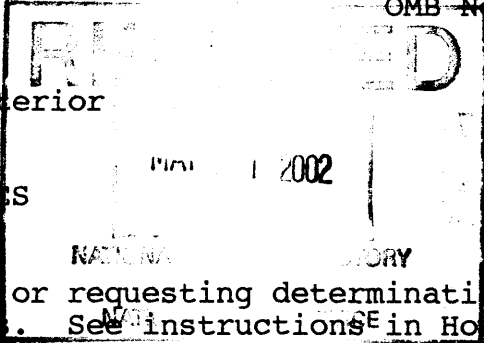


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



637

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 any 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 Ironton City Hall

other names/site number Ironton Village Hall

=====

2. Location

=====

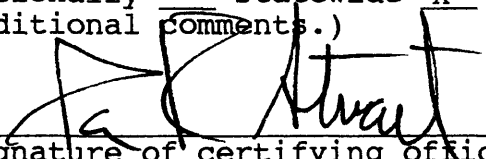
street & number 309 3rd Street not for publication
city or town Ironton vicinity _____
state Minnesota code MN county Crow Wing code 035
zip code 56455

=====

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

=====

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide X locally. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)



Signature of certifying official

4/17/02

Date

Ian R. Stewart, 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 or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this 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): _____

Edward F. Beal 6/14/02

Per

Signature of Keeper _____ Date _____
of Action

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

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u> 1 </u>	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
N/A

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

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Government</u>	Sub: <u>city hall, fire station,</u>
	<u>correctional facility</u>
<u>Social</u>	<u>meeting hall, civic</u>
<u>Education</u>	<u>library</u>
<u>Recreation and Culture</u>	<u>auditorium</u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Government</u>	Sub: <u>city hall, fire station</u>
<u>Education</u>	<u>library</u>

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and Early 20th Century Movement/Bungalow Craftsman
Late 19th and Early 20th Century Revivals/Colonial Revival/Georgian Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	<u>Limestone</u>
roof	<u>Composition</u>
walls	<u>Brick, stucco</u>
other	<u></u>

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

=====
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.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a 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.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Social history
Politics and government

Period of Significance 1917-1952

Significant Dates N/A

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Nelson, Alex (architect/contractor)

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

=====

9. Major Bibliographical References

=====

(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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

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

Name of repository: Ironton City Hall

=====

10. Geographical Data

=====

Acreage of Property _____

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	15	425010	5147490	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	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 Carmen Tschofen, contract historian

organization _____ date 12.01.01

street & number 2667 Parkview Boulevard telephone 763-522-5709

city or town Robbinsdale state MN zip code 55422

=====
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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Ironton

street & number 309 3rd Street telephone 218-546-5625

city or town Ironton state MN zip code 56544

=====
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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Ironton City Hall
name of property
Crow Wing, Minnesota
county and State

=====

7. Narrative Description

Constructed in 1917, the Ironton Village Hall is representative of trends and revivals in architecture of the late 19th and early 20th century. The brackets and wide eaves show the influence of the era's popular Craftsman Style of construction, while the dormers and rounded arch windows suggest Colonial and Georgian Revival influences. The Hall's exterior provides insight into the range of building functions through the various applications and sizes of windows and doors on all sides of the building. The building was remodeled with a 1996 grant from the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board, which included the alteration of some windows.

Site

The Hall is located at 309 3rd Street, the intersection of 3rd Street and Irene Street. This location is one block north of what is now the town's primary thoroughfare. At the time of construction, the Hall was adjacent to town's primary business district, which ran north and south along the 200 block of Ironton Street (now Curtis Avenue), and across the street from the hub of activity created by the east-west Northern Pacific tracks, a railroad depot and a farmer's market in the now-vacant lots to the south and southeast along 3rd Street.

Several buildings important to the town's development, including the Nelson and Berg retail building, the Presbyterian Church and the Elementary School (non-extant) were also built in 1917. The latter two are located one to four blocks to the south of the Hall along Irene Street, suggesting a deliberate axis of civic buildings parallel to the business district.

Placement and Form

Two of the Hall's original entrances face west to Irene Street, with another entrance and three fire hall bays opening south to Third Street. An alley defines the site on the east side, with a private residence occupying the lot to the north of the Hall.

The Hall's two-story, rectangular portion is approximately 94' long by 46' wide. The building is set on a limestone foundation, with a partial basement. A 10' by 10' square, hipped-roof hose tower projects from the midpoint of the Hall's east side. An approximately 16' by 36' single-story extension which served as the jail is located to the rear at the northeast corner of the building.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7

Page 2

Ironton City Hall
name of property
Crow Wing, Minnesota
county and State

=====

The facades on all sides are rough faced, polychromatic brick in shades of red, brown, black and orange, with stuccoing below the eaves. Because of its corner lot placement, both the west and south facades of the building are treated decoratively, with more modest decorative elements interspersed on the other two facades.

