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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 Herbster Community Center
other names/site number Herbster Gym; Clover Town Hall

2. Location

| | | | |
|-----------------|---|----------|---------------------|
| street & number | One block south of STH 13 on Lenawee Road | N/A | not for publication |
| city or town | Herbster | N/A | vicinity |
| state | Wisconsin | code WI | county Bayfield |
| | | code 007 | zip code 54844 |

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Signature of certifying official/Title State Historic Preservation Officer-WI Date 7/18/97

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

Herbster Community Center

Herbster, Bayfield Co.

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. Ball

8/15/97

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as
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)

contributing noncontributing

1 0 buildings

 sites

 structures

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**

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Government/City Hall

Education/Education-related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Government/City Hall

Recreation and Culture/ Auditorium

Recreation and Culture/ Sports Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Rustic Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation concrete

walls log

roof asphalt

other wood

Narrative Description

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

Herbster Community Center
Name of Property

Herbster, Bayfield Co.
County and State

Wisconsin

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

Architecture

Period of Significance

1939-1946

1939

Significant Dates

1939

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Buck, Roland C.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Herbster Community Center
Name of Property

Herbster, Bayfield Co.
County and State

Wisconsin

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:

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

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 5 acres

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

1 1/5 6/3/2/5/6/0 5/1/8/7/6/1/0
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
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 | Debra K. Kellner | | date | |
| organization | | | telephone | (212) 626-3149 |
| street & number | 228 97th Avenue West | | zip code | 55808 |
| city or town | Duluth | state | Wisconsin | |

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Herbster Community Center
Herbster, Bayfield County, Wisconsin

Section 7 Page 1

DESCRIPTION

Herbster Community Center was started in October, 1939 and was completed in the spring of 1940.

Herbster Community Center building is a single story, timber and joist log structure built in the Rustic Style. Native timber including balsam, spruce, and red oak, cut from land owned by the school district, constitute the mass of the building. The 72'x76' building is supported by a cement foundation which rises slightly above the ground level. The building is constructed entirely of logs which are sawed square on three sides. The curved side of the log is exposed to the exterior and constitutes the rustic or natural exterior appearance. On the interior the logs are chamfered along the edges creating an appealing and decorative appearance. The interior walls are painted off-white. It is believed the exterior was never painted and is unknown what, if any, treatment was applied.

The construction and fabrication of this structure deviates from the more traditional log construction using end notching methods; architectural plans specified a method of vertically positioning rabbetted logs fastened together with 1"x2" wood strips coated in lead. Each log is fastened with a steel rod which is visible near the foundation. This building method provides for a sturdy, weather tight structure. In attempting to revitalize the exterior facade, the building was reportedly sandblasted between the years 1981 and 1984.¹ A sealant apparently was never applied and the logs have since started to darken in the areas around the openings and near the foundation. The north facade is most adversely affected because lack of sunshine and the deleterious effects of Lake Superior on the exposed and weakened wood. Rot can be observed over the porch area on the northeast corner and water staining is observable from the interior on the north wall above the bleachers.

The most extraordinary design features of the building are created by the vertical and horizontal positioning of the logs. The logs are arranged predominantly in a vertical fashion bisected by a midsection course of alternating vertical and horizontal sections creating a checkerboard appearance across the front facade. The alternating block pattern is in vertical alignment with the upper and lower window sills and lintels. The windows are multi-pane and cased in either wood or metal. It appears many of the windows

¹ Interview with Frank Coehn, Teacher, South Shore School and former Herbster Town Board member.

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are operable, yet this is difficult to determine as the lower level windows are boarded up on the front facade. The metal cased windows are located on the north and south facade and have operable inserts in the lower portion of the 3x6 configuration. The building can be accessed from doorways located on each facade. Each door is constructed of wood veneer replicating the formation of the log walls. The roof is asphalt shingle and the foundation is concrete with a semi-basement located under the north and south building ends. Architectural plans for the building included landscaping around the periphery of the building, however, historic photos do not indicate this was ever completed. Currently, the periphery of the building is void of landscaping aside from the maintained grass lawn. The building is situated in a mixed use of residential, public and commercial zones and is located on the Lenawee Road which intersects with highway 13 one block to the north. The westerly facing front facade faces a gravel parking lot sized to accommodate school busses and several cars. To the north and east of the building is residential and commercial property. To the south is the former Herbster school.

