

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received **MAR 17 1987**
date entered

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

1. Name

historic District School No. 55

and/or common Svea School

2. Location

street & number County Highway 3 N/A not for publication

city, town Whitefield Township vicinity of Willmar

state Minnesota code 22 county Kandiyohi code 067

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Frank Christianson, Sr. and Ted Christianson

street & number N/A

city, town Blomkest N/A vicinity of state Minnesota 56216

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kandiyohi County Courthouse

street & number Becker Avenue West

city, town Willmar state Minnesota 56201

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1984-85 federal state county local

depository for survey records Minnesota Historical Society, 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 type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Svea School is located at the intersection of Highway 71 and County Road 3 in Whitefield Township, about 7 miles south of Willmar and 1 mile northwest of the unincorporated town of Svea in Kandiyohi County. The building is surrounded by a small yard, a parking lot, and plowed fields.

Unlike most of Minnesota's small, modestly designed, one story rural schools, the Svea School, built in 1907, is a large two story building with a Classical Revival-inspired design. The school has box-like massing and clapboard siding. The hipped roof retains its original wood shingles and is topped by a round metal cupola/vent. A two story, square hipped roof entrance bay with a semi-circular window at the top projects from the south (main) facade. The six bay main facade and six bay sidewalls have evenly spaced rectangular window openings.

The Svea School, which is in fair condition, has been altered very little since 1907. A small hipped roof enclosed entrance porch has been added to the main facade and a small gabled roof enclosed entrance porch has been added to the rear of the west sidewall. Some basement level windows have been filled with concrete and glass block, and the upper windows have been covered with plywood panels. The school is presently unused.

The District School No. 55 nomination consists of one contributing building.

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1932-1937

Builder/Architect

Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The District School No. 55, also known locally as Svea School, located in Whitefield Township, Kandiyohi County, is historically significant as an important local meeting hall which is regarded as one of the birthplaces of the Minnesota Farmers' Holiday movement.

The District School No. 55 was established in 1872 to serve Norwegian farmers in the region and residents of the nearby village of Svea. The present school was built in 1907 at a cost of \$8,000 to replace an 1886 school house on this site. After 1929 when high school students were bussed into Willmar (seven miles to the north) the upper story of the Svea School was converted to a gymnasium and auditorium. The school was one of the longest used of Kandiyohi County's rural school houses with elementary classes held in the building until the 1970s.

In addition to providing school facilities for a portion of southern Kandiyohi County, the Svea School served as a meeting hall. Social gatherings, lectures, concerts, civic events, and meetings of various farmers' organizations, were held at the school. During the Great Depression, small farmers like those in Kandiyohi County faced an economic crisis as their production costs rose, farm prices and land values fluctuated and then dropped, credit became tight, and farmers felt increasingly isolated from political arenas. Local units of groups such as the Farmers' Alliance, the Grange, the Non-Partisan League, and the Farmers' Union were organized as producers joined together to discuss issues and initiate change.

In Kandiyohi County, District School No. 55 is regarded as one of the birthplaces of the Farmers' Holiday in Minnesota, one of the most aggressive agrarian protest movements of the twentieth century. Early in the summer of 1932 John B. Bosch, a farmer from nearby Lake Elizabeth Township, met with the Farmers' Union group at Svea school to discuss the possibility of a general farm strike in which farmers would withhold their produce from markets in an effort to raise prices and draw attention to the farm crisis. The Svea group endorsed the proposal and members of the group became some of the first activists who joined Bosch in grassroots organization for the movement in Minnesota. Eventually Kandiyohi County became one of the strongholds of the Holiday in Minnesota, and Minnesota's Farmers' Holiday Association became the largest and strongest in the country. Bosch, who shares credit for the founding of the National Farmers' Holiday Association with Miles Reno of the Iowa Farmers' Union, served as President of the Minnesota Farmers' Holiday Association and Vice President and later President of the national group.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(see continuation sheet - page 3)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.72 acres

Quadrangle name Willmar Quad.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	5	3	3	8	8	6	0	4	9	8	5	7	2	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

That part of Section 22, Township 118, Range 35, Kandiyohi County described as follows: Beginning at the Southeast corner of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 22, then running West 25 rods, then North 13 rods, then East 25 rods, then South 13 rods to the point of beginning.

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 Susan Granger, Contract Historian

organization State Historic Preservation Office
Minnesota Historical Society

date June 1985

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 Nina M. Archabal

title Nina Archabal
State Historic Preservation Officer

date 3/13/87

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

[Signature]
Keeper of the National Register

entered in the
National Register

date 4-16-87

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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District School No. 55, Whitefield Township, Kandiyohi County, MN
Continuation sheet

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From 1932-1937, the Holiday Association's primary goal was to obtain government guarantees that farmers would recover at least the cost of production for farm products they grew and marketed. Among the demands of the organization were state embargos on agricultural products sold at less than the cost of production, federal embargos on imported farm products, and state and federal moratoria on foreclosures of farm and chattel mortgages and evictions from farmsteads. In addition to active lobbying and demonstrations, the initial tactic of the Holiday was the farm strike in which farmers withheld produce from the market, in some cases refused to plant, and picketed and blockaded major marketing cities in an effort which would, in the short run, cause shortages and raise prices and, more importantly, focus national attention on the plight of farmers and result in favorable legislative action. Beginning in January of 1933 the Holiday membership began its second and most successful series of activities and those that drew the most participation, the prevention of foreclosure sales on overdue real estate and chattel mortgages. Using two primary tactics, demonstrations by large crowds to physically stop real estate mortgage foreclosure sales at county courthouses and "penny auctions" at farmsteads to stop the sale of household goods and machinery, the Holiday prevented the foreclosure of thousands of farm mortgages nationwide.

The impact of the Farmers' Holiday movement nationwide was substantial. As farm strikes and picketing began, public opinion and the small town press were generally supportive of the Holiday, although newspapers in major cities were frequently critical. Public support deteriorated as violence occurred during demonstrations and as farmers who were not supportive of the Holiday and were blocked from marketing products began to speak out. The stopping of foreclosure sales was the Holiday's most successful venture and brought almost immediate response when, during a peak of activity in January and February, 1933, when sales were being stopped in 15 states, county sheriffs and lenders stopped attempting to hold sales, six national insurance companies suspended foreclosures effective January 30, 1933, local Councils of Defense were appointed by county governments to help farmers and lenders negotiate, and in February, 1933, Governor Floyd B. Olson of Minnesota issued a moratorium on farm foreclosures and governors and legislators in eight other states issued full or partial moratoria. The Holiday movement influenced the election of 1932 as candidates on all levels responded to the activities of the Association, and the demands of the Holiday had a substantial impact on the formulation of the agricultural components of Roosevelt's New Deal in the spring of 1933.

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After a peak of activity in 1932-1933, the membership and effectiveness of the Holiday movement began to decline as farmers perceived that their immediate crisis had ended with foreclosure moratoria and the optimism of the New Deal, public support for the Holiday had decreased, and the national leadership began to be courted by more radical communist and fascist oriented groups. After Milo Reno's death in May of 1936, Bosch became President of the badly divided National Association and its focus was moved from Iowa to Minneapolis. The group split over a decision to support a third party presidential candidate in 1936 and Bosch became increasingly uncomfortable with the radicalization of the Association's leadership. After the Holiday's last recorded foreclosure sale was stopped in Brown County, Minnesota, in November of 1937, the Farmers' Holiday Association merged back into the Farmers' Union.

The Svea School was included in an eight month historic sites survey of Kandiyohi County conducted recently by the State Historic Preservation Office. The survey staff determined that the school is historically significant for its associations with the founding of Minnesota's Farmers' Holiday movement, and fits within the Preservation Office's Agricultural Development and Railroad Construction historic context.

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Centennial History of Kandiyohi County, 1870-1970. Willmar, 1970.

Nass, David, ed. Holiday: Minnesotans Remember the Farmers' Holiday Association. Marshall, Mn: Southwest State University Press, 1984.

Shrover, John L. Cornbelt Rebellion: The Farmers' Holiday Association. Urbana: University of Illinois, 1965.

Luoma, Everett E. The Farmer Takes a Holiday. New York: Exposition Press, 1967.

Haroldson, Clinton. "Farmers Holiday Association." Unpublished manuscript, Kandiyohi County Historical Society, ca.1970.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

for Keeper Melona Lyman
1/19/89

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National Park Service

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**Note: These changes apply to
District School No. 55 in Kandiyohi
County, Minnesota.**

REFERENCE NUMBER: 87000619

STATE: MINNESOTA

COUNTY: Kandiyohi

RESOURCE NAME (HISTORIC):

CITY:

VICINITY OF: Willmar

ADDRESS: Co. Hwy. 13

CERTIFICATION DATE: 04/16/87

REMOVED DATE:

COMMENTS: Please double check date of property's
listing on the Register.

Nina M. Archabal

**Nina M. Archabal
State Historic Preservation Officer**

JUN 17 1988
Date