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### West Central School of Agriculture and Experiment Station Historic District Nomination Form

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**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name West Central School of Agriculture and Experiment Station Historic District

other names/site number University of Minnesota, Morris

**2. Location**

Street & number 600 East Fourth Street not for publication N/A

city or town Morris vicinity N/A

state Minnesota code MN county Stevens code 149 zip code 56267

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this        nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property        meets        does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant        nationally        statewide        locally. (       See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property        meets        does not meet the National Register criteria. (       See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is: Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

       entered in the National Register.  
       See continuation sheet \_\_\_\_\_

       determined eligible for the National Register.  
       See continuation sheet \_\_\_\_\_

       determined not eligible for the National Register. \_\_\_\_\_

       removed from the National Register. \_\_\_\_\_

       other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>11</u>	<u>7</u>	buildings
	<u>1</u>	sites
		structures
	<u>1</u>	objects
<u>11</u>	<u>9</u>	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

1

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education: school

Education: research facility

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education: college

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements:  
Bungalow/Craftsman

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other Limestone

Concrete

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

**A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

**B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

**C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

**D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is: N/A

**A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

**B** removed from its original location.

**C** a birthplace or grave.

**D** a cemetery.

**E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

**F** a commemorative property.

**G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education

Agriculture

**Period of Significance**

1910-1952

**Significant Dates**

1910

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

See Continuation Sheet

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed on the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

University of Minnesota, Morris, and West Central Research and Outreach Center, Morris

West Central School of Ag. and Exp. Station Historic District  
Name of Property

Stevens County, Minnesota  
County and State

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## 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property** Approx. 42 acres

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 273680 5052700  
Zone Easting Northing  
2 15 273950 5052670

3 15 273940 5052200  
Zone Easting Northing  
4 15 273460 5052050  
X See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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## 11. Form Prepared By

---

name/title Susan Granger, Scott Kelly, and Kay Grossman  
organization Gemini Research date September 13, 2002  
street & number 15 East 9th Street telephone 320-589-3846  
city or town Morris state MN zip code 56267

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## Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

### Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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## Property Owner

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(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Report (1024-0018), Washington DC 20503.

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West Central School of Agriculture  
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Stevens County, Minnesota

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### 7. DESCRIPTION

#### NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The West Central School of Agriculture and Experiment Station Historic District is located in Morris near the eastern city limits. Morris is a city of about 5,200 people and is the seat of Stevens County in west central Minnesota.

The historic district is comprised of the historic buildings of the West Central School of Agriculture (WCSA) and Experiment Station, a boarding high school and research facility that opened in 1910. The historic district encompasses about 42 acres, all of which are located on the campus of the University of Minnesota, Morris (UMM). The main entrance to the School and Station (and the current main entrance to the UMM campus) is located along the western boundary of the historic district at the intersection of College Avenue and East Fourth Street. (See accompanying sketch map entitled "Sketch Map and Site Boundaries, West Central School of Agriculture and Experiment Station Historic District, Morris, Stevens County, Minnesota.")

The historic district is surrounded by a residential neighborhood on the west, two cemeteries (adjacent to one another) on the northwest, and additional buildings and property of the University of Minnesota, Morris, on the north, east, and south. Beyond UMM's buildings and athletic fields lie some of the historic fields and pastures of the West Central School of Agriculture and Experiment Station. (Most of the original fields, orchards, feed lots, and pastures have been altered through the construction of UMM facilities, a state highway bypass, a city water treatment facility, and other structures.) The current headquarters of the West Central Experiment Station (now called the West Central Research and Outreach Center) and most current fields, gardens, orchards, and feed lots are located about one mile east of the UMM campus on the eastern bank of the Pomme de Terre River.

One of the buildings in the historic district, the Morris Industrial School for Indians Boys' Dormitory, was listed on the National Register in 1984.

The historic district's substantive resources are included in the resource count that appears in "Number of Resources Within Property" in Section 5 above. These resources are also listed in "Summary of Resources" at the end of Section 7 below.

#### Spatial Organization and Land Patterns

The WCSA and Experiment Station was established in 1910 on the former campus and farm of the Morris Industrial School for Indians, a federal boarding school that had recently closed. When it was given to the State of Minnesota in 1909, the School for Indians consisted of a large

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farm with several agricultural structures and about seven major non-farm buildings (e.g., dormitories and administration building).

The Indian school buildings had apparently been sited without a formal plan. Major buildings were spaced equidistantly and agricultural facilities were concentrated on the eastern side of the campus. The building cluster was approached by a narrow gravel road that entered from the west and circled through the campus. Another north-south gravel road extended northward toward the Northern Pacific Railroad tracks (which were parallel with Seventh Street) and southward toward the Morris to Cyrus Road (now called Second Street). The plantings on the School for Indians campus included some deciduous windbreaks and some trees (mostly deciduous) around major buildings. The farm area east and south of the building cluster was generally treeless.

One year after the West Central School of Agriculture and Experiment Station opened in 1910, a master plan for the new campus was created. The scheme, which is somewhat evident on the campus today, was developed by Morell and Nichols, a prominent Minneapolis landscape architecture firm. The WCSA is one of the first of many campuses that the firm eventually designed. Morell and Nichols must have worked closely with Clarence H. Johnston, Sr., (who designed most of the major campus buildings) since the 1911 master plan contains fairly accurate "footprints" of several Johnston-designed buildings that had not yet been constructed. (See accompanying plan entitled "Morell and Nichols Plan (1911).")

The 1911 Morell and Nichols plan envisioned a formal, symmetrical arrangement of roads, buildings, open spaces, and plantings. The Morell and Nichols plan was largely rectilinear, with buildings and landscape features generally aligned with cardinal points. At the center of the campus was a common yard, not unlike a village green, onto which major buildings would face. In addition to the central square, the 1911 plan specified large green spaces such as a yard south of Music Hall and Spooner Hall that is largely intact today.

The 1911 plan called for the symmetrical placement of three sets of "twin" buildings around the central square: Music Hall and the first Home Economics building (razed) (both inherited from the School for Indians), Girls' Dormitory and Spooner Hall, and Senior Hall and Agricultural Hall. Implementing the plan required that two buildings inherited from the School for Indians -- Music Hall and the first Home Economics building -- be remodeled so that they faced toward the central square, rather than away from the center of campus. Implementation also required that three other Indian school buildings -- a dining hall, a laundry, and an infirmary -- be removed from the center of campus so that the central square could be created.

The 1911 plan was generally followed throughout the WCSA's 53-year history. The Heating Plant (razed), Girls' Dormitory, Spooner Hall, the Cattle Barn, Dining Hall, Senior Hall, and Agricultural Hall were all sited per the 1911 plan. The Engineering Building was sited with a slight modification -- it was placed on the western, rather than eastern, side of the north-south

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road. The Infirmary, Junior Hall, and the Gymnasium (razed), were not included on the 1911 plan but were sited in sympathy with it (and, in the case of Junior Hall, with the help of Morell and Nichols). The 1911 spatial arrangement was also preserved by the WCSA as it built three replacement buildings -- a new Superintendent's House (1937, razed), a new Home Economics building (1954-1955), and a new administration building (Edson Hall, 1959) -- in the same location as the buildings that they were designed to replace.

The campus' spatial arrangement was altered in the 1960s after the WCSA closed and the new University of Minnesota, Morris, added classroom buildings, dormitories, and other facilities to the historic campus.

### Topography

The topography of the site is flat to gently rolling. The topography has generally not changed since the 1920s except that berms were added to the central square in 1968 (see "The Square or Mall" under Buildings and Structures below).

### Circulation

The Morell and Nichols plan called for an entrance road that approached the campus from the west and traveled around the central square. It also depicted a north-south road that led to the experimental fields, to the Northern Pacific Railroad tracks north of Seventh Street, and to the Morris to Cyrus Road (now called Second Street).

Today the street patterns within the historic district reflect the 1911 Morell and Nichols plan with two major alterations. First, during the summer of 1965, the southern portion of the north-south road (between Spooner Hall and Senior Hall) was removed to make way for a new UMM dormitory, Clayton A. Gay Hall. (Gay Hall is located southeast of Spooner Hall.) Secondly, in circa 1970 when UMM's Humanities-Fine Arts building was under construction, a new street was built west of Junior Hall and the "Y" shaped intersection immediately west of Briggs Library was modified. In addition, UMM has altered the outer curbline of the drive around the mall to make the drive more narrow and to create temporary and handicapped parking bays.

### Vegetation

The 1911 master plan depicted trees and shrubs that would formalize the landscape, delineate campus boundaries, delineate open spaces, and provide shelter and shade. Important features of the plan included evenly-spaced deciduous boulevard trees and windbreaks to shelter the campus from prevailing winds.



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Today the historic district retains some plantings that date from the implementation of the 1911 plan. They include boulevard trees, windbreaks, and some deciduous and coniferous trees at the edges of open spaces and around buildings.

Today the historic district also retains some trees, shrubs, and flowers that were planted by the staff of the School of Agriculture and Experiment Station as experimental and demonstration plantings. However, most of the experimental and demonstration plantings no longer exist.

Much of the current vegetation within the historic district is the result of post-1963 plantings by UMM. These plantings include trees (mostly deciduous) that replace those lost to Dutch Elm Disease and were planted to surround campus buildings; deciduous shrubs, hostas, and perennial flowers that were planted along the foundations of buildings; trees planted on the mall following a 1968 redesign of the central square; and ornamental flower beds.

Note: While the WCSA and Experiment Station campus was originally developed according to the 1911 Morell and Nichols plan, the campus landscape has been altered since 1963. The landscape itself does not appear to meet National Register criteria and is therefore not considered to be a Contributing resource for the purposes of this nomination. However, it is recommended that those landscape features that remain from the period of significance (1910-1952) be preserved and/or rehabilitated to support the historic character of the district's buildings and structures.

### Buildings and Structures

The historic district includes one building that dates from the School for Indians, 13 buildings that were built for the WCSA and Experiment Station, and four buildings that were built for UMM. The district includes one site -- the Square or Mall -- that was developed per the 1911 plan but was altered by UMM in 1968, and one object -- an entrance gate -- that was built by UMM in 1991 at the campus' main entrance. The historic district also includes several benches, light poles, refuse containers, retaining walls, and short sections of fencing that postdate the WCSA and are not individually enumerated in this nomination.

Since the WCSA closed in 1963, only three, principal, non-farm WCSA buildings have been removed from within the boundary of the historic district -- the Superintendent's House (moved off campus circa 1970, current location of Humanities-Fine Arts), the Home Management House (razed circa 1970, current location of Humanities-Fine Arts), and the Gymnasium (razed 2000, current location of Science's eastern addition). One principal, non-farm WCSA building was located outside the boundary of the historic district. It was the heating plant, which was razed in 1970.

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The historic district includes three agricultural buildings. They are the Cattle Barn, which was the largest barn of the WCSA and Experiment Station, the Seed House, and the Machinery Shed. One principal WCSA agricultural building has been removed from within the boundary of the historic district since the WCSA closed. It was the horse barn, which was located south of the Seed House. Most of the WCSA and Experiment Station's agricultural buildings and structures were located east of the boundary of the historic district. These 8-10 buildings and structures have been demolished.

Most of the Contributing buildings in the historic district were designed by Clarence H. Johnston, Sr., and built between 1911 and 1926. Johnston, a prominent Minnesota architect, was serving a 30-year tenure as State Architect when the WCSA buildings were constructed. Some of Johnston's WCSA buildings are somewhat similar to buildings that he designed on other University of Minnesota campuses.

The Johnston-designed buildings on the WCSA campus share a number of design characteristics that give the historic district a degree of architectural cohesion. Most of the designs were inspired by the Craftsman and Prairie School styles, although the Dining Hall and the Infirmary show the influence of the Renaissance Revival.

Johnston's WCSA buildings are not ostentatious, but instead have an architectural simplicity that was compatible with the school's public funding. This design sensibility was common to many public land-grant colleges and to public agricultural, science, and engineering schools. Many of these institutions were established to serve a broader and more diverse constituency than that of traditional private colleges, which were often perceived as fancy or elitist (Turner 1984). While Johnston's buildings are somewhat utilitarian, they are also non-institutional and domestic in quality, giving the campus a sheltering, residential character.

All of the Johnston-designed buildings are faced with warm, medium brown brick from the Twin City Brick Company. Johnston added texture to the brick facades through decorative brick patterning that emphasizes the buildings' windows, entrances, and roof lines. Most of the buildings are trimmed with buff-colored dolostone that was quarried along the Minnesota River near Kasota and Mankato. Johnston used the dolostone for sills, belt courses, and entrance surrounds on all of the major buildings except Engineering. Many of the buildings have regularly-spaced, rectangular window openings that were originally fitted with multipaned double-hung sash. Many of the buildings in the historic district retain their original sash.

All of the Johnston-designed buildings except the Dining Hall have hipped roofs with wide overhanging eaves that were left open to reveal exposed rafter tails. The rafter tails on all but Junior Hall were decoratively shaped. All of the hip-roofed buildings except the Infirmary have gable- or hip-roofed dormers. Some of the buildings originally had open entrance porches with limestone steps, iron railings, red tile floors, brick piers, and wooden cornices. Music Hall, Girls'

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Dormitory, and the Infirmary retain original porches, but the porches have been removed from Spooner Hall. Buildings without porches (Dining Hall, Senior Hall, Agricultural Hall, and Junior Hall) had limestone steps, iron railings, and other decorative masonry at their entrances. Dining Hall, Agricultural Hall, and Junior Hall (east entrance only) retain much of this detailing.

Paul Clifford Larson, who has extensively studied the work of Clarence H. Johnston, writes,

Johnston's approach to his state work was, he claimed, 'from the viewpoint of the modernist. That is, we take the attitude that Minnesota should have the best plans, the best construction, the most adaptable and most attractive building that it is possible to provide within the appropriation.' The order of objectives was important: Planning came first, then sound, low-maintenance construction, then adaptability to changing institutional needs, and finally, appearance (Larson 1996:114).

Larson also explains that the design cohesiveness seen at the WCSA was typical of Johnston's institutional campuses designed for the State. He writes,

On the institutional campuses, Johnston often made his 2 or 3 percent commission [a reduction from the 5 percent typical of non-state projects] suffice by replicating the design of his first cottage for those that followed. . . . Prior to 1910, however, no state educational facility was built in this way. Each building was separately designed usually with little or no attention to the style or planning of its predecessors. Johnston made the most of the situation by using designs worked out for his institutional cottages as the basis for collegiate buildings, with occasionally stunning results (Larson 1996:121).

In general, the buildings and structures of the historic district retain good integrity. Each of the buildings and structures is described below:

- 1. Historic Name:** **Music Hall**  
**Other Hist. Name:** Agronomy Building, Former Morris Industrial School for Indians Boys' Dormitory  
**Current Name:** Minority Resource Center, Old Music Hall  
**Built:** 1899  
**Architect:** Unknown (Clarence H. Johnston, Sr., 1921 alteration)  
**Resource:** One Contributing Building (Listed on the National Register 1984)

Music Hall was built in 1899 by the federal government as the Boys' Dormitory for the School for Indians. It is the oldest building on the campus and is located on the southern side of the central square. It is a two story building with boxlike massing and a raised basement. It has load-bearing brick walls and is faced with smooth dark red brick. The building has a random

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ashlar, buff-colored limestone foundation and buff-colored limestone sills. It has segmental-arched window openings that were originally filled with 2/2 sash. The building's hipped roof has a circular ventilator and small hip-roofed dormers. The roof originally had tin shingles and a cornice at the eaves. The building originally had four brick chimneys.

The southern facade of the building was the original main facade. The southern facade's centrally-located main entrance was marked by a two story wooden porch that was supported by slender columns. The porch was approached via a flight of wooden stairs. Both the porch and stairs have been removed.

In 1921 the building was redesigned by Clarence H. Johnston, Sr., so that its main entrance faced toward the central square, and so that the building more closely matched the Johnston-designed buildings on the campus. Johnston moved the main entrance to the northern side of the building to face the mall and filled the previous main entrance with brick. He added a Craftsman-inspired, flat-roofed entrance porch to the new main facade that matched the porches on Girls' Dormitory and Spooner Hall. The porch has square brick columns, wooden brackets, and a row of quatrefoil designs at the cornice. It has wide limestone steps, a red ceramic tile floor, and wrought iron railings. The building's main entrance, with its sidelights and single-leaf glazed door, also matched the original entrances of Girls' Dormitory and Spooner. Johnston's redesign of the building also removed most portions of the four brick chimneys, removed the roofline cornice, and added curvilinear rafter tails at the eaves. The building's current 6/6 sash probably dates from the 1921 redesign.

Since 1921 this building has had few exterior alterations except that an iron balustrade has been removed from the porch roof. The roof of the building is now covered with asphalt shingles.

The interior of the building has been altered considerably. A few rooms retain hardwood flooring that has been refinished.

### Historical Background

Music Hall (formerly the School for Indians Boys' Dormitory) is the only building that remains from the 22 years that the campus was used as an industrial school for Native Americans. It was built in 1899 by the federal government shortly after the government assumed operation of the school in 1897. It was used by the federal school as a dormitory until that institution closed in 1909. (This building had a twin, the School for Indians Girls' Dormitory, which had been built in 1898, used by the WCSA as its first Home Economics building, and razed in the 1950s.)

The former Indian School boys' dormitory was first used by the WCSA as a boys' dormitory. It served this purpose from 1910 until the 1912-1913 school year when the boys were moved into

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the newly-completed Spooner Hall. The building was also used by the WCSA to temporarily house girls at some point in the 1910s.

The building was next called the Agronomy Building. For about eight years, from 1913-1921, it housed agronomy and related agricultural classes. Woodworking shops and classrooms were located in the basement.

In 1921, after the agronomy department moved into the newly-completed Agricultural Hall, this building became Music Hall, a name it retained for the remaining 42 years of the WCSA's tenure. (The building is called Music Hall for the purposes of this nomination.) Music Hall was equipped with three "studios" and six private practice rooms. In addition to housing classrooms for piano, voice, orchestra, and band, the building was the headquarters for extracurricular groups such as the chorus and glee clubs, and was also used for private music lessons. The second floor classrooms were also used by the WCSA's business or "commercial" department. Courses taught here included typing, business spelling and penmanship, shorthand and dictation, office training (e.g., filing, indexing, duplicating and mimeographing, business ethics), and commercial bookkeeping.

After the campus became UMM, the name Music Hall was retained. The building housed music practice rooms, an art studio, and even a "little" theatre (Granger 1998:10). It served as UMM's principal fine arts building until 1973 when a new Humanities-Fine Arts building was completed. UMM's security office, custodial services, and duplicating services were housed in the basement of Music Hall for several years in the 1960s. The building became the headquarters of UMM's Minority Student Program when that office was established in 1972. In 1989 it was renamed the Minority Resource Center, but the name "Old Music Hall" was also retained. Today the building houses the Minority Student Program, student newspaper offices, and classrooms. The building was listed on the National Register in 1984 for its associations with Native American education.

