NPS Form 10-900

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

279

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

RECEIVED 2280
APR 08 2016
Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Hotel Sacred Heart

Other names/site number: Romborg Hotel

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location

Street & number: 112 W. Maple Street

City or town: Sacred Heart State: Minnesota County: Renville

Not For Publication: n/a Vicinity: n/a

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___**national** ___**statewide** X **local**

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X **A** ___**B** ___**C** ___**D**

Barbara Howard March 31, 2016

Signature of certifying official/Title: Barbara Mitchell Howard, Deputy SHPO, MNHS **Date**

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Joe Egan H. Beall 5-23-16

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private: [X]

Public – Local [ ]

Public – State [ ]

Public – Federal [ ]

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s) [X]

District [ ]

Site [ ]

Structure [ ]

Object [ ]

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	Total

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

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6. Function or Use
Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE/hotel
COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT /NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY
AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Commercial Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

In 1914 a group of local investors built a two-story brick hotel with a flat roof in the center of Sacred Heart, a small town about 110 miles west of Minneapolis in Renville County. The Hotel Sacred Heart faces north on Maple Street, the main commercial street which runs parallel to the rail road tracks which are one block to the north. The hotel was a short walk from the now razed Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul train depot and also adjacent to the Yellowstone Trail, an early automobile tourist route which passed through Sacred Heart on Maple Street. The building was constructed in a restrained Commercial Style with some detailing along the cornice. The main body of the building is a rectangle with the longest side facing Maple Street. A rectangular wing extends south from the west half of the rear façade of the main structure, forming an "L-shaped" plan. There is a full façade flat-roofed wooden porch along the front elevation. The building retains its historic integrity because the exterior is largely unchanged and the interior retains much of its original millwork and flooring even though partitions have been added in some places as a result of its reuse as an apartment building after the period of significance. There is a storage shed of indeterminate age behind the hotel which is a non-contributing resource.

Narrative Description

Exterior

The Hotel Sacred Heart is a flat-roofed, two-story brick building on the south side of Maple Street just west of the alley that runs north and south and divides the block bounded by 1st and 2nd avenues. The building has an "L" shaped footprint formed by the joining of two rectangular sections. The front section extends for 56 feet parallel to Maple and south for 34 feet. The rear section is a 32-foot wide rectangle attached to the west half of the rear façade of the front section and extending 42 feet to the south. As a result, the west façade of the building runs for 76 feet. Typical of early 20th century Commercial Style buildings, the structure is clad in textured dark brown brick laid in a running bond.

The main entrance is centered on the front façade and consists of a single wood door with a glass panel flanked by sidelights and topped by three glass transom windows, one over the door and one each over the sidelights. The transoms each have leaded glass ornamentation in geometric patterns. To the left and right of the main entrance are matching sets of three windows. In each set, a large rectangular storefront window with two lights is flanked by two one-over-one double-hung windows. The larger windows are covered by original six-light wooden storm windows, and the one-over-one side windows have original one-over-one wooden screens. All windows are set on simple stone sills.

There is a full façade flat-roofed wooden porch along the north elevation. The porch is reached by a wide central staircase of eight stairs which is flanked by a low wall which reaches the height of the porch floor. These walls are brick but covered by a coat of concrete. The wooden porch floor is about 12 feet deep. The porch roof is supported by six square wooden columns spread evenly across the width of the façade. Each of these sits on a brick pier. On the roof there is a low wooden balustrade with square balusters supported by square wooden posts which are at the same locations as the columns below.

The second floor of the front façade is divided into three bays. At the center is a group of three one-over-one windows. The left bay has two one-over-one windows; the right bay has two similar openings, except that the opening closer the center is a door rather than a window. This door is at the end of the main north-south hallway on the second floor and allowed access to the porch roof where hotel guests could sit. Each bay also has a small rectangular window at the attic level. Above those windows is a cornice line decorated with brick corbelling, and above that, a parapet which is higher at the corners and a six-foot section over the center. On the brickwork between the second floor and attic windows the words "Hotel Sacred Heart" are painted in white against a black background.[1]

[1] Historic photos indicate that the hotel originally had this name painted on the brick in a similar fashion at the same place (Figure #2). In 1947, the sign was repainted to read "Romborg Hotel" (Figure #5). In recent years, the original sign was restored.

The west façade forms the long leg of the "L." There is a water table formed by a projected soldier course of bricks at the height of the front porch floor. Both the first and second floors have a series of eight regularly-spaced one-over-one windows on stone sills. At the attic level there are two small rectangular windows and above that the cornice line decorated with brick corbelling capped by a parapet as on the front façade. On the basement level, there is a doorway reached by a stairway which begins near the Maple Street sidewalk and runs parallel to the façade. This stairwell is surrounded by a brick wall with a concrete cap which rises almost to the height of the water table. There are two small windows and two one-over-one windows north of the door way and six one-over-one windows to the south.

The south façade of the rear section has two one-over-one windows on each floor, and on the basement level, one window and one door, which is protected by a clapboard covered wood frame entryway with a shed roof (Photo #3). The east façade of this section has a door way at the far south end covered by a wood frame and clapboard entryway with shed roof and wood stairs. Both the first and the second floors have six one-over-one windows. There is an external brick chimney on this façade and no parapet. The rear facade of the front section, only about 24 feet wide, also lacks a parapet. It has two one-over-one windows on each level, and one window between the first and the second floors which allows natural light onto the main stair case, and a door way between the basement and the first floor levels at the level of the stairway landing. The east façade of the main section is divided into two halves by an external brick chimney. There are two one-over-one windows on each side of the chimney on all three levels. The cornice and the parapet are the same as on the front façade.

There is a simple one-story gable-roofed wood framed structure with tin siding facing the alley at the southern edge of the property. This non-contributing resource of indeterminate age was used as a storage shed and possibly a garage.

Interior

The central entrance opens into a lobby which originally was a large rectangular room extending to the exterior wall on the east (Figure #6). It was divided by sheetrock partitions when the building was converted to apartments in the late 1970s. There were two doors in the south wall of this room which originally opened into small rooms where hotel staff was quartered. The reception desk, no longer present, was centered on the west wall of the lobby. To the right of the desk was the entrance to the parlor, a room that became part of an apartment occupied by the hotel owners in the 1950s. To the left of the desk is the door into a hallway which provides access to the centrally located main staircase to the second floor and basement. At the south end of this hallway was originally the entrance to the dining room, which extended the entire width of the rear section of the building (Figure #4). Beyond the dining room to the south were the kitchen, pantries, and cooks quarters. All of these rooms were later divided into apartments. A service stairway against the south exterior wall links the former kitchen area to the basement and the second floor.

The entire second floor was originally divided into hotel guest rooms with doors opening on the two double-loaded corridors which intersected at the stairway landing. The north-south corridor led on the north to the doorway which allowed access to the porch roof and on the south to the rear stairway. The east-west corridor led to the rooms in the front section of the hotel above the lobby. These corridors are still double-loaded but the individual hotel rooms have been combined into apartments.

The basement has similar intersecting hallways. In that case, the north-south hallway leads up a short flight of stairs to the exit in the lower level of the south façade of the rear section. The east-west hallway leads to the door on the lower level of the west façade which opened into the stairwell that ran parallel to the building. In addition to boilers and storage, the basement rooms served a variety of commercial purposes over the years, and later were changed into apartments.

Integrity

The building retains its integrity because it exhibits the essential physical features that convey its historic significance. Its location and setting are unchanged. The building still fronts on Maple Street, a block away from the Milwaukee Road tracks. The highway through town still uses Maple Street, but the road has been known since 1934 as U. S. Highway 212 rather than as the Yellowstone Trail.

The design, materials, and workmanship of the exterior facades are mostly unchanged except that metal windows have replaced the original wood sash in some cases, and some window openings in the rear are covered with plywood. The doors and windows on the primary façade are mostly original, including the main entrance door, sidelights and transoms on the first floor and the door to the porch roof on the second. In no case has the size or shape of a window opening been altered. Although in need of repair, the wooden porch is original, although a low wooden balustrade between the columns on the lower level has been removed. The steps, most likely originally of brick, have been replaced or covered by concrete and the stairway walls have been covered by a coat of concrete which is deteriorating.

