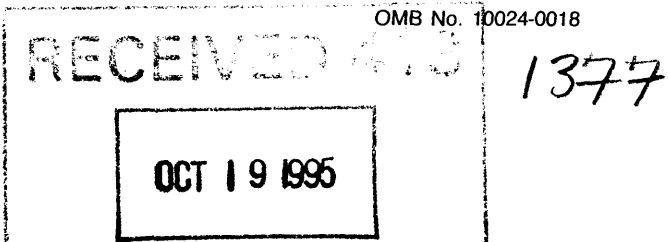


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Germania Hall

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number County Highway 11 not for publication N/A

city or town Germania Township vicinity Clarissa

state Minnesota code MN county Todd code 153 zip code 56440

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 10/10/95
Signature of certifying official/Title Ian R. Stewart Date
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau Minnesota Historical Society

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

[Signature]
Signature of the Keeper
Edson B. Beall
Date of Action 11.29.95

Germania Hall
Name of Property

Todd County, Minnesota
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and culture: music facility

Social: meeting hall, clubhouse, civic

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and culture: music facility

Social: meeting hall, clubhouse, civic

Government: town hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

No style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Weatherboard

roof Asphalt

other

Narrative Description

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

Germania Hall
Name of Property

Todd County, Minnesota
County and State

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 to the broad 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 or 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: N/A

- 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):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- 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)

Social History

Performing Arts

Period of Significance

1917-1945

Significant Dates

1917

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Johnson, John (builder)

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Todd County Historical Society

Germania Hall
Name of Property

Todd County, Minnesota
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property One acre

UTM References Clarissa, Minn. 1966
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	5
---	---

3	4	8	2	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

5	1	1	9	7	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

3

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

4

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

 See 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 Susan Granger and Kay Grossman
organization Gemini Research date July 15, 1995
street & number 15 E. 9th Street telephone (612) 589-3846
city or town Morris state MN zip code 56267

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 _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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 to amend existing 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.

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National Park Service

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Germania Hall
Germania Township, Todd County, Missouri

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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7. DESCRIPTION

Germania Hall is located about five miles north of the town of Clarissa near the center of Section 28 of Germania Township in central Todd County. The building stands approximately ten feet east of the paved County Highway 11 near its intersection with an unpaved township road. The building is surrounded by a small grassy lawn and a gravel driveway and parking area. It is sheltered by a grove of deciduous trees on the northern, eastern, and southern sides of the property. There is a small wooden outhouse northeast of the hall.

Germania Hall, built in 1917, is a one story gable-roofed woodframe building with a simple plan and massing. It measures 28 feet wide by 50 feet long. The building has a poured concrete foundation, shiplap siding, smooth fascia boards, cornerboards, and an asphalt-shingled roof. The main (western) facade has a single-leaf door which is set within an architraved frame. Three wooden steps lead to the door. The building has rectangular window openings with one over one sash set into simple frames with architraves. There is a second single-leaf door on the northern facade.

The interior of the hall is basically intact and consists of a single room. The main entrance is located on the western facade and there is a stage at the eastern end of the building. The floor of the stage is situated about three feet above the dance floor and its facade is faced with wainscoting. To the left of the stage is a paneled door which opens onto a short stairway which leads up to the stage. Germania Hall has a hardwood floor and a flat ceiling. The walls are faced with painted wainscoting which is laid vertically on the lower three feet of the walls and horizontally on the upper walls. Interior woodwork is simple and has been painted white. Attached to the interior side walls are wooden and metal auditorium seats with folding bottoms. On the northern facade is a single-leaf paneled exit door. Several "schoolhouse"-type hanging lamps are suspended from the center of the ceiling. Kitchen and serving equipment is located at the western end of the hall.

