UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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)

CITY, TOWN
Appleton

STATE
Wisconsin

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY
__DISTRICT
X BUILDING(S)
__STRUCTURE
__SITE
__OBJECT

OWNERSHIP
__PUBLIC
X PRIVATE
__BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION
__IN PROCESS
__BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS
X OCCUPIED
__UNOCCUPIED
__WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE
__YES: RESTRICTED
X YES: UNRESTRICTED
__NO

PRESENT USE
__AGRICULTURE
__MUSEUM
__COMMERCIAL
__PARK
X EDUCATIONAL
__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__ENTERTAINMENT
__RELIGIOUS
__GOVERNMENT
__SCIENTIFIC
__INDUSTRIAL
__TRANSPORTATION
__MILITARY
__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Outagamie County Historical Society, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER
320 North Durkee Street

CITY, TOWN
Appleton

STATE
Wisconsin

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

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

STREET & NUMBER
410 South Walnut Street

CITY, TOWN
Appleton

STATE
Wisconsin

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places

DATE
1977

FEDERAL X STATE

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
State Historical Society of Wisconsin

CITY, TOWN
Madison

STATE
Wisconsin

53706
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<td><em>EXCELLENT</em></td>
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<td>X <em>GOOD</em></td>
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**DESCRIPTIVE 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.
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Temple Zion and its school are significance 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.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: approximately 0.2 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME: Appleton, Wis.

UTM REFERENCES:

A [1 1 6 | 3 | 8 | 8 | 0 | 9 | 1 0]
ZONE EASTING NORTING
C | | | | | | |
B | | | | | | |
ZONE EASTING NORTING
D | | | | | | |
E | | | | | | |
F | | | | | | |

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.

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

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, Director

DATE:
6/8/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL Registers.

R.B. Pettingill
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
DATE:
9/18/78

Chief of Registration
DATE:
Sept 13, 1978
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."

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.

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.

1. Appleton Weekly Crescent, September 8 and 22, 1883.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

Appleton Weekly Crescent, September 8 and 22, 1883.


Frank, Bea. Tape-recorded interview. Outagamie County Historical Society.


"Profile, Harry Houdini." Wisconsin Then and Now. VI, September 1959.

Slattery, Hannah. Tape-recorded interview. Outagamie County Historical Society.

Temple Zion Papers. Outagamie County Historical Society.

Temple Zion & Schoof
Appleton, Wisconsin
K.E. Hundt, April 1978
neg. at SHSW, #KEH4/78-4
from the northwest

SEP 18 1978

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER