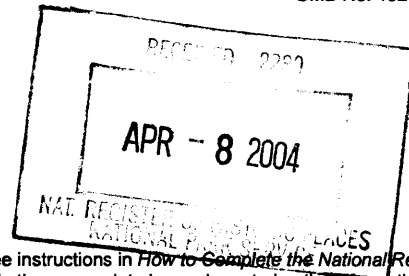


4601

United States Department of the 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 St. Stefan's Romanian Orthodox Church
other names/site number St. Stephen's Romanian Orthodox Church

2. Location

street & number 350 5th Avenue North not for publication
city or town South St. Paul vicinity
state Minnesota code MN county Dakota code 037 zip code 55075

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.)
Nina M. Archabal 4/5/04
Signature of certifying official Date
Nina M. Archabal, Director and State Historic Preservation Officer, Minnesota Historical Society
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 certifying official/Title 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): _____

Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall Date of Action 5/19/04

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
		structure
		objects
1		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

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion/Religious Facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion/Religious Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals/Byzantine

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Stucco

roof Asphalt

other

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.)

Property is:

- 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)

Ethnic Heritage

Social History

Period of Significance

1924-1953

Significant Dates

1924

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Bartl, John (Builder)

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property less than one acre

St. Paul East, Minn. 1967
Revised 1993

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1.	<input type="text" value="1"/> <input type="text" value="5"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/> <input type="text" value="9"/> <input type="text" value="6"/> <input type="text" value="9"/> <input type="text" value="3"/> <input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/> <input type="text" value="9"/> <input type="text" value="7"/> <input type="text" value="1"/> <input type="text" value="1"/> <input type="text" value="3"/> <input type="text" value="0"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
3.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

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	<u>David C. Anderson</u>		
organization	<u></u>	date	<u>8/15/03</u>
street and number	<u>169 Lundy Bridge Drive</u>	telephone	<u>563/382-3079</u>
city or town	<u>Waukon</u>	state	<u>IA</u>
		zip code	<u>52172</u>

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	<u>St. Stefan's Romanian Orthodox Church c/o Nick Motu</u>		
street & number	<u>350 5th Avenue North</u>	telephone	<u>612/860-3202</u>
city or town	<u>South St. Paul</u>	state	<u>MN</u>
		zip code	<u>55075</u>

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

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St. Stefan's Romanian Orthodox Church

Name of property

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DESCRIPTION

The Church of St. Stefan is located at the south end of a triangular parcel at the junction of Grand and Fifth Avenues North in South St. Paul, Minnesota. The site is on a high point of land overlooking the Mississippi River to the east and is flanked on the west and south by a residential area that was sparsely if at all occupied when the church was built in 1924.

The church is a modestly scaled example of the Byzantine style, also known as Eastern or Greek Orthodox, and differs in important ways from the Roman tradition in ecclesiastic architecture that developed in western and northern Europe after the Roman Empire split into an eastern and a western division in 395 A.D. An essential feature of this style, which will be discussed further in Section 8 as it relates to the Romanian ethnic heritage, is the inclusion of a large central interior space covered by a dome.

This feature in the Church of St. Stefan is octagonal and includes a drum with round arch window openings in each of the eight sides. The ground plan (footprint) of the building is somewhat irregular but in overall dimensions is very nearly square, measuring 42 by 44 feet. It stands over a nearly full basement that includes a large assembly hall, kitchen, storage and mechanical spaces. It is directly accessible from the church above, but a large separate entry was added in the west façade in the 1940s. The concrete basement (foundation) walls are clad in brick on the exterior.

The dome is flanked on three sides by hipped roofs and on the east by a five-sided sanctuary extending out from between two narrow wall segments; the one to the south supports a brick chimney. All terminate in the same roofline.