- 2. Historic Name: The Square or Mall**  
Current Name: The Mall  
Built: Ca. 1911-1916, 1968  
Architect: Morell and Nichols (1911), Roger Martin (1968)  
Resource: One Noncontributing Site

The campus' central square or mall dates from the 1911 Morell and Nichols plan for the campus. It was originally designed to be a flat, open yard or green surrounded by a symmetrical arrangement of major buildings and the campus' main drive. The 1911 plan depicted trees and shrubs around the edges of the square, leaving the center open. This plan was generally followed.

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The square is bounded by campus streets on the north, east, and south, and by Edson Hall on the west. Many of the principal WCSA buildings face the square.

The central square was redesigned in 1967-1968 -- five years after the WCSA closed -- following plans by landscape architect Roger Martin of the University of Minnesota's Minneapolis campus. Martin's scheme, which is largely intact today, replaced the flat, rectilinear design of Morell and Nichols' square with organic, curving forms and a gently sloped site that creates a natural amphitheater that descends toward the southeastern corner of the space. The center of Martin's mall is encircled by an elliptical sidewalk whose curves are echoed in a series of bermed, grassy islands around the perimeter. Between the islands are major trees and short sections of sidewalk that extend toward major campus buildings. At the southeastern corner of the mall is one of its focal points -- an outdoor stage built of exposed aggregate concrete. The front edge of the stage is a gently curving retaining wall that ends with two outer stairways. The top of the stage is planted with grass and deciduous trees. Martin's redesign retained several existing trees around the edges of the space, and added honey locusts, spruce, and linden trees to the perimeter. The redesign placed lamp poles with white globe fixtures along the inner edge of the elliptical sidewalk.

The western edge of the mall was altered in 1990-1992 when Edson Hall was expanded to become the Student Center. The alterations included slight changes in topography and modifications to some sidewalks and islands near the Student Center. A large metal flagpole on a simple at-grade circular concrete pad was erected immediately east of the Student Center at this time, replacing a previous pole.

Note: The Mall is considered to be a Noncontributing Site for the purposes of this nomination because its current appearance dates from 1968, outside of the nomination's period of significance. However, the Mall remains a distinctive and generally intact example of the work of noted landscape architect Roger Martin. It is recommended that the Mall's significance be assessed within the body of Martin's work when sufficient historical perspective and scholarship has been gained, and that, in the meantime, the character-defining features of the 1968 Mall be preserved.

### Historical Background

The central yard was a key component of the Morell and Nichols 1911 plan and was envisioned as an open green onto which principal campus buildings would face. Construction of the central square began circa 1911-circa 1916 (Bridgford 1966:5). There were three former Indian school buildings standing on the future square: a combined dining hall and dormitory, a laundry building, and an infirmary. The three buildings were cleared from the square between 1915 and 1926 as replacements were constructed, allowing the square to be completed per the Morell and Nichols plan.



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The space was apparently referred to as "the Square" early in WCSA history, although a 1916 yearbook also refers to it as "the campus quadrangle" (*Moccasin* 1916). Recent informal polling of several WCSA alumni who graduated in the 1930s-1950s reveals that some alumni recall that the space was called "the Square," some remember that it had no particular name, and others remember that it was called "the Mall." UMM has always referred to the space as "the Mall."

As intended, the central square was the geographic, symbolic, visual, and social center of the WCSA campus. It was the site of many campus activities including student gatherings, ceremonies, intramural games, cultural events, and simply relaxing and having fun.

The square was also the chosen location for a memorial flagpole that was erected during the 1919-1920 school year to honor students and alumni who had served in World War I. Placed just east of the Administration Building, it had a steel pole, a raised concrete base, and a bronze tablet. (The memorial flagpole now stands on the current UMM football field, outside of the historic district. The plaque from the flagpole was installed in the WCSA Alumni Garden in front of the Infirmary when that garden was built in 1996.)

After 1960, the Mall's symbolic and social significance continued as the campus became UMM. It became extremely popular among UMM students and staff as an informal gathering place. In fact, plans for its 1968 alteration were met with fierce opposition from some students who feared that the comfortable, open quality of the original square would be lost (Granger 2001-2002). The post-1968 Mall proved as successful as its predecessor, however. Since that time, the Mall has been regularly used for class meetings, public gatherings, extracurricular events, outdoor concerts, political rallies, informal relaxing and playing, and formal events such as UMM's graduation ceremonies.

- 3. Historic Name:** **Girls' Dormitory**  
Current Name: Camden Hall  
Built: 1912  
Architect: Clarence H. Johnston, Sr.  
Contractor: John Nagle (1949 post-fire reconstruction)  
Resource: One Contributing Building

Girls' Dormitory stands on the northern side of the central square. It is a Craftsman style, two story building with brick load-bearing walls. It has a raised basement. The building is faced with medium-brown, Flemish-bonded brick. There is a band of basketweave brickwork at the base of the first story. The building has Kasota limestone trim that forms a watertable, sills, and other details. It has a hipped roof with asphalt shingle roofing, wide overhanging eaves, and small hipped dormers that are sided with wood shingles. On the first story of the northern (rear) facade is a series of three Tudor-arched windows that light a large room that was originally the

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dormitory lounge. Most of the rest of the window openings are rectangular and filled with 1/1 sash. Most of the building's entrances retain glazed, single-leaf doors with glazed sidelights. A fiberglass enclosure has been added to the southwestern corner of the building to shelter a basement-level entrance.

Girls' Dormitory has flat-roofed entrance porches on the southern and western facades. (A matching porch on the eastern facade is currently being replaced with a new open porch supported by brick piers.) The southern and western porches have square brick columns, red ceramic tile floors, wrought iron railings, and wooden brackets and quatrefoil designs at the cornice. (The original cornice detailing on the southern porch is covered with metal.) The southern porch has wide limestone steps. The western porch has more narrow poured concrete steps. Iron balustrades have been removed from the roof of both porches.

Girls' Dormitory originally had three full stories and an attic level and was nearly identical to Spooner Hall. The third story had small balconies on the western and eastern facades that were supported by ornate iron brackets. Projecting from the roof were several gable-roofed dormers with wide bargeboards and exposed rafter tails. In 1949 a fire gutted the attic and the third story and caused extensive water and smoke damage elsewhere. The dormitory was reconstructed as a two story building with hipped, rather than gabled, dormers.

The first and second floors of Girls' Dormitory retain former dormitory rooms -- now faculty offices -- that are arranged on either side of central corridors. The interior also retains open, wooden stairways between floors, beamed ceilings on the first floor, original doors and woodwork, and a basement-level hallway with brick walls. The former dormitory lounge, which was located on the first floor, is now the Social Science Division office.

### Historical Background

Girls' Dormitory and Spooner Hall were twin residence halls built in 1912 and 1912-1913, respectively. The buildings were funded by the WCSA's first legislative appropriation for capital improvement, which was granted in 1911. Both dormitories were designed by Clarence H. Johnston, Sr. Girls' Dormitory cost about \$50,000 to construct. It served as the principal girls' residence hall during WCSA's 53 years. The WCSA student yearbook, the *Moccasin*, reports that the lounge in Girls' Dormitory was a favorite spot for dances and other social gatherings. The *Moccasin*'s offices were located in Girls' Dormitory in the 1940s. The building served the WCSA as a girls' dormitory until the WCSA closed in 1963.

Girls' Dormitory was the scene of a huge fire that engulfed the third story on the opening day of fall classes on October 5, 1949. Students had been unpacking their trunks and moving them into the attic all day, and it was believed that the fire was accidentally started by students who were secretly smoking in the attic. The chief of the Morris Fire Department was almost lost in the



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blaze. He was on the roof aiming a hose into one of the dormers when the roof collapsed. He slid down to the eaves and dangled from the gutter of the three story building until he was rescued by the rest of the crew (Granger 2001-2002).

Girls' Dormitory housed both high school students and college students during the transitional years of 1960-1963 when the WCSA and UMM were sharing the campus. UMM referred to the building as Women's Residence Hall until about 1965 when it was renamed Camden Hall, a name picked by a committee of students and staff solely for its pleasing sound (Granger 1998:11). The dormitory housed UMM women until 1969. Since 1969 it has been a faculty office building and headquarters for the Social Science Division.

- 4. Historic Name:** **Spooner Hall**  
Other Hist. Name: Boys' Dormitory  
Current Name: Spooner Hall  
Built: 1912-1913  
Architect: Clarence H. Johnston, Sr.  
Resource: One Contributing Building

Spooner Hall, which was known for its first few years as Boys' Dormitory, is located on the southern side of the central square, facing north. It is a three story, Craftsman style building with a raised basement, load-bearing brick walls, and a Kasota stone foundation. The dormitory is faced with medium-brown brick. It has Kasota trim that includes a belt course, watertable, and sills. It has basketweave brickwork between the third story windows, and a band of similar brickwork at the base of the first story. Most of the windows are rectangular with 1/1 sash. The building's hipped roof has asphalt shingles, wide overhanging eaves, and curvilinear rafter tails. Projecting from the roof are several gable-roofed dormers with wide bargeboards. The southern (rear) facade of the building has a series of three Tudor-arched windows on the first story that light a sunroom-like lounge that matches a similar room on the rear of Girls' Dormitory. There is also one Tudor-arched window at the center of the second story on the main facade.

Spooner Hall originally had open entrance porches on the northern, eastern, and western facades that matched the porches on its twin, Girls' Dormitory. The porches were removed in 1960 or 1961. The original main entrance in the central bay of the northern facade was filled with brick and a window. (Two stone shields in the central bay still mark the location of the original entrance.) As part of the 1960-1961 alterations, the eastern and western porches were replaced by three story, hip-roofed, brick-faced stair towers that were added to meet fire code.

Spooner Hall retains most of its original arrangement of dormitory rooms lining both sides of central corridors on each of three floors. The first floor has been partially rehabilitated and

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contains beamed ceilings, stained and varnished woodwork, and a lounge with double-leaf multipaned doors, a multipaned transom, and ornate window casings.

### Historical Background

This building was designed by Clarence H. Johnston, Sr., and built in 1912-1913 at a cost of about \$50,000. Boys' Dormitory and Girls' Dormitory were the first major buildings constructed by the WCSA. The 1914 edition of the *Moccasin* reports, "about a week before the [Christmas] holidays [1912] the boys moved into the new dormitory, an event which had been looked forward to with a great deal of longing and some impatience" (*Moccasin* 1914:28). By 1915 Boys' Dormitory had been renamed Spooner Hall in honor of Lewis C. Spooner, a member of the state legislature from Morris who had lobbied for the transfer of the campus from the federal government to the State of Minnesota in 1909 (Granger 1998:12). The building has been called Spooner Hall since that time.

The WCSA's freshman boys were often housed in Spooner Hall, which was one of four dormitories built by the WCSA. Spooner served the WCSA as a boys' dormitory until 1960 or 1961 when it became a dormitory for UMM. It is still a college residence hall today, housing about 90 students.

- 5. Historic Name:** **Cattle Barn**  
Current Name: Saddle Club Barn  
Built: 1914  
Contractor: John Nagle (1950 post-fire reconstruction)  
Resource: One Contributing Building

The Cattle Barn is located on the eastern side of a large grassy lawn near the eastern edge of the historic district. It is a large, 34' by 175' building that is aligned north and south. The southern two-thirds of the barn were constructed in 1914. The northern one-third was added in 1918.

The barn was built with a poured concrete foundation, a gambrel roof, and woodframe walls that were covered with shiplap siding. The roof was covered with wood shingles and had small shed-roofed dormers. Sometime between 1927 and 1931, the lower portion of the barn was rebuilt using structural hollow tile walls and industrial sash windows, both of which are intact. Short transept arms were added to the eastern and western facades, possibly when the tile walls were built (*Report . . . 1917:38; Report . . . 1918:45; Moccasin* 1920:56; *Moccasin* 1925:31; *Moccasin* 1932:62; *Moccasin* 1951:87; Sanborn 1927.)

The barn was badly damaged by fire in 1950. As part of the repair work, the original gambrel roof was replaced by the current Gothic-arched roof. The arched roof is supported by laminated

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bents or rafters that rest on the tile walls of the first story. The laminated bents are stamped with the name of the manufacturer, Rilco Laminated Products of St. Paul. The roof has asphalt shingles, small shed-roofed dormers (sided with wood shingles), and three round ventilators.

The barn's end walls also burned in the 1950 fire and were replaced. The northern end wall has an upper hay mow door that slides open, a lower hay mow door that opens casement-style, and a first story sliding door. The southern end wall has hay mow doors like those of the northern end, but the sliding door on the first story has been replaced with a roll-up type door. Both northern and southern end walls have hay hoods that project over the hay mow doors.

The barn's western transept was enlarged into a gable-roofed, hollow tile milk house in the 1950s -- probably during the post-fire reconstruction. The barn's eastern transept was enlarged into a gable-roofed, hollow tile feed room, possibly at the same time.

Through the years, the barn has been accompanied by a series of round silos. For example, there was a silo on the eastern side of the barn by 1915. By 1927 the eastern silo was gone and there were silos at the northwestern and southwestern corners of the building (Sanborn 1915, 1927). By 1955 a Harvestore silo had been added to the western side (*Moccasin* 1956:14). There were three silos on the western facade in 1961. All silos have since been removed.

The interior of the barn is largely intact. It retains a poured concrete floor, a central alley, and metal calving pens. The cattle stanchions have been replaced by wooden box stalls for horses. The roof truss system and hay mow are intact.

### Historical Background

The Cattle Barn was built in 1914 to house cattle for the WCSA and Experiment Station. The 1916 edition of the WCSA yearbook reported, "An entirely new set of farm buildings has replaced the old shacks of six years ago. Our new dairy barn is a model" (*Moccasin* 1916). In that year, the School and Station herd consisted of 16 Holstein cows, 14 Guernsey cows, and two types of beef cattle. The beef cattle were generally kept in the northern part of the barn and the dairy cows in the southern half.

The fire in the barn occurred on July 13, 1950. No animals were lost, but 40 tons of alfalfa hay being stored in the mow were burned. It was the WCSA's second disastrous fire, coming only 10 months after the fire that destroyed the upper story of Girls' Dormitory. After the fire, the barn's original gambrel roof was replaced by a Gothic-arched roof supported by laminated bents. Just as the barn's original roof had been considered optimal for dairy barn design in 1915, the Gothic-arched roof was considered excellent in 1950 for economical construction and superior hay storage.

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After the WCSA closed in 1963, the Cattle Barn served the West Central Experiment Station exclusively until 1973 when new Experiment Station facilities were constructed about one mile east of the UMM campus on the eastern bank of the Pomme de Terre River. Since 1973 the Cattle Barn has been used to stable the horses of the UMM Saddle Club. Part of the barn is also used by UMM Plant Services for storage.

- 6. Historic Name: Engineering Building**  
Other Hist. Name: Agricultural Engineering  
Current Name: Community Services Building  
Built: 1915  
Architect: Clarence H. Johnston, Sr.  
Resource: One Contributing Building

The Engineering Building, which was also known as Agricultural Engineering, is not located directly on the central square, but instead stands north of Girls' Dormitory. The oldest portion of the building is the northern wing, which was built sometime between 1910 and 1915 as the WCSA Blacksmith Shop. The Blacksmith Shop was a one story, hip-roofed brick building. Each of its side walls had 12 segmental-arched windows that were filled with multipaned sash. Several of the segmental-arched window openings remain, although they have been filled with modern casement sash.

When Engineering was built in 1915, the Blacksmith Shop became the northern wing of the new E-shaped building. As part of the construction, a short addition with a gabled roof was built onto the eastern end of the Blacksmith Shop. This addition was used as a coal storage room for the Shop. The eastern end of this addition has a segmental-arched doorway that is now filled with brick.

Engineering is a two story building with a steel and woodframe structural system. Like most of the other Clarence Johnston buildings, it has a Craftsman-inspired design. The lower portion is faced with medium-brown brick while the upper portion is covered with stucco. The main facade has entrances located in the outer bays. Brick piers separate the inner bays. The building has a hipped roof with asphalt shingles, small hip-roofed dormers, and wide overhanging eaves with curved rafter tails.

The first story of the building contained a large open shop that was flooded with natural light from large multipaned industrial sash windows that filled the eastern and western facades. These window openings have been largely filled with stucco-covered panels. The second story of the building retains its original 3/3 sash.

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Engineering has a one story, hip-roofed rear wing at the midpoint of its western facade, and a gable-roofed wing on its southern end. The latter wing was designed to balance the Blacksmith Shop which serves as the northern wing of the building. In 1958 the southern wing was refaced with brick and its multipaned windows were replaced with new metal-framed sash.

The second story of Engineering retains original interior woodwork and rooms arranged on either side of a central corridor. The first story of the building has been altered considerably.

An elaborate flower garden with a rectangular reflecting pool was once located on the western side of Engineering between the central and southern wings. The garden was removed and pool buried in the early 1960s.

### Historical Background

The Blacksmith Shop, which is the oldest portion of the building, was built for the WCSA sometime between 1910 and 1915. The Engineering Building, which incorporated the Blacksmith Shop, was designed by Clarence H. Johnston, Sr., and built in 1915 at a cost of \$26,200. Unlike the other WCSA buildings that were designed by Johnston, Engineering does not have stone trim. The lack of stone may represent a cost-saving measure made possible because the building does not stand on the central square and therefore did not need to match the other mall-facing buildings (Granger 1998:13).

The Engineering Building was occupied in the spring of 1916. It housed the WCSA's automotive mechanics shop, electrical lab, physics lab, drafting room, carpentry shop, farm shop, blacksmith shop, and classrooms and offices. Courses taught here included agricultural engineering, drainage, surveying, gas engines, farm machinery, farm building design and construction, drafting, auto mechanics, blacksmithing, and welding. The forges were converted from coal to acetylene gas about the mid-1940s as blacksmithing methods changed. The building was the headquarters of the Agricultural Engineering department until the WCSA closed in 1963.

Between 1960 and 1973 the building served as the headquarters of the West Central Experiment Station. The Experiment Station's administrative offices had been previously located in the Administration Building (razed) and then in Edson Hall. When UMM was established in 1960, the Experiment Station offices were moved from Edson Hall to the second floor of Engineering. They remained in Engineering until the new Station headquarters opened in 1973 about one mile east of the campus.

After UMM was founded, the southern wing of Engineering was UMM's chemistry lab from 1960 to about 1966. UMM's bookstore, post office, and printing shop had moved to the first floor by the early 1970s. In 1973 the West Central Experiment Station offices were moved out

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and the building was renamed the Community Services Building. It now houses various offices and outreach programs (Granger 1998:14-15).

- 7. Historic Name: Dining Hall**  
Other Hist. Name: Junior Girls' Dormitory, Men's Annex  
Current Name: Behmler Hall  
Built: 1918  
Architect: Clarence H. Johnston, Sr.  
Resource: One Contributing Building

The Dining Hall faces the eastern end of the central mall. It is a three story building with a reinforced concrete structural system, a flat roof, and a raised basement. The building is faced with stretcher-bonded, medium-brown brick. It has buff-colored Kasota limestone trim that forms belt courses, entrance surrounds, corbels, stone shields, and other detailing. Most of the building's window openings retain limestone sills and 6/1 sash. With its mildly Renaissance Revival design, the Dining Hall is one of the most ornate buildings on the campus.

