

**AUTHORIZING THE NAMING OF PROPERTY
LOCATED AT 1021 STATE STREET IN THE
CITY OF DEKALB, ILLINOIS TO THE
DEKALB LANDMARK REGISTER.**

WHEREAS, the DeKalb Area Women’s Center, owner of property at 1021 State Street, DeKalb, Illinois, has consented that the Landmark Commission consider designation of his property as a local landmark; and,

WHEREAS, it is the duty of the DeKalb Landmark Commission to make recommendations to the City Council of sites to be so designated; and,

WHEREAS, the Landmark Commission, after holding a public hearing, and hearing no negative comments from other applicable City officials or the general public, has determined that this building meets the criteria for local landmark designation set forth in Chapter 44.07 of the DeKalb Municipal Code, being of interest as part of the development of the City of DeKalb, being identified as Majakka Lighthouse Hall, often referred to as “Old Finn Hall” was built in 1917 by immigrants from Finland and established as a temperance society meeting hall ; and,

WHEREAS, the subject building being the site for the historic “Peace Meeting” of 1908 holds significance to the Finnish community as a temperance hall and community center and holds a place in the larger history of the City of DeKalb and the nation and has contributed to the economic, social and political development of DeKalb; now,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL of the City of DeKalb, Illinois, as follows:

Section 1. The property at 1021 State Street meets the criteria set forth in Chapter 44.07 of the DeKalb Municipal Code, and is now designated as a local historic landmark.

PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL of the City of DeKalb, Illinois, at a regular meeting thereof held on the 11th day of February, 2013, and approved by me as Mayor on the same day. Passed on voice vote.

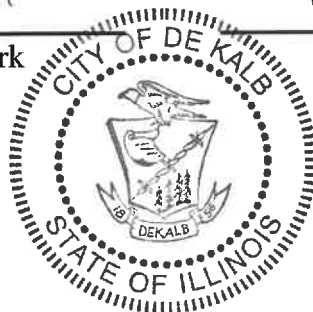
ATTEST:



DIANE K, WRIGHT, City Clerk



KRIS POVLSSEN, Mayor





200 South Fourth Street
DeKalb, Illinois 60115
815.748.2000 • cityofdekalb.com

PW Memo #LC001-13

DATE: 2/6/2013

TO: Mayor
City Council

FROM: Mark Biernacki, City Manager
T. J. Moore, Director of Public Works
Jamie Smirz, Community Services Planner

SUBJECT: Resolution for Local Landmark Designation for 1021 State Street currently known as the DeKalb Area Women’s Center (formerly Majakka Hall)

STRATEGIC GOAL: Create Safe and Quality Housing and Improved Environments in our Neighborhoods

I. Summary:

The DeKalb Landmark Commission recommends to the City Council that the Finn Hall, or Majakka Hall at 1021 State Street (currently known as the DeKalb Area Women’s Center), receive City of DeKalb Local Landmark status due to its significance to the Finn community as a temperance hall and community center; its place in the larger history of the City of DeKalb and the nation; its site as a location for the historic “Peace Meeting” of 1908; and the importance of Finnish immigrants to the economic, social and political development of DeKalb.

Local landmark designation provides recognition of the historic significance of a site, can be used as a step towards State or Federal landmark designation, and can provide certain tax incentives when rehabilitating the property. Designation limits the ability to significantly change the structure without losing the landmark designation status.

The request for local landmark designation was made by Anna Marie Coveny of the DeKalb Area Women’s Center and presented to the DeKalb Landmark Commission where it received a unanimous vote of approval. An extensive history of the building was compiled in a report by Diane Rogers, Jill Sanderson and Jessica Peterson of Northern Illinois University in collaboration with Anna Marie Coveny and provides detailed background and information regarding the subject property.

