

# PHOTO OF THE MONTH

January 2014



Photo: The Central Building post-fire, circa February 1961.

## Central Building Fire

Northern State University's Central Building loomed on campus as the main building for many years, occupying the space that now houses the Mewaldt-Jensen and Technology Center buildings. But on Tuesday, January 31, 1961, the recently remodeled building met its fate as it burned to the ground.

In the early hours of that fateful Tuesday, the local Fire Department was called to the scene. They fought not only a blaze seen for miles, but also the sub-zero temperatures and the prairie winds. The firefighters poured water on the fire until the following Thursday. The cause of the fire is unknown.

The blaze caused \$1.5 million in damage as the Central Building housed 75% of classroom space at the time. The floor area of the building spanned 61,150 square feet and contained 28 classrooms, 54 faculty offices, 8 laboratories, 3 lecture/demonstration rooms, and 11 storerooms.

This was not the first fire in Northern's main building. A small fire in the attic on December 29, 1925, and a fire in a practice room on February 11, 1939 both caused little damage.

Luckily, no people were injured in any of the fires experienced by the Old Central Building.