There are entrance porches with pediments at the north and west sides and a short bell tower above the west porch. The rooflines of the dome, belfry, hipped roofs and pediments together create a tiered effect in massing. The church exterior is clad in moderately textured stucco painted white that enhances the sense of a building comprised of a series of pure geometric forms. This quality is sustained by certain changes to the building's historic exterior, namely the addition of an entrance (enclosed staircase) to the basement and the enclosing of the north and west entrance porticos. An historic photo from 1924 indicates that the square columns still apparent on these porticos are original features.

The large patriarchal and Latin crosses placed on the dome and belfry, respectively, are especially prominent in the context of the building's unadorned simplicity. This effect is not diminished by the doors and relatively few window openings; all have semicircular heads in frames flush with the wall. While the arched portions of the dome windows and entrances have been covered over, the original shape is still visible. The windows on the dome have been fitted with aluminum frame storm sash, but the remainder appear to be the original wood storm windows. There is a date stone set into the west wall above the water table at the southwest corner that reads:

*BISCERICA ORTODOXA
ROMANA
ST. STEFAN
ED. 1924*

Loosely translated this would be "Romanian Orthodox Church of St. Stefan Built in 1924". "ED" most likely represents the Romanian verb "edifica" meaning to construct or build.

The interior presents a series of contrasts: light/dark, simple/ornate, and rich/austere. There is some sense of the volumetric forms that are strongly expressed on the exterior. The lath and plaster walls are smooth and white with two notable exceptions, namely the light blue sanctuary ceiling and the paintings of the Apostles on three of the pendentives that support and act as a transition to the dome. The fourth pendentive is at present blank, since it needs to be repainted following water damage from a leaking roof. Most furnishings are of dark stained wood, and these include the window frames, pews,

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St. Stefan's Romanian Orthodox Church

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cantors' podiums and seats, the iconostasis (altar screen) framing elements, and a large beam with corner brackets that supports the balcony above the west entrance.

Moreover, the interior is dimly lit except for the dome and sanctuary, a deliberate effect with symbolic meaning achieved by limiting the number of windows in the walls but installing eight in the dome. There are two stained glass windows on each side of the nave and one each on both sides of the choir zone. There is a strong sense of division between the main ground floor space and that of the dome above and sanctuary beyond the altar screen.

In addition to the pews on either side of the center aisle, there is a continuous series of wood seats with hinged bottoms and armrests (that function more as dividers than rests) running along the walls on both sides of the nave. These are individually rented and have nameplates affixed to the upper backs.

The simple/ornate contrast is expressed most powerfully by the large wood iconostasis that separates the chancel from the space open to the laity. This is a large wood construction divided into three segments that echo the Roman arch of triumph pattern: a large center segment flanked by shorter ones that in turn repeat the tripartite division on a smaller scale. Each of the three segments is crowned by a segmental arch supporting a cross that occupies the uppermost of three horizontal zones. Nearly all two-dimensional surfaces on this screen are painted with iconic images drawn from the Old and New Testaments. Four nearly life-size figures near the base – Moses, Mary, Jesus, and St. Nicholas – are framed by curtains that can be drawn to cover them.

Additional representations of Christ and other major figures within the church include elaborately framed portraits on two podiums flanking the aisle in front of the choir, four large cloth banners on poles, and the stained glass windows.

Lighting fixtures are another important means of expressing the richness of material and surface, and these include a massive and elaborate circular brass chandelier suspended over the central space by a chain running to the top of the dome, two suspended fixtures in the choir, and two heavy brass candelabra on podiums in front of the choir. Between these and running the length of the nave is a red carpet laid on naturally finished (light) maple flooring. A number of large bouquets of cut flowers and numerous flower plants at various locations also contribute to the jewel box quality of this church interior.

A cloth banner is hung on the balcony rail at the rear of the church that reads:

*REUNIUNEA FEM. ROMANE
ORT
So. St. Paul, Minn.
ORGANIZATA
1923*

Loosely translated this would be "Romanian Women's Auxiliary of So. St. Paul organized in 1923."

