring settlers from various German states. Ragatz' encouragement of the

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Perrin, Richard W.E., Historic Wisconsin Buildings: A Survey in Pioneer Architecture 1835-1870 Milwaukee WI, Milwaukee Public Museum, 1981.
- Mueller, Erhart., Salem Church 1844-1969 North Freedom, WI, 1969.
- Wyatt, Barbara. Editor., Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin Vol 1 & 3, SHSW Madison, WI. 1986
- McKee, Harley J., Introduction to Early American Masonry: Stone, Brick, Mortar and Plaster. Washington DC, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1973.
- Interview: 1986 William Floyd Steuber, Madison, WI by J. Eiseley.
1986 Herman Theide, North Freedom, WI by J. Eiseley.

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

Acreage of property 1 acre

UTM References

A

116	26951010	479781010
Zone	Easting	Northing

C

--	--	--

B

Zone	Easting	Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Church property excluding the parsonage and cemetery, being the lot at the intersection of CTH PF and Church Road, approximately 1 acre of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 36, Town 10 North Range 5E township of Honey Creek, Sauk County, WI.
(see sketch map)

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The entire lot on which the church stands has been included. The cemetery is not part of the church property. The church is separated from the parsonage by a driveway which has been excluded.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

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 organization Department of Landscape Architecture date February 1987
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Section number 7 Page 1

SALEM EVANGELICAL CHURCH, Honey Creek, Sauk Co.
Wisconsin

Described as follows in the text of the nomination: "(the masonry) employs squared, tooled blocks and rubble in the same wall planes. Overlaying all are tooled, raised mortar joints to emulate random ashlar construction." The walls of the church are 24" thick at the height of the window sills. The interior window openings are larger at the sides and top than are the outside openings, creating a light and airy effect inside the church. On the front face and entrance tower the surface consists of rectangular ashlar blocks 14" high and 20" wide with a bush-hammered surface, laid in courses and separated by rubblestone interstices in each course which are 5" to 9" wide. The rubblestone areas are decorated with 1½" wide horizontal strips of raised mortar. Mortar strips also define precise borders around each ashlar block, giving a pleasing texture to the building. On the north and south (side) walls the rubblestone interstices are wider and the ashlar blocks smaller and less regular in width. The rear (west) wall consists entirely of rubble, laid in courses and overlaid with raised mortar trim to give the appearance of ashlar construction. This latter technique is found, alone and together with the ashlar/rubble technique described above, in many buildings in the area, notably the nearby church St. Mary of Loreto, as noted by Perrin.

The Gothic windows and entryway are supported by pairs of curved limestone lintels which meet at a keystone. The keystone above the entryway has a vermiculated design. The lintels and the sills and watertable are decorated with a bush-hammered central panel and chiseled margins. Below the watertable the rubblestone foundation is 6' high. There are large basement windows in the sidewalls below each of the arched sanctuary windows.

The roof is covered with composition shingles. The side walls of the church are 24" high, including the foundation, and the roof rises to 40' at the ridge. The stone entrance tower is 43' high and the belfry and steeple rise to 90'. There is a narrow frieze, which may have been added in 1904, below the eaves. The cornice returns, in Greek revival style, at the front gable end.

NPS Form 10-900a
 (Rev. 8-86)
 Wisconsin Word Processor Format
 Approved 2/87

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
 CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 1

Salem Evangelical Church
 Honey Creek, Sauk Co.

missionaries led to the formation, under the aegis of the Honey Creek church, of churches which still survive in other parts of Wisconsin, including the towns of Richland Center and Sparta, and in Jefferson and Buffalo counties. There are also congregations in Minnesota which were begun by missionaries who made the Ragatz home and church their base. In the immediate area the Ragatz church spawned congregations in Sumpster (1863, active until 1942); Blackhawk (1864-present); Leland (1868-c.1910); Denzer (1864-present); Ridge (1862-c.1900); Prairie du Sac (1872-present); Baraboo (1877-present); Greenfield (1882-1923); Cassel (1905-1930); Harrisburg (1898-c.1920); and Stone's Pocket (c.1897-1905).

The Church was built in 1875, when the settlers' children, most of whom were born shortly before emigration, were in their most productive years. The three masons who built it were found in the manuscript 1880 U.S. census. In 1875, when they built the church, Caspar Stueber was 51, John Felix was 40 and Peter Kindschi was 39. It seems possible that there was an earlier mason or masons who originated the masonry style. A diary dated 1852 and reported in the Sauk-Prairie Historical Society newsletter for January, 1983, refers to a mason named "Phillip Steuber, patriarch of the Steuber clan." Phillip may have been the originator of the Sauk City masonry style which flourished for some three decades between 1855 and 1885 and left some 50 buildings which have survived 100 years or more of use. The Steubers were from Waldeck, while Felix and Kindschi were Swiss. All three masons who built the church were born in Europe, and had been in America 20 years or more by 1875. Today the church building symbolizes and commemorates an era when the initial hardships of settlement had been overcome, yet the daily life of the community was largely self-contained and its Swiss heritage still strong. The church building, and its reconstruction in 1904, testify to the success of the second generation of Swiss in America and to the cohesion and stability of the community.

