NPS Form 10-900 Rev. 10-90	RECEIVED 2280 OMB No. 1024-0018
<b>Jnited States Department of the Interior</b> National Park Service	. जो <b>2</b> 3 खंग
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM	NAT. REGISTER OF HISTOPIC PLACES NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individu Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A nformation requested. If any item does not apply to the property being docum naterials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories f sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer,	al properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National ). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the anted, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, rom the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation to complete all items.
. Name of Property	
nistoric name <u>GRAND ARMY of the REPUBLIC (G.A.R.) MI</u> other names/site number <u>OS01788</u>	EMORIAL HALL
2. Location	
*****	N/A not for publication
street & number <u>1101 Massachusetts Avenue</u>	
itv or town <u>St. Cloud</u>	<u>N/A</u> vicinitv
tateFLORIDAcodeFLcountv	Osceolacode097 zip code34769
. State/Federal Agency Certification	
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### Name of Property

OSCEOLA, FLORIDA County and State

5. Classification				·	
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)			
⊠ private ⊠ buildings □ public-local □ district		Contributing	Noncontribut	ing	
public-State     public-Federal     structure	structure	<u> </u>	0	buildings	
	object	0	0	sites	
		0	0	structures	
		0	0	objects	
		1	0	total	
Name of related multiple property listings (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)		Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register			
N	I/A	0			
6. Function or Use					
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)		Current Functions (Enter categories from instru	uctions)		
SOCIAL/meeting hall		COMMERCE/TRADE/	professional		
		RECREATION AND C	ULTURE/museum		
7. Description					
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)		Materials (Enter categories from	instructions)		
EARLY 20 <sup>TH</sup> CENTURY/Com	nercial	foundation <u>CON</u> walls <u>BRICK</u>	ICRETE		
		roof <u>METAL</u> other <u>METAL</u> : 1	iron		
		()))()) <u> </u>			

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuations sheets.)

#### GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC HALL Name of Property

### 8. Statement of significance

**Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution road patterns of our history.
- **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction of represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- **B** removed from its original location.
- **C** a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- **F** a commemorative property.
- **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.) Previous documentation on file (NPS): Primary location of additional data: State Historic Preservation Office preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) has been requested Other State Agency

- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

#### COMMUNITY PLANNING

SOCIAL HISTORY

#### **Period of Significance**

1914 - 1940

**Significant Dates** 

1914 1940

**Significant Person** 

N/A

#### **Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

#### Architect/Builder

CHESSMAN, M.W.

#

- Federal agency
- Local government
- University Other
- Name of Repository

OSCEOLA, FLORIDA **County and State** 

GRAND ARMY	OF THE	REPU	BLIC	HALL
Name of Property				

OSCEOLA, FLORIDA

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.17 ACRES

### **UTM References**

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)



#### **Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

#### **Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Beverly Gorshek, Historian; William Bauer, Architect	t: Gary V	. Goodwin, Historic Preservation	n Planner
organization Bureau of Historic Preservation		date _Ja	nuary, 1997
street & number R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough Street		telephone <u>(904</u>	) 487-2333
citv or town <u>Tallahassee</u>	_ state	Florida zio code	32399-0250

#### **Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

### **Continuation Sheets**

#### Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

### Representative black and white photographs of the property.

#### Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)	
name Sunoric Corporation	
street & number 1101 Massachusetts Avenue	
citv or town <u>St. Cloud</u>	

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.



# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number \_\_\_\_7 Page \_\_\_1

GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC HALL St. Cloud, Osceola County, Florida

## **Summary**

The Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) Hall, located at 1101 Massachusetts Avenue in St. Cloud, Florida, and constructed in 1914, is a rectangular brick, two-story example of early twentieth century commercial architecture. Fenestration includes single and paired, 3 over 2 sash windows with brick segmental arched surrounds. The roof is flat with a parapet. The interior includes meeting rooms, offices, and a theater/auditorium, which is the most significant space in the building.

