

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Wisconsin	
COUNTY: Dunn	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	JAN 18 1974

1. NAME

COMMON:
Mabel Tainter Memorial Building

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
205 Main

CITY OR TOWN:
Menomonie

STATE: **Wisconsin** CODE: **55** COUNTY: **Dunn** CODE: **033**

Third Congressional District

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>library & theatre</u>

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
City of Menomonie

STREET AND NUMBER:
800 Wilson

CITY OR TOWN: **Menomonie** STATE: **Wisconsin** CODE: **55**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
City of Menomonie, County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
800 Wilson

CITY OR TOWN: **Menomonie** STATE: **Wisconsin** CODE: **55**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Wisconsin's Historic Preservation Plan, Vol II: the Inventory

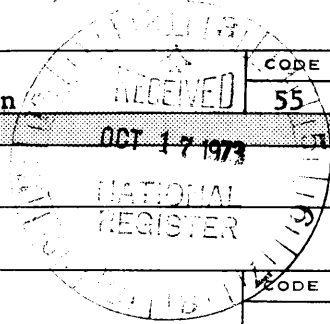
DATE OF SURVEY: **1973** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
State Historical Society of Wisconsin

STREET AND NUMBER:
816 State Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Madison,** STATE: **Wisconsin** CODE: **55**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE: **Wisconsin**

COUNTY: **Dunn**

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DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

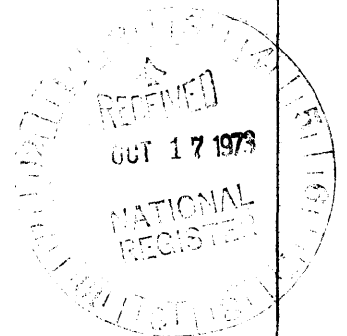
The Mabel Tainter Memorial, 1889, stands on the main street of Menomonie opposite the University of Wisconsin-- Stout. The approximately square building has a hip roof with two turrets in each hip and a round, conical roofed tower at each corner. The raised basement and exterior are of a now deep gray Dunnville sandstone. (The Dunnville quarry is about nine miles south of Menomonie). The side and rear elevations are quite plain, noteworthy features being the rusticated stone exterior and first story arched and second story flat window headers. The front facade has several features of note: 1) the broad Syrian arched entrance surrounded by a band of Sullivanesque ornament, 2) the finely carved letters and ornament of the namestone, 3) the boat prow on the entrance platform,* 4) the pediment with an attic window, and 5) the high quality of stonework. The building is clearly Richardsonian Romanesque in style and the architect, Harvey Ellis, was very adept in it.

The interior is in nearly original condition and it is maintained by the Mabel Tainter Memorial Preservation Association. Restoration efforts are being undertaken by the Denardo Decorating Studios, St. Paul, Minn. The library main room is a Richardsonian interior with its white walls broken by dark, hardwood beams. The furnishings are original and are of the same dark wood. The lobby is similar and both rooms contain oxidized silver and opalescent glass chandeliers. There is a beautiful stairway off the lobby opposite the doorway to the library. The theatre, at the rear of the plan, is representative of the time with its abundant use of gilt panels of Sullivanesque ornament and rich mohair fabric and carpet. The theatre contains a 1550-pipe organ which is still in working order, though it has been converted from water to electrical power. Restoration efforts have been concentrated on the theatre and every effort has been made to conserve its original qualities and duplicate them when necessary. The community is sufficiently interested and involved in maintaining the building to insure that it will remain in excellent condition.

In 1890 Andrew Tainter presented the Memorial to the Mabel Tainter Literary, Library, and Educational Society; the committee still manages the building for the City of Menomonie.

* This ship's prow is in memory of Andrew Tainter's beginnings with Knapp, Stout, & Co. as a steamboat pilot.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1889 (date above entrance)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>local history</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

The Mabel Tainter Memorial building was built in 1889 by Captain Andrew Tainter as a memorial to his eldest daughter who had died while away at college. The building houses the public library, a theatre, and public meeting rooms.

The building was designed by Harvey Ellis (1852- 1904) while he was the employee of LeRoy Buffington, a Minneapolis architect. The Mabel Tainter Memorial is one of Ellis's last standing buildings and has been termed one of the finest in the upper midwest. It is also one of the finest examples of Richardsonian Romanesque in the state. Ellis is an interesting though little known architect: Born in Rochester, N.Y., he remained there until 1886 when he went west to St. Paul. There he worked for J. Walter Stevens and LeRoy Buffington. From 1888 to 1893 he spent his time primarily in St. Joseph and St. Louis, Missouri designing for Edmund Eckel and George Mann. In later designs he tended more toward the Second Empire style introduced by R.M. Hunt than the earlier Romanesque. Ellis never stayed on permanently because none of his partners were satisfactory-- he never found an Adler as Sullivan had-- so he drifted from bar to bar. When one of the mentioned architects needed a good design, they sobered him, paid him, and abandoned him. With the 1893 depression, work dried up in the midwest so Ellis returned to Rochester and stopped drinking until several months before his death. During these ten years he primarily painted. His study of Japanese prints and his fine draughtsmanship led him to a linear style and to the world of the fantastic. His rendering mode was adopted by Frank Lloyd Wright and was one of the most popular around the turn of the century. He published and sold little, but among that known is a cover and decorative designs for Craftsman magazine. In his reading the architect was fond of William Morris and Grimm's Fairy Tales.

