

4.) Owner of Property to Be Nominated

Name: West Salem Historical Society

Street and Number: 360 N. Leonard St.

City: West Salem

State: WI

Zip: 54669

5.) Photo

&/or

Sketch

6.) Significance of the site or property or event to be nominated:

Include date of construction, builder/architect, all specific dates.

Statement of Significance: State why the site, property, or event is significant: what significant events occurred there, who was associated with the property, what features the property has that make it significant, etc. Document all statements of alleged fact with full and complete footnotes. Use additional sheets as necessary.

See attached materials

7.) Describe the present and original (if known) appearance or condition of the property or site to be nominated: Include your opinion of National Register eligibility.

The original octagon home was combined with a second home, also from the village of Neshonoc. That combination building is still in tact and we have moved it back into the area of the original location of the octagon part of the home and the added home.

It is on the National Register and we worked with those folks when we moved the home.

8.) Major bibliographical reference &/or collections:

Neshonoc, A Place Like No Other - Eldora Larson
Leonard's Dream - Enrol Kindschy

9.) Nomination submitted by:

Name: Errol Kindschy
Organization: West Salem Historical Society
Street: 99 E. Jefferson St / P.O. Box 884 (Errol)
City: West Salem State: WI
Telephone: 786-1675 (Errol)

Zip: 54669

For Information/Questions, Contact Committee Members:

Vicki Twinde-Javner, Chair - [REDACTED]

Barbara Kooiman, Vice Chair - [REDACTED]

Jason Gillett, Sec/Treas - [REDACTED]

Richard Bedessem - [REDACTED]

King Holley - [REDACTED]

Harriet Schuppel - [REDACTED]

Kent Sween - [REDACTED]

If you have any further questions, call Errol (786-1675)



West Salem Historical Society, Inc.

360 North Leonard Street • West Salem, Wisconsin 54669

Owners & Operators of the Hamlin Garland Homestead and the
Palmer-Gullickson Octagon Home • Phone (608) 786-1399
Operators of Smith Valley School • Phone (608) 783-2068

April 9, 2007

President

Errol Kindschy

Vice President

Sue Strauss

Secretary

Pat Hofer

Treasurer

Peggy Green

Directors

Glen Comeau

Carol Dable

Dorrene Heider

Dave Hofer

Marvin Iverson

Janet Kohlmeier

Doris Michelson

Ken Piper

Norma Piper

Karen Schaller

Norma Schmig

Marge Zantow

Smith Valley Committee

Carol Brown

Doris Mueller

Irene Radcliffe

Daina Parkunas
National Register Coordinator
Wisconsin State Historical Society
Headquarters Building
816 State Street
Madison, WI 53706-1482

Dear Daina,

The West Salem Historical Society is hereby requesting approval of the moving of the Palmer/Lewis Octagon Home from its present location in the commercial development area on the Evenson property to a site on La Crosse County Park land which we have leased for 25 years from the County.

With the help of Jim Sewell we have contacted several house movers for bids which range from \$13,000.00 to \$26,000.00. We are making arrangements for the fund raising campaign with pledges totaling \$5,000.00 already made.

We were contacted by Mr. David Evenson who had acquired several acres of land for a residential and commercial development from Helen Lewis. He told

us that he would give us the home providing that it was moved from its present location. If not moved, Mr. Evenson stated the home would be torn down as it should in the way of commercial development of the overall property. Thus, to save the home from total destruction, it would have to be moved to a different location. After several weeks of discussion, the West Salem Historical Society reached a land lease agreement with La Crosse County for 2½ acres of country park land, just down the road from its present location.

The new location is historically perfect as it is in the original site of the village of Neshonoc, founded by Monroe Palma, builder of the Octagon home in the 1850s. We will be placing the home on lots 36 and 37, the original lots owned by Mr. Palma as platted out in the village. How more appropriate can the new location be? We have avoided the archaeological dig site as requested by the state archaeological office by setting the home 148.5 feet from the edge of the property.

We will be moving the original octagon structure along with an addition to its rear (which was a second home originally (building) built in Neshonoc as well. When placed on the national register, this was already added to it. We will use the structure as a tourist center, museum and gift shop which will feature local arts and crafts. We will not alter the octagon part of the home in any way.

I am enclosing the following materials for your further discussion:

- (1) a copy of the agreement signed with La Crosse County leasing the land for 25 years

(2) a drawing, to scale, of the present building with addition as it now exists on the National Register

(3) a copy of the letter from Eldora Lussen, author of Neahonoc, A Place Like No Other, stating that the new location has a similar relationship to the road as it would have had in the original plat

(4) a detailed map of the $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres of land showing the proposed new location of the home once moved, 148.5 feet from the lot line

(5) a document from the Department of Land Conservation approving the movement of the home

(6) the original plat of the village of Neahonoc showing the present location of highways 108 and 16.

