

HABS No. MN-148-A

Willmar Hospital Farm for Inebriates, Auditorium/Gymnasium
(Willmar Hospital Farm for Inebriates, Rehabilitation Building)
100 Yards Directly East of the Administration Building ~~which is~~
at 1550 Highway 71 North

Willmar
Kandiyohi County
Minnesota

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
WILLMAR HOSPITAL FARM FOR INEBRIATES, AUDITORIUM/GYMNASIUM
(Willmar Hospital Farm for Inebriates, Rehabilitation Building)

HABS No. MN-148-A

Location: Willmar Regional Treatment Center
1550 Highway 71 N.
Auditorium is located 100 yds directly East of the Administration Bldg.
Willmar, Kandiyohi County, MN 56201

Present Owner: State of Minnesota

Present Use: None

Significance: As part of a campus that is considered a historical district, this building is of similar design and structure as those around it. Built around the same period and designed by the same architect, Clarence H. Johnston, Sr., this building is not unique in character. Due to its deteriorated condition, this building has been declared unsafe.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1923
2. Architect: C.H. Johnston, St. Paul, Minnesota
Engineers: Charles L. Pillsbury Company, St. Paul, Minnesota
3. Original and subsequent owner: State of Minnesota
4. Original plans and construction: Have most at the Willmar Regional Treatment Center, owned by the State of Minnesota. Will be put on microfiche.
5. Alterations and additions: Root cellar.

B. Campus Historical Perspective

The Willmar Regional Treatment Center complex, built between 1912 and 1933, is historically and architecturally significant as an intact example of the cottage/colony theory of state institution design, and as an example of the work of St. Paul architect Clarence H. Johnston, Sr.

The Willmar Hospital Farm for Inebriates was established by the state legislature in 1907 as Minnesota's second state hospital for alcoholics. (The first had been established in Rochester in 1873). The hospital was financed through a state tax of 2% on all liquor license fees, and opened in December of 1912 with 2 major buildings and a 500 acre farm site. Two years later, in July of 1914, there were 314 patients at Willmar. In 1917 services were expanded to include custodial care for the chronically insane (thereby creating the state's third asylum for the insane), and in 1919 the name was changed to Willmar State Asylum. Known as Willmar State Hospital since 1937, (renamed **Willmar Regional Treatment Center in 1986**), the facility was Minnesota's primary state-owned alcohol and drug treatment hospital until 1950 when the Sandstone State Hospital established a program for alcoholic males living in northeastern Minnesota. Today the Willmar hospital treats men, women, and adolescents who are mentally ill, mentally retarded, or chemically dependent.

The Willmar State Hospital was one of a network of state hospitals established between 1866 and the 1940's in about 15 cities in Minnesota. The system included hospitals and custodial asylums for the insane, detention hospitals for the criminally insane, hospitals and schools for the mentally retarded, state tuberculosis sanatoria, a hospital for crippled children, and the Willmar Hospital Farm for Inebriates. Most of these facilities were established on the outskirts of medium-sized cities like Willmar, and most were built on sizeable farms which, following nineteenth century theories of institutional design, provided privacy, created a familiar atmosphere for a largely rural clientele, provided opportunities for therapeutic labor, and allowed hospitals to be somewhat self-supporting. The Willmar Hospital Farm included 477 tillable acres plus additional pasture land, orchards, and gardens. While many of Minnesota's state hospitals were huge, imposing buildings, beginning at the turn of the century, some were built following the cottage or colony theory of hospital design. First seen in the Midwest in Illinois circa 1877, the cottage system espoused smaller, more home-like or humane residence cottages and supporting buildings grouped to resemble a country village, often with a village green and an adjacent farm. The Willmar Hospital Farm was planned in this fashion, with an administration building and nurses' residence forming the nucleus of the colony and residence cottages and other structures added to the group as they were needed over a twenty year period. The thirteen residence cottages, used instead of traditional hospital wards, allowed patients to be separated according to age, sex, and degree of care required

and isolated chemically dependent, mentally ill, and mentally retarded patients into separate buildings.

By 1933 the hospital complex had reached a stable size with an administration building, nurse and staff residences, an auditorium/gym, thirteen cottages, farm buildings, and various support buildings. There was no further major construction until 1950. After several policy changes during the 1950's and 1960's, the farm complex was phased out and eventually demolished and four small staff residences were moved and/or demolished when the staff was permitted to live off the hospital grounds. After 1950, a receiving hospital (now Cottage 1), a medical treatment center (including hospital, geriatric, and therapy wings) an activities building (including library, pool, gym, etc.), a service building (including dining room, kitchen, and laundry), a new power plant, and a superintendent's residence were added.

