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Wisconsin Word Processing Format (Approved 1/92)



United States Department of Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Neosho Village Hall  
other names/site number Old Village Hall Museum

2. Location

street & number 115 South Schuyler Street N/A not for publication  
city or town Neosho N/A vicinity  
state Wisconsin code WI county Dodge code 027 zip code 53059

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant    nationally    statewide X locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Naama J. Tenkunas*  
Signature of certifying official/Title

8/6/2018  
Date

State Historic Preservation Office - Wisconsin  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property    meets    does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Neosho Village Hall

Dodge

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

**4. National Park Service Certification**

- I hereby certify that the 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.  
See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National  
Register.
- other, (explain:)

*Barbara Wyatt*  
Signature of the Keeper

9-21-18  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1	0
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> site		structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		objects
		1	0 total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
(Enter "N/A" if property not part of a multiple property  
listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources  
previously listed in the National Register

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Government/City Hall

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture/Museum

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Concrete

roof Wood Shingle

other Wood

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Politics/Government

**Period of Significance**

1922-1968

**Significant Dates**

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Neosho Village Hall  
Name of Property

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- 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:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 376880 4796250  
Zone Easting Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

See Continuation Sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Leah Penzkover (with Carol Cartwright)	Date	8/24/17
organization	For Neosho/Rubicon Historical Society	telephone	262-951-5498
street & number	1310 O'Keeffe Ave. #313	zip code	53590
city or town	Sun Prairie	state	WI

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

**Maps** A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs** Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional Items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

<b>name/title</b>	Mike Weynand	<b>date</b>	9/21/17
<b>organization</b>	Neosho Museum Inc	<b>telephone</b>	920-625-3632
<b>street &amp; number</b>	PO BOX 105	<b>zip code</b>	53059
<b>city or town</b>	Neosho	<b>state</b>	WI

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Neosho Village Hall  
Neosho, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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Start description on line below

**DESCRIPTION**

The Neosho Village Hall, currently known as the Old Village Hall Museum of the Neosho/Rubicon Historical Society, was constructed as a government building in downtown Neosho, a small village located in Dodge County, a county in southeastern Wisconsin. The building is located in the north end of Neosho's downtown, which runs along State Highway 67, an important secondary highway connecting communities in southeastern Wisconsin. State Highway 67 in front of this building is named South Schuyler Street, and it is the most important street in the village because it is Neosho's "Main Street."

The Neosho Village Hall sits on a long and narrow north-south parcel bounded by South Schuyler Street on the west, a residence on the east and south, and the Neosho Mill Pond to the north. The Mill Pond was created from a dam over the Rubicon River at this location. South Schuyler Street is improved with a concrete sidewalk, curb, and gutter.

The topography of the building's site is sloped, generally rising from the north at the Mill Pond to the south boundary of the parcel. The land south of the building is formally landscaped and includes a path from the street to the main entrance, and a retaining wall that abuts the corner of the east and south elevations of the building and extends to the southeastern corner of the lot. Adjacent to the western elevation of the building is a small paved parking lot that can hold several cars. North of the building is a large paved driveway leading to the garage entrance in the lower level of the building. East of the building is a small strip of lawn that abuts the neighboring parcel that features a large, modern garage and lawn.

**EXTERIOR**

*GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS*

The Neosho Village Hall is a one-and-a-half-story building constructed by village citizens between 1914-1922. The building has a rectangular form and details from the Colonial Revival style. Both the walls and foundation are constructed of rusticated concrete blocks, probably from a local source. The concrete blocks of the foundation are wider than the blocks used for the walls. The windows are replacements in the original openings. The building has a steeply-pitched gable roof with a square bell tower, and returned eaves. The roof is covered with wood shingles. Under the roof of the building is a flat wood cornice.

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*WEST (PRIMARY) FACADE*

Historically, the west side of the building was the primary façade. The west façade is composed of six bays. The first bay to the far left is the corner bell tower. There are doors at the second and fourth bays and windows at the third, fifth and sixth bays. The grade slopes down from south to north so that at the south end of the building the foundation is slightly above grade and at the north end of the building the raised basement is twice as high. The roof of the main portion of the building is side gabled and of wood shingles.

Originally the main entrance was at the center of the facade. This entrance was later enclosed and the original staircase removed. The opening is currently enclosed with a wood signage panel, topped with a wood paneled transom and a concrete lintel. Projecting from the roof above this entrance is a gable with returned eaves. Flanking this original entrance are two rectangular openings on the south, and a rectangular opening and a modern entrance on the north side. The entrance is enclosed with wood paneling and the openings are filled with single-light, double-hung sashes. Both the entrance and the openings are topped with flat concrete block lintels. Like the openings for all of the windows, the windows are modern and the openings are slightly reduced. At the bell tower, there is a window at basement level, at the first floor, and a louvered-opening at the top of the tower; the louvers are of wood. These openings are stacked and the louvered opening is the same size as the first floor window opening below it. The bell tower also has a concrete water table and the window in the raised foundation is also enclosed with modern glass and concrete blocks. The pyramidal roof of the bell tower is of wood shingles and flared at the bottom.