The westerly facing front facade is symmetrical and is defined by an upper course of windows situated close to the roof line which are partially obscured by the roof eave, a lower course of windows, and a central porch entrance. The upper row of windows consist of seven sets of tripartite window groups, each sash being a six light casement. The central set is comprised of four windows. Interviews with local individuals indicate the windows were operable, however, because they are boarded-up from the interior, the hardware can not be observed or identified.² The lower course contains a single window on the southern and northern ends and two sets of three windows flanking the centrally located entrance. The windows are cased in wood and painted brown. The sills and lintels are composed of logs and serve as a counterpart to the log construction, further depicting the rustic style. The lintel above the windows on the north and south ends extends past the actual window opening providing symmetry with the lintels on the upper course and with the corresponding midsection alternating block patterns. The windows flanking the door on the lower level serve only an aesthetic purpose. They do not illuminate any useable space in the interior as they are situated below the bleachers. These windows are accessed from ceiling openings in the shower rooms located in the semi basement at each end of the building.

² Interviews: Jack Igo, Herbster resident and town board member, Cecil Kavajecz, Herbster resident and town board chair.

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The main entrance is located on the westerly facing front facade and is characterized by an open porch. The porch has a dropped roof supported by two log columns on each corner. The doorway is comprised of three doors and is flanked by two wood pilasters. The original hardware is mostly intact on each end door, however, some hardware has been removed from the center door. A three light transom is located across the top of each door. Two exposed light bulbs situated to each side of the center door and under the transom provide lighting for the entrance. Gutters are in place above the porch and appear to be detached from the roof, however, the hardware is in place on the roof. The asphalt shingled roof is side gabled, moderately pitched with wide eaves and exposed rafters. It is original to the structure and is in a state of disrepair. Two vent pipes rise from the roof near the front eave. These pipes likely provide ventilation to the lower level shower areas. A row of four inch wood dowels are observed above the lower window level. They are arranged in pairs of two and function to secure the massive wood bleachers to the interior wall.

The north facade is asymmetrical and is accessed by a sidewalk leading to an entrance on the western section and also by a porch on the eastern section. The western entrance consists of a single log veneer door with a transom window. A steep pitched pediment supported by brackets surmounts the door and two double hung 2/2 windows flank the door. The porch entrance on the northeast corner is a rectangular corner inset characterized by three stairs and a dropped, slope roof supported by a column positioned on a half wall of vertically positioned logs. The flashing above the porch roof is in a state of disrepair and has been dislodged in some areas. Deterioration due to rot is advancing in this area. The porch is currently boarded up and serves as an extension to the interior kitchen area and storage space. Two sets of four-pane windows are located on the north-facing wall of the porch. The bottom portion of the windows are boarded up and appear to be replacements due to the age, size and configuration. The focal point of this facade are the large 3x6 pane windows cased in metal. Two sets of two windows are separated by a section of horizontally placed logs and are positioned to align with the interior gymnasium floor. The windows have 2x2 operable inserts located on the lower half of the opening above the first row of lights. As on the front facade, the sills and lintels are horizontal logs. The logs are fashioned predominantly in a vertical pattern on the lower portion of the facade and are placed horizontally above both entrances and in the gable. A rectangular metal vent is positioned near the peak of the gable.

The southern facade nearly replicates the north facade; it is differentiated by the alteration of the porch roof which has been extended. The porch has been boarded up in a manner similar to its counterpart on the

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north facade and also serves as additional interior storage space. The southern facade does not show signs of deterioration due to rot as the north side does. This is likely due to the intact flashing above the roof and the protection from the severe and deleterious effects of Lake Superior along with the benefits of receiving a southern exposure.