The building is basically intact and in fair condition. During the last 15 years, the hall has been reroofed and repainted, its chimney has been repaired, and its window sills have been replaced.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Germania Hall, built in 1917, is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A (significance to the broad patterns of our history) in the areas of Social History and Performing Arts. Built as a practice and performance

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Germania Township, Todd Co., Minnesota

hall for a rural community band, the hall is significant as a rare example of its property type and as the building which has served as a meeting hall and social and political center for the Germania Township community for nearly 80 years. The hall is associated with a widespread early 20th century phenomenon of American popular culture--the popularity of community bands, and with the development and social significance of rural community clubs in the early 20th century. The property is significant within the statewide historic context entitled "Railroads and Agricultural Development 1870-1940."

The Germania Cornet Band was organized in late 1915 or early 1916 by approximately 20 young men who lived and worked on farms in Todd County's Germania Township and the surrounding area. (Some sources state that the band was organized in 1914, suggesting that there may have been a previous unsuccessful or short-lived attempt to organize the band.) Original and early band members included Sigvard Bjerken, Arthur and Oscar Erickson, bass drummer George Gibson, Guy Johnson, bugler Henning Johnson, drummer Herbert Johnson, Edward, George, and John Nelson, trumpet player Carl Peterson, Herbert Peterson, Gustaf Peterson, Axel and Clarence Sandberg, Benjamin Waldon, and trombone player Paul Waldon.

Most of the band members were first generation Americans, with the majority of the band members' parents immigrating from Sweden or Norway in the late 19th century. The band members' ages ranged from 13 years old to 43 years old, and several members were brothers. Many of the band members were young farmers who lived within a three-mile radius of each other and of Germania Hall. Sigvard Bjerken's family owned the 160-acre farm at the southeastern corner of Section 28. It was the Bjerken's land on which Germania Hall was built. Sigvard's parents, Daniel and Ribare Bjerken, immigrated to the United States circa 1888 and moved to Germania Township in 1901. In 1919 Sigvard purchased the farm from his father. He married Breda J. Nelson, sister of fellow band members George, Edward, and John Nelson. In 1936 Sigvard was appointed Clerk of Germania Township, and later he was appointed State Weed Inspector and moved to St. Paul.

The Nelson brothers' parents, Benjt and Emma C. Nelson, were both born in Sweden and immigrated to America in 1882. The Nelson family owned 160 acres of farmland in Section 30 of Germania Township. Edward Nelson, at age 13, was one of the youngest band members. The oldest band member, Gustaf Peterson, was 43 years old when the Germania Band formed. Born in Sweden in 1873, Gustaf immigrated to the United States in 1892. In 1903 he bought 80 acres of farmland in Section 22 of Germania Township and resided there with his wife, Hilda Nyman Peterson. Another band member, George Gibson, was born in Steele County and came to Germania Township as a young man where he farmed 120 acres in the northwestern quarter of Section 28 (northwest of Germania Hall). He was married to Hattie Ferrell. Gibson purchased the store and homestead of Captain Burton, one of the early settlers of Germania Township.

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Germania Township, Todd Co., Minnesota

Band members Carl and Herbert Peterson were the children of John S. and Matilda Peterson who immigrated from Sweden in 1887. The family arrived in Germania Township circa 1900 and lived on a farm in Section 33. Carl later operated a dray line in Clarissa and still later owned a shoe shop in Sauk Rapids. The Waldon family farmed the northwestern quarter of Section 20. Mary E. and Edward Waldon, parents of band members Benjamin and Paul Waldon, immigrated from Norway in the late 1800s. After arriving in Germania Township in 1899, Edward Waldon was active in township affairs for the next 40 years (DeLaurier 1936, 167). Benjamin Waldon and his wife Emma eventually purchased the Waldon family farm.

