ONE OF THE EXCITING prospects in store for patrons of the Minnesota Historical Society's (MHS) new history center in St. Paul is a centralized reference facility. In one place, researchers will have access to a wide variety of materials in the society collections, from books to museum objects to manuscripts. Interdisciplinary inquiry will be greatly facilitated. Yet one vital part of historical collections will remain outside the new center's walls, scattered throughout the state. Minnesota's historic properties will, for the most part, continue to play a variety of roles in the cities and countryside of all 87 counties.

These historic properties have as much to offer about the state's history as other elements in the collections, such as an archives file or a photograph collection. In a few cases, the society has followed the traditional process of collecting by acquiring ownership of the properties for preservation and interpretation. The Alexander Ramsey House, the Oliver H. Kelley Farmstead, and the Solomon G. Comstock House are examples. It has long been apparent, however, that the number of historic properties far exceeds the resources of the society—or the collective resources of all the state's history organizations, for that matter—to acquire and develop them. Through the activities of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the society has pursued an aggressive program of bringing these properties into the state's collection of historic resources by nominating them to the National Register of Historic Places.

The National Register, as defined by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, lists buildings, structures, sites, districts, and objects of national, state, and
local significance. The SHPO staff identifies and evaluates properties, which are then reviewed by the State Review Board and by the State Historic Preservation Officer, MHS director Nina Archabal. Finally they are listed by the National Park Service.

This year, with the completion of a decade-long, county-by-county survey of above-ground (as distinct from archaeological) properties, the process of identifying and evaluating historic resources for nomination has reached a major turning point. The first properties nominated to the register in the early 1970s were selected on the basis of significance that had often already been clearly established. They included Louis Sullivan’s National Farmers’ Bank in Owatonna; the Seppman Mill, acquired and preserved by the Blue Earth County Historical Society decades earlier; the Angels’ Hill Historic District in Taylors Falls, a clearly distinctive collection of Greek Revival and other early residences; and Duluth’s Aerial Lift Bridge.

Then, in 1977, the SHPO embarked on a major effort to inventory important properties in the county-by-county survey. By examining a large number of properties within the context of each county’s history, the significance of many previously ignored resources came to light. For example, two nearly identical banks in Clements and Milroy first appeared to be handsome but otherwise unremarkable buildings. An examination of Redwood County’s history revealed, however, that the banks were constructed in 1902, the same year that the Chicago Northwestern Railroad built a new line through the county and when several new towns, including Clements and Milroy, were platted. The
THE KANDYHOI COUNTY family farm of John Bosch, a leader of the Farmers' Holiday Association, an agrarian protest movement of the 1930s

banks were thus an important reflection of townsites development. Similarly, a large brick schoolhouse in Cloverton, while not in itself distinguishable from hundreds of others, was unusual in that a building of this size was found in an isolated rural area rather than in a community. The history of Pine County provided a context: the area around Cloverton was the site of ambitious but largely unsuccessful attempts to establish agriculture on cutover lands. During the survey of Pine County, the school was evaluated as significant testimony to the unrealized hopes of the region.

The survey of Carver County in 1978 was the first to be completed. Since then, the survey has moved through all of the state's 87 counties; sections of Hennepin County were completed this past summer. The resulting inventory is one of the first to be completed in
THE CHURCH OF ST. STANISLAUS, built in Winona in 1895, served the largest concentration of Polish residents in the state.

THE PROPERTIES LISTED represent a wide spectrum of the state's historical themes. The agricultural roster includes the Jones-Roberts Farmstead, a pivotal site in a Welsh settlement area in Blue Earth County; Femco Farm Number 2, a diversified farm in the Red River Valley; and the John Bosch Farmstead, a Kandiyohi County site associated with the Farm Holiday movement of the 1930s. The story of Minnesota's lumbering era is enhanced by such properties as the Weyerhaeuser House in the Park Place Historic District of Cloquet and the St. Croix Lumber Mill in Stillwater. St. Cornelia's Episcopal Church at the Lower Sioux community and St. Benedict's Mission School near White Earth relate to the development of Minnesota's Indian reservations and communities. The Oliver Iron Mining Company Boardinghouse and the Hibbing High School are two of the many properties associated with mining. Grand View Lodge in Nisswa and the Ellen Ruth Launch at Mille Lacs Lake augment part of the history of resorts in Minnesota.

