

MINNESOTA HISTORIC PROPERTIES INVENTORY FORM

HISTORIC NAME: O. G. Anderson & Co. Store COUNTY: Lyon
 CURRENT NAME: Big Store CITY/TWP.: Minneota
 LEGAL DESC.: Lots 26, 27, 28 and the southwesterly 5 ft. of lot 25, all in block 9 ADDRESS: on Jefferson St. at Second St. Minneota, MN

CLASSIFICATION:	CONDITION:	SIGNIFICANCE:	THEME/S:
Building <u>X</u>	Excellent <u>X</u>	Local <u>X</u>	Primary <u>commerce</u>
Structure _____	Good _____	State _____	Secondary <u>architecture</u>
Object _____	Fair _____	National _____	Others _____
District _____	Deteriorated _____		

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: Yes X No _____ Restricted X PRESENT USE: storage and commercial
 VISIBLE FROM THE ROAD: Yes X No _____
 OCCUPIED: Yes X No _____

DATE CONSTRUCTED: 1901 & 1916 ORIGINAL USE: general merchandise store
 ORIGINAL OWNER: O. G. Anderson & Co. ARCHITECT/BUILDER: H. G. Gerlach

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: The Society for the Preservation of Minneota's Heritage, Minneota, MN, Frank Rebnord, Pres.; and Virgil V. Gislason, Minneota, MN.	ACREAGE: Less than one acre <u>X</u>
LOCAL CONTACT/ORG.: The Society for the Preservation of Minneota's Heritage, Minneota, MN, Frank Rebnord, Pres.	UTM REFERENCE: Minneota Quad. 15/262800/4938340
FORM PREPARED BY: Susan Roth	
DATE: December, 1980	

DESCRIPTION:
 The O. G. Anderson & Co. Store (or the "Big Store") is located on the corner of Jefferson and Second Streets in Minneota's business district. The principal building, constructed in 1901, is a two story rectangular structure of brick set on a limestone foundation. In 1916 a one story brick extension was added to the north side of the main structure. The 1901 structure, designed in the Queen Anne commercial style, features a five bay front, metal casement display windows at the front and rear storefronts, a cornice pediment, and date and name plaques in the central second story bay. The central window in the second floor and the side opera house entrance feature semi-circular arches. All other openings are segmental-arched. Other ornamentation includes stone sills, decorative brick banding above street level display windows, and a low relief frieze and three sets of corbels along the roof line. The 1916 addition features an original storefront and simple patterned brickwork. When the Big Store closed in 1972, shelves and display cases were sold by the Anderson family. The main store building has since been purchased by a local organization committed to the preservation and adaptive re-use of the building by the community. It is now used for furniture storage. The 1916 building is owned by a development corporation and is rented to a local businessman. Apart from the removal of shelving, the interiors of both buildings remain unaltered and retain such features as a freight elevator, raised opera stage on the second floor, wood floors and millwork, and pressed metal ceilings.

SIGNIFICANCE:
 The O. G. Anderson and Co. Store is significant as a remarkably well-preserved early 20th century commercial building that served the residents of Minneota and great portions of Lyon, Lincoln and Yellow Medicine Counties for over 70 years. In 1896, Sigurdur A. Anderson, a grocer for the Verslunarfelag Islendinga, a cooperative Icelandic mercantile company, and Olafur G. Anderson became partners in a clothing and general merchandise store. By 1899 the firm which was known as O. G. Anderson & Co., considered plans for a larger store. In 1900 H. G. Gerlach, a Mankato architect, was retained to design the building and one year later the firm of Mahlke and Franksen, also of Mankato, was hired as building contractor. The total cost of the building was estimated from \$12,000 to \$15,000. By 1901 the building was being referred to as the "Big Store," and said to be one of the largest stores built on the section of the Chicago and North Western Railroad line between Mankato to Watertown, South Dakota. The Opera House, located on the second floor, was an important community center, hosting dramatic productions, dances, socials, roller skating,

basketball games and lectures.

After O. G. Anderson's death about 1903, the store passed into the hands of Carle Anderson, Sigurdur's son. It was managed by the Anderson's until 1972. The closing was attributed to competition from chain stores and supermarkets, the increased mobility of area shoppers, and the advanced age of the owner and employees. The Big Store is an outstanding component of rural commerce which supplied the commercial and social needs of a tri-county area for over 70 years.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

"THE BIG STORE Retirement looms before a southwest Minnesota landmark."
Minneapolis Tribune/Picture Magazine, 23 July 1972.

Larson, Ralph. Minnesota - A Centennial History. Minnesota: Centennial History Committee, 1981.

