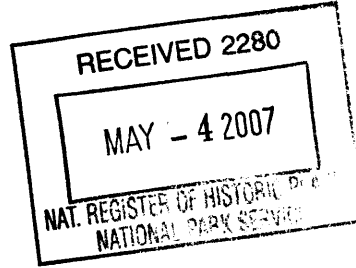


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**United States Department of Interior
National Park Service**



**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 Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 55 West Montello Street

city or town Montello

state Wisconsin code WI county Marquette

N/A

N/A

code 077

not for publication

vicinity

zip code 53949

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.)

5/3/07

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer - 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

Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop

Marquette County

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:)

Edson H. Beall

6-12-07

for

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

building(s)
 district
 structure
 site
 object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

<input type="checkbox"/> contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> noncontributing
1	0 buildings
	sites
	structures
	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 is previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/specialty store

RECREATION AND CULTURE/ MUSIC FACILITY

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/ MUSEUM

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & early 20th Century American Movements

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Concrete

walls Concrete

roof Metal

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)

Entertainment and Recreation

Architecture

Period of Significance

1912-1940

Significant Dates

1912

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Ben Neck & Bros.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop

Marquette County

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

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.)

name/title	Sarah McNamara, President	date	March 7, 2003
organization	Montello Historic Preservation Society	telephone	608-297-7168
street&number	55 West Montello Street, P.O. Box 473	zip code	53949
city or town	Montello	state	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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Continuation Sheet

Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin

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DESCRIPTION

The 1912 J.P. Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop is a two-story building located at 55 West Montello Street in Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin. The block is bounded, clockwise around the block, by West Park Street on the north side, West Street on the east, Montello Street on the south, and Underwood Avenue on the west. Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop sits on the southwest corner of the block.

Basically commercial vernacular in style, the two-story building is distinguished by its transitional stylistic mix of Colonial Revival and Queen Anne architectural elements, and by structural use of a relatively new technology, that being the concrete block. The building measures 36 feet, 9 inches wide at the West Montello side, and 76 feet, 2 inches long on the façade facing toward Underwood Avenue. The addition at the back measures 31 feet, 1 inch wide, and 28 feet, 5 inches long at the west side facing Underwood and, because West Street angles into Montello Street, 27 feet, 10 inches long on the east side facing toward Park Street. The square footage is approximately 2,849 square feet.

Vaughn's Hall is rectangular in shape and finished on all four sides and has always sat apart from nearby commercial buildings on Montello Street, which is in one of the City of Montello's primary commercial areas.

The exterior of the building is constructed of concrete block, varying in the size of the blocks, but mainly 16 inches wide by eight inches high. The hipped roof is of frame construction and covered with metal roofing. The foundation beneath the entire building is a concrete slab.

The front exterior wall, the front façade facing West Montello Street set on a corner in the downtown commercial area, is of concrete block. At street level, there is an entrance door at the center, flanked by large business display windows. On the second floor are three openings for double-hung windows. The center window is closed. A 1950s photograph shows that the openings remain unchanged. The original display windows consisted of two vertical lights. The display windows are currently single pane display windows. The second floor windows have a rounded upper sash, although these are set in rectangular openings.

Exceptions to the basic concrete block form on this façade are bull's-eye round blocks in the wall above each display window, a recessed band of block at the sill level of the three windows on the second floor, and five rectangular blocks near the top of the wall. Above the two stories is a dormer with a window. Historically, the window contained two vertical panes topped by a fan light. Most of the window has now been boarded over. Around the arched window are wood shingles cut in diamond and elongated hexagonal shapes. The roof above is hipped, with the dormer extending from the front.

Along the first floor of the west facing wall, the side façade facing toward Underwood Avenue, from south to north, are three double-hung windows, a door and one more window. At mid-level on the façade closest to West Montello Street is an exit door (formerly associated with a fire escape). Along the second story are four double-hung windows. These windows are new, but they replace earlier double hung windows.

The north facing wall, the back façade facing toward Park Street, was originally a concrete block wall. Because of a 1970s addition, only the second floor of the original building shows. There are three evenly spaced double-hung windows at the second floor.