Arthur and Oscar Erickson, children of August and Marie Erickson who immigrated from Sweden in 1887, were 17 and 18 years old, respectively, when the Germania band was formed. The Erickson family lived in Section 32 and farmed 80 acres. Guy Johnson, one of the youngest band members at 13 years old, was the son of Ole and Ellen Johnson. The Johnsons lived in Section 21 and farmed 80 acres. Guy later moved to Hibbing where he worked in iron ore mines. His wife, Ella Johnson, is still a member of the Germania Community Club. Brothers Henning and Herbert Johnson were the children of August and Anna Johnson. The Johnsons farmed land in Section 32 of Germania Township. Axel and Clarence Sandberg, sons of John and Lotta Sandberg, lived in Section 15 and farmed 80 acres there and another 40 acres in Section 14 of Germania Township.

The Germania Cornet Band was directed by "Professor" George Mundy of Eagle Bend, a small community located about five miles southwest of Germania Hall. Mundy practiced with the band once a week for a fee of five dollars per session. He was the band's director from its organization until October of 1917 when he moved to Pelican Rapids to instruct and direct a band there. According to a local newspaper, Mundy was instrumental in founding both the Germania Cornet Band and the Clarissa High School Band (Clarissa Independent, Oct. 4, 1917).

The band first met in an old store building and skimming station (where farmers took their milk to have cream separated) located southwest of the present location of Germania Hall. In March of 1917 band members met to formally decide to erect a practice and dance hall with a stage on the Bjerken farm. The hall was constructed during the summer of 1917 with funds that the band members had saved from their engagements. The hall was built by John Johnson of Clarissa (whose fee was 150 dollars), with labor provided by the band members. The hall was built on land which the band rented from Bjerkens in a 20-year lease at no cost. The lease was later renewed for 10 more years at \$1 per year.

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Germania Township, Todd Co., Minnesota

Before and after Germania Hall was constructed, the band played at concerts and dances held at barns and other facilities in the area, as well as on their new stage at Germania Hall. A local historian wrote of the Germania band: ". . . a community band gave life and enjoyment to the neighborhood. Indeed, its influence was felt beyond the neighborhood, for during the Great War the band visited and gave concerts in the villages of the county. This band, though not active at this time [1936], still maintains its organization" (DeLaurier 1936, 168). In June of 1916 the band shared the stage with the Eagle Bend band at a dance given in the barn of the Bjerken farm. Three weeks later the band gave another dance in Bjerken's barn. On December 8, 1916 the band gave a concert and dance at the Clarissa Opera House. The profits from these concerts were used to pay for Mundy's instruction. In June of 1917 the Germania Cornet Band and the Clarissa Cornet Band each played three times at a community picnic which was held at Titrud's Grove on the northern side of Clarissa. The picnic also included a 10:30 a.m. address, a ball game, vocal performances, and, at 7:00 p.m., a formal concert by the two bands.

THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY BAND MOVEMENT

The history of the Germania Cornet Band is associated with the larger context of community brass bands in the U.S. and their role in American popular culture. Between their development in the mid-19th century (some through connections with local militia groups) and their decline nationwide around 1920, these groups became highly successful in communities across U.S., including rural townships like Germania which were outside the boundaries of incorporated municipalities. By the 1880s and 1890s the band movement had expanded to such a degree that most towns of any size were actively supporting some sort of civic band. Local community bands were mirrored at the national level by the immense popularity of professional concert bands conducted by leaders such as Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore and John Philip Sousa (Hazen and Hazen 1987, 4).

Band historians Margaret Hindle Hazen and Robert M. Hazen call community brass bands "unquestionably the most visible and audible musical organizations" of their day (Hazen and Hazen 1987, 1). Community bands, usually brass, were far more popular, for example, than symphonies, orchestras, and other forms of musical performance. Community band music was heard at parades, funerals, holidays, commencements, temperance meetings, military events, county fairs, ceremonies welcoming dignitaries and politicians, events marking the opening of the nation's railroads and bridges, and at weekly band concerts held at local halls or bandstands (Hazen and Hazen 1987, 2; Atherton 1984, 147). One historian has written, "No matter what the catalyst was that caused mass gatherings and involvement, whether for recreation, social entertainment or pure amusement, the band was almost always included" (Tiede 1970, 178).