II. Background:

The building located at 1021 State Street was built and used as a Temperance Hall by the early Finnish immigrants of DeKalb. The foundation was laid in 1917 and the completed building dedicated in 1918. The construction of the building was supervised by Samuel O. Elson and P. Korpela of the Finnish community with the volunteer labor of the local Finnish workers. Its architectural style represents the American vernacular tradition of a rural hall built to serve as a community center for temperance activities, performances, gymnastics, a cafeteria and lending library.

The building has retained its original exterior and interior architectural design with minor modifications added for ADA compliance. Majakka Hall was not only a local community center for Finnish Americans but also a meeting place for Finnish organizations from Waukegan and Chicago to meet with those in DeKalb over common concerns. The interior of the building retains the architectural features that are shared with most Finnish Halls, including a stage for performances. The front doors of the Hall open to a small foyer complete with the original "ticket booth".

The Hall was used for many activities, including performances of music or theatre reflecting Temperance or Finnish cultural themes. The stage that was built for the Hall remains intact in the building today.

Please see the attached report for further information.

III. Community Groups/Interested Parties Contacted:

Property owners within 250 feet of the building were contacted by mail and asked to comment on the request. A Public Hearing was held October 25, 2012 before the DeKalb Landmark Commission and no negative comments were made.

IV. Legal Impact:

Upon designation by the City as a Landmark, the property would become subject to additional review and scrutiny should building renovation, remodeling or renovation be proposed at any point in the future, as contemplated by Chapter 44 of the City Code.

V. Financial Impact:

There are no financial impacts associated with this request.

VI. Alternatives:

The City Council may choose to not allow Local Landmark Status be granted to this building.

VII. Recommendation:



Landmark Commission and City of DeKalb staff recommends that Local Landmark Status be granted to 1021 State Street.

Respectfully submitted for City Council consideration,

Reviewed by:

Approved by:

Rudy Espiritu
Assistant City Manager

Mark Biernacki
City Manager

The Historic Significance of Majakka Hall, 1021 State St. DeKalb IL

Report for the Landmark Commission of DeKalb

September 27, 2012

Presentation given by Diane M. Rodgers, Northern Illinois University

Report compiled by Diane M. Rodgers, Jill Sanderson and Jessica Peterson of Northern Illinois University in collaboration with Anne Marie Coveny of the DeKalb Area Women's Center

Historical Significance of former Finnish Majakka Hall, 1021 State Street

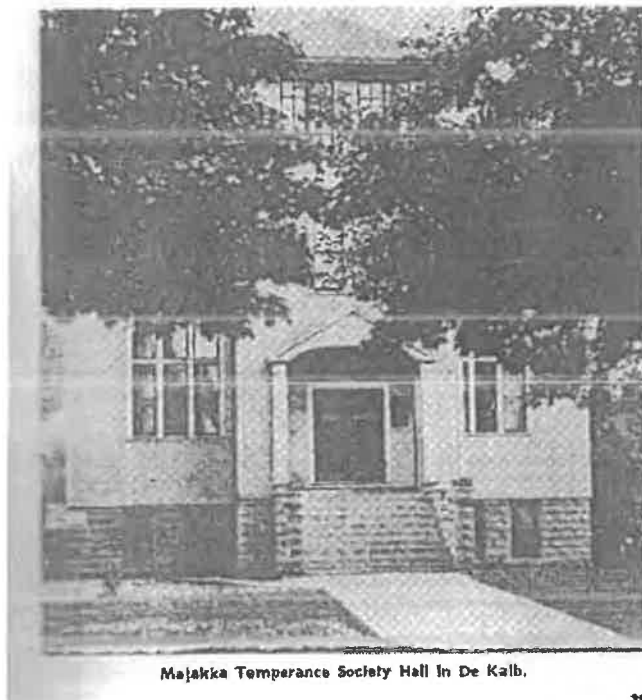
Report prepared by Diane M. Rodgers, Jill Sanderson and Jessica Petersen of Northern Illinois University, in collaboration with Anna Marie Coveny, Director of the DeKalb Area Women's Center, current occupants of the former Majakka Hall.