In 1945, a new owner changed the basement's commercial spaces into additional guest rooms. After the hotel was sold in 1977, the guest rooms in the basement and second floor were converted into apartments. The hallways are unchanged. The lobby and the former dining room were divided into apartments by sheetrock partitions. Except for the basement, the floors are hardwood and generally covered with carpeting or linoleum. The basement floors are concrete and also mostly covered with carpet or linoleum. Most of the original millwork is in place, including many doors which still have large metal numbers indicating their designation in the hotel's scheme of guest rooms. There is serious water damage to the ceilings of the hallway and rooms in the southern half of the rear section of the second floor. In 2014, the Sacred Heart Area Historical Society became the owners of the building with the intent of restoring the hotel. They were able to finance a complete reroofing of the structure in the spring of 2015. The remodeling which changed the hotel into apartments is mostly reversible.

Overall, the building conveys a feeling of its period of significance. Taken together, its physical features express the property's historic character and clearly associate it with the commercial life of a small town.

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.)

- [x] A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [ ] C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- [ ] A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- [ ] B. Removed from its original location
- [ ] C. A birthplace or grave
- [ ] D. A cemetery
- [ ] E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- [ ] F. A commemorative property
- [ ] G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE

Period of Significance
1914-1956

Significant Dates
1914
1945

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Martin Granum (Montevideo, MN)
Rodeberg & Biggard (Montevideo, MN)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Hotel Sacred Heart is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Commerce as a pioneering small town hotel opened in 1914 to provide quality lodging and meals to business travelers arriving by train and also to capitalize on early automobile tourism along the Yellowstone Trail which was organized in 1912. In addition, the Hotel Sacred Heart served local residents as the town's principal venue for the banquets at which schools, organizations, and businesses marked achievements and milestones as well as for the private dinners at which weddings, anniversaries, and retirements were celebrated. The name of the hotel was changed to the Romborg Hotel in 1947 and it continued to operate as a hotel until 1978. The period of significance begins with the construction of the hotel in 1914 and continues to 1956 when the proprietors closed the hotel's restaurant. The property is related to the statewide historic context of "Railroads and Agricultural Development, 1870-1940."

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The settlement of Renville County and the founding of the Village of Sacred Heart

The first Europeans to appear in the Dakota lands which became Renville County were fur traders, mostly of French or of mixed French and Dakota descent. One of these "mixed bloods" was Joseph Renville, who for a time had a trading post near present-day Renville. He later moved west to the area around Lac Qui Parle. More Europeans arrived after the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux in 1851 and especially after the removal of the Dakota from the north bank of the Minnesota River in 1858.[2]

Following the exile of the Dakota after the Dakota War of 1862, as well as the passage of the Homestead Act that same year, Europeans began to arrive in larger numbers. They were primarily immigrants who had settled temporarily in Iowa, Wisconsin, and southern Minnesota before relocating to Renville County. Originally part of a much larger subdivision, Renville County as it is known today was established in 1866. The area around Sacred Heart is on the western edge of the county, just north of the Minnesota River. The immigrants were mostly Norwegians, although Swedes and Germans also came to the Sacred Heart area.[3] Seeking economic independence, they were drawn to the Midwest because of the possibility of acquiring land they could afford. Their first difficult years were spent in dugouts or log houses with sod

[2] William Lass, *Minnesota A History,* 2nd Ed. (New York: Norton, 2000), pp. 110-114, 127-128.
[3] Census data on the various ethnic groups in Renville County can be found in Carlton C. Qualey and Jon A. Gjerde, "The Norwegians," p. 223 in June Drenning Holmquist, Ed. *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1981); Hildegard Binder Johnson, "The Germans," p. 159, in Holmquist; John G. Rice, "The Swedes," p. 251, in Holmquist. According to the 1880 census, there were 3,416 Norwegians, 2,307 Germans, and 931 Swedes in Renville County.

roofs as they began the arduous process of establishing farmsteads in the valley and on the prairie. They had to break up the sod in order to plant potatoes, turnips and small grains. Once established, they generally became wheat farmers, although later they turned increasingly to corn. All the while they had to survive diseases like diphtheria and whooping cough, and in the 1870s, an invasion of grasshoppers.[4]

From "railway village" to thriving town

In 1869, the new migrants organized North and South Sacred Heart Township, two entities governed from the beginning by a single town board. There was, however, no commercial center until the railroad arrived. Development was delayed by the economic depression in 1873, but in 1878, the Hastings and Dakota Railway Company, which had earlier built a line from Hastings to Glencoe, extended its line to Montevideo, and in the next year to Ortonville. The Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway Company (CM&StP) already held controlling interest in the Hastings and Dakota Railway, but kept the Hastings and Dakota intact as a corporate entity because it was a land grant railroad that controlled over 376,000 acres of federal lands. After the line was completed, the CM&StP became the direct proprietor of the route from Hastings to South Dakota.[5]

In 1879, the railroad built a depot and platted the town named Sacred Heart about 110 miles west of Minneapolis. Very quickly entrepreneurs opened several commercial enterprises and soon a "railway village" emerged which quickly grew into a local trading center. More than a dozen stores, two saloons, two grain elevators, and a doctor established themselves in just a few years. The town of Sacred Heart was incorporated in 1883.[6]

From the beginning, Sacred Heart had some kind of hotel. In 1879, the farmer Hans Field moved his farmhouse into the center of town and provided room and board to the laborers building the CM&StP depot. Shortly thereafter, Raffel Johnson and Peter Synnes built a simple two-story frame building which they ran as the Johnson & Synnes Hotel. In the late 1880s it was known as the Hotel Denmark.[7]

These two buildings were eventually converted to other uses. Meanwhile, Ole Sveiven began running a more substantial two-story brick hotel on Maple Street (on the site of the present Hotel

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[4] *Sacred Heart Town and County* (Sacred Heart, MN: Sacred Heart Area Historical Society), pp. 8-21, 232-233. Renville County was one of the counties severely damaged by the Rocky Mountain locust (which local farmers called grasshoppers) between 1874 and 1877. Annette Atkins, *Harvest of Grief: Grasshopper Plagues and Public Assistance in Minnesota, 1873-78* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1984).

[5] Andrew Schmidt, et al, *Railroads in Minnesota, 1862-1956, NRHP Multiple Property Listing Form* (2007), pp. 65-66 (available at the Minnesota Historic Preservation Office).

[6] The town was named Sacred Heart most likely because the township already bore that name. The origin of the township name is less clear. Two stories appear in the sources, and both are linked to the early French presence in the area. One concerns a fur trader named Charles Patterson and the name given by local Indians to his bearskin hat. The other concerns the name given to a creek by an early French missionary priest. Given the French origins of settlement in the area, the name of Sacred Heart, which resonates with Catholic theology and ritual, makes sense. The irony is that the predominantly Lutheran population adopted it as the name of their town, and retained it over the years. Warren Upham, *Minnesota Place Names,* 3rd Ed. (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2001), p. 493.

[7] Franklin Curtiss-Wedge, History *of Renville County*. 2 vols. (Chicago: H. C. Cooper Co, 1916) p. 914.

Sacred Heart) in about 1898. The hotel had a wood portico with a flat roof upon which guests could sit. There was a one story annex to the north which housed businesses and meeting rooms. Sveiven added a second floor to the annex in 1901 to accommodate more guest rooms (Figure #1). The establishment was known first as the Hotel Windsor and then the Hotel Ellingboe when Knute Ellingoe leased the hotel. The hotel business being what it was, lessors and managers came and went quickly, and within a year, the hotel was rechristened the Hotel Ryan. The hotel was operated under that name by a number of managers until Valentine's Day 1907, when a fire raged through the hotel and annex, burning both to the ground.[8]

In the years before World War I, Sacred Heart grew into a thriving community of 800 that functioned as a trading center for the surrounding townships. By this time, corn had overtaken wheat as the main cash crop. The town had five grain elevators, several livestock dealers, a produce company, two lumber yards, two banks, two hardware stores, and a number of other retail establishments.[9] The town had concrete sidewalks, electric street lights, a waterworks plant, a fire department of ten men, a jail, and a bandstand. It also had five churches, four of which were Lutheran and one Methodist. The town also had a stately two-story brick school which had begun to offer high school classes.[10] What it did not have was a hotel.