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Germania Township, Todd Co., Minnesota

Community bands were relatively easy to organize. The instruments were readily obtainable, easy to play, and had similar mouthpieces and fingerings which allowed them to be interchanged and shared among band members (Hazen and Hazen 1987, 12-13). There was flexibility in the number of members or instruments a band needed. Companies sold entire sets of musical instruments and sheet music through the mail and made recommendations about band composition. A typical early 20th century brass band of the size of the Germania Cornet Band used brass and percussion, and relatively few woodwind instruments such as clarinets, for maximum sound. An early photograph of the Germania Cornet Band shows that the band apparently consisted of three trumpets of various types, one trombone, three clarinets, five larger valved brass horns (apparently comprised of at least one bass, one baritone, one tenor, and two others), one snare drum, and one bass drum.

Musical prowess was not necessary to form a community band--the enthusiasm of band members and a single instructor was apparently all that was required. Carl Peterson, a founding member of the Germania Cornet Band, recounted in 1982, "None of us had ever played an instrument--we didn't even know how to read notes, but we thought it would be fun to have a band. So we got together and hired an instructor, George Mundy of Eagle Bend, who first of all, helped us order our instruments. It was a great day when our instruments arrived--everyone tried to blow the horns, beat the drums, etc." (Clarissa Independent, Oct. 7, 1982).

Uniforms were seen as important to the performance and were often military-inspired woolen suits impressively decorated with gold cord and buttons. Two Germania Cornet Band uniforms once owned by Herbert Johnson and Henning Johnson survive in a museum in Eagle Bend in Todd County. They are black with gold braid down the front and the initials "G. B." stitched onto the collar.

Bands played important social functions in new and developing communities. To the band members, participation was a fun, rewarding social activity. To the greater community, the band was seen as a valuable social and civic institution. Some communities saw support of the local band as their patriotic or civic duty, and to some communities the band was as important an institution as the public school, churches, or the local newspaper (Hazen and Hazen 1987, 43). This relationship seems to have existed in Germania Township where local newspapers like the Clarissa Independent implored readers to "give the boys a lift and enjoy a pleasant evening" by attending a concert (Clarissa Independent, Dec. 14, 1916).

Bands often operated on a volunteer basis, with the members paying for their own equipment, instruction, and uniforms. Some communities supported bands through taxes or public donations (Atherton 1984, 147-148). In Todd County,

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the Germania Cornet Band members played without fee, but used the proceeds from dance and concert admissions to help pay for their instruction.

Like the Germania Cornet Band, many community bands were comprised of members of the same family who had often been taught musical appreciation and skills by a family member (Hazen and Hazen 1987, 33; Tiede 1970, 192). Many amateur bands were formed through the efforts of a single individual, who may have been George Mundy in the case of the Germania Band (Hazen and Hazen 1987, 63; Tiede 1970, 22). Like the Germania Band, many community bands were comprised of local boys or unmarried men. Because it was considered unladylike for women to play instruments other than pianos, organs, and strings, most community bands were comprised of males.

Some amateur bands were organized with deliberate and definitive ethnic ties. For example, German, Czech, and Italian bands were particularly popular in the Midwest. These bands usually played dances, folk music, and patriotic songs from the immigrants' country of origin, often using traditional instruments. The Germania Cornet Band does not appear to have been an ethnic band, despite the fact that most members were either Norwegian or Swedish. Rather, it seems to have been a more typical, mainstream "American" community band. Germania Township residents who remember the band report that it played music that was "popular in the area" including some polkas, waltzes, two-steps, and some Scandinavian music (Reek 1995).

Community bands began to decline nationwide around World War I. In Germania Township, the band continued at least into the 1920s. Band concerts eventually became less popular as phonographic recordings, the automobile, motion pictures, and radio broadcasting enticed both audiences and musicians away from brass bands (Hazen and Hazen 1987, 191-193). In addition, audience support for local bands decreased as telephones, radios, and automobiles made farms and rural communities less isolated, leading residents to identify less intensely with their own local community and to socialize in larger regional groups (Hazen and Hazen 1987, 195-197).