Should you have any other questions or in need of any other materials, please call me at 608-786-1675.

Thanks for all your help.

Sincerely,

Evel Kindred, President
West Salem Historical
Society

The Palmer-Lewis Octagon House

Like a lone sentinel to the past, Monroe Palmer's eight-sided house appears to be waiting; poised to experience yet another phase in its interesting life. Its empty windows seem to be gazing northward to the La Crosse River. Although the Octagon is now standing along Highway 16 next to the new Neshonoc Lake Addition to West Salem, that wasn't always the case. When Palmer hired Hiram Lovejoy to build the house for him, ca1856, it was positioned approximately one-third mile north within the boundaries of Neshonoc Village where the La Crosse County Park is today.

The words of Hamlin Garland, the Coulee Region's Pulitzer Prize winning author, can help us visualize where and how Neshonoc Village was situated. On page 192 of Trailmakers Of The Middle Border, Garland describes the arrival of his father into Hamilton Township:

"The Village of Neshonoc on the La Crosse river was about five miles away, and toward this point they resumed their march. Two hours later they drew up before a little tavern which stood on the level ground above the bridge, a lovely spot for a village. To the east was the mill-pond. A trout-brook came in from the north, and a grist-mill rose against a conical hill around whose base the river ran in a reedy curve. On the bottom lands to the west, scattered pines were growing, and in the edges of these groves and on the banks of the stream, a group of wigwams denoted the presence of redmen. Altogether it could have been used as an illustration for a poster. It had all the elements of pastoral beauty."

Monroe Palmer visited various parts of Wisconsin in 1850 but didn't settle here until after his marriage to Martha Bigelow Coolidge in June 1851. Their first home was a cabin on the hill, north of the La Crosse River, just above Monroe's flour mill. Palmer soon purchased about 700 acres of land around the mill and built a new cabin on the south side of the river near the end of the current bridge. He began to dream of developing a settlement on his acreage.

In October 1855, Monroe Palmer had a portion of his land officially surveyed and platted for a village. It consisted of 147 lots arranged in eighteen blocks. The lots measured 100 feet in depth and 50 feet in width. The only exceptions were seven smaller lots fronting on the North edge of the village. Palmer's streets, running on a North-east/ South-west line, were named Cyprus, Centre, Main, and Oak Street. The cross-streets, starting nearest the river, were Mill, Second, Third, and Fourth Streets and Mentora Avenue. There was only one avenue and it was named in honor of Palmer's sister-in-law, Mentora Coolidge (Mrs. Algernon S. Bradford.)

Neshonoc Village's Main Street coincides with present-day Highway 108 and Cypress Street was located near the Northwest shore of Lake Neshonoc. The closest house to this shore was the octagon-shaped home that was constructed by Hiram Lovejoy for Doctor Horace Palmer, brother to Monroe. Dr. Palmer owned and consistently paid taxes on property which lay at the corner of Centre and Second Streets. He joined Monroe at Neshonoc in May 1857 and is mentioned most often as the first physician in Neshonoc Village. Dr. Palmer's house was moved to West Salem in 1866 and is now known as the Palmer-Gullickson House.

Two houses, not original to Neshonoc Village, stand on property that can be identified within Monroe Palmer's plat of the village. We can trace lots 98 and 113 when Palmer sold them to Joseph Hemstock in May 1857 until they were owned in recent times by the Matiak-Terringer's and then the Humbel family. The house is located on the west side of Main Street midway between Third and Fourth Streets. Moving northeast along Main Street, we have a house that

recently belonged to the Johnson family. The property includes Second Street and portions of lots 75 and 76 on either side. Obed Lindsey had the first blacksmith shop here, followed by associated names such as Jonsen, Pittenger, and Curtis.

Approximately 150 to 200 feet northeast of the just-described Johnson house, we have improved property that was consistently held by Martha and Monroe Palmer. In spite of financial difficulties, they were able to protect their home and keep it safe from creditors. Throughout the history of Neshonoc Village, the Palmers and other residents were land-rich and penny-poor. The 1850s was a time of tight money and they suffered through the Panic of 1857 when many mortgages were written but village lots were selling for only half of their previous year's price. Further complicating their financial status was their speculation that the railroad company would purchase their lands and bring more commerce to their town. This didn't happen and the railroad built its line through nearby West Salem. Soon, the businessmen of Neshonoc began to move, "lock, stock, and barrel," to be closer to the railroad. By 1870, Palmer must have sensed that the worst depression yet experienced by the people of Wisconsin was just over the horizon because he sold his homestead to Martha Palmer's brother-in-law, Algernon S. Bradford of Minnesota. Mr. Bradford's ownership kept Palmer's personal property from the hands of his creditors.