West Facade

The west facade is symmetrical, with the placement of double doors with transoms and paired double hung windows repeating twice in sequence on ground level. Two shed-and-shingle-roofed entryways (ca. 1980) conceal the doors. Running bond brickwork extends from the limestone foundation (where window wells have been filled or covered with cement) to sill level. White limestone sills extend past the edges of the window openings, and the sill line is emphasized with short stretches of horizontal limestone flanking each door. Two rows of protruding horizontal stretchers between openings at sill level provide continuity to the sill line and connect the brick window surrounds. On the southwest corner at sill level is a white limestone cornerstone marked "A.D. 1917."

Window and door surrounds on the ground floor are created by the alternate placement of bricks: stretchers extend horizontally from vertical edges, and are placed vertically along the upper edge. A second tier of oppositely placed stretchers protrudes slightly from the wall to complete the frame.

A belt course of four rows of corbeling, six rows of flat brickwork, and six further rows of corbeling visually marks the separation between upper and lower floors. The second story contains four smaller double-hung windows aligned with the lower openings. Second story surrounds are similar to those below, with the vertical stretchers along the top of the openings angled to create flat relieving arches with white keystones. Raised brickwork between each window creates the effect of pilasters.

Directly above these smaller windows are four fan-shaped openings framed by arched brickwork extending to the level of the eaves. The original fan-shaped transoms were replaced with plywood ca. 1980. Three arched rows of corbeled brickwork provides further emphasis to the arches. The outer course is marked by a white keystone aligned with the keystones of the openings below. Two perpendicular courses of brick horizontally connect each surround and clearly define the line between the brickwork and the white stucco which surrounds the arches and visually caps the upper third of this story.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 3

Ironton City Hall
name of property
Crow Wing, Minnesota
county and State

=====

Wooden brackets with triangular openings define the corners and the midpoint of the west facade. A hipped-roof dormer with two window openings (now closed with plywood) and modern siding (replacing the original cedar shingles) is centered above the roofline.

South Facade

The Hall's south facade shares many decorative features with the west facade, but with less symmetry in fenestration. Brackets visually divide this side into six segments. The two westernmost segments, with two pairs of double-hung windows on the ground floor and second story, and fanlights in arched brickwork, echo the the west side.

The third segment on the ground floor contains a single doorway with a transom, flanked by single double hung windows. Original plans indicate that this entrance served as access to the Firemen's Room. This segment is united by a continuous sill line. Brick surrounds are similar to other openings. A painted wooden sign with the words "Ironton City Hall" and clerk's hours and council meeting times is centered above the door. The final three segments on the ground floor contain three overhead doors accessing the fire hall vehicle entrances, with a white neon-on-red-background "I.F.D." sign located on the belt course between the first and second bays (covering the engraved "I.F.D." limestone block shown in historic photographs prior to 1942). Original plans show that 6-panel wooden doors provided access to the fire bays, with iron bumpers flanking each opening.

The four northernmost segments on the upper story each contain pairs of double-hung windows larger than those previously described, with sill lines equal in width to the windows. These larger windows extend to the fan-shaped opening above without interposed brickwork. Brick arches over these fan openings are visually lighter, with only a single course flanking the white keystone.

East Facade

The utilitarian east facade is marked by a variety of roofline heights, with the two story portion bisected by a two-and a half-story, squared, protruding hose tower and a single-story jail extension to the north.

The corners of the protruding tower are defined by raised brick pilasters, with a narrower vertical line of protruding bricks marking the intersection of the tower and the Hall's east wall. The southern side of this tower has a louvered window opening just below the roofline. A tall, rectangular window opening penetrates the ground floor of the tower, with a similar opening in

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7

Page 4

Ironton City Hall
name of property
Crow Wing, Minnesota
county and State

=====

the tower's second story. A double opening with wooden louvers is located at the top of the tower just below the eaves, and is underlined by a sill extending beyond the opening's lower edge. The northern facade of the tower echoes the south side, with the addition of two rows of metal bolt plates midway up the tower. Original blueprints also indicate a hinged door on the west side of the tower, opening to the roof.

A utility door is centered south of the tower, with cedar paneling filling in what was once a larger opening, and a window opening is located in a parallel position just north of the tower, with a slightly smaller opening in one story, flat-roofed jail annex. Openings on this facade have no decorative surrounds. The corbeled belt course from the south facade extends from the south corner and wraps around the tower, but does not continue. A second, smaller belt course adorns the east facade just below the level of the two corner brackets, stopping at the tower.

North Facade

The placement of four roof brackets on the north side of the building suggests three functional segments on this side. In the eastern third, the ground floor contains the protruding jail annex, with a central door between two narrow windows to the east and west. All openings in the annex have been filled with plywood. (A window is also located on the west side of the annex near the wall intersection.)

A plywood-filled window with no decorative treatment is the easternmost opening above the annex. To the west and still above the annex, a window and door with transom are grouped under a fan-shaped opening and the lighter brick arch described on the south side. A metal fire escape stair extends from the door westward to the ground.

