



A newsletter on historic preservation from the State Historic Preservation Office of the Minnesota Historical Society

Historic preservation in Minnesota: 40 years later

This year we mark the 40th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act, the landmark legislation that shaped the comprehensive, nationwide historic preservation program we know today.

The act set up the program's structure and, in the process, defined the values on which it stands. Each state was authorized to create a State Historic Preservation Office, ensuring that the work of preservation would be shared. At the federal level, an Advisory Council on Historic Preservation was established to consult with the president and Congress on preservation matters. In addition, the federal government was required to demonstrate responsible stewardship for its own properties. Perhaps the most visible product of the 1966 preservation act was the National Register of Historic Places, providing a formal way to recognize properties that constitute the essential fabric of our nation's history.

This anniversary gives us reason not only to celebrate but also to reflect on what was happening to our historic resources before the National Historic Preservation Act became law. After World War II, Minnesota joined the rest of the country in an ambitious effort to renew blighted urban areas and build a



The U.S. Post Office, Courthouse and Customs House (Landmark Center) in St. Paul was Minnesota's first individual property listed on the National Register of Historic Places, in March 1969.

system of federally funded interstate highways. By the late 1950s, it became clear that these projects were changing the American landscape: irreplaceable pieces of the past were being lost at an alarming rate. It was against this backdrop that preservationists began

Historic preservation *continued on page 3*

CALENDAR

May 2: "Whose House Was This?," 6 to 7:30 p.m., MHS Library, Minnesota History Center, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul. Learn how to use resources such as maps, city directories and photographs to uncover your house history. Cost: \$6 for MHS members, \$8 for nonmembers. Registration required; call 651-296-2143 or register online at www.mnhs.org/library/classes.

May 16: State Review Board meeting, 7 p.m., Minnesota History Center, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul. For agenda information call Michele Decker, 651-296-5434.

May 21-June 30: "Minnesota Rocks! International Stone Carving Symposium 2006," Saint Paul College lawn, Kellogg Boulevard at Summit Avenue, St. Paul. In an open-air studio, master stone carvers from around the world will create artworks from stone quarried in Minnesota. The symposium includes tours of historic St. Paul buildings. For information call Public Art Saint Paul, 651-290-0921, or go to www.publicartstpaul.org.

MAY IS PRESERVATION MONTH

Preservation Month serves as a showcase for historic preservation successes nationwide. This year's theme: "Sustain America – Vision, Economics and Preservation." For tips on planning Preservation Month events, visit the web site of the National Trust for Historic Preservation at www.nationaltrust.org/preservationmonth/index.asp.

To publicize your events on the MNLOCALHISTORY listserv, e-mail Tim Glines at timothy.glines@mnhs.org. Include the event name, date, time, location, a brief description, sponsors and contact information.

SAVED

Freeborn County: Home Improvement Building (1916), Albert Lea. Located in the Albert Lea Commercial Historic District, the Home Improvement Building was rehabilitated for senior housing and commercial space using federal preservation tax incentives. Work included repairing and repointing exterior masonry, rebuilding storefronts, replacing windows and installing a new roof and mechanical systems.



Home Improvement Building before (left) and after rehabilitation for senior housing.

Chisago County: J. C. Carlson House (1899), Rush City. This Queen Anne residence designed by Augustus F Gauger was rehabilitated into a bed-and-breakfast inn using federal preservation tax incentives. Work included installing a new roof, removing a fire escape and repairing the front porch, replacing deteriorated siding, constructing new front steps and replacing storm windows.



J. C. Carlson House before (left) and after rehabilitation as a bed-and-breakfast inn.

REGISTRATION

Recent additions to the National Register of Historic Places

Otter Tail County: People's Union Church (1915), 48566 205th Ave., Scambler Twp. Prepared by Denis Gardner.

Todd County: Batcher Opera House Block (1907), Fifth Street and Second Avenue, Staples. Prepared by Denis Gardner.

Wabasha County: Reads Landing Overlook (1939-40), Minn. Hwy. 61, Pepin Twp. Prepared by Susan Granger, Scott Kelly, Kay Grossman and Sue Dieter.



Constructed in 1915, People's Union Church remains as it was founded – a nondenominational religious gathering place administered by women. Over the years, the church has been used variously for weddings, receptions, church suppers and farewell gatherings. It has also served as a meeting place for the local Farmer's Club and 4-H Club.



Reads Landing Overlook, also known as Lake Pepin Scenic Overlook, is an excellent example of the wayside rests built during the formative years of the state highway department's Roadside Development Division. Located along one of the widest parts of the Upper Mississippi, it features a Rustic Style, 230-foot-long wall built of random ashlar limestone with brick trim.

Minnesota Historic Properties Record launched

The Minnesota SHPO is currently completing final review of the first 13 historic properties recorded under the new Minnesota Historic Properties Record (MHPR).

Since 1933 the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) has provided a national archive for documentation of the country's historic architecture. Administered by the National Park Service and the Library of Congress, this program was expanded in 1969 to include the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) and again in 2000 with the Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS).

