

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received **JUL 29 1985**  
date entered **SEP 11 1985**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Milaca Municipal Hall

and/or common Milaca City Hall

**2. Location**

street & number 145 Central Avenue South N/A not for publication

city, town Milaca N/A vicinity of

state Minnesota code 22 county Mille Lacs code 095

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name City of Milaca

street & number 145 Central Avenue South

city, town Milaca N/A vicinity of state Minnesota 56353

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Mille Lacs County Courthouse, Register of Deeds

street & number 635 2nd Street Southeast

city, town Milaca state Minnesota 56353

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Minnesota Statewide Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1984  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Minnesota Historical Society  
Ft. Snelling History Center

city, town St. Paul state Minnesota

---

## 7. Description

---

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>          N/A          </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

---

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Milaca Municipal Hall is a one story building, rectangular in plan. It incorporates a simply-detailed brick fire hall, ca. 1890, which was remodeled as a part of the 1936 municipal hall project. The building occupies several lots in a block at the edge of Milaca's central business district. The building is set back from U. S. Highway 169, the main thoroughfare through Milaca.

Milaca's municipal hall was constructed following the established W.P.A. program of using inexpensive, labor-intensive, locally-found or produced materials. Fieldstone is used on the foundation and exterior walls. Poured concrete is used on the front entry steps, sill, roof coping and in a belt course above the stone foundation wall. The previously existing fire hall at the rear of the site has brick walls and foundation.

In plan, the building is rectangular and measures approximately forty by sixty feet. Offices are located at the sides of a short passageway leading from the centrally-placed entry to the auditorium or main hall, which comprises the bulk of the floor area in the 1936 portion of the building.

The rear portion of the building measures approximately thirty by sixty feet and is divided into two by six bays on the exterior. The interior of this portion, originally one large room, was divided in 1936 into several smaller offices, storage, restrooms, and a smaller fire hall.

The main interior space is the auditorium. This space is lined with oil-on-canvas murals executed by Andre Boratko, an artist associated with the Federal Arts Project in Minnesota. Scenes from the murals depict Milaca's past. In one frame two lumbermen are cutting a tree with a cross-cut saw. Other lumber scenes show logs being dragged over frozen roadways to the nearby streams, several "river pigs" hauling and floating logs down the river, and the saw and planing mills that used to exist in Milaca. Two larger-than-life figures of a lumberman and an explorer flank the entry to the room, symbolically guarding those inside.<sup>1</sup> The walls below the level of the murals are finished in knotty-pine tongue and groove paneling, which was selected by the artist to reinforce the rustic image provided by the murals.

The integrity of the building and its public spaces is generally excellent. Alterations to the building have mostly been limited to the office rooms. Those at the front of the building have been carpeted and panelled. A suspended acoustical tile ceiling and new lighting fixtures have been installed. A room on the north side of the entry passageway, originally a kitchen, has been converted into an office. The former serving window which opened onto the auditorium has been extended and replaced with a swinging

---

<sup>1</sup>Andre Boratko, interview with George Reid, August 9, 1977. Unpublished typescript. (Background research for exhibit: "Accomplishments: Minnesota Art Projects in the Depression Years," University Galleries, University of Minnesota, 1977.) Milaca Historical Society, Milaca, Minnesota.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1936

Builder/Architect Louis C. Pinault

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Milaca Village Hall is an exceptional example of a work-relief project undertaken by the Works Progress Administration during the 1930s depression. The building was added onto a ca. 1890 brick fire hall existing on the site. The building closely follows the outlined W.P.A. building program of using inexpensive, locally-found labor-intensive building materials erected in a manner so that unskilled or semi-skilled labor could be employed. The interior auditorium contains an intact series of murals produced by the Federal Arts Project in Minnesota.

The Works Progress Administration was established in 1935 to provide aid to needy employable workers. The program's emphasis on relief, through organized work projects rather than direct relief, continued policies established by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, which had been established in 1933, but on a much larger scale. While the types of work relief under the W.P.A. took many forms, the numerous buildings which were constructed under its auspices most visibly represent both the W.P.A. and the economic conditions which it was established to alleviate.

In Minnesota, 1633 public buildings were either constructed or had additions built under the W.P.A.<sup>1</sup> The types of buildings which were constructed were numerous, and included park shelters, armories, schools and garages. One common feature was their building program. At least 90 percent of the persons working on any W.P.A. project were required to be taken from the public relief roles.<sup>2</sup> This required the use of labor-intensive construction techniques and materials. Because budgets were necessarily small, materials used were often native to the region.

The Milaca Municipal Hall was designed by Louis Pinault, a St. Cloud, Minnesota architect who designed several other W.P.A. and post office projects throughout Minnesota. The building closely follows the W.P.A. program. Fieldstone used in the exterior walls was collected from the farmlands surrounding Milaca. The project retained and renovated an undistinguished brick building previously existing at the rear of the site. In form and plan the building is Moderne, the usual W.P.A. style, but the incorporation of the rustic fieldstone gives the building an Arts and Crafts character.

The incorporation of work from the Federal Arts Project is perhaps the most

<sup>1</sup>United States Federal Works Agency, Final Report on the W.P.A. Program: 1935-43 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), p.135.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.7.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Milaca, Minn.