The eastern facade is void of architectural ornament. The logs are uniformly arranged in a vertical fashion. Two 6/1 double hung windows are positioned next to the northeast and southeast corner porches. The log sills conform to the dimension of the window and the wood lintels extend past the window edge toward the center of the building replicating the configuration on the front facade. The building is accessible from a door near the southeastern corner. The log veneer door has one vertically divided window. The original hardware appears to be intact. The central lower portion of the rear facade is constructed of concrete block. This area contains two awning style metal cased windows and a metal chute leading to the boiler room in the semi-basement under the northern portion of the building. A square brick chimney rises from the roof above the area of the boiler room.

The interior of the building appears to have been designed to function foremost as a gymnasium. The main entrance leads to a vestibule with a ticket booth. An adjacent doorway and flight of four stairs permits entrance into the gymnasium. Above this doorway and stairway, massive wood bleachers rise vertically to the upper row of windows and extend along the entire wall. The bleachers have a seating capacity of 350, are made entirely of wood, and sealed with a clear finish. At each end of the bleachers, stairways lead to the north and south doors and to the girls bathroom on the southwestern corner and the boys bathroom on the southeastern corner. At this doorway is another flight of six stairs leading to the semi-basement where the boys and girls locker rooms are located.

The wall opposite the bleachers has a proscenium stage. It is accessible by doorways located on each end of the stage and by a set of four stairs leading from the playing floor. These stairs do not appear to have been original to the building. A kitchen area is located to the north of the stage and a storage room adjoins

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the stage to the south. The kitchen area is original to the building. The storage room was originally designed for use as dressing rooms. The area between the bleachers and the stage is a 42'x76' gymnasium floor which has been varnished and painted as a basketball court. The gymnasium is lit by twenty caged ceiling lights arranged symmetrically over the playing area. The bi-level ceiling is suspended 20 feet above the gymnasium floor and stage area and is approximately five feet lower above the bleachers and converges with the wall at the area just above the windows. The bleachers, support beams, and stage retain their natural wood color while the interior walls are painted off-white.

The furnace room is located under the stage and kitchen. The ductwork for the heating and ventilation is located on the rear wall of the stage and can be observed from the bleachers. A vault is located in the semi-basement to the south of the furnace room. The architectural integrity of the building has been retained as it has been spared renovations or modifications other than the alterations of the porches. In 1995 the building was placed on the Wisconsin Trust Ten Most Endangered Buildings List.

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SIGNIFICANCE

The Herbster Community Center is being nominated to the National Register of Historic (NRHP) for its local significance under National Register Criteria A and C. More specifically, it is being nominated because of its associations with the areas of Politics/Government and Architecture; each of which is also a theme identified in the State of Wisconsin's Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP). Research shows the Herbster Community Center is locally significant under National Register (NR) criterion A as a 1939 example of the town hall resource type. The Local Government study unit of the CRMP states a thematic survey of town halls over fifty years old is a survey priority and lists town halls as one of the resource types most directly associated with this unit. The Herbster Community Center is also significant for its affiliation with the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The Herbster Community Center was built under the WPA program and was considered one of the most impressive WPA projects in northern Wisconsin.³ Although the WPA is not discussed in the CRMP, the relationship between School District No. 1, the Town of Herbster and the WPA program are central to the Politics/Government theme.

The Herbster Community Center is of local significance under NR Criterion C as an intact example of Rustic Style architecture. Built in 1939⁴, the log building is a distinctive example of timber and joist construction consisting of an unusual and infrequently used method of construction in the Herbster area.⁵ The logs were sawn square on three sides, rabbeted lengthwise, and secured with a 1"x2" strip of wood sealed with white lead. The design of the building allows for a multi-use structure. The Herbster Community Center served primarily as a town hall and school gymnasium and secondarily as a community center.

³ "Impressive Work Accomplished by WPA in County", Washburn Times, April 18, 1940.

⁴ "Streamlined" Log Structure Unique in Area, Superior Evening Telegram, undated. Article states construction started October 19, 1939.

⁵ Interview with Albert Isaksson; his father was former owner of Isaksson Lumber and was actively involved with the cutting and shaping of the logs used for the project.

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POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Bayfield County is situated on the south shore of Lake Superior. Its origins date back to 1845 when Bayfield County was subdivided from the larger Crawford County and encompassed the areas now known as Douglas, Bayfield, Ashland, and Iron counties and the northern portions of Burnett, Washburn, and Sawyer counties. The current boundaries were established between 1854 and 1860. This area, initially occupied by the Chippewa Indians, was settled primarily by Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish people after the turn of the century. The largest population of Finnish immigrants in the state settled in Bayfield County and the neighboring Douglas, Ashland and Iron counties.