Majakka Hall

The building located at 1021 State Street was built and used as a Temperance Hall by the early Finnish immigrants of DeKalb, IL. The foundation was laid in 1917 and the completed building dedicated in 1918. The construction of the building was supervised by Samuel O. Elson and P. Korpela of the Finnish community with the volunteer labor of the local Finnish workers. Its architectural style represents the American vernacular tradition of a rural hall built to serve as a community center for temperance activities, performances, gymnastics, a cafeteria and lending library.

The building has retained its original exterior and interior architectural design with minor modifications added for ADA compliance. Consultations with the Illinois Preservation Society in Springfield were made through the City of DeKalb Planning Department and approval was given for replacing four side windows: the East and West balcony windows and the East and West foyer windows to the Great Hall.

Early photograph of Majakka Hall n.d.:

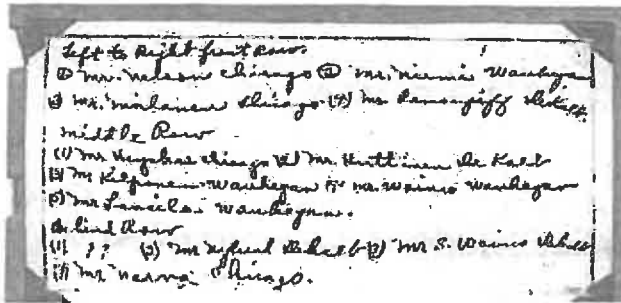


Although partially shrouded by trees, this early photograph of the Majakka Hall provides a view of the original architectural design of 1918.

Source: Esa Arra, *The Finns in Illinois*

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Majakka Hall was not only a local community center for Finnish Americans but also a meeting place for Finnish organizations from Waukegan and Chicago to meet with those in DeKalb over common concerns.



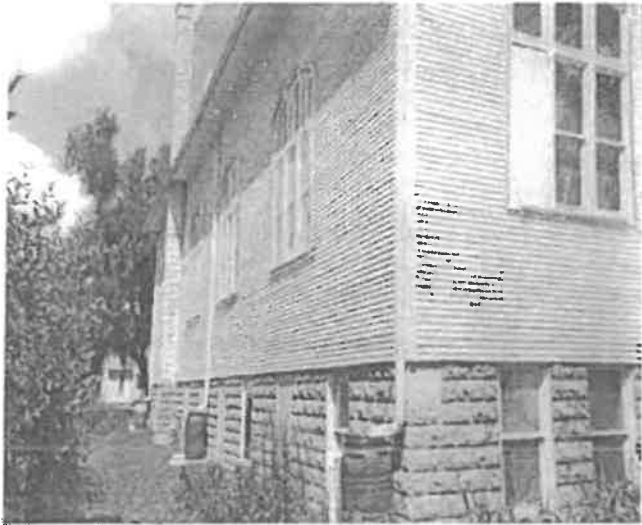
This photograph of a tri-city meeting of Illinois Finns also gives a close-up of the front of Majakka Hall, including the street number over the door, confirming the original location of the Hall.

Source: Lahti personal collection

A contemporary photo of the Majakka Hall shows little structural modification to the building:



Source: Eric Nolan

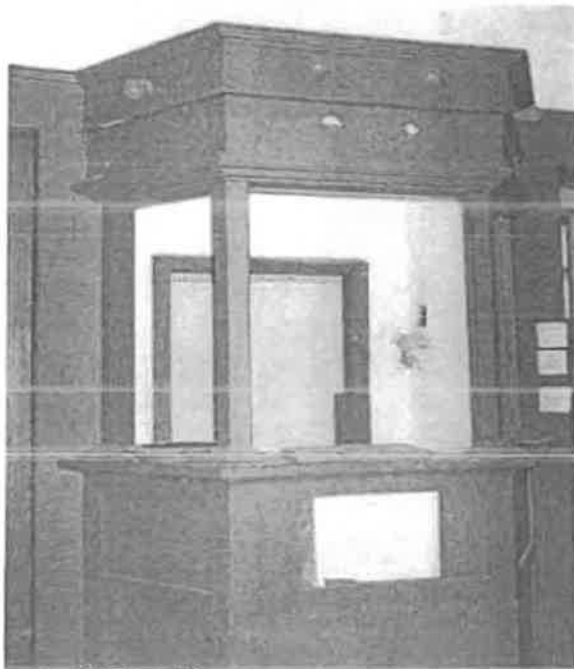


This current photo provides a closer view of the original foundation.

