

**MNDOT HISTORIC ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT  
STRUCTURES INVENTORY**

DK-MDC-010  
CS 1909  
Mendota Granite Arrow Marker

|   |   |                                   |  |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Historic Name</b>                                  | Mendota Granite Arrow Marker  | <b>CS #</b>                       | 1909   |
| <b>Other Name</b>                                     | Mendota D.A.R. Marker   | <b>SHPO Inv #</b>                 | DK-MDC-010   |
| <b>Location</b>                                       | N side of TH 55/TH 110<br>800' E of TH 13                                   | <b>Hwy District Reference</b>     | TH 55/110<br>Met E<br>199  |
| <b>City/Township</b>                                  | Mendota, City of  | <b>Acres</b>                      |  |
| <b>County</b>   | Dakota  | <b>Rest Area Class</b>            | 4  |
| <b>Twp Rng Sec</b>                                    | 28N 23W Sec 27    28N 23W Sec 28  | <b>SP #</b>                       |  |
| <b>USGS Quad</b>                                      | St. Paul West   | <b>SHPO Review #</b>              |  |
| <b>UTM</b>  | Z15 E486800 N4969790  | <b>MHS Photo #</b>                | 013548.01-03   |
| <b>Designer</b>                                       | Unknown   | <b>MnDOT Historic Photo Album</b> | Ols 1.67   |
| <b>Builder</b>  | Minn Dept of Highways (MHD)   | <b>Yr of Landscape Design</b>     | 1994-97  |
| <b>Historic Use</b>                                   | Roadside Parking Area   | <b>Overall Site Integrity</b>     | Moderately Altered   |
| <b>Present Use</b>                                    | Roadside Parking Area   | <b>Review Required</b>            | Yes  |
| <b>National Register Status</b>                       | Not Eligible, see Statement of Significance                                 |                                   |  |
| <b>Historic Context</b>                               |   |                                   |  |
| <b>List of Standing Structures</b>                    |   |                                   |  |
| <b>Feat#</b>  | <b>Feature Type</b>   | <b>Year Built</b>                 | <b>Fieldwork Date</b>  |
| 01  | Marker  | 1928                              | 11-02-97   |
|   |   |                                   | <b>Prep by</b>   |
|   |   |                                   | Gemini Research<br>Dec. 98 G1. 88  |
|   |   |                                   | <b>Prep for</b>  |
|   |   |                                   | Site Development Unit<br>Cultural Resources Unit<br>Environmental Studies Unit |
| NOTE: Landscape features are not listed in this table |   |                                   |  |
| <b>Final Report</b>                                   | Historic Roadside Development Structures on Minnesota Trunk Highways (1998) |                                   |  |

■ BRIEF

The Mendota Granite Arrow Marker is located on a small site near the southern end of the Mendota Bridge, within the City of Mendota. The site is on the northern side of T.H. 55/T.H. 110 (formerly T.H. 13) about 800' east of T.H. 13.

■ STANDING STRUCTURES

**Stone Marker.** Built 1928 by the DAR. Moved to this site in 1994. The principal feature on the site is an unusual arrowhead-shaped monument cut from speckled pink granite that is roughly dressed. The monument was built in two pieces -- the arrowhead top and a tapered base -- that are joined by a mortared collar that has recently been reworked. The marker is about 8.5' tall and about 5' wide. It rises out of the grassy lawn with no visible footing or base. Mounted on the southern face of the stone is a rectangular bronze plaque. The symbol of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) is cast near the top of the plaque. The text of the plaque addresses the history of Mendota. (See text at the end of this document.)

■ OTHER LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND PLANTINGS

The marker is located on the eastern side of a short, asphalt-paved drive that is aligned north and south. This drive is entered from a highway frontage road along T.H. 55/T.H. 110 that curves to the north around the bluff and joins T.H. 13 (which travels through Mendota's downtown). The marker is standing very close to the edge of this curbsless, asphalt-paved drive. The drive also serves as the route to the entrance road to St. Peter's Cemetery, located north of the marker. The topography is hilly.