To fill this gap, five Sacred Heart businessmen met in late 1912 to plan a joint stock company which would build a hotel and lease it to a hosteller. In early 1913, Edward O'Connor, John N. Stenborg, Ole C. Sparstad, Carl Anderson, and Gustav P. Mangerud signed the articles of incorporation for the Sacred Heart Hotel Company. The leader was most likely O'Connor, one of six brothers who moved to the area in the 1880s and became involved in a variety of businesses. The O'Connor brothers started a private bank in 1888 and incorporated it as the Farmers State Bank in 1905. Ed O'Connor was also a farmer, grain broker, elevator owner, and real estate broker, and in general, a resident who the 1916 county history singled out as a "man of affairs" and a "leading citizen."[11]

O'Connor and his fellow hotel stockholders set the share price at $100, and quickly raised $9,000 which they thought was enough to build "a handsome, first-class, fireproof brick hotel" in Sacred Heart.[12] Carl Anderson had bought the vacant lot once occupied by Hotel Ryan as the site of the new hotel, and the property was transferred to the new company. The Sacred Heart Hotel Company hired Martin Granum, an architect from Montevideo, to draw up plans and specifications, and put out a call for bids from general contractors.[13] In July, local contractors bid on the job, and the investors then realized that the hotel they envisioned would cost about $15,000.[14] They therefore set out to sell more shares, and had quick success with local farmers. The hotel entrepreneurs praised the farmers in a newspaper article, noting that their willingness

[8] Curtiss-Wedge, p. 915.
[9] Curtiss-Wedge, p. 911.
[10] Greg Gaut, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for the Sacred Heart Public School*, June 15, 2014.
[11] Curtisss-Wedge, p. 684.
[12] "Hotel is Now Fully Assured: Organization is Perfected, Stock Subscribed, Title Cleared," *Sacred Heart Journal* (hereafter *SHJ*), May 2, 1913. The newspaper also reprinted the entire Articles of Incorporation in this issue.
[13] "Bids Wanted for Brick Hotel at Sacred Heart, MN," *SHJ*, June 13, 1913.
[14] Using the Consumer Price Index, $15,000 in 1913 has the relative worth of about $370,000 in today's dollars.

to invest in the hotel proved that they were "not narrow-minded; that they were progressive, unprejudiced and the best sort of fellows to be found anywhere in our free land."[15]

Rodeberg & Biggard, a firm from Montevideo, began building the hotel in September 1913 and enclosed the shell of the building before winter. As the contractors finished the building in the spring of 1914, O'Connor, Stenborg and Anderson traveled to Brooten to negotiate a leasing arrangement with Lloyd F. Reddicliffe, an experienced hosteller. They concluded a one-year lease with an option for four more, and Reddicliffe then went to the Twin Cities to buy furniture for the hotel.[16] As the hotel prepared for its debut, the local newspaper was sure that the 25-room hotel, with its electric lights, steam heat, and handsome oak and maple furnishings would be the "best to be found between the cities and Aberdeen." It was the hotel "that our citizens have long wished to see in our town," and "we are all proud of the structure."[17]

On May 23, 1914 the hotel was formally opened with a dinner at which more than 100 guests were served. Edward O'Connor presided over the festive evening, and the citizens of Sacred Heart were pleased to hear N. J. Holmberg, a Renville resident who represented the area in the Minnesota House of Representatives, make a speech in which he praised their town for "the fine public spirit" shown in "putting up such a fine hotel." The evening concluded with dancing followed by a "midnight lunch."[18]

When the hotel opened, the railroad was Sacred Heart's main connection with the outside world. The Hotel Sacred Heart was designed in part to serve business travelers arriving at the Milwaukee Road depot which was a short walk from the hotel. Traveling salesmen could set up displays of their products in the hotel's "sample room." They could eat in the hotel dining room and also take advantage of the fact that a barber and a dry cleaning service had offices in the basement.

From the beginning, travelling medical specialists also used the Hotel Sacred Heart to see patients. Dr. J. Keller, an optometrist, announced monthly office hours in the hotel starting in August 1914.[19] Perhaps in response, Dr. J. C. Lepler, a St. Paul ophthalmologist, placed a large newspaper advertisement announcing his September 1914 office hours in the hotel. His notice said that he would make regular stops at the hotel to fit patients for eyeglasses. He also suggested that "thoughtful parents will see to it that nothing stands in the way of their child's success and advancement."[20] A third eye specialist, Dr. Joseph Pfister, also from St. Paul, saw patients at the Hotel Sacred Heart on a regular basis a few years later.[21] These eye specialists

[15] "Hotel Doings," *SHJ*, August 8, 1913.
[16] "New Hotel Leased," *SHJ*, April 24, 1914.
[17] "Hotel Sacred Heart Ready," *SHJ*, May 1, 1914.
[18] "Grand Opening Hotel Sacred Heart Saturday May 23," *SHJ*, May 22, 1914; "Hotel Formally Opens to Public," *SHJ*, May 22, 1914. Holmberg served in the Minnesota house form 1907-1914 and the Senate from 1915-1917, after which he was appointed the Commissioner of Agriculture for the state.
[19] "Dr. J. Keller, Optometrist: Eyesight specialists from St. Paul will be in Sacred Heart," *SHJ,* August 14, 1914.
[20] Advertisement for Dr. Lepler, *SHJ*, August 28, 1914. He placed a second large advertisement in the October 2, 1914 edition of the *SHJ* about his October 6 office hours in the hotel.
[21] "Pfister is coming," *SHJ*, July 8, 1920. This article indicates that Dr. Pfister had been visiting Sacred Heart for several years.

stopped in Sacred Heart because there was no resident optometrist in those years. Sacred Heart did have at least one general practice physician, but more specialized medical services came from outsiders. Dr. J. E. Doran, an internist from Minneapolis, saw patients in the hotel in 1915. He told the newspaper that people suffering from diseases "that have baffled the skill of the family physician" should make an appointment.[22]

On the trail to Yellowstone

The hotel, however, was also built to cater to visitors arriving by automobile. It was no accident that local entrepreneurs were highly motivated to open a quality hotel in 1912. In that same year, a group of businessmen in South Dakota led by Joe Parmley organized a grass roots movement to improve the road between the South Dakota towns of Ipswich and Aberdeen. This was part of the larger "good roads" movement that was springing up all over the country as the number of automobiles mushroomed. In that year, 356,000 automobiles were sold, and that number would reach nearly 1 million in 1915. Automobiles need roads, and few were being built because states and the federal government were still focused on subsidizing the railroads. Parmley's idea was so popular that it soon evolved into the much bigger project of lobbying for an improved road from "Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound" and then marketing it as a tourist attraction.[23]

In October 1912, a group of South Dakota businessmen formed the Twin Cities-Aberdeen-Yellowstone Park Trail Association, using the name of the popular national park in its title. Then they recruited businessmen all along the projected route of what would soon be known as "the Yellowstone Trail." The first convention was held in Montana in February 1913. They adopted a slogan ("See America First") and a distinctive circular trail marker with a yellow band with a black arrow in the center "pointing to Yellowstone National Park."[24] In addition to lobbying local, state and federal governments for improved roads, the association also held "Trail Days" where locals were encouraged to improve the trail near their town. They also published maps and trail guides for travelers (Figure #3).

Businessmen in Renville County were involved from the beginning, especially Michael Dowling, an educator and newspaper publisher from nearby Olivia, the county seat, and eventually that town's mayor.[25] An early automobile enthusiast, he was the first Minnesotan on the executive committee of the Yellowstone Trail association. His passionate commitment to the

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[22] "Coming to Sacred Heart: Dr. J. E. Doran, specialist," *SHJ*, June 27, 1915.