## Setting

The Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) Hall almost completely occupies its fifty foot by one hundred and fifty foot site. A narrow sidewalk separates the building from streets on the west and north sides. A small, asphalt parking lot is located on the east (rear) portion of the property. Since the building practically occupies the entire site, landscaping is limited to a few trees, shrubbery, and small patches of grass. The building is located on the corner of Eleventh Street and Massachusetts Avenue, a few blocks from city hall in St. Cloud, Osceola County's second largest city. Other civic, and commercial properties in the area include a church, a funeral home, the Chamber of Commerce, and an assortment of professional offices and small businesses.

## **Physical Description**

## Exterior

Few brick buildings in Osceola County, with the exception of the Osceola County Courthouse in Kissimmee, are of the scale, age, and condition of the G.A.R. Hall. The building has a brick and concrete water table broken only by a recessed and slightly angled entrance way on the front, west elevation (See Floor Plan). A set of three concrete steps spans the length of the archways and extends down to the sidewalk (Photo 1). A pair of round arched openings is centered and flush with the face of the main elevation (Photo 2). The archways are flanked by paired, 5-light windows. Directly above the ground floor windows and archways are four identical sets of

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC HALL St. Cloud, Osceola County, Florida

paired windows. All window openings have shallow, segmental brick arches. Above the windows, at the termination of the wall, is a corbelled brick cornice that runs the entire length of three elevations of the building (Photo 3).

The north and south walls are nearly symmetrical. There is a slight step down of the cornice at a point roughly two-thirds from the corner intersection of the front and side elevations (Photo 4). The first story has an arched entry with a fanlight at the east end and eight single windows. The second story has nine single windows on axis with the windows and entry at the first level (Photo 4). The rear (east) elevation is the most varied in window placement (Photo 5). In addition to individual windows near the corners of the second floor level, there is a window located between the stories. Smaller, closely spaced windows are located in the middle of the second story level (Photo 5).

Changes to the fenestration have not affected the location of the openings themselves, although bronzed, aluminum, single hung windows with three over two sash have replaced the originals (Photo 6). There have been other changes to the exterior. Most notable is that, with the exception of the door panels, the original, exposed brick has been painted white (Photo 7). Above the arched openings is a rectangular, concrete panel with the inscription: 19 G.A.R. 14 over *MEMORIAL HALL* (Photo 8). Through the archways on either side, are floor to ceiling red bricks inscribed with the names of those G.A.R. members and supporters whose donations helped finance the Memorial Hall (Photos 9 and 10). In general, the exterior of the building appears to be in excellent condition. Only minor settlement cracks appear in the brick work on the main elevation.

## Interior

The G.A.R. Hall contains a theater/auditorium with stage on the first floor, and a large meeting room with a raised speakers' platform on the second floor. Columns are spaced, east to west, along the centerline of the interior on both the first and second floors. High, flat ceilings are found on both floors.

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### GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC HALL St. Cloud, Osceola County, Florida

Because of later alterations, it is not possible to see the original vestibule plan from the front (west side). Evidence of the theater box office can be found between the two pairs of entrance doors. The main theater space and stage remains. The coffered, metal ceiling is impressive. Enhancing its appearance is its rich gold color. It was recently repainted to the original appearance (Photo 11). The raised stage area is a dominating feature with its wood panel surrounds, original hand-painted stage curtain and floor lighting trough (Photo 12). The stage curtain was painted by hand in 1914, by John Herfurth of Cincinnati, Ohio (Photo 13). A small orchestra pit, which has been covered for safety and protection, is located in front of the stage. The side walls of the theater have the original stained, wooden wainscoting. Backstage, all original fly-system apparatus remains. Although modern seating is in use, the original seats have been saved and stored. The rear third of the original theater seating area has been enclosed to provide a small lobby/vestibule, rest rooms, an exercise room and a small meeting room (See Floor Plan). According to some accounts, no rest rooms were included in the initial construction; facilities were provided separately from the main structure.