Quadrangle scale 7.5' Series \_\_\_\_\_

### UTM References

A 15 449400 51066720  
Zone Easting Northing

B \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

C \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

D \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

E \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

F \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

G \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

H \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 10 and 11 and the East 50 feet of Lot 12; Block 39; Kerr's Addition to the city of Milaca.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Thomas Jenkinson and Norene Roberts

organization Historical Research, Inc. date January 15, 1985

street & number 5535 Richmond Curve telephone (612) 929-2921

city or town Minneapolis state Minnesota 55410

# 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 Russell W. Fridley date 7/5/85  
State Historic Preservation Officer

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Keeper of the National Register [Signature] date 9/11/85

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Milaca Municipal Hall, Milaca, Mille Lacs County, Minnesota  
Continuation sheet Description (Cont'd.) Item number 7

Page 1

door, the room being converted to an office. The maple floor of the auditorium has been carpeted.

The style of the building is Moderne. The facade is rectilinear, having paired six-over-six divided light windows placed symmetrically on the sides of the central entry. The entry doors, originally glass in heavy wood frames, have been replaced with a single wider door and side light with glass set in an aluminum frame. This doorway is surmounted by a stone tympanum with a relief carving which depicts early explorers and native Indians, both under the wings of a stylized eagle. The doorway is set into a bay which projects from the facade. Piers buttressing this bay are continued at the base of the building as side rails for the concrete entry steps.

Executed in fieldstone, the building "comes close to being an Arts and Crafts product" rather than Moderne.<sup>2</sup> This imagery is reinforced by the placement of fieldstone arched gateway over the path around the south side of the building.

---

<sup>2</sup>David Gebhard and Tom Martinson, A Guide to the Architecture in Minnesota (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), p. 167.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

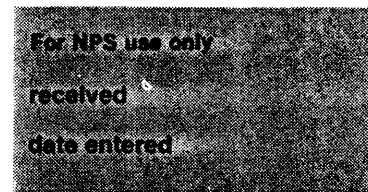
Milaca Municipal Hall, Milaca, Mille Lacs County, Minnesota

Continuation sheet

Significance (Cont'd.)

Item number 8

Page 2



significant feature of the building. Murals executed by the artist Andre Boratko line the central auditorium. Depicting scenes of the lumber industry, the historical basis for settlement in Milaca, and of nature. These murals cogently summarize the early history of Milaca. Boratko also recommended the use of knotty pine panelling in the auditorium to reinforce the theme of the murals above.<sup>3</sup>

A stone lunette above the exterior doorway was designed by Samuel Sabeau of St. Paul. This depicts stylized Indians and explorers beneath the wings of an American eagle and is executed in a shallow relief carving.

Despite the alteration of the office spaces in the interior, the exterior and all major interior features -- the auditorium and murals -- are intact and have been well-maintained. The municipal hall is widely used and appreciated by the community; approximately 300 meetings, social gatherings and other events are held there each year.

---

<sup>3</sup>Andre Boratko, interview with George Reid, August 9, 1977. Unpublished typescript. (Background research for exhibit: "Accomplishments: Minnesota Art Projects in the Depression Years," University Galleries, University of Minnesota, 1977.) Milaca Historical Society, Milaca, Minnesota.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Milaca Municipal Hall, Milaca, Mille Lacs County, Minnesota  
Continuation sheet Bibliography Item number 9

Page 3

Biographical file, Louis C. Pinault, Northwest Architectural Archives,  
University of Minnesota.

"Cornerstone of City Hall Laid Thursday Morning." Mille Lacs County Times,  
Milaca, Minnesota, May 21, 1936, p.1.

"Dedication of Municipal Hall Friday Evening." Mille Lacs County Times,  
Milaca, Minnesota, February 11, 1937, p.1

"Large Crowd Attends New Municipal Hall Dedication." Mille Lacs County Times,  
Milaca, Minnesota, February 18, 1937, pp. 1, 10.

Milaca: From About 1858 Until 1976. Milaca, Minnesota: Milaca Historical  
Society, 1976.

Milaca Historical Society, Milaca, Minnesota. Typescripts of interviews of  
Andre Boratko and Karen Reineke as part of background research for  
exhibit: "Accomplishments: Minnesota Art Projects in the Depression  
Years," University Galleries, University of Minnesota, 1977.

Nelson, Herman. The Axe and the Plow: Stories of Mille Lacs. Princeton,  
Minnesota: The Princeton Eagle, 1974.

"New Addition to the City Hall." Mille Lacs County Times, Milaca, Minnesota,  
March 3, 1936, p.1.

United States, Federal Works Agency. Final Report on the WPA  
Program: 1935-43. Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office,  
1946.

United States, Works Progress Administration, Minnesota.  
Accomplishments: Minnesota: 1935-39. St. Paul, Minnesota: Works Progress  
Administration of Minnesota, 1939.

United States, Works Projects Administration, Division of  
Community Service Programs, Minnesota Historical Records Survey Project.  
Inventory of the County Archives of Minnesota. Volume 48: Mille Lacs  
County. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Records Survey, February 1940.

"Work Program Summary Given for the County." Mille Lacs County Times,  
Milaca, Minnesota, October 29, 1936, p.1.