

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Minnesota
COUNTY:	Clay
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	DEC 30 1974

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Comstock, Solomon Gilman, House

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Comstock, Solomon Gilman, House

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
5th Avenue and 8th Street South

CITY OR TOWN:  
Moorhead

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
Seventh

STATE: Minnesota CODE: 22 COUNTY: Clay CODE: 027

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" 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 (Specify)

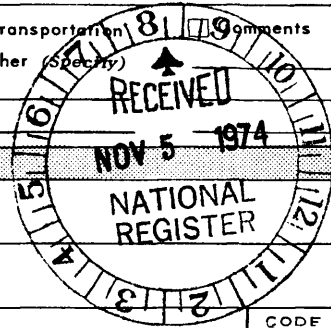
**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
Minnesota Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER:  
690 Cedar Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
St. Paul

STATE:  
Minnesota



**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Clay County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Moorhead

CITY OR TOWN:  
Moorhead

STATE:  
Minnesota

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Minnesota State Register of Historic Sites

DATE OF SURVEY: 1969  
 Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Minnesota Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER:  
690 Cedar Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
St. Paul

STATE:  
Minnesota

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Solomon G. Comstock House was constructed on its present location in 1883 according to designs by the Minneapolis architectural firm of Kees and Finch. It is executed in a stylistic mode which contains features from Queen Anne and Eastlake designs. Although the tower is absent the massing is essentially that of a multi-gabled two story Queen Anne wood frame house and is characterized by a profusion of spindle work porches, high patterned chimneys, and poly-chromed siding and trim. The porch posts, brackets and gable treatment, however, are more Eastlake as is evidenced by the lathe-turned posts, incised spandrels, and patterned diagonal siding juxtaposed with areas of rectangular panels and shingles.

The design features have survived intact and are in excellent condition. The Solomon G. Comstock House is one of the best extant and unaltered representatives of late Victorian architecture in the Moorhead area. It is also one of the few houses in Moorhead to retain the spacious lawns typical of the late 1800 urban mansions.

The interior is comprised of eleven rooms distributed on two floors. Upon entry to the front hall access is given to the second floor by means of an oak balustraded staircase. Oak and gumwood doors lead to the parlor, library, and sitting room. The dining room, pantry, kitchen, and bedroom and bath are located at the rear of the first floor. The second floor contains four bedrooms and a maid's chamber, all accessible from a central hall.

To the rear of the house is a multi-doored storage building one story in height. The original carriage barn to the north of the house was removed at an early date when the lot upon which it stood was divided from the original homestead and sold.

The Solomon G. Comstock House is in process of restoration to its 1883 appearance. Many rooms contain original furnishings and personal effects of the Comstock family.



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**3. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian       16th Century       18th Century       20th Century  
 15th Century       17th Century       19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1883**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political      | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify): |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry    | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                   | <u>Immigration and Settlement</u>         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                 | _____                                     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian       | _____                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                   | _____                                     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce     | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  | _____                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |  | _____                                     |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Solomon G. Comstock is noted as one of the first settlers of Moorhead in Clay County, Minnesota. From the time he arrived in 1871 until his death he actively participated in the political, social and educational growth of the county and state.

Soon after he arrived in Moorhead he took up the practice of law and was appointed county attorney in 1872, a position that he held until 1881. A staunch Republican, Comstock represented his constituents in the Minnesota Legislature and the United States Congress. He was elected, as representative to the state legislature in 1875, a position he held until 1878. In 1883 he was elected to the state senate and served for four consecutive terms. He served as a representative in the 57th Congress of the United States from 1889-1891. While in the state legislature he served as chairman of the finance committee of the house, and also of the judiciary and temperance committees of the senate.

The endeavors of Solomon Comstock often times took the form of civic contributions to the community of Moorhead. His belief in the importance of higher education made Solomon Comstock an early advocate for the establishment of an educational system in Moorhead.