*NORTH (SIDE) FACADE*

At the north facade the grade slopes again, the grade is higher at the west and slopes down significantly toward the east (the rear of the property) so that at the northeast corner of the building there is a full story at the basement level. It is at this corner where there is a garage door and adjacent pedestrian door. The garage door is modern and this interior space at basement level is currently used for Village storage. The Neosho fire department used to store fire engines in the space until 1966, when the modern Fire Department building nearby was completed. The garage door is constructed of wood panels with a row of glass panels toward the top. There is a pedestrian door west of the garage door. It is constructed of wood panels with a glazed panel. A concrete lintel spans both the garage and pedestrian doors. To the west of the door is a window opening that is filled with modern concrete block and modern glass block. A concrete block water table divides the basement level from the first story.

The bell tower slightly projects from the northwest corner of the building. There are three openings on the first story, one in the bell tower and two in the main wall. The openings are filled with modern

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single-light, double-hung sash, and topped with concrete block lintels. The openings have been slightly reduced at the top. Above this row of windows are two openings. The opening in the gable peak of the main wall is filled with a modern single-light, double-hung sash. In the bell tower there is a rectangular louvered opening; the louvers are of wood.

*SOUTH (SIDE) FACADE*

The south side of the building now has the primary entrance. This side is one-and-a-half-stories with a large gable and prominent gable-end returns. The façade is three bays wide at the first floor and has a single window at the top of the wall under the gable. The south facade sits at the top of the sloped parcel, so the lower level of the building and the foundation is not exposed. Its openings are identical to the north and west facades and are topped with concrete lintels. The window openings at the first and third bays flank the current museum entrance in the middle bay. The window openings are filled with modern, single-light double hung sash. The museum's entrance is filled with a pair of modern metal doors and is topped with a concrete lintel. In the gable peak, the window opening has a single-light, double-hung sash.

*EAST (REAR) FACADE*

At the east facade, there are five bays and the lower level is exposed. All five window openings in the lower level have been filled with modern concrete blocks. The window openings on the first story are the same as elsewhere on the building, being the same size and each having a concrete lintel. The window in the first bay (at the southeast corner) and those in bays four and five all have double-hung windows. The remaining openings in bays two and three are of vertical board infill. The concrete block wall plane is broken by a concrete block water table which separates the lower level and first story. There is a gutter along the length of the roof and downspouts at each end of the wall.

***INTERIOR***

*GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS*

The interior of the Neosho Village Hall is filled with museum exhibits, but most walls, ceilings, and floors can be seen. Most of the interior walls are covered with modern dry wall, and the ceiling has been exposed in the main hall so that the second floor structuring is visible. Modern fluorescent light panels, museum track lighting, and utility ductwork are also visible. There is 15 feet between the floor and the exposed roof structure, except in the stage area, which is raised from the main floor. The original, narrow maple flooring can be seen on the stage and in portions of the main hall. There is modern carpeting over these floors in some of the exhibit spaces. Most of the window and door trim on the interior was also removed when the building was converted into a museum in 1989.



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Neosho, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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*FIRST FLOOR*

The original first floor plan of the Neosho Village Hall consisted of a large open hall space with a raised stage at one end. Prior to the conversion into a museum, the Village of Neosho erected partitions to create office spaces in the hall area. The partitions were removed when the building became a museum so that the original hall and stage plan is extant. Currently, this space is filled with museum exhibits and materials for the research center for the Neosho/Rubicon Historical Society. The stage had been utilized for locally produced plays, musical concerts and other performances as well as the main floor had been used for recreational activities such as basketball.

Entering the museum from the main (south) entrance, there is a foyer area where visitors sign in. Exhibits begin in this area and extend to the stage at the north end of the building. The interior was modernized when the hall and stage areas were altered to museum and research spaces. Exhibits on the history of the area line the walls and run down the center of the room to make use of all the space. At the back of the hall is the stage; this space is now the research center that holds the Neosho/Rubicon Historical Society's archives, records, and office equipment.

*SECOND FLOOR*

The half-story under the roof is accessible only by climbing a ladder to a panel in the ceiling. It was used as storage for the plays and shows put on at the Village Hall. According to museum staff, these spaces are intact and have their historic features; due to the difficulty of access, they are not used.

*LOWER LEVEL*

The lower level is accessible from the first floor by a door in the southeast corner of the building. A staircase with one landing towards the bottom leads to the lower level that is partitioned. The Neosho/Rubicon Historical Society uses the first room, once the municipal jail, for storage and utilities. This room extends about a third of the length of the building and is separated from a garage, still used by the village, by a wood partition wall.

The walls in this area are of concrete block with a smooth surface. They sit at the south end of the building on a concrete foundation. The floor is poured concrete and the ceiling is covered with wainscot panels. On the east side of the area, there is a bathroom that has walls finished with wood paneling, and which has a chemical toilet.

The north wall of the lower level has double doors that lead into the garage area. The garage area has exposed concrete block walls that also have a smooth texture. The ceiling is covered with modern dry wall and the floor is poured concrete.     End of Description of Physical Appearance

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Neosho, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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***SIGNIFICANCE***

The Neosho Village Hall is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, in the area of Politics/Government as the first Village Hall, the center of municipal government for sixty-seven years. The building originally housed Village governmental offices, the fire department and a small jail. The construction of this building was precipitated by the incorporation of the Village of Neosho in 1902-1903. Prior to that time, Neosho was governed by the Town of Rubicon. The Town of Rubicon had no formal town hall until the later twentieth century. This is the only building from Neosho's historic period used for municipal administrative purposes making this building the most important historical government building in Neosho.

The period of significance begins in 1922, the date of the building's completion, and ends in 1968, using the National Register program's fifty-year rule. The building was used as a village hall until 1989, after which time the building was converted to a museum.

