

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Wisconsin	
COUNTY: Jefferson	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	FEB 23 1972

1. NAME

COMMON: First Kindergarten	Congressmen to be notified: Sen. William Proxmire Sen. Gaylord A. Nelson Rep. Robert W. Kastenmeier
AND/OR HISTORIC: First Kindergarten in America	

2. LOCATION

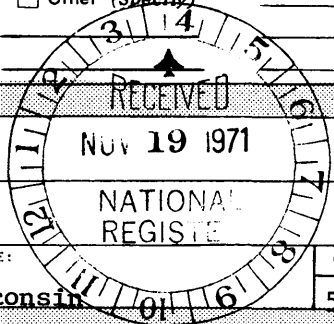
STREET AND NUMBER: 919 Charles Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Watertown			
STATE Wisconsin	CODE 53094	COUNTY: Jefferson	CODE 055

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure 	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both 	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress 	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment 	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Watertown Historical Society	
STREET AND NUMBER: 919 Charles Street	
CITY OR TOWN: Watertown	STATE: Wisconsin
	CODE 55



5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Jefferson County Courthouse	
STREET AND NUMBER:	
CITY OR TOWN: Jefferson	STATE: Wisconsin
	CODE 55

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings <i>NO</i>	
DATE OF SURVEY: Not known	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: National Park Service, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation	
STREET AND NUMBER:	
CITY OR TOWN: Washington	STATE: District of Columbia
	CODE 11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Ruins Unexposed

(Check One)

Altered Unaltered

(Check One)

Moved Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

A simple 1 1/2 story, gable-roofed frame building, the First Kindergarten is located on a gently sloping hillside on the grounds of the Richards Octagon House. Cornices are boxed, with common metal eaves along the sides. Siding is of clapboards, and all openings have plain board trim. Windows are plain, wood-muntined, double hung sash. The building is small, approximately 18 feet wide and 24 feet long. It is well maintained and in reasonably good condition. Its continued preservation is assured.

In the years prior to 1956 the building had seen a variety of uses, the most recent being that of a store. The front gable end had been much altered to make it a store front. Original clapboarded sides had been covered with a simulated brick sheathing. What interior modifications might have occurred are not known.

Because the building faced demolition in late 1956 it was moved by the Watertown Historical Society to a permanent location on the Octagon House grounds and faithfully restored to its original state. The interior is one large room, furnished as a kindergarten school room would have appeared when it was used for that purpose--a living room used as a classroom--and, with manikins, portrays a kindergarten class in progress.

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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) 1856

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |

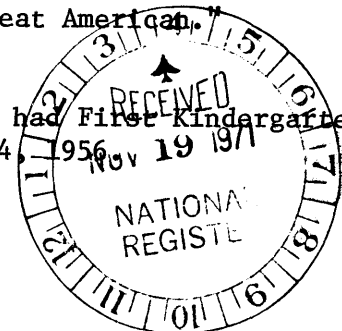
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Margarethe Meyer Schurz, when but a girl of sixteen in Hamburg, Germany, had been greatly influenced by a series of lectures presented by the noted German educator, Friedrich Froebel. The lecture course dealt with " 'the new education,' as it was then called and of which the kindergarten was the first step."¹ Margarethe's sister, Madame Ronge, and her husband Johannes Ronge had an active interest in the kindergarten, and when Madame Ronge later² had a kindergarten in London, Margarethe assisted her for a brief time.

In 1852 Margarethe Meyer married Carl Schurz, who was to become known as "the most famous German-American in U.S. History,"³ and sailed with him to the United States. After living in Philadelphia for a time, they moved to Watertown, Wisconsin in August 1856.⁴

Later that year Margarethe started her kindergarten in her new home, with the Schurz's three year old daughter Agatha and four of her little cousins as pupils. When "the children of other relatives and friends wished to join the group...Mrs. Schurz opened a kindergarten in the little building in town, as it was easily accessible to the children there. Thus was created the first kindergarten in America in November or December 1856."⁵ That this was indeed the first kindergarten in the United States was documented by the Library of Congress.⁶ The original little building, authentically restored and furnished, marks the point of beginning in America of what we now consider a vital phase of children's education.

1. Jenkins, Elizabeth, "How the Kindergarten Found Its Way to America," 49.
2. Ibid, 50
3. Thielke, Rosemary, "A German Who Became a Great American."
4. Jenkins, Elizabeth, op. cit., 51
5. Ibid, 52
6. "Research by Library of Congress Proves City had First Kindergarten in U.S.," Watertown (Wis.) Daily Times, August 24, 1956



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9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Jenkins, Elizabeth, "How the Kindergarten Found Its Way to America," Wisconsin Magazine of History, 14:48-52, 1930.
 Thielke, Rosemary, "A German Who Became a Great American," The Bridge, Hamburg, Germany, 5 (4):3, April 1961.
 "Research by Library of Congress Proves City had First Kindergarten in U.S.," Watertown (Wis.) Daily Times, Kindergarten Centennial Edition, August 24, 1956, 4-6.
 Vandewalker, Nina C., The Kindergarten in American Education, Macmillan, New York, 1908, 12-16.

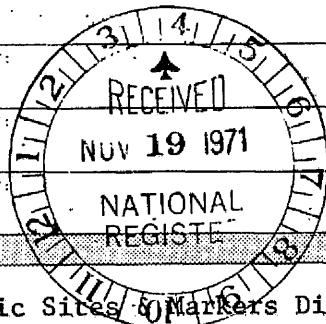
10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		N 43° 11' 04"	W 88° 42' 26"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 0.1

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 Donald N. Anderson, Asst. Director, Historic Sites & Markers Division

ORGANIZATION: State Historical Society of Wisconsin DATE: October 15, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER:
 816 State Street

CITY OR TOWN: Madison STATE: Wisconsin CODE: 55

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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
 James Morton Smith
 Title Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin
 Date NOV 12 1971

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Forest A. Connelly
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date FEB 23 1972

ATTEST:
William J. Manthey
 Keeper of The National Register

Date FEB 1 1 1972

SEE INSTRUCTIONS