Along the first floor of the east facing wall, the side façade facing toward West Street, from south to north are a display

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Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop
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window, four double-hung windows, a door space originally shaped as an equipment entrance, and two more double hung windows. Along the second floor are five unevenly spaced double-hung windows. Decorative concrete blocks on this façade are seven bull's-eye circle-shaped blocks above the first floor windows and door, and six rectangular-shaped blocks at the roofline. The windows along this façade are also recent replacements. The windows visible in the 1950s photograph indicate double hung windows on the second floor and a combination of multipaned widows on the first floor.

The first floor interior of the original building is one room, a medium-size open space originally used as a blacksmith shop. The second floor, which was the "hall" for various sorts of community entertainments, is seemingly intact. The walls and ceiling are covered with 14 different styles of pressed steel panels with designs from Victorian to Arts and Crafts to pieces reminiscent of the work of the Chicago architect Louis Sullivan (1856-1924). The walls of the stairway from the first floor are also covered with pressed steel panels. At the back of the hall are, at floor level, a ticket booth and a restroom with a toilet and marble sink, and, above, a narrow balcony with an opening for a woodstove. At the front of the hall, next to the side of the building facing Montello Street, is a stage reached by sets of four steps at either side. An early fire curtain and scenic side drops are in place. Two of the drops are double-sided. The drops were made by the Simon Curtain Co. of Green Bay, Wisconsin.

ALTERATIONS

The front windows and a display window on the side facing West Street have been changed. In a photo from the 1920s, the original windows remained. A photo from the 1950s shows the original tall narrow windows replaced by large show windows (Abstract). In the 1970s—1974 or 1975, Vaughn's Hall was enlarged with a one-story addition at the back of the building. The addition is made of concrete block. In 2004, Roger Vesperman of Riva Architects LLC, Waupun, Wisconsin, provided an interior plan for bathrooms in the back addition (Riva). In 2005, a second stairs was added from the first floor to the second.

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Section 8 Page 1

Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: SUMMARY

The 1912 Vaughn's Hall & Blacksmith Shop is being nominated under Criterion A for a property associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history in the area of Entertainment and Recreation and Criterion C for its local significance in the area of Architecture as an example of the new methods and materials of construction available to builders in the early twentieth century. The building was completed by Ben Neck & Bros. in 1912 at one of those pivotal periods when technologies and cultural patterns are changing--widespread use of new building technologies, the wider use of automobiles for transportation, the introduction of basketball as a sport. The period of significance spans the years from 1912, when the building was completed, to 1928. Vaughn died in 1928 and the building was sold. The exact designer is unknown. The builder and maker of the concrete block was Ben Neck and Bros. of Montello.

HISTORY OF MONTELLO, WISCONSIN

Montello itself dates to June 1849 with the arrival of the first white settlers (Portrait and Biographical Album: pages 298 ff). Before that, the area was populated by the Ho-Chunk Indians (Loew 2001: 40). A few months later, a gathering of "half a dozen" settlers produced the name Montello, because one of the attendees, Joseph R. Dartt, "had read of 'Montello' in a novel..." Montello was incorporated as a village in 1868.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF MONTELLO

By 1912, when John Vaughn built his new blacksmith shop and hall, Montello had been a commercial center for the surrounding area for some 40 years. Typical Montello businesses in 1890, the year of publication for the Portrait and Biographical Album, with histories of Green Lake, Marquette and Waushara counties, were drugstores, general stores, farm implement dealers, dry goods, lumber, jewelry stores, combination furniture dealers and undertakers, mills, and above all, the Berlin and Montello Granite Company (Portrait and Biographical Album: pages 300 ff). The granite quarry was at "The Hill," a rounded mound of pink granite, "1/3 mile long, 40 feet high, medium grain, close texture..." Montello Granite was honored at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, shipped around the United States, used for Grant's Tomb in New York, and a major source for prosperity in Montello, with a peak employment of 200 men in 1909 (Montello Commercial Historic District).