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St. Stefan's Romanian Orthodox Church

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SIGNIFICANCE

The Church of St. Stefan is eligible for listing on the NRHP under Criterion A. It is locally significant in the areas of Ethnic Heritage and Social History. Built by Romanian immigrants who came to South St. Paul beginning in the early 1900s and found employment in the city's meatpacking industry, the church, both as architecture and institution, was an important means of sustaining their ethnic identity. It also served as a venue for a multi-faceted social life benefiting Orthodox Christians and other Romanians in the city with a remarkable ethnic diversity in its population. The church also relates to the Minnesota statewide contexts Railroads and Agricultural Development, 1870-1940 and Urban Centers, 1870-1940.

Romanians in Minnesota

Romania is a central European republic that includes seven historic-geographic regions that made up the ancient Roman colony of Dacia. The Emperor Trajan gave Romania its present name in the 2nd century A.D., which means "New Rome" in Latin, the basis of the Romanian language, one of seven modern European Romance languages.

At around the turn of the 19th century, emigration from the Transylvania region to the U.S. began. At this time and until WW I Romania was part of the "Dual Monarchy" of Austro-Hungary, and in 1900 this exodus increased and included people from the Banat and Bucovina regions of the country. Upon arriving here, these Romanians preferred to settle in certain large industrial centers, e.g. New York, Detroit, and also Minneapolis and St. Paul (Wertsman, 3-5). This exodus was followed by a second wave in the 1920s that augmented the initial settlements, since they went to locations where their landsmen had preceded them (ibid., 8).

The factors behind this migration were mainly economic. Growing population and limited opportunities for small farmers and their descendents to obtain land while a large proportion of the tillable land was controlled by owners of large estates made what little land that was available expensive. Consequently, most of the initial immigrants were single men who came with the idea of someday returning to the homeland with enough money to purchase land and livestock (Bobango 2, 4). Many did return to Romania, but more came to stay and were in time joined by their families.

Ethnic and religious oppression also played a role in this out-migration. In the Transylvania and Banat regions under Hungarian control, populations were under pressure to convert from their traditional Orthodox and Uniate* faiths to Roman Catholicism. The dominant faith of Romanians at home and in the immigrant population is Eastern Orthodox (Wertsman, 60; deGryse and Kaplan, 440).

Most Minnesota Romanians came over in the two waves just mentioned, none having been officially recorded here before 1900, even though a group of Romanian-speaking Jews had organized a synagogue in Minneapolis in 1888 (deGryse and Kaplan, 444). As elsewhere in the U.S., they gravitated to metropolitan centers, in Minnesota to Minneapolis (1,599), St. Paul (589), South St. Paul (296), and Duluth (61).**

*Uniates followed Eastern Orthodox rites and rituals but also recognized the authority of the Roman Pope.

**The numbers are population figures from the Federal census of 1930.

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As deGryse and Kaplan put it,

The story of Minnesota's Romanians is largely a part of the history of the Twin Cities area, the site of their only churches and fraternal organization(s) in 1980. (deGryse and Kaplan, 440)

They were largely unskilled male farm workers and day laborers, and the vast majority took industrial jobs of various kinds upon arrival: railroading, mining, and factory work (deGryse and Kaplan, 441; Bobango, 7).

It was in the industrial heartland of the middle-Atlantic and Great Lakes states that the greatest numbers of Romanians settled and continue to live today (1979). While Romanians also located in St. Paul, Minn. and in Missouri and Nebraska, they did not stray in large numbers away from the major industrial regions. (Bobango, 9)

The South St. Paul Romanian Community and the Church of St. Stefan

South St. Paul is in the Twin Cities metro area, although it is six miles south of St. Paul, in a different county, and was established later than either St. Paul or Minneapolis. The South St. Paul Romanian community is perhaps the best documented in the state, and its development can be dated to 1904 when about a dozen individuals arrived to be followed a year later by several more. Most were single men employed in the meatpacking industry, and others worked in railroad construction (Stefan, 42-43).