The Dining Hall's main facade has five recessed window bays that rise three stories to a course of brick and stone corbelling. In the outer bays of the main facade are two stone shields bearing the letter "M" for Minnesota. (These shields originally supported two short flagpoles.) Beneath the shields are the building's rounded-arched entrances. The entrances are decorated with ornate brickwork, stonework, and inset terra cotta tiles. Each entrance has a limestone stairway with brick and stone side walls. (In the early 1960s the building's wooden entrance doors were replaced with metal doors and the tympanums were filled with brick.)

In 1926 the building received a sensitively-designed two story rear addition that enlarged the kitchen area and provided living quarters for dining hall staff, dormitory housekeepers, and other employees. A large root cellar (partially below ground) was built immediately south of the rear wing sometime between 1937 and 1947. It was removed sometime after 1965 (Lindor 2002).

The first floor of the building originally housed the dining hall and kitchen. The second and third floors housed a combined gymnasium and auditorium. The gym-auditorium was lighted by two-story-tall windows on the building's main facade. (The windows consisted of a 9/9 sash topped by a fixed 9-pane sash.) The gym-auditorium had a wooden floor, a stage, a balcony with seating, and adjacent locker rooms with showers. In 1930-1931 the gym-auditorium was remodeled to create two floors of dormitory rooms. The two-story-tall windows on the main facade were replaced with the current two floors of rectangular double-hung windows. Between the new windows are header-bonded spandrels that match those on Agricultural Hall and Senior Hall. An additional set of 12 windows was added to the eastern facade (Granger 1998:17).



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A second cafeteria was eventually added to the basement of the Dining Hall. Offices in the building were remodeled in 1967. A brick elevator tower was added to the northern facade near the rear of the building in the early 1980s.

The interior of the building retains very few original features other than some areas of red ceramic tile flooring and painted woodwork that surrounds the interior windows. The arrangement of rooms on all floors has been altered.

### Historical Background

The Dining Hall was designed by Clarence H. Johnston, Sr., and constructed in 1918. It was built to replace a woodframe dining hall and dormitory building that had been located on the central square. Money for the new \$69,000 building was appropriated during the 1917 legislative session. From 1918-1931, the building housed a dining hall on the first story, a combined gymnasium and auditorium on the second and third stories, and living quarters for staff.

In 1930-1931, after the WCSA constructed a new gymnasium building, the Dining Hall's gym-auditorium was remodeled into dormitory rooms. The top two floors of the building then became known as Junior Girls' Dormitory. During a scarlet fever epidemic in the 1940s, Junior Girls' Dormitory was used as a temporary hospital (*Moccasin* 1963:66). Junior Girls' Dormitory also housed WCSA boys during the winter and spring of 1960 after Spooner Hall was emptied to prepare it for use as a college dormitory for UMM students (*Moccasin* 1963:71). All WCSA male students lived here during the final 1962-1963 school year, when the dormitory was called Men's Annex (*Moccasin* 1963:71). The building was used by the WCSA as a dining hall and dormitory until the school closed in the spring of 1963.

In the early 1960s, shortly after UMM was established, the Dining Hall was renamed Behmler Hall. The building was named for Fred W. Behmler, a local physician who was also the state senator who chaired the Interim Legislative Commission that recommended that the WCSA be converted to a college. Behmler was a key figure in persuading the legislature and the University to establish UMM (Granger 1998:17).

UMM did not use Dining Hall's dormitory rooms for student housing, but instead used them for offices. The dining hall on the first floor served as UMM's dining hall until 1971 when a new UMM Food Service building was completed. The former dining hall was then remodeled into offices. Behmler Hall is now UMM's administrative headquarters.

**8. Historic Name:** Senior Hall  
Current Name: Blakely Hall  
Built: 1920

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Architect: Clarence H. Johnston, Sr.  
Resource: One Contributing Building

Senior Hall is a dormitory that faces the eastern end of the mall. It is a two story, Craftsman-inspired building that is very similar in design to Agricultural Hall, which was built at the same time. Senior Hall has a hipped roof with asphalt shingles, small hip-roofed dormers (sided with wood shingles), wide overhanging eaves, and curved rafter tails. The building has a reinforced concrete structural system and a raised basement. It is faced with medium-brown, stretcher-bonded brick with buff-colored Kasota trim. The rectangular window openings on the main facade are aligned within recessed bays with header-bonded brick spandrels. Most of the building's windows retain limestone sills and 8/8 sash.

The main entrance to Senior Hall was originally located in the third bay of the main facade. The entrance was approached by a set of limestone steps with wrought iron railings. The entrance featured an ornate stone and brick rounded arch that was supported by brick columns with leafy stone capitals. The entrance was identical to the main entrance of Agricultural Hall and was similar to the main entrance of Junior Hall. (Agricultural Hall's entrance is also located in the third bay. Senior Hall and Agricultural Hall were nearly identical and were built on the eastern side of the mall flanking the Dining Hall in a symmetrical arrangement.)

About 1963 or 1964 a hip-roofed, brick-faced stairwell was added to the northern end of the building to meet fire codes. This became the main entrance and the entrance in the third bay was filled with brick and a window. An entrance at the center of the rear facade was also closed, possibly at the same time. In 1988 a similar hip-roofed, brick-faced stairwell was added to the southern end of the building.

The interior of Senior Hall retains its original arrangement of dormitory rooms on either side of a central corridor on each floor. Most interior doors and woodwork have been replaced. The dormitory lounge, located on the first floor, retains an intact, Craftsman Style fireplace. The fireplace is faced with textured, reddish- and dark-brown brick with inset ceramic tiles. It has a red ceramic tile hearth and a dark-stained wooden mantelpiece.

### Historical Background

Senior Hall, one of four dormitories built by the WCSA, was constructed at a cost of \$75,000. It was built in 1920 at the same time as Agricultural Hall, which it closely resembles. Senior Hall was used by the WCSA as a boys' dormitory from 1920 through the 1961-1962 school year. In the 1930s and 1940s the WCSA rifle team had a shooting range in the basement. The attic of the building was used as a smoking room where ping pong was played daily and where occasional boxing matches were held (Granger 1998:18).



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Senior Hall was also used by UMM as a dormitory for male students. In about 1965 the building was renamed Blakely Hall, a name that does not honor a person. Former UMM administrator Stephen Granger explains, "When the campus became UMM it was decided that the names used for three of the dorms -- Senior Hall, Girls' Dormitory, Junior Hall -- were not appropriate for a college. Blakely Hall's name was chosen simply for its phonetic appeal by a group of staff and students. The same method was used [by UMM] to choose the names of Camden, Pine, and, later, Independence residence halls" (Granger 1998:18). Today Blakely Hall is a dormitory housing about 70 students.

- 9. Historic Name:**                    **Agricultural Hall**  
Current Name:                    Social Science Building  
Built:                                    1920-1921  
Architect:                        Clarence H. Johnston, Sr.  
Resource:                         One Contributing Building

Like most other WCSA buildings facing the square, Agricultural Hall is a two story, Craftsman-inspired brick building with a hipped roof. The building is very similar in design to Senior Hall. Agricultural Hall is faced with medium-brown, stretcher-bonded brick with Kasota stone trim. It has a reinforced concrete structural system and a raised basement. The roof has asphalt shingles, wide overhanging eaves, curvilinear rafter tails, and hip-roofed dormers that are sided with wood shingles. The main facade's rectangular window openings are aligned in slightly recessed bays. The spandrels are faced with header-bonded brick. Most of the windows retain their original limestone sills and 8/8 sash.

A limestone stairway with ornate wrought iron railings leads to the building's rounded-arched main entrance. The entrance has unusual octagonal brick columns with leafy stone capitals, a stone shield in the tympanum, and other decorative brick and stonework. The double-leaf exterior door has been replaced with a more recent door, but the foyer inside retains an original single-leaf door with multipaned sidelights. Agricultural Hall's main entrance matched the original entrance to Senior Hall and was similar to the main entrance of Junior Hall.

In 1949 a one story, flat-roofed, brick-faced addition was built onto the northern end of Agricultural Hall. The addition contained an auditorium that had a wide entrance on the rear facade (toward the barns) that was used to bring animals into the building. This entrance has been filled with brick. In 1975 an elevator and two metal-clad stair towers were added to the rear of Agricultural Hall.

The interior of Agricultural Hall retains original dark-stained woodwork around many windows, as well as some areas of red ceramic tile flooring. The first story has rooms arranged on either side of a central corridor. The arrangement of rooms on the second floor has been altered.

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### Historical Background

Agricultural Hall and Senior Hall were designed by Clarence H. Johnston, Sr., and were built at the same time. Agricultural Hall cost about \$89,000 and was completed in the spring of 1921. Between 1921 and 1963 it housed classrooms, offices, a dairy and creamery lab, other labs, a stock judging pavilion, meat killing and cutting rooms, and cold storage facilities. Courses taught here included agronomy and soil science, horticulture, farm management, farm finance, animal husbandry (e.g., feeds, livestock production, beef stock, dairy cattle, hog selection), butchering, and meat care and curing. The 1949 addition provided a small auditorium with banked seating. The auditorium was designed for the display of animals to classes and was known as the "Cow Palace," a name still used by UMM today.

After UMM was established Agricultural Hall was renamed the Humanities Building. It was successively renamed Humanities/Social Science, Social Science/Education, and finally Social Science (Granger 1998:19). The building continues to house classrooms, faculty offices, and the Cow Palace.

<b>10. Historic Name:</b>	<b>Infirmary</b>
Other Hist. Name:	Health Service
Current Name:	Education Building
Built:	1923-1924
Architect:	Clarence H. Johnston, Sr.
Resource:	One Contributing Building

The Infirmery is located on the southern side of the central square and is set between, and back from, Music Hall and Spooner Hall. The Infirmery is a two story building with a raised basement. It is faced with medium-brown brick and has buff-colored Kasota stone trim. It has a hipped roof with wide overhanging eaves, curved rafter tails, and asphalt shingles. The rectangular window openings are filled with 8/8 sash. Rather than being Craftsman in style, the Infirmery displays a mildly Renaissance Revival design with decorative brick arches above the first story windows and an open entrance porch with wooden Tuscan columns, classical detailing, and a flat roof. There is an iron balustrade along the porch roof. The Infirmery's main entrance has a multipaned single-leaf door.

In 1974 a basement-level entrance on the rear facade was filled with brick. At the same time, a hip-roofed, concrete block stairwell was added to the western facade. As part of this alteration, an original, multipaned, double-hung window was removed from the western facade and installed on the main facade of the stairwell.

The interior of the building has been altered considerably.

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### Historical Background

The Infirmary was designed by Clarence H. Johnston, Sr. It was built in 1923-1924 to replace an earlier campus infirmary, a building that had been constructed in 1902 for the School for Indians and stood on the northeastern corner of the current mall. The WCSA's new Infirmary was built at a cost of \$10,000 and originally accommodated 25 hospital beds, nurses' quarters, and a kitchen.

The Infirmary was built five years after the influenza epidemic of 1918. WCSA Agronomy Professor R. O. Bridgford writes that during the 1918 flu epidemic "... at least half of the total student body was stricken. Dormitories became veritable hospitals, school was closed for a three week period and all healthy students sent home. Three deaths occurred on the campus. When classes were resumed, gauze face masks were required to be worn by all students and faculty as a precautionary measure" (Bridgford 1963:53). The severity of the 1918 epidemic may have influenced the WCSA's decision to replace its aging infirmary with a modern facility. The epidemic may have also influenced the WCSA's decision to keep a comprehensive infirmary on campus, rather than shifting to the services of local doctors who might have been overwhelmed with patients in the event of another significant outbreak of disease.

The campus was stricken again during the 1940s when a scarlet fever outbreak filled the Infirmary to capacity. So many students were ill that Junior Girls' Dormitory was also used as a hospital (*Moccasin* 1963:66). Around 1943 another influenza epidemic hit the WCSA and dormitory floors were again used as extra hospital wards (*Moccasin* 1963:66).

The Infirmary served as the health service for the WCSA from 1924 until 1961.

UMM, established in 1960, operated its student health service as an outpatient clinic, rather than an inpatient infirmary, so much less space was needed (Granger 1998:21). Rather than being housed in this building, the UMM health service was located in Junior Hall from 1961 to 1967, and then in Clayton A. Gay Hall, which is its current home. The former Infirmary was used for UMM administrative offices from 1961-1967 and was known as the Office of Student Services. In about 1967 the building became the headquarters of the Education Division. It now houses the Education Division's administrative and faculty offices and several seminar rooms (Granger 1998:21).

<b>11. Historic Name:</b>	<b>Junior Hall</b>
Current Name:	Pine Hall
Built:	1926
Architect:	Clarence H. Johnston, Sr.
Contractor:	J. H. Olson
Resource:	One Contributing Building

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Junior Hall is a dormitory located near the western edge of the campus where it is set back from other mall-facing buildings. Its main facade faces south. It is a Craftsman style building with a reinforced concrete structural system, two stories, and a raised basement. The building is faced with medium-brown brick and is trimmed with Kasota limestone. Its hipped roof has wide overhanging eaves and small hip-roofed dormers. The rectangular window openings have 8/8 sash. Junior Hall was originally designed with an ornate main entrance in its central bay. The entrance was similar to the existing main entrance of Agricultural Hall, with a brick arch supported by octagonal columns that had leafy stone capitals. The entrance was approached by a monumental stone stairway that split at a lower landing to descend in two directions. The stairway's ornate wrought iron railings matched the current railings on Agricultural Hall. In 1960 the main entrance was replaced by an enclosed, hip-roofed, brick-faced stair tower. Junior Hall has an eastern entrance that retains an original rounded-arched doorway, stone steps, an ornate wall lamp, multipaned inner and outer doors, and multipaned sidelights.

The interior of Junior Hall retains its original arrangement of dormitory rooms on either side of a central corridor on each floor. Most interior doors and woodwork have been replaced.

### Historical Background

Junior Hall was built in 1926 as a boys' dormitory. It was one of four dormitories designed by Clarence H. Johnston, Sr., for the WCSA. In addition to rooms for students, there were four rooms for female faculty members on the eastern end of the first floor, and a recreation and smoking room in the attic (Granger 1998:22). Junior Hall served the WCSA as a boys' dormitory through the 1961-1962 school year.

The former Junior Hall has been used by UMM as a residence hall since 1962. The building also housed the UMM health service from 1961-1967. The name of the building was changed to Pine Hall in about 1965. Today about 85 students live in the dormitory.

<b>12. Historic Name:</b>	<b>Seed House</b>
Current Name:	Recycling Center
Built:	1929
Architect:	Roy Lund
Resource:	One Contributing Building

The Seed House is located near the northern edge of the historic district. It is a two story building with a poured concrete foundation. The first story is built of textured structural clay tile and the second story is woodframe with shiplap siding. The building has a gabled roof with exposed rafter tails. The roof is covered with clay tiles. There is a clapboard-sided, gable-roofed monitor on the roof. The building's rectangular window openings have concrete sills and steel-

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framed, six-pane sash. (These windows are very similar to those on the Cattle Barn.) There is an entrance with an original sliding door on the eastern facade. The southern facade has a more recent concrete loading dock and roll-up type garage door.

A one story quonset shed was added to the rear (northern) end of the Seed House in 1953. The addition has shiplap siding and an asphalt-shingled roof.

The interior of the Seed House, which is relatively intact, retains reinforced concrete floors, piers, and partitions.

### Historical Background

The Seed House was designed by Roy Lund of the University of Minnesota's Minneapolis campus. Lund later became the Director of Plant Services for the entire University system. The Seed House was constructed in 1929 as a seed processing and storage facility. It was used by the West Central Experiment Station for this purpose well into the 1990s (Granger 1998:22). The building is currently used by UMM as a recycling center.

<b>13. Historic Name:</b>	<b>Home Economics</b>
Current Name:	Humanities Building
Built:	1954-1955
Architect:	Bernard J. Hein
Contractor:	Jensen Construction Co.
Resource:	One Noncontributing Building

Home Economics is located on the northern side of the mall where it faces south. It has a reinforced concrete structural system, two stories, a raised basement, and a flat roof. The building is faced with orange-red brick with buff-colored Kasota limestone trim. It has an asymmetrical, International Style-influenced design with a horizontal emphasis and windows arranged in long, limestone-edged bands. The building retains its original casement sash. The main entrance is located within a flat-roofed foyer that projects beneath a large, multipaned stairwell window. East of the main entrance, a vertical arrangement of limestone rectangles is set into the building's smooth brick wall surface. In 1997, a sensitively-designed elevator tower was added to the western end of the building to provide handicapped access.

The interior of Home Economics retains brick-faced walls, linoleum tile floors, original doors and hardware, and some original light fixtures.

Note: Home Economics is considered to be Noncontributing for the purposes of this nomination because the building is not yet 50 years old, which is one of the requirements of National

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Register eligibility. However, Home Economics was an important WCSA building and is an example of the work of architect Bernard J. Hein. It is recommended that the Noncontributing status of Home Economics be reassessed when the building becomes 50 years old in 2005, and that, in the meantime, the character-defining features of the building be preserved.

### Historical Background

Funds for a new Home Economics building were appropriated by the legislature in 1953. Home Economics was designed by Bernard J. Hein, an Albert Lea architect who also designed the WCSA's Edson Hall. Winston Close served as the University's Advisory Architect for the project. Construction began during the summer of 1954 and the building was fully equipped and furnished by the opening of the 1955 fall term. Home Economics courses were temporarily held in the basement of Girls' Dormitory and in Agricultural Hall during construction (*Moccasin* 1955:5).

Home Economics replaced the WCSA's previous Home Economics building, a brick building that had been constructed in 1898 as the School for Indians Girls' Dormitory.

The new \$200,000 Home Economics building originally contained "unit kitchens, laundry, living-dining area, child-care area, art and home furnishing workshop, clothing construction and grooming area, reference center, and lecture rooms" (*Moccasin* 1955:5). Courses taught here included home nursing, first aid, foods, sewing, child care, home finance, and home management. Immediately north of the building was the "Home Management House," a Craftsman style, single family house in which senior students would be required to live for eight weeks to practice homemaking skills. (The Home Management House had been built in 1918 and was first called the Custodian's Cottage. It was razed circa 1970.) The Home Economics building served the WCSA as a classroom and home economics facility until the school closed in 1963.

When UMM was founded this building was renamed the Science Building. Some of the home economics facilities were converted to college biology labs in 1960, and biology, math, and art classes were held here. In 1967, after a new UMM Science Building was constructed, this building was renamed the Humanities Building. It has served as the headquarters for the Humanities Division and as a general purpose classroom building since that time (Granger 1998:24).

<b>14. Historic Name:</b>	<b>Machinery Shed</b>
Current Name:	Transportation Garage
Built:	1958
Architect:	University of Minnesota Physical Plant Dept.



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Resource: One Noncontributing Building

The Machinery Shed is one of the two northernmost buildings in the historic district. It is a one story building with a poured concrete foundation. It is faced with corrugated sheet metal siding. The building has a gabled, corrugated metal roof on which there are three round ventilators. There are three vehicle entrances on the southern facade and one on the eastern facade. All four entrances have roll-up type garage doors that were installed in 1984. There are two pedestrian doors on the southern facade and one on the northern facade. The building has rectangular window openings, most of which retain six-pane fixed sash.

