

## MINNESOTA HISTORIC PROPERTIES INVENTORY FORM

HISTORIC NAME: Hinckley Fire Relief House

COUNTY: Pine

80002/12

CURRENT NAME: Karnowski Residence

CITY/TWP.: Sandstone

LEGAL DESC.: Townsite of Sandstone Quarries  
Block 25  
Lot 5ADDRESS: NE corner of Court  
Avenue and Sixth Street

## CLASSIFICATION:

Building   
Structure \_\_\_\_\_  
Object \_\_\_\_\_  
District \_\_\_\_\_

## CONDITION:

Excellent   
Good \_\_\_\_\_  
Fair \_\_\_\_\_  
Deteriorated \_\_\_\_\_

## SIGNIFICANCE:

Local   
State \_\_\_\_\_  
National \_\_\_\_\_

## THEME/S:

Primary Social/Humanitarian  
Secondary \_\_\_\_\_  
Others \_\_\_\_\_OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: Yes \_\_\_ No  Restricted \_\_\_  
VISIBLE FROM THE ROAD: Yes  No \_\_\_  
OCCUPIED: Yes  No \_\_\_PRESENT USE:  
Residence

DATE CONSTRUCTED: 1894

ORIGINAL USE: Residence

ORIGINAL OWNER: Edward Halvorsen

ARCHITECT/BUILDER:

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: Agnes Karnowski  
Sandstone, MN 55072ACREAGE: Less than one acre LOCAL CONTACT/ORG.: Pine County Historical Society  
Askov, MN 55704UTM REFERENCE:  
Sandstone Quad. 15

15 / 510640 / 5108600

FORM PREPARED BY: Mark Haidet  
DATE: March 1980

## DESCRIPTION:

The Hinckley Fire Relief House is situated on a corner lot in a residential neighborhood east of Sandstone's business district. The Sandstone school and playground are located directly across the street.

The simple one and one-half story rectangular frame structure is sheathed in clapboard and covered by a gable roof with boxed cornice. A one room gable-roofed lean-to erected at the time of construction is attached to the rear of the house. The main entrance is offset to the left of the west gable facade, and a second entrance is located on the north side of the lean-to. Second floor windows at either gable end, the sole window on the north side of the main section, and the window at the rear of the lean-to are all double-hung single light windows. The house's sole decorative features are a stained glass window immediately above the front first floor window and simple end boards.

Alterations include a simple front porch, an exterior brick chimney constructed on the south side of the house, and two modern windows in the lean-to. An area sheathed in vertical siding on the north side of the lean-to may have been an open porch at one time.

A small gable-roofed barn (ca.1895) is located behind the house at the rear of the property.

## SIGNIFICANCE:

The Hinckley Fire Relief House in Sandstone stands as a reminder of one of the worst forest fire disasters in Minnesota history and of the humanitarian effort undertaken by the state to aid victims of the fire. On September 1, 1894, fire destroyed an area of approximately 350 square miles in Pine County, obliterating the villages of Finlayson, Hinckley, Miller, Mission Creek, Pokegama, and Sandstone. Four hundred eighteen persons (comprising about one-sixth of the entire population) perished. Hundreds were left homeless and in need of assistance. To attend to the needs of the survivors, Governor Knute Nelson appointed a State Commission for the Relief of the Fire Sufferers. The commission received contributions of money and supplies and provided the victims with temporary shelter, food, clothing, seed, furniture, and tools. One of the responsibilities assumed by the commission was the construction of houses for survivors who had owned homes prior to the fire and who lacked sufficient insurance to cover the loss. One hundred forty-nine simple frame houses were erected by the commission within three months of the fire. All measured 24' by 16', and were either one story or a story and a half depending on the family's size. A lean-to was sometimes added for larger families. Most relief houses, due to their age and small size have been razed or drastically altered. The house at the corner of Court Avenue and Sixth Street in Sandstone was the home of the Edward Halvorsen family for several years after the fire. The six Halvorsen family members survived the fire by seeking shelter in the Kettle River east of town. They, like other Sandstone survivors, were taken to Duluth where they received temporary relief while the commission's

(see continuation sheet)



Hinckley Fire Relief House

Pine County  
Sandstone, MN

carpenters erected the house for \$181. The house's exceptional integrity makes it a good representative of the aftermath of an important local event.

Bibliography:

Minnesota Commission for Relief of Sufferers, 1894-95, boxes 1-4. Governor's Files, Minnesota State Archives, Minnesota Historical Society.

"Report of the State Commission for the Relief of the Forest Fire Sufferers." Appendix to Memorials of the Minnesota Forest Fires in the Year 1894 by William Wilkinson. Minneapolis: Norman E. Wilkinson, 1895.

Swenson, Grace Stageberg. From the Ashes: The Story of the Hinckley Fire of 1894. Stillwater: The Croixside Press, 1979. pp. 97-134.

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