

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic John J. Makinen Bottle House

and or common Kaleva Historical Museum

2. Location

street & number 14551 Wuoksi Avenue

N/A not for publication

city, town Kaleva N/A vicinity of

state Michigan code 026 county Manistee code 101

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name The Kaleva Historical Society, Inc.

street & number 14551 Wuoksi Avenue

city, town Kaleva N/A vicinity of state Michigan

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Manistee County Courthouse

street & number 415 Third

city, town Manistee state Michigan

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Michigan State Survey has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date October 17, 1986 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Bureau of History

city, town Lansing state Michigan

## 7. Description

### Condition

☒ excellent  
☐ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☒ unaltered  
☐ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The John T. Makinen Bottle House is a north-facing, one-and-one-half-story bungalow with an intersecting gabled roof. The house is a unique example of vernacular architecture, with over 60,000 glass bottles used to clad the exterior walls, with patterns created by use of different colored glass bottles. The most prominent such ornamentation is "HAPPY HOME" spelled out across the front porch. The House is approximately 58 feet deep and 25 feet wide, and sits on a foundation of rock-faced concrete blocks. It stands on its original site at the southwest corner of Huoksi Avenue and Kauko Street, in Kaleva, Michigan. It is the only bottle-clad house known in Michigan.

The exterior of the house features coursed brickwork at the corners and above the foundations. Using knowledge gained from at least two previous bottle structures (see significance paragraph), John Makinen laid bottle courses with a specifically developed mortar between the brick corners. The bottles were laid bottom end outward so that studding could fit between the bottle necks. The interior walls have been plastered smooth. The bottles are predominantly clear soft drink bottles from the Northwestern Bottling Works, owned by Makinen. Dark bottles were used to accent the windows, and create geometric designs. The gabled roof has been reshingled with shingles that match the original and an addition at the back was rebuilt in 1980.

Entry from the front (north side) is via an enclosed rectangular porch. The front of the porch has "HAPPY HOME" spelled in dark bottles. The porch enters into the living room on the east side of the house. To the west is a bedroom. The living room opens to a dining room. West of the dining room is a bath and the stairway to the upper floor. South and west of the dining room is the kitchen, which opens to another bedroom on the east and the back addition. The upper floor is divided into three bedrooms from north to south, with the middle room off-set to the east into the gable. West of this middle room is the stairway and upper bathroom. The basement has two rooms at the southeast and northwest corners for storage. The remainder is open area.

The house was purchased by the Kaleva Historical Society in 1980 after it had been vacant for several years following the death of Mrs. Makinen. The Society restored the home, reshingled (with shingles of the same size and color) the roof, repaired the landscaping and rebuilt the back addition since it was in such a dilapidated state that restoration was not possible. It is currently being used to house the Society's museum.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1939-1940

Builder/Architect John J. Makinen, Sr.

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The John J. Makinen Bottle House is a rare Michigan example of vernacular architecture built of bottles. Makinen, a native of Finland, owner and operator of the Northwestern Bottling Works for seventeen years before retiring in 1939, decided to use the surplus bottles from his plant to clad a new house in Kaleva. He had twice before built bottle-clad structures and found the bottles provided ideal insulation. Using his skills, a self-produced mortar, and bottles, he single-handedly built this bungalow over a two-year period, thereby displaying the implements of his trade on his retirement house. The clear bottles, with dark green and dark brown bottles used for detailing, sparkled in the sun and quickly became an attraction for visitors. After completing the house, but before moving in, Makinen died. His widow survived him and for many years she welcomed visitors to see her husband's handiwork. Over the years it came to symbolize his determination in particular, and Finnish determination in general. After Mrs. Makinen died, the house was purchased by the Kaleva Historical Society, who renovated it, established their museum in it, and now use it as a focus for Finnish ethnic celebrations. Even though the Makinen Bottle House is not yet 50 years old (built 1939-1940), it is significant for its construction material. Only a few other bottle structures are known to have existed in Michigan: the Stephens bottle fence (1916) at Waters (now destroyed), a bottle silo on a farm near Matherton, Ionia County (delapidated), and Makinen's own earlier structures in Kaleva.

