

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 00000723

Property Name: Volga Auditorium

County: Brookings State: South Dakota

Federal Relief Construction in South Dakota MPS

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Linda L. Holland July 5, 2000

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8 Statement of Significance: "Entertainment/Recreation" and "Performing Arts" are, hereby, dropped from the list of areas of significance because they reflect functions not documented aspects of significance.

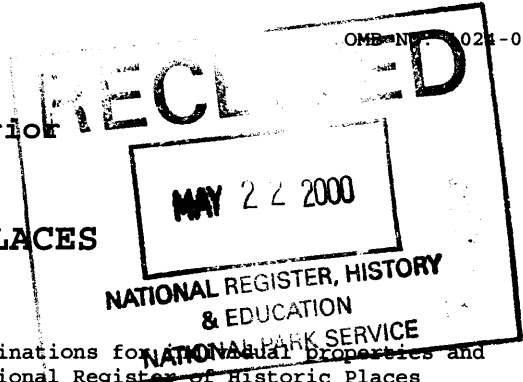
The South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

723

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 any 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, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name Volga Auditorium

other names/site number N/A

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number 212 Kasan Avenue not for publication N/A
city or town Volga vicinity N/A
state South Dakota code SD county Brookings code 011 zip code 57071

=====

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

=====

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide x locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jay D. Vogt
Signature of certifying official

05-16-2000
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 commenting or other official

Date

Name of Property Volga Auditorium

County and State Brookings Co., SD

Federal Relief Construction in South Dakota, 1929-1941 (MPDF)

=====
4. National Park Service Certification
=====

I, hereby certify that this property is:

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): _____

Sinda McClelland

7/05/00

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

=====
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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) Federal Relief Construction in South Dakota, 1929-1941

Name of Property Volga Auditorium

County and State Brookings Co., SD

Federal Relief Construction in South Dakota, 1929-1941(MPDF)

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
<u>SOCIAL</u>	<u>meeting hall</u>
<u>SOCIAL</u>	<u>civic</u>
<u>RECREATION and CULTURE</u>	<u>auditorium</u>
<u>RECREATION and CULTURE</u>	<u>gymnasium</u>
<u>RECREATION and CULTURE</u>	<u>theater</u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
<u>SOCIAL</u>	<u>meeting hall</u>
<u>SOCIAL</u>	<u>civic</u>
<u>RECREATION and CULTURE</u>	<u>auditorium</u>
<u>RECREATION and CULTURE</u>	<u>gymnasium</u>
<u>RECREATION and CULTURE</u>	<u>theater</u>

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation CONCRETE

roof CONCRETE; ASPHALT

walls CONCRETE

other METAL; GLASS

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

See 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)

X 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.

X 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.)

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

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or a 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)

- SOCIAL HISTORY
- ECONOMICS
- ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION
- PERFORMING ARTS
- ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1938-1941

Significant Dates 1938-39

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

Name of Property Volga Auditorium
Federal Relief Construction in South Dakota, 1929-1941 (MPDF)

County and State Brookings Co., SD

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8. Cont'd.
=====

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Works Progress Administration

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

See Continuation Sheets

=====
9. Major Bibliographical References
=====

(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 in 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: South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office

=====
10. Geographical Data
=====

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
14	665355	4909849	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Map Volga

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.) **See Continuation Sheet**

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.) **See Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property Volga Auditorium County and State Brookings Co., SD
Federal Relief Construction in South Dakota, 1929-1941 (MPDF)

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Megan D. Eades date April 2000
street & number 1039 Magnolia Street telephone (912)746-6510
city or town Macon state GA zip code 31201

=====
Additional Documentation
=====

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)

=====
Property Owner
=====

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

name City of Volga
street & number 226 Kasan Avenue telephone (605)627-9113
city or town Volga state South Dakota zip code 57071

=====
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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

**Volga Auditorium
Brookings County
*Federal Relief Construction in South Dakota, 1929-1941***

VII. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Volga community auditorium is located at 212 Kasan Avenue in Volga, Brookings County, South Dakota. Built in 1938, the large building is built entirely of reinforced concrete and is characterized by its rectangular plan, barrel-vault roof, and Art Deco inspired exterior ornamentation. The overall form, construction materials, and architectural style are clearly associated with techniques and plans employed by federal relief agencies during the Great Depression, but additional information is provided by a large, rectangular metal plaque at the entrance. The plaque states the following:

Volga Auditorium
built by
City of Volga
and
Works Progress Administration
W.P.A. project number 3186
Nineteen thirty nine

The two-story auditorium is in excellent condition and retains a considerable degree of architectural integrity. Although the building is simple in form and materials, it does feature Art Deco style elements such as vertical concrete pilasters or piers that add variation to the smooth exterior walls and the stylized motifs that are somewhat influenced by Native American designs. The interior is also decorated by Art Deco geometric forms and features murals painted by local artist Oscar Lee.

