

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUN 1978
DATE ENTERED	SEP 18 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Temple Zion and School

AND/OR COMMON
The History Workshop (Outagamie County Historical Society)

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
320 N. Durkee Street (school: 309 E. Harris Street) NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN
Appleton VICINITY OF _____ CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Eighth

STATE
Wisconsin CODE 55 COUNTY Outagamie CODE 087

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Outagamie County Historical Society, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER
320 North Durkee Street

CITY, TOWN
Appleton VICINITY OF _____ STATE
Wisconsin 54911

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Outagamie County Register of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER
410 South Walnut Street

CITY, TOWN
Appleton VICINITY OF _____ STATE
Wisconsin 54911

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places

DATE
1977 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS State Historical Society of Wisconsin

CITY, TOWN
Madison VICINITY OF _____ STATE
Wisconsin 53706

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Temple Zion is a 42 by 67 foot frame structure with a gable roof. The main (west) facade is dominated by a squat center-front tower with a mansard roof and a jerkin-headed dormer. The tower is flanked by gable-roofed entrance wings. The main block of the temple is four bays deep with an apse-like structure at the rear. The building rests on a rubble foundation.

All facades incorporate stick-style elements. Clapboarded surfaces are taut, framed with vertical and horizontal "stickwork"; below the windows are panels of thin vertical boards. Windows and doorways all are in the form of Gothic lancets. Other embellishments to the building are a frieze on the tower with a rinceau motif, carved brackets in all eaves, curved truss design with rosettes and imbricated shingling in the entrances' gable ends, and gable hoods incorporating the lancet motif and supported by ornate carved brackets over the doors.

Although the exterior of the building looks substantially as it did when constructed, a number of decorative elements have been lost over time. Cresting has been removed from the tower and the gable entrances. Stained glass casement windows, with the exception of a single panel above the southernmost front door, have been lost, most of them having been sold during the Depression. Ornate carved doors have been replaced with plain ones. A circular stained glass window emblazoned with a pair of Torah scrolls, which was centered above the pair of lancets on the tower, was removed, and along with it some of the tower's "stickwork." Graceful stone stairs at both entrances also have been lost.

Little remains of the temple's original interior, apart from hardwood floors and a Felgemaker organ donated by the Zion Ladies Sewing Circle in 1907. The First Assembly of God's 1950's renovation project covered the walls and ceiling with fiberboard, and added a full basement to the building.

The Outagamie County Historical Society is committed to the preservation of the building. The society has done little to the interior of the building and uses the main floor as a museum. The choir loft is enclosed and used for office space. The basement will house a research library, darkroom, and a publications department. Last summer the society gave the building a much-needed paint job, rendering it appropriately in a polychromatic scheme.

Temple Zion school is a simple frame building 16 by 30 feet with a gable roof. The school is clapboarded and painted white. Stylistic embellishments include molded architraves and a triangular hood on brackets with a bell-shaped motif over the door.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) ethnic; association with im- portant individuals.
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1883, 1884

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Henry G. Ashman / Charles Hove

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Temple Zion and its school are significant to the history of Appleton as the focus of the city's important early German-Jewish community. Architecturally, with its exposed vertical and horizontal framing and taut surfaces, Temple Zion is a fine Wisconsin interpretation of the characteristically American exploitation of the qualities of wood in construction. Remaining buildings which resemble the east coast stick style are rare in Wisconsin, especially in religious architecture. The building's design reflects the liberality of Zion Congregation and the congregation's desire to be an integral part of Appleton society; the history of the building's construction and dedication testifies to the Jewish community's acceptance in that society. Temple Zion is also interesting for its association with three important individuals: Mayor David Hammel, Harry Houdini, and Edna Ferber.

Zion Congregation was formed in the 1850's by a group of German-Jewish immigrants to Appleton. In following decades the German-Jewish community grew and became established, and members of the congregation achieved positions of importance and responsibility in Appleton. Most notable among them was David Hammel, a horse-and-cattle dealer who served repeatedly as mayor of the city in the 1890's; Hammel was president of the congregation and chairman of the building committee when the temple and school were constructed in 1883 and 1884.

