

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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

For HCRS use only

received MAR 24 1980

date entered

1. Name Murray County Multiple Resource Area

historic Historic Resources of Murray County (Partial Inventory—Historic Properties

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number The County Limits of Murray County, Minnesota N/A not for publication

city, town N/A N/A vicinity of N/A congressional district 6th

state Minnesota code 22 county Murray code 101

3. Classification see individual inventory forms

Category	Ownership <u>N/A</u>	Status <u>N/A</u>	Present Use <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no <u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Ownership - see inventory forms

street & number N/A

city, town N/A N/A vicinity of N/A state N/A

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder's Office -- Murray County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Slayton state Minnesota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Statewide Survey of Historic Resources has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records Minnesota Historical Society -- 240 Summit Avenue--Hill House

city, town St. Paul state Minnesota

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED OCT 27 1982
DATE ENTERED

Historic Resources of Murray County, Minnesota

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

This Multiple Resource Area Nomination is based on a survey of standing structures conducted in Murray County by the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office as part of a long-range statewide survey of historic resources. The properties included in the nomination represent those which illustrate significant aspects of the history of the county and which have been deemed eligible for nomination to the National Register at the conclusion of the survey. Additional information and new perspectives for evaluation of specific types of historic properties are continually being gained as the statewide survey progresses, and it is quite possible that additional Murray County properties will be nominated in the future. These may be presented individually or as parts of thematic groups when the entire survey is completed. For this reason, this Multiple Resource Area Nomination should not be construed as representing all properties in Murray County eligible for nomination.

(The above disclaimer is based on an agreement between Charles Herrington, HCRS, and Russell Fridley, Minnesota SHPO, August 31, 1979)

MURRAY COUNTY

Standing Structures

The basis of the survey for this nomination is an inventory of structures which are indicative of various aspects of the county's history. Structures were identified and inventoried during a county wide survey conducted during the summer of 1980.

Selection of structures for the inventory included both field reconnaissance of pre-identified sites and isolation of sites on a purely visual basis. Pre-identification of sites was limited to a small number of the most significant locations (those unique on a county wide scale, or significantly linked with some aspect of county history.) County histories, individual community histories, and photographs from both the state society and private collections were researched for site-specific information. General references to common buildings were not noted.

Township maps from the Murray County Atlases were copied for field use. Plat maps on file in the county recorder's office were researched for original plat information (proprietors, survey and filing dates) and for addition dates. The filing dates for the various platted areas were noted on current highway department city maps. This collection of maps was useful in gaining a localized sense of development for areas of the county.

All city streets were walked or driven. All rural non-farm structures, pre-identified sites, and locally suggested buildings were visited. The roads connecting these dispersed sites provided a strong sampling of the rural landscape. Pre-identified sites were inventoried regardless of integrity. Other buildings with unusual integrity or unique features were also inventoried. In general, structures built before 1940 were considered for an inventory.

Follow-up information (both localized specific and generalized contextural) on some sites was gathered to help establish significance.

In each region of the county, at least one and in most cases several local contacts were made through the county historical society and by random inquiry. These were most often helpful in locating information on selected properties, but also in pointing out additional locations for inventory.

From the inventory of 100 sites, 2 individual structures were selected for nomination to the National Register, mostly on the basis of their significance within the county. Information and photographs on all sites are recorded on inventory forms for a permanent record.

MURRAY COUNTY
Minnesota

Methodology (supplement)

From the inventory of 100 sites, two individual structures were selected for nomination to the National Register on the basis of their significance within the county. This limited number of sites, when combined with the four sites previously selected for nomination, accurately and adequately reflects the historic properties in the county which retain integrity and which reflect the county's history.

The number of National Register quality sites in Murray County is indicative of the county's building stock. Although we do not know the exact number of structures in the county, the area's relatively sparse population (entire county - 12,508 people) has resulted in a similar sparse count of buildings. Most of the land is, simply, cultivated fields. The nature of the agricultural economy requires buildings on farmsteads and in small service center towns, and the majority of the structures in these areas are of undistinguished design or historical association or have lost integrity.

MURRAY COUNTY

Murray County is located in the second tier of southwestern Minnesota counties north of the Iowa State line. It is bounded on the north by Lyon County and a small part of Redwood County, on the east by Cottonwood County, on the south by Nobles County, and on the west by Pipestone County. It is 30 miles east to west and 24 miles north to south, comprising 719 square miles. Out of a total land area of 444,657 acres, 17,634 are water.