In the segment immediately west of the jail annex, a taller plywood-filled window and two smaller double hung windows are located on the ground floor. Above are two double hung window openings with fan lights and arch surrounds in the style and size of the primary facades. Midway between these two windows, the corbeled belt course separating the first and second stories resumes and continues west along the wall.

The third (western) segment of this side contains a below-grade stairwell to the basement, the well opening surrounded by a black metal pipe-type railing. A narrow window with bars is on the ground floor just to the west of the stair opening, with a low-set double hung window (no decorative treatment) immediately above in the second story. This segment is also marked by a

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 5

Ironton City Hall
name of property
Crow Wing, Minnesota
county and State

=====

raised brick belt course at the level of the stucco, a continuation of the brick treatment on the west facade.

Interior

The interior ground floor of the Hall was remodeled in 1996, with spaces on the first floor altered to accommodate accessible restrooms and to reconfigure office and library space. This remodeling retained the building's original first-floor functions but rearranged their locations. The jail space was converted to a firefighter's meeting room after 1971. Records indicate that the Hall was also remodeled in 1963, and that various alterations prior to that were made in attempt to retain warmth in the drafty building.

While the remodeling has obscured most original interior details, a few elements remain in the Hall, including the first floor vault room. The black frame and door have decorative elements in gold paint, including "Village of Ironton" stenciled on the upper door jamb, and the words "Cary Safe Company, Buffalo, New York" and decorative framing lines on the door. The basement houses a second, identical vault room at the base of the staircase and a No. 3 Ideal Redflash Boiler from the American Radiator Company. An Art Deco styled sign with gold on black lettering signed by the Luxem Company of Pittsburgh is located at the first floor landing, and lists city council officials and trustees at the time of construction, as well as the names of the building's architect and city engineer. Original door hardware at the second-floor auditorium entrance bears the name "Smith's Improved." The hose tower interior is relatively undisturbed, with metal rungs secured diagonally in the brickwork in the southeast corner, platforms at two levels and remnants of the pulley and hanging mechanisms.

A cast iron fire bell hangs in the peak of the tower.

Exterior Alterations

Accessibility accommodations have altered sidewalks on the west and south sides; portions of the original sidewalk extend around the building's north and east sides. Large, modern white downspouts, added during remodeling, are now strong visual features at the northwest and southwest corners of the building. Chimneys with decorative corbeling have been removed. A flagpole is located on the southwest corner of the lot, and a 1976 time capsule headstone bearing the seals of the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary and a brief inscription sits on a limestone foundation just east of the pole. Based on comparison to a 1923 photograph, iron railings on the west and south sides have been eliminated, as have several trees and foundation plantings.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7

Page 6

Ironton City Hall
name of property
Crow Wing, Minnesota
county and State

=====

Current Use

The Hall currently houses the city clerk's office, the Ironton children's library, the city council meeting room, and the fire department. The former jail serves as a meeting room for the fire department and other groups. The second floor and basement were closed to the public following a 1993 accessibility survey and remodeling proposal by Rieke Carroll Muller Associates, Inc. of Minnetonka. Public interest in the upper story auditorium is strong, but due to the prohibitive cost of resolving accessibility and safety issues, there are no viable plans for the restoration or reuse of this space. A bar owner on an adjacent block recently added a metal warehouse-style structure to his building, which now serves as a large public meeting and entertainment facility.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 7

Ironton City Hall
name of property
Crow Wing, Minnesota
county and State

=====
8. Statement of Significance

The Ironton City Hall is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A in the areas of Government and Politics and Social History. The activities associated with these areas of significance were important throughout the period of significance introduced by the construction of the Hall in 1917 and concluding in 1952. The Hall¹ served as the seat of local governmental and municipal activities from the town's period of initial growth and activity through the years following World War II. Additionally, events at the Hall exemplified the broad pattern of intensive civic interaction and social support practiced by members of this Iron Range community. The property is locally significant within the statewide context entitled "Iron Ore Industry, 1880s-1945."

Construction Era Context

Ironton City Hall was constructed as the Cuyuna Range iron ore production rolled toward its peak. The Cuyuna Range was the last of Minnesota's iron ranges to be developed, and fur trade and logging settlements in the area predated the successful sinking of the first shafts on the Cuyuna Range. The development of Ironton, however, was a direct result of the mining industry, and its rapid growth (and slow decline) paralleled that of the industry. Platted in 1910, Ironton's population peaked in 1920, as did ore production, bolstered by the demand for the Cuyuna Range's rare manganese ore during WWI.

Reflecting the rapid growth typical of a boom town, townsite proprietors and Cuyuna-Duluth mine owners John H. Hill and E.A. Lamb sold all lots in their original 1910 plat within a month. They quickly platted two 40-acre additions to accommodate the exploding population² and juggled their plat again in 1911 when ore was discovered directly underneath the northwest corner of the plat, causing the relocation of several buildings. Development was buoyed not only by the iron itself, but also by improved processing methods and by the improvement of transportation needed to move the ore, with a Soo Railroad feeder line to Ironton in late 1910 or early 1911 and the Cuyuna Northern line connecting Ironton with the Northern Pacific in 1912.