BACKGROUND HISTORY OF GERMANIA TOWNSHIP

Most of the founding members of the Germania Cornet Band were farmers of Swedish and Norwegian descent who were living in a township of mixed Scandinavian and German settlement. Germania Township is located in northwestern Todd County in northcentral Minnesota. In the early 20th century wheat, barley, oats, rye, flax, corn, and vegetables were grown in the region and there were enough dairy cattle to support 17 creameries in the county by 1915. The first settlers to Germania Township were apparently S. H. Hamilton and Paul Steinbach who came around 1877. Steinbach apparently named the township after the ship that carried him to America from his native Germany.

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Germania Township, Todd Co., Minnesota

Todd County was settled by a mixture of pioneers including Germans, Norwegians, Swedes, Poles, Yankee Americans, French Canadians, and others. Germans, Norwegians, and Swedes comprised the three largest ethnic groups. By 1905 there were particularly dense concentrations of German immigrants in the northern and east central parts of the county, dense concentrations of Norwegians in east central and southwestern Todd County, and dense concentrations of Swedes in northwestern and southwestern townships (Holmquist 1981).

Germania Township itself was also settled by an ethnic mixture. In 1905, 10-25 percent of the township residents were of German stock, 10-25 percent were of Norwegian stock, and 10-25 percent were of Swedish stock (Holmquist 1981).

After its initial settlement in 1877, the population of the township doubled every ten years between 1880 and 1900, reaching 485 people in 1900. It then grew steadily to 682 people in 1920, remained at approximately that level between 1920 and 1940, and began to decline to a 1970 level of 450 people. Germania Township was incorporated in March of 1880. By the early 20th century at least five rural school houses and three churches were scattered throughout the township.

Germania Hall is the last building standing in the unincorporated hamlet known as "Germania" which developed in the center of Section 28 in Germania Township. The hamlet developed on County Highway 11 at its intersection with a township road at what was known in the late 19th century as "Burton's Corner" (after Captain Burton whose land was adjacent to the intersection and who was one of the first settlers to the area). The hamlet developed in anticipation of the construction of a Northern Pacific branch line through Section 28. (The Northern Pacific had crossed the northeastern corner of the county in 1872 on its route from Duluth to Fargo.) Buildings in the hamlet once included a store which was founded by George Van Dyke of Eagle Bend and a cream station built to gather milk and cream from surrounding dairy farms. The railroad line never reached Germania, and by 1936 the cream station had gone bankrupt and the store had burned down. A local historian reports ". . . when the fire destroyed the store, the club and band projected and carried out a plan for a town hall, and as a result what is known as the Germania town hall was built. This corner is and has been for nearly 60 years a landmark in the region. It was first known as Captain Burton's corner. Later the land passed into the hands of George Gibson, who still owns it" (DeLaurier 1936, 168).

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EVENTS AT GERMANIA HALL

Germania Hall was dedicated on September 23, 1917. Band members and area residents decided to combine the dedication of the hall with a large World War I loyalty demonstration. All area residents were invited to attend and to bring their dinner baskets to the picnic. Two or three bands joined the Germania Cornet Band in concert, and several orators including the local school superintendent spoke to the crowd.

The fact that the dedication of the hall was combined with a loyalty demonstration is consistent with a pattern of similar events held across the Midwest during the years 1915-1918 in which communities of immigrants used such celebrations as an opportunity to demonstrate political allegiance to their new country. As World War I broke out, the loyalty of many ethnic groups was questioned in both subtle and direct ways by the dominant American culture. Some politicians and members of the press nationwide extolled so-called "anti-hyphenism" as they demanded that Norwegian-Americans, Swedish-Americans, and German-Americans discontinue overt references to their countries of origin, drop traditional cultural practices, and stop speaking foreign languages. During calls for U.S. neutrality in the early years of World War I more ethnic diversity was tolerated, but as the U.S. was entering the war many Americans felt that it was important to present a united front in the war effort (Chrislock 1977).