The cornerstone displays the date of 1917.

Source: Jill Sanderson

The interior of the building retains the architectural features that are shared with most Finnish Halls, including a stage for performances. The front doors of the Hall open to a small foyer complete with the original "ticket booth."



Source: Jill Sanderson

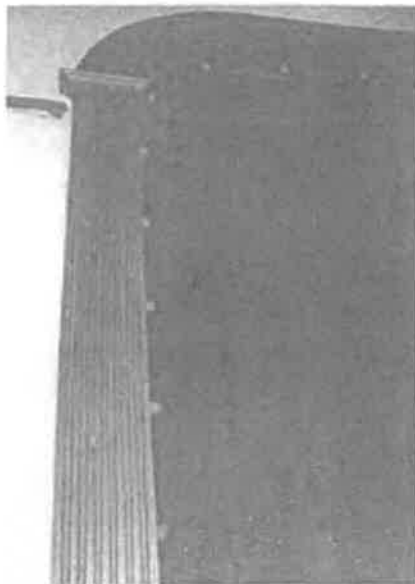
The Hall was used for many activities, including performances of music or theatre reflecting Temperance or Finnish cultural themes. The stage that was built for the Hall remains intact in the building today.

Picture of the original stage in use for a play:



Source: Lahti personal photo collection

Current picture of close-up of the stage woodwork:



Source: Jill Sanderson

Original woodwork can be found throughout the building, including bead board alongside stairwells and kitchen areas.

A view from the stage captures the balcony across the hall that once served as a library for the Temperance Societies. Staircases lead up to it from either side.



Source: Jill Sanderson

The Historical and Cultural Significance of Finnish-Americans in DeKalb, IL

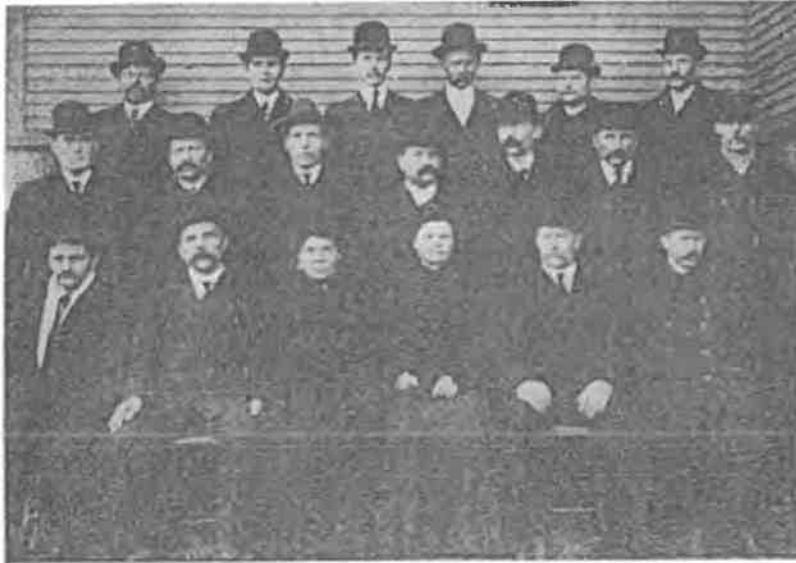
Finnish-Americans settled in DeKalb as early as 1892 and worked in the barbed wire factories of Jacob Haish, Joseph Glidden and Isaac Ellwood as well as the Wurlitzer plant (Arra 1971, Metzger 1990). They also formed a thriving community in the 3rd ward of DeKalb that was commonly known as "Finn Town." Throughout the country similar areas were dubbed with this name wherever significant Finnish communities developed. The DeKalb Finns established a church; launched many businesses and cooperatives, built meeting halls and homes all within the 3rd Ward. By the 1930s there were between 600-800 Finns documented as residing in DeKalb (Metzger 1990). DeKalb Finns interacted closely with the Finnish population in Waukegan and Chicago, through similar organizations and cultural activities. DeKalb was often a meeting place for the Illinois Finns. DeKalb Finns were involved in cultural heritage groups such as the Kaleva organization and The National Society of DeKalb; labor organizations, such as the Worker's Society of DeKalb; and the Finnish Temperance Movement in America. This last organizational involvement is significant for this report on Majakka Hall because it was built and utilized for the Majakka Temperance Society of DeKalb. DeKalb Finns played an active role in these larger national organizations and social movements.