DESIGN OF THE BUILDING

By May 10, 1912, the *Montello Express* reported, John Vaughn's new building was progressing rapidly and the first story was complete (Montello Express: unnumbered 5). About one month later, the same newspaper, in its June 14 edition, in a local news column, mentioned that the building was "fast nearing completion. The roof is all on and the work of putting in the cement floor will be finished this week, and the floor in the second story will also be finished. The putting on of the steel ceiling and side walls will be started at once" (Montello Express: unnumbered 5). A grand opening was celebrated with a dance on Friday evening, June 28 (Montello Express: unnumbered 4).

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Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin

USE OF CONCRETE BLOCK

The most notable feature of the architecture of Vaughn's Hall & Blacksmith Shop is its construction employing imitative architectural materials, mass-produced and thus newly affordable. The hall is constructed of cast concrete block, primarily rock-faced, with a dozen different styles for detailing. The interior is embellished with a ceiling and walls of pressed steel sheets, commonly referred to as tin, in several styles, including Sullivanesque.

Context is provided by the definitive work on the topic, *Quick Cheap, & Easy: Imitative Architectural Materials, 1870-1930* by Pamela H. Simpson (1999). Simpson covers concrete block, ornamental sheet metal, metal ceilings, linoleum, embossed ceilings and walls, and other faux materials. Wisconsin context is provided by *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin: Volume 2*, edited by Barbara Wyatt (1986)

Concrete was known in Roman times, but its large-scale use did not return until the early twentieth century. In 1875 natural cement beds were found in Milwaukee, one of the few major sources of natural cement in the entire Midwest. By the early 1900s, the deposit was depleted, and Milwaukee's cement industry was transformed, making the city a major distribution rather than producer of bulk cement products (Wyatt 1986:2.11-2.12). A series of patented processes improved the quality of cement in the nineteenth century and according to Simpson (1986:10-11) "Great Britain was the major producer of cement for most of the nineteenth century." In the last decade of the nineteenth century and first decade of the twentieth century, however "a series of technological improvements increased production, lowered costs, and improved quality" making American cement more available and competitive. In 1905, the Portland Cement Association was established to promote the use of Portland cement, and "one of the forms they recommended was concrete block" (Simpson 1986:11).

Wyatt (1986:4.8) summarizes the use of grout (made of lime, sand and gravel), early experiments with precast concrete block, and a patent issued to two Wisconsin men. Simpson explains, however that while there were a number of patents issued for casting concrete blocks from the 1870s onward, virtually no blocks were actually produced in the nineteenth century. Again, technological developments were a crucial factor in making this building material widely available. In 1900 Harmon S. Palmer patented a practical cast iron machine for the production of hollow core concrete blocks. Palmer's machine allowed the block-maker to throw a lever and release the block, as soon as it had been formed, greatly speeding production (Simpson 1999:11,13). "Palmer started the Hollow Building Block Company in 1902, making four hundred block making machines that year which sold for two hundred dollars each. Notwithstanding Palmer's patent, "by 1907, over a hundred companies were producing this type of machine, or variations on it (Simpson 1999:14)." Palmer's method made hollow concrete blocks easy to manufacture and affordable. His machine was widely imitated and inexpensive, allowing individual builders to buy one. Thus small builders, such as Ben Neck & Bros., the builders of Vaughn's Hall, could readily afford a block-making machine and manufacture their own blocks. Indeed, most Wisconsin producers of concrete block or artificial stone were small firms. The U.S. Census of Manufactures of 1910 records there were in Wisconsin 119 such firms employing 377 wage earners (U.S. Census 1910: 9.1332)

The explosive growth of concrete block or artificial stone manufacture is recorded in the U.S. Census of Manufactures released in 1910. The industry was so small in 1899 that no data was collected. By 1904 records that in Wisconsin there were 20 firms with 93 persons engaged in the new industry. By 1909, there were 119 firms with 548 persons engaged in the industry (U.S. Census 1910: 9.1351).

