

MINNESOTA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

PART I. PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION AND GENERAL INFORMATION

Common Name: Garrison Pedestrian Underpass

Bridge Number: 5265

Identification Number: CW-GRC-005

Location:

Feature Carried: US 169 Northbound
Feature Crossed: Stream
Descriptive Location: 0.5 Miles South of Jct. TH 18
Town, Range, Section: 44N-28W-13
Town or City: Garrison
County: Crow Wing

UTM:

Zone: 15
Easting: 436480
Northing: 5126260

Quad:

Garrison
7.5 Minute Series
1927

Present Owner:

State

Present Use:

Mainline

Significance Statement:

Standing on U.S. Trunk Highway 169, Bridge 5265 overlooks what was once the north end of a picnic area on the shore of Mille Lacs Lake. This unusual bridge has two levels on a masonry substructure. The bottom level, now submerged thanks to the raised lake level subsequent to the original construction, consists of two, side-by-side, rectangular, concrete culvert barrels with masonry floors. Each barrel is approximately six feet wide and one and one-half feet high. These culverts carry the water beneath the bridge. The concrete tops of the culverts serve as the floor of the pedestrian underpass above. This underpass is created by the semi-circular, multi-plate arch, which has a 14-foot span and a 44-foot barrel, and is designed to provide dry pedestrian access to the lakeshore. Carrying the roadway slab on a layer of earth fill, the arch has granite-faced headwalls that extend along the roadway to serve as retaining walls. The masonry is rock-faced, random-coursed, ashlar. The stonework extends above the roadway to form railings, with evenly spaced, square openings. Buttresses or pilasters are positioned along the headwalls/retaining walls at regular intervals and frame the arch opening, which is further accented by pentagonal ringstones and oversized keystones. Plans for Bridge 5265, prepared by

the National Park Service in January 1938, are on file with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT). These drawings indicate that the bridge retains its original design.

In January 1938, the National Park Service completed final drawings for Bridge 5265 as part of an extensive wayside development project that was constructed from 1935 to 1940 along Minnesota Trunk Highway 169, in the vicinity of Mille Lacs Lake, by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The bridge itself was completed in 1938. Aesthetically, it is one of Minnesota's best examples of a multi-plate arch bridge. Introduced by the Armco Culvert Manufacturers Association in 1931, multi-plate was a galvanized, corrugated-iron product fabricated in curved segments to facilitate shipping in "nested" position. For bridge construction, the segments were bolted together in the field to form an arch, which was typically anchored by concrete headwalls and abutments. Frequently, the concrete work was ornamented with stone facing in order to simulate a stone-arch bridge. On occasion, as in the case of Bridge 5265, the abutments and headwalls were pure masonry with no concrete core. The new bridge type found ready acceptance with work-relief planners of the 1930s, for the masonry-veneered, multi-plate arch bridge was highly compatible with the New Deal's agenda of promoting highway beautification, local craft skills, and labor-intensive public works projects.

With its well-crafted stonework and fine architectural detailing, Bridge 5265 is eligible for the National Register for its design and workmanship under Criterion C, within the historic context of "Iron and Steel Bridges in Minnesota, 1873-1945." The Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) associated with this context presents the following registration criteria for the multi-plate arch type:

"Since the multi-plate arch bridge is most notable for its modular corrugated-metal construction and stone headwalls and spandrels, these features should be clearly visible and relatively unaltered. And since the multi-plate arch bridge enjoyed its vogue at least partly because of the New Deal's encouragement of roadside beautification, the bridge's workmanship and design should be on the original site, harmonious with the general setting, of high aesthetic quality, and of New Deal vintage."

Bridge 5265 satisfies these criteria. The bridge is also eligible under Criterion A for its association with the CCC's Mille Lacs Lake wayside beautification project, within the historic contexts of "Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1941" and "Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960."