Other properties represent more specific themes. The Church of St. Stanislaus in Winona's Polish neighborhood and Danish settler Christian F. Uytendale's
THE FARMERS' ELEVATOR built in Lambertton in 1916; note the unusual use of brick in its construction.

farms in Swift County are examples of ethnic properties. Social reformer Martha G. Ripley's Maternity Hospital in Minneapolis and suffragist Julia Bullard Nelson's house in Red Wing are important in women's history. Unique properties include Fillmore County aircraft pioneer Bernard Pietenpol's workshop and garage and the Lindholm Oil Company service station in Bena, built from designs by the noted architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, in the 1950s.

NOW that the counties have been surveyed, what next? Is the collection complete, only to be protected from the wrecking ball and dry rot? A decade ago, a naive but widespread view anticipated that we would surely know all the state's historic properties by the mid-1980s. Today a review of the inventory shows that, while the survey has created an invaluable base of information, there are many gaps to be filled. For example, in the northern cities of the state few urban lumber mill properties were inventoried, yet they are a pivotal type of property if we are to understand the lumber industry. In the agricultural southern and western parts of the state, many grain elevators were found, but only two were placed on the National Register. Dense pockets of distinctive farmhouses in the Embarrass area and in Todd County were only barely documented. Both prehistoric and historic archaeological properties are underrepresented, as are sites associated with traditional cultural values. And some specific types of resources—historic landscapes, for instance—have only come to the attention of preservationists in recent years.
and are scarcely represented in the inventory. The list goes on.

Through a comprehensive planning process that is based on the broad themes of the state, the SHPO has now embarked on identifying significant omissions and needs for surveys and in implementing programs to fill those gaps. For example, this summer SHPO completed specialized surveys of metal, concrete, and masonry bridges; of the rustic-style buildings constructed by the WPA and the CCC in state parks; and of the log buildings constructed by Finnish immigrants in the Embarrass area. Upcoming projects include a detailed study of the development of two types of properties—grain elevators and hydroelectric facilities; surveys of early road systems (the Red River trails and old government roads); and a review of geographic features with cultural significance. Properties listed as a result of this work will continue to fill out the state's collection of historic properties.

Listing, of course, is only the first step. The properties must be cared for if they are to be preserved, and, since most of them are not owned or controlled by the society or any other history agency, curatorship presents unique challenges. Most collections of museums or libraries can be preserved by a conservation laboratory; SHPO must rely on incentive and regulatory programs—and salesmanship—to promote the proper treatment of properties. The state grant-in-aid program has assisted in the restoration of more than 170 buildings since its inception, utilizing both state and federal funds. The federal preservation tax benefits, which allow an owner of a rehabilitated property a
THIS DORMITORY, built in 1899, is the only surviving structure of the Morris Industrial School for Indians, which operated from 1887 to 1909.

A JACOBEAN REVIVAL house, designed for Paul and Florence Watkins of Winona by noted architects Ralph A. Cram and Frank W. Ferguson of New York.

tax credit, have been used on more than 200 Minnesota buildings. The SHPO reviews more than 2,000 federal undertakings each year to assess impacts on historic properties. The department’s “Time and Taste” workshop series for owners of register properties is held at several locations. And the office handles hundreds of phone calls, letters, and requests for assistance.

Yet, the broad forces that cause our buildings and land to change are enormous and have the potential to affect our historic properties. In recent years, 29 Minnesota properties have been removed from the National Register because of destruction.

Co-operative work with agencies and organizations is a key aspect of achieving better protection. Local heritage preservation commissions play a major role in this because land and buildings are largely regulated at the local level. Local commissions will continue to be eligible for federal grants under SHPO’s Certified Local Government program. SHPO is developing a team approach to study new uses for endangered buildings with the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota and will continue to promote the alliance’s preservation easement program. Each year, under a co-operative agreement with the University of Minnesota School of Architecture, students record a register property to the standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey.

Another high priority is the strengthening of ties with state agencies in planning for state-owned properties with historical significance. New state legislation with better incentive and regulatory provisions holds further promise for better protection. One phase of the comprehensive planning process will attempt to identify
new opportunities for co-operative work.

Minnesota's collection of historic properties is an important resource, imparting knowledge and a sense of history to a wide spectrum of people. For scholars who use the buildings as primary source material in their studies or commuters who drive by a historic property on the way home from work, these properties complement other items in the society collections—a farmer's diary, a piece of pottery, or an early map, for example. By preserving the farmsteads, factories, and neighborhoods, the actual places of history come to life. And, as is true for other components of the MHS collections, the challenge of what to preserve and how to preserve it will continue to demand time, financial resources, and ingenuity if we are to fulfill our custodial responsibilities to the record of Minnesota's history.

THE ILLUSTRATIONS on p. 145 and 152 are from the University of Minnesota School of Architecture. All other pictures are in the MHS collections.