Membership in the church led to a pattern of intermarriages such that nearly every member at the time of construction has a living descendant in the present day local population. The names of early Sunday School teachers, for example, such as Accola, Enge, Gasser, Witwen, Kindschi, Ploetz, Hatz and Steuber, are to be found on current plat maps, mailboxes and businesses. The farmsteads established by these families still define the shape of the landscape today. The stone houses, built in the same masonry style as the church, set against the hillsides and surrounded by white pines, are a visual testament to historical continuity in an area of about 40 square miles on the Sauk prairie. While the German language died out during and after World War I in most of Wisconsin, it persisted in this area into the 20s and 30s, probably because the children were taught to read and write German in the Sunday School of the Ragatz church. Annual camp meetings have been a feature of the church. Since 1918 they have been held at the village of Witwen,

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Section number 8 Page 2 Salem Evangelical Church
Honey Creek, Sauk Co.

four miles west of the church, where there is a tabernacle and facilities. In 1904 a fire destroyed the wooden belfry, roof and interior of the church. Church members were helpless to stop the fire but were able to save the furnishings. Reconstruction began immediately and except for a shortened steeple, reproduced the original design. Ten stained glass windows, installed at this time, memorialize descendants of the original Accola, Ragatz, Enge and Kindschi families, and relatives of contemporary ministers. Accola, Enge and Kindschi families still reside in the area while Ragatz is a name prominent in Wisconsin business and professional life.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The stonework which the church exemplifies is notable for its durability, the extant examples showing little or no evidence of settling or weathering after more than a century. In addition to the unique and attractive surface treatment, the buildings have in common the use of dressed stone lintels and sills, large dressed quoins at the corners and the sides of the window and door openings, and a demi-lunette, or half-moon shaped window in the attic story of the gable walls. The masonry is laid up in a criss-cross fashion so that the wall is bound together by stones laid perpendicular to the surface. It is the ends of these stones which are seen on the outside surface as rubblestone interstices between the ashlar blocks. Their solidity makes the church and the surrounding houses a continuing reminder of the skill and industry of the builders. With some conversion of porches, and wooden additions, the houses are used today, just as the church, with the addition of a side entrance and modern heat, light, and plumbing, continues to serve the congregation in the way for which it was designed.

On the prairie surrounding the church are a group of seven stone farm houses which are closely similar in size and design, all built between 1868 and 1880, and having the same masonry pattern as the church. Except for three similar houses near Roxbury in Dane County, this particular expression of the New England "upright and wing" design is unique to the area of Swiss settlement in Sauk County. The form, with its particular spacing of windows, size and proportion of the upright and the wing, demi-lunette and porch, is repeated in one birch house, dated 1868. In addition there are a number of stone houses which appear to be the same criss-cross masonry technique but which do not have the ashlar surface. Some of these are upright and wing. There are also a number of "I" houses, a design typical of the middle Atlantic states, built of stone. Other 19th-century houses on the Sauk prairie and still extant include two believed to be log covered with siding and a number which are balloon frame in various forms. The latest known date of a stone house on the Sauk prairie is 1883. In Sauk County and throughout Dane County are examples of rubblestone buildings which have been overlaid with raised mortar

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Salem Evangelical Church
Honey Creek, Sauk Co.

strips in imitation of the ashlar/rubble technique seen in the church and surrounding houses. A prime example is the St. Mary of Loreto church, described by Perrin (pg 112), built in 1880.

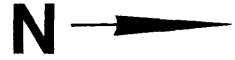
The origin of the masonry technique observed on the Salem Church is unknown, but seems to be unique to the Sauk City area. The earliest examples on the prairie date to the early 1860s, but there are several examples in Sauk City and Prairie du Sac which were built in the 1850s. An examination of the manuscript 1880 U.S. Census for the townships of Honey Creek, Sumpter, Troy, Franklin, Prairie du Sac and the villages of Sauk City and Prairie du Sac shows that there were 17 stone masons, including the co-owners of a marble and stone works, both born in Switzerland, and a "marble-cutter," born in Ireland. Of the 17, seven were born in Switzerland and seven in Prussia. The three masons believed to have built the Salem Church were found in the census.