The following is excerpted from MnDOT Historic Roadside Development Structures Inventory form:

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Garrison Pedestrian Underpass (Bridge 5265) was constructed in 1938 by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) working in cooperation with the Department of Highways and the National Park Service. The bridge was built by the enrollees of a CCC camp that was located just north of the bridge on the western side of T.H. 169. The bridge was built as part of a larger Mille Lacs Lake roadside development project that also included the construction of the Garrison Rest Area and several other roadside development facilities in the area.

In 1935-1936, in connection with the realignment of T.H. 169 (which was moved slightly west of the lakeshore), the highway department had obtained 53 acres of land in and near the town of Garrison and around Mille Lacs Lake for development of a recreational route. The project included roadside landscaping, the development of rest areas, and the construction of stone culverts, among other amenities. The project was known as the Mille Lacs Lake Highway

Development Plan (also known as the Mille Lacs Lake SP-15 project) and was built using CCC labor from the Mille Lacs Lake Highway Wayside CCC Camp (also known as the Garrison CCC Camp). (The CCC camp was located on the western side of T.H. 169 just north of this bridge.)

The Garrison Pedestrian Underpass (Bridge 5265) was constructed in 1938. The construction plans (signed in 1937 and 1938) specify that the bridge's footings be granite stones to be taken from the lakeshore and that "construction to be done during the winter months in a heated shelter." The plan includes the statements "Drawn by H. O. Skooglun" and "Designed by H. O. Skooglun." The plans are signed by three officials from the Department of Highways -- Harold E. Olson (Engineer of Roadside Development), A. R. Nichols (Consulting Landscape Architect), O. L. Kipp (Construction Engineer) -- and four officials representing the National Park Service and the Minnesota State Parks Division -- Agge Thompson (CCC Camp Superintendent), Harold W. Lathrop (Minnesota Department of Conservation Park Authority), Ed Lasey (NPS Inspector), and either Earl C. Grever (NPS Regional Officer) or Donald B. Alexander (NPS Regional Officer).

H. O. Skooglun, the designer of this bridge, was with the National Park Service. Skooglun also designed three other bridges and a scenic overlook as part of the Mille Lacs Lake Highway Development Plan: the Whitefish Creek Bridge (Bridge 3355), the Garrison Creek Culvert (Bridge 5266), the T.H. 169 Culvert at St. Alban's Bay, and the Kenney Lake Overlook (all are included in this inventory). Arthur R. Nichols, Consulting Landscape Architect for the Minnesota Department of Highways, also participated in the design of these extensive roadside development improvements.

Mille Lacs Lake Highway Development Plan and the Garrison CCC Camp

This bridge was built as part of the Mille Lacs Lake Highway Development Plan, to which the work of CCC Camp SP-15 was devoted. The project operated between September of 1935 and March of 1940. It improved many miles of T.H. 169 and T.H. 18 west and north of Mille Lacs to facilitate increased recreational and commercial travel. It was the most extensive roadside development project undertaken by the CCC in the state.

The project was planned by the Minnesota Department of Highways and the National Park Service and was built with CCC labor from the Mille Lacs Lake Highway Wayside CCC Camp (Camp SP-15) that was located on the western side of T.H. 169. The first portions of the plan to be developed were a 4-mile section of T.H. 18 northwest of Garrison, a 5.5-mile section of T.H. 169 north of Garrison, and a 7-mile section of T.H. 169 south of Garrison. A construction plan noted: "Ultimate development of the parkway and connecting waysides is to continue around the entire lake, a distance of approximately 90 miles." The project was never completed to the extent planned. However, between 1936 and 1939, the highway department and the CCC constructed at least seven known roadside development projects (with standing structures) in the Garrison area, all of which are extant and are included in this study. They are the following:

- Garrison Concourse
- Garrison Creek Culvert (Bridge 5266)
- Garrison Pedestrian Underpass (Bridge 5265)
- Garrison Rest Area
- Kenney Lake Overlook
- T.H. 169 Culvert at St. Alban's Bay
- Whitefish Creek Bridge (Bridge 3355)

Historian Rolf Anderson writes:

The principal design work for the Mille Lacs Lake Highway Wayside projects was executed in the [National Park Service's] Minnesota Central Design Office in St. Paul, which was actually a branch office of the National Park Service Regional Office in Omaha. . . . Principal figures included Edward W. Barber, the chief architect and major designer, V. C. Martin, who designed the Kitchen Shelter [at the Garrison Rest Area], Oscar Newstrom, and N. H. Averill who completed many of the master plans and landscape designs. . . . Park Service engineers and landscape architects had experimented with a variety of styles and eventually concluded that buildings constructed with native materials and designed to harmonize with their natural settings were most appropriate (Anderson, "Mille Lacs Lake Kitchen Shelter" 1990:8-5).

The 1938 ~Annual Report~ of the highway department's Roadside Development Division summarized work completed that year in the Mille Lacs Lake area:

The construction work on a large masonry concourse overlooking Mille Lacs Lake was begun in 1936 and continued through 1937 and 1938. In addition, some major changes in alignment and design of the roadway have been made, together with the construction of several large drainage structures which were provided with rustic stone headwalls [see Garrison Creek Culvert, Whitefish Creek Bridge, T.H. 169 Culvert at St. Alban's Bay, and the Garrison Pedestrian Underpass (Bridge 5265)]. Grading operations are now in progress, extending from Garrison to 1 1/2 miles south and consist of a divided roadway of two 30 foot lanes with an island of 6 to 90 feet between (~Annual Report~ 1938:19).

CCC Camp SP-15, also known as the Mille Lacs Highway Wayside Camp, was located on the southern edge of Garrison. The camp was established in September of 1935 and was one of four CCC camps in Minnesota that were sponsored by the Department of Highways. Camp superintendent was Agge Thompson. The camp's 200 enrollees worked primarily on the Mille Lacs Lake Highway Development Project. Work on the project ended when the men of CCC Camp SP-15 were transferred on March 31, 1940, to the St. Croix Recreational Demonstration Area (now St. Croix State Park).

The Garrison CCC Camp was one of four CCC camps in the state that were sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Highways. (Most of the state's other CCC camps were sponsored by agencies such as the Minnesota Department of Conservation (State Parks Division), the U.S. Forest Service, and the Soil Conservation Service.) The first of the four highway department camps was the Spruce Creek Camp that was established on the Cascade River on the North Shore in 1934. The other three highway department CCC camps were established in 1935. The four are listed below:

- Lakeshore (Camp SP-19), located near Knife River on the North Shore
- Leech Lake (Camp SP-16), located near Whipholt on Leech Lake
- Mille Lacs Lake (Camp SP-15), located at Garrison on Mille Lacs Lake
- Spruce Creek (Camp SP-13), located near Cascade River on the North Shore

Nine sites constructed by these camps are included in this Historic Roadside Development Structures Inventory (see individual inventory forms for each):

Built by the Spruce Creek Camp

Cascade River Overlook (includes Bridge 5132)
Spruce Creek Culvert (Bridge 8292)

Built by the Mille Lacs Lake Camp

Garrison Concourse
Garrison Creek Culvert (Bridge 5266)
Garrison Pedestrian Underpass (Bridge 5265)
Garrison Rest Area
Kenney Lake Overlook
T.H. 169 Culvert at St. Alban's Bay
Whitefish Creek Bridge (Bridge 3355)

No properties built by the Lakeshore or Leech Lake CCC camps are included in this study. (One of the principal accomplishments of the Lakeshore Camp is the elaborate Knife River Historical Marker on old Highway 61 several miles northeast of Duluth. The site is intact but in fragile condition. It is no longer on right-of-way and is now within the jurisdiction of St. Louis County Highway Department. No standing structures built by the Leech Lake CCC Camp, which operated for only six months, are known to be extant.)

The Garrison Pedestrian Underpass (Bridge 5265), built in 1938 by the CCC, is one of seven bridges recorded in this inventory that are faced with stone. It is one of 14 sites in the inventory known, or suspected, to have been built by the CCC. The bridge is one of five sites in the study that were designed by H. O. Skooglund of the National Park Service (NPS), and one of eight sites in the study that were designed by NPS designers (in collaboration with A. R. Nichols).

