

PH# 366684

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED MAY 3 1976  
DATE ENTERED JUN 3 1976

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

1 NAME

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HISTORIC Old Main - St. Olaf College

AND/OR COMMON  
The Main

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER  
St. Olaf College Campus

CITY, TOWN Northfield VICINITY OF First

STATE Minnesota CODE 27 COUNTY Rice CODE 131

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME St. Olaf College

STREET & NUMBER  
St. Olaf College Campus

CITY, TOWN Northfield VICINITY OF STATE Minnesota

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Rice County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER  
CITY, TOWN Faribault STATE Minnesota

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Statewide Historic Sites Survey

DATE 1973  FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Minnesota Historical Society - Building 25, Fort Snelling

CITY, TOWN St. Paul STATE Minnesota

# 7 DESCRIPTION

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

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

In 1876, the prominent Minneapolis firm of Long and Haglin was commissioned by the St. Olaf Board of Trustees to draw up plans for a building to be erected on a site overlooking the city of Northfield. For the purpose of housing all college classrooms, offices, and faculty housing Long and Haglin designed a three story, Victorian Gothic building measuring 101' by 56'.

The basement of Old Main is built of limestone, the two main stories of brick, and the attic story of wood framing, with a mansard roof of slate. The tower is centered on the east facade, four stories high, of brick throughout. The tower roof is also of slate, with four dormers. The attic has six dormers on the east side and seven on the west side, with one on the north and south sides. The building has four corner pavilions, and each of these has two dormers. The pavilions are outlined with wood trim, culminating in more elaborate wood trim at the peaks. The attic dormers and the tower dormers are similarly embellished.

The east front is the main facade, with an elaborate porch and staircase. From the east the hill drops off dramatically, providing a fine setting for the building and a panoramic view of the city of Northfield and surrounding countryside. Because of the siting on the hill, Old Main may be seen from nearly all parts of the city. The west facade faces the level land of the campus. The porch is less elaborate than that on the east side. When the building was constructed, the north and south sides both had simple entrances with stairways. The entrance on the north has been removed, but the exterior was not altered. The doorway was shortened from the bottom to make a window.

The roof originally had eight brick chimney stacks. The chimney stacks were removed in the 1930s, replaced by two unobtrusive metal chimney stacks.

The red brick walls of the building were originally painted cream color and trimmed in a sand color. The walls were painted regularly until forty years ago. Since that time the brick has not been painted and the building is now a natural red brick color.

The interior of Old Main is divided into four sections by wide hallways running east-west and north-south. The walls separating each section are of brick. Because of this structural feature changes and alterations have been made only within each section as needed for the various departments using the building. Old Main currently houses classrooms and offices for the Foreign Languages and Speech Departments.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES 1877 - present

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Charles P. Anderson/Long & Haglin

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of Old Main lies in its interesting architectural features and in its long history as an educational and religious institutional building.

Old Main is a symbol of the strong belief in religious education of Minnesota's Norwegian Lutheran settlers. St. Olaf was founded in order to preserve the Norwegian Lutheran heritage as well as to provide secular education for the children of settlers. As the number of Norwegian Lutheran immigrants to Minnesota grew in the decades following the Civil War, the leaders of the community were particularly concerned that education, which included training in the traditions of the Christian faith, be available to young people. One such leader was the Reverend Bernt Julius Muus who came to Minnesota in 1859. By the early 1870s he had convinced the local Lutheran congregations and the Northfield business community of the importance of starting a school, and plans were underway in the summer of 1874 to found a school in Northfield. "St. Olaf's School" was duly founded on November 6, 1874 and its doors opened for classes on January 8, 1875. These doors were to two small wooden school buildings purchased from the city of Northfield. In the fall of 1878 the entire school moved into Old Main.

Between 1886 and 1890 St. Olaf's Old Main was home for a Lutheran Divinity School, which was moved to Northfield as the result of a doctrinal disagreement. The Divinity School remained a separate entity, with its own two-man faculty, but its presence hastened the development of the College Department at St. Olaf. Until 1886 instruction had been purely at the high school level, and the institution was known as St. Olaf's School. As the result of an agreement with the Divinity School, the Board of Trustees decided to add a College Department beginning that year. In 1889 the name was officially changed to St. Olaf College and the Principal was newly styled President. The first Bachelor of Arts degrees were granted in 1890.

Old Main was the only building on the campus until 1900. By that time the enrollment at St. Olaf College had reached three hundred students, it had become an official college of the United Lutheran Church, and its future was assured.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Minutes, Board of Trustees, St. Olaf's School, 1876-1878. President's Office, St. Olaf Coll.  
 St. Olaf College Histories: 1899 (25th anniversary), 1924 (50th anniversary), 1949 (75th anniversary) and 1974 (100th anniversary). St. Olaf College Archives.  
 St. Olaf College Catalogs. St. Olaf College Archives.  
 Correspondence: Principal Thorbjørn N. Mohn with members of the Board of Trustees and the architects. Archives of the Norwegian-American Historical Association, Rolvaag Memorial Library, St. Olaf College. (see continuation sheet)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

485

A	1 5	4 8 4	6 9 0	4 9 2 2	7 2 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	
C						D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Mrs. Joan R. Olson, Archivist/Lynne VanBrocklin

ORGANIZATION

Rolvaag Memorial Library/Minnesota Historical Society

DATE

23 February 1976

STREET & NUMBER

St. Olaf College/Building 25, Fort Snelling

TELEPHONE

?/612-726-1171

CITY OR TOWN

Northfield/St. Paul

STATE

Minnesota/Minnesota

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Russell W. Fridley*

TITLE

SAPO

DATE

4-30-76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Acting

*Clayton K. Kistner*

DATE

6/3/76

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

DATE

5-28-76

ACTING CLERK OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

RBR for WJM 5/28/76

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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RECEIVED MAY 3 1976

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Old Main - St. Olaf College

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

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Rice County Journal, 1877 and 1878. Northfield Public Library.