CONCLUSION

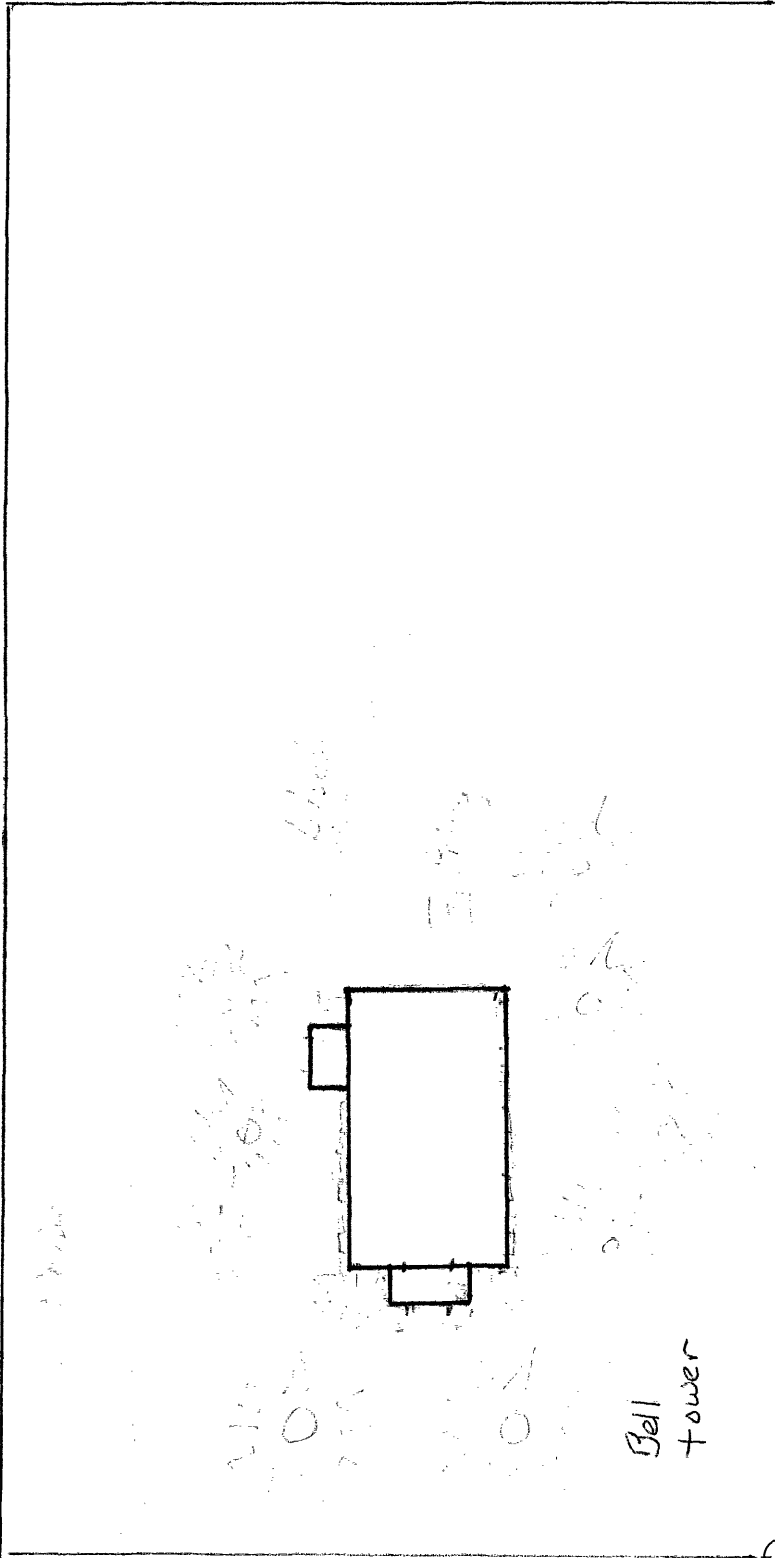
The Salem Evangelical Church meets National Register criterion C as a fine example of a 19th century vernacular stone Gothic Church. The unique masonry form used in the church in particular points to a localized building tradition created, adapted by local craftsmen to create a distinctive vernacular tradition. The property also meets National Register criterion A by possessing a larger social and ethnic significance as one of the earliest community structures representing the Swiss origins and continuing identity of the community. The Wisconsin Cultural Resource Management Plan notes that Sauk County was the recipient county with the third largest percent of foreign-born Swiss in Wisconsin. As a base for education, social and religious development, the Salem Evangelical Church served to reinforce the cultural identity of the isolated Honey Creek area, which for over 145 years has seen continuous settlement by German-speaking Swiss descendants.

The Salem Evangelical Church meets the National Register criteria for exceptions as a religious property deriving primary significance from its historical, cultural importance.

SALEM EVANGELICAL CHURCH
Sauk County, Wisconsin.



Cemetery



Parsonage

County PF

Bell tower

Church Park

2/5/68