Several years ago, when the HABS and HAER programs narrowed their primary focus to properties of national significance, the SHPO decided to establish a similar documentation program to record historic properties of state and local significance.

MHPR guidelines patterned on the federal standards were developed by former SHPO staff member Sarah Jordan

Beimers. Among properties selected for MHPR documentation are those slated for demolition, substantial alteration or transfer from public ownership. Before that happens, each property is documented through archival-quality photographs and a historical narrative typically more detailed than that found in a National Register nomination. The materials are integrated into Minnesota Historical Society collections for use by researchers in the MHS Library.

The 13 projects currently under final review are:

- **Minnesota State Sanitarium for Consumptives at Ah-Gwah-Ching, Willmar Hospital Farm for Inebriates and Fergus Falls State Hospital** (completed by the Minnesota Department of Administration).
- **Stewart-Cepro Grain Elevator in Minneapolis** (completed by Hennepin County).
- **Chicago Avenue and Park Avenue Bridges over the Midtown**



Photo by Jerry Mathiason

Aerial view of Willmar Hospital Farm for Inebriates.

Greenway in Minneapolis and three bridges in downtown Austin

(completed by the Federal Highway Administration, the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the City of Minneapolis).

- **Hennepin Paper Company in Little Falls** (completed by the Environmental Protection Agency and the City of Little Falls).
- **Roseau City Hall and Roseau Power Plant** (completed by the City of Roseau).
- **Hibbing Disposal Plant** (completed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the City of Hibbing).

For more information on the MHPR, call Kelly Gragg-Johnson at 651-296-5462.

- *Dennis Gimmestad*

Historic preservation *continued from page 1*

seeking new ways to protect them.

Today, one thing is certain: the preservation ethic has taken root. In Minnesota more than 1,500 properties - encompassing 6,500 individual properties that represent every county in the state - have so far been listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The state's local preservation programs are thriving and our preservation community continues to grow. In the midst of struggles to save threatened resources, and despite our tendency to rush from one crisis to the next, it is important to remember the incredible strides we have made in 40 years.

And so we celebrate our many

successes. Preservation Office staff members have already begun compiling a list of accomplishments - events and milestones in Minnesota preservation over the past four decades. We want your input, too. Give us a call or send an e-mail letting us know what you think are the significant preservation milestones in your community.

One milestone on everyone's list will surely be the creation in 1981 of the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, the only statewide nonprofit organization dedicated solely to the preservation, protection and promotion of Minnesota's historic properties. The Alliance is gearing up to celebrate its

own 25th anniversary this year with a host of activities and events.

What a great foundation we have to build on as we move forward. When we observe Preservation Month in May, we will be well on our way toward meeting the goals set forth in the new statewide historic preservation plan, published this winter. And when we gather next fall at the statewide historic preservation conference in Red Wing, we will once again measure our progress and celebrate our successes. We hope you'll join us.

- *Britta L. Bloomberg, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer*

Minnesota Preservation Planner

is published four times a year by the State Historic Preservation Office of the Minnesota Historical Society, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul, MN 55102-1906. Material from this issue may be reprinted with the following credit line: Reprinted with permission from *Minnesota Preservation Planner*, published by the Minnesota Historical Society, Vol. XVII, No. 2, Spring 2006.

Upon request, this publication is available in alternative formats: audiotape, large print or computer disk. Back issues can be found online at www.mnhs.org/about/publications/planner.html.

Unless otherwise noted, photographic images in the Planner are from the State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society.

For address corrections call Michele Decker at 651-296-5434 or e-mail michele.decker@mnhs.org.

This newsletter has been financed in part with federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, through the Minnesota Historical Society under the provisions of the national Historic Preservation Act as amended. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendations by the Department of the Interior.

Regulations of the U.S. Department of the Interior strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination in departmental federally assisted programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or disability. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility operated by a recipient of federal assistance should write to: Director, Equal Opportunity Program, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127.

Britta Bloomberg, Editor

Michael Koop, Assistant Editor

Mary Ann Nord, Assistant Editor

Kate Raver, Layout

www.mnhs.org

Preservation conference set for Sept. 28-29

Mark your calendars now for Minnesota's 27th Annual Statewide Historic Preservation Conference, to be held Sept. 28-29 at the St. James Hotel in Red Wing. Sponsored by the State Historic Preservation Office, the conference will be hosted by the

City of Red Wing, the Red Wing Heritage Preservation Commission, the Red Wing Visitors and Convention Bureau, and the Goodhue County Historical Society.

The program features lectures and working sessions on historic preservation topics as well as walking tours and bus tours of local sites.

Watch for a postcard about the



The 1875 St. James Hotel, site of this year's statewide historic preservation conference in Red Wing, was built according to plans by architect Edward P. Bassford.

conference to be mailed later this spring. Further details will be available in the summer. For more information call SHPO at 651-296-5434 or e-mail mnshpo@mnhs.org.

Minnesota Historical Society

345 Kellogg Boulevard West
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102-1906

Address service requested.

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
St. Paul, MN
Permit No. 854