Letters were sent to the old country with details on the many opportunities in America, and the South St. Paul community grew, as did one in St. Paul. Many of the immigrants in these two communities came from the same regions in Romania, and together they formed the first Romanian-American institution in the state, the fraternal society "*Augustina*" (since it was created in the month of August) in 1910 at a time when Federal Census reports listed 392 Romanians in St. Paul (Stefan, 43; deGryse and Kaplan, 442).

The rise of South St. Paul as a nationally important livestock market and packing center began in 1885 when a railroad was completed running south of St. Paul through what was to become the city of South St. Paul two years later. This line, the Minnesota and Northwestern (later the Chicago Great Western), was a shorter route from the Twin Cities to Chicago than existing connections and enhanced the viability of the new city as a major livestock market and processing center (Glewwe, 33). Other important factors were the proximity to the Mississippi and an exceptionally good supply of groundwater that was to be accessed via artesian wells developed by the stockyards and packing plants. The first of the former, the St. Paul Union Stockyards Co., was organized in 1886 with slaughterhouses and packing plants following shortly. The largest and best known of these were the Cudahy (1894), Swift (1897) and Armour (1919) operations. The population grew most rapidly after the establishment of the packing plants, and both Swift and Armour had recruiting agents in Europe making employment contracts with immigrants before they left for the U.S. (Glewwe, 294). In 1895 the South St. Paul population was 2,135 and nearly half (904) had been born outside the U.S. with the largest contingent of German origin. Immigration was to continue until around 1950, and the countries and regions of origin include Scandinavia, Ireland, Poland, Bohemia, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Romania (Glewwe, Chapter V).

This settlement pattern was similar to what was typical for Romanians elsewhere in the U.S. and for other immigrant groups in South St. Paul. The first arrivals were single men who took up residence in boarding houses of which four were listed on N. Concord St. in the 1915 South St. Paul City Directory. Soon these men were joined by their families, and children were born. As the community grew, they decided to create their own institutions, in part because it was a lengthy trip via streetcar to St. Paul's near north side, the location of the St. Paul Romanian community. The first of these was the cultural and fraternal society *Alexander Cel Bun* ("Alexander the Good), established in 1918 (Stefan, 44; Toconita, 2). In 1922 a second organization of the same kind was formed, the *Clubul National Roman* ("Romanian National Club"). It was the membership

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of this group that formally organized St. Stefan's parish in 1923. Initially services were held in a hall at 265 N. Concord St., which building also boarded Romanian immigrants (Glewwe, 281).

Church records from the early period have not been located, but John Stefan had access to them when he wrote his history of the parish in 1945, from which most of the data included here was drawn (Stefan). The charter members of the church included 151 individuals and several local and regional businesses including the Schmidt and Hamm breweries and the Swift and Armour packing plants. Further, according to Stefan and Mrs. Ella Motu, Emil Neagoe, a charter member and architecture student at the University of Minnesota, designed the building.

Newspaper (*South St. Paul Daily Express*, 5-21-23 and 6-15-23) and *Improvement Bulletin* reports suggest a somewhat different story, namely that the St. Paul architect M. A. Wright had designed a brick edifice for the congregation (11-24-23) but that the project was indefinitely postponed in early 1924 (3-8-24). The February 11, 1924 edition of the *St. Paul Builders' Exchange Newsletter* also listed the church as designed by M. A. Wright as "in prospect." There is no further mention of the church in either publication. At present there is not enough documentation to justify listing either Wright or Neagoe as architect of the building. A likely scenario is that Wright's plans were revised by Neagoe so as to reduce the cost of construction.

All available accounts agree that the church was to be in the Byzantine or Romanian (Greek) Orthodox style, and the building committee made at least one trip to Minneapolis to visit Greek and Russian Orthodox churches (*South St. Paul Daily Express* 5-21-23) "to get ideas on size, cost and architecture." Ground was broken on December 26, 1923 for a 42 by 44 foot edifice "of stucco finish" (*South St. Paul Globe*, 12-28-23). Contracts to complete the project were let in April of the next year to John Bartl (a charter member of the church) in the amount of \$12,400 (*South St. Paul Daily Express*, 5-24-24). There is no record of the costs of furnishing the church, so the total cost remains unknown.