Most of the buildings at the Willmar Regional Treatment Center, including many of the farm structures, were designed by Clarence H. Johnston, Sr., a prolific St. Paul architect who served as State Architect for the Minnesota Board of Control from 1901-1931. As State Architect Johnston designed almost all buildings constructed at state institutions during this period, including those at some state prisons and at various campuses of the University of Minnesota. The buildings at Willmar, because of their integrity and cohesiveness as a complex, remain excellent examples of Johnston's work.

Administration Building. Built 1912. Largest and most complex building on the site. Originally contained administration, patient wards, and medical treatment, now houses primarily administration and a chapel. T-shaped with a central 3 story hipped roof core (3 bays wide, 5 bays deep), 10 bay two story hipped wings extending north and south, and a nine bay gabled and hipped roof rear wing. Stucco walls, brick base and trim, red ceramic tile roof. Rectangular and rounded arched 12/1, 6/1, and 4/1 sash. Detailing includes a smooth limestone entrance surround on main (west) facade, two cast iron lamp posts at the entrance, 3 bay loggia links between central structure and north and south wings, hipped dormers, octagonal and hipped cupolas, and heavy window boxes. The addition of handicapped entrances on the west and east facades and the removal of the central cupola's lantern cap are the only apparent exterior alterations.

Nurses' Residence. Built 1912. Later used as the Administration Annex, now used as a Minnesota Highway Patrol Station Office. One story L-shaped building with gabled and hipped roof. Stucco walls, brick trim, red ceramic tile roof. Rectangular, paired 6/1 sash. Open loggia porches on south and west facades with polished gray granite columns. Heavy window boxes. Intact.

Cottages. Complex contains 13 nearly identical residence cottages built between 1919-1933. Six overlook Willmar Lake, 7 face each other in a row east of the Administration Building. The cottages are rectangular two story structures, 13 bays wide and 3 bays deep. Stucco walls, brick trim, red ceramic tile hipped roofs. Rectangular 8/1 sash in all but Cottages 15 and 16. Centrally located main entrances recessed within 3 bay loggias with yellow limestone columns. Large brick stoops, some of which are surfaced with stucco. One story sun room/activity room on either right or left sidewall (relative to main facade). Nearly all cottages are virtually intact and all are in good condition. They include the following:

Cottage 4. Built 1919. Intact.

Cottage 5. Built 1919. Intact.

Cottage 6. Built 1925. Intact.

Cottage 7. Built 1921. Intact.

Cottage 8. Built 1921. Intact.

Cottage 9. Built 1925. Intact.

Cottage 10. Built 1927. Cylindrical metal fire escapes added to north and west facades.

Cottage 11. Built 1929. Intact.

Cottage 12. Built 1929. Intact.

Cottage 13. Built 1931. Intact.

Cottage 14. Built 1931. At one time used as General Medicine and Surgery building. Cylindrical metal fire escapes added to north and west facades.

Cottage 15. Built 1933. Unlike other cottages, has rectangular multi-paned casement windows. Cylindrical metal fire escapes added to north and east facades.

Cottage 16. Built 1933. Unlike other cottages, has rectangular multi-paned casement windows. Intact.

Laundry. Built 1912. Maintenance Shop. One story, 8 bays long, 3 bays wide. Stucco walls, brick trim, red ceramic tile gabled roof with parapet walls. Segmental arched windows. Main entrance on west facade. Low concrete block addition on east end.

Power Plant. Built 1912. Grounds Department, later used as the Mechanic's Garage. One story structure constructed of red brick. Red ceramic tile gabled roof with parapet walls and monitor. Window and door openings altered, exterior brick painted.

Maintenance Buildings. ca. 1930. One story, stucco walls, flat roof, intact.

Garage. Built 1930. One story, stucco walls, hipped roof covered with asphalt shingles. Six stalls with double leaf wooden garage doors. Intact.

Ice House. Built 1920. Iron Removal Building. One story, stucco walls, flat roof. Intact.

Other major buildings on the site which are not included in the registration because of recent construction dates are the following: Cottage 1 (former Receiving Hospital, built 1950), Service Building (1958), Power Plant (1962), Medical Treatment Center (1965), and Activities (Rehabilitation) Building (1979). In addition, a water tower (ca. 1945), and a greenhouse and a few recent storage and service sheds on the site are not included in the register.

No major hospital buildings have been demolished or moved, with the exception of four small staff residences (one built before 1935 and at least two built in the 1950's). Various small service buildings have been demolished including a fire house, about 4 garages, a maintenance and repair shop, a pump house, 2 root cellars, a rain shelter, a water tower, and about 4 sheds. In addition, the hospital's farm complex which stood at the northeast corner of the site has been razed. It once included 4 barns, 3 brooders, 2 hog houses, 2 farrowing houses, and a chicken house, corncrib, creamery, farm office, granary, machine shed, and slaughter house.