At the turn of the century Bayfield County was virtually unknown.⁶ It consisted of a huge tract of cut over lands which were largely undeveloped. As the area became settled and developed, the local government units became established, following the developmental patterns of government in the southwest and eastern portions of the state. The early years of governmental organization in Wisconsin allowed for both county unit and town unit forms of government. The developed areas of eastern Wisconsin favored the town unit and the developed area of the southwest favored the county unit of local government. In 1870, the legislature established the town form of local government and since that time all counties have been organized into towns. Because of the late date of settlement in relation to the southwestern and eastern portion of the state, Bayfield County was required to adopt the town form of government. The town form of government allowed town boundaries to become established for many reasons: a town would be created as a result of a clash of personalities with an existing town creating a division and the birth of a new town; as an attempt to increase representation of the county board, the town chair being the representative of the town on that board; and lumber companies in the north established towns in order to get preferential tax treatment.⁷ Because of the abundant supply of hemlock, spruce, pine, sugar maple, red oak, elm, and white and yellow birch in the area, the lumbering industry became established and likely was instrumental in the formation of the town of Herbster.⁸

⁶ Superior Telegram September 10-11, 1921.

⁷ CRMP, Vol. 1, p. 9-3.

⁸ Lumbering was the prevalent industry at the birth of the town of Herbster. Superior Evening Telegram. September 28, 1960.

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As the town developed, so did the governmental structure. Central to the governmental structure is the town board and town meeting. The town hall is usually where the meetings are held and where business is transacted. Town halls were often built as needed and as resources dictated. In Herbster, prior to erection of the town hall in 1939, town business was apparently conducted in private locations or churches as was often the norm in other towns which did not have the prominent Town Hall building.

As required by CRMP context considerations, any resource symbolizing local government should convey the history and authority of that government. Historic association is primarily concerned with properties built by the municipality to carry out aspects of local jurisdiction. The Herbster Community Center is locally significant as the primary resource representing the town system of rural local government; it is the resource most directly associated with the local government and reflects the history and the town form of government established therein. Additionally, the relationship between the town representing the general government unit and of the school district representing the special district is significant. The special district designation of the local government was established in part because of the emphasis the state placed on the importance of education. Education, as physically manifest by the school, was viewed as the doorway to opportunity.⁹ Decisions about schools were entrusted at the local level to elected board members set apart from other governmental units. The general government unit in Herbster worked in tandem with the school district to provide a building that allowed for the daily functions of the local government and provided an ancillary building for the school district to serve the students in the area. Significant beyond the local government unit/school district is the affiliation with the WPA program.

The WPA was established in 1935 by executive order of President Roosevelt to provide employment for limited numbers of needy unemployed workers throughout the United States. The WPA resulted in material and social values to every state and to most every community in the land. Before the WPA was 5 years old, approximately 5 million projects had been undertaken with Wisconsin ranking relatively high

⁹ CRMP, Vol. 1, Government, p. 9-11.

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among the states receiving these appropriations¹⁰. The year the Herbster Town Hall was built, Wisconsin ranked in the 124 percentile following fifth behind Pennsylvania, the highest ranking state at the 218 percentile. Funding for this program was administered by congress from year to year. Although the types of projects the WPA may or may not have funded varied from year to year, the provisions of funds for public buildings consistently ranked second behind highway and street projects, making the Herbster Town Hall a representative example of the type of projects funded by the WPA.