***AREA OF SIGNIFICANCE: GOVERNMENT***

The Neosho Village Hall is locally significant as the long-standing center of municipal government, originally having Village governmental offices, the fire department, and the local jail. This was the first village hall and it served the community for sixty seven years making it the most significant building constructed for local government use in the village's history. *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin* states that "resources associated with services provided by municipalities include fire stations, police stations, jails, water utilities, and recreational facilities."<sup>1</sup> Though this village hall did not provide water utilities for citizens, through the construction of this building, the village consolidated the functions of a village hall, fire department, jail, and added a stage as to create a community center. Prior to this building, the village government had no formal place for their fire department. Its use as a community center is also notable with its large open interior and stage suitable for plays and dances.

*Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin* also states, "City halls and village halls, fire stations, jails, and police stations generally are located in or near central business districts. Town halls generally are located on main thoroughfares... In many communities, administrative services are located in civic center complexes or combined into single multi-purpose buildings."<sup>2</sup> Neosho's Village Hall fits this description as it is located in the center of the village, along a thoroughfare, and it housed many of the municipality's administrative functions as well as serving as a civic center. It is appropriate that the building is a museum now, because it extends its historic use as a community center.

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<sup>1</sup> Barbara Wyatt, ed., *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*, (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986) Government, pg. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pg. 13.

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**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Prior to 1908, the village of Neosho did not have a formal place where the local government could meet, or a location for other municipal functions such as the fire department. By the early-twentieth century, the citizens of Neosho felt they needed better facilities for their government and their local fire department. In 1908, the village purchased land for a future village hall, but construction did not begin until 1914.<sup>3</sup> In the interim, a local contractor, Michael Neisius, began manufacturing concrete blocks. It is likely that Neisius produced the concrete blocks that the local citizens used to build their village hall. Completed in 1922, the construction of the village hall over many years by citizen labor is notable and demonstrates the connection Neosho citizens had to this building and the building's high regard in the community.

The fire department remained in the Neosho Village Hall until 1966, when a new fire department building was constructed nearby along State Highway 67.<sup>4</sup> The village hall continued to serve as a formal setting for local government administration until 1989, when a new village hall was opened nearby.<sup>5</sup> The village board deeded the building to the Neosho Museum Inc. in that year for use as a local historical museum. A portion of the lower level, which once housed fire trucks, is still used by the village for storage of equipment.

Neosho citizens constructed this building to be both a government and community hall facility that would take them into the twentieth century. They built it themselves, over several years, probably using locally produced resources, demonstrating that they were personally invested in creating this building, not just as a center for local government, but also as a center for broad community activities. This is shown in the plan of the building, which included not just a meeting hall, but also a stage that could be used for plays and dances.<sup>6</sup> It was a building that served to tie the community together after a divisive political fight to incorporate as a village.

**Developmental History**

The Village of Neosho was the location of the first white settlement in the Town of Rubicon in Dodge County, Wisconsin. Most historic sources agree that Daniel E. Cotton purchased 80 acres of land at the Neosho site on the Rubicon River in 1845. Cotton and a partner, Anderson Rathburn, built a dam and a saw mill at the site along with a small cabin. The site of this mill is across Highway 67 just north of the Old Village Hall.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The Neosho Standard, 4-3-1908, pg. 1; The Hustisford News, 10-9-1914, pg. 4.

<sup>4</sup> "Clear Water Gave Neosho Its Name", Newspaper article on file at Neosho/Rubicon Historical Society, Neosho, WI.

<sup>5</sup> *Watertown Daily Times*, "Neosho Village Hall will become museum", pg. 6, June 23, 1989

<sup>6</sup> Neosho/Rubicon Historical Society archives "Neosho's Village Hall Stage Was The Home Of Many Theatrical Productions."

<sup>7</sup> *Remembering the Past Rubicon Township Sesquicentennial 1846-1996*. Published by citizens of the Town of Rubicon,

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In 1846, the first store was built in the settlement and in 1847, the village was platted. The first settlers in Neosho were “Yankees” primarily from New England who brought both their cultural and governmental traditions with them to the new settlement. Shortly afterwards a large number of ethnic Germans settled in Dodge County and strongly influenced the culture of the Town of Rubicon.<sup>8</sup>

The Town of Rubicon developed as a very rural area and remains so today. Only two settlements grew to the size of villages; the villages of Rubicon and Neosho. Farming dominated the landscape and the economy. At first the “Yankee” farmers grew wheat and in 1848 a grist mill was constructed in Neosho. When wheat growing transitioned to stock raising and dairying, the grist mill also transitioned from a flour mill to a feed mill and operated for the local farmers until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. But, Neosho remained small, with only a tiny commercial district in existence throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>9</sup>

The Town of Rubicon was so rural, in fact, that it never erected a formal town hall. Rather its town meetings were held at the home of town clerks and elections were held in local hotels, commercial halls, and even taverns. In the mid-twentieth century, meetings and elections were held in a local church annex. In the late-nineteenth century, annual town meetings were held in Rubicon and Neosho in alternate years. A formal town hall was not erected for the Town of Rubicon until 1977.<sup>10</sup>

In April of 1902, some citizens of Neosho began the process for village incorporation. At the time, Neosho was an *un*-incorporated village and governed by the Town of Rubicon board. The incorporation effort coincided with the development of a local fire department. The first organized fire department in Neosho was established in 1890, then reorganized in 1894. After that time, the fire department started to purchase equipment.<sup>11</sup>

Between 1902 and 1903, the effort to incorporate Neosho into a village was fraught with controversy. It was soon discovered that the issue split the community in half and those opposed to incorporation took the matter to court. A judge ruled that a referendum must be held and of 89 total votes, the result was 45 votes for incorporation and 44 against. This close result caused the opponents of incorporation to again file a lawsuit challenging the result of the referendum. The Wisconsin Supreme Court decided the lawsuit in another controversial decision in favor of incorporation.<sup>12</sup>

The fight over incorporation influenced the history of the Neosho Village Hall. It wasn't until 1908 that the village purchased land for a future village hall, and construction did not begin until 1914; it

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1998, 90.