Monroe Palmer's next step was to offer his Hamilton Mills and over six hundred acres of land for sale. That didn't solve Palmer's problems, however, and, in 1873, his remaining properties were sold at Sheriff's auction to Angus Cameron for \$651.67.

Soon after this sale, the Palmers moved their eight-sided home to farmland just outside the limits of the Neshonoc Village plat; to its present location along Highway 16. They also moved another Neshonoc home and attached it to the back of their octagon. This house was called The Parsonage and had most likely been the home of T.W. Winter who was one of the first resident ministers at Neshonoc.

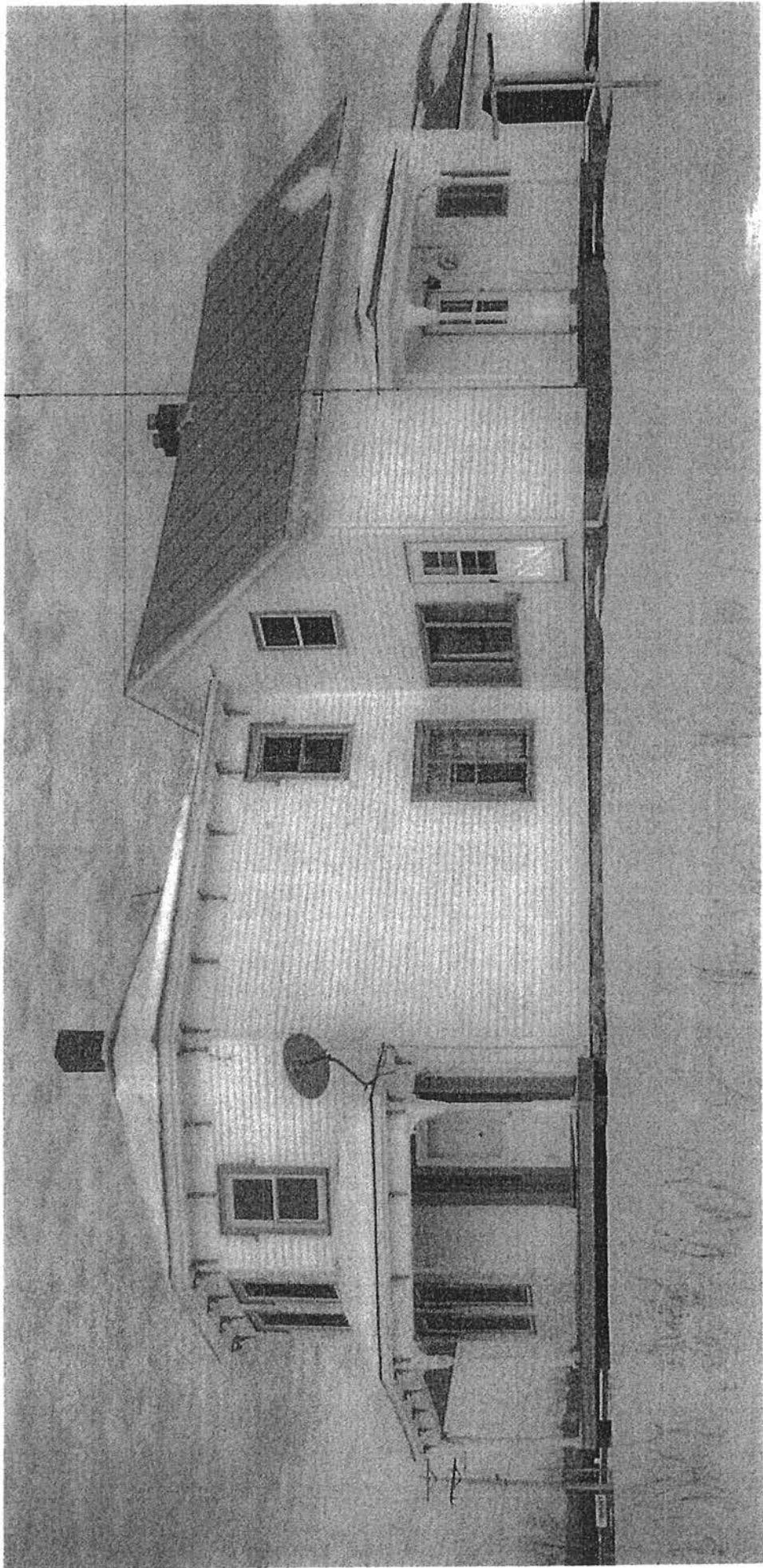
On 12 April 1890, Prudence (Dunlap) and David R. Lewis purchased Martha and Monroe Palmer's farm. The Palmers left the West Salem area and traveled to visit their daughter in Fairbury, Nebraska. Because Monroe Palmer became ill during their visit, he and Martha remained in Fairbury where Monroe died and was buried in 1892. November 1892 seems to mark the official end to Neshonoc Village. The village plat was vacated on 15 November and Monroe Palmer died on 21 November. It's interesting and ironic that only six days passed between the dissolution of Neshonoc Village and the death of its founder.