### Historical Background

The Machinery Shed was built in 1958 by a private contractor. It was designed to house equipment for the School of Agriculture and Experiment Station. After the WCSA closed, the building was used by the Experiment Station exclusively until about 1973, the year that the Station moved into its new headquarters about one mile east of the campus.

**15. Historic Name:** **Edson Hall**  
Current Name: Student Center  
Built: 1959, 1992  
Architect: Bernard J. Hein (1959), Hokanson, Lumming Assoc. (1992)  
Contractor: Anderson Bros. (1959), All Building Corp. (1992)  
Resource: One Noncontributing Building

Edson Hall is located on the western side of the central square, facing east. Edson was built in 1959 as a one story, flat-roofed, International-influenced building. It has a steel and concrete structural system. The building originally had a low, horizontal emphasis to the design, rectangular windows arranged in horizontal bands, smooth brick wall surfaces, and flat-roofed rectangular masses that projected forward -- to house the main entrance -- and upward -- to encompass the auditorium.

In 1992 Edson Hall was engulfed by a \$4,178,000 reconstruction that transformed it into the current Student Center. The southern facade of the building retains Edson's original exterior brickwork and windows. The interior of Edson's handsome 530-seat auditorium is intact (and retains the name Edson Auditorium). Little else of the original building is visible. The Student Center's new main facade is marked by a hip-roofed "great hall" that is lighted by large windows and glass doors. The great hall has art glass by Michael Pilla. The northern and southern sides of the building have flat-roofed entrance porches. The exterior of the Student Center is faced with white stucco-covered panels mounted above a reddish-brown brick base.

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### Historical Background

Funding for Edson Hall was approved by the legislature in 1957. Edson replaced the Administration Building, which had been built in 1900 by the federal School for Indians and rebuilt and enlarged in 1923-1924 by the WCSA (Fenske 1963:49). The Administration Building was demolished so that Edson Hall could be built on the same site.

Edson Hall was dedicated on November 25, 1959. It first served the WCSA and Experiment Station as its administrative headquarters, auditorium, and library.

Edson Hall was designed by Bernard J. Hein, who also designed Home Economics. Winston Close served as the University of Minnesota's Advisory Architect for the project. During the construction of Edson, the WCSA library was housed in the basement of Spooner Hall and administrative offices and the post office were housed in Home Economics. Edson Hall provided the WCSA with its first full-fledged auditorium. Prior to its construction, assemblies had been held in the campus gymnasium, and plays and other performances were often held in the Cow Palace in Agricultural Hall.

Edson Hall was named for Allen W. Edson (1894-1958), superintendent of the WCSA who died suddenly during its construction. Edson had come to the WCSA in 1922 as an agriculture and business instructor and as head of the Experiment Station's poultry and beekeeping divisions. In 1945 he became Horticulturist. Edson was superintendent of the WCSA and Experiment Station from 1947 until his death in 1958.

Edson Hall served the WCSA as its administrative and auditorium building until the WCSA closed in 1963. The experiment station offices were located in Edson from 1959 until 1960, when they were moved to Engineering to make room in Edson for UMM's new administration. Edson Auditorium has been used by the experiment station for outreach programs since 1959, and is still used for that purpose today.

UMM's administration was housed in Edson during the early 1960s. The building also housed the UMM library (1960-1968) and its art gallery (1960s). Since 1968 the building has served as a student union with offices, a radio station, meeting and recreation rooms, and a cafeteria. In 1992 UMM enlarged the building and it became known as the Student Center. Edson Auditorium remains inside and is in frequent use as UMM's largest auditorium.

**16. Historic Name:** Science Building  
Current Name: Science West and Science East  
Built: 1966-1968, 2000



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Architect: Graffunder and Assoc. (1966), Bettenberg Townsend, Stolte, and Comb (1968), Rafferty, Rafferty, Tollefson (2000)  
Contractor: Engelen-Twin City Co. (1966), Sheehy Constr. (1968), Borson Constr. (2000)  
Resource: One Noncontributing Building

The Science Building is located at the southwestern corner of the historic district. The oldest portion of the complex has four stories and was built in two phases in 1966 and 1968. The northern (1966) phase, designed by Carl Graffunder and Associates, features white, pre-cast concrete panels and narrow, vertically-aligned windows. The southern (1968) phase, designed by Bettenberg Townsend, Stolte, and Comb, is faced with reddish-brown brick and has windows aligned in vertical strips. Attached to the eastern side of the building is a one story, 275-seat auditorium that was built in 1968. Attached to the western side is a domed conservatory that was built in 1968 and a greenhouse that was built in 1986. In 2000 a large, three story, hip- and flat-roofed addition was constructed on the southern and eastern sides of the complex. The 2000 addition was designed by Rafferty, Rafferty, Tollefson and is faced with brown brick with buff-colored cast stone trim. The northern facade of the new addition faces the mall.

### Historical Background

The Science Building was constructed in 1966-1968 for UMM to house the biology, chemistry, physics, and mathematics disciplines. The 2000 addition to the complex was built on the site of the WCSA Gymnasium. The Gymnasium had been designed by Clarence H. Johnston, Sr., and built in 1930. It was demolished circa 1998 so that the Science Building could be expanded.

**17. Historic Name: Rodney A. Briggs Library**  
Current Name: Rodney A. Briggs Library  
Built: 1968  
Architect: Walter Butler Company (1968, 1973)  
Contractor: Walter Butler Co. (1968), James Steele Constr. (1973)  
Resource: One Noncontributing Building

The Rodney A. Briggs Library is located immediately west of Edson Hall. The library is a four story, flat-roofed building with a simple rectangular form. (Four stories are exposed on the western facade and three stories are exposed on the eastern side.) The building is faced with reddish-brown brick. Simple piers faced with aggregate stone divide the eastern and western facades into eight bays. Each bay has narrow rectangular window openings filled with single-pane fixed sash. The basement level of the western facade is faced almost entirely with glass. The upper story of the building is marked by a band of aggregate stone. On the western and eastern facades, the band becomes a series of projecting aggregate screens that shield the upper

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story windows. The building's main entrance, located at the center of the eastern facade, is situated within a projecting flat-roofed foyer.

The interior of the Briggs Library is essentially intact. Many of the library's interior walls are faced with warm brown brick.

### Historical Background

The Rodney A. Briggs Library was built for UMM in two phases, the first in 1968 and the second in 1973. A year after it was completed, the library was named for Rodney A. Briggs. Briggs had been appointed superintendent of the School and Station in 1959 and led the school's transformation into UMM. He was UMM's first chief administrator, serving from 1960-1969, and much of the early success of the college is credited to his leadership. Briggs Library still serves its original purpose.

<b>18. Historic Name:</b>	<b>Humanities-Fine Arts</b>
Current Name:	Humanities-Fine Arts
Built:	1973
Architect:	Ralph Rapson and Associates
Contractor:	M.J.M. Construction Co.
Resource:	One Noncontributing Building

Humanities-Fine Arts (HFA) is located on the northern side of the mall and is set between, and back from, Home Economics and Girls' Dormitory. The main facade faces south.

HFA is an animated collection of geometric forms that are sheathed in wide expanses of reddish-brown brick. Tall shed-roofed towers soar many feet above the ground to create theatrical fly space, skylight windows, and mechanical housing. The base of the building reveals exposed, form-textured concrete that is also used for entrance plazas and exterior stairways. HFA's windows are arranged in horizontal bands and include numerous skylights that illuminate hallways, art and dance studios, classrooms, and an art gallery. Principal entrances are located on the southern facade (facing the mall), and on the eastern facade.

The interior of the building has soaring ceilings, polished concrete floors, and walls of "raw" concrete block and smooth white plaster. Additional industrial-inspired elements include simple wrought iron railings, track lighting suspended on black metal beams, and exposed and brightly-painted ductwork and pipes. A central hallway that is aligned north and south was conceived by the architect as an interior "street" along which galleries, studios, and performance halls were arranged (Hession et al 1999:178-179, 185).

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Note: Humanities-Fine Arts is considered to be Noncontributing for the purposes of this nomination because it was built for UMM, rather than the WCSA, and dates from 1973, outside this nomination's period of significance. However, HFA remains a distinctive and intact example of the work of accomplished architect Ralph Rapson. It is recommended that the building's significance and National Register eligibility be assessed within the body of Rapson's work when sufficient historical perspective and scholarship has been gained, and that, in the meantime, the character-defining features of the HFA be preserved despite its Noncontributing status.

### Historical Background

Humanities-Fine Arts (HFA) was constructed for UMM and completed in 1973. In preparation for building HFA, two buildings were removed from the site. The largest was the WCSA Superintendent's House, a two story residence that had been built in 1937. The Superintendent's House was sold to a private party and moved to 210 Colorado Avenue in Morris where it still stands as a private residence. The second was the Home Management House, a small woodframe house that had been built in 1918.

HFA was designed by Ralph Rapson who, at the time, was the head of the University of Minnesota's School of Architecture. Rapson's previous commissions for fine arts centers had included the Guthrie Theatre and the University of Minnesota's Rarig Center, both in Minneapolis. Rapson won two prestigious design awards for HFA -- a First Design Award from *Progressive Architecture* magazine in 1972 and an Honor Award from the Minnesota Society of the American Institute of Architects in 1975.

<b>19. Historic Name:</b>	<b>Temporary Offices</b>
Current Name:	Temporary Offices
Built:	1988
Contractor:	UMM Plant Services
Resource:	One Noncontributing Building

The Temporary Offices are two identical, one-story, gable-roofed, woodframe buildings that are located west of the Home Economics building on the northern side of the mall. The buildings are sided with plywood siding and are essentially portable. Each houses ten offices.

### Historical Background

The Temporary Offices were built by UMM in 1988 to ease a shortage of faculty office space. One of the buildings was first used south of the Science Building and was moved to its current location circa 1999. The other is standing near its original site.

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<b>20. Historic Name:</b>	<b>Entrance Gate</b>
Current Name:	Entrance Gate
Built:	1991
Architect:	Harold Fahl and other University of Minnesota staff
Contractor:	UMM Plant Services
Resource:	One Noncontributing Object

The Entrance Gate, located on College Avenue, marks the main entrance to the campus. It is located on the southern side of the entrance drive. The entrance gate is a single, curved wall that is about 30' long and about 6' tall. It is faced with reddish-brown brick and has a cap of buff-colored Kasota stone. Chrome-colored mounted letters read "University of Minnesota Morris."

### Historical Background

The current entrance gate is the third gate that has been built at this location to mark the main entrance to the campus.

The first set of gates was built for the WCSA circa 1924 and stood until 1960. These gates consisted of two Craftsman style brick wall sections, one located on either side of the entrance road into the campus.

The second set of entrance gates, built when UMM was established, was erected circa 1962 and demolished circa 1990. This set of gates was also built of brick and consisted of two rectangular elements, one located on either side of the entrance road.

The current entrance gate, built on the southern side of the entrance road, was designed by Harold Fahl (Director of UMM Plant Services from 1968-1993) in consultation with staff from the University of Minnesota's Minneapolis campus. It was built in 1991 by the UMM Plant Services crew.

### Summary of Resources

The West Central School of Agriculture Historic District includes 20 substantive resources for the purposes of this nomination: 11 Contributing resources (all buildings) and 9 Noncontributing resources (7 buildings, 1 site, and 1 object). They are listed below:

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<b>Historic Name</b>	<b>Orig Built</b>	<b>Current Name</b>	<b>Resource Count</b>
Music Hall	1899	Minority Resource Ctr	One Contrib Bldg
The Square or Mall	c1911-16	The Mall	One Noncontr Site
Girls' Dormitory	1912	Camden Hall	One Contrib Bldg
Spooner Hall	1912-13	Spooner Hall	One Contrib Bldg
Cattle Barn	1914	Saddle Club Barn	One Contrib Bldg
Engineering Building	1915	Community Servic Bldg	One Contrib Bldg
Dining Hall	1918	Behmler Hall	One Contrib Bldg
Senior Hall	1920	Blakely Hall	One Contrib Bldg
Agricultural Hall	1920-21	Social Science Bldg	One Contrib Bldg
Infirmery	1923-24	Education Building	One Contrib Bldg
Junior Hall	1926	Pine Hall	One Contrib Bldg
Seed House	1929	Recycling Center	One Contrib Bldg
Home Economics	1954-55	Humanities Building	One Noncontr Bldg
Machinery Shed	1958	Transportation Garage	One Noncontr Bldg
Edson Hall	1959	Student Center	One Noncontr Bldg
Science Building	1966-68	Science Building	One Noncontr Bldg
Briggs Library	1968	Briggs Library	One Noncontr Bldg
Humanities-Fine Arts	1973	Humanities-Fine Arts	One Noncontr Bldg
Temporary Offices	1988	Temporary Offices	One Noncontr Bldg
Entrance Gate	1991	Entrance Gate	One Noncontr Object

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### 8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

#### ARCHITECT/BUILDER, CONTINUED

Johnston, Clarence H., Sr. (Architect)  
Morell, Anthony (Landscape Architect)  
Nichols, Arthur R. (Landscape Architect)  
Lund, Roy (Architect)  
Hein, Bernard J. (Architect)  
Anderson, John A. (Horticulturist)  
Gray, Wesley (Horticulturist)  
Martin, Roger (Landscape Architect)  
Rapson, Ralph, and Associates (Architect)  
All Building Corporation (Contractor)  
Anderson Brothers (Contractor)  
Bettenberg Townsend, Stolte, and Comb (Architect)  
Borson Construction (Contractor)  
Butler, Walter, Company (Architect and Contractor)  
Engelen-Twin City Company (Contractor)  
Fahl, Harold (Architect)  
Graffunder and Associates (Architect)  
Hokanson, Lumming Associates (Architect)  
Jensen Construction Company (Contractor)  
M.J.M. Construction (Contractor)  
Nagle, John (Contractor)  
Olson, J. H. (Contractor)  
Rafferty, Rafferty, Tollefson (Architect)  
Sheehy Construction (Contractor)  
Steele, James, Construction (Contractor)

#### NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The West Central School of Agriculture and Experiment Station Historic District is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A, significance to the broad patterns of our history, in the areas of Education and Agriculture. The property is an excellent example of a residential agricultural high school, a significant trend in public education that was particularly important in midwestern and southern states. The school and experiment station at Morris were significant components of the University of Minnesota's system of regional agricultural high schools and experiment stations, a system that was a model for the development of agricultural education elsewhere in the nation. The school and experiment station were important contributors to

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education and agriculture in west central Minnesota. The West Central School of Agriculture was one of the longest running residential agricultural high schools in the country, operating from 1910-1963. Today the campus is one of the most intact examples of this property type standing in the U.S. The property is significant on a statewide level. The period of significance begins in 1910, the year the institution opened, and ends in 1952. (The period of significance ends in 1952, rather than in 1963 when the WCSA closed, in keeping with National Register guidelines that state that 50 years ago is used as the closing date for periods of significance where activities begun historically continued to have importance and no more specific date can be defined to end the historic period.)

### Boarding School for Native Americans

The West Central School of Agriculture (WCSA) and Experiment Station was established on the campus of a former boarding school for Native American children. The school had been founded in 1887 by a Catholic order of nuns, the Sisters of Mercy, who operated it under contract with the federal government. The school eventually had about two dozen woodframe buildings (including small buildings such as sheds) located on a 220-acre farm. Its staff and student body were sizable. In 1893, for example, there were 103 students and 25 staff (24 sisters and a hired man) making it the largest contract Indian school in Minnesota (Ahern 1984:85). The school operated until 1896, when, because of a change in policy by the federal Office of Indian Affairs that forbade sectarian schools, the Sisters lost their federal contract and were forced to close (Granger 1998:2).

A few months later, in 1897, the federal government purchased the facility and reopened it as an Indian boarding school. The government immediately began a substantial building program. During the next five years, the campus' first four masonry buildings were constructed -- a girls' dormitory (1898, razed), a boys' dormitory (1899, extant), an administration building (1900, razed), and a hospital (1902, razed). From 1901-1908, the Morris Industrial School for American Indians enrolled an average of 160 students each year. It operated for 12 years, until 1909. In 1909, because of a change in federal policy that sought to reduce off-reservation boarding schools, the Morris school was permanently closed (Granger 1998:2; Ahern 1984:85).

### Founding the WCSA and WCES

When the School for Indians closed, the campus and farm, now 292 acres, was given to the State of Minnesota by Congressional action in 1909. The arrangement was made with the proviso that the lands and buildings be used by the State as an agricultural school and that Native American pupils be admitted tuition-free and on terms of equity with white pupils. (Only two Native American students attended the WCSA during its 53 years (Ahern 1984:98). The University of Minnesota, Morris, has continued the policy of admitting Native Americans tuition-free and it is a popular program.)



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Within west central Minnesota there was significant local support for the establishment of a School of Agriculture and Experiment Station in Morris. Among the local activities was a meeting held in June of 1909 at the Morris armory at which "prominent citizens" spoke about the need to raise \$10,000 necessary to help the school operate during its first year. The Citizens Bank of Morris apparently loaned \$10,300 on the basis of a personal guarantee by Lewis C. Spooner, a Morris attorney and state legislator who was a leader in efforts to gain legislative support and raise funds (Bridgford 1966:3-4). Historian Wilbert H. Ahern explains that "When it appeared that Governor John A. Johnson was balking at accepting the facility, Morris boosters, led by Spooner, entertained members of the legislature and administrators from the University of Minnesota to demonstrate the support for a regional school of agriculture as well as the potential of the campus and community" (Ahern 1984:97).

The state legislature accepted the facility in 1909. The West Central School of Agriculture and Experiment Station would be a co-educational, residential, agricultural high school and regional experiment station operated by the University of Minnesota. It would serve the residents of 15 counties in west central Minnesota through teaching, research, and outreach. Part of this work would be to train young men and women for the vocations of farming and homemaking, "and to conduct experimental work and gather information of value for the farmers in the west central portion of Minnesota" (*Report . . . 1922:5*). The mandate to serve rural people is explained in an early school bulletin which states, "The school was not created to take young men and women from city homes in order to make farmers out of them. On the contrary, it is for boys and girls from the farms" (*Bulletin* circa 1916). In late 1909 and early 1910 the University hired the first superintendent and staff, established the curriculum, and registered students for classes to begin in the fall of 1910 (Granger 1998:3).

### Within the University of Minnesota System

The West Central School and Station, as the institution was often called, was a significant component of the University of Minnesota's system of regional agricultural high schools and experiment stations. The school was established as a branch of the University's School of Agriculture. The West Central Experiment Station was established as a branch of the University's Agricultural Experiment Station. The WCSA remained part of the University throughout its 53-year history, and the experiment station (now called the West Central Research and Outreach Center) is still operated by the University of Minnesota today.

The WCSA was one of four agricultural high schools (all boarding schools) operated by the University before World War II. The four included the central agricultural high school in St. Paul (1888-1960, technically in the city of Falcon Heights), and "branch" schools in Crookston (1906-1968), Morris (1910-1963), and Grand Rapids (1926-1965). Peak enrollment at the four was reached in 1945-1946 when they collectively enrolled 1,815 students (Lehmberg and Pflaum 2001:4). The largest of the branch schools was Crookston, which was slightly larger than the



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school in Morris. The school in Grand Rapids was considerably smaller. (A fourth branch school, in Waseca, had been authorized by the legislature in 1919 but was not established until 1953. It was considerably smaller than the schools in Morris and Crookston. The high school at Waseca closed in 1973.)