John Jacob Makinen (b. 6 June 1871) emigrated from his native Kurikka, Finland in 1893 along with his wife Maria Mathilda (nee Nyrkkanen, married 24 June 1891) to Ishpeming, Michigan as part of a larger Finnish migration to that region. In 1903 he moved to the vicinity of Kaleva, Manistee County, another area to which Finns were being attracted by the opportunity to purchase inexpensive, cut-over land. He bought a farm and also worked as a clerk in a general store owned by the Siirtolainen newspaper company, which worked actively to attract Finnish settlers to central Manistee County. He later opened his own store, which operated for a number of years, as well as operating his farm. In 1909, on his farm, he constructed his first bottle clad structure, an ice house. Particulars of this building are not available.

In 1922, Makinen formed a partnership with Alex Ketonen to create the Northwestern Bottling Company, which produced soft drinks. Ten years later, due to a change in bottling technology, Makinen found he had a large supply of surplus bottles. Recalling the ice house, he built a storehouse from the bottles, spelling the company's name in contrasting colors. He found that the bottles, with trapped air space, provided an ideal insulating barrier.

Following his retirement in 1939, Makinen decided to leave the farm and build a house in Kaleva using the other surplus bottles from the bottling plant. The bottles were laid in courses with the bottoms pointing outward and the necks between the studs of the frame house. Makinen laid bricks at the corners for stability. The interior was covered with plaster board and plaster. After the house was completed, but before moving in, Makinen died (22 January 1942). His widow lived in the house for many years and welcomed the many people who came to see her husband's handiwork. Because of his ethnicity, the house also became a symbol of Finnish determination and resolve. After Mrs. Makinen died the house stood empty for several years, but it continued to attract tourists. In 1980 the house was purchased by the Kaleva Historical Society to house its museum. The house was restored and now has become the focus of Finnish ethnic celebration in Manistee County.

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In addition to building the house and operating the bottling works, Makinen was active in community affairs. As a pioneer of the Kaleva area, he served as township treasurer and school board member. He helped organize the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church, which he over the years served in such capacities as vice-secretary, auditor, collector, and leader of hymns. He also served as director of the Sael Choir. In addition, he served on the Suomi College Committee which supervised the college's affairs. (Suomi College's Old Main Building was listed on the National Register in 12 January 1972.)

The John J. Makinen Bottle House stands as a unique example of folk-art vernacular architecture built by an individual significant in the community. It is the only known bottle house in Michigan.

AENR86284E AENR86284G

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

## 10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Brethren

Quadrangle scale 1:25,000

UTM References

A 

1	6	5	7	8	9	3	8	4	9	1	3	5	6	2
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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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H 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title 1) Velma R. Bigelow, Secretary & Doris Gustafson & Ruth Cooper  
2) Richard H. Harms, Historian

organization 1) The Kaleva Historical Society  
2) Bureau of History

date

street & number 1) 14551 Wuoksi Avenue  
2) 208 N. Capitol Ave.,

telephone

1) (616) 362-3258  
2) (517) 335-2721

city or town 1) Kaleva  
2) Lansing

state

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☒ national ☐ state ☐ local

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

title Director, Bureau of History

date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
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Continuation sheet

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9. Major Bibliographical References

- Manistee News Advocate 9/11/82  
Manistee News Advocate 7/23/85  
Manistee County Sun Times 6/27/86  
Detroit Free Press 9/14/41  
Detroit Free Press 9/11/77  
Manistee News Advocate 7/3/86  
Manistee County Pioneer Press 1/23/42  
Manistee News Advocate 1/23/42  
Wampler, Jan. All Their Own: People and the Places They Build, (New York: Halsted Press, 1977).  
Schuyt, Michael. Fantastic Architecture: Personal and Eccentric Visions, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1980).  
Rosen, Seymour. In Celebration of Ourselves, (Los Angeles: California Living Books, 1979).  
McDowell, Marsha and Dewhurst, Ken. Rainbows in the Sky: The Folk Art of Michigan in the Twentieth Century, (East Lansing: M.S.U. Board of Trustees, 1978).

10. Verbal boundary description and justification

Corner 14551 Wuoksi and Kauko

Section 21  
Property #51-38-401-716-01  
Kaleva Historical Society, Inc.

MGV -48  
Village of Kaleva lot #66  
Section 0 - Class Code 701  
Town & Range T-23 North R-14 West

This is the entire property on which the structure stands.