On September 28 the church was dedicated in an event presided over by Archbishop Victor Murasan of Pennsylvania with several representatives of other Romanian communities in Minnesota and elsewhere also in attendance. This added up to a crowd of about 600 people, and following the formal ceremony at the church (which is documented in a large photo located in the church basement) a parade was held and the crowd gathered at the Serbian Hall for a banquet (*Daily Reporter*, 9-29-24).

At this time there was no formal organization that administered relations between Romanian Orthodox churches abroad and the official church in Romania. This changed in 1929 with the establishment of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, a body under the jurisdiction of the Holy Synod of Romania (Wertsman, 10; see also Bobango). St. Stefan's and St. Mary's (St. Paul) joined the Episcopate, and in October 1935 Polycarp Morusco, Bishop of North and South America and Western Europe, blessed St. Stefan's during a tour that included visits to Romanian Orthodox communities all across the country. His visit to South St. Paul culminated in a banquet at the Serbian Hall where some 1,000 guests were accommodated, with speeches made by the Mayor, Superintendent of Schools and a State Senator, among others. The superintendent of the local Swift packing plant was also in attendance, and the Bishop toured that facility during his stay.

The Bishop's visit was headline news and the dedication service, presented in both Russian and Romanian, was "made impressive with the ritual and pomp of the old world" (*Daily Reporter*, 10-14-35). The event documents the church's significance in terms of the local ethnic heritage and the importance of the Romanian community in South St. Paul. For the local Romanian-Americans this visit by a landsman who officially represented their home church was both an honor and an affirmation of their ethnicity while reinforcing ties to the home country and affirming the new lives they had chosen in America.

That the Serbian Hall (listed in the NRHP in 1992 as "Serbian Home") was the venue for large banquets at both dedications reflects the close relations between these groups in the city, based on their shared religions and geographic proximity in Europe. Moreover, Serbs had contributed to the St. Stefan's building fund and a number attended services there, not having a

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church of their own in the city until 1953. The Serbian Hall was often the venue for events such as weddings, which entailed crowds too large to be accommodated in the parish hall.

By the early 1930s Romanian immigration to Minnesota had slowed and population figures leveled off, even declining in some communities. It had reached about 500 in South St. Paul and remained at that level until at least WW II (deGryse and Kaplan, 446-447; Wertsman, 10). The advent of the war presented difficulties for Romanian-Americans because the home country joined the Axis powers and subsequently was governed by a communist regime under Nicolai Ceaucescu. This precipitated a split between the Romanian Holy Synod, which replaced Bishop Polycarp with a person sympathetic to the regime. The American Romanians then created their own Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, but in 1954 St. Stefan's parish became an independent congregation and remained one of five independent Orthodox churches in America until Father Ilie Motu retired in 1998 (deGryse and Kaplan, 447-448; *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, August 15, 1999). He was replaced by a Romanian-born and American-educated priest, and the parish rejoined the American diocese. All in all, this was a remarkable event since the congregation had declined to 35 individuals by that time.

The Church as Symbol and Social Institution

Gerald J. Bobango begins his history of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America with this sentence: "All churches are, to a greater or lesser extent, ethnic churches, and they reflect of necessity the cultures of those who comprise them" (Bobango, ix). Referring specifically to the Eastern Europeans who came to North America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, he suggests that their origins were "in lands where intensive nationalism shaped the pattern . . . of political, economic and cultural life to a stronger degree than in the corresponding periods in the West of Europe. . . ."