<sup>8</sup> *Remembering the Past*, 90-99.

<sup>9</sup> *Remembering the Past*, 94-101.

<sup>10</sup> *Remembering the Past*, 17-31.

<sup>11</sup> *Remembering the Past*, 111-112.

<sup>12</sup> *Remembering the Past*, 113.

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took until 1922 for the village hall to be completed.<sup>13</sup> This unusual construction story might be explained by the fact that half of the citizens did not want an incorporated village and possibly fought tax increases to build a village hall.

Records suggest that the exterior of the Neosho Village Hall was completed around 1914. Another flurry of activity at the Neosho Village Hall occurred in the spring and summer of 1922 when the building is said to have been completed. The Village of Neosho's treasurer's records indicate the village spent over \$800 for materials and labor to complete the interior of the building. And, in late fall of 1922, the Neosho volunteer fire department agreed to fund the purchase of a furnace for the village hall.<sup>14</sup>

One of the first activities in the newly completed village hall was a theatrical production and many more would follow. Perhaps, after 20 years, hard feelings about the incorporation fight had died out and all of Neosho's citizens could now see the value of a village hall and community center as the building was also used extensively for community events for several decades.<sup>15</sup>

One of the most important functions of this building, its use as a fire station, remained until 1966, when a new fire department building was constructed nearby along State Highway 67.<sup>16</sup> Around this time, the large main level space used for dances and other entertainment was partitioned into village offices. The village hall continued to serve as a formal setting for local government until 1989, when a new village hall was also opened nearby.<sup>17</sup>

In 1989, the village board deeded the building to the Neosho/Rubicon Historical Society under the name Neosho Museum Inc. for use as a local historical museum. At that time, the partitions in the floor were removed, returning the first floor to its original plan. The space was then filled with historical exhibits. The half of the lower level that was used as a jail was converted into storage space for the museum, while the other half of the lower level that once housed fire trucks, was retained by the village for equipment storage.

According to *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*, resources associated with services provided by municipalities include fire stations, police stations, jails, water utilities, and recreational facilities. The plan also states that city and village halls, fire stations, jails, and police stations are generally located in or near central business districts and along main thoroughfares. In many

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<sup>13</sup> *Neosho Standard*, 4-3-1908, 1; *Hustisford News*, 10-9-1914, 4.

<sup>14</sup> Village of Neosho Treasurer's records, 1922, on file in the Neosho/Rubicon Historical Society, Neosho, WI; Minutes of the Neosho Fire Department, November 3, 1922, on file in the Neosho/Rubicon Historical Society, Neosho, WI.

<sup>15</sup> "Neosho's Village Hall Stage Was The Home Of Many Theatrical Productions," newspaper article on file at Neosho/Rubicon Historical Society, Neosho, WI.

<sup>16</sup> "Clear Water Gave Neosho Its Name," newspaper article on file at Neosho/Rubicon Historical Society, Neosho, WI.

<sup>17</sup> *Watertown Daily Times*, "Neosho Village Hall will become museum", June 23, 1989, 6.

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communities, administrative offices are often combined into single, multi-purpose buildings.<sup>18</sup> The Neosho Village Hall is typical of local government buildings constructed in a downtown area that combine many local governmental functions within one multi-purpose building.

The Neosho Village Hall is a significant resource in the area of local government in the community, because it represents the fight for local representation for the citizens of Neosho and the desire to have a designated building to house local government functions. The decision to build a village hall was probably not without controversy in the community and reflected a change in thinking by some citizens in the Town of Rubicon about these types of facilities. The Town of Rubicon did not even have a one-room town hall prior to 1977. Because of this, along with Neosho's divisive incorporation fight, it is significant that citizens in Neosho built a village hall at all in the early-twentieth century. That they built a fairly large, multi-purpose, building is even more significant.

Of particular interest in this village hall design is the fact that it was built with an emphasis on providing a meeting and entertainment space in the form of a large hall with a stage. This set the tone from the start that the building was not just to be a monument to government, but a place where the community could come together for government functions and recreation. Except for the fire department and a small jail for the local police, governmental office space had a small footprint in the building, perhaps limited to a desk and cabinets at the back of the hall. In fact, this building has more in common with a rural town hall than an urban village or city hall.

As local government grew in the mid-twentieth century, the emphasis on the building as a community center lessened as the village had to provide more space for modern government activities and the large upper space was divided. But, this was a short-lived phenomenon as the Neosho/Rubicon Historical Society restored the large open space and stage when they took over the building for use as a museum.

*Design of the Village Hall*

The Neosho Village Hall has an interesting construction history. The building stands out in the community for its use of formed concrete block as the building material and for its architectural interest, including a prominent bell tower that anchors the northwest corner of the building.