In 1874 the congregation hired its first rabbi, Mayer Samuel Weiss. Weiss had emigrated from Hungary that same year, and he brought with him a wife and an infant son, Erich. Young Erich grew up in Zion Congregation; later he would earn world-wide renown as the great escape artist and illusionist, Harry Houdini. Rabbi Weiss remained with the congregation less than ten years, and although Temple Zion was planned during his tenure, he left for Milwaukee before its dedication. Weiss was not well suited to Zion Congregation which found his religious views too orthodox; moreover, the liberal congregation wanted a rabbi who could preach in English and Weiss could not.

Planning for the temple began in 1879. The building committee, composed of Marcus Lyons, Gabe Ullman, and David Hammel as chairman, engaged Charles Hove, a local architect, to design the edifice. Hove maintained an office in Appleton during the 1880's and designed the Volksfreund Building on the corner of Morrison Street and College Avenue (NRHP, 12-27-74). The committee accepted a design which reflected the congregation's liberal outlook. The temple is squat, like other nineteenth-century Wisconsin synagogues, although its Gothic lancet windows, more at home in a church because of their verticality and their medieval Christian connotations, seem out of place.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 0.2 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Appleton, Wis.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 16 388090 4910210210
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The north 60 feet of lot 1 and the west 41.1 feet of the north 60 feet of lot 2 in block 44, Appleton Plat, City of Appleton, Outagamie County, Wisconsin.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

David Donath, Historian; Katherine E. Hundt, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE

April 1978

STREET & NUMBER

816 State Street

TELEPHONE

608/262-3390

CITY OR TOWN

Madison

STATE

Wisconsin 53706

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Richard A. Erney

TITLE Richard A. Erney, Director

DATE

6/8/78

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

9/18/78

ATTEST

R. B. Rettig
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

Sept 13, 1978

William Lebovich
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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The citizens of Appleton lent appreciable encouragement to the building project. The list of subscribers to the building fund contains the names of several gentile pillars of the community. The new temple was completed by September 1883, and Appleton's citizenry, Jews and Gentiles both, turned out for the dedication ceremony; Mayor Richmond "opened the portals" at the event. The evening of Temple Zion's dedication "a crowd of Appleton's best and worthiest citizens" attended a festive banquet in celebration of Zion Congregation's new edifice. Rabbi Moses, who had delivered the dedication sermon, and the Reverend Mr. Banks, a member of Appleton's christian clergy, exchanged toasts to "the catholicity of true religion," to the demise of "the odium theologicum of the past," and to "religious liberty in America."¹

The following year Zion Congregation erected a small one-room school building directly to the rear of the temple, hoping to avoid the costs of heating the larger building when classes in Hebrew and biblical studies were being conducted.

Notable among the scholars who attended the school and temple was Edna Ferber. Ferber's family had moved to Appleton about 1897, when she was ten years old. Edna found the ecumenical atmosphere of Appleton to be a bright contrast to the anti-Semitism she and her family had experienced in their previous home, Ottumwa, Iowa. David Hammel was then mayor of the city, and in later life she remembered Appleton as "the American small town at its best." In her autobiography, A Peculiar Treasure, she devoted an entire chapter to her recollections of Temple Zion, which she called Temple Emanu-El.²

By the late 1920's, Zion Congregation was in decline. In 1932 the congregation sold the edifice to the First Assembly of God, which undertook major remodeling of the interior in the 1950's. In 1977 the Outagamie County Historic Society bought the buildings to house their museum, history workshop, and offices. The society is adeptly working a historical interpretation of Temple Zion into their reuse of the buildings, and Temple Zion will remain a visual focus of local history in the Appleton area.

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1. Appleton Weekly Crescent, September 8 and 22, 1883.
 2. Edna Ferber, A Peculiar Treasure (Garden City, New York, 1960), p. 68 and chapter 6.

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Kellogg, Carolyn. "This Was Temple Zion." Appleton, Wisconsin, 1977.

Marshall, Louis J. Reminiscences, 1964. Green Bay Area Research Center,
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"Profile, Harry Houdini." Wisconsin Then and Now. VI, September 1959.

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