As a result, the churches became "instruments and symbols of national feeling" (ibid.). Without taking issue with the contention that nationalism was any less a factor among Western European immigrants, there is ample evidence to support the unity of church and ethnic identity among the Romanians in South St. Paul. Oppression by Hungarians who controlled parts of their ancestral lands was a factor in their emigration, and a similar situation prevailed in Bucovina under Austria and in Bessarabia under the Russians (deGryse and Kaplan, 440). Nevertheless, according to Philip Toconita, Jr., Romanians had "always been accepting of other ministries," and in South St. Paul they were served by nearby Catholic and even Lutheran clergy (Toconita, Jr.; deGryse and Kaplan, 442)

When it came to building their own church, it was to be in the Byzantine or Greek Orthodox style, which had developed in Eastern Europe in areas under the Eastern or Byzantine Roman Empire. Constantine I had established the ancient Greek city of Byzantium as the capital of the Eastern Empire and it was rebuilt and renamed Constantinople in 330 (today it is Istanbul, Turkey). Constantine had also made Christianity the official religion of the Empire, and while the longitudinal or cruciform plan (basilica) became the rule for church architecture in the West, Constantine and his successors preferred more centrally focused plans where the dominant feature is a dome, which may be deployed singly as at St. Stefan's, or together with smaller domes or half-domes over subsidiary spaces as at the 6th century church of St. Sophia in Constantinople, the best known of any building in the Byzantine style.

On the interior, a circular or octagonal dome may cover a rectangular space and rest on four pendentives, zones of transition between square and circle that were typically decorated with mosaic or painted (*al fresco*) representations of the Apostles or other figures. The dome may also be elevated on a drum as at St. Stefan's.

Equally characteristic of this style is the rich interior decoration with large areas given over to images of Christ, various saints, the four Apostles, and with smaller and subsidiary zones decorated in various polychromatic abstract decorative patterns. This style was carried to all areas of the Eastern Empire and took on regional variations over the centuries. While said to be based on "a familiar church in Romania" (Motu 1986, 282), it is probably more accurate to regard St. Stefan's as a kind of "Byzantine Revival" architecture, since little survives in Romania from earlier than the 14th century and these churches are typically elongated, tall, and narrow albeit richly decorated inside and out (Krautheimer, 464).

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In any case, the church was intended to represent the South St. Paul Romanians for what they were, a 20th-century community from Central Europe with an identity manifest in language, Eastern Orthodox religion, and Byzantine church architecture.

The church also provided a parish hall in its basement where the several mutual benefit societies kept their records and insignia and held meetings. Besides those already mentioned and the Ladies' Auxiliary, there were the *Campul Liberatii* and *Andealul a Banatului* societies, which merged in 1929. The *Campul Liberatii* was named after a location in Transylvania where thousands of Romanians gathered in 1848 "to demand freedom of (sic) and equality with the Hungarians" (Stefan, 48).

Maintaining a sense of Romanian identity among community youth was an important issue especially among the first generation of immigrants, and it was addressed by the Episcopate and local parish members. Accordingly, the South St. Paul Romanian Youth Club was created in 1934.

To combat the drift away from their heritage, members of the RUYC organized some very traditional activities. Much like the church group in St. Paul, it offered plays and songs, presumably in the Romanian language. The club was closely linked to St. Stefan's Church, which provided the site for its activities and received the proceeds of its performances. (deGryse and Kaplan, 446)

It was about this time that the American Episcopate began discussing its role in fostering such groups.

The model for Romanian-American youth clubs was to be the type found in Romania, under the aegis of the church: religious-cultural in scope, with choral, athletic, educational, and theatrical activity developed in an Orthodox framework. (Bobango, 104)

After WW II this group became a chapter of AROY (American Romanian Orthodox Youth), the Episcopate's youth organization; one existed in St. Paul as well and the groups interacted.