¹ Documentation during this era refers to both "Village Hall" and "City Hall." The fire station which first served as a municipal building was also called the "Village Hall." To avoid confusion, and because the current structure was identified on blueprints and referred to with increasing frequency as "City Hall" in historic documentation, this latter designation is used for this document.

² *Cuy-una! A Chronicle of the Cuyuna Range*. Cuyuna Range Bicentennial committee, 1976. p. 38.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 8

Ironton City Hall
name of property
Crow Wing, Minnesota
county and State

=====
Early newspaper accounts relate the rapid development of homes, sidewalks, a school house and "railroads' depot, national bank, post office, telephone and telegraphs with waterworks and electric plant under way."³

As the town's proprietors, Hill and Lamb had a vested interest in the success of the town and sought to provide all the amenities of a fashionable, developed town in order to attract residents. Clearly under the influence of the City Beautiful movement, they planned for wide streets, a public park and a playground in the new town. The City Beautiful amenities also were likely to attract women and citizens accustomed to well-established towns to an area which was still part of rough and tumble mining frontier,⁴ thereby further cementing the town's growth.

Handsome and community-oriented civic buildings, exemplified by the City Hall, were a further element of this movement. The Hall's multiple functions and its central location adjacent to the town's main street echoed those of other city halls across the country.⁵ The popularity of such structures was so great that Hill made a proposal for such a building almost immediately after the town's incorporation. In a 1911 letter to the city council, he proposed a multi-function village hall and auditorium. Hill's eagerness was such that his architects had already outlined a general plan for the purpose of discussion, according to the letter. Hill also felt that the local mining companies would need to approve the project, since they would bear the "burden of the taxes required to pay the bonds and interest." Ultimately, a proposal for a Hall of this type was not formally considered by the Council until 1916. The resulting building seemed to embody Hill's vision, with the exception of a court room; Ironton was served by the municipal court in Crosby at that time.

Prior to the construction of the 1917 Hall, various sites fulfilled the building's many functions. City officials first met in rotation at the "Lamb and Hill office" (shared by townsite proprietors E.A. Lamb and John H. Hill), the Frank Hill office, and the Ellingson Brothers general store, which anchored the main business district on the corner of Ironton Avenue and Third Street. In 1912 the council began meeting at the village Fire Hall, located just east of the present Hall

³ *Duluth Herald*, November 14, 1910.

⁴ *Iron Range Country. A Historical Travelogue of Minnesota's Iron Range*. Eveleth: IRRRB, State of Minnesota, 1979. p. 24. The Duluth Herald newspaper of Nov. 14, 1910, reprinted in *Cuyuna!*, p. 39, stated, "In laying out Ironton, its promoters had in mind a city beautiful."

⁵ Gebhard, David and Tom Martinson. *A Guide to the Architecture of Minnesota*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977, p. 302.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8

Page 9

Ironton City Hall
name of property
Crow Wing, Minnesota
county and State

=====
location. This building was soon referred to in newspaper accounts and council minutes as the Village Hall. In 1917, as the new Hall neared completion, the Street Commissioner was instructed to move the old building west to the village skating rink, where it served as a warming house.

Construction Politics and Processes

Village Council minutes provide insight into the importance that the city and its promoters granted to the construction of the Hall. A vote was held on November 1, 1916, with 71 citizens supporting the construction and furnishing of a Village Hall, ten against, and 67 supporting the \$20,000 bond issue, with 12 against. (A vote for the improvement of the public water works and an additional \$15,000 bond was passed at the same time.) Notices for the bonds and bids for construction were published in the *Ironton News* and the *St. Paul Dispatch*. Sixteen bids were received for the bonds, and they were ultimately sold to the William R. Compton Company of Chicago, which offered the highest premium. Payments were to be made to the Continental and Commercial Trust and Savings Bank in Chicago.

On December 13, 1916, the Village Council met with "a representation of Ironton businessmen...[who] expressed opinions as to choice of sites." (The council seems to have agreed with Hill's 1911 proposal to solicit local business support.) A unanimous vote approved Lots 25-26, Block 11, First Addition to Ironton. Three days later, architect Alex Nelson of Perham was employed to draw "plans and specifications" for the Hall.

While information on Alex Nelson is limited, he is mentioned in newspapers and city council minutes as the building's single architect and contractor, although original blueprints for the building list the architects as "Nelson and Buetow."⁶ Nelson's obituary notes that he served two years as a legislator from Otter Tail County in addition to being a "well known contractor" during his 45 years in Perham. He died in 1936 at the age of 76.

Clyde M. Pearce served as the village engineer during the project, and his stamps on the back of the blueprints note that he was a "mining engineer." Council minutes record his appointment to city engineer in 1917 and note his duties concerning the water supply and storm sewer plans, with no further record of his involvement with the Hall's construction.