Stairways are located in the northwest corner of the building and at the rear of the stage area. One section of the front stairs is original; the others were altered during remodeling. Primary access to the private meeting room on the second level was by a wide stairway running south up from the side of the building entrance. The stairs had a handgrip in the center. At the top of the stairs were the traditional doors with peepholes (Photos 14 and 15). The doors remain and still lead into the great meeting room. The raised platform for the post commander is evident along the west wall. The original anteroom has been divided into a library, rest rooms, and small office. The larger meeting space itself has been divided in half. The single open area of the southern half is a secretarial production area. The northern part has been further subdivided into a smaller office/work area and a museum (See Floor Plan).

Stairs run down the north wall beside the museum to an added mezzanine level and back to the first floor entrance. The mezzanine office occupies the space above the theater vestibule area. Low doors open out from the mezzanine level with a view toward the theater and stage below.

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GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC HALL St. Cloud, Osceola County, Florida

Most changes to the floor plan were made by the present owner, Sunoric Corporation, in the late 1970s. However, these alterations have not diminished the overall integrity of the building; its significant architectural elements have remained intact much as it was when built in 1914. Presently, this building, the last remaining hall in the South, represents one of the best preserved G.A.R. halls in the country.

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 1

GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC HALL St. Cloud, Osceola County, Florida

## **Summary**

The Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) Hall is significant at the statewide level under Criterion A in the areas of Community Planning and Social History. It was erected in 1914 by members of the Lucian L. Mitchell Post #34 of the G.A.R who had founded the town of St. Cloud as a soldier's colony for Union Civil War veterans. The post was very prosperous and had by far the largest enrollment of any post in Florida. The hall served as a memorial to the veterans and as the center for G.A.R. activities not only in St. Cloud, but also for the entire state from 1914-1940. It is the only remaining G.A.R. Hall in the South. The hall was also used as a meeting hall by other organizations, and for live stage performances from 1916 through 1948, housing the Palm Theater throughout the 1920s.

This brick, two-story example of early twentieth century commercial architecture, built by Tampa contractor M.W. Chessman, is also significant under Criterion C at the local level in the area of Architecture, particularly for its interior features.

## Historic Context

The Grand Army of the Republic was a patriotic society of Union Army veterans. It was organized in Decatur, Illinois, on April 6, 1866, and held its first annual meeting (encampment) in Indianapolis, Indiana. From the beginning, the society was organized into state and territorial departments; these departments were supported by local societies called posts. The last veteran of this Post in St. Cloud, passed away in 1943.

In early 1900, Veterans of the Civil War sought a warmer climate in which to live and appealed to the owners of the *National Tribune* in Washington, D.C., to seek a suitable location for a soldier's colony in Florida. The *National Tribune* was the publishing arm of the G.A.R. Following several searches, it was decided that the old Disston tract was the best location. The elevation of this tract on the divide between the Kissimmee and St. Johns rivers made it most acceptable for the foundation of this colony. This land had been a sugar plantation, and at the

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GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC HALL St. Cloud, Osceola County, Florida

time of purchase by the Seminole Land Investment Company, the real estate arm of the *National Tribune*, the sugar refinery and other buildings were still standing.

Through the agency of W.B. Makinson and C.A. Carson, this tract of some thirty thousand acres on the south of Lake Tohopekaliga was purchased. In May, 1909 surveyors were employed to lay out the town site and, in addition, to provide property in sections of five acres for farming. A Mr. Miller was responsible for design and lay-out, accompanied by noted architect and engineer W.B. Talley. Finally, Byron E. White of Utica, New York, was in charge of the land surveys until the project was completed in September, 1910. This was the beginning of the City of St. Cloud.

## **Historic Significance**

The founding of St. Cloud as a city is linked with the G.A.R. Because of this direct involvement, it is not surprising that one of the initial concerns of the first residents was the erection of a G.A.R. meeting hall. For nearly five years the veterans' organization met in an "old hall," built in 1909-1910 at the rear lots directly east of the future Memorial Hall. The land was donated by the Seminole Land Investment Company (S.L.I.). The old hall housed the L.L. Mitchell Post #34, named in honor of the first deceased veteran of the St. Cloud colony, which was organized and instituted on January 4, 1910. It was here that the incorporation of St. Cloud and election of town officials were undertaken. State G.A.R. encampments were held at the old hall in St. Cloud as early as 1911.