C. Auditorium/Gymnasium.

Built in 1923, this building was designed by architect C. H. Johnston of St. Paul, Minnesota. Also called the Rehabilitation Building, it was used as a general purpose utility facility for many years. In 1979, a new Rehabilitation Building was completed and the old building was vacated and used for storage. It is currently vacant because of disrepair and the need to remove/recycle roof tiles for use in matching tile repair on other buildings of the same vintage. The building's architectural character would be described as Spanish or Mediterranean Colonial style. The exterior of the building consists of stucco covered wall with brick trim. The windows are large, paired rounded arched with multi-pane sash. The front or west facade consists of three entrances within ornate brick-lined arches.

The basement level of the auditorium building as you entered from the tunnel system from the west, housed the chef's office and pantry, and the heated food carts for bringing bulk food to the cottages. Patients ate in the basement dining room of the cottages. The large high ceiling central part was the production kitchen, scullery, etc. To the rear of the building was the bakery which produced all baked goods, a root cellar to store garden grown crops such as carrots, onions, potatoes, apples, etc., occupied the space to the south of the building being at least as large as the auditorium itself.

The particular design of the building provided for two storage areas between the kitchen level and the auditorium level. Dried foods, canned goods, and kitchen supplies were warehoused there. At the west end was more storage, mainly flour and cereals. The Recreation Department shared that area.

At the time of the auditorium construction, the campus had two arms of buildings on either side of campus; one for women patients and the other for men. The idea was to have absolute segregation of the sexes, including geographically. In that era of the 20's and 30's, two cottages were built each legislative session to receive "transfer" patients. Behind the current auditorium building was a large apple orchard on the site of the current Service Building. A dairy building for milk separation and pasteurizing was close to the rear of the auditorium. Further to the rear were the farm buildings: a large first class dairy barn, several swine barns, a poultry barn, a slaughter house, a horse barn, and a farm office-storage building complex.

Being a residential facility, the patients needed a place for dances, parties, meetings, church services, and meetings for some of the treatment programs. The auditorium had a good stage for shows, portable altars for church services, and velvet curtains for the theater. In the balcony area (west end) was a first rate 35mm movie projection setup. Movie film came in by truck just like the downtown theaters.

The auditorium declined in use as the food service building emptied the lower level. The laundry vacated the now Maintenance Shop building in the late 1950's or early 1960's. The new Rehabilitation Building replaced the auditorium and expanded the Rehabilitation Services Department in one location.

One big problem has always been the fact that utilities ran through tunnels including the auditorium building/root cellar.

An item of note: The famed alcohol treatment program of which 36 states, 6 provinces, and 2 foreign countries patterned their programs, was capped at 240 patients because that is what the auditorium capacity was.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Spanish Colonial Style Mediterranean
2. Condition of fabric: Poor

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 46' x 120'
2. Foundations: Poured concrete
3. Walls: Face brick with tile and brick backup. Stone coping and trim.
4. Structural system, framing: Steel main truss supporting wood purlins and wood sheathing, tile roof.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: Concrete.

6. Chimneys: None
 7. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: wood
 - b. Windows and shutters: Roundtop, double hung, divided lites
 8. Roof
 - a. Shape, covering: hip roof, slate shingles which have since been recycled to repair other damaged roofs of same vintage buildings.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: wood decorative timber supports
 - c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: eyebrow small windows
- C. Description of Interior:
1. Floor plans
 - a. Describe Floors: Terrazzo
 2. Stairways: Terrazzo and concrete
 3. Flooring: Some decorative tile in basement
 4. Wall and ceiling finishes: Plaster
 5. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: 3 sets double doors, remaining single solid wood panel.
 - b. Windows: Large double hung, divided lights
 6. Decorative features and trim: Small amount of carved and milled stone. Decorative timber rafter tails.
 7. Hardware: Brass Corbin
 8. Mechanical equipment: Steam
 - a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: Steam heat from central power plant. No air conditioning. Small exhaust fans and windows for ventilation.
 - b. Lighting: Incandescent. Large windows that open.
 - c. Plumbing: Cast iron. Galv. iron. China fixtures.

- D. Site:
1. General setting and orientation: Centrally located (see site plan).
 2. Historic landscape design: Not available.
 3. Outbuildings: None. Root cellar underground to the south of building.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original Architectural Drawings: Available, will be put on microfiche.
- B. Early Views

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August 9, 1994