⁶ Brothers Max and Carl Buetow were architects with separate practices in Minnesota during the Ironton City Hall construction era. Review of archival and other sources does not provide evidence to confirm which, if either, architect was involved in the Ironton City Hall design.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 10

Ironton City Hall
name of property
Crow Wing, Minnesota
county and State

Due to the rapid growth of the town, empty lots were at a premium in the town, and the site ultimately selected for the Hall was already occupied, whereby the City exercised its right of eminent domain. The Inland Steel Company, which was deemed to be entitled to \$1300 for its lot, agreed to accept \$375, with the city assuming to cost of moving the frame house on that site to another lot and placing it on a "foundation similar to the foundation now under said house." Prior arrangements had been made to move two, one-story frame buildings from the lot owned by the Cuyuna-Duluth Iron Company (owned in part by townsite founder John H. Hill, who was identified as the lot owner in local news accounts.⁷) to another lot accepted as compensation. Following the Inland Steel agreement, Hill disagreed with the valuation of his lot and, after a decision by a court-appointed board, the Cuyuna-Duluth Iron Company, along with Carrie P. Hill and Agnes I. Lamb (wives of the townsite proprietors) were ordered to receive \$600 in damages. This money ultimately went directly into the Hill and Lamb family pockets, as the Cuyuna Duluth Company was recorded as "having disclaimed any right or interest in or said to said sum or any part thereof." Shortly thereafter, the "Caddy and Clemens houses" and the "Inland Steel House" were moved by Emil Zontelli, a local roadbuilder and drayman.

Four bids for construction were opened June 5, 1917, and one was ultimately accepted from Alex Nelson (now identified as "contractor") for the sum of \$20, 243. Construction began the following week. A bid for "approximately 55,000 Alhambra brick, mixed shades" from the Standard Salt and Cement Company of Duluth was accepted a few days later, although the *Cuyuna Range Miner* noted in August that two cars of these bricks were rejected "because they were not according to specifications."⁸ Bonds for the Hall's heating and plumbing were accepted from L.H. Gauthier Company as contractor and the American Surety Company of New York for \$4000, and from the Blake Electric Company for \$490 for Hall wiring. In July, the council approved the use of "dipped-red cedar shingles" in the Hall's construction. In August, the Council apparently wished to promote the construction of this civic structure, approving \$4.80 for "The Improvement Bulletin," an expense noted as "Adv. Village Hall." In October the Hall was insured for \$14,000, and a committee was appointed to select furniture.

Further expense reports suggest the level of detail that went into the planning for the operation of the Hall. By February, 1918, the council recorded expenses such as those for the company of Merrill, Greer & Chapman, "Glassware, dishes, etc., V.Hall, \$296.65." The Ironton Hardware

⁷ *Ironton News*, February 24, 1917.

⁸ *Cuyuna Range Miner*, Aug. 3, 1917.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 11

Ironton City Hall
name of property
Crow Wing, Minnesota
county and State

=====
Company received over \$100 for "Furnishings," and a variety of suppliers, including Anderson C. & F.S. Co., Marshal-Wells and W.T. Carlson, received small payments for "equipment." Superior Novelty Works received \$19.62 for Village Hall supplies, and another sum later for flags. In March, shrubbery and trees were purchased from the Rose Hill Nursery in Minneapolis for both the Hall grounds and the Village park. A bid from the Safe Cabinet Co. for a safe cabinet and fixtures for \$258.00 was accepted and the company of Congdon & Bowen received \$2.25 for putting up a Village Hall sign. Voting booths were installed by E.A. Olson.

A cornerstone for the Hall was laid in August, 1917, and was reported to contain "...photographs, post cards, coins and newspapers. Various scenes on Ironton avenue and a few inside views of business houses, a handsome picture of John H. Mattson, the pioneer of Ironton, lists of the village officials, firemen and Ironton bank, the first and latest copies of the Ironton News and the Cuyuna Range Miner, and copy of the Duluth Herald of August 12 were the principal documents..." The occasion, which had been postponed from the previous day due to rain, was marked by short speeches from council president P.J. Long, B.W. Heed, and contractor Alex Nelson.⁹

Community and Social Use

Shortly before the Ironton City Hall was dedicated in December of 1917, the *Cuyuna Range Miner* provided a detailed introduction to the new building:

"On the ground floor in the rear of the building are commodious quarters for the apparatus of the local fire department with a thoroughly equipped tower for drying hose. These quarters will be of sufficient size to accommodate auto driven apparatus when same is purchased. Adjoining the equipment room is a large club room for the use of the members of the department. This will be furnished with lockers for the men, two shower baths and furniture of a lounging and smoking room, including reading and card tables.

In the front of the building on the first floor there is a large council chamber which will accommodate the needs of the village fathers for a long time to come.

On the second floor is the auditorium which is of sufficient size to seat 400 persons comfortably. The floors in this room, like those throughout the building are of maple and the finish is wash fir.

