

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Holman Field Administration Building
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 644 Bayfield St. N/A not for publication
city, town St. Paul N/A vicinity
state Minnesota code MN county Ramsey code 123 zip code 55107

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Ian R. Stewart Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Signature of certifying official Ian R. Stewart Date 6/28/91
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.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register. Bob Boland 8/15/91
- 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

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/air-related

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/air-related

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Moderne

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation limestone

walls limestone

roof asphalt

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Social History

Period of Significance

1939

Significant Dates

1939

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Clarence Wesley Wigington

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- 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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Fort Snelling History Center
Saint Paul, Minnesota

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A 15 494900 4976290
 Zone Easting Northing

C

B
 Zone Easting Northing

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The building is located within a 180' by 100' parcel of land which is located within Section 4, T 28N, R22W, Holman Airfield, Ramsey County. The rear (South) elevation of the control tower aligns with the southern boundary which lies at the northern edge of the paved runway. The building is otherwise centered on the parcel.

The building is defined on the USGS St. Paul East Quad.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all the land with which the property was historically associated.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jacqueline Sluss, Rolf Anderson
 organization Thomas R. Eahn & Associates, Inc. date July 16, 1990
 street & number University Club, 420 Summit Avenue telephone (612) 221-9765
 city or town Saint Paul state Minneapolis zip code 55102

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Holman Field Administration Building, St. Paul, Ramsey Co., Minnesota

Section number 7 Page 1

The Holman Field Administration Building is located on Bayfield Avenue within Holman Field, commonly known as the St. Paul Downtown Airport. The airport is located on the south bank of a bend in the Mississippi River, just below the St. Paul business district which towers above from high sandstone bluffs.

Designed in the Moderne style, the Administration Building is a large, rectangular, two story structure constructed on a raised basement and built with gray, rock faced, limestone trimmed with smooth yellow Kasota stone. The twenty inch thick masonry walls are laid in a random ashlar pattern. The building's north facing facade is located adjacent to the parking area and includes a central entrance which is flanked by two story wings that terminate in small one story extensions. The three bay projecting entrance features stone piers placed between narrow window openings and a stepped parapet wall. Entrance doors are separated by fluted columns over which is a Moderne canopy constructed of a stainless steel veneer on solid copper. The canopy features rounded corners and banding. The flanking two story wings are divided into five bays by wide stone piers. Each outer bay includes a single window opening while openings in the remaining bays are organized in groups of three. A decorative stone medallion is placed above each bay.

The south facade, which opens into the airfield, features a symmetrical design identical to its north facing counterpart, with the exception of the central bay which includes a four story octagonal control tower which dominates the building. The tower's first and second stories are built with stone while the third is constructed with glass and reflective metal and projects above the building's flat roof. The tower also includes a round clock, apparently original, located between the second and third stories and balconies which open off both upper floors. A small third story, built with smooth Kasota stone, is located over the portion of the west wing and a tall hexagonal limestone chimney rises above the eastern section of the building. A vehicular ramp, which descends to the basement level, is located along the east facade. The building includes a cornerstone with the initials WPA and the year 1939 carved in stone.

There were alterations made to the tower in 1951. These changes include the addition of the uppermost, or fourth story, glass and stainless steel control tower (with 45 degree glass) and the conversion of the original control tower on the third floor into restroom facilities, where the multi-pane window openings have been filled in and one over one windows have been installed.

Minor modifications have been made to the north entrance which include replacement of the original entrance doors and the four over four light double-hung sash.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Holman Field Administration Building, St. Paul, Ramsey Co., Minnesota

Section number 7 Page 2

The interior of the building originally contained a two story lobby with limestone walls and a large skylight. These features were altered during a 1962 remodeling in which the skylight was removed, the stone walls were covered with wood paneling, and the atrium was enclosed to provide additional office space. However, the original stairways, with brass rails and cast metal balusters, remain intact. A large granite map of North America, which indicates St. Paul's geographic location, is located in the center of the lobby floor. The building originally contained a basement for storing cars and field equipment, an office for the weather bureau, a restaurant, waiting rooms, offices, and a rooftop promenade used for viewing the airfield.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Holman Field Administration Building, St. Paul, Ramsey Co., Minnesota

Section number 8 Page 1

The Holman Field Administration Building is significant under criterion C as one of the most accomplished works of Clarence Wesley Wigington, the first Black architect for the City of St. Paul. The building is also significant under criterion A as an important WPA project completed in cooperation with the City of St. Paul, and as well-preserved example of the Moderne style. Wigington's career as an architect with the City spanned 34 years and during that time he designed many prominent public buildings that have had a lasting impact on the city landscape. Because his career spanned the New Deal years, many of those designs are associated with the Works Progress Administration.