Germania Hall was the site of numerous community picnics and social events through the years, in addition to band concerts and dances. For example, there was a dance at Germania Hall in September of 1918 to benefit the Red Cross. Also in September of 1918 the "home talent" play entitled "Safety First" (apparently a war-related theme) was presented at the hall to a large crowd. By the 1920s township board meetings, annual township meetings, and all public elections were regularly held there.

The hall remained a very popular local entertainment center. By 1920 there was a regular schedule of dances. After the Germania Cornet Band folded in the early 1920s, other groups provided music. In May of 1920, for example, music was furnished by Rader's Orchestra of Sauk Centre, and at an August dance the Jolly Jazzers performed. In May of 1925 the five-piece Wildwood Serenaders furnished music.

In January of 1925, at the height of Prohibition, the Clarissa Independent reported the following under the headline, "Wild Time At Germania Hall: Moonshine Crowd Meets Waterloo at Hands of Sheriff Burns and Deputies":

Sheriff Burns and his deputies scored heavily last Saturday night when they swooped down on the crowd that have been bringing moonshine and getting drunk at Germania Hall at the Saturday night dances that have

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been held there. As a result of the visit of Todd County's energetic sheriff, seven young men were rounded up and taken to Long Prairie, where they had a chance to think it over and on Monday morning they were taken before Justice Barber, where they plead guilty and paid fines from \$25 to \$160.00 and costs. Some of the young men were unable to raise the price of their fun and are at this writing still confined to the jail. Peddling booze and getting drunk has been the popular pastime for some time around Germania Hall on dance nights, and the final blow-up was bound to come. To the credit of the young men of the Germania community it can be said that but two young men of that neighborhood were mixed up in the affair, the remainder of the crowd coming from Bartlett Township and Aldrich. . . . We understand that Carl Peterson, who has been giving these dances, called in Sheriff Burns to stop the hoodlums who had been making things miserable around the hall the past few dances (Clarissa Independent, Jan. 15, 1925).

During the 1930s large annual Germania Township picnic reunions were held at the Bjerken grove located adjacent to the hall. The July 1937 reunion, for example, included amusements typical of rural, Midwestern social gatherings including sporting events, dancing, prizes, a picnic, concessions, a wrestling match, a horseshoe tournament, horse and pony races, an amateur talent program, boxing, an Eagle Valley versus Germania tug-of-war contest, a ball game, and a 9:00 p.m. dance at Germania Hall. Seth W. Wood, a nationally-known cartoonist and lecturer, spoke about the Townsend plan at the July 1938 reunion. Music was provided by vocalists and the Little German Band from Bertha. Tony Rue performed his famous whip act, and there were boxing matches, barrel races, running races, horse races, kittenball, and a large dance at Germania Hall.

In October of 1938 Germania Township's Farm Bureau held an amateur show in Germania Hall which was attended by 300 people who were "jammed" into the building. A similar event sponsored by the Germania Community Club and the local Farm Bureau unit in August of 1940 sent its winners to a county contest.

Many educational events and lectures were also held at the club. For example, in August of 1938 John E. Egley spoke at a meeting of the Germania Community Club on the "Depression, Its Cause and Remedy." Spelling contests were also held there during the 1930s.

Many of the events at the hall were sponsored by the Germania Community Club. The Germania Community Club originally organized during the active years of the Germania Cornet Band, but disbanded around 1945 and was later reorganized in 1952. The club sponsored the annual Germania picnics and reunions of the 1930s.