[23] Harold A. Meeks, *On the Road to Yellowstone: The Yellowstone Trail and American Highways 1900-1930* (Missoula: Pictorial Histories Publishing, 2000); Alice Ridge and William Ridge, *Introducing the Yellowstone Trail-- A Good Road from Plymouth to Puget Sound 1912-1930.* (Altoona, WI: Yellowstone Trail Publishers, 2000).

[24] *A Reproduction of the First Year Book of the Twin Cities-Aberdeen-Yellowstone Park Trail Association (The Yellowstone Trail Association), 1914.* (Altoona, WI: Yellowstone Trail Publishers, 2003).

[25] While working as a teenage farmhand in 1880, Michael Dowling (1866-1921) was trapped in a blizzard and lost both legs and one arm to frostbite. He was able to adapt to prosthetic legs and an arm, continue his education, and eventually became editor of the *Renville County Star*, the superintendent of schools in Olivia, and its mayor. He served in the Minnesota Legislature and is best remembered today an early crusader for handicapped children. The Michael Dowling School of the Minneapolis Public School District was named in his honor. Built in 1924, it was originally called the Michael J. Dowling School for Crippled Children. Today it is a K-5 environmental magnet school.

project was demonstrated when he led a three car caravan from Olivia to Yellowstone in the summer of 1913. He drove his wife and three young daughters in his brand new 1913 Oakland. Driving 2,500 miles on mostly gravel and dirt roads, they reached Yellowstone in 10 days. He told his family that the purpose of the trip was "to show that ordinary families with children can now travel any place, any time, in any kind of automobile for less than the fare by rail."[26]

Sacred Heart was also on the Yellowstone Trail and like their counterparts in the neighboring towns of Bird Island, Olivia and Renville, its businessmen joined the trail association and used its publications to attract tourists. Tim O'Connor, one of Ed O'Connor's brothers, served on the Finance Committee of the trail association in 1913.[27] The 1921 "Route Folder" for the trail, a multipage brochure which provided travel information to tourists, listed H. C. Omholt, a former mayor of Sacred Heart, as the local representative.[28] He was elected first president of Sacred Heart's Commercial Club in 1919. He had owned a firm which serviced automobiles and had been involved in banking. The route folder assured travelers that "all" accommodations were available in the town. Ed O'Connor, for example, built a garage behind the Farmers State Bank and rented it to a number of mechanics including one who called his business the Yellowstone Trail Garage.[29] In fact, as the Renville County history published in 1916 noted, Sacred Heart was "quite an automobile town." Two new "up-to-date garages" took care of "all auto troubles with dispatch." "Many tourists stop here," the writer concluded, "and most of the farmers own automobiles."[30]

The new hotel filled the void that was created in Sacred Heart's commercial life when fire destroyed the Hotel Ryan in 1907. The town could once again accommodate business travelers arriving by train. Local business and civic organizations once again had a venue for luncheons and banquets. By anticipating the rise of the automobile and contributing to the efforts to bring motorists to Sacred Heart, the entrepreneurs behind the hotel were also ushering in a new phase in the town's commerce.

"The Radisson of Renville County"

Automobiles provided a business opportunity, but they also presented dangers. Less than a year after the hotel's grand opening, the family of Lloyd Reddicliffe, the hotel lessee and manager, suffered a terrible tragedy in downtown Sacred Heart. On June 4, 1915, a dog ran in front of the Reddicliffe car causing an accident in which both of his sons were killed and his wife injured. In September, Lloyd Reddicliffe sold the hotel lease to H. A. Kurth and left town with his family. Kurth published a large advertisement in the *Sacred Heart Journal* proclaiming that the

[26] Dorothy Dowling Prichard, *We Blazed the Trail: Motoring to Yellowstone in Mike Dowling's Oakland* (Gronvick: Barry Prichard, 2008). Dowling's car was a Model 6-60 Oakland manufactured in Pontiac, Michigan. The Oakland Motor Car Company became a division of General Motors Corporation in 1909. When the Depression hit, General Motors discontinued the Oakland in favor of a newer brand, the Pontiac. Dorothy Dowling was the oldest of the three daughters.
[27] "Yellowstone Trail 'Boosters' Meet," *Olivia Times*, May 1, 1913.
[28] "The Yellowstone Trail: 1921 Route Folder," Minnesota Historical Society archives.
[29] *Sacred Heart Town and County*, p. 133
[30] Curtiss-Wedge, p. 910.

new management of the hotel "extends 'The Glad Hand' to the traveling 'knight of the grip.'"[31] Six weeks later he sold the hotel to Charles Clay, telling the local newspaper that he found the hotel business "uncongenial" and complaining that he had lost weight since taking over the hotel.[32]

Clay took over the hotel in December 1915 and ran it successfully for several years. When the U.S. declared war on Germany in April 1917, however, the business of running a hotel and restaurant became significantly more difficult. Hopes for road improvements and expanded automobile tourism were temporarily put on hold. In September 1917, the Council of National Defense in Washington urged citizens to curtail pleasure driving. In August 1918, the federal government asked citizens east of the Mississippi not to drive on Sundays. In Minnesota, the state fuel administrator asked the entire state to comply with this rule.[33] The nationwide food conservation campaign also made it difficult to attract business. In 1917, federal and state officials asked restaurants to observe one "meatless' and one "wheatless" day per week. In 1918, the federal food administration replaced this voluntary approach with a formidable list of orders severely limiting what public eating places could serve. Bread, for example, could only be served sparingly, and if served, it had to contain at least 20% of wheat flour substitutes. Restaurants were forbidden to place a sugar bowl on the table, and if a guest asked for sugar, only a teaspoonful could be served.[34]

Perhaps for these reasons, an advertisement appeared in the local newspaper in May 1919 announcing that the hotel would soon close and its furniture would be up for sale.[35] A month later, Ole Sparstad, one of the hotel's original incorporators, and his sister Berit Syness reopened the hotel and its dining room.[36] Sparstad operated a photography business in Sacred Heart and served several terms as mayor and village clerk.[37] In October of that year, the Hotel Sacred Heart marked the end of the war period by hosting a banquet at which all Sacred Heart service men and women who had returned from Europe were honored. Following the dinner, Michael Dowling addressed the veterans.[38]

In 1921, William and Grace Grinnell arrived from Minneapolis with their daughter Fannie to take over management of the hotel and its dining room. William Grinnell was a traveling salesman, so Grace Grinnell ran the hotel for the next nine years and built its reputation as a quality establishment with a fine restaurant. Grace Grinnell became famous for serving T-bone or chicken dinners for 75 cents to locals, tourists, and business travelers, and the hotel become well-known locally as a banquet facility. Shortly after the Grinnells took over, business leaders

[31] Advertisement: "Hotel Sacred Heart extends "The Glad Hand.'" *SHJ*, October 15, 1915.
[32] "Hotel Changes Hands," *SHJ*, December 3, 1915.
[33] Franklin Holbrook and Livia Appel, *Minnesota in the War with Germany*, Vol 2 (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1932) pp. 184-185.
[34] Holbrook and Appel, pp. 160-165; Rae Katherine Eighmey, *Food Will Win the War: Minnesota Crops, Cooks, and Conservation during World War I* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2010) pp 32-34, 110-111.
[35] Advertisement in *SHJ*, May 9, 1919.
[36] "Hotel under New Management," *SHJ*, June 13, 1919.
[37] *Sacred Heart Town and Country*, pp. 184-185.
[38] *Renville Star Farmer,* October 16, 1919.

including Ed O'Connor and H. C. Omholt organized a welcoming banquet to spark interest in the hotel and restaurant. The meal was such a success, according to the local newspaper, that one of the diners rose to toast the establishment as the "Radisson of Renville County."[39]

In the mid-1920s, the hotel began functioning as Sacred Heart's bus station. It was about that time that the Northland Transportation Company extended service to the town, and in 1929, the company placed an advertisement in the local newspaper mentioned Grace Grinnell as the local representative. Northland eventually became part of the Greyhound Bus Company which regularly advertised in the Sacred Heart newspaper, always mentioning the Hotel Sacred Heart as the place to board the bus.[40]