⁹ *Ironton News*, August 18, 1917.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 12

Ironton City Hall
name of property
Crow Wing, Minnesota
county and State

=====

In the front of the second floor are two rooms which will be equipped with card and reading tables for the use of the Ironton Commercial club. These will be furnished with leather upholstered easy chairs and other furniture to match. A kitchen in which banquets may be prepared, adjoins these rooms. This is finished in white enamel and will be equipped with all the facilities of a modern kitchen, including an electric cooking stove.

There is a large balcony above the auditorium which will be furnished with tapestry furniture or other similarly rich in finish where the ladies may lounge and chat and rest during dances or other gatherings. At present the lower walls of the auditorium are kalsomined but when the work is completed they will be hung with green burlap.¹⁰ The lighting system in the hall is of the indirect pattern and provides a most pleasing soft light.

In the rear of the building there is also a city jail which will be equipped with all that tends to make it a safe place for the keeping of the most obstreperous prisoners. It will have four steel barred cells of most modern equipment. "¹¹

The newspaper clearly lauded the modern facilities for the various functions of city government. But attention to details of furnishings and lighting also suggests that this practical consideration was balanced, or perhaps eclipsed, by the social and public opportunities of the Hall's spaces.

The combination of civic functions and social events taking place in the Hall made it truly a civic center. The Hall not only housed governmental functions which directly affected the welfare of community members, but also served as the site for events organized by community members for community enjoyment – events which often raised funds subsequently donated to benefit community causes.

The first event in the Hall, held prior to its final completion and dedication, was a prototypical example of the events that were to be held over the next decades. The 1917 Thanksgiving ball

¹⁰ Kalsomine, also called calcimine, was a mixture, sometimes tinted, of glue, water, and powdered calcium used to provide color on plaster walls and ceilings. It appears to have been a temporary measure, with the later burlap an improvement, since kalsomine rubbed off when brushed against. There is no longer any evidence of these wall coverings. While the spaces described here remain identifiable- kitchen, balcony, etc., the decorative elements and most furnishings, with the exception of kitchen appliances of various vintages, are no longer in evidence. (See also Section 7.)

¹¹ "Plan to dedicate City Hall Dec. 10." *Cuyuna Ranger Miner*, Nov. 30, 1917.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 13

Ironton City Hall
name of property
Crow Wing, Minnesota
county and State

=====

was sponsored by the town's newly organized Commercial Club and raised \$125 to benefit soldiers and their dependents. Twenty-five people were members of the organizing committee, and one newspaper reported an attendance of 350 people from several Range towns. Decorations were appropriately patriotic, including "a large flag covering the rear of the stage, the windows festooned in red, white and blue bunting and a flag hung in front of the glass."¹² Other early events were also associated with the rhetoric and needs of World War I, including dances to raise funds for soldiers' tobacco,¹³ "loyalty" meetings,¹⁴ and a Red Cross fund drive that included a "hit the Kaiser" ball throwing contest.¹⁵ Newspapers regularly noted the names of bands that played at these events, usually the local Moose orchestra in the early years, and a variety of other local and sometimes big-name bands later.

The use of the Hall by various community and private groups was regulated by rules and fees set by the Village Council. The detailed nature of these rules also support the concept of the Hall as a location meant to benefit the greater community, with charitable clubs receiving more favorable term and conditions.

In the first fee schedule, established in 1918, private or afternoon parties and lodges were charged \$5.00, with an additional \$3.00 fee for the use of the kitchen and custodial services. An organized group holding a dance or party was charged \$10.00, kitchen still \$3.00. The resolution specifically stated that the Red Cross, Fire Department, Ironton City Band and the Ironton Commercial Club were not required to pay fees. By 1929, the categories of possible Hall usage had expanded, with "charitable, religious or Civic organizations, political meetings, [and] conventions of public community purposes" being able to use the facilities without charge, except \$5.00 "for use of the dishes." Dances were now grouped with shows or other entertainment charging admission in the Hall, and charged \$7.00, with the experienced council now requiring fees "to be paid in advance." These fees brought in about \$350 in revenue in the early years of the Hall, and over \$600 in the active years immediately after WWII.

The range of groups using the Hall shows not only the popularity of the Hall but also the high level of civic activity in Ironton through the years. A list of hall renters in the late 20s and early

¹² "Dancers Enjoy First Big Ball," *Cuyuna Range Miner*, Nov. 30, 1917.

¹³ *Ironton News*, January 12, 1918.

¹⁴ *Ironton News*, March 13, 1918.