The involvement of Finns in the Temperance Movement in America begins in 1883 when the Independent Order of Good Templar's Scandinavian branch welcomed Finns to their meetings. Soon to follow in 1885 the first Finnish Temperance Society formed in Michigan and affiliated with the Good Templar Temperance organization (Holmio 2001). Yet as Finnish Temperance Societies increased, so did dissatisfaction with being under the umbrella of the Good Templar organization and therefore the Finnish National Temperance Brotherhood was founded in 1888. As societies joined they were assigned a number, and DeKalb's Finnish temperance society *Kylvö* lists as number 100, joining in 1896 (Holmio 2001). A second temperance society was formed in DeKalb in 1901 and this was the *Majakka* society. *Majakka* stands for "Lighthouse" and *Kylvö* for "Sowing," in keeping with the uplifting names Finnish Temperance societies referred to their organizations. Although the two societies worked for the same cause and had some level of cooperation, the *Majakka* society did not want to join the Finnish National Temperance Brotherhood as *Kylvö* had, instead, it later joined the Illinois Finnish Temperance League that was formed in 1911. Representatives from DeKalb helped organize this new group (Arras 1971).



Group of DeKalb Finns spelling out "temperance" in Finnish (Source: Arra 1971)

By 1916, the Finnish National Temperance Brotherhood had 244 societies across the country. But along with the Brotherhood, another umbrella group had been started, The Friends of Temperance, as well as a Western and Eastern league in the Upper Peninsula. The Finnish American Temperance Movement began the attempt to pull together some of the factions that had developed in order to create a more central organization. DeKalb, IL became the site for a "Peace Meeting" in 1908. Representatives from the various societies came together to forge a constitution and a new name was suggested for an overarching organization. Although these suggestions did not at first take hold, further meetings were held and much later merges took place and a central organization was finally agreed upon (Holmio 2001).



Participants of the "Peace Meeting" at De Kalb in 1908.

Source: Arra 1971

With the enactment of Prohibition in 1919, Temperance activities declined and in some cases societies were eventually dissolved. In DeKalb, the Kylvö society left the Brotherhood in 1921. The Majakka society continued on, sponsoring summer festivals and parades for the other Illinois Temperance Societies of Chicago and Waukegan. More cultural activities and Finnish heritage events were added to the activities of the society, including choruses, bands, plays and gymnastics. A former resident of the 3rd Ward, Anne Hietikko remembers fondly, "Oh my goodness that was a nice place. They put on plays, the Finnish people would; they were good. That's where I learned to dance you know, they had a beautiful dance floor." (Hietikko 2012)

Majakka Hall was seen as not only a meeting place for temperance work but also a welcoming place for Finns to come for support, especially those new to the area. The resources of a lending library, a cafeteria and a place for social events made this particularly important for this purpose. As Al Riippi, who also grew up in the 3rd Ward states about the hall, "Down in the basement that's where the bachelors who worked at the steel mill would come and they'd have their breakfast and they'd make their lunch box. They'd go and they'd eat all their meals there down in the basement of that building." (Riippi 2012)

