



### Front - Title/Description

#### *Suomi College*

In the 1880s large numbers of Finns immigrated to Hancock to labor in the copper and lumber industries. One immigrant, mission pastor J. K. Nikander of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, headquartered in Hancock, wanted to ensure seminary training in America. He had observed that Swedish and Finnish immigrants along the Delaware River did not train new ministers, and he feared a loss of Finnish identity. In 1896 Nikander founded Suomi College. The college's role was to preserve Finnish culture, train Lutheran ministers and teach English. During the 1920s Suomi became a liberal arts college. In 1958 the seminary separated from the college. Four years later the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church of America merged with other mainstream Lutheran churches.

#### **Significant Date:**

Industry and Invention (1875-1915)

**Registry Year:** 1959    **Erected Date:** 1991

### Marker Location

**Address:** 601 Quincy St.

**City:** Hancock

**State:** MI    **ZipCode:**

**County:** Houghton

**Township:**

**Lat:** 47.12658400 / **Long:** -88.58923000

**Web URL:**

### Back - Title/Description

#### *Old Main*

Suomi College was founded in 1896 by the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. The cornerstone of Old Main, the first building erected at Suomi College, was laid on May 30, 1898. Jacobsville sandstone, quarried at the Portage Entry of the Keweenaw waterway, was brought here by barge, cut, and used to construct Old Main. Dedicated on January 21, 1900, it contained a dormitory, kitchen, laundry, classrooms, offices, library, chapel, and lounge. The burgeoning college quickly outgrew this building, and in 1901 a frame structure, housing a gym, meeting hall, and music center was erected on an adjacent lot. The frame building was demolished when Nikander Hall, named for Suomi's founder, J. K. Nikander, was constructed in 1939. The hall was designed by the architectural firm of Saarinen and Swanson.