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Rural community clubs like the Germania Community Club became popular in the Midwest around 1915 as the telephone service, automobiles, and better roads provided opportunities for farm families to become better acquainted with their neighbors and to get together more easily. These clubs, which were often the forerunners of local units of the Farm Bureau (a farmers' organization which was founded during World War I), usually met in members' homes, rural churches, or in social halls such as Germania Hall. These clubs provided situations in which farm youth gained experience in public speaking, musical and dramatic performance, and other creative expression, as well as providing both adults and children with social interaction. Some served as rural lending-library locations. Some clubs sponsored political, civic, or agricultural activities. Many were affiliated with larger, county-wide community club organizations (Morain 1988, 105-106).

In 1950 the Germania Hall structure was given to the Germania Community Club. The club then purchased the one-acre plot of land on which the hall stood for \$50. In 1968 Germania Hall was still being regularly used as a recreation center and meeting place by educational, patriotic, and family and social groups, and by the Golden Valley 4-H Club. It was being used to practice for and to perform sporting events, school programs, and talent shows, as well as being used for township meetings and public elections (Clarissa Independent, Aug. 1, 1968).

In 1992, the Germania Community Club was still holding regular monthly meetings and entertainment in the building, and sponsoring a dance in the hall the last Saturday of each month. On Saturday, September 9, 1994, for example, more than 100 people gathered at the hall for a special talent show which was held in addition to a regular Saturday night musicians' jam session and dance. More than 20 performers from the towns of Long Prairie, Sauk Centre, Staples, Deer Creek, Burtrum, Wadena, Browerville, and Clarissa attended the event (Becker 1994).

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description:

The west 208.71 feet of the south 208.71 feet of the northeast quarter of Section 28, Township 132, Range 34, Todd County, Minnesota.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary of the nominated property includes the parcel historically associated with Germania Hall.

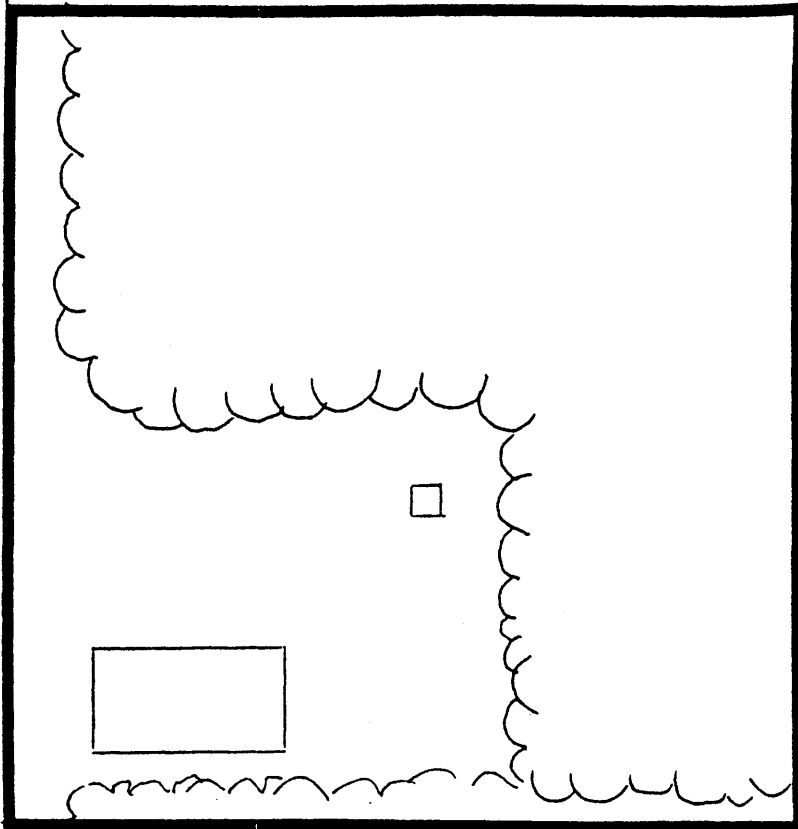
Germania Hall
Germania Township
Todd County, Minnesota



County Highway 11

Gravel Township Road +

Ctr Section 28



Not To Scale

 Property boundary