The notoriety of St. Cloud as a veterans' colony grew quickly. St. Cloud became known as "The Friendly Soldier City." With the subsequent great influx of new residents, many of whom were G.A.R. members, the need for a larger hall became apparent. In April and May of 1910, the project of erecting such a memorial building there was initiated. Plans and specifications were made up by a committee.

However, obstacles surfaced, particularly with securing title to the land, which delayed construction. The organizing of a joint stock company three years later eliminated the problem

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GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC HALL St. Cloud, Osceola County, Florida

and allowed the post to take title of the lots donated by S. L. I. Eight hundred shares of stock at ten dollars each were offered, and money began to be deposited in the building fund.

With many of the members returning to the North for the summer of 1913, fund raising momentum was difficult to maintain. However, the subscription list continued to grow and more money was collected, sufficient at least to seemingly justify building the foundation—which was completed by Morgan and Ely at a cost of \$487.10, and accepted by the Board of Directors August 29, 1913.

The following year was one of arduous labor and intense efforts. Committees on labor, materials, and soliciting funds were formed and began meeting on a regular basis. One fund raising method employed was the sale of memorial bricks for \$1.25 to \$2.00 each to be placed in the walls of the vestibule with the inscribed names of donors. In all, nearly four hundred bricks were donated, with some coming from interested non-residents of St. Cloud. Flanking either side of the double sets of entrance doors, these brick panels are prominent features of the hall. Upon inspection, it is possible to see curious slashes across and into the brick faces. These were the results of vandalism, and a large reward was offered for the arrest of the "miscreant." Distress over the vandalism was expressed in the local newspaper; a 1914 *St. Cloud Tribune* article reported:

It is inconceivable how a man can stoop to such underhanded, contemptible, low down acts of vandalism as to deface the monuments to a band of men who had lived their lives, and who in the days of fifty years ago were undergoing hardships on the battlefield the like of which they would have never known. We say monuments advisedly, for the bricks in the G.A.R. Memorial Hall will be the only monuments that ever will be erected to many of those heroes who gave their all that this country should be one and inseparable.

Work on the hall had been rushed to make it ready for the State G.A.R. Encampment in April, 1914. Many of the members gave willingly, not only of money but also of their time and skills.

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC HALL St. Cloud, Osceola County, Florida

The hall was not completed entirely for the encampment, but flags and decorations were used to cover unfinished areas. When completed, the hall cost well over ten thousand dollars.

The G.A.R. Memorial Hall was built in St. Cloud for a definite purpose and with its importance for future generations in mind. Upon completion of the building in 1914, G.A.R. Post Secretary E.E. Scranton in his building committee report declared:

The dream of four years ago is realized. A splendid G.A.R. Memorial Hall has been erected for memory and in honor of the old boys of the Union Army of '61 to '65 who saved this country for the generations coming after us, and saved our glorious flag, the Stars and Stripes, from dishonor or disgrace in over 2000 battles of that great war. We do not commend this Memorial Hall for its beautiful design or its architectural splendor. It is not crowned with costly minarets or towers, but it is strong and safe and both of its halls [are] filled with all conveniences for comfort and entertainment—good ventilation, good water supply. Well lighted, good stage, well equipped with convenience and fast fittings and equipment...

The G.A.R. Hall was constructed with a public auditorium with a stage on the first floor, and a private assembly room for the G.A.R. on the second floor. Immediately, upon its completion, community functions were held in the structure. Many of the early functions were directly related to the G.A.R. or its associated Women's Relief Corps (W.R.C.) and the Ladies of the G.A.R. One such event was a benefit supper to help pay off the cost of such items as the chairs for the hall.

The citizens of St. Cloud were also justifiably proud of the G.A.R. Post and the new facility and benefitted from their presence in town. The G.A.R. Hall functioned for many years as the social center for St. Cloud and was also used by other organizations, and provided entertainment and educational facilities for stage productions, motion pictures and public speaking. The Palm Theater was first housed in this building in 1920; the ticket window remains between the entrance doors. St. Cloud residents were impressed with the installation of motion picture equipment, as well as the interior appearance of the theater. Increasingly, St. Cloud's Masonic

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC HALL St. Cloud, Osceola County, Florida

Lodge Number 221 became a frequent occupant. Twice weekly meetings were held in the upper G.A.R. Hall. By 1940 the last state G.A.R. encampment was held in this edifice. The Masons controlled the use of the Hall until 1971 when it was sold to a St. Cloud couple and later to the present owner in 1978.

