

Kaleva Historical Society
Kaleva, Michigan 49645

April 7, 1986

Saving & Preserving Arts & Cultural
Environments,
1804 North Van Ness
Los Angeles, California 90028

Dear Elaine Wintman, Assistant Director

In answer to your letter of March 25th, I am sending some copies of letters for your file on the Kaleva Historical Museum which you said you were opening. I hope it is what you want.

Included are the following: a letter from the Michigan Historical Commission informing us our museum "The Bottle House" was accepted for listing on the State Register of Historic Sites; a copy of the text as approved for our marker; copy of our Dedication Program; copy of our original letter to potential donors for purchasing the Bottle House; a copy of the second letter to those who made pledges; a progress report after we acquired the building.

I hope this is of interest and the kind of thing you want.

I have talked to the Michigan History Division and am in the process of applying for National Register status.

Thank you for your interest and if you think I can be of any further help let me know.

Respectfully yours,

Velma R. Bigelow (Mrs.) Secretary
THE KALEVA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

MICHIGAN HISTORY DIVISION
MICHIGAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
RICHARD H. AUSTIN

LANSING, 48918
SECRETARY OF STATE



John Collins *Marshall*
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Alexis Praus *Kalamazoo*
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GOV. WILLIAM G. MILLIKEN *Lansing*
Ex-Officio

January 21, 1982

President and Members
The Kaleva Historical Society
SW corner of Wuoksi Ave. and Kauko St.
Kaleva, MI. 49645

Dear Sir/Madam:

The Michigan Historical Commission is pleased to inform you that the John J. Makinen, Sr. House - "The Bottle House" (The Kaleva Historical Museum), Kaleva, Manistee County, has been listed in the State Register of Historic Sites.

The Commission has judged the site to be historically and/or architecturally significant and listed it as a type A, protected site.

The State Register was established by Act 10 of the Public Acts of 1955 to recognize historic sites in Michigan. This designation also enables the purchase and display of an official state marker pending approval of the text by the Michigan Historical Commission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Martha M. Bigelow".

Martha M. Bigelow, Director
Michigan History Division
and Executive Secretary
Michigan Historical Commission

MMB/s1

One-post marker
1 1/2" caption
1" text
Kaleva
Manistee County

THE BOTTLE
HOUSE

1 John J Makinen, Sr.,
2 (1871-1942) built this house
3 out of over 60,000 pop
4 bottles, most of which came
5 from his business, the
6 Northwestern Bottling Works.
7 The bottles were laid on
8 their sides with the bottom
9 ends to the exterior. A
10 native of Finland, Makinen
11 moved to the area in 1903.
12 He completed the house in
13 1941 but died before his
14 family moved into it. In
15 1980 the building was
16 purchased by the Kaleva
17 Historical Society, which
18 renovated it to house the
19 Kaleva Historical Museum.

Michigan History Division, Department of State
Registered Local Site No.
Property of the State of Michigan
1983

Approved.

Nelma R. Bigelow

*Secretary,
Kaleva Historical Society. 7-26-83*

*Mailed 7-30-83
with \$700 check*

7/22/83

The Kaleva Historical Society, Inc.

Kaleva, Michigan 49645

President - Eva Densmore
Vice President - Harold Bigelow
Treasurer - Lempi Ahlskog
Secretary - Velma Bigelow
Trustees - M. A. Gustafson
 Matt Hakala
 Harold Bigelow
 Robert Grant
 Martha Lehto
 Jack Luhtanen

The Kaleva Historical Society and the people of the area have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to have the name of Kaleva recognized and remembered for our history and our part in the development of a permanent home for the many artifacts already donated to the museum.

There is a famous house in Kaleva built of bottles by the late John J. Makinen who operated the Northwestern Bottling Works. He used 60,000 pop bottles to form the outer walls; colored bottles formed the designs in the walls and to this day no one has ever found out what type of mortar was used to hold round bottles in perfect symmetry.

The "Bottle House" has received national publicity in "Believe-It-Or-Not, Ripley" and has been photographed by thousands of people, some from as far away as Japan.

The Kaleva Historical Society now has the opportunity to acquire the "Bottle House" and to preserve this famous old home as an Historical Landmark and also use it as a museum for the Kaleva area. We realize that without the help of everyone in the community the project to purchase and renovate the "Bottle House" will be impossible.

We need your pledge or donation. Enclosed is a pledge card for your convenience; please pledge what you can and return to Treasurer Lempi Ahlskog, Kaleva, Michigan 49645 by the date of October 30, 1979.

Respectfully,

The Kaleva Historical Society, Inc.
Kaleva, Michigan 49645

Kaleva Historical Society, Inc.
Kaleva, Michigan 49645

April 14, 1980

Dear Donor:

The Kaleva Historical Society's attempt to have Kaleva recognized and remembered for its history, and our part in the development of a permanent home for the many artifacts already donated to the museum, is still very much alive.

Our first efforts to raise funds brought in pledges and donations of \$8,340, not enough to purchase the famous old John J. Makinen "Bottle House" then offered for \$20,000, plus renovation costs.

After long discussions with the Makinen family, who also wish the "Bottle House" to become our much needed museum and to remain as a memorial to John J. Makinen, the family has agreed to reduce the price to \$12,000 plus closing costs. We will still need renovation money of at least \$3,000, making a total of \$15,000. The amount still needed to enable the Kaleva Historical Society to purchase the "Bottle House" is approximately \$6,600. This is an offer we just cannot say no to, so we must keep on trying.

This letter is to request that you send your pledged donation now. If you would like to increase your pledge it would be greatly appreciated. If you have not made a donation, do so now and send it to:

Lempi Ahlskog, Treasurer
The Kaleva Historical Society, Inc.
Kaleva, Michigan 49645

Your donation to this very worthy cause is tax deductible, and it is also the intention of the Kaleva Historical Society to install a plaque in the Bottle House Museum with the names of donors who made this dream a reality.

We wish you to know that we appreciate your help in the past and hope you will continue your interest in the future.

Sincerely,

Eva Densmore, President
THE KALEVA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

ED/vrb

Kaleva Historical Society, Inc.
Kaleva, Michigan 49845

THE KALEVA HISTORICAL SOCIETY wishes to make a progress report on the status of the Kaleva Museum Building (Bottle House) to the community and especially to those who so generously donated funds to acquire and renovate it.

The very first thing done was the installation of a new roof. The old shed was torn down and replaced by a new 14' x 14' addition. Vinyl siding was installed overall. Extensive outside yard work was done. The basement walls have one coat of white water-proof paint and the furnace has been put in good working condition. The kitchen, front porch, five bedrooms and the upstairs hall have new white ceiling tile. Four bedrooms, the porch and kitchen walls have all been paneled; one bedroom will be papered at a later date. The bathroom, living room and dining room have been given two coats of paint. All woodwork has been painted, some receiving two coats.

We were very fortunate because CETA labor was made available to us, thus we were able to do a great deal more than anticipated because our funds could be used entirely for material.

All museum possessions have been moved to the new building and work is progressing to get the museum in order. The Kaleva Woman's Club members have voted to make the museum their Civic Improvement Project (CIP) so they will be working closely with the Kaleva Historical Society to complete the job.

(January 19, 1981)