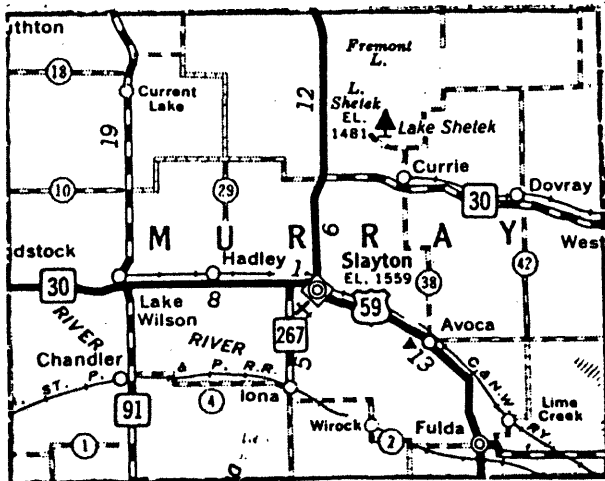
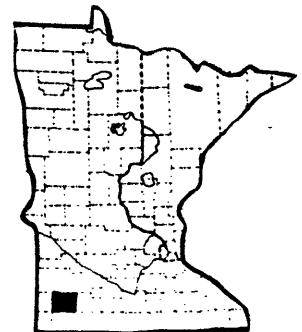
Murray County rivers drain into three systems--northwestward to the Minnesota River, southeastward to the Des Moines River, and southwestward to the Big Sioux River. The largest lakes in the county are Sarah, Maria and Shetek. Numerous smaller lakes remain while others have dried up or been drained and are now cultivated land or wildlife areas. The most visually prominent land feature which runs through the western portion of the county is the Coteau des Prairies or "Highland of the Prairies". This highland is a large plateau or massive ridge which rises from 1,600 to over 1,900 feet above sea level.

Original vegetation included mostly prairie grass. Natural timber, consisting of elm, bass, bur oak, poplar and cottonwood, was confined mostly to the borders of lakes and streams which offered some protection against annual prairie fires.

Fertile and well drained soil, a black loam, accounts for the high percentage (82.6%) of the county's area used as crop land. The principal early crops were small grains (wheat and oats) which were sold locally to new settlers.

By the 1890s, farm practices were becoming diversified and grains, corn, dairy cows and livestock became the principal produce. Crop emphasis today is on corn and soybeans, and cattle and hogs rank the county 3rd and 7th respectively in total state animal production. The number of farms in the county is 1,228, with an average size of 303 acres.

Area Description



MURRAY CO.				
ELLS-BOROUGH	SKANDIA	LAKE SARAH	SHETEK	HOLLY
CAMERON	LOWVILLE	MASON	Currie MURRAY	DOVRAY Dovray
Lake Wilson CHANA-RAMBIE	Hadley LEEDS	Slayton SLAYTON	LIME LAKE Avoca	DES MOINES RIVER
Chandler MOULTON	FENTON	Iona	BONDIN Fulda	BELFAST

There are ten platted and incorporated townsites in the county, ranging in population from 104 in Dovray to 2,351 in Slayton, the county seat. The towns of Wirock and Lime Creek were platted, but were never incorporated and have no separate population statistics. The populations of the incorporated communities are as follows:

Avoca	203	Hadley	119
Chandler	319	Iona	260
Currie	368	Lake Wilson	378
Dovray	104	Slayton	2,351
Fulda	1,226		

Current Lake, Mason, and Owanka remain as unincorporated and unplatted hamlets which, because of natural hardships or commercial competition, never prospered, but nevertheless have retained their name and locale.

Like other southwest Minnesota counties, Murray County has an early history of Indian occupation and white exploration and trading. Bands of Dakota Indians inhabited the region until the 1851 treaties of Traverse des Sioux and Mendota officially relinquished their territory. However, many Indians remained in the area and it was only after the 1862 Dakota War that the remaining Indians were sent to out-state reservations.

Early travelers to the area included artist George Catlin and government explorers Joseph Nicollet, John C. Fremont and Captain James Allen. Their trips often led them to the trading houses of the American Fur Company which were active in the area during the mid 1800s.

In 1857, Murray County was established and named for William Pitt Murray, a Minnesota politician. Most initial settlement occurred in the Lake Shetek area. The 1862 War stalled further settlement in the county for several years. In 1867 settlers from New York, Wisconsin, and the Ohio Valley began to filter into the county and by 1870 the total population was 109. Township organization began in 1872 and was completed in 1886. Formal organization of the county occurred in 1872.