The most distinctive feature of this building is its rusticated concrete block construction. The Neosho Village Hall appears to have been built largely in two phases. According to local sources, the hall was started in 1914 and the village treasurer's records confirm this. In the fall of 1914, several payments were made for construction expenses. One of the most interesting is a payment to Michael Neisius, a local cement contractor for concrete blocks. Neisius began manufacturing concrete blocks in Neosho

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<sup>18</sup> Barbara Wyatt, ed., *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*, (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1989), Government, 13.

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Neosho Village Hall  
Neosho, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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in 1910. The citizens of Neosho may have used them because they were locally available and, perhaps, more economical than other materials. Concrete blocks of the time were often advertised as a building material that did not need an expertly skilled mason, another factor in cost savings. Concrete block homes were sold in catalogs at the time as “build-it-yourself” kit homes, and the machines to make the blocks were also sold in catalogs, suggesting that builders did not need significant masonry skills to make or use them.<sup>19</sup>

This factor was important as local sources indicate that village citizens built the hall themselves. The blocks used in the hall were of two sizes. A longer block was used for the walls on the lower level, and smaller blocks were used for the walls on the first and second stories. Alongside the “rusticated” appearance of the blocks, this use in different size blocks suggests stone construction. The long blocks used for the lower level mimics the use of limestone blocks seen in institutional buildings of that time period.

Because of the popularity of the heavily classical buildings constructed for the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, classical details became popular for institutional buildings of the early-twentieth century, such as schools, hospitals, and government buildings. While the Neosho Village Hall is primarily a vernacular building, the use of details such as returned eaves and flat window lintels, along with the general symmetry of the building suggests a classical influence. It is clear that even though the Neosho Village Hall was primarily a “do-it-yourself” project, it was completed with a good attention to detail to make the building as attractive as possible and to fit in with the architectural ideas of the time. What they created was a Classical Revival influenced building using modern materials.

Modern poured concrete and concrete block construction did not become widely popular until the late nineteenth century after the introduction of Portland cement. After 1900, the use of concrete in blocks became popular. Builders could purchase commercially manufactured block presses and by the 1910s and 1920s, the use of concrete blocks, particularly in building foundations, became commonplace. Many makers of concrete blocks and mail-order house kits promoted the use of concrete blocks for houses and other buildings, but it was not as popular as wood or brick construction. Catalogs also sold concrete block presses and Neosho citizen, Mike Neisius, entered the trade of pressing concrete blocks.<sup>20</sup> The early concrete blocks were almost always given a “rusticated” appearance to mimic stone, a construction material people were more familiar with, but by the mid-twentieth century, most concrete blocks were made with smooth faces. At this time, concrete block became a popular material

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<sup>19</sup> Village of Neosho Treasurer’s records, 1914, on file in the Neosho/Rubicon Historical Society, Neosho, WI; *Hartford Press*, 10-14-1910, p. 8; *Hartford Press* 12-10-1909, 8; Sears Roebuck Catalog pages, no date, on file at the Neosho/Rubicon Historical Society, Neosho, WI.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

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Neosho Village Hall  
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for the construction of industrial and institutional buildings.<sup>21</sup> It is probable that Neosho citizens used this local source because it would have been cost effective, convenient, and importantly, was a material that was advertised as being something people could work with themselves.

The building is also distinctive for its type of construction as a village hall with unique interior spaces. Interestingly, the building was constructed originally more like a rural town hall of that era because it had a large meeting hall space and a stage, with no separate office spaces like many rural town halls.<sup>22</sup> By the 1920s most city or village halls might have included this type of feature along with offices. It is interesting that the entire building was designed without offices and emphasized the communal space.

Adding to the unique appearance of the building is the prominent bell tower, a traditional feature of historic fire stations. By the 1920s, when this building was completed, the need for bell towers had declined in favor of telephone notifications for fire departments. The fact that the citizens went ahead and completed the bell tower indicates the desire for a traditional looking fire station.

#### CONCLUSION

The Neosho Village Hall is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, locally significant as the only village hall in Neosho from the Village's historic period. This was the first Village hall and center of municipal government, originally having governmental functions, the fire department, and the local jail. The community space and the stage also characterize this building as a center of the community, providing a space for gatherings, plays, musical performances, and other social activities. The building's construction was the culmination of an effort by local citizens to provide modern village services to the community. For over 60 years, even after the fire department moved to new quarters in 1966, the village hall was still important as the center for local government administration and remained this center until 1989. Adding to the historical significance is the fact that the building was used for local community activities. The inclusion of the stage is important in understanding how the citizens saw the use of their building beyond governmental activities. Because of these activities, the building is an important historic landmark in the village.

#### INTEGRITY

The Neosho Village Hall retains most of its historic integrity. The building remains at its original location. The building retains its original plan, and there have been no significant changes to its design. The Neosho Village Hall remains in its original setting and the building has its original materials extant. Though there have been slight changes to windows, the openings have not been changed, and the windows are similar to the original sash windows. Doors have been significantly changed, however, the size of the entrances have not changed. There are historic photographs which one could

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<sup>21</sup> Wyatt, *Cultural Resource Management Plan*, Architecture 4-9.

<sup>22</sup> Local source "Neosho's Village Hall Stage Was The Home Of Many Theatrical Productions."



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Neosho Village Hall  
Neosho, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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use to replace the modern doors and windows with historically appropriate reproduction doors and windows. These slight changes do not significantly detract from the overall distinctiveness or the overall historic integrity of the building. The building is still clearly recognizable as the Village hall.