In 1930, Grace Grinnell returned to Wisconsin to run a tea shop and Ole Sparstad and Berit Syness once again became managers of the hotel and restaurant.[41] The hotel continued to operate as it had in the previous decade. As noted below, the tradition of the annual junior-senior banquet had been firmly established at the hotel, and probably with this in mind, Sparstad advertised the hotel in the 1931-1932 high school yearbook. In 1942, the state's Division of Hotel Inspection awarded Sparstad a Certificate of Cleanliness for the hotel.[42]

During the 1930s, the Hotel Sacred Heart most likely hosted, probably more than once, a group of African American basketball players who later would go on to international fame. In 1930, the Harlem Globetrotters, a barnstorming team of basketball stars, made its first venture into Minnesota. They were organized in the late 1920s by Abe Saperstein, a Chicago entrepreneur, and in those early days they traveled by Model T through the Midwest playing local teams for a portion of the gate.[43] In February, the Globetrotters faced, and defeated, the Whippets, the local basketball team, in the Sacred Heart Public School gymnasium. The local newspaper reported that everyone in attendance "enjoyed a most hilarious evening."[44]

When a return engagement was organized in January 1931, the paper noted that "record attendance is anticipated for the evening of laughs with the black men."[45] About 700 packed the gymnasium to see the rematch and the local newspaper reported that the crowd was delighted by

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[39] *Sacred Heart Town and Country*, p. 157.

[40] Advertisement for Northland Transportation Company, *Sacred Heart News* (hereafter *SHN*), January 10, 1929. In 1954, the company placed an advertisement that one of their new "Scenicruiser" buses would be on display at the Hotel Sacred Heart. *Sacred Heart News*, November 25, 1954. See also Margaret Walsh, "Tracing the Hound: the Minnesota Roots of the Greyhound Bus Company," *Minnesota History 49, No 8* (Winter, 1985): pp. 310-324.

[41] "Mrs. Grinnell, 95, dies on Saturday; rites Wednesday," *SHN*, January 13, 1972. The 1930 census indicates that Grace Grinnell lived at the hotel at that time but does not mention William Grinnell. In any case, he died in 1932 in Faribault, still a traveling salesman, and his body was returned to New Richmond, Wisconsin, his home town, for burial.

[42] "Cleanliness Award Presented to the Sacred Heart Hotel," *SHN*, May 14, 1942.

[43] The Harlem Globetrotters toured small towns in Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota beginning in the winter of 1929-1930. Ben Green, *Spinning the Globe: the Rise, Fall, and Return to Greatness of the Harlem Globetrotters* (New York: Harper Collins, 2005). Green provides a good overview of the early barnstorming years of the Globetrotters at pp. 51-71.

[44] "Whippets Easily Lose to Colored Team," *SHN*, February 6, 1930.

[45] "Whippets to Meet Fast Redwood Team," *SHN*, January 8, 1931; "Colored B.B. Team Here Sat. Jan 24," *SHN*, January 15, 1931.

the fast style of play and humorous antics of the Globetrotters.[46] The newspaper also stated that the team made Sacred Heart their base for a week while they traveled to play in neighboring towns, apparently because "everyone treated them civilly" in Sacred Heart and there were no racial epithets shouted during the game.[47] If they stayed a week they must have found lodging, and the Hotel Sacred Heart was the only possibility. It is not clear how many times the Globetrotters appeared in Sacred Heart, but newspaper advertisements and articles document their appearance in 1938, 1939, 1947, and 1972.[48]

In 1944, Sparstad, who was by this time in his 70s, sold the hotel lease to George Tillbury and within a year, Tillbury transferred the lease to Art Mack. At this time Mack also purchased the property from Sacred Heart Hotel Company, which had retained ownership of the land and building since 1913. Mack then remodeled the hotel by adding seven rooms on the first floor and basement. Newspaper reports indicate that he planned on enclosing the veranda, but very likely he only enclosed it in a temporary way to encourage bus passengers to wait on the porch rather than inside the lobby, and in any case, later owners reopened the porch. Mack sold the hotel to Elmer Jenson in 1946, but like several others, Jenson and his wife reconsidered their foray in the hotel business after only one year.[49]

The Romborg Years

In 1947 new owners with close family ties to the earlier days of the hotel bought the business and reestablished the style and quality for which it had been known before World War II. Mr. and Mrs. Albert N. Stenborg joined with Mary N. Romness to purchase the hotel and run it as a partnership (Figure #6, 7). Combining their last names, they christened the business the Romborg Hotel. Albert Stenborg, the son of John N. Stenborg, one of the original incorporators of the hotel company, ran a general store in Sacred Heart. He had married Fannie Grinnell, the daughter of William and Grace Grinnell, during the 1920s. Fannie, of course, had lived and worked in the hotel prior to her marriage. Mary Romness was the wife of Palmer Romness, one of the sons of Peter Romness, who ran a garage which sold and fixed automobiles and farm implements in Sacred Heart. When his father died in 1940, Palmer and his brother renamed the

[46] "Elusive Colored Boys Win From Whippets," *SHN*, January 29, 1931.

[47] "Round about the Town," *SHN*, February 5, 1931. The pervasive racism in the U.S. meant that the Globetrotters often had problems finding lodging and restaurants willing to serve them and sometimes had to quickly leave after a game to avoid violence. See Green, *ibid.* With respect to the team's relationship with the town, a local memoirist recalled that Abe Saperstein asked a Whippets player named Harry Strand to fill in for an injured Globetrotter sometime during this period. If so, he may have been the first person to play on the team who was not African-American besides Saperstein himself, who sometimes had to substitute because the team could only afford to travel with five players. Beverly Webster, *Aase's Family* (1993), p. 145; quoted in *Sacred Heart Town and Country*, p. 364. Further research may reveal potential significance of the Hotel Sacred Heart under Criterion A within a civil rights context.

[48] "The All-Star Globe Trotters to Play Dec 20 Against the Sacred Heart Town Team," *SHN*, December 11, 1938; "Colored 5 Win in Riot of Fun," *SHN*, December 7, 1939; *SHN*, December 4, 1947, p. 6; *SHN*, December 18, 1947, p. 1.

[49] "Sparstads Sell Hotel Business," *SHN*, March 23, 1944; "Hotel has Face Lifted, Glazed," *SHN*, September 14, 1944; "Art Macks Sell Hotel Tuesday to Veteran of Navy," *SHN*, October 4, 1945.

business Romness Brothers.[50] Shortly after Palmer died in 1946, Mary Romness went into business with the Stenborgs.

The three partners cemented their links to the past by bringing Grace Grinnell back to run the kitchen and dining room. She was 70 years old and they pledged to close the dining room when she reached 80. Under her management, the hotel regained its reputation as a banquet facility and as a fine dining establishment which attracted the notice of outsiders. In 1950, the *West Central Tribune* based in Willmar profiled the establishment, noting that Grace Grinnell continued to serve steaks and chicken (but not for 75 cents) and now considered her signature dishes to include beef pot roast with German potato pancakes, cheese soufflé with mushroom sauce, and ham steak with corn pudding.[51] The article also highlighted the hotel's antique-laden décor. The three owners gathered their own antique furniture, light fixtures, and collectibles in the hotel for display in the common areas and in the guestrooms. Their best known piece was a Franklin Stove which came from the LeDuc House in Hastings, the 1865 Gothic Revival mansion built in 1865 by William LeDuc, who served as Secretary of Agriculture under Rutherford B. Hayes.[52] The owners put the stove in the lobby to warm their guests (Figure #8).

The Romborg Hotel was also featured in travel writer Roland Hill's popular travel guides, including *In Minnesota I Recommend*, published in 1949. A Minnesota native, Hill published best-selling travel books which recommended hotels and restaurants nation-wide. In his guide to Minnesota, he called The Romborg Hotel "one of the best bets in the state." He credited Mary Romness and Fannie Stenborg for upgrading the hotel, which he wrote was "filled with antiques arranged around beautifully papered walls in public rooms, dining rooms and in the bedrooms upstairs." He assured travelers that they would have a "really delicious and beautifully served dinner."[53]

Mary Romness left the partnership in late 1952 to take over management of the dining room at the Nicollet Hotel in St. Peter. True to their word, the Stenborgs closed the dining room in 1956 when Grace Grinnell turned 80.[54] Although the hotel continued to operate into the 1970s, this event marks the end of the period of significance, since the hotel's contribution to the commerce of the area was closely associated with its restaurant.