## **Architectural Significance**

## **EXTERIOR**

Architecturally, the G.A.R. Hall is an excellent example of a commercial-style brick building of the early twentieth century. Spare of elaborate exterior detail, it does possess other features which give it a unique appearance and identity both on its exterior and interior. The overall impression of the building is one of strength and stability, resulting from its massive, rectangular volume and its symmetrical design. From its corbelled brick and concrete watertable to roof cornice, the building reflects an appreciation for brick's strength. The commemorative panels at either side of the entrance doors are brick also. The workmanship and condition of the brickwork is excellent. Major exterior details are limited to the entrance archways and shallow segmented arched windows.

## **INTERIOR**

On the first floor, the primary interior spaces and details associated with the theater survive. The auditorium has not been changed. Its most significant features are the stage area with its original stage curtain, hand painted by John Herfurth of Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1914, and a paneled proscenium. All original wood wainscoting, doors and window surrounds and flooring are in their original condition. The impressive, coffered, metal ceiling was repainted in its original rich gold color, enhancing its appearance.

Some changes have been made to the second floor space without severe alterations to the historic meeting room. A wall was constructed dividing the room into two offices; however, the raised platform for the post commander remains. The only significant change from the original floor

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GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC HALL St. Cloud, Osceola County, Florida

plan, was the removal of the rear stairway from the ground level to the meeting room. At one time, this was the main entrance to the meeting room. Original doors and woodwork remain, including the eye hole at the sentinel's door.

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC HALL St. Cloud, Osceola County, Florida

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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Section number 10 Page 1

### GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC HALL St. Cloud, Osceola County, Florida

## Verbal boundary description

Saint Cloud Block 188, Lots 23 and 24. Township 26S, Range 30E, Section 01  $\frac{1}{4}$   $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$ 

## Verbal boundary justification

The property nominated includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Grand Army of the Republic Hall.

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number <u>PHOTOS</u> Page 1

## GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC HALL St. Cloud, Osceola County, Florida

### **PHOTOGRAPHIC INVENTORY**

- 1. Grand Army of the Republic Hall
- 2. 1101 Massachusetts Avenue, St. Cloud, Osceola County, Florida
- 3. Daniel V. Wermuth
- 4. November, 1995
- 5. Daniel V. Wermuth, Photography, 1112 10th Street, St. Cloud, Florida
- 6. Exterior view facing southeast
- 7. Photo No. 1 of 15

Items 1–5 are the same for remaining photographs.

- 6. West elevation, facing east
- 7. Photo No. 2 of 15
- 6. West/North elevations, facing southeast
- 7. Photo No. 3 of 15
- 6. Detail of north elevation, facing south
- 7. Photo No. 4 of 15
- 6. East elevation, facing west
- 7. Photo No. 5 of 15
- 6. Detail of typical window, facing south
- 7. Photo No. 6 of 15
- 6. East/North elevations, facing southwest
- 7. Photo No. 7 of 15
- 6. Detail above entrance, facing east
- 7. Photo No. 8 of 15

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number PHOTOS Page 2

### GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC HALL St. Cloud, Osceola County, Florida

- 6. Detail of brick panel, facing north
- 7. Photo No.9 of 15
- 6. Detail of brick panel, facing south
- 7. Photo No. 10 of 15
- 6. Auditorium ceiling panels, facing up
- 7. Photo No. 11 of 15

6. Interior - Auditorium/stage, facing east

- 7. Photo No. 12 of 15
- 6. Close-up of stage curtain, facing east
- 7. Photo No. 13 of 15

6. Interior - Meeting room doors, facing east

- 7. Photo No. 14 of 15
- 6. Close-up of peep hole, facing east
- 7. Photo No. 15 of 15