The interior of the building has also seen some modernization with the use of drywall on exterior walls; however, that original floor and much of the trim of the original interior is extant. The most important recent change has been the return of the first floor interior plan to its original large hall and stage appearance after some division into office spaces in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. This return to the original first floor plan is obscured somewhat by the density of the exhibits, but it was an important restoration by the museum. While the interior has partitions inserted into the first floor space, these partitions are temporary, are not full height, the full volume of the interior space is discernable, and the stage has not been altered.

The building retains the workmanship of the citizens from 1914 to 1922. The Neosho Village Hall's continued use by the Neosho/Rubicon Historical Society as a museum extends its association as a community center.

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACTIVITIES**

The building is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places by the historical society that occupies the building and has long been involved in the history of this community. The historical society maintains and preserves the building as a museum, and it continues to be a place for community activity.

\_\_\_End of Statement of Significance

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Neosho Village Hall  
Neosho, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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Dodge County Independent-News Inc., "Clear Water Gave Neosho Its Name" 7-15-1976, pg 12.

The Hartford Press 12-10-1909, pg. 8.

The Hartford Press, 10-14-1910, pg. 8.

*The history of Dodge county, Wisconsin, containing ... its early settlement, growth ... an extensive and minute sketch of its cities ... war record, biographical sketches.* Chicago, Western Historical Company, 1880.

Hubbell, Homer Bishop, *Dodge County, Wisconsin, past and present.* Chicago: S.J. Clarke, 1913.

The Hustisford News, 10-9-1914, pg. 4.

McAlester, Virginia Savage, *A Field Guide to American Houses: The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America's Domestic Architecture.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014.

Minutes of the Neosho Fire Department, November 3, 1922. On file in the Neosho/Rubicon Historical Society, Neosho, WI.

The Neosho Standard, 4-3-1908, pg. 1.

Neosho/ Rubicon Historical Society Archives, "Neosho's Village Hall Stage Was The Home Of Many Theatrical Productions."

Neosho/Rubicon Historical Society Archives, "Sears Roebuck Catalog" date unknown.

*Remembering the Past, Rubicon Township Sesquicentennial 1846-1996.* Published by citizens of the Town of Rubicon, 1998.

Village of Neosho Treasurer's records, 1914, 1922. On file in the Neosho/Rubicon Historical Society, Neosho, WI.

*Watertown Daily Times*, "Neosho Village Hall will become museum", pg. 6, June 23, 1989

Wyatt, Barbara ed., *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin.* Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986.

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Neosho Village Hall  
Neosho, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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**Verbal Boundary Description:**

The verbal boundary description for this property is: Beginning at the intersection of a point 12 feet north of the northwest corner of Lot 1, Block 5 and the south lot line of the property, then north 100 feet along the west lot line to the intersection with the north lot line, then east 40 feet along the north lot line to the intersection with the east lot line, then south 100 feet along the east lot line to the intersection with the south lot line, then west 40 feet along the south lot line to the place of beginning.

**Boundary Justification:**

The nominated boundary corresponds to the parcel and includes all of the land historically associated with this building since its date of construction.

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Section photos Page 1

Neosho Village Hall  
Neosho, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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Name of Property:	Neosho Village Hall
City or Vicinity:	Neosho
County:	Dodge County
State:	WI
Name of Photographer:	Leah Penzkover
Date of Photographs:	June 2017
Location of Original Digital Files:	Historic Preservation Office, Wisconsin Historical Society, 816 State St. Madison, Wisconsin 53706

WI\_Dodge County\_Neosho Village Hall\_0001  
Site view, north elevation (left) and west elevation (right), camera facing southeast.

WI\_Dodge County\_Neosho Village Hall\_0002  
North elevation, camera facing southeast.

WI\_Dodge County\_Neosho Village Hall\_0003  
North and west elevation, camera facing southeast.

WI\_Dodge County\_Neosho Village Hall\_0004  
South elevation, camera facing northwest.

WI\_Dodge County\_Neosho Village Hall\_0005  
West elevation, camera facing east.

WI\_Dodge County\_Neosho Village Hall\_0006  
East elevation, camera facing northwest.

WI\_Dodge County\_Neosho Village Hall\_0007  
North elevation, lower level, original fire department opening, camera facing southeast.

WI\_Dodge County\_Neosho Village Hall\_0008  
Interior main hall from the northeast corner of the stage.

WI\_Dodge County\_Neosho Village Hall\_0009  
Interior main hall from the northwest corner of the stage.

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Neosho Village Hall  
Neosho, Dodge County, Wisconsin

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WI\_Dodge County\_Neosho Village Hall\_0010  
Interior, view of west side of hall.

WI\_Dodge County\_Neosho Village Hall\_0011  
Interior, view of east side of stage.

WI\_Dodge County\_Neosho Village Hall\_0012  
Interior, lower level restroom in storage area.

WI\_Dodge County\_Neosho Village Hall\_0013  
Interior, lower level west side of municipal garage.

