

# Houdini Historical Marker in Houdini Plaza

## • Brief description of the proposed project

Seeking to install a Wisconsin Historical Marker in Houdini Plaza in honor of Harry Houdini – in this the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his passing. This year the Society of American Magicians will host their convention in Appleton and a slate of events and happenings are in various stages of planning.

## • Photos/sketches of proposed work:

A sample image of what the Historical Markers look like is included

## Draft Text:

Born Erik Weiss in Budapest, Hungary, Harry Houdini became a world-famous magician and escape artist. His family immigrated to the United States when he was four years old, settling in Appleton in 1878. His father, Mayer Samuel Weiss, served as the first rabbi for Appleton's Zion Reform Jewish Congregation. Throughout his career, Houdini proclaiming Appleton as his hometown. In 1897 he performed at the Appleton Opera House and challenged the local police by escaping from their handcuffs and a jail cell. Houdini's career soared after traveling to Europe in 1900 where he did numerous escapes and stunts. Houdini was not only highly regarded as a performer but was an author, pioneer aviator, silent film star, inventor, and a collector. Appleton proudly remembers its connection to the legendary "Handcuff King," as a testament to his enduring legacy and prestigious career.

## Sources:

- Book: Ken Silverman's [Houdini!!! The Career of Ehrich Weiss](#)
- Houdini-A Pictorial Life by Milbourne Chirstopher
- Houdini: His life and Art by Bert Randolph Sugar and James Randi
- Wild About Harry Houdini blog curated by John Cox,
- History Museum at the Castle: <https://myhistorymuseum.org/houdini/>

Please note that the Wisconsin Historical Society will also verify the information through their approval process.

## • Site plan/location map showing location of proposed work

Houdini Plaza: to be located near the bronze bust in accordance with the City of Appleton setback and restrictions. We would work with the Park and Recreation Department and Public Works Department to select the best location within the plaza.

## • Reason for choosing the proposed location:

Honoring its name's sake, Houdini Plaza is the perfect location for a Historical marker sharing Harry Houdini's connection to Appleton WI.

## • Description of how the work is installed/anchored/attached

BOLDT construction will be the contractor to install the marker.

## • Installation specifications provided by a structural engineer

TBD by BOLDT based on location.

## • Timeline and duration of installation

The installation goal is October 30<sup>th</sup> 2026

Approval through the WI Historical Society can take up to 12 months – so we may not make this.

• **How the marker will be paid for and maintained**

Private funds donated through Creative Downtown Appleton Inc will pay for the marker and any installation cost.

Creative Downtown Appleton Inc will retain a maintenance budget to repair the marker as needed.