The WPA program was organized to function in co-operation with local agencies which played important roles in the administration of its program including the contribution of 25% of the cost of the project. This project was sponsored by School District No. 1, Town of Clover, Herbster, Wisconsin, under the leadership of School Board Director, E. R. Phillips. Anthony Janoch, School Board Clerk, appears to have been the official primarily involved with management of the project. He conducted many of the transactions, correspondences and was the individual primarily involved in the overall project management. In addition to the multitude of letters and memorandums which indicate his active participation, his signature appears on the WPA project proposal dated April 10, 1939. The proposal details work plans and specifications, as well as materials and cost. The proposal requested funds of \$21,730.00 for a 134,501 cu.ft. building at a cost of 23.3 cents/cu.ft., the sponsors share being the usual 25%. To obtain the required 25%, the school board obtained a loan from the State Annuity Board for \$4,000.00; the WPA applied credit for the timber cut from land owned by Town of Clover School District #1 to satisfy the remaining balance due. Janoch requested approval of plans and specifications from the Industrial Commission for the building and then from Charles Gill, District Manager for the WPA on April 12, 1939. Approval from the President was granted on May 13, 1939 pending final approval from the State Administrator which depended upon availability of funds and presence of a strong labor pool labor. Work began on the project on October 19, 1939 and employed a crew ranging between 20 and 35 men. The project was managed by Oscar Palm, area engineer for the WPA, Morgan Hoff, Construction Supervisor, Grantsburg, Wisconsin, and C.H. Gill, District Manager for the WPA.

¹⁰ Howard, Donald S. The WPA and the Federal Relief Policy, Russel Sage Foundation, New York, NY, 1943.

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The availability of labor in Herbster was due in part to the decline of the lumber industry. As stated in the CRMP, the logging and timber industry in Wisconsin reshaped the environment and landscape of the state and provided livelihood for a significant portion of the population in the northern half of the state during the late 19th, and early 20th centuries. The boom of the lumber industry provided jobs for many but, its decline also contributed to the loss of employment for many workers. The WPA project at Herbster was specifically developed to utilize local materials and to employ local labor forces while achieving the final goal of erecting a building for use as a gymnasium and town hall.

The Herbster Community Center is situated on a five acre parcel and is located on Lenawee Road, one block south of the main thoroughfare, Highway 13. Lenawee Road runs perpendicular to Highway 13 and provides access to the central and more densely populated central areas of the state. The location of the town hall conforms to common locational patterns of town halls across the state as confirmed by the CRMP which states town halls are generally located on local main thoroughfares. The location of the building is also important for its close proximity to the school building located directly south on adjacent land. The location of the Herbster Community Center provides direct association with the local government unit; the affiliation with School District #1, provides an indirect association with the local government unit.

An informal windshield survey was undertaken to identify town halls in areas of Bayfield and Douglas counties and include the rural towns of Oliver, Amnicon, Parkland, Lake Nebagamon, Hawthorne, Winneboujou, Iron River, Port Wing, and Cornucopia. The survey indicates the vast majority of original town hall buildings have been abandoned, re-used, or demolished. The original town hall in Brule was demolished and rebuilt on the same site in approximately 1937 and it retains its civic function. The town hall in Iron River appears to have been built around the turn of the century and also appears to retain its civic function. The remaining buildings identified appear to be abandoned or re-used. The Herbster Community Center appears to be one of a few buildings still used as a town hall and appears to be the only building built as a town hall/gymnasium. The Fifield Town Hall, Price County, Wisconsin (NRHP 2-17-78) is the only town hall building nominated to the NRHP in northern Wisconsin.¹¹

¹¹ CRMP, Vol. 1, Government, p. 9-14.

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The Herbster Community Center is locally significant for its association with local government and represents the contributions of the general government unit and the special district. It is also significant for its association with the WPA program. The period of significance extends from 1939 to 1946. In 1939 the WPA proposal was drafted and the general government unit and the special district (School District #1) combined efforts to establish a building of dual purpose to serve the needs of the community in the broadest manner possible. Although the Herbster Community Center continued to serve the community until the 1980s as a gymnasium and currently is used as a town hall, the period of significance of a historic structure is restricted to a date later than 50 years ago, in this case 1946.