The center of festivities

Given that its reputation for food attracted business and leisure travelers from some distance, it is no surprise that the hotel was much in demand locally as a banquet facility used by businesses,

[50] *Sacred Heart Town and Country*, p. 133.
[51] Jean Somer, "Hotel in Sacred Heart Wins Fame," *West Central Tribune*, May 11, 1950. Willmar is about 35 miles northeast of Sacred Heart.
[52] The LeDuc House was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1970. The Romborg partners likely purchased the stove from Carroll Simmons, an antique dealer who purchased the home in 1940. Many of the Romborg Hotel's antiques, including the stove, were auctioned with other hotel property in 1978. The Sacred Heart Area Historical Society now owns the stove.
[53] Roland L. Hill, *In Minnesota I Recommend* (Minneapolis: Forest Publishing, 1949), p. 66.
[54] Grace Grinnell lived for another fifteen years. She died in 1972 at age 95 and is buried in Sacred Heart. "Mrs. Grinnell, 95, dies on Saturday; rites Wednesday," *SHN*, January 13, 1972.

associations, school groups for important organizational events, as well as by families for wedding feasts, engagement dinners, and the like.

The hotel, for example, played a role in the town's annual University Week, a series of educational events. In 1916, businessmen gathered for lunch at the hotel to hear a lecture on "Municipal Revenue and Expenditures" which was part of that summer's University Week.[55] In 1924, the alumni association of the local high school had its organizational meeting at a banquet at the hotel, and over the years, many other community organizations used the hotel and its dining room as the site of meetings, award ceremonies, and celebrations, including the Women's Improvement Club, the Village Chest charitable organization, the Renville County Editorial Association, and the Commercial Club, later renamed the Community Club, which had a regular rental contract with the hotel. Sometimes banquets were organized around special events, like the "testimonial dinner" to send off a local girl to compete in the 1948 Corn Festival Queen contest in Olivia.[56]

Many events involved the high school, including an end of year awards banquet, and most enduringly, the Junior-Senior Banquet every spring when the juniors would host the seniors and the faculty at a gala dinner.[57] These events began in 1930 and were a major social event until World War II. After Grace Grinnell reopened the dining room in 1947, the tradition was renewed at the hotel, and by the 1950s, the banquets served as a prelude to the prom dance in the gymnasium at the Sacred Heart Public School. The hotel dining room was decorated, and the juniors, who served the meal, were costumed consistent with a theme (in 1954, for example, the theme was "In Davy Jones' Locker" with the juniors dressed as pirates).[58] A multicourse feast would be served, many toasts made, and musical performances given.

The hotel was the regular venue for engagement parties and wedding feasts. On one occasion, the wedding was held in the hotel itself. This was the wedding of the Stenborgs' own daughter Rosemary, who married James Hoberg in the parlor in a service conducted by a local Lutheran minister. Following the ceremony Mary Romness and Fannie Stenborg hosted a reception in the dining room where coffee and a three-tier wedding cake was served to 120 guests.[59]

In recent years

By 1960, Albert Stenborg was 67 and the Stenborgs were clearly interested in retirement. That year the newspaper reported that they had sold the hotel to a couple who intended to turn the hotel into a nursing home. This project fell through and the Stenborgs retained ownership.

Albert Stenborg died in 1969 and two years later Fannie Stenborg sold the hotel to Mr. and Mrs. E. L. Strommer. They continued to operate the hotel until 1978 when the hotel fixtures were

[55] "University Week Very Successful," *SHJ*, June 11, 1916.
[56] "Fifty Honor Queen Virginia at Dinner," *SHN*, August 5, 1948.
[57] On the awards banquet, see "Letters Given to Students at Hotel Banquet," *SHN*, May 23, 1935.
[58] "Banquet and Prom are Big Success," *SHN*, May 20, 1954.
[59] "Weddings: Hoberg-Stenborg," *SHN*, July 2, 1948

auctioned off and the building sold to a developer who turned it into apartments. The building was run as an apartment building until about 1999.

The last owners forfeited the property for unpaid taxes, and in January 2015, the city sold the building to the Sacred Heart Area Historical Society (SHAHS). In consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office, SHAHS raised the funds needed to put a new roof on the building, a project which was completed in the spring 2015. As of this writing, the building is vacant and SHAHS is working on maintaining the structure and planning for its adapted reuse.

* * *

In 1914, a group of Sacred Heart entrepreneurs built a hotel to meet the unmet demand for quality accommodations for travelers arriving by train for either business or pleasure. In building the Hotel Sacred Heart, these men also hoped to capitalize on the creation of the Yellowstone Trail, an early automobile tourist route which ran past the hotel. By the 1930s, the hotel, and especially its restaurant, had earned a solid reputation. Following World War II, a new generation of owners revitalized the business under the name of the Romborg Hotel. Throughout, the hotel served local residents as the town's principal venue for the banquets held by businesses and clubs as well as for the private dinners at which families celebrated their weddings, anniversaries, and retirements. From its opening in 1914 until the closing of the hotel's restaurant in 1956, the hotel was the hub of commercial life of this small town. For these reasons, the Hotel Sacred Heart is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Commerce.

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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 # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

_x_ State Historic Preservation Office:
- ✓ Letter from Britta Bloomberg to Chuck Swanson, June 7, 2007, indicating eligibility for the National Registrar
- ✓ Minnesota Historic Property Inventory Form, October 1984, by Susan Granger

____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
_x_ Other: Sacred Heart Area Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): RN-SHC-22

10. Geographical Data **Acreage of Property** Less than one acre

UTM References Datum (indicated on USGS map):

[X] NAD 1927 or [ ] NAD 1983

1. Zone: 15 Easting: 314035 Northing: 4961740

Verbal Boundary Description: Lot G of Sveiven's Rearrangement of Lots G, H, I, 7 & 10 of Block 11 of the Original Plat of Sacred Heart.
Boundary Justification: The boundary includes the city lots historically associated with the property.

Form Prepared By
name/title: Greg Gaut
organization: Historic Preservation Consultant
street & number: 1235 Yale Place #408
city or town: Minneapolis state: Minnesota zip code: 55403
e-mail GregGaut@gmail.com
telephone: 612-200-9494
date: November 23, 2015

Additional Documentation

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map**

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Hotel Sacred Heart
City or Vicinity: Sacred Heart County: Renville State: Minnesota
Photographer: Greg Gaut Date Photographed: June, 2015

Photo #1: (MN_Renville Co_Hotel Sacred Heart_0001)
Hotel Sacred Heart, north façade, camera facing south

Photo #2: (MN_Renville Co_Hotel Sacred Heart_0002)
Hotel Sacred Heart, west façade, camera facing southeast

Photo #3: (MN_Renville Co_Hotel Sacred Heart_0003)
Hotel Sacred Heart, south façade of rear section, camera facing northeast

Photo #4: (MN_Renville Co_Hotel Sacred Heart_0004)
Hotel Sacred Heart, east façade of rear section and south façade of main section, camera facing northwest

Photo #5: (MN_Renville Co_Hotel Sacred Heart_0005)
Hotel Sacred Heart, east façade camera facing west

Photo #6: (MN_Renville Co_Hotel Sacred Heart_0006)
Hotel Sacred Heart, main stairway, camera on second floor landing, facing south east

Photo #7: (MN_Renville Co_Hotel Sacred Heart_0007)
Hotel Sacred Heart, hallway to east exit, basement, camera facing west

Photo #8: (MN_Renville Co_Hotel Sacred Heart_0008)
Hotel Sacred Heart, Room 204, second floor, camera facing east

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.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Historic Photos

Figure #1: The Ryan Hotel in a photograph taken sometime between 1901 when a second floor was added to the next door annex and 1907 when it burned to the ground (Sacred Heart Area Historical Society archives).