The explosion of interest in concrete construction in the first decade of the twentieth century is evident also in the development of trade associations, "regional workshops, national advertising, trade catalogues and pattern books" (Simpson

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Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop
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1999:11). Evidence of interest in this topic at the University of Wisconsin-Madison remains in the libraries that, in the first decade of the twentieth century, acquired numerous books on concrete construction, including those specifically on hollow concrete blocks. Books still remaining on the shelves include: *How to Manufacture Hollow Concrete Blocks* by Paul Wilkes (1905), *Hollow Concrete Block Building Construction* by Spencer Newberry (1905), *Concrete Block Houses* by Henry Wittekind (1905), *The Manufacture of Concrete Blocks and Their Use in Building Construction* by Harmon Rice and William Torrance (1906), *Practical Concrete Block Making* by Charles Paliser (1908), and the *Manual of Reinforced Concrete Block Construction* by Charles March and William Dunn (1908).

Hollow concrete block construction is more complex than it might at first seem. The hollow blocks were not a solid material, like brick or stone, and could not be cut to fit on site by a mason, as some inexperienced masons tried to do. Likewise, some builders who were unfamiliar with the material constructed buildings that were not structurally sound. The blocks had to fit the plans perfectly. For example, special blocks were required at corners and door and window openings, in addition to any ornamental elements. Rice and Torrance (1906: 59) recommended that architects and engineers run the block manufacturing plants. Thus, in addition to economics, another reason for Ben Neck & Bros. to produce their own blocks, as well as build with them, was to provide a better integration of the processes of design, production and construction.

Vaughn's Hall is primarily of rock-face, also known as pitch-face, construction. Nationally, this was the most popular style of block. Rice and Torrance assailed rock-faced block (See also Rice 1906:54-55, 126-129): "...the patterns adopted are too much alike, and there are no sharp corners as in cut stone; this makes the wall look as though it were faced with galvanized iron, stamped to imitate rock faced flocks, and the paints with sand paint...that the concrete presents such a poor appearance when wet, etc." (Rice and Torrance 1905:3) Such sentiments were widespread among architects and architectural critics. Simpson concludes that "while architects and critics rejected the idea of block imitating quarried stone, ordinary people seemed to think it was just fine." (Simpson 1999:25).

Harvey Whipple, in his book on *Concrete Stone Manufacture of 1918*, condemns rock-face blocks "not because it is an imitation, but because it fails to imitate" (Simpson 1999:25). One of Simpson's most significant insights is that for the ordinary people who bought materials such as rock-faced concrete block, there was no intent to fool people with an imitation; rather the design of the material was an allusion (Simpson 1999:52). In Montello, built around a granite quarry, no one would have thought the rock-faced blocks of Vaughn's Hall were stone, but they may have appreciated the allusion to it.

A range of molds and wide variety of plates used in the molds could create a wide variety of blocks. Rice and Torrance (1905:97) suggest using other creative techniques such as embossed thick oiled cardboard, intended as a wall covering (similar to Lincrusta) in the molds for special effects.

Vaughn's Hall is constructed primarily of rock-faced blocks. However, in addition to lintels and sills, more than a dozen other styles and forms of concrete block were employed. The top of the wall is embellished with a series of bands of various types of block including those with bulls-eyes and others with chamfered edges.

USE OF PRESSED STEEL PANELS

The dominant architectural embellishment of the interior of Vaughn's Hall is the embossed sheet steel ceilings and walls, often referred to as tin. There are several sources of the term tin in referring to this material. In the late eighteenth and early

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Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop
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nineteenth centuries iron plates were tin plated to resist rust. In the nineteenth century tin smiths and tin shops worked with all kinds of thin sheet metal, popularly referred to as tin. In the twentieth century, however, tin became a disparaging term, meaning cheap (Simpson 1999:32, 71).

Simpson (1999:30-74) provides an excellent context for understanding the history sheet metal architectural materials. Again technology played a central role in making metal ceilings widely affordable. In the 1880s improvements in the steel mills greatly increased the supply and reduced the cost of sheet steel. Another technological innovation, in 1888, replaced the earlier technology of embossed zinc ornaments fastened to an iron base, with large thin sheets of steel stamped in a die-press (Simpson 1999:34, 57). According to Simpson, (1999:41): "...sheet-metal ornament reached the peak of its popularity in the last decade of the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth centuries throughout North America. If anything, its success as interior cladding for ceilings and walls was even greater than for exterior work..."