The townsite of Currie was platted just south of Lake Shetek on the Des Moines River in 1874 by Neil Currie at the location of a mill and store. Currie marked the beginnings of significant urban settlement, and served as the county seat from 1873 until 1886. The location of ten subsequent townsites were predicated on the three rail lines that were laid across the county from 1879 to 1900 (see map). The first two lines, the Southern Minnesota (St. Paul and Pacific) and the Minnesota and Black Hills (Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha) were both laid across the southern sections of the county in 1879; among the communities established on these lines was Slayton (1881), which became the county seat in 1886. Much later, in 1900, the Des Moines Valley Line of the St. Paul & Sioux City entered the northeast part of the county to provide rail connections to pre-existing Currie.

Closely tied with the establishment of the early communities and rails were the promotion of Irish Catholic settlement in the areas of Currie, Fulda, and Avoca by Archbishop John Ireland and others. (Ireland is listed as the proprietor of the plat for the townsite of Fulda.) The promotion involved the purchase of railroad lands for re-sale to Irish immigrants but it was not widely successful and much of the land was eventually sold on the open market. Other groups settling in the area included Norwegians, Swedes, and New Englanders.

With the railroad came the prosperity associated with line elevators and depots that attracted and encouraged the agricultural development of the rural countryside. Today, all the rail lines have been abandoned and removed. Despite the removal of the tracks, the towns continue in their role as agricultural service centers and shipping points relying solely on truck transport. Several unplatted crossroads communities remain in the county centering around a store; most of these cater to the resort and fishing traffic concentrated in the northern portions of the county.

The architecture of the county follows the building patterns and styles of other prairie counties. The earliest Euro-American buildings were sometimes of log construction, although the availability of materials usually led to sod or dugout construction methods. As soon as finished lumber became widely available, domestic, agricultural and commercial structures utilized the standard plans for buildings of the period. The highly technical changes in farming operations have resulted in great physical changes on the farmstead. Most of the remaining 19th and early 20th century farm buildings have been radically altered, or razed and replaced by modern shelter facilities or low, metal machine storage buildings. Style conscious, architecturally designed buildings have generally been limited to public buildings with a few residential and commercial examples in the towns. The dominant construction material for domestic and agricultural structures is wood; most commercial and public buildings are masonry.

8. Significance

see individual inventory forms

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

Specific dates N/A Builder/Architect N/A

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

See Area Significance

MURRAY COUNTY

From the 1860s through the 1890s Murray County experienced a development process characteristic of most southwest Minnesota counties. The early settlements primarily were associated with agriculture and the shipment of agricultural produce by railroad. The significance of the county has remained that of an agricultural producing and exporting area.

The rail system provided the key transportation for agricultural products. The hand-operated Currie Railroad Turntable (1901, Currie, placed on the National Register in 1977), is a unique, surviving railroad structure built at the end of the last rail line to be built in the county. All of the community's depots have been razed except for the St. Paul & Pacific Depot in Fulda (ca 1901, Fulda, placed on the National Register in 1979) which stands as the most visible symbol of the railroad facilities constructed in the county.

Notable buildings associated with the institutional and government functions of the townsites are the Murray County Courthouse (1891, Slayton, placed on the National Register in 1977) and the Avoca Public School (1894, Avoca, placed on the National Register in 1979). The Dinehart-Holt House (1891, Slayton) is significant for its association with a pioneer banking developer in the community of Slayton. Associated with the commercial prosperity in the early 20th century is the Citizens State Bank (1918-1919, Fulda) constructed to replace the old bank that could no longer meet the increasing demands of its customers.

A few structures in Murray County are architecturally significant for their design features. These include the Romanesque Revival Murray County Courthouse (1891, Slayton, placed on the National Register in 1977), designed by Mankato architect Frank Thayer who was also responsible for the design of the Queen Anne-Stick Style Dinehart-Holt House (1891, Slayton). The Beaux Arts Citizens State Bank (1918-1919, Fulda) is architecturally significant for its use of cream colored terra-cotta, an ornamental feature made popular in southwest Minnesota and portions of Iowa by the Lytle Company of Sioux City, Iowa.