The University of Minnesota had been operating agricultural programs since the 1860s and had formally established a College of Agriculture in 1874. Enrollment in the college was initially low, and changes in agricultural education were being demanded by farmers in the state, who did not feel well served by the University (Moore "The Involvement" 1988:166). As part of its response, the University established a School of Agriculture for high school-age students in 1888. The school was located on the University Farm where the College of Agriculture and state agricultural experiment station were sited. (The farm and campus were technically located in Falcon Heights, but were usually referred to as the "St. Paul campus" of the University.)

The School of Agriculture on the St. Paul campus was the first agricultural high school in Minnesota. The high school proved to be more popular than the college-level program, and four branch schools were eventually added throughout the state, including the West Central School of Agriculture in Morris. The agricultural high schools were successful and contributed to agricultural education's role as "perhaps the university's most pervasive connection with people throughout the state" (Chambers 1989:494). The branch agricultural high schools were part of a vast University system that also included regional agricultural experiment stations (including the West Central Experiment Station in Morris), facilities such as a forestry station in Cloquet and a fruit breeding station in Zumbra Heights, and a network of agricultural extension agents and home economists working in each county throughout the state.

The founding of branch agricultural high schools by the State was in part driven by the University's Willet M. Hays, who argued that the first School of Agriculture at the St. Paul campus was drawing students from only a 75-mile radius (in part due to their young age and the cost of travel) and that the majority of the state was being underserved. Local demand by farmers in particular regions also influenced the University to establish the branches (Gray 1951:117, 407). In 1906 the first branch school opened in Crookston where one of the University's two branch experiment stations had been operating since 1895. Andrew Boss, a longtime University faculty member, describes the demand for schools and the founding of the School and Station in Morris:

Scarcely a session of the legislature went by in which some representative or senator did not seek to secure for his community a branch agricultural school. Had the legislature bowed to the wishes of all communities, few counties over the years would have been without such a school. Secondary agricultural education by 1909 was popular with farmers and educators alike, and there was a danger that schools on this order might be founded faster than the State could well support them. At this time, fortunately, there was a way to secure a school

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with the minimum of expenditure. The Indian School at Morris, operated by the federal government through the Department of the Interior, was no longer needed. . . . Willet M. Hays, then Assistant Secretary of Agriculture [formerly of the University], was aware of this situation. He brought his influence to bear upon Senator Moses E. Clapp of St. Paul who, on December 9, 1908, introduced a bill in the United States Senate to transfer this school [at Morris] to the State of Minnesota (Boss 1941:81-82).

### Agricultural Education

The West Central School and Station is an excellent example of a residential agricultural high school, a significant trend in public education in the U.S. in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. According to historian Richard H. Thomas, agricultural schools (the first being private) were established in the U.S. beginning in the early 19th century. "However, the national debate over where, when and how to teach agriculture occurred between 1890 and 1920 -- years identified with the reforms of the Progressive Movement" (Thomas 2002:1). The West Central School of Agriculture, founded in 1910, was one of "numerous agricultural high schools" that were established between 1900 and 1920, according to Thomas (Thomas 2002:4). Most of the nation's agricultural schools were located in midwestern and southern states.

The West Central School, like many other agricultural schools, was founded and grew during an expansionary period in public education. In Minnesota, for example, public education advanced on several fronts between 1900 and 1930: funding from the state and federal governments increased, many new schools were constructed, schools were given greater incentive to comply with state standards, curricula improved, school terms lengthened, and teacher training improved. The number of accredited high schools in Minnesota doubled between 1900 and 1915 (McConnell 1931). Nationwide, the number of American children attending school beyond the eighth grade increased from about 10 percent in 1900 to about 67 percent in 1940. (Farm children, however, were less likely than other children to attend school beyond the eighth grade. For example, in 1940 in Minnesota, 56 percent of farm boys and 37 percent of farm girls (ages 16 and 17) were not attending school. Primary reasons included transportation difficulties, the need for children to help out at home, and a lack of parental encouragement (Ekstrom 1946).)

The School and Station in Morris was also founded at a time when agricultural education was increasing nationwide, as was education in mechanical arts and home economics. Like many other facets of the U.S. economy, agriculture was becoming increasingly technical, and the proportion of skilled versus unskilled workers needed on the farm was changing as technology advanced. As WCSA Superintendent Higbie wrote in the 1914 WCSA yearbook, "The improvement of grains and stock, the maintenance of soil fertility, the organization of the business of farming -- these are the scientific problems that need careful and systematic study and must be a part of the training received by our youth who are to make the farmers of the next generation" (*Moccasin* 1914:9). It was important that the new agricultural methods and

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techniques also be conveyed to current farmers if agricultural productivity were to be sustained and increased.

Using agricultural education to help sustain and increase farm productivity was supported by the railroad industry and by large agricultural marketers and processors, many of whom hoped for increased profits if farm production increased. Consumers who were unhappy with high food prices in the early 20th century also supported efforts that would increase farm productivity in the hope that food prices would lower (Wood 1993:156-157).

Agricultural research and education were advanced through various pieces of federal legislation. They included the Hatch Act of 1887, which established federally-funded agricultural experiment stations; the Smith-Lever Act of 1917, which established a system of federally-funded county agricultural agents; and the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, which provided federal funding for teaching agricultural and vocational subjects in public high schools. Federal initiatives were complemented in Minnesota by state legislative action and funding.

Agricultural schools and experiment stations like West Central were supported by advocates of "scientific agriculture" and proponents of the "farm management movement." The former argued that farmers should move toward scientifically-proven techniques such as soil fertilization and crop rotation, rather than relying on traditional or old-world methods. WCSA Superintendent Higbie wrote in 1914, "From the beginning, agriculture has been almost an art. Its practice has been handed down from father to son, and he is the best farmer who is the most proficient in carrying on the physical labor and manipulation. . . . Now the new phase of agricultural development may be called the scientific phase, for it involves the application of scientific principles to the practice of farming" (*Moccasin* 1914:9). Proponents of the farm management movement held that farming was a business that could be made more efficient and profitable if modern business and marketing practices were used (Danbom 1990:55).

Scientific agriculture and farm management were regarded by some as a way to "professionalize" agriculture and farmers, thereby recognizing the specialized knowledge and skills that successful farming required and, in turn, increasing the status of farmers in society (Danbom 1990:3). However, the movements were also criticized by some farmers and political activists who argued that emphasizing the prowess and efficiency of individual farmers diverted farmers' attention from their real need -- to gain political power. These critics argued that it was more important for farmers to work together to achieve control over more facets of the agricultural industry and bring about enlightened agricultural policies, than it was to increase yields on individual farms (Danbom 1986:249-252).

Agricultural education was also seen by some supporters as a way to mitigate the impact of the nation's demographic shift from rural areas to cities. The technological advances that were increasing farm efficiency were also reducing the number of people it took to operate each farm.

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By 1910, rural residents in Minnesota and nationwide were already leaving farms and small towns for lives in the cities, a trend that continues today. According to historian Roger James Wood,

President Theodore Roosevelt's Country Life Commission reported in 1909 that rural America was falling behind urban America and cited rural social disorganization as a key factor. It recommended reforms to revitalize rural communities and counter the drift of population to the cities. Those included more social survey work, parcel post and postal savings banks, consolidation of rural churches, better trained rural ministers, organization of agricultural cooperatives, consolidation of small rural schools, reform of rural government, improvement of communications, and creation of a nationwide system of agricultural extension to keep farmers in touch with the latest discoveries in agricultural science (Wood 1993:155-156).

Training high school students in modern practices of agriculture and home economics was regarded as a way to positively influence entire families and communities. Some proponents of the "country life movement" argued that agricultural education and the diffusion of modern methods would lead to attractive, convenient homes and farms that would, in turn, build character and enrich the lives of rural people. Improving rural life was seen as critical to encouraging farm boys and girls to stay in rural areas after they grew up, rather than moving to cities (Danbom 1990:36-37). Such ideas were endorsed WCSA Superintendent Higbie who explained in the 1914 yearbook, "The [WCSA] student body and graduates become a strong force for leadership in the communities where their work lies. Large yields become contagious; improved stock causes comment and emulation; one silo erected in a neighborhood is often the forerunner of many others; Farm Clubs with student leadership become, through discussion of live topics and community understanding, centers of great benefit" (*Moccasin* 1914:8). Higbie concluded his statement by writing that the WCSA must "continue to send out each year larger and larger groups of graduates who will be forces in their respective communities making for a redirected agriculture and a better rural life" (*Moccasin* 1914:9).

According to historian Roger James Wood, "Teaching farmers how to produce more food and how to improve rural life became a concern of many business leaders, educators, clergymen, bankers, philanthropists, editors, and professional social scientists (primarily sociologists and economists). These reformers organized campaigns to introduce vocational education into the American public schools and allied themselves with the USDA [U.S. Department of Agriculture] and the land-grant colleges to expand agricultural extension activities among the nation's farmers" (Wood 1993:157).

As agricultural education was developing, there was a nationwide debate over whether agricultural education should be integrated into the curriculum of regular public schools, or whether special schools of agriculture (like West Central) should be established. "Separatists"

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argued that the curriculum at separate, specialized schools would be more complete and intensive, that such schools would have better equipment and land, and that such schools would be more innovative. Critics argued that specialized schools would provide a poor education for children by focussing too narrowly on a specific topic and neglecting broader subjects (Thomas 2002:1-2).

By 1909 four types of state-supported, specialized agricultural schools had developed in the U.S., including the type that emerged in Minnesota. In Minnesota, an agricultural school for high school students had been organized in 1888 as part of the University of Minnesota. In 1903 the legislature authorized the establishment of more schools of agriculture and domestic science that would be associated with the University. One school could be located in each county, although two or more counties could be combined to create a school that would serve a larger region (Thomas 2002:2-4). According to historian Gary E. Moore, about two-thirds of the states followed the Minnesota model of having a secondary-level agricultural school attached to the land-grant college (and its experiment station) (Moore "The Involvement" 1988:167).

The other three types of schools developed in Alabama-Georgia, Wisconsin, and New York. Alabama and Georgia each instituted a system of agricultural schools to be located in each congressional district. The schools were supported by special taxes on fertilizer (and, in Georgia, illuminating oil). Eleven such schools had been founded in Georgia by 1906, and several had been founded in Alabama. In Wisconsin, agricultural schools were authorized for each county. The schools would be operated by a county school board under the supervision of the state superintendent of schools. By 1909 six schools had opened, three of which were located in the same buildings as county normal (teachers training) schools. In New York, three agricultural high schools were authorized in 1903. Two of the three were located at liberal arts colleges and one was an individual institution (Thomas 2002:2-4).

Many of the nation's specialized agricultural high schools, like the WCSA, were boarding schools. Although more expensive to operate, residential schools were often established because their constituents were scattered widely on farms, travel was often expensive and slow, roads were poor, and cars were not abundant.

### **The Early WCSA and WCES**

The West Central School and Station opened in the fall of 1910 with a superintendent and five other faculty. The superintendent was Edgar C. Higbie, a graduate of the University of Chicago and the University of Minnesota who had previously been the public school superintendent in Canby, Minnesota. Higbie is said to have had a "missionary's enthusiasm" for his job (Williams 1912).



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The WCSA's six faculty held the titles of superintendent, accountant, preceptress of the girls' dormitory, and instructor in home economics, animal husbandry, and iron work. In reality their roles were much larger, as the 1916 WCSA yearbook explains: "Those were the days when the accountant taught mathematics, acted as librarian, sold the postage stamps, mopped the dining room floor, fed the chickens, and gathered the eggs" (*Moccasin* 1916). Many historical accounts describe the huge amount of work the staff undertook and the wide range of things they accomplished.

When the School and Station opened in 1910, the campus and farm were in disarray and the staff was at first consumed with repairing and improving the facilities. The 1914 yearbook explains, "In those days [circa 1910-1912] there was no sidewalk between Morris and the school so they [students and staff] were obliged to trail through eighty rods of very adhesive Stevens County clay. When the school was finally reached, more mud was seen. A central heating plant was in the course of construction [in 1911] and [utility] tunnels were being built to the various buildings. The whole campus, therefore, was a sea of mud, not a very beautiful sight at that time surely" (quoted in Olson 1972:9).

The 1916 WCSA yearbook also describes the early campus: "The farm was in keeping with the general condition of the whole campus. On all sides it was flanked by mounds of rubbish, back of these, the fields were aglow with mustard and variegated with wild oats and quack grass. Truly this was an educational problem. Those early days [Superintendent] Higbie could usually be found at one of those rubbish piles, loading wagons, or dumping scapers on some grading job. If you did not find him there, probably he was leading an expeditionary force to attack one of those fields of tall weeds just south of the present Boys' Dormitory [Spooner Hall]" (*Moccasin* 1916).

The first burst of construction, considered essential to creating a modern, functional campus, was funded by the first major legislative appropriation, made during the 1911 session. The appropriation included money for a badly-needed central heating plant and separate girls' and boys' dormitories. The three buildings were constructed in 1911, 1912, and 1912-1913 respectively. (The heating plant was razed in 1970, but Girls' Dormitory and Spooner Hall are still standing.) The appropriation also included money for separate buildings for horses, cows, hogs, sheep, poultry, and machinery, as well as money for items such as fencing, repairs, equipment, maintenance, and the purchase of livestock (Bridgford 1966:4-5).

Longtime faculty member Roy O. Bridgford writes,

With funds available, a real transformation took place during the next 4 or 5 years [circa 1911-1916]. Weeds which had once flourished on the campus site began to disappear, to be replaced by luxuriant blue grass lawns; shrubs and trees were planted; and a large number of other improvements were made in accordance with plans prepared by Morell and Nichols,

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landscape architects. An enlarged quadrangle was provided and several roads constructed through the campus: two leading into Fourth Street [the road around the central square], one south to the Cyrus Road, and one north to Seventh Street (Bridgford 1966:5).

The 1916 yearbook reports the progress of improvements: "An entirely new set of farm buildings has replaced the old shacks of six years ago. Our new dairy barn is a model. . . . The farm also has been made over. The luxuriant fields of alfalfa and the clean fields of corn and grain would in no small degree astound our predecessors. The entire farm and campus have been thoroughly drained, and the wet and unsightly spots reclaimed. Practically all of the desirable land has been plotted out for experimental purposes. . . ." (*Moccasin* 1916).

Bridgford writes that "for economical reasons, during those early years, it was the practice to use lumber from buildings that were razed to build new ones. After work was begun on the new dining hall, the old one was torn down, and from much of the lumber a new barn for beef cattle and a stock judging pavilion were constructed" (Bridgford 1966:12). By the mid-1920s the campus had an extensive set of buildings. (See accompanying "Morell and Nichols Topographical Survey (1926)" for a plan of the campus in 1926.)

The staff of the WCSA and WCES, several of whom were ardent horticulturists and arborists, implemented the 1911 master plan and planned and executed later campus landscaping. The campus was also used by the staff to test new varieties of trees, shrubs, and flowers and to demonstrate the successful use of plants that could be recommended to area farmers. Beginning about 1917, the WCES annual report detailed the results of experimental and demonstration plantings on campus. For example, the report for 1917 includes "before" and "after" photographs of the campus mall showing ornamental shrubs that had been planted the previous year. The report lists progress on about 28 varieties of ornamental shrubs that had been planted in 1916 and provides a list of seven types of trees and shrubs that were planted in 1917 (*Report . . . 1917*).

Two years after the new school and station opened, a favorable article in *The Farmer*, a long-running agricultural journal published in St. Paul, credited the institution with significant improvements in local agriculture:

This whole section of the state shows the influence of this new school already. Two years ago there were but two silos in Stevens County, and but little attention paid to stock raising. Today there are about 50 silos in the county, 20 being sold by one dealer this past season. There are 25 pure-bred Holstein sires in the county and a few dams and several pure-bred Guernsey herds. A number of herds of good grade cows are started. Fifty-one students in the school from the home county are transforming the ideas of farm life in their home neighborhoods. Numbers of them have started the building of silos on the home farms. More systematic records of cost and production are instituted; better seed is introduced.



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Above all, a new attitude toward farm life is being developed. . . . Agriculture is becoming a scientific vocation, engaging the keenest minds (Williams 1912).

The article reports that "The farm is raising the best crops in the section. Experimental seed plots, rotated fields, an alfalfa field, fine stands of clover, and one of the best cornfields in the state (at this writing) make the old Indian school grounds quite a different looking place" (Williams 1912).

The article also credits the staff and superintendent Higbie with establishing the West Central Minnesota Development Association, a regional agricultural improvement organization, and with founding the Stevens County Farm Club. The club apparently allowed local farmers to join forces to buy Holstein cattle in larger quantity and, therefore, lower cost (Williams 1912).

The West Central School and Station became the largest institution in Stevens County. Between 1910 and 1963, the WCSA and WCES had a significant impact on the economic, social, and cultural development of the city of Morris and surrounding area. Millions of state and federal dollars entered the local economy through salaries and local expenditures, hundreds of faculty and staff became residents of the community, and thousands of students lived in Morris, if only temporarily.

### WCSA Students

The WCSA opened in 1910 with 103 students. The student body ranged in size from 103 to 455 through the years. Enrollment expanded during the first few years but then dipped to 172 students sometime during World War I. In 1929-1930 enrollment reached an early peak with 388 students. The Depression hit the school hard and, three years later in 1932-1933, only 187 students were enrolled. In 1935 the legislature authorized the State to help defray costs for agricultural school students, and enrollment rebounded to 391 students in 1935 ("Fifty-three Years" 1995). Enrollment surged again after World War II when the WCSA offered special veterans programs and Minnesota farmers enjoyed relative prosperity. There were 455 students enrolled in 1947-1948, which was the school's all-time high. One of the largest graduating classes was the Class of 1951, which had 107 graduates.

At first, tuition was free for most students, but eventually a nominal tuition fee was charged for many categories of students. All students also paid room, board, and instructional and incidental fees. The cost to attend the 1916-1917 school term was estimated to be about \$110, which consisted of board (\$60), room (\$30), lab fees (\$3), textbooks (\$10), hospital fee (\$2), and incidental fees (\$5) (*Bulletin* circa 1916). In 1935, a new state law helped defray tuition costs for many students. Many WCSA students helped pay for their education through an extensive on-campus work-study program. In 1938-1939, for example, 60 percent of students held on-campus jobs. Walter Hokanson, the longtime WCSA herdsman who was also a 1930 graduate, recalls:

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"Sometimes I had to go to the dorms and wake kids who were supposed to be at work at four a.m. I felt sorry for them, it wasn't easy to milk cows and go to school at the same time, but they needed the money for their [schooling]" (Webb 2002:16).

About 7,000 young people attended the WCSA during its 53 years. The ratio of boys to girls was about two to one. The age of the student body was more varied than that of a typical high school. In the fall of 1925, for example, students on campus ranged in age from 13 to 20 (Hanson 1963:60).