Figure #2: Hotel Sacred Heart not long after it opened in 1914 (SHAHS archives).

Figure #3: *Yellowstone Trail Touring Service, Map No. 9 Minnesota* (Minnesota Historical Society archives). A map produced for tourists in 1921.

Figure #4: The Hotel Sacred Heart dining room with tables set for a festive meal not long after it opened in 1914 (SHAHS archives).

Figure #5: Romborg Hotel in a photograph taken in 1955 (SHAHS archives).

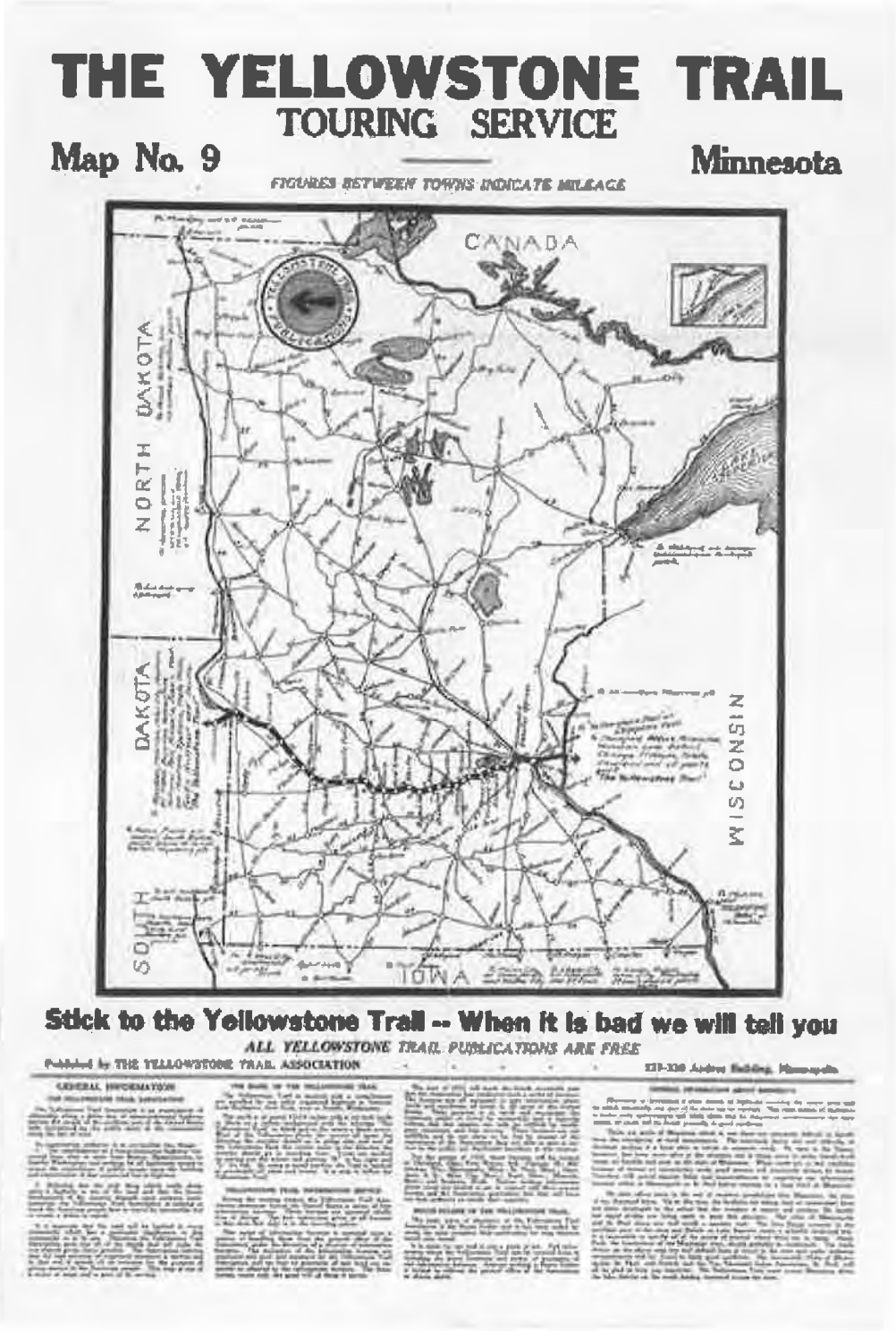
Figure #6: The lobby of the Romborg Hotel, with proprietors Mary Romness, A. N. Stenborg, and Fannie Stenborg standing behind the desk in a photo from the early 1950s. Behind them, the door on the right led to the parlor which the Stenborgs were then using as part of their living quarters. The door to the left opened to a hallway which led to the stairway to the second floor guest rooms and the dining room (SHAHS archives).

Figure #7: News clipping showing the three owners of the Romberg Hotel behind the reception desk in the lobby (Jean Sommers, "Hotel in Sacred Heart Wins Fame, *West Central Tribune,* May 11, 1950).

Figure #8: News clipping from the same source of a guest sitting by the Franklin Stove in the lobby of the Romborg Hotel.

Figure #1

Figure #2



THE YELLOWSTONE TRAIL
TOURING SERVICE

Map No. 9 Minnesota

FIGURES BETWEEN TOWNS INDICATE MILEAGE

Stick to the Yellowstone Trail -- When it is bad we will tell you

ALL YELLOWSTONE TRAIL PUBLICATIONS ARE FREE

Published by THE YELLOWSTONE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

Figure #3

Figure #4

Figure #5

Figure #6

WCT 11 MAY 1950

Hotel in Sacred Heart Wins Fame

By JEAN SOMMER

Faith in the belief "There's as much artistry in the kitchen as in the gallery" has played a major role in transforming an unknown, old-fashioned, high-ceilinged hotel into one of the most outstanding eating and show places in this part of the state.

The famed eating center, which has earned that title in three short years and is favored especially by those gourmands who like their food in both look and taste "fit for a king," is the Romberg hotel in Sacred Heart.

Three partners took over the hotel on about the first of February, 1947, because they say "Our antiques were sort of crowding us out of our homes, and so we bought the hotel to put them in." In the trio are Mr and Mrs. A N. Stenborg and Mrs Mary Romness Their willingness to work very hard and long hours is another factor in the success of the hotel.

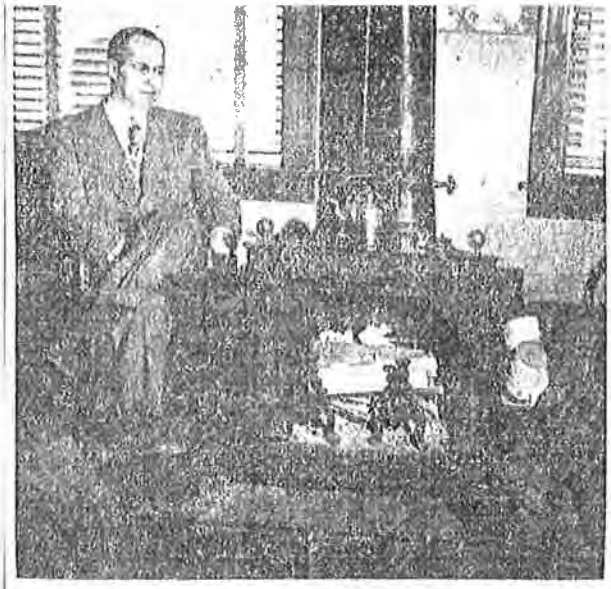
And because they love their antiques most of which were in their families for years as much as top-cute food and service they completely remodeled the place to make it comfortable but elegant showplace worthy of their prized possessions

Coming to it now for a Sunday or

Mrs. Mary Romness (left) and Mr. and Mrs. A. N. Stenborg are shown at the desk of the Romberg hotel which they purchased three years ago in Sacred Heart.

Under their management the hotel has become an area showplace for beautiful and valuable antiques.

