

**MNDOT HISTORIC ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT
STRUCTURES INVENTORY**

GD-FLC-057
CS 2513
Frontenac State Park Gates

Historic Name	Frontenac State Park Gates	CS #	2513
Other Name	Munro Estate Gates	SHPO Inv #	GD-FLC-057
Location	SW side of TH 61/TH 63 about 700' SE of CSAH 2	Hwy	TH 61/63
City/Township	Florence Township	District	6B
County	Goodhue	Reference	78.7
Twp Rng Sec	112N 13W Sec 13	Acres	
USGS Quad	Maiden Rock	Rest Area Class	NA
UTM	Z15 E554020 N4927850	SP #	
Designer	Unknown	SHPO Review #	
Builder	Unknown	MHS Photo #	013555.02-04
Historic Use	Entrance/ Boundary Marker	MnDOT Historic Photo Album	
Present Use	Entrance/ Boundary Marker		
Yr of Landscape Design	1925		
Overall Site Integrity	Very Altered		
Review Required	Yes		
National Register Status	Not Eligible, see Statement of Significance		
Historic Context			
List of Standing Structures			
Feat#	Feature Type	Year Built	Fieldwork Date
01	Entrance Wall	1925	11-06-97
			Prep by
			Gemini Research Dec. 98 G1. 99
			Prep for
			Site Development Unit Cultural Resources Unit Environmental Studies Unit
NOTE: Landscape features are not listed in this table			
Final Report	Historic Roadside Development Structures on Minnesota Trunk Highways (1998)		

■ BRIEF

The site consists of a set of stone entrance walls that were built as the entrance gates for a private residence known as the Munro House or "Bramble Haw." The walls are known for the purposes of this study as the Frontenac State Park Gates. The walls are located on the southwestern side of T.H. 61/T.H.63 about 700' southeast of CSAH 2. They stand in the southwestern quarter of Section 13 of Florence Township, about one mile south of the town of Frontenac and about 4.5 miles north of Lake City. The site is within Frontenac State Park.

■ STANDING STRUCTURES

Stone Entrance Walls. Built in 1925. The site consists of a pair of stone entrance walls that support an iron gate. The walls originally served as the entrance to a private residence. The walls now mark a service entrance road into Frontenac State Park (the service road is not open to the public). The gravel service road leads from T.H. 61/T.H. 63 through the gates and into the park.

The walls are built of tan, random ashlar, roughly-cut limestone, and are 18" thick and about 3'6" tall. The two gently-curving wall segments are symmetrical in design. Each wall segment (about 20' in overall length) begins and ends with a stone pier. The piers at the lower (eastern) end are 5' tall and 2'6"-square, while the piers at the taller (western) end are 6'5" tall and 3'-square. The taller piers flank a 16' opening that is blocked by an iron gate with an elegant curved design. A thin, poured concrete cap has been added to the top of the walls.

■ OTHER LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND PLANTINGS

The first few feet of the entrance drive adjacent to T.H. 61/T.H. 63 are paved with asphalt. The remainder of the drive is gravel. The drive passes through the gate and travels off to the west, curving through the forest. There is grass planted along the inner (roadway) side of the walls. The topography of the site is flat.

■ SETTING

The site is located in a forested setting within Frontenac State Park. The Fort Beauharnois Historical Marker (also included in this inventory) is located about 1,000 feet to the north along T.H. 61/T.H. 63.

■ INTEGRITY

Alterations

The house that accompanied these walls has been demolished, but some of its outbuildings remain. The land is now part of the state park.

The walls and gate appear to be intact except for the thin veneer of poured concrete that has been applied to the wall. The site has lost integrity because the walls were originally part of a larger complex of buildings that has lost its principal structure -- the house. In general, the site retains integrity of location and setting and has lost integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Notes on Condition

The structures are in fair condition and the landscape is minimally maintained.

■ HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

These walls and gate were built for James N. and Lulu B. Munro as the entrance to their home, which they called "Bramble Haw." The house was built in 1925. Col. James N. Munro was a West Point graduate, a 32-year veteran of the Army, and an "ardent conservationist" (Hagen 1957). Between his death in 1929 and 1953, the house was occupied by his widow, Lulu B. Mabey Munro, and her sister, Nell Mabey, a poet. The Munro estate (approximately 160 acres in size) became part of the original acreage of Frontenac State Park in 1955, following the wishes of Lulu B. Munro.

The limestone used to construct the gates may have been obtained from a quarry within the current park boundaries. Layers of Shakopee and St. Lawrence limestone are located in the bluffs of the Mississippi River valley. Quarrying began at Frontenac as early as 1855. One quarry was located within the current boundaries of Frontenac Park on the bluff below the picnic area. Limestone from this quarry was used to construct the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City in 1883. The quarry has been inactive since the 1940s (source: "Frontenac State Park Summer Trails").

Frontenac State Park, encompassing approximately 2,600 acres, was established in 1957. (Establishment of the state park had been proposed in the mid-1930s but was not pursued by the State.) A group called the Frontenac State Park Association (formed in 1954) lobbied for the park in the mid-1950s and succeeded in introducing the first Frontenac State Park bill to the legislature in 1955. The bill met with citizen opposition in hearings. The Association then purchased 160 acres of land (the Munro estate) in 1955 and, in 1956, 200 acres were donated to the effort by John H. Hauschild, board chairman of the Great Northern Insurance Company. When the legislature finally established Frontenac Park in 1957, this acreage formed the park. Actual development did not begin until 1964 when a road was built to the top of Garrard Bluff and camping and picnicking facilities were constructed. Frontenac was classified under the 1975 Outdoor Recreation Act (ORA) as a natural state park, which means that the land will be preserved for ecological values rather than recreational development.

See also the inventory form for the Fort Beauharnois Historical Marker, which is also located on T.H. 61/T.H. 63 in the park.

■ PREVIOUS SHPO REVIEWS

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

■ STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This property has been evaluated within the historic context "Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960." The evaluation determined that the Frontenac State Park Gates do not fit within the parameters of the context as described in the registration requirements. While the gates are currently located on Mn/DOT right-of-way, they were not originally built for roadside development purposes and were not acquired by the highway department to serve a roadside development function. Because the house has been demolished, the site has been altered significantly. It is recommended that the site is NOT ELIGIBLE for the National Register due to loss of integrity.

■ OTHER COMMENTS

This property may require further evaluation for potential archaeological resources.

T.H. 61/T.H. 63 is busy past this site in the summer months. The turn-off from T.H. 61/T.H. 63 to the entrance walls is abrupt, but it is not a public road, but a MnDNR service road.

T.H. 61 at this location has been designated part of the Great River Road.

■ REFERENCES

Hagen, Jean. "Nell Mabey, Noted Lake City Poet, Aided Creation of Frontenac State Park." *Rochester Post-Bulletin*, Aug. 1, 1957.

Meyer, Roy W. *Everyone's Country Estate: A History of Minnesota's State Parks*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1991.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. "Frontenac State Park Summer Trails." [Pamphlet.]

Thiel, George A. and Carl E. Dutton. *The Architectural, Structural, and Monumental Stones of Minnesota*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1935.