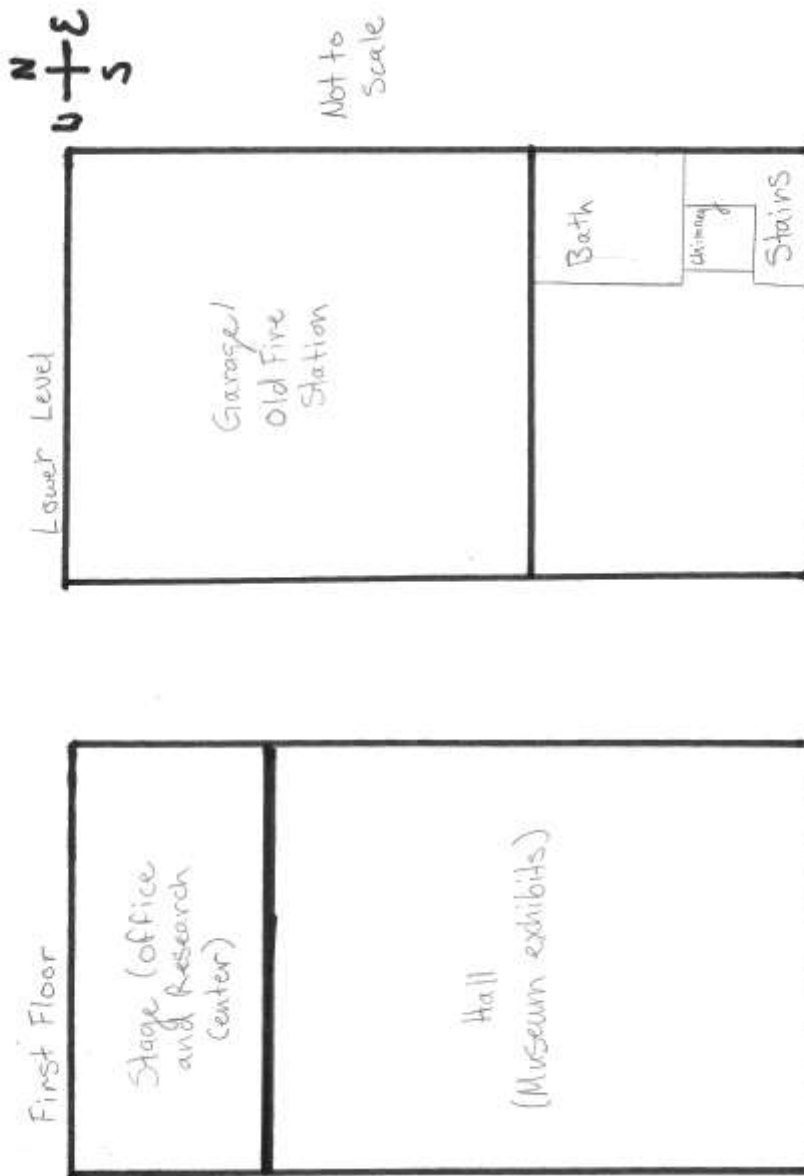
**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

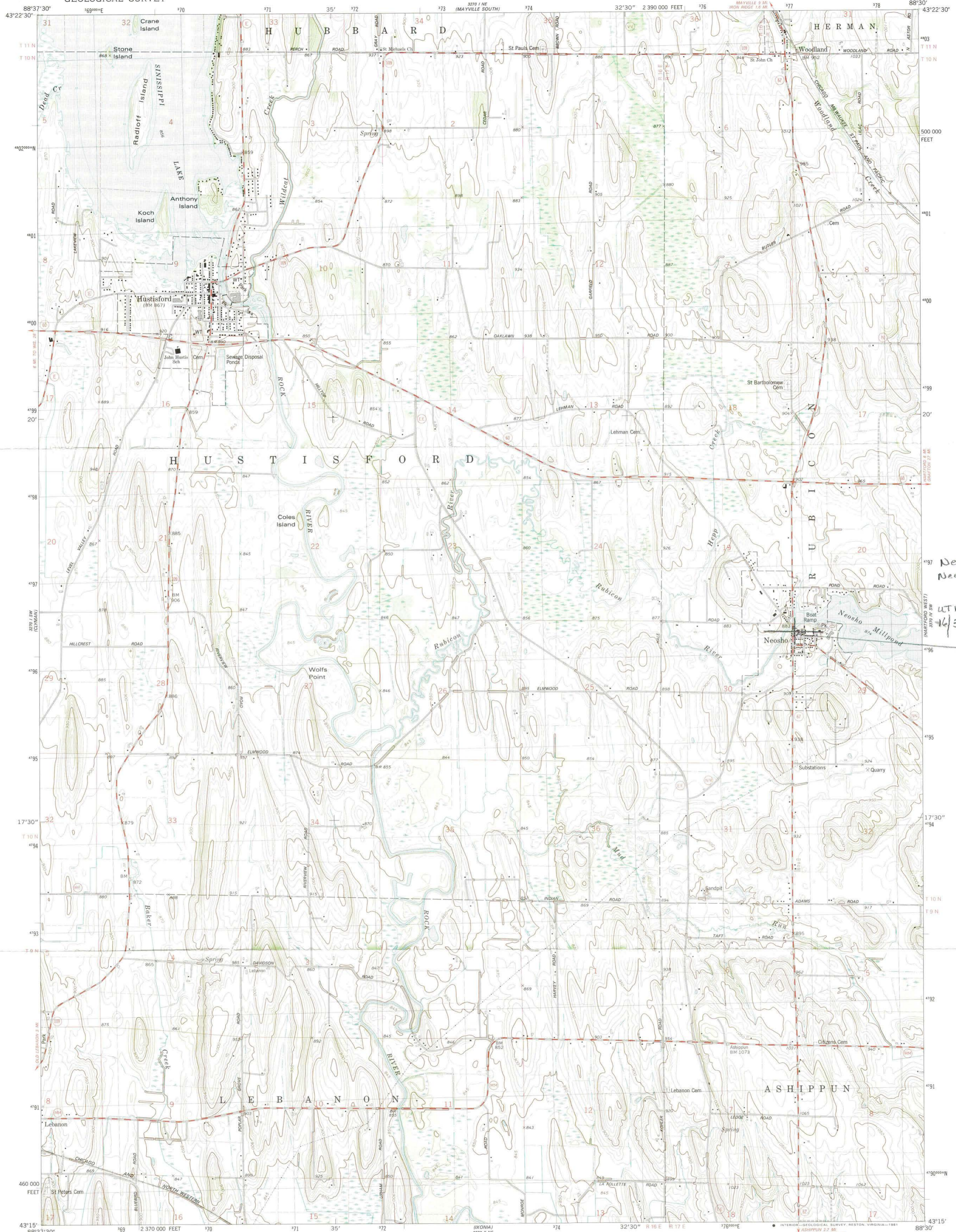
**National Register of Historic Places**  
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Neosho Village Hall  
Neosho, Dodge County, Wisconsin