Figure #7



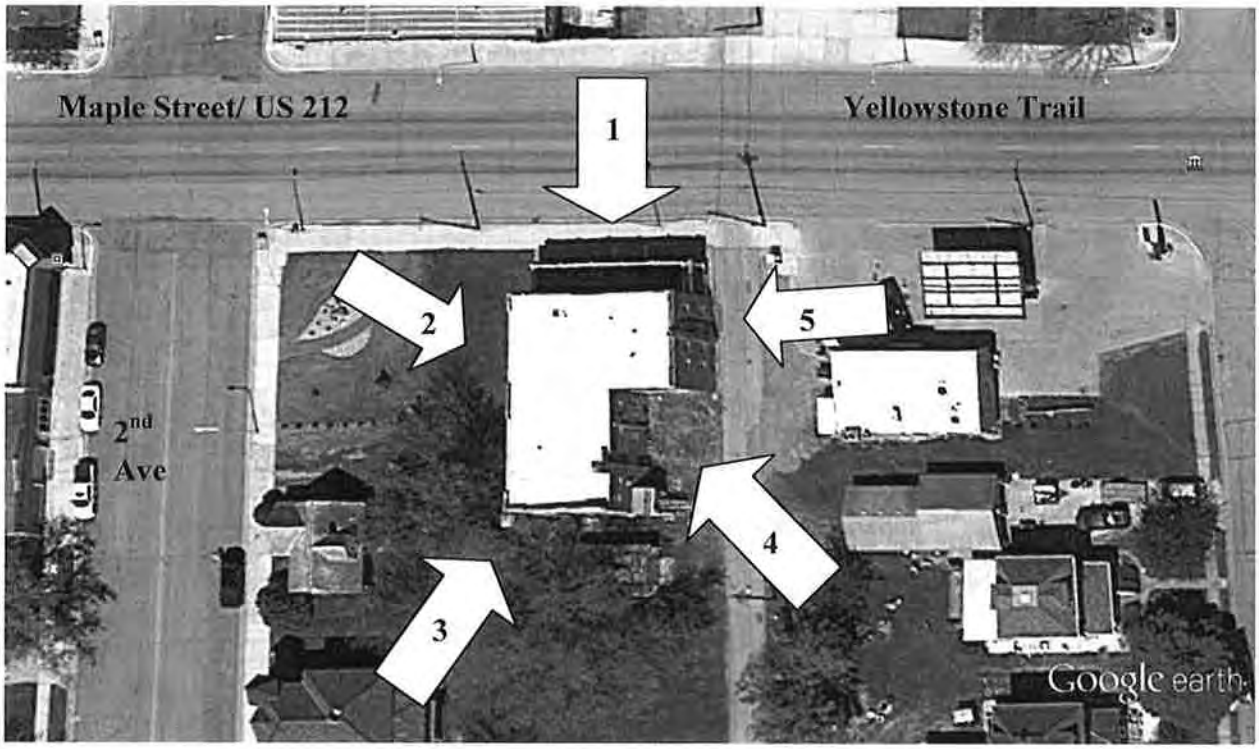
Arthur W. Reibel, an insurance salesman from Minneapolis, rests at the end of a busy day beside the picturesque Benjamin Franklin fireplace in the lobby of the Romborg hotel.

The fireplace was purchased for the hotel at the LeDuc mansion in Hastings and since its installation attracted many antique-lovers to the Sacred Heart hotel.

Mr. Reibel says that, like many other salesman, he'll drive 40 or 50 extra miles at the end of the day to get a chance to eat and stay overnight at the Romberg hotel.

Figure #8

Google Earth shot showing camera direction of external photographs

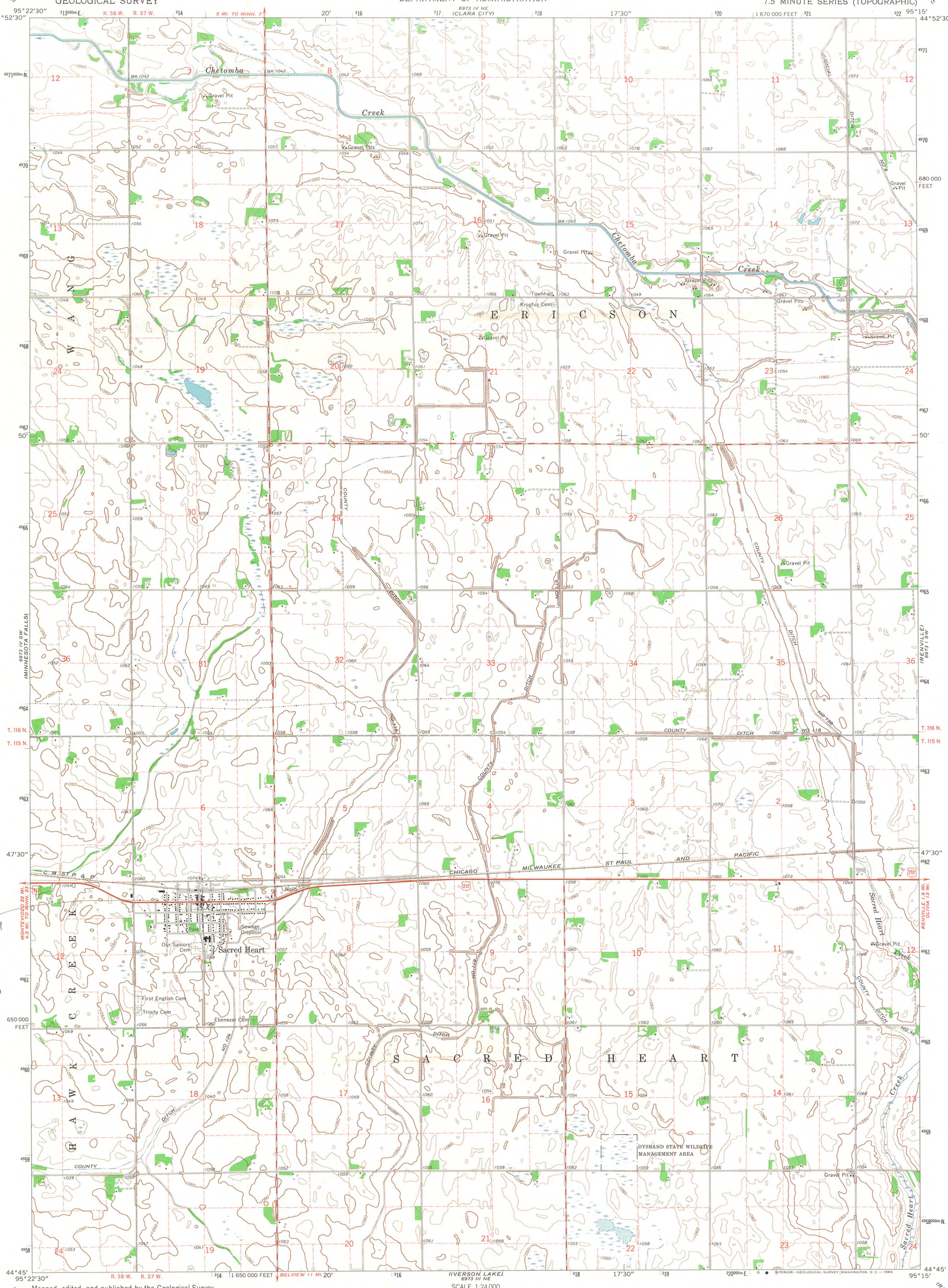

Maple Street/ US 212
Yellowstone Trail
1
2
3
4
5
2nd Ave
Google earth

North

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

SACRED HEART QUADRANGLE
MINNESOTA–RENVILLE CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Hotel Sacred Heart
Sacred Heart, MN
Renville Co
UTM
15/314035/4961740

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1964. Field checked 1965

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Minnesota coordinate system, south zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs
This information is unchecked

UTM GRID AND 1965 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty — Light-duty
Medium-duty — Unimproved dirt
U. S. Route

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

S8 d

SACRED HEART, MINN.
N4445—W9515/7.5
1965
AMS 6973 IV SE—SERIES V872

112D

HOTEL SACRED HEART.
112 MAPLE
ST
WEST

HOTEL SACRED HEART
TESO

HOTEL SACRED HEART
TELEPHONE

Keep
Clear

204