Solomon Comstock, along with two other Moorhead citizens, served as director of a corporation which established the Bishop Whipple School. The directors acquired six acres of land and erected the building on what is now the site of Concordia College. While Comstock was serving in the state Senate he proposed the establishment of a state normal school at Moorhead. The legislature of 1885 voted to locate the fourth normal school at Moorhead on six acres which Comstock contributed for that purpose. He served as resident director of the school from 1894-1899. This school later became Moorhead State College. The present student union was endowed by Comstock and named for him.

In the field of business and industry Solomon Comstock was a fore-runner in his community. He was one of a group of pioneer bankers who established the First National Bank of Moorhead in 1881. In 1883 he was one of the principal incorporators of the Moorhead Foundry, Car, and Agricultural works. This industry supplied the community with farm machinery, ditchers and heavy machinery of many varieties. Solomon Comstock's close working relationship with railroad builder James J. Hill resulted in the development of an outstanding railroad system in the Red River Valley.

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**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Fargo Forum -- March 27, 1937.  
 Marquis, A.N., ed., The Book of Minnesotans, (Chicago: 1907).  
 Moorhead Daily News -- June 3, 1937.  
 Sunday Fargo Forum -- November 7, 1965.  
 Turner, John and Semling, C. K., editors, History of Clay and Norman Counties Minnesota, vol. 1, (Indianapolis: 1918).  
 Upham, Warren, ed., Minnesota Historical Society Collections, vol. 14, (St. Paul: 1912).

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

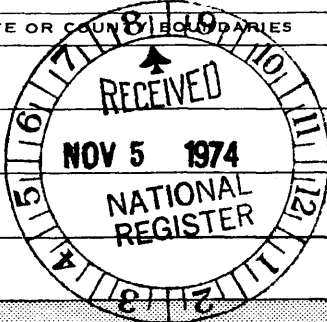
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		46° 52' 10"	96° 46' 3"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

UTM  
 14/670120  
 5192870  
 CD

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1/2 acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
 Lynne Van Brocklin - Charles W. Nelson

ORGANIZATION: Minnesota Historical Society DATE: July 30, 1974

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Building 25, Fort Snelling

CITY OR TOWN: St. Paul STATE: Minnesota CODE: 22

**12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

<p>As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name <u>Russell W. Fridley</u>                  Russell W. Fridley, Director</p> <p>Title <u>Minnesota Historical Society</u></p> <p>Date <u>Oct. 25, 1974</u></p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p><u>[Signature]</u>                  Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date <u>12/20/74</u></p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p><u>[Signature]</u>                  Keeper of the National Register</p> <p>Date <u>DEC 27 1974</u></p>
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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
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(Number all entries)

8. Significance

Solomon G. Comstock built this house in 1883 and soon thereafter it became the showplace of Moorhead. The house was designed by the Minneapolis architectural firm of Kees and Finch. Kees was a major figure in the developmental years of Minneapolis architecture between 1880 and 1910. He was a partner in the firms of Long and Kees, designers of the Richardsonian Romanesque Minneapolis City Hall/Hennepin County Courthouse, and Kees and Colburn, chief designers of many important commercial and warehouse structures in Minneapolis. In 1965, Mr. and Mrs. George Comstock (son and daughter-in-law of Solomon G. Comstock) presented the house to the Minnesota Historical Society for preservation. In 1970, Mrs. George Comstock, now a widow, aided the Society in realizing the first phase of a plan to restore the house to its 1883 appearance. One room contains exhibits which tell the story of Solomon G. Comstock and his impact on Red River Valley history. The Clay County Historical Society assists in the operation of the house.

The significance of the Solomon G. Comstock House lies both in its architectural design and in its association with one of the founders and builders of Moorhead. Solomon G. Comstock was largely responsible for the overall growth of Moorhead from a pioneer village in the 1870s to a booming railroad town at the turn of the century.

