

PH0501581

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUL 27 1977  
DATE ENTERED JAN 20 1978

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

### 1 NAME

HISTORIC  
UNION HIGH SCHOOL  
AND/OR COMMON  
THIRD STREET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

### 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER  
North Third Street  
CITY, TOWN  
Black River Falls  
STATE  
Wisconsin 54615

\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Third  
VICINITY OF  
CODE  
055

COUNTY  
Jackson  
CODE  
053

### 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

### 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME  
Joint School District No. 2  
STREET & NUMBER  
400 Harrison Street  
CITY, TOWN  
Black River Falls  
STATE  
Wisconsin 54615

### 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Register of Deeds Office, Jackson County Court House  
STREET & NUMBER  
307 Main Street  
CITY, TOWN  
Black River Falls  
STATE  
Wisconsin 54615

### 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE  
Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places  
DATE  
1976  
\_\_\_ FEDERAL  STATE \_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_ LOCAL  
DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
CITY, TOWN  
Madison  
STATE  
Wisconsin 53706

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Remarkably, the Union High School has received few alterations over the years. The Badger State Banner of August 20, 1870 stated: "The schoolhouse is to be three stories high not including the basement and to be built of brick, with a stone foundation, and surmounted with a Mansard roof. It will be 42 feet high above the basement, and 80 by 65."<sup>1</sup> The same paper in December, 1871, said: "A neat tower projects out from the main walls and rises about thirty feet above the main building, with Mansard roof in which there is a bell room, clock room and dials. There are also eight air flues projecting out two and one half feet from the walls, and rising above the roof like turrets, and two large chimneys in the center, corresponding with the air flues, giving it an attractive and stately appearance."<sup>2</sup> Frear stone window sills and arches enliven the brick facade.

The interior, according to these articles, had a basement divided into two playrooms, a furnace room, wood rooms, alleys, air chambers, etc. The first and second floors contained four rooms, 25' x 30', and a 13' wide central hall. The third floor had two similarly sized rooms, a 30' x 58' assembly room, a 13' x 13' library at one end of the long central hall and a janitor's room of the same size at the other end. The interior configuration has remained the same.

The exterior, however, has received a few alterations. The original fire escapes on the north and south sides were replaced in the 1930's with fire escapes of a very similar but more modern type. The clock in the tower is no longer extant. The outside wooden steps were replaced with concrete steps and metal pipe railings in 1902. Later the concrete steps on the back facade were removed and replaced by a ground level entrance.

Newer doorways and split level landings inside each door have been added to both the front and back facades.

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1. "New Union High School," Badger State Banner, Black River Falls, August 20, 1870.
  2. J. K. Hoffmann, "The Union High School, Black River Falls," Badger State Banner, Black River Falls, December 16, 1871.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1870-1871

BUILDER/ARCHITECT W. H.J. Nichols, La Crosse

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Union High School is no doubt one of the finest examples of Victorian schoolhouses remaining in the state of Wisconsin. Very few schoolhouses in towns the size of Black River Falls were of such stately design. Much fewer are extant. Crowning the summit of Price Hill, the schoolhouse is also a local landmark, dominating the skyline from all directions and overlooking the business district of the city.

Construction of the Union High School began in the summer of 1870.<sup>1</sup> It was planned for a capacity of 650 scholars. The Badger State Banner of Black River Falls declared "it will be the best schoolhouse in northwestern Wisconsin."<sup>2</sup> William H. J. Nichols of La Crosse was the designer.<sup>3</sup> Nichols was a prominent early La Crosse architect, beginning his practice in 1857 and designing many important buildings in the city before he moved to Denver in 1872. William Van Hoosear supervised the construction, and the contract was let to Dudley J. Spaulding. He made the bricks for the building in his yard at the west end of Van Buren Street in Black River Falls. Mr. Spaulding was paid \$20,000 for his work, although the final cost came to between \$30,000 and \$35,000. The county superintendent of schools praised Spaulding who had "spared no means to build the house according to plans and specifications, although costing hundreds of dollars more than the contract price."<sup>4</sup> After visiting the school on opening day the superintendent said, "It was pleasant to pass from room to room, and to see children numbering nearly three hundred, rich and poor alike so comfortably provided with everything that modern improvement has brought about, regardless of expense, showing the wisdom of the people and although the sum expended has been enormous, all the remuneration asked or expected is the education of their children."<sup>5</sup>

An outside privy was in use until 1902. The building became a grade school in 1897 when a new high school was built beside it (this building has been much altered, is completely detached from the older schoolhouse, and is therefore not included in the nomination).

Although it is still in use as an elementary school, a recent study by the school board declared the old Union High School building to be obsolete for school use. The school board and the Jackson County Historical Society desire to save the building, but its future ownership and maintenance are uncertain at this time.

1. "New Union High School."

2. Ibid.

3. Hoffmann.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Anderson, Jean G., "Preservation Is Sought For Century-Old School," La Crosse Tribune, January 6, 1977.  
 Hoffmann, J. K., "The Union High School, Black River Falls," Badger State Banner, Black River Falls, December 16, 1871.  
 "New Union High School," Badger State Banner, Black River Falls, August 20, 1870.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .12 acre  
 UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	5	6	7	1	4	0	0
ZONE		EASTING			NORTHING		

  
 C 

ZONE		EASTING			NORTHING		

B 

ZONE		EASTING			NORTHING		

  
 D 

ZONE		EASTING			NORTHING		

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Edges of building.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Miss Carol Kinley, President

ORGANIZATION

Jackson County Historical Society

DATE

January 8, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

223 North 4th Street

TELEPHONE

715/284-4659

CITY OR TOWN

Black River Falls

STATE

Wisconsin 54615

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Rebecca Kinley*

TITLE Acting Director  
 State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE 7/20/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Wm. J. Smith*  
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 1.20.78

ATTEST: *Charles...*  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
 DATE 1.17.78

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

11

PAGE

2

11. Katherine E. Hundt, Architectural Historian

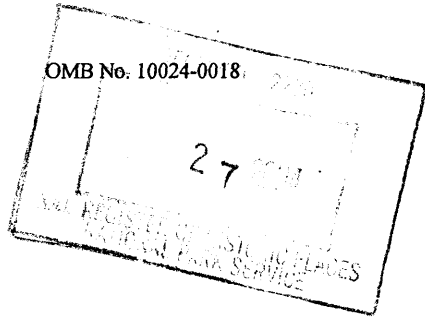
State Historical Society of Wisconsin

816 State Street

Madison,

608/262-2970

Wisconsin 53706



**United States Department of Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

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 "x" 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 Union High School  
other names/site number Third Street Elementary School

**2. Location**

street & number	223 North Fourth Street	N/A	not for publication
city or town	Black River Falls	N/A	vicinity
state Wisconsin	code WI	county Jackson	code 053
			zip code 54615

**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.)

*James Draelga*  
Signature of certifying official/Title

7/21/04  
Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer - Wisconsin

State or Federal agency and bureau

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