¹⁵ *The Cuyuna Range Miner*, May 18, 1918.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8

Page 14

Ironton City Hall
name of property
Crow Wing, Minnesota
county and State

=====
30s include the Rebekah Lodge, Scandinavian Fraternity, Degree of Honor, Crosby Drum Corps, Independent Order of Odd Fellows, the high school, United Workmen, the Auxiliary Drum Corps, the Rangers basketball team, the Junior Dance Club, the Athletic Club, the South Sea Islanders, the Serbian Sisters, and the Ironton Hockey Club, in addition to a number of individuals. Specific activities in this era are exemplified by newspaper notices of dramatic readings, an annual Presbyterian Ladies Aid Bazaar, and an indoor carnival sponsored by the American Legion, which included keno, fortune tellers, fish ponds, refreshment booths and vaudeville acts.¹⁶ Oral history and newspaper references also suggest the active presence of Boy and Girl Scouts at the Hall.

In a town dominated by mining activities of men, the Hall provided a venue in which women played a prominent role by structuring the social and educational life of the community, through library activities and through lodge meetings, ladies' aid events, Red Cross activities and cultural events. The social opportunities offered by the Hall were particularly important in a fast growing community of diverse populations with miners from many European nations,¹⁷ although it is also clear that the Hall served as facilities for groups which promoted their particular ethnicity.

The Hall also provided a haven in times of crisis for the community, exemplified during the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918. Newspaper accounts of the time indicate that an area of the second floor was designated by the city council as a "flu hospital." Scores of women were paid to nurse the sick, likely those who did not have family to care for them. The council authorized expenditures for beds, linens and other supplies brought from Brainerd, which enabled the "hospital" to care for up to thirty patients. At what appeared to be the epidemic's peak, on November 9, 1918, the newspaper reported twenty cases being cared for in the Hall. Although oral lore suggests the Hall was used as a morgue,¹⁸ there is no written confirmation of this; the virulent nature of the flu does make it likely that many of the patients died, however. By November 23, the number of patients was down to twelve, and in late December, the Village offered for sale "beds, mattresses, springs, blankets, pillows, pillow cases, sheets, etc., that were used during the influenza epidemic."¹⁹

¹⁶ *Ironton News*, Jan 28, 1927, Nov. 25, 1927, Jan. 25, 1929.

¹⁷ *Iron Range Country*. p. 35

¹⁸ Maiolini, Kathryn Aune. "History of Ironton and the Cuyuna Iron Range," unpublished manuscript, 1984.

¹⁹ *Ironton News*, Dec. 21. 1918. No income from the sales of these items was recorded as such in city records. One interesting notation in village minutes is a payment of \$216.00 to A.H. Edwards for "peddling soup, flu patients."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 15

Ironton City Hall
name of property
Crow Wing, Minnesota
county and State

=====

The Hall's benefit to the community's health and welfare is also reflected in oral history accounts of showers in the building opened to the public during the Depression era. (These accounts locate these showers in the basement, perhaps part of the firefighters' "gymnasium.")

The operation of the Hall offered employment opportunities benefiting a number of community residents. Individuals were hired as laborers for the grounds, and local women were paid for catering services at the Hall, including such activities as "washing dishes."

Government and Civic Functions

The government and civic functions housed in the Hall supported the development of the town's welfare, safety and education. City Council meetings were held at least monthly, with frequent "special meetings" to deal with pressing issues. Council business focused on creating and maintaining the town's infrastructure and regulating businesses and individual activities which directly affected citizens. The fire department, library and jail also fulfilled roles in Ironton's establishment and growth as a town.

Fire Department

The fire department was organized soon after the village was incorporated with a company of twelve men, divided into an engine compartment, a ladder compartment, and a bucket compartment. A Fire Relief Association was established as the department moved into the new facilities in 1917. The new fire department headquarters were almost immediately equipped with the town's first motorized fire truck, reportedly lowering insurance rates in the village by ten percent.²⁰ In addition to an expansive apparatus room, the firemen also occupied a "fireman's room" equal in size to the council chambers.

Department members were a clear presence in the new Hall, not only in their volunteer duties but also in a maintenance capacity and as a social entity. 1917 department minutes note a motion to ask the village council "to have man in charge of City Hall be a fireman." W.H. Ogden and H.M. Bolder were listed for one month as "Firemen, Village Hall," then each designated as "Janitor, City Hall," receiving \$95.00 per month. Within a year of the Hall's completion,

²⁰ "Motor Driven Fire Truck for Ironton," *Cuyuna Range Miner*, December 21, 1917.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 16

Ironton City Hall
name of property
Crow Wing, Minnesota
county and State

minutes suggest that the Hall basement was in use as a "gymnasium" for department members. Reflecting the social aspects of fire department membership, the department subsequently considered the purchase of a pool table, paid for subscriptions to various publications, (including the *Duluth News*), and found reason "to get [a] Dictionary." Public dances were held regularly in the auditorium to raise funds for the Relief Association.

By 1920, the department had four companies. Changes in technology created some changes in the department's portion of the Hall. Almost immediately after the Hall's construction, the department lobbied the city council to acquire a Double Electric Siren from the Northwestern Electric Company, an improvement on the signal bell at the top of the hose tower. In 1920, the openings to the fire bays underwent modification, with council minutes noting that the new fire trucks were too high for the existing doors.