The site was created in 1994 in conjunction with the reconstruction of the T.H. 55/T.H. 110/T.H. 13 intersection. The site is now open and treeless, but is currently being landscaped -- new deciduous trees have been planted, grass-planting is underway, etc. On the eastern side of the site are several tall evergreens and dense brush.

An undated historic photo of the site shows the marker in a grass-planted setting with a group of large evergreens behind it. The marker orientation and landscaping shown in the historic photo is somewhat similar to that of the current site.

■ SETTING

The site is located at the southern end of the Mendota Bridge on the eastern side of T.H. 55/T.H. 110, near the junction of T.H. 55, T.H. 13, and T.H. 110, within the City of Mendota. Busy highways are dominant in the setting: the site is now surrounded by highways in all directions except north. The northern border of the site is created by a paved city street that originally traveled east and west. It led westward into St. Peter's Cemetery and eastward into a wooded residential neighborhood. The street is now blocked immediately northeast of the marker, but still serves as the entrance road to St. Peter's Cemetery northwest of the marker. St. Peter's Cemetery is bordered by hedges north of the marker site. East of the marker site is a wooded residential area on the top of the bluff.

South of the site is the highway frontage road that leads northward to T.H. 13 and downtown Mendota. Farther south is the large intersection where T.H. 55 and T.H. 110 split before heading south and east. Northwest of the site is the Mendota Bridge. There are large undeveloped parcels of land and a former farmhouse to the south and southwest. The site is located along the line of large bluffs that form the Minnesota River valley. There is a large hill west of the site called Pilot's Knob (on which Acacia Memorial Park Cemetery is located), and another large hill east of the site on which a residential neighborhood has been built.

■ **INTEGRITY**

**Alterations**

No original plan has been located.

The marker originally stood on a site about 400' west of the current site. It was moved in 1994 in association with the reconstruction of this large highway interchange. (The marker has been moved from Control Section 1901 to 1902.)

The site retains integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and association. It has lost integrity of location, setting, and feeling because of its relocation and the dramatic changes to this highway interchange.

**Notes on Condition**

The marker is in good condition

■ **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

This stretch of T.H. 55/T.H. 110 was formerly known as T.H. 13.

The marker was erected in 1928 by the Minnesota Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), and dedicated on September 24, 1928. This marker is one of about 90 markers that were erected by Minnesota DAR chapters during the earliest years of the DAR's marking program, 1903-1941. It appears that only two of 90 markers were bronze plaques mounted on arrow-shaped stone monuments. (The other arrow-shaped marker was erected circa 1922 by the Mendota Chapter of the DAR in Acacia Memorial Park Cemetery on the top of Pilot's Knob, the large hill west of this site. The Acacia Cemetery marker commemorates the signing of the Mendota Treaty of 1851 between the Wahpekute and Mdewakanton Dakota and the U.S. Government.) Most of the other early DAR markers were brass plaques that were mounted on large boulders, on flagpole bases, on historic structures, and at cemeteries. The DAR marking program continued through at least the 1960s.

This is one of three markers in this Mn/DOT Historic Roadside Structures Inventory that were erected by the DAR. The other two are the Sibley Pioneer Church Monument located a few blocks north of this site (erected in 1955), and the Browns Valley Historical Marker in Browns Valley (erected in 1929).

### Daughters of the American Revolution

The National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) is a hereditary patriotic society for women that was established in 1890 in Washington, D.C. The club's strict, exclusive membership standards require that its members be women who are directly descended from people who helped establish American independence. By 1897, the DAR had chapters in 38 states and had become the largest and most influential club of its type. In the early to mid-twentieth century the preservation of history and genealogy were important to the group and the National Society urged local chapters to mark historic sites in their areas. Local DAR chapters also identified and marked unmarked graves, recorded the service records of veterans, sponsored essay contests, and distributed patriotic materials to children.