In fact, people from both communities commonly dated and married each other. It was, however, hard to get from one place to the other, and this is the reason for the duplicate institutions in both communities. (Toconita, Jr., 2)

Music and dance were as important to Romanian-Americans as to any other immigrant group, and historic photos in the church basement document this. Speaking of the St. Paul Romanians (in 1980), Toconita reported that

Dancing was a popular church activity, back when the church was a real social center. People might come for morning services, and afterwards retire to the social hall. There they could eat, drink and dance. You could stay all day. (Toconita, Jr., 2)

As with other European-American immigrant groups, the Romanian church promoted ethnicity by language study, use of the language in church services, and by sponsoring courses on language and history for children. "Romanian School" was held on Saturdays and religious instruction on Wednesdays (deGryse and Kaplan, 445). More recently, Sunday school was taught by Rev. Motu, and all these activities took place in the parish hall (Motu 1986, 282).

While St. Stefan's parish has survived a long period of decline in membership, there are indications that other institutions established to sustain ethnicity and promote the social and economic welfare of Romanian-Americans have also declined, especially since WW II. For example, in 1964 most of the several mutual benefit and fraternal societies were merged into one organization, *Romanii din Minnesota* (Romanians in Minnesota) (deGryse and Kaplan, 447). During the Motu era in South St. Paul, Romanian was still spoken in the city, and church services adhered to a "purely Romanian liturgy," while statewide other expressions of Romanian culture, e.g. folk music and dancing, have declined because of the difficulty in

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finding musicians familiar with native instruments (ibid.). At present, the church hosts a variety of socio-cultural events in the parish hall that also serve to raise funds. These include dinners serving Romanian specialties, bingo, and receptions associated with confirmations and weddings (Motu 2003).

Conclusion

In 1969 Swift & Co. closed its plant in South St. Paul and 10 years later Armour did the same. These and the Cudahy plant and the Union stockyard had been the city's largest employers since they were first established in 1899 and 1919 respectively. So far as the city's population is concerned, these events would seem to have had only short-term effects.*

As for historic Concord St., which ran the length of the city and was its commercial center, a Federally sponsored Urban Renewal project for its redevelopment in 1969 resulted in the demolition of nearly all the city's historic commercial properties, including what was left of the many boarding houses that sheltered so many Romanians and other immigrants upon their arrival from Europe. Additional properties associated with the Romanians including restaurants, meat markets and taverns are also gone. As a result, the Church of St. Stefan is the only extant property that can represent their century-long presence in the city.

Along with members of other ethnic groups from nearly all sections of the European continent, the Romanians were seeking opportunities deemed necessary for survival that were not available in their homeland. In Minnesota, this migration was also driven or pulled along by the powerful forces of agricultural development, railroad construction and industrial enterprise that included meatpacking but also mining operations on the State's iron ore ranges, where a similar ethnic diversity developed and for similar reasons.

The immigrants who stayed in Minnesota found the challenge of preserving their identity, language and culture, while becoming Americans and adopting a language and customs that were well established upon their arrival, to be both formidable and unavoidable. In South St. Paul the history of St. Stefan's church as a social and cultural institution documents how they addressed this issue, while as architecture it represents a synthesis of ancient East European traditions and 20th century American form and methods of construction. It remains an eloquent expression of Romanian-American identity.

The urban areas where most Romanians settled have undergone substantial changes economically and demographically, with the growth of suburbs being a major factor in their history since WW II. The Romanian neighborhoods developed rapidly as the first generation established itself in South St. Paul, but within one or two generations their descendents were leaving, many to metro suburbs or heading off to more distant locations in search of more promising opportunities than were perceived to exist closer to home (Toconita, Jr.; deGryse and Kaplan, 447).

These developments meant that the church had to weather some difficult times, but recently its prospects have brightened as post-Ceausescu era immigrants continue joining the community of which the church remains the focus and gathering place. Some of these are students and others professionals who may not even reside in the city, but they are all making important contributions to its survival and preservation as a Romanian-American landmark (Filipescu, Tau, Nick Motu, Ella Motu, 2003).

*In 1950 the population was 15,909, rising to 20,016 in 1970 and 20,197 in 1990.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 1-4, Block 4, Union Addition to the City of South St. Paul, Minnesota.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the church.

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Additional Documentation

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Photographer: John W.G. Dunn, Jr.
Date: 1932
Minnesota Historical Society
Neg: 29351