Library

A library fund was a regular expense in the town's early budget, but the library was first formally established by ordinance in 1920, immediately locating to the Hall, where a local newspaper noted it was allowed to use a "large well-lighted room." Over 300 books were placed on the shelves in the first year, a number which increased fivefold in the next six years. The library also received book donations, and all volumes were recorded by hand in acquisition books still located in the library. The direction of the library's acquisitions and operations was almost exclusively the purview of women. Typical of the era, the women appeared to take their roles as societal guardians seriously, acquiring titles which were likely to enlighten and morally influence village patrons.

Jail

Law enforcement was a significant need early on in the village, where a population of miners required the creation of ordinances regulating pool halls and liquor consumption before those establishing roads and sidewalks. One or two marshals were paid on a regular basis, and prior to the construction of the Hall, jail space was rented from Crosby. Ironton subsequently housed prisoners from Deerwood for a fee. Original blueprints show a central "marshal's entry," flanked by barred windows and a "prisoner's corridor" along the interior perimeter. Four cells were located at the center of the annex (away from windows), two on either side of the marshal's entrance. These cells were five feet by seven feet, with the western cells for men, and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 17

Ironton City Hall
name of property
Crow Wing, Minnesota
county and State

=====

those on the east designated as "juvenile cell" and "female cell." A single shower was adjacent to each of these cell pairs.

A 1920 thesis on county jails identified the occupants of municipal jails like Ironton's as "misdemeanants... hoboos, drunks... chicken thieves... bum[s]... [and] suspicious character[s]." ²¹ The author also noted that some law breakers were simply ordered by judges to leave town to avoid further disturbances. Care of prisoners was not a high priority, the author noted, and this is perhaps confirmed by a blueprint notation indicating that plumbing and heating were not to be installed in the jail annex until sometime "in the future;" finishing of the interior jail spaces was not included in the original bid.

With the decline of the mining industry, the need for police functions in Ironton grew more limited, and in 1971 policing services were contracted to Crosby, which also received Ironton's single police car.

The Ironton City Hall was constructed at a time when Ironton's future was bright with the promise of ore and community growth. Like city halls of this era throughout the country, it served a variety of the town's governmental and civic needs. It also served Ironton as the focal point for the community's ethnic, religious and fraternal affiliations, private and public celebrations, cultural expressions, and activities of mutual support.

²¹ Queen, Stuart Alfred. *The Passing of the County Jail*. Menasha, Wis.: George Banta Publishing Co., 1920.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 18

Ironton City Hall
name of property
Crow Wing, Minnesota
county and State

=====

9. Major Bibliographic References

“Alex Nelson, of Perham, Dies Suddenly.” *Fergus Falls Daily Journal*, September 26, 1938.

Annual Financial Statements, Village of Ironton, 1923-1955.

Cuy-una! A Chronicle of the Cuyuna Range. Cuyuna Range Bicentennial committee, 1976.

“Dancers Enjoy First Big Ball,” *Cuyuna Range Miner*, November 30, 1917.

Gebhard, David and Tom Martinson. *A Guide to the Architecture of Minnesota*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977.

“The Growth of a Community,” *Ironton News* supplement, October 18, 1923.

Iron Range Country. A Historical Travelogue of Minnesota's Iron Range. Eveleth: IRRRB, State of Minnesota, 1979.

Ironton News, diptheria articles, November 9- December 21, 1917.

“The Ironton Village Hall,” in *Digging into the Past*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Cuyuna Country Heritage Preservation Society, Autumn, 1996.

Ironton Village Minute Books, June 1911-July 1915; August 1915-December 1931 and various volumes.

“John H. Hill Called Beyond,” *Ironton News*, July 24, 1924.

Johnson, Beverly Mindrum. “Ironton. A good (and unusual) place to grow up.” Unpublished manuscript, Cuyuna Country Heritage Society, 2000.

Nelson, Alex and Buetow, architects. City Hall and Fire Station. Original blueprints, 1917.

Ordinances, Rules, Regulations and By-Laws for the Village of Ironton, 1917.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9

Page 19

Ironton City Hall
name of property
Crow Wing, Minnesota
county and State

=====

Queen, Stuart Alfred. *The Passing of the County Jail*. Menasha, Wis.: George Banta Publishing Co., 1920.

Maiolini, Kathryn Aune. "History of Ironton and the Cuyuna Iron Range," unpublished manuscript, Cuyuna Country Heritage Society, 1984.

"Motor Driven Fire Truck for Ironton," *Cuyuna Range Miner*, December 21, 1917.

Records of the Ironton Fire Department, Ironton City Hall, various volumes.

Walker, David A. *Iron Frontier. The Discovery and Early Development of Minnesota's Iron Ranges*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1979.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 20

Ironton city Hall
name of property
Crow Wing, Minnesota
county and State

=====

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

City Lots 25 and 26 of Block 11 of the First Addition to Ironton. Lot sides 80' x 140'.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire city lots that have historically been associated with the property.