

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received JUL 2 1986

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Western Bohemian Fraternal Union Hall

and/or common The National Hall of Meadowlands

2. Location

street & number off County Highway 29

N/A not for publication

city, town Meadowlands Township vicinity of Meadowlands

state Minnesota code 22 county St. Louis code 137

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Social

4. Owner of Property

name Meadowlands Jr., Lodge No. 361, Mary Marvel, Secretary

street & number N/A

city, town Meadowlands N/A vicinity of state Minnesota

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Louis County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Duluth state Minnesota 55802

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Minnesota Statewide Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1984 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office, Fort Snelling History Center

city, town St. Paul state Minnesota 55111

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____ N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Western Bohemian Fraternal Union Hall is located two and half miles south of Meadowlands, Minnesota, a small town of about 250 people in south central St. Louis County. The building is surrounded by rural farms and homes.

The Western Bohemian Fraternal Hall, now known as the Western Fraternal Life Association Meadowlands #361 Hall (or simply the Meadowlands Hall), was constructed in 1925 by the original lodge members (Kopie, Krutina, Vodochodsky, Holets, Kucera, Leuzensky, Marek, Karasek, Dittrich, Svamek, Stecher, Simon, Kozumplik, Valla, Fleisleber, Slavek, and Kadera). These Czech immigrants cut logs on their farms. The lumber was hauled by horses to a local sawmill, owned by a man named Turnboom, to be cut and planed. A wooden platform was built in 1924 for a July 4th celebration and throughout the next year more lumber was cut. The structure itself was built after the 1925 4th of July celebration and on December 20th the first meeting was held at the hall. In June 1928 an additional 30' was added to the rear of the hall for about \$1,000.00.

The hall is a one story rectangular building measuring approximately 40' by 80', three bays wide and six bays long. The building is faced with clapboard siding and has a concrete foundation. The hipped roof was shingled in 1979. Rafter ends are visible under the eaves. A front vestibule with double doors, added soon after the hall was completed, opens into another set of double doors that lead into the hall. The entrance steps are concrete. The 6/6 sash windows are original.

The interior of the hall consist of a large room with a center stage, two small dressing rooms, a balcony and a bar room and kitchen under the balcony. A large wooden floor, once used by gymnists, is original. The hall is equipped with electricity but has no running water.

During the 1930's, an unemployed Czech artist named Fryzek was commissioned to paint the interior. He embellished the hall with oil paintings depicting castles and landmarks of Czechoslovakia alledgely using postcards from the country as sources for the scenes. Painted on canvas and tacked to the ceiling, these paintings still exist although some water damage did occur prior to the installation of the new roof. A stage and three sets of scenery were also painted by Mr. Fryek. Little else is known of the artist except that he may have been from Nebraska.

Structurally, the Western Bohemian Fraternal Union Hall is in good condition. Besides the addition of a new roof, the removal of exterior wood vertical supports is the only alteration. Originally located between the bays on the front facade and between the first three bays on each side, these supports were removed when the wood began to deteriorate. Vertical wooden panels between these bays remain as evidence of these supports

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Ethnic-Czech

Specific dates 1925 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Western Bohemian Fraternal Union Hall is historically significant as one of the few known rural Czech halls still actively used by a Western Bohemian Fraternal Union Lodge in the state of Minnesota. The hall served as Czech center for fraternal lodge and community activities, Czech plays, and Sokol gymnastics. The Meadowlands Hall has local and statewide importance as a visible and still viable representation of the preservation of Czech culture and heritage.

Czechs began arriving in Minnesota in the 1850's and continued immigrating until World War I. A Czech community, one of the latest in Minnesota, was established in Meadowlands in 1915. A Moravian, employed by the Duluth, Missabe, and Iron Range Railroad, ... lured scores of Czechs to Meadowlands in St. Louis County in the years 1915 to 1919. They found bogs and forest instead of prime agricultural land he promised. The Czech settlers remained to farm the land forming a rural community that resisted complete assimilation until World War II.

Czech settlers in Minnesota were quick to form types of organizations that initiated development of religious, social, and cultural ways of life. Many Czech immigrants, affected by free thought or religious liberalism in the nineteenth century, expressed themselves through the Czech American press, fraternal lodges, and reading societies and cemetery associations not linked to any specific church. Fraternal lodges were one type of Czech institution that sought to preserve Czech culture and were especially attractive to free thinkers. The Western Bohemian Fraternal Union, begun in 1897 in the western United States, formed a network of lodges in Minnesota and number of these lodges built halls. Known as the Zapadni Ceska Bratrska Jednota or ZCBJ, the Western Bohemian Fraternal Union formed two lodges in Meadowlands-- one in 1918 that was Czech-speaking, Meadowlands Lodge #65 and one in 1935 that held gatherings in English, Meadowlands Jrs. #361. Both lodges used the same hall. They merged in 1975. In 1980, the ZCBJ, by then known as the Western Fraternal Life Association, had twenty-four lodges with 5,152 members in the state. In 1980 Meadowlands and Canby, Minnesota were among few lodges that still had active halls, supporting programs of Czech cultural activities.

Besides lodge activities, the Meadowlands Hall was the home to Sokol gymnastics, another Czech organization. Originating in Bohemia in 1862, it advocated free thought and supported Czech nationalism and unity. The Meadowlands Sokol, formed on July 18, 1926, used gymnastics, drills, and educational events to promote Czech culture. A pommel horse, high bars, parallel bars, and rings were installed in the hall. Paul Stramek was the drill master with assistance from Simon Johaneck. Quite active in the late 1920's and 1930's the Sokol began to decline in Meadowlands after World War II and now no longer exists as an active organization.

The Meadowlands Hall still serves the Western Bohemian Fraternal Union, now known as the Western Fraternal Life Association and is used for various community activities. In 1985 the Lodge (English-speaking) celebrates its 50th anniversary. The Western Fraternal Life Association Meadowlands Lodge #361 remains a visible expression of the preservation of Czech heritage and culture in Minnesota.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Holmquist, June Drenning ed., They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups.
 St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1981.
 Oral interview and information provided by Mary Marvel, Secretary of Meadowlands Jr. Lodge
 No. 361.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2½

Quadrangle name Meadowlands, Minn.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

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5	2	1	0	3	2	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is all that which is located in the southwest quarter of the southeast quarter of the southeast quarter of the northeast quarter of Section Twenty-eight, Township 53 North, Range 19 West, Meadowlands Township, St. Louis County, Minnesota.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Liz Holum - Field Assistant

organization State Historic Preservation Office
Minnesota Historical Society

date December 1984

street & number Fort Snelling History Center

telephone (612) 726-1171

city or town St. Paul

state Minnesota 55111

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Russell W. Fridley

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date

6/24/86

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date

7-31-86

for Allene Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

for Keeper Melanie Lynn
11/19/89

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Note: These changes apply to
Western Bohemian Fraternal Union
Hall in St. Louis County,
Minnesota.

REFERENCE NUMBER: 86002123

STATE: MINNESOTA

COUNTY: St. Louis

RESOURCE NAME (HISTORIC):

CITY:

VICINITY OF:

ADDRESS: Co. Hwy. 29

CERTIFICATION DATE:

REMOVED DATE:

COMMENTS:

Nina M. Archabal

Nina M. Archabal
State Historic Preservation Officer

JUN 17 1988

Date