The façade faces west on Kasan Street and provides the primary access to the building. A recessed entrance with double, half-glass doors with wood frames is sheltered by the projecting center bay on the lower façade. Each side of the stepped, or beveled bay is

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

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Page 2

**Volga Auditorium
Brookings County
Federal Relief Construction in South Dakota, 1929-1941**

DESCRIPTION, Cont'd.

decorated by stylized motifs made by deep grooves in the concrete and painted in contrasting color. Cast-iron wall sconces with white glass globes are located in the center of each motif. The word "AUDITORIUM" is directly above the entrance at the uppermost part of the projecting center bay. Concrete wingwalls with recessed panels flank the concrete steps that lead up to the entrance. A single metal rail divides the steps.

In addition to the projecting bay on the lower level, the façade features paired, multi-pane recessed windows with concrete sills on the first story. Four narrow, raised concrete beltcourses divide the façade into five horizontal sections and break up the flat wall surface. The raised concrete is also found as coping along the barrel-vault roofline on the façade and at the basement level. The second story contains centered, paired windows flanked by single windows, all with recessed openings and concrete sills. The date of construction, 1938, is carved in relief in the upper center of the façade along with the United States eagle emblem. Larger stylized motifs identical to the ornaments found on the center bay, are positioned on each end of the façade.

The south elevation is characterized by smooth concrete cladding broken by two narrow beltcourses and also features stepped pilasters that divide the elevation into six equal bays. Each bay contains two slightly recessed windows with concrete sills. Originally designed as full-height window to allow for maximum lighting and ventilation, most of the windows have been at least partially boarded to suit contemporary heating and cooling needs. A single metal door is located on the lower story in the sixth bay and provides access to the meeting rooms in the basement. The exposed basement level has a wider concrete beltcourse and is pierced by narrow, awning windows.

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**Volga Auditorium
Brookings County
Federal Relief Construction in South Dakota, 1929-1941**

DESCRIPTION, Cont'd.

The north elevation is identical to the opposite side with the exception of the sixth bay. This side of the building retains the original, small windows that have been filled in on the south side.

Like the other two elevations, the rear elevation features smooth concrete cladding but is divided by two narrow, horizontal beltcourses. The concrete coping on the barrel-vault roofline is repeated on the rear to match the façade treatment. A brick chimney is located at the northeast corner of this elevation. A single opening, possibly a door or a window, is situated on the lower section of the wall, but is currently boarded. Three basement level openings that are slightly larger than on the previous elevations, are also closed at present. Connected to the building is a small concrete storm shelter that shares a common wall with the auditorium at the northeast corner of the rear elevation.

The interior configuration appears to be largely intact, with only minor alterations. The rooms and spaces retain their historic size, shape, and purpose as initially intended. In addition to the concrete walls and floors, the building also features hardwood floors in the auditorium as well as masonite walls and ceilings. Virgil H. Folkers of the Masonite Corps of Chicago designed the patterns and supervised their implementation.¹ The front entrance opens into a rectangular-shaped foyer or lobby. This area still retains the original masonite ceiling and walls with grooved, geometric patterns. A concessions area is located at the north end

¹ The Volga Tribune, February 2, 1939.

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**Volga Auditorium
Brookings County
*Federal Relief Construction in South Dakota, 1929-1941***

DESCRIPTION, Cont'd.

of the lobby, while stairs to the basement and balcony are located on the south end of the room. Two sets of double doors open into the primary public space that served as an auditorium, gymnasium, and theater. This large, open room is highly decorated with stylized motifs on the walls and ceiling beams. Grooved masonite ceiling tiles also utilize geometric patterns. A recessed stage with two dressing rooms is located at the rear of the building and also features the decorative geometric/Art Deco motifs. Two murals by Oscar Lee flank the stage.

The basement contains several rooms, including meeting rooms, storage space, bathrooms, and a kitchen. A large dining hall with other murals by Oscar Lee is adjacent to the fully-equipped kitchen.

Although the upper story is currently unavailable for viewing, it has incurred few alterations and originally housed the balcony, movie projection booth, and city council rooms.