ARCHITECTURE

The Herbster Community Center is architecturally significant as an example of the Rustic Style using timber and joist construction. The structure is constructed of logs in its entirety except for a concrete semi-basement under the north and south ends. The logs used in the walls are spruce and balsam and the beams and joists are red oak. Trees were cut from logs on a 40 acre tract of land owned by the Town of Clover School District #1. This parcel of land was acquired by the school district from Bayfield County around 1929 at a cost of \$300.00 when E. R. Phillips was a member of the county board of supervisors. Later, as school district director, Phillips initiated the WPA project as a collaborative effort between School District No. 1 and the Town of Herbster, Wisconsin. This arrangement arose from the town's need for a public meeting space and the school's need for recreational facilities for the students. The type of structure was selected to utilize local materials and certified labor as much as possible. The attractive and unusual design of the building was considered the most interesting WPA project in upper Wisconsin when it was built.¹² It is described by the builder as a "streamlined log structure". This project received extensive community support; upon completion of the structure, dedicatory ceremonies were held at the gymnasium on July 13, 1940 at 7:30 p.m. Attended by hundreds and regarded as the biggest event in the history of the county, the dedication consisted of opening ceremonies, dinner banquet, and dance to the locally popular Jack Monroe's Orchestra.

¹² "Impressive Work Accomplished by WPA in County", Washburn Times, April 18, 1940.

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The building was designed by architect Roland C. Buck of Superior, Wisconsin.¹³ Work on the WPA project was started in October, 1939 and was completed in the spring of 1940 at a cost of \$30,000.00. Roland Buck designed the structure to serve dual purposes as a town hall and a gymnasium. This building is said to be similar in design to the gymnasium formerly located at the nearby town of Iron River, Wisconsin.¹⁴ A comparative site analysis of these structures cannot be made as the Iron River gymnasium was destroyed by fire in 1974. It appears through correspondences between Buck and Janoch and through inferences made in newspaper accounts, Buck may have been the architect for the Iron River structure also.

Original plans and specifications detail a one-story log structure with a playing floor of 42'x70', bleachers, stage, dressing rooms, kitchen, shower room and locker rooms. The building was to be built of timber and joist construction, set on concrete foundation and piers. The walls of all rooms were to be left unfinished except on the stage and in the shower rooms. Those areas were to have metal lath and plaster. The gymnasium was to have a wainscoting of 1/2" plywood 6 ft. high. The floor was to be maple on wood sub-floors and the stage to have 2" plank floor. The bleachers were to be of wood construction with wood hand rails of peeled logs, plank floor. Shower and locker room floors would be concrete. The roof was to be constructed with trussed rafters fastened with bolts and split ring. The roof would be covered with 90 lb. slate coated roofing. The 20' ceiling would be covered with wall board, 1" thick, fastened to joist and furring strips. The outside and inside of the entire building was to be finished with linseed oil and turpentine. Shower and toilet rooms would be painted and enameled. Alterations of these plans resulted from input from the Industrial Commission and from insurance companies concerned with fire code regulations. Order 5503 of the state building code permits a frame assembly hall where there is not a basement other than for heating purposes and that must be of fireproof construction. If the basement would be used for any other purposes, the exterior wall of the building must be constructed of incombustible materials. It appears the plan for a semi-basement on the north and south ends of the building arose from these concerns. Other deviations from the original proposed plans include the elimination of wainscoting and the application of a asphalt shingle roof rather than the slate roof originally specified.

¹³ WPA proposal and outline specifications, dated January 25, 1939. Letters and memorandums between Roland Buck (architect) and Anthony Janoch (Clerk, School District #1).

¹⁴ Interviews with Albert Isaksson and Frank Coehn. Correspondence between Roland Buck and Anthony Janoch, School District Clerk.

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As specified in the WPA proposal, local materials and labor would be utilized as much as possible. In addition to the logging of the 40 acre tract, labor was supplied in large part by the local sawmill, Isaksson Lumber where the logs were sawed, planed, and grooved. According to Albert Isaksson, whose father was involved in the project, the design requiring rabbeting of the logs was unusual and required the development of special knives to be fitted for the planer to cut the groove. Special knives were also fitted for the V joint on the interior and for the rounded exterior surface. Construction techniques ordered the logs to be rabbeted and joined with a 1'x2' piece of wood sealed with white lead. Lead served to prevent rot by sealing out moisture. According to Isaksson, this method was not often used during the time of construction when the more common end notching of logs was the predominant method of log construction.