At some point in the 1940s Majakka left the Illinois Temperance Society and then commenced their temperance work in 1953. The Majakka Hall was sold in 1949 (Metzger 1990). It now serves the community as the DeKalb Area Women's Center. The building's history as a Finnish temperance hall is worthy of inclusion in the city of DeKalb's preservation sites. Some of the few remaining Finnish halls in the country are recognized at state levels or listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



**Finnish Temperance Hall
Rocklin, CA Built in 1905
California Point of Historic
Interest & State Historical
No. PLA-019**

Source: <http://www.quarriesandbeyond.org>

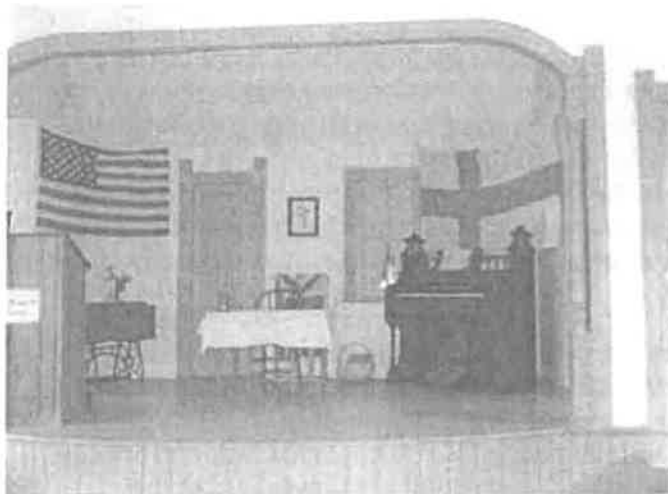


**Cokaton P.R.S. Onnen Toivo
Ratusserura-Temperance Hall
located at Temperance Corner,
Wright County, Cokato, MN
Built in 1896**

**Listed with National Register of
Historic Places**

Source: <http://www.cokatofinnam.org>

Cokato, MN Temperance Hall Stage:





Valon Tuote Raittiusseura
Temperance Hall, currently
Kaleva Hall Virginia, MN
Built in 1906

Listed with National
Register of Historic Places

Source: <http://waymarking.com>

DeKalb Finnish American population decreased in the 3rd Ward by the 1950s and later generations assimilated into the general population. These early immigrants had contributed to DeKalb initially as workers in the steel mills and then as business owners and civic leaders. Hugo J. Hakala is an excellent example of this, having worked at American Steel and Wire for 15 years and then, after serving as 3rd Ward alderman for five years, became Mayor of the city of DeKalb from 1937-1949. Other civic leaders include Sam Riippi who served as city clerk for 20 years and Carl Riippi who served as city treasurer for four years and also on the park board for thirteen years. Public servants of the city of DeKalb include Finnish-Americans John Remsey as police officer and chief of police from 1949-1953 and 1956-1957; Sam Luoma as chief of the Fire Department from 1958-1967; and Al Riippi from 1979-1986 (Cruse 1994; Metzger 1990).

The Finns of DeKalb have contributed to the history of the city, as well as to larger and quite significant cultural trends and social movements. The Majakka Hall of DeKalb is an important testament to the resiliency of Finnish heritage that is still visible today, and one of the few remaining Finnish Temperance Halls in the country.

References

- Arra, Esa. 1971. *The Finns of Illinois*, translated by Andrew I. Brask. Minnesota: Finnish-American Historical Society of Illinois.
- Cruse, Mike. 1994. "Finns Are Vital Part of DeKalb's History." *Daily Chronicle*, July 24, p. 9.
- Hietikko, Anne. May 20, 2012. Personal interview by Jill Sanderson.
- Holmio, Armas K. E. 2001. *History of the Finns in Michigan*, translated by Ellen M. Ryyanen. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- Metzger, Joan M. 1990. "The Finnish Community of DeKalb IL" Retrieved August 1, 2011 <http://www.genealogia.fi/emi/art/article412e.htm>
- Riippi, Al. March 23, 2012. Personal interview by Jill Sanderson and Diane Rodgers.