The Volga Auditorium is an excellent example of community buildings designed for multiple use and retains a very high degree of architectural integrity both in its exterior construction and in the interior spaces.

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**Volga Auditorium
Brookings County
*Federal Relief Construction in South Dakota, 1929-1941***

VIII. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Volga Auditorium, in Volga, South Dakota is historically significant for its association with social history and economics in Volga and South Dakota during the Great Depression. As a Federal Relief project, the property is significant because it is directly associated with federal programs designed to provide work for unemployed segments of the population and to supplement the depressed economy of many rural communities.

Prior to the economic crisis of the early 1930s, little or no federal funding was available for community-based construction activity. The Federal Emergency Relief Agency instituted programs that filtered money for improvement projects through various agencies. The projects, approved and executed by organizations such as the Civilian Works Association (CWA), Public Works Administration (PWA), Works Progress Administration (WPA), and Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), also contributed to the substantial increase in the number of public-related construction projects and community improvements. As a result of federal funding and local labor, a vast proportion communities in South Dakota erected public buildings and recreational facilities that promoted pride and local support during the economic crisis.

Within the context of the Multiple Property Listing, *Federal Relief Projects in South Dakota, 1929-1941*, this property is notable as an individual property type (Auditoriums and Community Buildings) under the category of Social and Recreational Facilities. The multiple property listing stipulates that, in addition to social history and economics, the auditorium is significant in the areas of entertainment/recreation, community planning/development, and architecture.

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Section 8 Page 6

**Volga Auditorium
Brookings County
*Federal Relief Construction in South Dakota, 1929-1941***

SIGNIFICANCE, Cont'd.

Historical Background and Significance

The small community of Volga (population 1,200) is located in Brookings County, South Dakota. Established in 1879, the town was located just a few miles west of the Brookings, which served as county seat. Like so many other towns in northeast South Dakota, Volga aspired to become a major stop on the railroad that was advancing through the state. There are two conflicting stories as to the name of the town and neither is fully substantiated. According to an article in the August 29, 1929 issue of the Volga Tribune, the town was named after the Volga River in Russia in hopes of enticing Russian-German settlers. The second theory is that it was named after a town of the same name in Iowa. Regardless of the name's origin, Volga, South Dakota, was named by Chicago and Northwestern Railroad officials.

Although the railroad did pass through Volga (and still parallels State Highway 14), the town never reached the population once predicted. Northeastern South Dakota is largely agrarian, and most of the settlers around Volga relied on farming for their livelihood. As Brookings grew and eventually became the home of South Dakota State University, Volga and other communities declined. Volga did establish enough local businesses to provide the necessary services for area farmers, and weathered the boom and bust periods associated with South Dakota's early settlement.

The economic crisis following the stock market crash in 1929 and the subsequent freak weather conditions during the early 1930s took its toll on the town. Federal Relief Programs implemented during these years did provide the town with the work and financial assistance that helped sustain the community during the terrible period.

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**Volga Auditorium
Brookings County
*Federal Relief Construction in South Dakota, 1929-1941***

SIGNIFICANCE, Cont'd.

Construction on the new city auditorium commenced in late 1938 under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration. At a cost of approximately \$37,000.00, the building was completed by September 1, 1939 and dedicated on October 26 of that same year.² This period of construction, and the connection with the WPA is sufficient evidence for the property's historical significance. It is also important, however, for its local associations.

Prior to the initiation of federal relief programs, large-scale community improvements were considerably less frequent. Federal funds, however, allowed small towns to construct facilities that did not exist previously, despite the potential or actual need. The auditorium represents that effort to provide local recreational and social facilities that were not available. As was common in this type of property, the auditorium served multiple purposes, as a gymnasium, theater, meeting hall, and offices.

As an intact historical resource, the auditorium is also architecturally significant because it embodies distinctive features associated with the Art Deco style, and it is representative of the type of construction frequently utilized by the W.P.A. The reinforced concrete building is both utilitarian and well-designed, and all the character-defining features associated with its period of construction. The decorative interior is also very noteworthy, since the original motifs and unusual grooved masonite are still intact.

²Volga Tribune, October 19, 1939.

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**Volga Auditorium
Brookings County
*Federal Relief Construction in South Dakota, 1929-1941***

SIGNIFICANCE, Cont'd.

The Volga Auditorium meets all the general registration requirements stipulated in the associated Multiple Property Document, *Federal Relief Construction in South Dakota, 1929-1941*, in that it was financed by the federal government under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration; it was substantially complete by 1941; it is locally significant; and it retains its historic integrity.