Roland Buck owned and operated one of the largest engineering and architectural consulting firms in northern Wisconsin.¹⁵ He began his career as a civil engineer specializing in dock design. Prior to the establishment of his consulting firm in 1912 he was employed by the Mpls., St. Paul and S. Ste. M. Railroad Co. in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and later by C.E. Wales in Duluth, Minnesota and Superior, Wisconsin. His work entailed railroad location and construction. He was involved in many of the dock facilities involved with the transshipment industry in the Superior and Duluth harbor area, between the years 1913-1932, including: Berwind Fuel Co. coal dock, West Duluth; Clarkson Coal & Dock Co., Duluth; C. Reiss Coal Co. Superior and Ashland, Wisconsin; Pittsburgh and Ashland Coal & Dock Co.; coal dock and anthracite storage plant, Ashland; Lehigh Valley Coal Co. dock. His work was primarily conducted in Superior and Ashland, Wisconsin and Duluth, Minnesota and extended to Lansing, Michigan, Fort William, Canada, Minneapolis, MN, Hamilton, Ontario, and Saginaw, Michigan.

Little information is available on the accomplishments of Roland Bucks architectural designs. He is known for the design of the Nelson Dewey and Itasca School in Superior, residences in the Central Park

¹⁵ Superior Intensive Survey Report, 1983.

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neighborhood and regional industrial sites. The CRMP does not list him as a master architect practicing in Wisconsin, nor does it identify the rustic style of architecture of the Herbster Community Center. The design of this building may have been influenced by the settlers in this area. According to the CRMP, Finns settled in northern Wisconsin near Lake Superior. Typically, original settlers took advantage of Wisconsin native forests to construct residential log dwellings. They employed a very precise construction method that required careful fitting of logs so no chinking was necessary.

The town hall/gymnasium more closely resembles Rustic Style architecture. Rustic Style architecture is defined as decoration by means of roughwork creating an appearance of what is thought to be rural in character, and compatible to the rural environment. Design features of the rustic style incorporate the use of logs, indigenous stone, shingled roofs with wide overhangs, porches, and simply proportioned window and door openings. It is accentuated by the absence of adornment such as plaster, paint, and wallpaper. Typically, rustic architecture was constructed of balsam, spruce, hemlock or tamarack. Logs were often hand cut, however, sawmills were used when readily accessible. In this case, the logs were then sawed flat to insure a tight fit and were rabbetted lengthwise for insertion of weather barriers. Although the CRMP does not discuss the Rustic Style, the town hall gymnasium closely resembles this style of architecture in that it is a log structure and is compatible with its rural wooded environment. The shingled roof, simply proportioned windows, and porches also typify the style. The architectural specifications detail a natural exterior and interior finish to the balsam, spruce and red oak wood, however, the interior of the building has been painted over the course of time. The logs were sawn in the above-mentioned rabbetted fashion which further relates this structure to the Rustic Style. Although modest in design elements, the Rustic Style is on par with some of the well known Rustic Style lodges located in the Adirondacks and parallels the Rustic Style park pavilions and recreational centers incorporated by the National Park Service in the earlier part of the century.¹⁶

¹⁶ Good, Albert, Department of the Interior: Park and Recreation Structures. Part 2, Recreational and Cultural Facilities, US Dept. of Interior, National Park Service, 1938; and Kaiser, Henry H.. The Great Camps of the Adirondacks, Boston, Mass., David Goodine Publisher, 1936.

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The building maintains its architectural integrity as little changes have taken place on the interior or exterior of the building. The rear porch areas have been enclosed and the window openings have been boarded up to prohibit entry. Electrical and heating systems may have been upgraded over the life of the building.¹⁷ Originally, the building was heated with wood which was supplied by local lumber companies on a competitive bid basis. The building was sandblasted approximately 12 years ago causing the wood to become spongy and porous. The north side, which is exposed to the effects of Lake Superior, displays signs of rot near the rear porch on the northeast corner and above the doorway on the northwest corner. Cutting of timber and the erection of the building took place primarily in the winter season. Although the logs apparently were still green, little shrinkage of logs occurred possibly due to the season in which they were cut.¹⁸

An informal windshield survey was conducted in parts of Douglas and Bayfield counties. The Lake Nebagamon Auditorium (NRHP 9-14-81) in Douglas County was identified as a log structure of similar scale. Other log buildings of this scale and design were not observed. The Rustic Style, as described by kaiser in Great Camps of the Adirondacks, appears to be predominantly found in private compounds. As these compounds may well exist near the rivers or lakes of rural Douglas and Bayfield counties, they are not readily identified or accessible because of the private ownership.

The town hall/gymnasium is locally significant as the one known example of Rustic Style architecture in Bayfield County and retains its architectural integrity. The period of significance ranges from 1939 - 1946 as described in the above section: Politics/Government.

¹⁷ Interview with Frank Coehn.

¹⁸ Interview with Albert Isaksson.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Parcel 6 of NE-NE, Sec.8-50-7, 5 acres. being lot 6 of Robt. Bartlett, Jr. 2nd Add. to Orchard City.¹⁹

Verbal Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Herbster Community Center.

¹⁹ Correspondence between First State Bank of Port Wing and Mr. Anthony Janoch, Clerk, School Dist. #1, Town of Clover. This letter identifies the parcel of land purchased by the Town of Clover from Mr. Jeremiah Laughlin, former owner.

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Herbster Community Center
Herbster, Bayfield County, Wisconsin
Photo by: Debra Kellner, June 1996
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Camera facing: east

Photo # 2 of 20
Herbster Community Center
Herbster, Bayfield County, Wisconsin
Photo by: Debra Kellner, June 1996
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Camera facing: east

Photo # 3 of 20
Herbster Community Center
Herbster, Bayfield County, Wisconsin
Photo by: Debra Kellner, June 1996
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Camera facing: east

Photo # 4 of 20
Herbster Community Center
Herbster, Bayfield County, Wisconsin
Photo by: Debra Kellner, June 1996
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Camera facing: east

Photo # 5 of 20
Herbster Community Center
Herbster, Bayfield County, Wisconsin
Photo by: Debra Kellner, June 1996
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin

Camera facing: southeast

Photo # 6 of 20
Herbster Community Center
Herbster, Bayfield County, Wisconsin
Photo by: Debra Kellner, June 1996
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Camera facing: southeast

Photo # 7 of 20
Herbster Community Center
Herbster, Bayfield County, Wisconsin
Photo by: Debra Kellner, June 1996
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Camera facing: southwest

Photo # 8 of 20
Herbster Community Center
Herbster, Bayfield County, Wisconsin
Photo by: Debra Kellner, June 1996
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Camera facing: southwest

Photo # 9 of 20
Herbster Community Center
Herbster, Bayfield County, Wisconsin
Photo by: Debra Kellner, June 1996
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Camera facing: west

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Photo # 11 of 20
Herbster Community Center
Herbster, Bayfield County, Wisconsin
Photo by: Debra Kellner, June 1996
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Camera facing: northwest

Photo # 12 of 20
Herbster Community Center
Herbster, Bayfield County, Wisconsin
Photo by: Debra Kellner, June 1996
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Camera facing: northwest

Photo # 13 of 20
Herbster Community Center
Herbster, Bayfield County, Wisconsin
Photo by: Debra Kellner, June 1996
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Camera facing: north

Photo # 14 of 20
Herbster Community Center
Herbster, Bayfield County, Wisconsin
Photo by: Debra Kellner, June 1996
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin

Camera facing: north

Photo # 15 of 20
Herbster Community Center
Herbster, Bayfield County, Wisconsin
Photo by: Debra Kellner, June 1996
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Camera facing: northeast

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Herbster Community Center
Herbster, Bayfield County, Wisconsin
Photo by: Debra Kellner, June 1996
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Camera facing: northeast

Photo # 17 of 20
Herbster Community Center
Herbster, Bayfield County, Wisconsin
Photo by: Debra Kellner, June 1996
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Camera facing: west

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Herbster Community Center
Herbster, Bayfield County, Wisconsin
Photo by: Debra Kellner, June 1996
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Camera facing: west

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Herbster, Bayfield County, Wisconsin
Photo by: Debra Kellner, June 1996
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Camera facing: west

Photo # 20 of 20
Herbster Community Center
Herbster, Bayfield County, Wisconsin
Photo by: Debra Kellner, June 1996
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Camera facing: west