Another key technological development that led to the rapid growth of popularity of metal ceilings occurred in the printing industry. The development of half-tone illustrations and reduced cost of production made it possible to present effectively the rich ornamentation to consumers. Metal ceiling manufacturers produced catalogs they sent to contractors with the intention of catching the eye of consumers (Simpson 1999:46, 48).

Manufacturers also promoted the practical features of metal ceilings and walls. In an era of increasing concern for hygiene, metal surfaces were promoted as sanitary. They were also promoted as highly fire resistant, which they were not, unless an earlier plaster ceiling was above them.

Manufacturers employed artists and skilled craftsmen to create the dies used to stamp the metal. For inspiration, the artists frequently drew on sources such as the large illustrated portfolios of monumental European buildings. A search yielded the catalogs of two Wisconsin firms: the Milwaukee Artistic Ceiling Company's *Artistic Interior Decorations in Metal* of 1906, and the La Crosse Steel Roofing and Corrugating Company's *Manufacturers Steel Ceilings* of the 1930s. Neither of these catalogs contained any of the many designs of ceiling and wall panels identical to those found in Vaughn Hall, but they did contain similar products. The La Crosse firm characterized the styles as Gothic, French Renaissance and Colonial. The Milwaukee firm characterized its styles as Gothic, French Renaissance, Louis XIV, L'Art Nouveau, Colonial, and Romanesque.

Again, the intention of these sheet metal ceiling and walls is allusion, not imitation intended to fool the viewer. No one would have believed that the ceiling of Vaughn's Hall was actually made of molded plaster as sophisticated as those of a French Renaissance chateau, but the viewer would have understood the allusion to the grandest buildings of Europe.

The interior of Vaughn's Hall employs at least 14 designs of pressed metal. The ceiling is covered with two basic types of designs. One type is decorated with large squares of neo-classical swags surrounding a central modillion. The second type, of which there are three designs, is decorated with small squares or diamonds with a dot, floret or cloverleaf in the center. The neo-classical style cornice is comprised of three styles of narrow panels. Below the cornice is a frieze embossed with Renaissance strap-work. Door openings are accented with narrow panels of embossed circles. In an allusion to France, the walls are covered with vertical panels embossed with the fleur de lis, connected by festoons of beads on which are suspended a modillion with ribbons and a two-handled neo-classical vase. In other areas, the design consists of wide and narrow vertical bands of foliate decoration. The most interesting panels are those with an unmistakable Sullivan-esque design--after the work of the Chicago architect Louis Sullivan (1856-1924), the "tree of life," probably the product of a Midwest firm. The "tree of life" motif was much used by progressive Chicago architects of the late 19th and early 20th

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Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop
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centuries like Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright, George W. Maher and others. The motif comes from the Book of Revelation in the Bible and speaks of and represents knowledge (Neret: 59).

Wisconsin's Architecture and History Inventory, which continues to be updated and expanded, records 860 concrete block buildings in Wisconsin. It also records an additional 545 rock-faced concrete block buildings. These buildings are located widely across the state from south to north; in Milwaukee, mid-sized cities, small villages, and farms. These buildings comprise houses, commercial buildings, stores, banks, hotels, offices, theaters, gas stations, cheese factories and creameries, fraternal halls, and churches of Roman Catholic, Episcopal and various Protestant denominations, and a synagogue. Together, the concrete block and rock-faced concrete block, include eleven meeting halls, most of them fraternal halls, and not public halls like Vaughn's Hall.

Despite the wide distribution of this important method of construction across the state, in Wisconsin, only 150 concrete block and rock-faced concrete block buildings are listed on the National Register, almost all of them as part of districts. The concrete structures that have been recognized with individual listing include the Belmont Hotel of 1909, in Pardeeville, Columbia County, also constructed by the Neck Brothers of Montello to a design by architect Charles H. Williams (Bernstein 1992). Another of these listings is the Mathey Building of 1916, a small general store in Lena, Oconto County, built by employees of N.C. Netzer of Lena. Netzer, a leading businessman with two farms totaling 240 acres, a mill, agricultural implements dealership, general store and grocery, employed 18 men in manufacturing concrete block and other concrete products (Rucker 1998).

