

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Andrew J. Volstead House

AND/OR COMMON Andrew J. Volstead House

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 163 Ninth Avenue

CITY, TOWN Granite Falls VICINITY OF COUNTY CODE 27 CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 6

STATE Minnesota CODE Yellow Medicine 173

**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 type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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 type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Mrs. Lloyd A. Connor

STREET & NUMBER 163 Ninth Avenue

CITY, TOWN Granite Falls VICINITY OF STATE Minnesota

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Register of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER Yellow Medicine County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN Granite Falls STATE Minnesota

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE Minnesota Register of Historic Sites; National Register

DATE 1974; 1974  FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Minnesota Historical Society; National Register

CITY, TOWN St. Paul; Washington STATE Minnesota; D.C.

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED (minor)

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This two-story, white-painted, frame house was built in 1878. Andrew J. Volstead purchased it in 1894 and made his Minnesota home here until 1930, when he moved into a new dwelling in the same city. His residency here, at 163 Ninth Street, corresponds with his period of greatest national significance.

The north-facing Volstead House sits on a stone foundation only a few feet from the street in the center of what is now a commercially zoned block. Most of the adjacent buildings are residences, however, and most of these are structures similar in age to the Volstead House. An original wrought-iron fence passes along the sidewalk in front of the dwelling, and lilac bushes, planted by Volstead, grace the grounds. The house remains a private residence and has undergone almost no exterior alteration--except for the recent addition of new shingles--since Volstead's occupancy. Interior alterations have been limited to the removal of one upstairs partition for the purpose of converting that area into two apartments and to the installation of modern bathroom and kitchen facilities and equipment.

Volstead made several major additions to the house soon after he bought it, giving it an almost entirely new front facade. Basically L-shaped with a gabled-hip roof, the dwelling is distinguished particularly by a projecting, two-story, hip-roofed, stair tower that Volstead attached near the center of the front facade. A single, center-placed, front, round-arched, plate-glass window lights this addition. Extending eastward across the front facade from the left side of the tower is a two-tiered veranda that continues approximately halfway along the east side of the house. The lower story of the veranda is screened, while the upper is enclosed by wood panels and a series of four-light windows. A similar, screened porch crosses the rear facade of the main block. Here Volstead's hand-operated water pump remains in place just as he left it.

Most of the windows in the Volstead House are one-over-one sash, and all are set in white-painted, wood surrounds. A pair of one-story, hip-roofed, hexagonal bay windows, one each on the north and west sides, ornament the northwest corner of the dwelling. Irregularly placed, single-light, shed dormers illuminate the house's unfinished attic.

Principal front entrance to the residence is through a single door from the lower tier of the front veranda. Similar openings provide interior access from the east side of the veranda and from the rear porch. On the rear portion of the west side another single door leads to the interior through an enclosed, gable-roofed portico.

# 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 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 1894-1930 BUILDER/ARCHITECT unknown

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

"For most Americans [Andrew] Volstead," says his biographer Ari Hoogenboom, "personified prohibition."<sup>1</sup> As chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, he drafted the 1919 National Prohibition Enforcement Act, better known as the Volstead Act, which proved to be the chief vehicle for enforcing the newly ratified 18th amendment. Rather extensive in scope, the act forbade the manufacture of any beverage with an alcohol content of more than .5 percent; divided enforcement between the Federal and State Governments so as not to set aside more stringent State laws; contained a rather drastic search and seizure clause; and provided for the use of injunctions and padlocking against individuals and businesses violating the law. At the same time, however, certain provisions--like those providing for the manufacture of industrial alcohol, use of alcoholic beverages in religious observances, prescription by doctors for reasons of health, and home manufacture of light wines and cider--led to abuses that made enforcement almost impossible. Matters were made even more difficult, says historian Andrew Sinclair, "due to administrative stupidity, political graft, the federal structure of the United States, [and] an antiquated legal system."<sup>2</sup> In terms of national significance, though, the Volstead Act's "loopholes" were as important as its enforcement provisions, for it was the combination of the two that gave the unique 14-year Prohibition Era its distinctive characteristics.

Before turning his attention to prohibition, Volstead had earned a reputation as a moderate progressive supporting measures like railroad regulation, the extension of workmen's compensation laws, the woman suffrage amendment, and a Federal antilynching law. In 1922 he helped author the Capper-Volstead Act, sometimes called the "Magna Carta of cooperative marketing."<sup>3</sup> This law was highly significant, says Volstead biographer Ari Hoogenboom, because it "enabled farmers to organize marketing and bargaining cooperatives and exempted them from

<sup>1</sup> Ari Hoogenboom, "Andrew John Volstead," Dictionary of American Biography, Supplement Four (New York, 1974), 853.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Sinclair, Era of Excess: A Social History of the Prohibition Movement (New York, 1964), 182.

<sup>3</sup> Cited in Theodore Saloutos and John D. Hicks, Agricultural Discontent in the Middle West; 1900-1939 (Madison, 1951), 288.



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CONTINUATION SHEET Volstead House ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE one

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Inside, no original Volstead furnishings remain, but beautiful oak woodwork throughout the house recalls his occupancy. Oak flooring, laid in alternating dark and light strips, remains uncovered by carpeting, and a stained glass window continues to light Volstead's library, which now serves as a bedroom. Access to the second story is by an oak stairway in the tower. There is an unfinished basement.

Discussions currently underway may lead to development of the residence into a house museum in Volstead's honor. A group interested in buying and preserving the structure has approached the owner who has shown a willingness to cooperate in the project.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Volstead House ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE one

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Odegard, Peter H., Pressure Politics: The Story of the Anti-Saloon League (New York: Columbia University Press, 1928).

Saloutos, Theodore and John D. Hicks, Agricultural Discontent in the Middle West, 1900-1939 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1951).

Sinclair, Andrew, Era of Excess: A Social History of the Prohibition Movement (New York: Harper & Row, 1964).

Timberlake, James H., Prohibition and the Progressive Movement, 1900-1920 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963).

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CONTINUATION SHEET Volstead House TEM NUMBER 8 PAGE one

the antitrust laws."<sup>4</sup>

This two-story, white-painted, frame house was built in 1878. Volstead bought it in 1894 and maintained his Minnesota residence here until 1930. He made a number of alterations, but subsequent owners have made few changes in the generally well-maintained dwelling. There is one other extant Volstead residence. It is the Brighton Hotel in Washington, D.C., where he occupied an apartment from 1914 to 1922.

Biography

Andrew John Volstead was born October 31, 1860, near Kenyon in Goodhue County, Minn., to John E. and Dorothea M. Vraalstad, both of whom were Norwegian immigrants. The family owned a prosperous farm and lived a relatively comfortable existence. After attending public schools, Andrew entered St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minn., but soon transferred to Decorah Institute in Decorah, Iowa. Despite his parents' desire that he become a Lutheran minister, Andrew's heart was set on a legal career. After graduation in 1881, he remained in Decorah where he taught school and read law in one of the local law firms.

In 1884 Volstead returned to Minnesota, won admission to the bar, and began to practice, first in Lac Qui Parle County and then in Grantsburg, Burnett County. Two years later he moved to Granite Falls in Yellow Medicine County where he was to make his home for the rest of his life. Shortly after moving to Granite Falls, he became actively involved in Republican politics and served at various times as county and city attorney, president of the school board, and mayor.

In 1902 Volstead won the first of 10 terms in the U.S. House of Representatives from Minnesota's 7th District. According to biographer Ari Hoogenboom, as a Congressman, Volstead "championed the

<sup>4</sup> Hoogenboom, "Volstead," Dictionary of American Biography, Supplement Four, 853.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Volstead House ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE two

homesteader and energetically guarded the interests of western Minnesota wheat farmers," opposing proposals like reciprocity for Canadian wheat.<sup>5</sup> Moderately progressive, he supported measures like railroad regulation, the extension of workmen's compensation laws, the woman suffrage amendment, and a Federal antilynching law. In 1913 Volstead became ranking Republican on the House Judiciary Committee and soon exhibited intense partisanship in his opposition to much of the domestic legislation proposed by Woodrow Wilson. Volstead believed that the Underwood Tariff discriminated against the farmer, that the Federal Reserve Act benefited large city banks, and that the Clayton Act had legalized holding companies and exempted labor from practically every Federal law.

After Republicans won control of Congress in 1918, Volstead became chairman of the House Judiciary Committee. Shortly before he assumed this post in 1919, the 18th amendment was ratified by the States, and it became the duty of Volstead and his committee to draft a prohibition enforcement act. Working alone, Volstead drafted a bill patterned in part after one advocated by the Anti-Saloon League but less drastic and designed, says historian Andrew Sinclair, "to secure as much enforcement as the country would endure, [but] not total enforcement" that might cause "a public revulsion against national prohibition."<sup>6</sup> Rather extensive in scope, Volstead's bill forbade the manufacture of any beverage with an alcohol content of more than .5 percent; divided enforcement between the Federal and State Governments so as not to set aside more stringent State laws; contained a rather drastic search and seizure clause; and provided for the use of injunctions and padlocking against individuals and businesses violating the law. One of the most controversial provisions was the section keeping the wartime prohibition law in effect. This paragraph caused Woodrow Wilson to veto the bill, says historian Paul L. Murphy, because "it merged enforcement based on war powers with that based on the Constitutional amendment."<sup>7</sup> Congress, however, easily mustered the two-thirds vote necessary to override.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Sinclair, Era of Excess, 169.

<sup>7</sup> Paul L. Murphy, The Constitution in Crisis Times, 1918-1969 (New York, 1972), 20.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Volstead House ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE three

Despite its scope, the Volstead Act contained a number of fatal flaws. In terms of national significance, though, these "loopholes" were as important as the enforcement provisions, for it was the combination of the two that gave the unique 14-year Prohibition Era its distinctive characteristics.

Provisions like those providing for manufacture of industrial alcohol, use of alcoholic beverages in religious observances, prescription by doctors for reasons of health, and home manufacture of light wines and cider led to abuses which made enforcement almost impossible. Matters were made even more difficult, says historian Andrew Sinclair, "due to administrative stupidity, political graft, the federal structure of the United States, [and] an antiquated legal system."<sup>8</sup> By 1933 these weaknesses and a new climate of public opinion had led to repeal of the 18th amendment.

Because of his agricultural constituency, Volstead in 1922 helped author the Capper-Volstead Act which, according to Theodore Saloutos and John D. Hicks, "legalized cooperative marketing associations and defined the terms under which producers engaged in interstate commerce could organize."<sup>9</sup> Despite his role in getting this important legislation passed, Volstead was defeated for reelection in 1922 largely because of low farm prices and strong opposition from wets and the newly organized Farmer-Labor Party.

After leaving office, Volstead was deluged with offers to write and lecture on prohibition, but he turned these down as unethical. In 1924 he became legal advisor for the Northwest Prohibition Enforcement District headquartered in St. Paul, Minn., and served in this capacity until 1931. He then returned to Granite Falls, where on January 20, 1947, he suffered a coronary occlusion and died at age 86.

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8 Sinclair, Era of Excess, 182.

9 Saloutos and Hicks, Agricultural Discontent in the Middle West, 288.