On 31 July 1905, Prudence and David R. Lewis sold the farm to their son and daughter-in-law, Naomi Bell (Colburn) and Arthur Ray Lewis. Ray and Naomi were married on 3 June 1903 and lived out their lives in the Octagon house. Their son David Lewis and his wife Helen were the next owners of the home and it remained with them until David's death and the subsequent sale to the Dave Evenson Company.

Now, another interesting occurrence is underway. The West Salem Historical Society, already owners of Horace Palmer's octagon, have accepted Monroe Palmer's octagon as a gift from the Dave Evenson Development Company. The Palmer-Lewis house will soon be readied to return to Neshonoc Village; to reside almost exactly where it was constructed 150 years ago.

Eldora Schober Larson
4 February 2007

Eldora Schober Larson 1607 Cronin Circle Hudson, WI 54016 30 March 2007 Errol Kindschy 75 Jefferson Street West Salem, WI 54669 Dear Errol, Thank you for your recent query concerning the Monroe Palmer-David Lewis house and its location within the Village of Neshonoc. As you know, we've searched extensively but unsuccessfully for photographs and personal papers which would help us to know more about Neshonoc Village. Instead, we've had to use tax rolls, mortgages, deeds and papers of that sort to reconstruct the Village. The resulting information is compiled in my book "Neshonoc~ A Place Like No Other." Checking various papers and records, we can conclude that Martha and Monroe Palmer built their octagonal-shaped home on lots 36 and 37 of Block 6 in Neshonoc Village. These lots were owned exclusively by the Palmer's until 1870 when they were sold to Algernon Bradford. By this time, Palmer was having great financial difficulty and was in danger of losing his properties. Bradford was Palmer's brother-in-law and it appears Bradford purchased the lots in order to keep the lots and the home from a Sheriff's sale in 1871. As for orientation of the house, we conclude that it faced to the east on land that would be on the west side of today's Highway 16. Lot 36 lay at the corner of Mill Street on the North and Centre Street on the East; Lot 37 was to the south and faced Centre Street. Obviously, Palmer built his home to face one of these streets. Since Palmer's brother's home was on lots 26-29 of Centre Street, it is logical that Monroe would have his front door facing the same street as his brother's. Centre Street ran in a north/south direction and was nearly parallel to today's Highway 16. I hope this information is sufficient to answer your questions. Please let me know if I can be of further help to you. Sincerely, Eldora Larson "Neshonoc~A Place Like No Other" by Eldora Schober Larson, 1994, Hudson, Wisconsin. Page 147, "Neshonoc~A Place Like No Other." Page 130, "Neshonoc~A Place Like No Other."



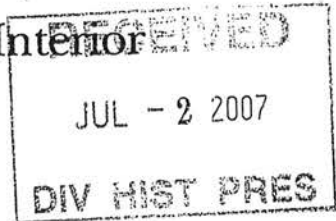
20

15012
1189 - 6'8" ±
1189



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240



IN REPLY REFER TO:
H32(2280)

JUN 27 2007

Mr. Michael E. Stevens
State Historic Preservation Officer
Administrator, Division of Historic Preservation-Public History
816 State Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53706-1482

Dear Mr. Stevens:

Thank you for the letter of May 11, 2007, regarding the proposed move of the Palmer-Lewis Octagon, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin, listed in the National Register of Historic Places on August 7, 2007 as one of the Palmer Brothers Octagons. The building is being moved to prevent its demolition. You have included documentation justifying the move, describing the new site, and evaluating the archeological potential of the new site.

The proposed move was approved on June 21, 2007. The building will remain listed in the National Register during and after the move. Final approval of the continued listing of the building on its new site will be issued after the move. After the building has been relocated please provide a letter notifying us of the date of the move, along with photographs of the building at its new location, a new verbal boundary description, acreage figure, UTM point, and an original USGS map. Once we have received this documentation we will issue a final approval of the building's continued listing in the National Register.

We appreciate the interest of the owners in preserving this building and look forward to hearing of the successful move.

Sincerely,

Patrick W. Andrus
Patrick W. Andrus, Historian
National Register of Historic Places