Important questions have been raised about Ellis and his possible relationship to Richardson, Sullivan, and Wright. For example it is possible that he had a hand in doing the ornamentation for Richardson's Albany State Capitol and certainly he was doing Sullivan-esque ornament simultaneously with Sullivan. He had tremendous influence throughout the midwest because his designs were frequently published in periodicals such as the Inland Architect. Ellis's genius and influence is attested to by two projects. The first in 1887 for Buffington was a 29-story steel frame, all of a piece from base to attic, skyscraper; it is this that led Buffington to claim that he did the first skyscraper.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Claude Bragdon; "Harvey Ellis, a Portrait Sketch" (Prairie School Review, Vol. V Nos, 1 & 2, 1st and 2nd Quarter, 1968); p. 19- 35.
2. Hugh M. Garden; "Harvey Ellis, Designer and Draughtsman" (Prairie School Review, same issue as above); p. 36- 39.
3. Roger Kennedy; "Long Dark Corridors: Harvey Ellis" (Prairie School Review, same issue as above); p. 5- 18.
4. Roger Kennedy; Men of the Moving Frontier (American West Publishing Co., Palo Alto, Calif., 1969).

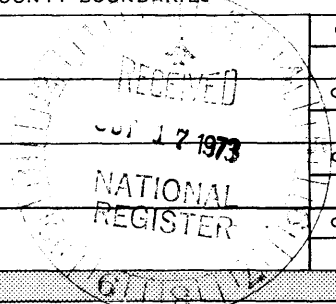
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	44 °	52 '	35.5"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	91 °	55 '	40.5
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **less than 1.0 acre**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Ellen Threinen, 1973 Summer Architectural Survey Team

ORGANIZATION: **State Historical Society of Wisconsin** DATE: **July 31, 1973**

STREET AND NUMBER:
816 State Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Madison, Wisconsin** STATE: **Wisconsin** CODE: **55**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: James Morton Smith
 Title: Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin (State Historic Preservation Officer)

Date: October 10, 1973

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

[Signature]
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 1/18/74

ATTEST: [Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: 1/17/74

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Mabel Tainter Memorial

Statement of Significance, continued

8. The second is a design of a small bank, 1891, which was the first to break midwest tradition. Wright's and Sullivan's designs followed later. Ellis is an architect who warrants much study because of the possible influence he had on Prairie School architects and the American Arts and Crafts Movement. Because the Tainter Memorial is one of Harvey Ellis's few remaining buildings it is an important monument for study of the architecture of the 1880s and 1890s in the United States.

The Mabel Tainter Memorial has local historical significance, of course, because it was donated by an important Menomonie family to perform various cultural services for the community. Captain Andrew Tainter (1823- 1899) came to Wisconsin in 1832 and shortly after joined the Knapp, Stout and Co. Company which in 1890 was the largest lumber firm in the world. His career began as a steamboat captain and he rose to vice-president. His son, Louis, took over the position upon the death of his father. (The Louis Tainter residence in Menomonie is stylistically related to the Memorial). Like many of the nineteenth century's self-made men, Tainter was on the one hand a ruthless industrialist, but on the other a generous philanthropist-- this is certainly attested to by the Memorial. The building performed and performs many services for the community and Menomonie's interest in it along with its architectural significance qualify the Mabel Tainter Memorial as an important local landmark.

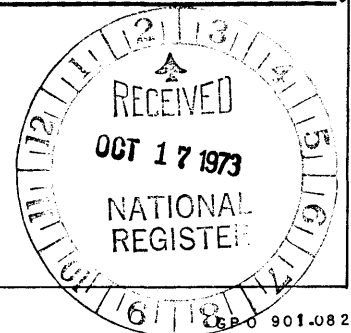
1. The Mabel Tainter Memorial Gay Nineties Theatre has recently been funded under Wisconsin's American Revolution Bicentennial Commission; the purpose of the theatre is to represent American Victorian theatre through performances by a local repertory theatre and theatre museum. ("Mabel Tainter Memorial 1889- 1968: the Gay Nineties Theatre")

2. Roger Kennedy, Men of the Moving Frontier, American West Publishing Co., Palo Alto, Calif., 1969. p. 83.

3. H. Allen Brooks, The Prairie School, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1972. p. 82.

4. Robert Judson Clark, The Arts and Crafts Movement in America 1876- 1916, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1972. p. 35.

5. Brooks. p. 135.



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(Continuation Sheet)

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Mabel Tainter Memorial

11. Donald N. Anderson, Asst. Director, Historic Sites & Markers Division

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

June 14, 1972

816 State Street

Madison

Wisconsin

Code: 55