Clarence Wesley Wigington was born in 1883 in Lawrence, Kansas. As a boy in his teens, the family moved to Omaha, Nebraska where Wigington would eventually study architecture under the tutelage of Thomas R. Kimball. Kimball had received his training at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and had a successful practice in Boston before moving to Omaha. Kimball hired Wigington in ca. 1902 for his excellent drawing skills and personally tutored him in architectural design. It was during this apprenticeship that Wigington also learned structural steel construction and drafting from Lorenz Rustad and Frank Brazee. During his work at the Kimball office, Wigington studied at the studio of T. Lawrence Wallace of the Western School of Art in Omaha. He completed it's four year program in painting, drawing, clay modeling, composition, and design. Former teachers and friends paid half his expenses while Wigington worked out the other half himself. (It is to this institution that Wigington accredited his registration as an architect in the State of Minnesota.). Wigington continued his apprenticeship at the Kimball office until 1908 when he married and moved to Sheridan Wyoming in search of work as an architect. Architectural design work in Sheridan proved hard to come by, so Wigington turned to the potato chip business to support his family. In 1910, Wigington was able to land a contract for three buildings on the National Religious Training School Campus, (now the North Carolina State College for Negroes). Although it is not known how long Wigington stayed in Sheridan before he returned to Omaha, he practiced in Omaha until 1913 when he and his family moved to Davenport, Iowa.

Two years later, in 1915, the family moved to St. Paul where Wigington took the exam for a position with the City Architect's office. Wigington scored first in the civil service test for the position and was hired as a draughtsman in August. Clarence Wesley Wigington was the first Black man to serve in this capacity in the City of St. Paul and may have been the first Black architect employed by a municipality in the United States.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Holman Field Administration Building, St. Paul, Ramsey Co., Minnesota

Section number 8 Page 2

In a time when many Blacks with college educations were working in service jobs, Wigington's achievement is exceptional.

As a draftsman, and later as the Chief Design Architect, Clarence Wesley Wigington drafted and designed many buildings for the City of St. Paul between 1915 and 1949. Because all designs from the City Architect's Office in St. Paul were stamped with the name of the City Architect, it was not until recent years that many of the designs were associated with Wigington. Since that time, designs that record Wigington as *architect in charge* and carry his signature have been attributed to Wigington. The most prominent surviving Wigington designs include the Highland Water Tower (listed on the National Register in 1976) several public schools, the Harriet Island Pavilion, Keller Golf Course Club House, the Como Park Palm House and the Como Zoo Building, the Ramsey County Boys School, the Public Safety Building, Fire Station No. 17, and a group of WPA built recreation buildings located in neighborhood parks. Of these designs, those that exhibit the highest degree of material and stylistic integrity are: the Harriet Island Pavilion (1941, WPA), the Highland Water Tower (1928), the Baker Park recreation building (1940, WPA), the Hamline playground building (1938, WPA), and the Holman Field Administration Building (1938, WPA). Other surviving designs are generally severely altered or constitute smaller, less significant designs. The Holman Airfield Administration Building is outstanding among the best preserved designs for its fine execution of the Moderne style, the handsome use of salvaged Kasota stone in a fresh modern design, and its high standard of craftsmanship typical of WPA projects.

The design of the Holman Administration Building is also significant as a well-preserved example of the relationship of the City of St. Paul and the federal work programs of the New Deal such as the Works Progress Administration. During the country's Great Depression, St. Paul, located in Ramsey County, or Minnesota WPA District #3, was the hub of WPA activity in that district because of its population and related concentration of unemployed persons. During a period of eight years between the establishment of the WPA program in 1935 and its abolishment in 1943, St. Paul received WPA funds to complete major road projects, construct new public buildings, make improvements to the Mississippi River Barge Terminal, and assemble miles of street surfacing, sewers, watermains, curbs and gutters. Improvements to over fifty school buildings and twenty fire stations were made while new construction included the Holman Field Administration Building, the Como Park golf course

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Holman Field Administration Building, St. Paul, Ramsey Co., Minnesota

Section number 8 Page 3

and clubhouse, municipal swimming pools, community recreation centers and playgrounds, and a building on the State Fair grounds. Even St. Paul's Winter Carnival Ice Palaces were underwritten by the WPA.

In addition to engineered projects, research and records projects were completed for the St. Paul Public Library and Ramsey County. Adult education and teen recreation programs were offered throughout the city at social agencies and school lunch programs were initiated. Artists and writers projects employed hundreds of artisans and provided entertainment and cultural stimulation for the public. WPA programs in St. Paul touched every aspect of life during the New Deal period. Both men and women, natives and immigrants, were employed and/or trained through WPA projects. The wages they brought home sustained many families through this difficult period. To qualify for work, certain health standards were imposed and hundreds benefited from a health care program designed to make workers eligible for employment.