Murray County

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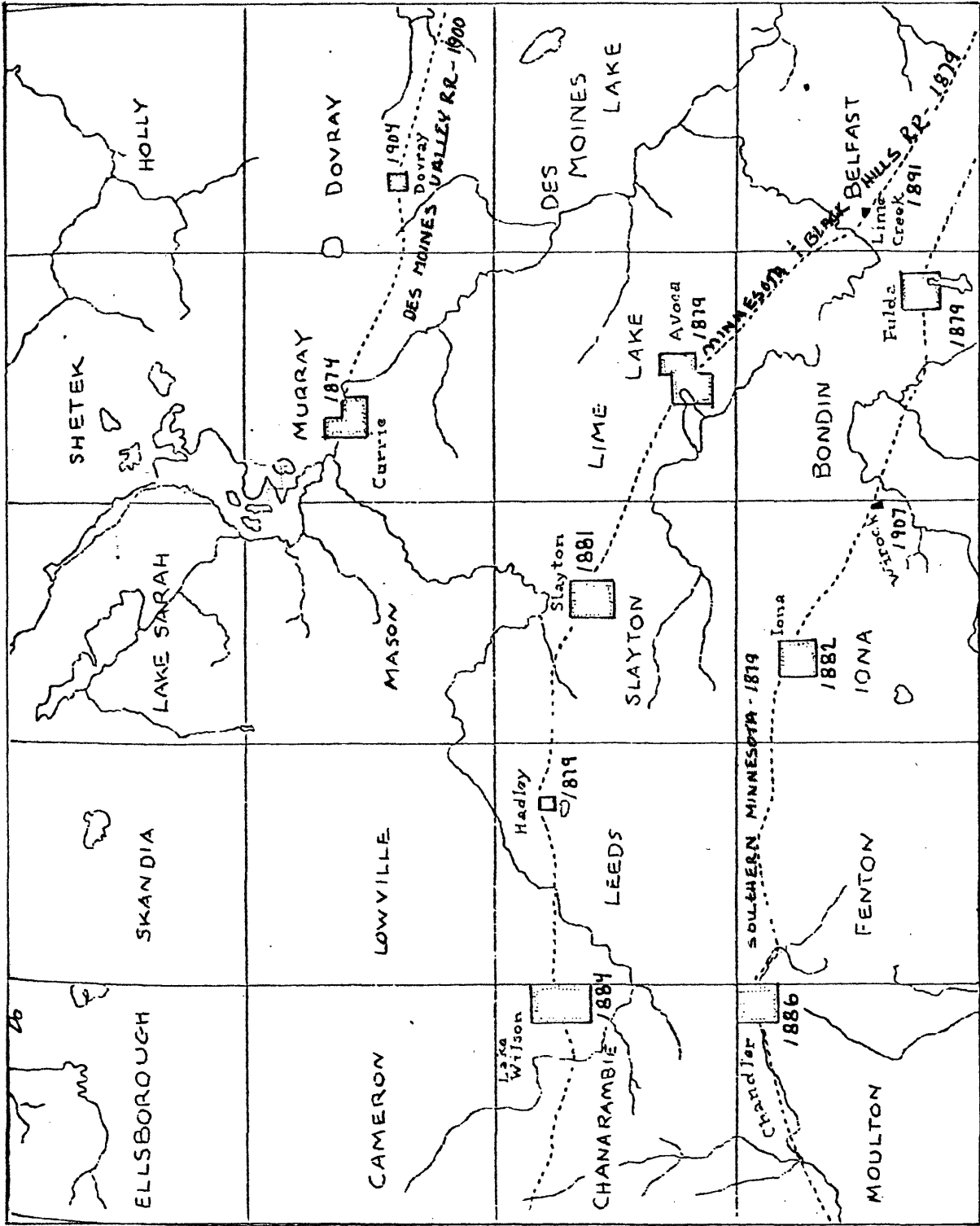
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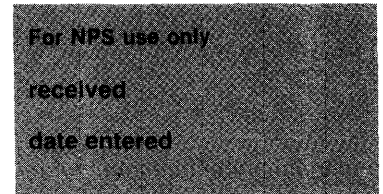


MURRAY COUNTY

Historical Records Survey, Minnesota.
 Inventory of the County Archives of Minnesota.
 St. Paul, 1937-42.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number

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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Murray County Multiple Resource Area
State Minnesota

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

1. First National Bank

~~Multiple Resource Area~~

Keeper

Beth Grosvenor - 12/7/82

Attest

2. Dinehart-Holt House

~~Multiple Resource Area~~

Keeper

Beth Grosvenor - 12/7/82

Attest

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Keeper

Attest

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