#### ■ PREVIOUS SHPO REVIEWS

There apparently have been no previous SHPO cultural resource reviews of the property.

#### ■ STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Mendota Granite Arrow Marker, erected in 1928, is the oldest of three markers in this study that were erected by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) in partnership with the MHD. It is also one of several markers in this study with unusual, non-standard designs. It was moved to its current location in 1994.

This property has been evaluated within the historic context "Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960." It is recommended that the site is NOT ELIGIBLE for the National Register under this historic context due to loss of integrity.

#### ■ OTHER COMMENTS

This property may require further evaluation for potential archaeological resources.

T.H. 55/T.H. 110 is very busy past this site. The traffic noise and noise from the airport are very intrusive.

The marker has been moved from Control Section 1901 to 1902, according to the district right-of-way engineer.

The text of the historic marker is associated with the village of Mendota and the Sibley House and uses the phrase "three blocks northeast from here." It is not specifically associated with the site of the wayside rest.

It is recommended that additional interpretation be added to provide cultural sensitivity.

#### ■ REFERENCES

*Guide to Historic Markers Erected by the Daughters of the American Revolution.* Prepared by the Minnesota Historical Records Survey Project, Division of Community Service Programs, Work Projects Administration. 1941.

Vaughan, Mrs. James A. *Markers Placed in Minnesota by Chapters of the Minnesota Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, Commemorating Historic Places and Noted Persons.* Minneapolis: 1970.

■ **ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND TEXT OF MARKER**

Mendota is the oldest permanent Euro-American settlement in Minnesota. The settlement was called (at various times) St. Peter's, New Hope, and The Entry. The name Mendota, a Dakota word meaning "the mouth of a river" or "the meeting of waters," was adopted circa 1837. The Minnesota River joins the Mississippi River near this site. Euro-American fur traders explored this area as early as 1799 and by 1820 permanent trading camps had been established at the junction of the two rivers. With the construction of nearby Fort Snelling in 1819, Mendota became an economic trade center. Several treaties with the Dakota were signed at or near Mendota, the first in 1805. Mendota was also the home of Henry H. Sibley, a fur trader who arrived at the settlement in 1834. Sibley later became Minnesota Territory's first Congressman (1849) and the state's first governor (1858-1859). Mendota served as the seat of Dakota County from 1854-1857. By 1887 the town had begun to decline due to the growth of nearby urban areas and the diminishing fur trade.

The Sibley House, located three blocks northeast of this site, was constructed in 1835 and is considered to be the oldest private residence in Minnesota. Henry Hastings Sibley resided here from 1836 to 1862. Stonemason John Muller constructed the house of limestone, which was obtained from a nearby quarry. The Catholic church purchased the residence in 1862 and the home served as a parochial school from 1867 to 1878. The St. Paul Chapter of the DAR acquired the house in 1910. The residence was restored and opened to the public. The Sibley House is now part of the Mendota Historic District (which was listed on the National Register in June of 1970) and was listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places in January of 1972.

**Text of Bronze Plaque on Stone Marker**

[Symbol of the Daughters of American Revolution at the top of the plaque]

"Mendota. In the language of the Sioux means the mouth of a river. Was the earliest permanent white settlement in southern Minnesota. A pioneer center of the fur trade. Near here were signed treaties with the Indians in 1805, 1837, 1851, ceding to the whites most of the land in Minnesota. Fort Snelling was established on this side of the river in 1819. This region was long known as Saint Peters.

"Sibley House. Three blocks northeast from here stands the oldest house in Minnesota built in 1835 by General Henry Hastings Sibley first governor of the state 1858-1859. Restored by the Minnesota Daughters of the American Revolution. Maintained by them as a museum.

"This tablet erected by the Minnesota Society Daughters of the American Revolution September 24, 1928."