This property has been evaluated within the historic context "Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960." It is recommended that Bridge 5265 is ELIGIBLE for the National Register under this historic context because it meets the following registration requirements:

Significant to the History of Roadside Development. The Garrison Pedestrian Underpass is one of nine properties in this inventory that were built by the four CCC camps in Minnesota that were sponsored by the MHD. (All four camps were dedicated to roadside development.) The MHD-sponsored CCC camps improved many miles of trunk highway, as well as constructing 9 of the 68 Depression-era properties in this inventory. These numerous New Deal-era sites represent the MHD's first large-scale effort to construct roadside development facilities in the state. Bridge 5265 is an excellent example of the distinctive and well-constructed public facilities, built by the MHD in partnership with federal relief agencies, that met the objectives of roadside development while providing essential work and job training to the nation's unemployed during the Depression. (National Register Criterion A.)

Furthermore, the bridge is significant as one of seven sites that were built near Garrison by the CCC as part of the Mille Lacs Lake Highway Development Project. This 4 1/2-year-long roadside development project improved and developed T.H. 169 and T.H. 18 near Garrison for recreational purposes. It was the most extensive roadside development project undertaken by the CCC in the state. The seven properties near Garrison (four of which are bridges) are rare in the state for their variety, design quality, degree of integrity, and close geographic proximity. The properties are testimony to the success of the partnership between the MHD, the National Park Service, and the CCC. This collaboration produced functional, long-lasting, and aesthetically-superior roadside amenities that continue to enhance the experience of the traveling public today. (National Register Criterion A.)

Design Significance. The bridge is an excellent example of the application of the "National Park Service Rustic Style" to a small highway bridge. It has stonework of excellent quality. The site displays the special labor-intensive construction techniques and distinctive use of indigenous materials that characterize both the Rustic style and federal relief construction in Minnesota. (National Register Criterion C.)

PART II. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Date of Construction:

1938

Contractor and/or Designer (if known):

Contractor: Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)

Designer: H.O. Skooglun, National Park Service
A.R. Nichols, Consulting Landscape Architect

Historic Context:

Historic Iron and Steel Bridges in Minnesota
Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1941
Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960

National Register Criterion:

C

PART III. DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

Descriptive Information:

single-span, multi-plate arch with granite headwalls and sidewalls

masonry substructure

multi-plate arch carrying earth fill

stone masonry railing

The granite used to construct Bridge 5265 was probably obtained from a quarry near Isle, a community located on the southeastern shore of Mille Lacs. The Isle-Warman Creek granite region contains outcroppings of red, gray, and black granite that were quarried by various companies. The Cold Spring Granite Company, for example, operated a quarry about five miles south of Isle as early as 1935. Light gray granite from the site was called Isle Granite and was marketed under the name of "Cold Spring Pearl White" granite.

PART IV. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

References:

Minnesota Department of Transportation Bridge Database; Bridge No. 5265 File, in Minnesota Department of Transportation, Waters Edge Building, St. Paul; Bridge No. 5265 File, in Minnesota Department of Transportation Records Storage Center (correspondence), St. Paul; Bridge No. 5265 File (plans), in Minnesota Department of Transportation District 3 Office, Brainerd, Minnesota; Rolf T. Anderson, Draft National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for Mille Lacs Lake Kitchen Shelter, 9 October 1990, in State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul; Fredric L. Quivik, "Iron and Steel Bridges in Minnesota," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, Sec. F, 10-11, in SHPO; field inspection by Shawn P. Rounds, 18 September 1996; "Historic Roadwide Development Structures on Minnesota Trunk Highways," prepared for Minnesota Department of Transportation by Gemini Research (Susan Granger, Scott Kelly, Kay Grossman), December 1998.

PART V. PROJECT INFORMATION

Historians:

Jeffrey A. Hess

Form Preparer:

Mead & Hunt, 2006

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