USE OF VAUGHN'S HALL & BLACKSMITH SHOP

Not long before he built his new building, John P. Vaughn was described at age 47 or so as a blacksmith and horseshoer in a booster brochure (Montello... Thriving: 20). Vaughn, wrote an unidentified writer from nearby Portage, "conducts a model and well-equipped blacksmith, horseshoeing and wagon shop, and also does wagon repairing..." His chief competitor blacksmith and horseshoer, A. McDonnell, also had, according to the same booster brochure, "A well-equipped blacksmith shop," one housed in a shop "45 feet long, 38 feet wide at one end and 24 feet wide at one end and 24 feet at the other, built of cement blocks..." Surely Mr. McDonnell's fine building had much to do with John Vaughn's decision to also have a concrete-block building. These buildings were increasingly popular in the area, thanks to the availability of block from the Neck family's business in Montello. Vaughn, however, decided at some critical point to go farther. He sensed that Montello could use another entertainment hall. The existing such hall was the Montello Opera House (now the Montello Theater) at 34 East Montello Street, several blocks to the east of where Vaughn would build. So he planned, likely with the assistance of the Necks, a two-story building with a "hall" above.

After its opening events, Vaughn's Hall continued to be a place of entertainment. In various issues of the *Montello Express*, John Vaughn is found announcing a "grand Harvest Ball" (August 13, 1912), which drew the "largest crowd that has attended a dancing party in Montello in many a day"—total attendance 95 "numbers sold." A week or so later (August 23, 1912), Vaughn announced a Leap Year party. Then followed a Labor Day ball, a Thanksgiving ball, and a New Year's ball. Events upstairs diversified in February 1913 when the basketball teams of Montello and nearby Rio, Wisconsin, played in the hall. The next month, John Vaughn introduced roller skating to Vaughn's Hall. By the 1920s, community organizations were meeting in the hall—for example, a July 25, 1921, meeting for Catholic men and women, with Louis F. Nys, Superior, Wisconsin, giving a "talk in regard to the Catholic Order of Foresters organization."

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Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop
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Meanwhile, work in the blacksmith shop downstairs went on. In late November 1912, the *Express* reported that James Hollerup, nicknamed "Big Noise," had returned from Madison and was again employed by Vaughn. In early January (14) 1913, the *Express* noted that Vaughn was "confined to his house on account of injuring his knee by falling on the cement floor in the blacksmith shop." John Vaughn pursued his basic blacksmithing business in a changing, increasingly automobile-focused world. The work was randomly hazardous, as witnessed in this report from the *Montello Express* of August 15, 1919: "J.P. Vaughn met with a painful accident one day last week and one that will lay him up for some time. He was at work in his shop making some repairs with a sharp pointed iron when it slipped and nearly went through the palm of his left hand." Vaughn continued his work in the building as a blacksmith until five months before his death on June 9, 1928. In his obituary in the *Montello Express*, an anonymous writer told of Vaughn's having been sickly for two years. Finally, in the typical journalistic style of the time, this was reported: "...last Saturday death relieved him and the sufferer's spirit took its flight to the home beyond." He was 64 years old.

Not long after Vaughn's funeral, John Vaughn's widow, Anna, sold Vaughn's Hall & Blacksmith Shop to Anton and Paul Weiske on July 12, 1928 (Abstract). The Weiskes, who were brothers, used the building for their auto dealership. Soon enough basketball games were being played in the City Hall, and by 1940, Montello High School had its own gymnasium at the school at Clay and Cass streets (The Granite Hilltopper). In 1958, Anton Weiske, whose brother Paul had died in 1935, discontinued his business, the Weiske Garage, and sold the building to Hubert and Margaret Hill. The Hills used the building for their Ford and Mercury auto dealership until 1971. Subsequent uses were as a machine shop, 1971-75; hardware store, 1975-89, and various businesses, including liquidator outlet and auction house, 1989-2003. On March 7, 2003, the owner, the National Exchange Bank, donated the building to the nonprofit Montello Historic Preservation Society, which intends to open a museum on the first floor and preserve the second floor hall for community entertainment events and meetings.

Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop is significant in the area of architecture because it represents the adoption of new building materials and methods. Concrete blocks and pressed metal panels were relatively new materials that allowed local builders to add ornamentation at a relatively low cost with a mass produced product. Concrete blocks were popular because they could mimic other, more expensive materials. Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop retains a high level of integrity, with little alteration to the exterior block façade, or to the spaces using decorative pressed metal panels.

The building is also significant under criterion A as an important location of community entertainment. It was the site of dances, meetings, and of sporting events. Before the construction of large public high schools, which incorporated a gymnasium and an auditorium, in many communities these halls served an important role for school related events, such as sporting events and commencement exercises. In smaller communities throughout Wisconsin, public and private halls, such as Vaughn's, were important centers of cultural and civic life.

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Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated parcel corresponds with the legal boundary description: The legal description provided by the City of Montello lists Vaughn's Hall & Blacksmith Shop as located on Plat 0279 (Certified Survey Map [CSM]), Block Condo, Lot 1 (CSM 279), occupying .09 acres.

Boundary Justification:

The justification for the boundary is the extent of the property owned by the Montello Historic Preservation Society. Proceeding from Montello Street, the boundaries are: From the curb at the southwest corner of Montello and West Streets, proceeding west for 41 feet, 8 inches; turning north along the west side of the building to the northern property line for 109 feet, 10 inches; turning east along the property line for 35 feet, 6 inches; turning south at the West Street curb for 32 feet, three inches; continuing south on West Street as West Street angles into Montello Street for 80 feet, 17 inches.

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Photo #1 of 11

Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop
Montello, Marquette County, WI
Photo by Donald M. Aucutt, February 2006
Neg. at Wisconsin Historical Society
View looking north

Photo #2 of 11

Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop
Montello, Marquette County, WI
Photo by Donald M. Aucutt, February 2006
Neg. at Wisconsin Historical Society
View looking east

Photo #3 of 11

Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop
Montello, Marquette County, WI
Photo by Donald M. Aucutt, February 2006
Neg. at Wisconsin Historical Society
View looking south

Photo #4 of 11

Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop
Montello, Marquette County, WI
Photo by Donald M. Aucutt, February 2006
Neg. at Wisconsin Historical Society
View looking west

Photo #5 of 11

Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop
Montello, Marquette County, WI
Photo by Donald M. Aucutt, June 2006
Neg. at Wisconsin Historical Society
Interior view, first floor looking north

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Photo #6 of 11

Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop
Montello, Marquette County, WI
Photo by Donald M. Aucutt, June 2006
Neg. at Wisconsin Historical Society
Interior view, second floor looking north

Photo #7 of 11

Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop
Montello, Marquette County, WI
Photo by Donald M. Aucutt, June 2006
Neg. at Wisconsin Historical Society
Interior view, second floor looking south

Photo #8 of 11

Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop
Montello, Marquette County, WI
Photo by Donald M. Aucutt, June 2006
Neg. at Wisconsin Historical Society
Interior view, second floor looking south at stage

Photo #9 of 11

Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop
Montello, Marquette County, WI
Photo by Donald M. Aucutt, June 2006
Neg. at Wisconsin Historical Society
Interior view, second floor, pressed steel panels on wall and ceiling

Photo #10 of 11

Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop
Montello, Marquette County, WI
Photo by Donald M. Aucutt, June 2006
Neg. at Wisconsin Historical Society
Interior view, second floor, pressed steel panels on ceiling

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Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop
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Photo #11 of 11

Vaughn's Hall and Blacksmith Shop

Montello, Marquette County, WI

Photo by Donald M. Aucutt, June 2006

Neg. at Wisconsin Historical Society

Interior view, second floor, pressed steel Sullivanesque panels with "tree of life" motif