Most WCSA students lived on campus in one of four principal dormitories. Each dormitory housed about 75 students in double rooms. A faculty preceptor also lived in each dormitory. In the early decades, the preceptor's spouse and children sometime lived in the dormitory as well.

Most WCSA students grew up on family farms in west central Minnesota. In 1945, 402 of the 445 students listed farming as their parents' occupation (Bridgford 1966:17). In 1941, the student body represented 23 Minnesota counties, but most were from Big Stone, Grant, Pope, Stevens, and Traverse counties, and a few were from other states including Illinois and South Dakota (*Report of the Superintendent* 1941).

The WCSA's modern dormitories and well-equipped facilities must have seemed luxurious to some students. During the early decades of the institution, many Minnesota farms had no electricity, indoor plumbing, or central heating. Many WCSA students had only attended one-room schools. (In 1930, for example, there were still 7,000 one-room schools in Minnesota.) Walter Hokanson, a 1930 graduate, recalls that many rural teenagers his age did not attend school past the eighth grade, and that "For every kind of education after 8th grade, you were on your own. There was a public high school in town but not too many kids from farms went there, because they had no means of getting to town [every day]" (Webb 2002:1).

Many of the students who attended the WCSA became farmers or worked elsewhere in the fields of agriculture or home economics. For example, in 1922 the WCSA reported that, "Approximately 85 percent of the young men who have graduated from the West Central School of Agriculture are now actively engaged in the business of farming" (*Bulletin* June 1922).

Carlton Hanson, a 1932 graduate from near Barry, Minnesota, was one of nine siblings who graduated from the WCSA. Carlton and his brothers and sisters were encouraged by their parents, Edward and Esther Hanson, to attend the WCSA in part because its six-month school term allowed the children to work at home during the growing season. "We had a big family and times were tough and dad needed us to work on the farm. WCSA's sessions accommodated the farming seasons, whereas the public schools did not allow for time off to farm," said Carlton. All of the nine Hanson children graduated from WCSA -- in the years 1928 through 1941 -- and all attended and graduated from the University of Minnesota. Most of the Hansons obtained

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degrees from the University in ag-related or home economics fields. Many continued their education further and received advanced degrees. Carlton Hanson is married to Amy Stark Hanson, WCSA class of 1934, who is one of 11 siblings who graduated from the WCSA (Hanson 2002).

### School Terms and Course Work

The WCSA began as a three-year program when it opened in October of 1910. Students were required to have completed the eighth grade (with a few exceptions). In addition, "most of the applied courses require a previous knowledge of farming and experience in farm work" (*Bulletin* June 1924). While most WCSA students attended during their high school years, some were high school graduates or older students who came for a year of intensive agricultural or vocational training.

The WCSA's three-year program did not provide the equivalent of a high school diploma. In 1917 the WCSA began to offer an additional year of post-graduate college preparatory work, which also provided a high school degree. (The change was coordinated with the fact that in 1917 the University of Minnesota began to automatically accept for college enrollment those students who had graduated from the state's agricultural high schools and had completed an additional year of course work.) Students who returned to WCSA for an additional year were referred to as the "Advanced Class" to differentiate them from Freshmen, Juniors, and Seniors, as the other classes were called. (WCSA had no Sophomores.) The fourth year became mandatory in 1950.

School was held from October through March, an arrangement designed to accommodate the planting and harvesting schedule so that students could help at home. To fit the curriculum into six months, school work was intensive and class days were long. Many courses included labs held in the afternoons in the barns, fields, greenhouses, and shops. Mandatory, supervised study sessions were held several evenings per week. "Short courses" were offered for students who could not attend for the full six months.

Initially, school was held Tuesday through Saturday. Longtime faculty member R. O. Bridgford recalls: "This arrangement seemed to work better for students, most of whom came in by train. So the 'no Monday' sessions enabled them to go home over the weekend and return by Monday night" (Bridgford 1963:53). As autos became more widely available, students were no longer as dependent on train schedules, and a Monday through Friday school week was eventually adopted.

Beginning in 1910, WCSA students were also required to conduct special projects on their farms during the summer. Examples of projects included experimental grain plots, farm accounting, windbreak and orchard planting, weed eradication, food preparation, and home canning (*Profile* 2000:7). At the time that the WCSA opened in 1910, using supervised home projects as a

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method for agricultural instruction was a new idea that was just being introduced in agricultural schools. The idea is credited to Rufus W. Stimson, who established home projects at Smith's Agricultural School in Massachusetts in the 1908-1909 school year and actively promoted the method during the next few years. Supervised home work was codified in the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, which provided federal funding for teaching agricultural and vocational subjects in public high schools, and soon spread to other areas of education (Moore "Forgotten Leader" 1988:51-52). WCSA instructors visited each student during the summer to monitor progress. Not only did these visits allow instructors to evaluate the students' work, but they served an outreach function and increased contact between WCSA staff and entire farm families in the region.

The WCSA curriculum was typical of secondary schools of agriculture elsewhere in the country. The curriculum included typical high school courses (e.g., English, sociology, math, history, chemistry, physics, botany, economics, government, public speaking, and music) as well as specialized technical training in agricultural and vocational fields. Technical courses were divided into several areas of study. In the 1930s, for example, boys were encouraged to pursue one of three tracks -- Agriculture and Farm Management, Animal Husbandry, or Agricultural Engineering -- while girls were asked to concentrate on either Home Management, Dressmaking, Home Nursing, or Business Training. (A circa 1931 bulletin explains that business courses were offered to girls because "Many girls desire to be self-supporting during that interval between the completion of their education and their career as homemakers" (*Life at ca. 1931:33*).)

Although specific courses changed through the years, many of the WCSA's major fields of study remained constant. The variety of the courses illustrates the breadth of the faculty's knowledge and the wide range of skills needed in successful farming. Agriculture and Farm Management included topics such as agronomy and soil science, crop production, seed production, grains, grass and hay crops, legumes, marketing, forestry, farm management, and farm finance. Animal Husbandry included courses such as animal feeds and nutrition, livestock production, beef stock, dairy cattle and production, hog selection, veterinary studies, poultry, stock judging, breeding, marketing, butchering, and meat care and curing. Agricultural Engineering included topics such as drainage, surveying, agricultural physics, gas engines and auto mechanics, electricity and lighting, farm machinery, carpentry, drafting, farm building design and construction, cement construction, blacksmithing, gas and electric arc welding, and farm shop (which included metal work, harness repair, rope work, etc.). Horticulture courses included the study of fruits, flowers, vegetables, landscape gardening, and the planning of windbreaks, vegetable gardens, and ornamental plantings of trees, shrubs, and flowers. Home Economics courses included home nursing, first aid, nutrition and cooking, textiles, clothing, sewing, child care, home finance, and home management. Business Training included bookkeeping, commercial law, typing, office practice, shorthand, filing, business machines, and business ethics.

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Senior home economics students were required to live in the "Home Management House" (located behind the Home Economics building) for eight weeks to practice skills in a homelike setting. For many years, babies were brought from the Twin Cities to provide students living in the house with experience in "the care, feeding, and training" of a young child. During the 1930s, for example, babies were obtained through an arrangement with the Ramsey County Child Welfare Board (*Life* at ca. 1931:31; *Moccasin* 1963:61).

The WCSA curriculum evolved to meet advancing technology. During the WCSA's first decades, most farms did not have electricity, running water, or central heating, and most farming was done with mules, horses, and steam-powered threshers. A former student recalls that, in the 1910s and 1920s, "a topic frequently debated [on campus] was whether the tractor could ever displace the horse on the farm" (Hanson 1963:59). As machinery improved, the WCSA taught the operation, repair, and maintenance of gasoline-powered automobiles, tractors, threshers, and combines. Similarly, blacksmithing evolved from the use of coal-powered forges to acetylene torches, and courses like "forge work" were renamed "welding." Courses in Home Economics and Business also changed as new technology and equipment influenced the fields of homemaking, nursing, and business.

Like more typical high schools, the WCSA also sponsored a wide range of extracurricular activities including athletics, dances, games, parties, and lyceums. In 1918, for example, there were at least four literary societies and several debating and musical groups, an Engineers' Club, Rifle Club, Young Men's Christian Association, Young Women's Christian Association, and sports teams. Other activities included agricultural clubs, drama productions, and student government. "Aggie" athletic teams played other high schools in the area, traveling to "away" games by train.

During World War I, the WCSA emphasized engineering subjects that would prepare the boys for similar work during military service. Military drill was added to boys' physical education classes in 1917. New course work for girls included nursing to the injured and Red Cross training. Work at the School and Station during the war emphasized increased food production, in line with a statement by the dean of the College of Agriculture (at the St. Paul campus) who declared that "the progress of the war has demonstrated that the nation which will eventually triumph will be the one which can sufficiently nourish her people" (quoted in Bridgford 1966:8). WCSA livestock experiments largely stopped during World War I because of a labor shortage and high prices for feed (Olson 1972:29). Enrollment dropped as a "large percentage of the [WCSA] boys" were in the service during World War I, while others "were speeding up production upon the farm." In addition, the "personnel of the faculty changed completely" due to enlistments (*Moccasin* 1919).

The Depression of the 1930s also affected the WCSA and WCES. In 1934 Superintendent P. E. Miller was chosen to head the state's massive Federal-State Drought Relief Program that was



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headquartered in St. Paul. Miller was chosen in part because of his extensive experience studying the effects of severe drought on west central Minnesota farms during the previous several years. Directing the program required that Miller move to St. Paul, so Allen W. Edson served as Acting Superintendent (Bridgford 1966:17). Federal relief funds helped provide on-campus jobs for students under the auspices of the National Youth Administration (NYA), and for adult staff under the Work Projects Administration (WPA). The 1935 WCSA yearbook notes that many of the students' summer home projects were "discouraging" because the Depression's drought was harming crop experiments (*Moccasin* 1935). In WCSA course work, more emphasis was placed on cutting costs while increasing farm production. A new course called Farm Finance included a study of New Deal programs such as the Farm Credit Administration, and a new course called Economics of Buying emphasized economy and efficiency in cash-strapped homes. Former superintendent Fenske recalls in 1963, "It was the aim of these courses to give the student a foundation which would enable him to understand more clearly the economic changes [and] their relationship to farm people" (Fenske 1963:50).

In the 1940s the WCSA made changes to policies and curriculum to prepare for World War II. The school lowered the minimum age for enrollment because a large number of 13 and 14 year olds were seeking farm training so that they could replace their older brothers and sisters who had left the farm to join the service. The School and Station continued to place emphasis on increasing food production. Engineering study was again emphasized and the welding and truck repair classes were expanded to train students for both military service and work in defense industries. Extensive "victory" gardens were grown on campus, and Home Economics classes such as Food Conservation were altered and expanded as students learned to prepare and conserve food and contribute to other homefront activities. In 1943 the WCSA yearbook, the *Moccasin*, published a second, abbreviated, paperback edition that was mailed to all students who were serving in the armed forces.

During World War II the WCSA offered special intensive training to help alleviate the farm labor shortage, in cooperation with the federal Farm Security Administration. (Farm training programs designed for veterans were offered after the war beginning in 1947.) An aviation ground school was offered during the war in cooperation with the Civil Aeronautics Administration, which was another federal agency. Students took flight instruction at the newly-established Morris airport. The program was first known as Civilian Pilot Training and later as War Training Service. Dozens of students went directly into the Army Air Corps after training. The *Morris Tribune* wrote in 1995 that "Many of [west central Minnesota's] earliest pilots received their training" through the program ("Fifty-three Years" 1995).

### West Central Experiment Station

The West Central School of Agriculture and the West Central Experiment Station (WCES) were established simultaneously and were fully integrated in operation through 1963, sharing a single

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superintendent. Such a relationship was typical in the U.S. after passage of the Hatch Act of 1887, which provided federal funding for an agricultural experiment station for each state and required that the station be attached to a land-grant college. The Hatch Act directed that experiment stations disseminate practical agricultural information, as well as conduct scientific investigations. In part because teaching students was seen as an excellent way to educate a larger constituency, many experiment stations nationwide were operated in conjunction with secondary agricultural schools. Combining school and station also usually meant that funding could be drawn from more than one source (Wood 1993:130-131). The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Experiment Stations (OES), which had been founded in the 1880s to oversee the use of Hatch Act funds, actively promoted agricultural education.

The WCES at Morris was a regional branch of the state agricultural experiment station, which had been established by the legislature in 1885 and was headquartered at the University of Minnesota's "St. Paul campus" and farm in Falcon Heights. The WCES was the third branch of the state experiment station to be established. It was preceded by branch stations at Crookston (1895) and Grand Rapids (1896), and followed by stations at Waseca (1912), Duluth (1912; closed in 1976), and Lamberton (1959). (A station was also founded in Rosemount in 1949. It was not technically a branch but instead was an extension of the central station.) The WCES often coordinated its work with the central station and with other branch stations. Minnesota's agricultural experiment stations are credited with playing an important role in the phenomenal increase in the state's agricultural productivity during the 20th century (Lewis 1984:n.p.). All branches except Duluth are still operating.

The original WCSA and WCES farm comprised about 292 acres. About 40 acres were devoted to buildings; about 40-50 acres were used for experimental plots, gardens, and orchards; many of the remaining acres were used for raising livestock feed and as pasture; and some was unusable land near the Pomme de Terre River bottom. The farm grew as the University purchased an additional 22 acres in 1915, 61 acres in 1925, 160 acres in 1930, and 286 acres in 1937, for a total of about 820 acres, a size it retained in 1960. Additional acres were rented through the years (Bridgford 1966:3-6).

The WCES was financed by state and federal dollars. The farm provided some income for the institution through the sale of crops and animal products (e.g., meat and milk). (Food for the school dining hall was also grown on the farm.) For many decades the farm was managed by Oscar Beckstrom who served 35 years (1927-1962) as Farm Foreman.

### *Research*

Research at the station began in earnest around 1914, and the station began to publish annual reports of its work in 1915. In 1917-1919 the station helped conduct the first-ever soil survey of Stevens County, providing farmers with invaluable information on soil characteristics. The



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station also gathered weather data and reported it monthly in local newspapers and annually in the published reports.

For the first 50 years, research focused on agronomy, horticulture, animal husbandry, and agricultural engineering, especially as it applied to the 15 counties of west central Minnesota. In 1945, for example, the WCES was conducting 17 distinct experiments in crops and soils, 4 in horticulture and forestry, 3 in animal and dairy husbandry, 2 in agricultural engineering, and 1 in poultry (Bridgford 1966:17). Whether agricultural experiment stations should be conducting "basic" or "applied" research was the subject of much debate nationwide and in Minnesota. The WCES, like most publicly-funded stations, conducted a combination of both types of studies (Danbom 1986:248; Danbom 1990:15-17).

Early agronomy and horticultural work included experiments on fertilizers, crop rotation, varietal comparison, and cultural methods for growing grains, fruit trees, garden crops, annual and perennial flowers, ornamental shrubs, and trees. Beginning in 1915 the WCES conducted early experimental work on the use of phosphate fertilizers and dozens of area farmers applied phosphates to their fields in WCES trials and demonstrations. The experiments showed "conclusively" the value of phosphates in west central Minnesota (Bridgford 1966:10-11). In 1963 the trials were still being carried out in one of the oldest rotation experiments in the U.S. (Fenske 1963:47; *Report of WCES 1916-1927*; Olson 1972:30).

Soil and crop research at the WCES helped to control diseases such as wheat stem rust, which had reached epidemic proportions in the 1910s and 1920s and still plagues farmers today. To fight disease and improve production, the station distributed seed grain of various crops so that farmers could try new or improved varieties. (For example, the WCES distributed 1,700 bushels of seed grain in 1945.) Beginning in 1932, the station also began to treat seed barley for area farmers so that their resulting crop and future seed would be free from loose smut, another devastating disease (Bridgford 1966:12-13).

The West Central Station's livestock research was also important. During the 1910s and 1920s experiments focused on feeding, breeding, disease eradication, and "production increases" for beef and dairy herds, sheep, hogs, and horses. In the late 1910s the station was encouraging area farmers to add sheep to their farms after station staff demonstrated how quickly a flock could grow from only a few ewes and a ram (Olson 1972:29). The WCES was well known for its lamb and sheep feeding trials in the early 20th century. Former superintendent Fenske noted in 1963, "It has been said that the West Central Station has done more experimental work in lamb feeding than any other single experiment station in the United States" (Fenske 1963:49). The station was also at the forefront of swine crossbreeding programs in the 1920s and 1930s. The station's beef cattle, dairy cattle, sheep, and swine herds all contained award-winning animals that were often shown at national livestock events. Station livestock provided local farmers the opportunity to

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examine particular breeds and contemplate introducing similar lines into their own herds. The WCES also had programs in poultry and beekeeping.

From 1927 through 1952 the station was known throughout the state for raising purebred Percherons, an important breed of large draft horses. Station agronomist Roy Bridgford wrote in 1963, "Beautifully matched teams made a striking appearance in the field and it was not unusual to see six well-matched animals hitched in tandem, moving heavy loads in and about the campus" (Bridgford 1963:55). After mechanization reduced the use of draft horses on Minnesota farms, the station sold the last of its Percherons in 1952.

### *Outreach*

Disseminating information to area farmers has been a major function of the West Central School and Station since it opened in 1910. The campus hosted a constant stream of visitors, especially during the summer months, including farmers and their families, seminar participants, representatives of agricultural organizations, boys' and girls' clubs, community groups, and agricultural journalists. The staff answered a large volume of letters and calls from farmers requesting information or advice. Longtime staff member Les Lindor explained that the staff were essentially the sole agricultural experts in west central Minnesota and that if "you needed a question answered, you came up to the ag school" (Lindor 2002). The staff also maintained an active speaking schedule. In 1945, for example, staff members spoke at 56 meetings and conferences attended by an estimated 7,000 people (Bridgford 1966:17). The School and Station staff sometimes worked closely with the Stevens County Agricultural Extension Office, a county-, state-, and federally-funded outreach service that was headquartered in Morris, the county seat.

The School and Station educated farmers about the dangers of over-reliance on a single crop, about vulnerability to crop and livestock diseases, and about adjusting methods to local climatic conditions. Convincing Minnesota farmers to plant a variety of crops in rotated fields and to broaden their operations to include hogs, sheep, dairy, and beef cattle was a large part of the early message.

One of the first outreach programs offered on campus was the "Farmers Short Course," first held January 10-13, 1911. This four-day course was held each year through 1916 and was replaced in 1917 with one-day courses and special clinics scattered throughout the year.

Many WCES educational seminars covered new technology. For example, in 1916 more than 125 people attended a three-day short course on automobiles. The course bulletin indicated that the instructor would be an "automobile expert" from Dunwoody Institute in Minneapolis and that a car would be "completely taken down and reassembled" (*Automobile School* 1916). In 1919,

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500-600 people attended a two-day tractor demonstration that was called the best tractor exposition ever held in west central Minnesota (Olson 1972:23, 29).

Some clinics covered business topics, such as accounting, marketing, farm management, and property issues, while others focused on livestock production. The experiment station first held Sheep and Lamb Feeders Day in 1927. It was the first event of its kind in the state and attracted farmers from several states (Bridgford 1966:15). In 1939, 550 people attended, and the clinic is still held today. The experiment station still regularly conducts special clinics and seminars, including many that are held in Edson Auditorium within the historic district.

One of the largest gatherings of the year was Summer Field Day, later called Station Day and Visitors Day. The annual event introduced local farmers to new methods and research results and allowed them to examine exceptional livestock. It was also an important way to recruit new WCSA students (Lindor 2002). The first Summer Field Day was held in July of 1916. Several hundred people as well as members of the University's Board of Regents and the University president attended. In July of 1920, Visitors Day drew 8,000-9,000 people. Attractions included a free barbecue, livestock judging, a baseball game, a band concert, and an alumni dance (Bridgford 1963:55; Bridgford 1966:10). Although it has been modified somewhat through the years, Visitors Day has run continuously since 1916 and is still held today.

Programs for women and other special constituent groups were also held. Women's Week, also known as Homemakers Week, was held every summer from 1934 through at least the 1960s. The mothers of WCSA students and alumni often attended these sessions, which were designed to provide continuing education and a welcome break from summer farm work. In 1934 more than 138 women attended Women's Week; 219 attended in 1939. Other summer events included 4-H Club Week, which was held each year from 1934 through 1959. More than 900 children attended in 1934. Most attendees were members of 4-H Clubs near their home farms. (4-H Clubs were agricultural clubs for boys and girls that were founded in the 1910s. "4-H" stands for Head, Heart, Hands, and Health.)

### Staff of the WCSA and WCES

The staff of the school and station were intermixed: a single superintendent served both, WCSA instructors performed research, and many WCES researchers taught students. Many staff were students and alumni of the school. Longtime faculty member Roy Bridgford recalls that, in 1917, "employees of the Animal Husbandry Department, Farm Department, plot men, and gardeners were all either students or graduates of the West Central School." He explains that around 1917 "it became the policy of the administration to employ only student help whenever possible" (Bridgford 1966:12). One advantage of hiring students and recent graduates may have been the ability to employ well-educated, qualified labor at relatively low cost.

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The size of the staff varied through the years, but was small considering the amount of work accomplished. In addition to instructors and researchers, the staff included administrative, maintenance, and food service workers, as well as field hands, livestock and poultry workers, and others. Many staff were enthusiastic about the work of the School and Station (Lindor 2002). Many were prominent in their fields, spoke at national conferences, won important awards, and published articles and books (*Profile* 2000:7). Several went on to prestigious jobs at other institutions and businesses after leaving the WCSA and WCES (Lindor 2002).

The WCSA and WCES had seven superintendents: Edgar C. Higbie (1910-1917), Paul E. Miller (1917-1937), Theodore H. Fenske (1938-1947), Allen W. Edson (1947-1958), Herbert G. Croom (Acting, 1958-1959), Rodney A. Briggs (1959-1961), and Ralph E. Smith (1961-1963). Smith was himself a WCSA graduate. After the WCSA closed in 1963, Smith continued as superintendent of the experiment station.

The superintendents lived on campus in two successive Superintendent's Houses. The first was a woodframe American Foursquare style house that had been built in 1905 by the School for Indians to house its superintendent. The house was located near the current site of Girls' Dormitory (now Camden Hall). In 1911 or 1912 the WCSA remodeled the house slightly and moved it several feet to the northwest to make room for the construction of Girls' Dormitory. In about 1936 the house was sold to a private party and moved to 540 E. 5th Street in Morris where it still stands. It was replaced by a new brick-veneered Superintendent's House that was built on the same location in 1937. The 1937 residence was moved to 210 Colorado Avenue about 1969 or 1970 where it also stands today as a private residence.

The physical development of the campus during the earlier years is credited to "unsung heroes" such as staff members Albert Anderson and Julius Felt who were "very capable, skilled, dedicated men" (Bridgford 1966:6-7). Anderson was Chief Engineer; a skilled plumber, blacksmith, and electrician; and an instructor in forge work. He worked at the WCSA for about 40 years from circa 1911-1951. As of 1966 he still held the record for "the longest tenure of any of the civil service employees" (Bridgford 1966:6). Julius Felt worked at the WCSA from 1918-1947 as a carpenter, painter, plasterer, cement worker, and woodworking instructor. The staff member most instrumental in early campus landscaping was John Anderson, who worked at the School and Station for 43 years, from 1916-1959. Anderson taught horticulture, music, chemistry, and botany, served as station horticulturist, ran the greenhouse, and supervised the campus landscaping (*Moccasin* 1963:21).

Some members of the School and Station staff served for many years. Examples include (but are not limited to) the staff listed below: Walter Barz served many years as assistant agronomist. Oscar Beckstrom served 35 years (1927-1962) as farm foreman. Roy O. Bridgford served 38 years (1918-1956), primarily as agronomist. Allen W. Edson served 36 years (1922-1958) as head of the poultry department, horticulturist, and superintendent. A. C. Heine served 32 years

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(1916-1948) as agricultural engineer and assistant superintendent, which included supervising buildings and grounds. Walter "Slim" Hokanson served his entire career at the school and station, including many years as herdsman. Nanna Jelstrup served at least 35 years (1928-1963) as dean of girls, mathematics instructor, and yearbook advisor. Phillip S. Jordan served 40 years (1915-1955) as head of animal husbandry. Les Lindor served 39 years (1947-1986) as agricultural engineer and superintendent of buildings and grounds. Art Schiller served at least 22 years as assistant poultry manager. E. J. Volden served 40 years (1915-1955) as cashier, business office manager, and instructor in bookkeeping and commercial law. Many longtime WCSA employees worked at the University of Minnesota, Morris, after the college opened in 1960. They include Herbert G. Croom, who joined the WCSA in 1943, served as acting superintendent from 1958-1959, and was Director of Student Services for UMM; Theodore S. Long, who taught English for 44 years (1925-1960 for WCSA and 1960-1969 for UMM); and sisters Eleanor and Evelyn Peterson, who both served 38 years in food service (1948-1960 for WCSA and 1960-1986 for UMM), among others.

### Closing of the WCSA

The West Central School of Agriculture always remained relatively small considering the number of farmers in the state and the role of agriculture in the state's economy. Historian Richard H. Thomas writes, "A number of powerful factors contributed to checking the growth of separate agricultural schools and to their demise. From the beginning it was clear that many farm families wanted and needed their children at home and therefore resisted residential schools. This factor always worked against residential schools and at the same time put pressure on local schools to teach agriculture" (Thomas 2002:4). Agricultural training in public schools, which had been funded by the federal government since the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, slowly improved and reduced the demand for specialized schools. (By 1957 more than half of the high schools in Minnesota were offering agricultural education courses (McGrath 1974:21).)

Specialized agricultural schools also suffered from low state funding nationwide through the Depression and World War II. Thomas writes,

By 1941 it was clear that public school officials [nationwide] were almost universal in their support of the teaching of vocational agriculture. The public schools were meeting the demands for vocational agricultural education of all types. Only a few residential high schools were surviving as World War II began and the Depression ended. Many of the agricultural schools had already merged with the regular public school system. Some were converted to general vocational schools or junior colleges and others were turned over to the counties. It appears that most of the schools that survived [nationwide] were closely affiliated with state agricultural colleges (Thomas 2002:5).



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By 1959 enrollment at the WCSA had dropped to 266. Enrollment was declining at all five of the state's secondary agricultural schools, and in similar schools nationwide. In Minnesota, a continuing decrease in the number of farms statewide, growing mechanization which reduced the number of people needed to run each farm, the steady shift of the population from rural to urban areas, and the improvement of roads which allowed school buses to bring farm children to the high school in town all contributed to a decrease in prospective students (Barber 1973:9-10). By the late 1950s, Minnesota and Nebraska were the only two states that were still maintaining agricultural high schools in association with their land-grant colleges (McGrath 1974:6).

The idea of phasing out the state agricultural high schools at Morris and Crookston and converting the campuses to four-year liberal arts colleges was discussed in the legislature in 1957 and 1958. At the time, the University was exploring the idea of expanding its Minneapolis campus to the western bank of the Mississippi River, and expanding to the Morris campus was also seen as an option. The idea was supported by many west central Minnesota residents. Advocates of a college at Morris argued that only 4 of the state's 24 colleges were located in the western half of the state -- a region that produced about 30 percent of the state's high school graduates. The idea of a college at Morris was also supported by the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation and the Minnesota Farmers Union. Converting the WCSA to a four-year college was formally recommended in May of 1958 by a special legislative commission that was chaired by Fred W. Behmler, a Morris physician and state senator (Profile 2000:3).

In 1959 the University's Board of Regents announced that high school classes at the Morris campus would be phased out and that college classes would be taught beginning in the fall of 1960. The conversion to college courses in Morris would be a pilot project, with Crookston to follow if the experiment was successful. The University was also exploring converting the agricultural high schools at Waseca and Grand Rapids to post-secondary technical schools. After the decision to convert the WCSA was made, Morris area residents raised more than \$60,000 to support its start-up ("Equal" 1960:6-7).

For three years of transition, from 1960-1963, the Morris campus was shared by the last group of WCSA high school students and by the college students of the new University of Minnesota, Morris (UMM). The success of the transition from WCSA to UMM is credited in part to Rodney A. Briggs, who served as superintendent of the School and Station from 1959-1961 and was UMM's first chief administrator, serving from 1960-1969. The last group of WCSA seniors graduated on March 28, 1963. When it closed, the West Central School of Agriculture had been one of the longest running residential agricultural high schools in the country (Thomas 2002:7).

The demise of the WCSA coincided with the closing of the state's other agricultural high schools. The School of Agriculture in St. Paul (Falcon Heights) closed in 1960. The agricultural high school in Grand Rapids closed in 1965. (The campus is now a community college.) The school in Crookston was converted to a two-year technical college in 1968 which still operates today.

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The high school in Waseca was also converted to a two-year technical college in 1973. It closed in 1992 and the campus is now a minimum-security prison.

Although the WCSA closed, the West Central Experiment Station continued to flourish. In 1973 the experiment station offices were moved from the former WCSA campus into new headquarters on the University's farm on the eastern bank of the Pomme de Terre River, about one mile east of the historic district. In 1998 the experiment station was renamed the West Central Research and Outreach Center. Today the station conducts research and special programs in animal husbandry, crop production, horticulture, and various environmental, economic, and social topics relating to agriculture. It also continues a full range of outreach activities.

Today, the West Central School of Agriculture and Experiment Station is one of the most intact examples of a residential agricultural high school still standing in the U.S. A study of surviving residential agricultural high school campuses conducted in 2001 by historian Richard H. Thomas revealed that very few institutions still retain a large number of extant structures. Thomas found that the most intact examples in the country appear to be the Milwaukee County School of Agriculture and Domestic Economy in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin (listed on the National Register in 1998), the Nebraska School of Agriculture in Curtis, Nebraska, and the West Central School of Agriculture and Experiment Station in Morris (Thomas 2002:7-9).

### Conclusion

The West Central School of Agriculture and Experiment Station Historic District is an excellent example of the residential agricultural high schools and associated experiment stations that were founded in the U.S. in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. West Central was one of the longest running residential agricultural high schools in the country, and the campus is one of the most intact examples of this property type still standing today. Within Minnesota, the School and Station at Morris made important contributions to agriculture and education in west central Minnesota, and were significant components of the University of Minnesota's system agricultural schools and experiment stations.



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### Appendix A: Designers and Builders

#### *Clarence H. Johnston, Sr.*

Clarence H. Johnston, Sr. (1859-1936), designed all of the pre-1950 buildings in the historic district with the exception of Music Hall, the Cattle Barn, the Seed House, and the Machinery Shed.

Johnston had been born near Waseca, Minnesota. He studied architecture briefly at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology but was trained primarily as an apprentice and draftsman with prominent architects in St. Paul and in New York City. He opened his own office in St. Paul in 1882. In May of 1901 he was appointed architect for the Minnesota State Board of Control, which had been recently created by the state legislature to oversee the building and operation of Minnesota's state-funded institutions. At about the same time he became architect for the University of Minnesota's Board of Regents. During the next 30 years Johnston designed hundreds of buildings for the state's extensive University facilities, normal schools, correctional facilities, hospitals, veterans home, tuberculosis sanatoria, asylums, schools for the handicapped, orphanages, state capitol complex, and state fairgrounds. He left the post of State Architect in 1931.

Johnston's designs for the University of Minnesota date from about 1904 to his death in 1936. They include buildings at the Schools of Agriculture and Experiment Stations at Morris, Crookston, Grand Rapids, and Waseca, and numerous buildings on the Minneapolis and St. Paul campuses of the University. Other state-owned collegiate buildings designed by Johnston include many for the State Normal Schools (now state universities) at Mankato, St. Cloud, Moorhead, Duluth (now University of Minnesota, Duluth), and Bemidji.

Johnston also maintained a prolific private practice. He designed hundreds of churches, schools, hospitals, courthouses, and residences, including Assumption Catholic Church (1905) in Morris. Johnston's non-state secondary school and collegiate commissions include buildings at Shattuck School (Faribault), Macalester College (St. Paul), Seabury Divinity School (Faribault), St. Paul Seminary (St. Paul), Hamline University (St. Paul), and the College of St. Theresa (Winona).

Johnston's brother, Cyrus Johnston, joined the firm in 1915 and did much of the mechanical system planning (heating, plumbing, ventilation) (Larson 1996:133). Johnston's son, Clarence H. Johnston, Jr., was a lead designer in the firm and maintained his father's practice until 1960. C. H. Johnston, Jr., is responsible for work performed for the University of Minnesota after 1936.

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### *Morell and Nichols*

The landscape architecture firm of Morell and Nichols of Minneapolis created the WSCA master plan of 1911, and provided additional planning assistance to the WSCA in other years, including in 1926. Arthur N. Nichols seems to have taken the lead for the Morell and Nichols firm, and the surviving drawings of the UMM campus bear his initials.

Arthur R. Nichols and Anthony Morell had worked together in the office of New York City landscape architect Charles W. Leavitt, Jr., around 1908 before forming a partnership and moving to Minnesota. Leavitt had been commissioned to design the landscaping for Chester A. Congdon's new home in Duluth called Glensheen (built in 1908), and Morell and Nichols apparently became acquainted with Minnesota while working for Leavitt on the Glensheen project. In 1909 the two men left Leavitt, moved to Minnesota, and opened an office in Minneapolis. They practiced together until Morell's death in 1924, after which Nichols continued to practice for another 30 years. Morell and Nichols worked throughout the U.S. and Canada, but most of their work is concentrated in the Midwest (Kopischke 2000:257).

The West Central School of Agriculture appears to have been one of the first campuses designed by Morell and Nichols. The firm did planning work for nearly 40 schools and colleges, including master plans and plans for campus expansions. Their work for private institutions in Minnesota includes Blake School (Hopkins), Breck School (St. Paul), Carleton College (Northfield), College of St. Catherine (St. Paul), College of St. Theresa (Winona), Concordia College (Moorhead), Gustavus Adolphus College (St. Peter), Macalester College (St. Paul), St. Mary's College (Winona), Shattuck School (Faribault), and Summit School (St. Paul). Public institutions in Minnesota include University of Minnesota campuses in Crookston, Duluth, Grand Rapids, Minneapolis, Morris, St. Paul, and Waseca, as well as Minnesota State Teachers Colleges (now State Universities) in Bemidji, Mankato, Moorhead, St. Cloud, and Winona. Out-of-state campuses include Augustana College (Sioux Falls, SD), Luther College (Decorah, IA), North Dakota State University (Fargo), University of North Dakota (Grand Forks), Washington State University (Pullman), Wartburg College (Waverly, IA), and Wartburg Seminary (Dubuque, IA) (Kopischke 2002).

According to Morell and Nichols historian Greg Kopischke, "Nichols and the firm were particularly sought after to plan college campuses. . . . The underlying principal in the firm's campus designs was the orderly, generous arrangement of space for human activity. They emphasized buildings sited in balance, framed with plantings, with open foregrounds and carefully planned circulation systems between them. Plans often utilized axial themes" (Kopischke 2000:254). Kopischke notes that "The partnership blended Morell's European training and Nichols' Eastern background with both men's appreciation of the state and its regional character" (Kopischke 2000:256).

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Morell and Nichols and architect Clarence H. Johnston, Sr., may have first worked together on Glensheen in Duluth, which had been built in 1908. Johnston was the architect of Glensheen, and Morell and Nichols had worked on the landscaping for Charles W. Leavitt, Jr. Scholar Paul Clifford Larson provides some clues about the frequency with which Morell and Nichols and Johnston worked together. He explains, "The [State Board of Control] had already hired the firm of Morell and Nichols on several occasions [from 1909-1919] to assist Johnston [the Board's Architect] in developing campus plans, and in some instances the architect had independently sought their help in the siting of a new building. By joining the [Board's newly-formed] Bureau of Construction in 1919, Morell and Nichols permanently relieved Johnston of any responsibility for additional site planning throughout the state's thirty institutional and educational campuses. One of their first state contracts was to draw up a status plan of the University of Minnesota campus [in Minneapolis] and assist with long-range site development with a degree of specificity that had not been possible in 1908" (Larson 1996:145).

Morell (1875-1924) had been born in France and had immigrated to the U.S. around 1902. In addition to practicing with Nichols, he consulted for many years for the City of Minneapolis' planning department, where he was also a member of the Planning Commission. Morell also provided municipal planning for other cities in the Midwest and in Canada. Morell was about 49 when he died in 1924 (Kopischke 2000:253).

Nichols (1880-1970) had been the first graduate, in 1902, of the newly-established landscape architecture department at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Throughout a long and prolific career, Nichols became one of Minnesota's most prominent landscape architects. He is credited with playing a major role in establishing the profession of landscape architecture in the state.

In 1909 Nichols became consultant for the Minnesota State Board of Control, a position he held for several decades. He consulted for the University of Minnesota from 1910-1952. He helped establish the landscape architecture program at Iowa State University in the 1920s. In addition to planning the grounds of many state institutions, Nichols designed numerous parks, urban master plans, private estates, and cemeteries (including Sunset Memorial Park and the northeastern part of Lakewood Cemetery, both in Minneapolis). He also designed the State Capitol Approach in St. Paul (1944-1950) and developed master plans for most Minnesota state parks during the 1950s. Nichols became a member of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) in 1906 and was elected a Fellow in 1915. He retired in 1960 at the age of 80 (Kopischke 2000:253-257).

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### *John A. Anderson*

John A. Anderson served on the staff of the WCSA and WCES for 43 years, from 1916-1959. According to former superintendent Theodore H. Fenske, "The beauty of campus with its magnificent trees and landscaping may be credited" to Anderson (Fenske 1963:49). Anderson joined the staff in 1916 to teach music and chemistry, and served as the experiment station's first horticulturist. In 1942 Anderson was teaching landscape gardening, as well as botany, chemistry, instrumental music lessons, directing the band and orchestra, serving as campus photographer, and supervising the greenhouse (*Moccasin* 1942). Many of the excellent photographs taken of the campus between 1916 and 1959 are his work (Fenske 1963:49; Lindor 2002). John Anderson retired in 1959. (His birth and death dates are not known.)

### *Bernard J. Hein*

The Home Economics Building and Edson Hall were designed by Bernard J. Hein (1910-1982). Hein had been born in Minot, North Dakota, and was a 1937 graduate of the University of Minnesota. Between 1937 and World War II, Hein worked as a draftsman and designer for the architectural firms of Rollin Chapin (Minneapolis); Johnson and Backstrom (Minneapolis); Thorwald Thorson (Forest City, Iowa); and Smith, Hinchman, and Grylls (Detroit, Michigan). He served in the U.S. Navy from 1943-1945 and then worked for architect A. Reinhold Melander in Duluth before establishing his own practice in 1947 in Albert Lea, Minnesota. Hein moved his office to Minneapolis circa 1960 and lived in Cross Lake and Albert Lea after retiring.

In addition to the two buildings on the WCSA campus, Hein's designs include Christ Episcopal Church in Albert Lea, Southwest School and Sibley School in Albert Lea (both in association with Hammel and Green of St. Paul), an addition to the Freeborn County Courthouse in Albert Lea, the Minnesota Department of Highways' district headquarters in Mankato, and several other buildings for the University of Minnesota.

### *Roger Martin*

Roger Martin (19??- ) redesigned the WCSA central square, which was transformed in 1968 under his direction into UMM's current Mall. Martin was educated at the University of Minnesota and at Harvard. He was the founder of the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Minnesota. He served as chair of the department for 15 years and is now professor emeritus. Martin co-founded the Minnesota Society of Landscape Architects, which later became the Minnesota chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (MASLA). He has also served as president of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA). Martin was a co-founder of the firm InterDesign, which designed the Minnesota Zoological Garden and redesigned major portions of the Minneapolis parkway system. Later, while working

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with Martin and Pitz Associates, Martin continued to work on the Minneapolis parkway system and worked on several Minneapolis riverfront projects including Nicollet Island Park, Main Street, Hennepin Island and St. Anthony Falls, the Stone Arch Bridge, and the downtown segment of the West River Parkway. Martin's collegiate work has included planning and designs for UMM, Moorhead State University, Augsburg College, and Winona State University. Martin has received several awards including the Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome and the Outstanding Educator Award from the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture. He became a Fellow of the ASLA in 1981 ("Roger Martin" 2002).

### *Ralph Rapson*

Ralph Rapson (1914- ), architect of Humanities-Fine Arts (1973), has been an international leader in modern design since the 1930s. Rapson was born in 1914 and is still in practice. He is widely regarded as the most influential Minnesota architect of the 20th century. Rapson was educated at the University of Michigan and at Cranbrook Academy of Art and practiced in several cities. He began teaching architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1946 and became head of the University of Minnesota's School of Architecture in 1954. He taught at the University for 30 years. Rapson's designs include the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis (1963), Cedar-Riverside apartments in Minneapolis (1962-73), Rarig Center on the University's Minneapolis campus, several U.S. embassies in Western Europe, and many other public buildings, collegiate buildings, houses, and churches. In 1999 Rapson was the subject of a major retrospective exhibit organized by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and the University's Weisman Art Museum. Rapson's career is examined in the book *Ralph Rapson: Sixty Years of Modern Design*, which was published in 1999.

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### 8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE, CONTINUED

The level of significance for the West Central School of Agriculture (WCSA) and Experiment Station Historic District is national, rather than statewide as indicated at the beginning of Section 8 above. The WCSA and Experiment Station contributed to the broad patterns of history at the national level in the areas of Agriculture and Education.

#### Representative of Significant National Trends

The West Central School and Station is associated with significant national trends in the development of public education and agriculture in the early- to mid-20th century.

The WCSA was one of numerous secondary-level agricultural schools that were established nationwide between 1900 and 1920. They were established in many states, but concentrated in the South and Midwest. Between 1900 and 1940, for example, it is estimated that there were more than 100 secondary-level agricultural schools located in at least 14 states (Thomas 2003). Many were boarding schools.

The states varied in the ways in which they organized their approach to providing residential secondary agricultural education. Boarding agricultural high schools varied in their constituencies (e.g., county, multi-county, Congressional district) and in their administration (e.g. operated by counties, local school boards, colleges). By 1909, four patterns of organization had emerged. One of them was the so-called Minnesota model in which secondary agricultural schools were combined with the land-grant college and its experiment station. (The land-grant college and experiment station combination was encouraged nationwide by the Hatch Act of 1887.) According to historian Gary E. Moore, about two-thirds of the states followed the Minnesota model (Moore "The Involvement" 1988:167).

Secondary-level agricultural schools were founded and grew during an expansionary period in public education and industrial education that was experienced nationwide. In 1900 only about 10 percent of American children were attending school beyond the eighth grade. The number doubled between 1912 and 1920, and had increased to about 67 percent of children in 1940. During this period, public secondary school curricula also broadened to encompass a range of vocational, mechanical arts, agricultural, and home economics programs, amid national debate on the merits of their inclusion.

Secondary-level agricultural boarding schools are also associated with the extension of secondary education to rural children nationwide between the 1910s and the 1950s. Farm children historically did not attend school beyond the primary level because of lack of opportunity, poor transportation, and demands that they work on the family farm. Educational



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and social reformers, including the Country Life Commission (1908-1911, convened by President Theodore Roosevelt), strongly recommended improving public education for rural children, along with including more vocational agriculture and home economics training in high schools, establishing a county-based agricultural extension service, and improving rural roads and rural mail delivery.

Agricultural schools and experiment stations are associated with the rise of scientific agriculture in the U.S. and with broad nationwide efforts to increase American farm productivity in the 20th century. The need for and value of agricultural education and its economic implications were debated by major forces in the agricultural industry including the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the agricultural press, railroad companies, agricultural marketers and processors, and farmers' reform and political organizations.

Agricultural high schools and agricultural experiment stations were in large part the product of federal initiatives such as the Hatch Act of 1887 (which established federally-funded agricultural experiment stations), the Smith-Lever Act of 1917 (which established a system of federally-funded county agricultural agents), and the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 (which provided federal funding for agricultural and vocational education at the secondary level). The schools and research stations received significant federal funding.

The broad trends that led to the decline of agricultural high schools were experienced nationwide. They include the integration of vocational courses into the curricula of regular high schools, improvements in roads and transportation that allowed farm children to attend high school in nearby towns (thereby eliminating the need for boarding schools), farm mechanization that reduced the number of laborers needed to operate a farm, and depopulation of rural areas and corresponding urbanization of the United States.

### **Outstanding in its Representation of the Theme**

The West Central School of Agriculture was one of the longest-running residential agricultural high schools in the country, operating from 1910-1963.

When it closed in 1963, the WCSA was one of the oldest American residential agricultural high schools still operating according to recent research by Richard H. Thomas, Professor of History Emeritus at Cornell College (Thomas 2002). Among the few similar schools still operating were the Northwest School of Agriculture in Crookston, Minnesota, and the Nebraska School of Agriculture at Curtis, Nebraska. The only other known school with both equivalent longevity and an equally well-preserved campus is the school at Curtis.

West Central in Morris operated during nearly the entire period of the secondary agricultural school movement nationwide. The WCSA was founded near the beginning of the broad dissemination of such schools, and it closed long after most similar institutions had closed.



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Because of its longevity, West Central was associated with the historic theme longer than most schools.

### **Retains the High Level of Integrity Necessary To Communicate its Associations with Important Historical Trends**

The West Central School of Agriculture and Experiment Station Historic District is one of the country's most intact remaining examples of a residential agricultural high school campus.

In a study conducted in 2001-2002, Richard Thomas identified only two residential agricultural high school campuses in the U.S. that appear to be as intact as the WCSA campus in Morris. They are the Milwaukee County School of Agriculture in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, and the Nebraska School of Agriculture in Curtis, Nebraska (Thomas 2002). The WCSA and Milwaukee County campuses were listed on the National Register in 2003 and 1998, respectively. The Curtis campus was surveyed by the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in 1990 and was recommended to be eligible for the National Register by the survey consultant (Stupka-Burda 2003).

The following remarks offer some comparisons between the Morris, Milwaukee County, and Curtis, Nebraska, campuses. Information about the Milwaukee County campus is drawn from the National Register nomination of that campus (Rankin 1997). Information about the Curtis campus is drawn from published sources, from a current campus staff member, and from Nebraska SHPO files (Crawford 1925; "History of NSA" ca. 1986; Jippen 2003; and NCTA Photographs 1990).

All three schools were established at about the same time, circa 1910-1913, during the period when most of the country's residential agricultural high schools were established.

The Milwaukee County school in Wisconsin served a basically local or county population, while West Central in Morris served a 15-county region, and Curtis, Nebraska, served the western half of the state. Milwaukee County was operated by the county, while West Central and Nebraska were operated by land-grant universities. These variations represent some of the ways in which states chose to organize their approach to providing residential secondary agricultural education.

In terms of students and faculty, West Central and Curtis were about the same size and were larger than Milwaukee County. Peak enrollment at West Central reached 455 and at Curtis reached just over 400. (Both peaks occurred shortly after World War II.) Milwaukee County's largest student body was 289 students, reached in 1922.

The Milwaukee County school operated for 16 years, closing in 1928. West Central and Curtis were both among the longest-running residential agricultural high schools in the country: West

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Central operated for 53 years (1910-1963) and Curtis for 55 years (1913-1968). Most residential agricultural high schools in the U.S. had closed by World War II.

All three of the schools had adjacent farms. Only one of the three, West Central, used the farm to operate a regional experiment station that conducted significant research of multi-state value. All three used their farms for student instruction and presumably to help sustain the schools through crop income and growing food for the campus dining hall. Milwaukee County's farm was also used for some testing and outreach to local farmers (but not for a significant experimental program).

The three campuses appear to have been initially about the same size, although Milwaukee County may have been slightly smaller. In all three cases, the earliest buildings were designed by a single architect. The pre-World War II buildings at West Central and Milwaukee County are fairly uniform in architectural style, while Curtis's early buildings represent a few compatible styles. The early architect at both West Central and Curtis was the State Architect. All three campuses retain most of their original, principal non-farm buildings, arranged in a fairly tight cluster. The West Central and Curtis campuses both appear to retain historical landscape features. The landscape integrity of Milwaukee County is unknown. West Central apparently has the largest remaining collection of early structures with exterior integrity: 11 Contributing buildings. Curtis has approximately 10 pre-1950 buildings. Many might be categorized as Contributing, although they have not been recently evaluated as such. Milwaukee County has 4 Contributing buildings.

Only West Central has historic farm buildings that retain integrity. Nebraska at Curtis retains one early dairy barn, but it has been remodeled and enlarged to serve as a classroom and lab facility and apparently does not retain integrity. Milwaukee County has no farm buildings left.

Because Milwaukee County closed after only 16 years, its campus does not display the physical growth and evolution that the other two campuses experienced as enrollment grew and facilities were added. Its period of significance is shorter and it represents fewer years of association with the major theme.

Only Nebraska at Curtis retains its entire adjacent historic farm acreage. West Central's original farm is partly intact and provides a setting for the historic district, but does not retain sufficient integrity to be included within the district. Milwaukee County's farm is gone.

### *Further Information on the Schools in Milwaukee County and Curtis, Nebraska*

The 6-acre Milwaukee County School of Agriculture and Domestic Economy Historic District was listed on the National Register in 1998. It is located within the city of Wauwatosa. The district boundaries appear to be drawn fairly closely around the cluster of buildings. In 1997 most of the buildings were vacant.

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The historic district includes five Tudor Revival style brick buildings. The four associated with the agricultural school were built in 1912 and designed by Alexander C. Eschweiler, a prominent Milwaukee architect. The fifth, a heating plant, was built in 1936, eight years after the school closed. (The nomination erroneously counts this building as Contributing.) Two major non-farm buildings are missing from the original campus and all farm buildings and structures are gone. The non-farm buildings are arranged on two sides of a central grassy quad or square. The 136-acre farm was located north of the cluster of non-farm buildings. It is gone.

The Milwaukee County school shared an 1100-acre parcel of land -- known as the Milwaukee County Institutional Grounds -- with other public institutions, some of which were educational and charitable. Most of the buildings on the county grounds have lost exterior integrity or have been demolished.

The Milwaukee County school was part of Wisconsin's system of residential secondary agricultural schools, which were organized on a county level, enabled by the state legislature, and partly state funded. Wisconsin's configuration was one of the four general models that residential agricultural high schools in the U.S. followed (Thomas 2002:3).

Enrollment at Milwaukee County remained relatively small (perhaps, the nomination suggests, because of its proximity to Milwaukee.) It opened in 1912 with a student body of 243. Peak enrollment was 289 students in 1922. There were 108 students in 1928, the year the school closed.

The Milwaukee County school was one of eight residential agricultural high schools founded in Wisconsin and was the largest in terms of enrollment and farm acreage. The National Register nomination indicates that the Milwaukee County school is likely the only one of the eight Wisconsin schools that retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic associations (Rankin 1997:8.4-8.6).

The school existed for 16 years (1912-1928). Major reasons for its decline included the integration of agriculture and related subjects into the state's regular public high schools, and the urbanization of Milwaukee County which reduced the number of working farms and potential students. After the school closed in 1928, the buildings were reused by the county for other purposes, including a Home for Dependent Children. The farm became a working farm that grew food for adjacent county institutions.

The former Nebraska School of Agriculture at Curtis is located on the northern edge of the town of Curtis in southwestern Nebraska's Frontier County. The former residential agricultural high school is currently a two-year technical college.

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The non-farm portion of the Curtis campus was about 70 acres, which is also its current size. The historic buildings are arranged in a cluster in the south-central portion of campus amidst grounds (i.e., trees, shrubs, lawns, sidewalks) that appears to retain some historical features.

There are about ten extant pre-World War II buildings. They constitute much of the original campus including administrative, classroom, and dormitory structures. The oldest building dates from 1912. Many were designed by Nebraska State Architect Brad Miller. Most of the historic buildings are brick, some with stone trim. Some of the early buildings are Classical Revival in style, while others are Craftsman-influenced.

The historic core of the campus has been supplemented with newer campus buildings, most located to the north and east of the historic buildings. The campus now has about 20 buildings in all (Jippen 2003).

Curtis's original 400-acre farm is north of the non-farm buildings. Most of the historic farm buildings have been demolished and replaced by modern farm structures. Apparently one of the original farm buildings remains -- a dairy barn that has been altered. The campus currently has about 560 acres of farmland and access to several hundred acres of grazing land (Jippen 2003).

The Nebraska School of Agriculture at Curtis opened in 1913. It was one of two residential agricultural high schools in Nebraska, each of which served half of the state. Both were founded by the University of Nebraska, the state's land-grant college. The first was established in 1895 on the University of Nebraska campus in Lincoln, a situation similar to that in Minnesota, where the first agricultural high school had been established in 1888 on the University of Minnesota's St. Paul campus. The school at Curtis was established in 1913 (18 years after the school in Lincoln).

The school at Curtis opened in 1913 with a student body of 121. Peak enrollment occurred after World War II when there were just over 400 students.

The residential agricultural high school at Curtis operated for 55 years, from 1913-1968. In 1965 the high school stopped accepting students and began a three-year phase-out. The same year, 1965, a state technical college known as the University of Nebraska School of Technical Agriculture (UNSTA) was established to take its place. The two schools shared the campus for three years and the last high school class graduated in 1968. UNSTA provided two-year training in fields such as agri-business, mechanics, horticulture, and veterinary technology. In 1988 it became the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA), still operated within the University of Nebraska system. The school continues to offer one- and two-year programs in various technical fields.

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### Summary of Identification Methods

In 2001 and early 2002, research on residential agricultural high schools in the United States was conducted by historian Richard H. Thomas of Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa. Among Thomas' goals were to identify the historical forces that influenced the development and decline of agricultural high schools, to learn about the geographic distribution of the schools and their similarities and differences, and to try to identify the residential agricultural high school campuses in the U.S. that might be comparable to the West Central School of Agriculture (WCSA) in Morris in terms of physical integrity (Thomas 2003).

A preliminary result of the study was the identification of the West Central School of Agriculture in Morris, the Milwaukee County School of Agriculture in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, and the Nebraska School of Agriculture at Curtis as the three most well-preserved residential agricultural high school campuses known to be standing in the U.S. (Thomas 2002).

Thomas began his research with a review of relevant literature, and learned that no nationwide study of agricultural schools below the collegiate level had previously been conducted.

Thomas' quest to characterize and understand the distribution of agricultural secondary schools was aided by two key sources. The first was a 1909 discussion of agricultural schools nationwide published in the *Cyclopedia of American Agriculture* (1909). The second was a national survey of agricultural schools conducted in 1939 by the U.S. Office of Education and published in 1940. The 1940 report provided a reasonably thorough account of the schools in existence in 1939 and, because each state also reported on the history of agricultural education in their state, provided some information on earlier schools. Using these sources, Thomas estimated that, between 1900 and 1940, there were more than 100 secondary-level agricultural schools located in at least 14 states (Thomas 2003).

Thomas used the 1909 list, the 1940 list, query of SHPOs nationwide, and follow-up communication with SHPOs and other informants to attempt to identify the properties nationwide that would be comparable to West Central in Morris.

Beginning with a list of all known agricultural schools, Thomas' research narrowed the list to those that were both secondary-level schools and boarding schools. He also narrowed the list to those that were multi-building facilities, rather than schools that had operated in only one or two buildings. As he learned that a school had been demolished, it was eliminated from the list. By the end of the study, Thomas had learned something about the fate of nearly all schools in the original pool.

Thomas made a preliminary assessment of the physical integrity of the school campuses that remained on his list. He conferred with SHPO staff in associated states and/or used National

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Register integrity criteria to help determine which schools retained sets or clusters of buildings that might be potentially eligible for the National Register. Photographs were examined, but fieldwork was not conducted.

Richard H. Thomas is Distinguished Teaching Fellow and Professor of History Emeritus at Cornell College. He received his B.A. from Macalester College, a B.D. from Garrett Theological Seminary, and an M.A. and Ph.D. from Rutgers University. He teaches American and Public History and has become a specialist in the preservation and reuse of historic university buildings. He served 12 years on the Iowa Review Panel for National Register nominations (the equivalent of Minnesota's State Review Board) and 6 years as the Chair of the Iowa State Historical Society. Thomas has written three National Register nominations for historic districts as well as published several essays, articles, and books.



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### 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA, CONTINUED

#### UTM References, Continued

UTM Reference 5:    Zone 15    Easting 273470    Northing 5052490

#### Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is shown by the solid line on the accompanying map entitled "Sketch Map and Site Boundaries, West Central School of Agriculture and Experiment Station Historic District, Morris, Stevens County, Minnesota." The historic district is located on the campus of the University of Minnesota, Morris.

#### Boundary Justification

The nominated property is comprised of a 42-acre parcel of land on which stand the historic buildings of the West Central School of Agriculture and Experiment Station. The Morell and Nichols 1911 master plan for the campus was used as a starting point for determining the boundary. Excluded from the boundary are portions of the original campus that have been altered. Also excluded are the School of Agriculture and Experiment Station fields, orchards, and pastures. These elements are located north, east, and south of the historic district, are no longer contiguous with the district, and no longer retain sufficient integrity to convey their historic character and significance.

### Note

The complete National Register nomination includes three maps and a set of current photographs that are not in this online file.