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Volga Auditorium
Brookings County
Federal Relief Construction in South Dakota, 1929-1941

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10

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Volga Auditorium
Brookings County
Federal Relief Construction in South Dakota, 1929-1941

VIII. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is located 212 Kasan Avenue and includes the south 10' of lot 5, all of lots 6-7, and the north 15' of lot 8 in Block 4 of the original plat for the City of Volga, South Dakota.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Volga Auditorium.

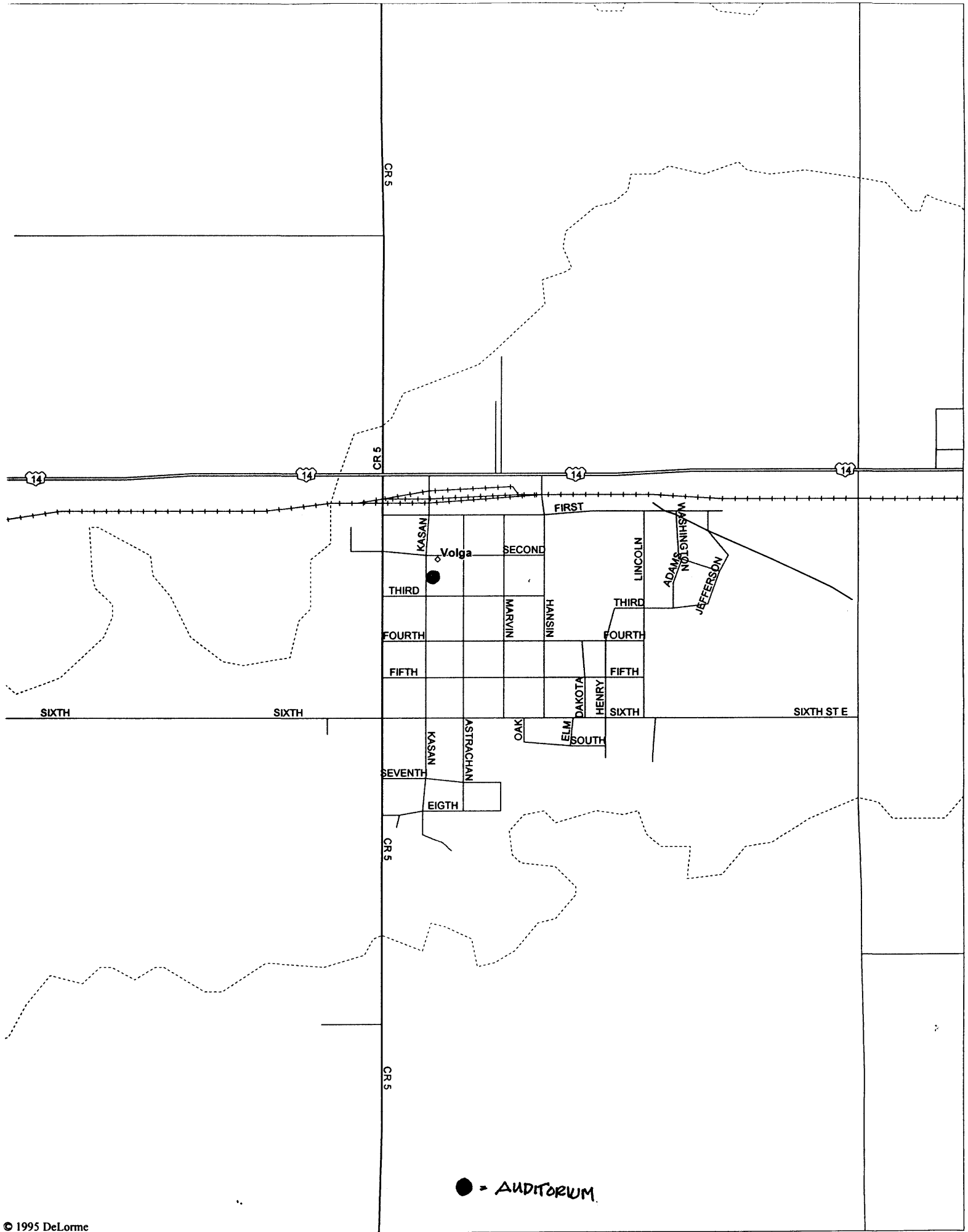
PHOTOGRAPHS

Megan D. Eades
September 1999

1 of 3
Facade

2 of 2
Interior, Gymnasium/Auditorium

3 of 3
Interior, Basement Meeting Room



● = AUDITORIUM