Holman Field Administration Building is one element in a larger Works Progress Administration project to improve St. Paul's only municipal airport, which was originally established in 1926. The airfield was later named Holman Field in honor of Charles W. "Speed" Holman, one of the Twin Cities' most famous aviators who died when his plane crashed during an airshow in Omaha in 1931. By 1937, both national and local events figured into the need to expand Holman field: the war in Europe and the Great Depression. By late 1938, the local press commented that "...aviation's greatest period of growth in America may be expected because of impetus given by the National Defense Program." As a result, many federal work programs turned their emphasis toward defense, and it was estimated that 85% of all airport and landing field construction in the United States during a period from 1935 through 1940, was completed by the WPA, much of it directly related to the emerging national defense program. By the middle of 1941 some one and a half billion dollars had been expended on primary and secondary defense contracts throughout the United States. In Minnesota, about 13 million dollars were allocated for airports in Eveleth, Hibbing, Minneapolis, Duluth, Camp Ripley, Morris, Austin and Marshall. Other newspaper articles pointed out local economic issues: between 1935 and 1936 the level of air transportation, nation wide, had jumped fifty per cent. An improved airfield, the argument continued, could insure a prominent place for St. Paul in the air freight business much as St. Paul enjoyed in the river and rail freight businesses.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Holman Field Administration Building St. Paul, Ramsey Co., Minnesota

Section number 8 Page 4

The Holman Airport contract meant potential jobs in the midst of the Great Depression and a substantial reduction in relief funds paid out by the county. In order to secure \$1,394,000 in WPA funds, the city passed a bond issue for \$435,000.00 in November, 1937. The papers were full of articles extolling the benefits of an airport expansion plan that would provide both long and short term jobs. It was estimated that the airport project would employ 672 WPA workers over a two year period of time. In 1937 an additional 150 acres of land were purchased for the southward extension of runways. In 1938, the existing acreage was stabilized and leveled with fill from the river bottom, and three main runways were hard surfaced. Construction of the Airport Administration Building was begun the same year and two of the runways were extended. The administration building, which cost \$269,000 (including \$187,800.00 in federal WPA funds) was described by the local press as "the hub of all commercial airline departures and elaborate baggage, express, and airmail facilities." The building boasted the latest in technology as well as public accommodation. The Holman Field expansion project ultimately involved approximately 1500 workers: the local press hailed it as the "backbone" of the St. Paul relief program under the New Deal legislation.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Holman Field Administration Building, St. Paul, Ramsey Co., Minnesota

Section number 9 Page 1

Air Museum of Minnesota Records, Frank Geng Collection, Box 4, MHS Manuscripts, St. Paul, MN.

Dreck, Wilson, biography of Clarence Wesley Wigington, unpublished, 1976, Northwest Architectural Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN.

Granger, Susan, Holman Field National Register Nomination, 1982.

"Man of the Month," *Eyes* magazine, May, 1946.

Marin, Alma, B., Holman Field National Register Nomination, 1980.

Meinen, Irene, Homan Field history, unpublished, State Historic Preservation Office files, 1980.

Personal correspondence with Mildred Bohanon and Caroline Pemberton, daughter and granddaughter, respectively, of C.W. Wigington 1990.

Roscoe, Robert, "Of Ice and Stone," *Preservation Matters*, Vol. 4, No. 5, May, 1988.

Stolte, Sidney, L. "Final Report of the Minnesota WPA," 1942, MHS Manuscripts, St. Paul, MN.

Works Progress Administration Collection, "Civil Service and WPA Defense Construction," Social Studies Research Materials, Vol. 23, Bulletin No. 55, January, 1942, MHS Manuscripts, St. Paul, MN.

Works Progress Administration Collection, various speeches and news releases, Box 330, MHS Manuscripts, St. Paul, MN.

Works Progress Administration Collection, Ramsey County reports of accomplishments, 1940 (?), Box 332, MHS Manuscripts, St. Paul, MN.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 91001004

Date Listed: 8/15/91

Holman Field Administration Building
Property Name

Ramsey
County

MN
State

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Bob Beland
Signature of the Keeper

8/15/91
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Item # 8, Significance:

The architect, Clarence Wesley Wigington, has been documented as an important Black architect; therefore, "Ethnic Heritage: Black" is an appropriate area of significance to add.

This information was verified by Susan Roth of the MN SHPO staff.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)