**Neosho Village Hall, Neosho, Dodge County, Wisconsin**

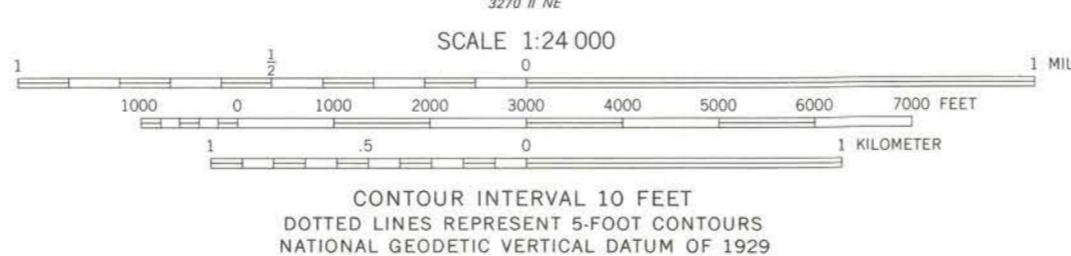
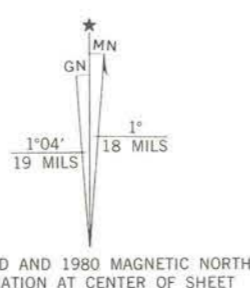




Neosho Village Hall  
Neosho, Dodge Co.  
Wisconsin  
UTM Ref:  
16J376880/4796250

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA  
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1975. Field checked 1976. Map edited 1980  
Hydrography compiled from information furnished by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Wisconsin coordinate system, south zone (Lambert conformal conic)  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 16  
1927 North American Datum  
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 4 meters north and 8 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



Primary highway, hard surface ——— Light-duty road, hard or improved surface ———  
Secondary highway, hard surface ——— Unimproved road ———  
○ Interstate Route □ U. S. Route ○ State Route

HUSTISFORD, WIS.  
824 HORIZON 19 QUADRANGLE  
N4315-W8830/7.5

1980

DMA 3270 1 SE—SERIES W861

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
AND WISCONSIN GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY, MADISON, WISCONSIN 53706  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST







FIRE DEPT.  
FILL SITE



FIRE DEPT.  
FILL SITE

MUSEUM  
Open 1-4





NEOSHO-RUBICON  
Old Village Hall  
MUSEUM

Open 1-4 May-Oct 1st & 4th SUNDAY

NO PARKING  
EXCEPT ON SUNDAY







ONE PRICE STORE

CHURCHES





OLYMPIAN DENNIS HALL

CHURCHES

TT TRAILER CO. INC.





CASHIER

FDIC

IRON RIDGE  
FIRE

NO SMOKING

BANKS



CHARLE  
MAY 1880  
MAY 1880

A PRAIRIE ROSE  
APRIL 20, 1922



Neosho/Rubicon  
Historical Society

Neosho/Rubicon  
Historical Society



THE WESTERN  
CHURCH  
WEEKLY CROSS

PIANO-FORTE



RESTROOM



VEOLIA  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
SERVICES

**CAUTION!**  
NO SLEDDING AND RED POSTS!  
ROCKS & DROPPED BELOW

S SCH

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 8/7/2018      Date of Pending List: 8/27/2018      Date of 16th Day: 9/11/2018      Date of 45th Day: 9/21/2018      Date of Weekly List: 9/21/2018

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept       Return       Reject      9/21/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary  
Comments:

Recommendation/  
Criteria

Reviewer Barbara Wyatt      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2252      Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



WISCONSIN  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY



TO: Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Peggy Veregin  
National Register Coordinator

SUBJECT: National Register Nomination

The following materials are submitted on this Sixth day of August 2018, for the nomination of the Neosho Village Hall to the National Register of Historic Places:

1	Original National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form
1	CD with NRHP Nomination form PDF
	Multiple Property Nomination form
13	Photograph(s)
1	CD with image files
1	Map(s)
1	Sketch map(s)/figures(s)/exhibit(s)
	Piece(s) of correspondence
	Other:

COMMENTS:

	Please ensure that this nomination is reviewed
	This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
	The enclosed owner objection(s) do or do not constitute a majority of property owners
	Other: