

**MNDOT HISTORIC ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT
STRUCTURES INVENTORY**

OT-OTT-001
CS 5620

Craigie Flour Mill Historical Marker

Historic Name Other Name	Craigie Flour Mill Historical Marker	CS # SHPO Inv #	5620 OT-OTT-001
Location	SE side of TH 78 .5 mi NE of Co Rd 128	Hwy District Reference	TH 78 4A 31.4
City/Township County Twp Rng Sec USGS Quad UTM	Otter Tail Township Otter Tail 134N 39W Sec 31 Battle Lake Z15 E296090 N5138710	Acres Rest Area Class	.3 4
Designer	Nichols, A R, Consult Land Arch	SP #	5620-01
Builder	National Youth Administration (NYA)	SHPO Review #	
Historic Use Present Use	Roadside Parking Area Roadside Parking Area	MHS Photo #	013524.01-07
Yr of Landscape Design	1940	MnDOT Historic Photo Album	Ols 2.96
Overall Site Integrity	Intact/Slightly Altered		
Review Required	Yes		
National Register Status	Eligible, see Statement of Significance Now listed: see http://www.dot.state.mn.us/roadsides/historic/files/wayrep-suppl.pdf for additional information.		
Historic Context	Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960		
List of Standing Structures			
Feat#	Feature Type	Year Built	Fieldwork Date
01	Marker	1940	06-29-97
02	Bench(es), Stone	1940	
NOTE: Landscape features are not listed in this table			Prep by Gemini Research Dec. 98 G1. 15
			Prep for Site Development Unit Cultural Resources Unit Environmental Studies Unit
Final Report	Historic Roadside Development Structures on Minnesota Trunk Highways (1998)		

■ BRIEF

Craigie Flour Mill Historical Marker is a small, .3-acre site located on the southeastern side of T.H. 78, at a place called Balmoral Beach on the southeastern side of Otter Tail Lake in Otter Tail Township. It is located about one-half mile northeast of County Road 128.

■ STANDING STRUCTURES

Stone Marker. Built 1940 by the NYA. The principal feature on the site is a stone marker that is basically rectangular in shape, although the two front corners are canted. The marker is approximately 30' long and about 11'6" wide. It is built of pink and gray, random rubble granite. The marker's flagstone terrace is outlined by an approximately 18"-wide granite border. (The terrace is labeled "blacktop" on the original plans -- the flagstone represents an original deviation from the plan.) At the rear of the terrace is a tripartite stone pedestal that supports an iron water wheel (about 3' tall and 3' in diameter) and two millstones (about 3'4" in diameter and about 6" thick), all of which were salvaged from the Craigie (or Balmoral) Mill. The millstones have been partially covered with poured concrete. In front of the water wheel is a bronze tablet (about 2' by 3') that is mounted at a slant. There are two stone steps (10'6" wide and 8' wide) made of tan limestone at the marker's front edge. (This is the only place that limestone is used on the marker.)

The text of the bronze plaque, which is mounted near the water wheel, addresses the Craigie or Balmoral Mill, which was the first grist mill in Otter Tail County. The seals of the Minnesota Historical Society and the Minnesota Department of Highways are cast near the bottom of the plaque. (See transcript of text at the end of this document.)

Stone Benches. Built 1940 by the NYA. Flanking the millstones are two benches (about 7'9" long and 1'9" wide) that have poured concrete seats and random rubble granite legs. The seats on the benches have recently been replaced with new poured concrete seats.

■ OTHER LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND PLANTINGS

The .3-acre site has an asphalt-paved highway pull-off that forms a grassy island between the pull-off drive and T.H. 78. The drive is lined with a 6"-thick poured concrete curb that appears to be original. Immediately in front of the marker's stone steps are two poured concrete squares that form a plaza. This area is labeled "blacktop" on the original plan (the poured concrete may represent a deviation from the plan). Most of the gently-sloping site is planted with grass. There are about seven mature ash trees along the southern edge of the site. There are three ash trees and three Blue Spruce of medium age behind the marker. In front of the marker are two globe-shaped arborvitae and two spirea bushes. An original planting plan has not been located.

■ SETTING

The site is located in an area of gently rolling wooded hills across T.H. 78 from Otter Tail Lake. The lakeshore is visible through mature ash and oak trees and between the residential and resort buildings that comprise Balmoral Beach. Bordering the site on the south is a

swampy area on the shore of the stream that powered the original mill. The stream runs between Otter Tail Lake and Lake Blanche to the south. South of the stream is a golf course and riding stables. North and east of the site is a large restaurant and bar called the "Boardwalk." Its building replaces the dance hall, which is visible in historic photos of the site.

■ INTEGRITY

Alterations

With the exception of the slight deviations in the stone marker described above, it appears that this site was built fairly close to the original plan.

A poured concrete cap has been added to the millstones. The mortar on the marker has been poorly repaired. The poured concrete slabs on the benches have recently been replaced (with poured concrete). The pull-off has been paved with asphalt and the concrete curb has been partially covered with asphalt. Some new plantings have been added. In general, the site retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Notes on Condition

The marker is in fair condition. The mortar has been poorly repaired. The millstones are crumbling and have cracked. The concrete curb has been partially covered with asphalt.

■ HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Prior to the construction of this wayside rest, there was a 3' by 5' steel sign at this site. The sign was white with black lettering and had text identical to the text of the metal plaque on the stone marker. The steel sign was one of the markers erected during the first cooperative marking program of the Minnesota Department of Highways and the Minnesota Historical Society, which was established in 1929.

The wayside rest was constructed in 1940 by the National Youth Administration (NYA) in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Highways. A. R. Nichols served as Consulting Landscape Architect, and Harold E. Olson was Engineer of Roadside Development Division. Construction plans were drawn in November of 1939 and signed on December 4, 1939, by Nichols, Olson, and several highway department officials: A. O. Torgerson (District Engineer), G. G. Gladman (Engineer of Survey and Design), and O. L. Kipp (Construction Engineer). A notation on the plan indicates "Final Plans Construction Division NYA 1940."

On June 25, 1939 (apparently in preparation for the erection of the marker), this site was honored in a gathering that doubled as the Otter Tail County Historical Society's summer meeting. Between 2,000 and 3,000 people attended the meeting, picnic, and dedication ceremonies. Judge Anton Thompson, president of the historical society, presented the welcoming address. Other speakers were Senator Elmer E. Adams, Dr. Theodore Blegen (Superintendent of the State Historical Society), E. T. Barnard (Secretary of the Otter Tail County Historical Society), and pioneers from the county.

■ **PREVIOUS SHPO REVIEWS**

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

■ **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Craigie Flour Mill Historical Marker was built in 1940 by the NYA and the MHD. It is one of 18 stone, free-standing, shrine-type historic markers recorded in this inventory. It is one of 19 sites in the inventory on which the NYA worked. It is one of more than 60 sites in the inventory that were designed by, or whose design is attributed to, Arthur R. Nichols.

This property has been evaluated within the historic context "Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960." It is recommended that the Craigie Flour Mill Historical Marker 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 Craigie Flour Mill Historical Marker is among the 68 Depression-era properties in the inventory that represent the MHD's first large-scale effort to construct roadside development facilities in the state. The site is important as a well-preserved example of the accomplishments of the NYA working in cooperation with the MHD. The property is an 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.)

Design Significance. The Craigie Flour Mill Historical Marker is a well-preserved example of the MHD Roadside Development Division's small pull-off style roadside parking areas -- this one with a shrine-type historic marker. The marker is a good example of the application of the "National Park Service Rustic Style" to an interpretive marker. It has stonework of high quality, and 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. Furthermore, the marker is an important example of the roadside development work of prominent landscape architect A. R. Nichols. (National Register Criterion C.)

The property may also be associated with the "Federal Relief Construction, 1933-1943" and "Tourism and Recreation in the Lake Regions, 1870-1945" historic contexts.

■ **OTHER COMMENTS**

This property may require further evaluation for potential archaeological resources.

The site is not well-maintained -- it is crudely mowed and needs to be weeded and trimmed. T.H. 78 was fairly quiet past this site on a Sunday afternoon in June, but if the highway were busy with recreational traffic it would be difficult to find the site, slow down, and safely turn into it.

There are two other properties in the inventory that have historic markers on which millstones are mounted. They are the Pelican Rapids Village Historical Marker (OT-PRC-021) and Marine on St. Croix Roadside Parking Area (WA-MXC-015).

The text of the historic marker is specifically associated with the site of the wayside rest.

■ REFERENCES

Anderson, Rolf T. "Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1941." National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form. Oct. 9, 1990; amended Aug. 30, 1993.

Final Report National Youth Administration for the State of Minnesota: Sept. 1935 to July 1943. U.S. National Youth Administration, Minnesota. 1943.

Guide to Historic Markers Erected by the State Highway Department, Cooperating with the Minnesota Historical Society. Prepared by the Minnesota Historic Records Survey, Division of Professional and Service Projects, Work Projects Administration. St. Paul: May 1940.

"Markers and Monuments in Otter Tail County." Unpublished manuscript. Otter Tail County Historical Society, Jan. 1980.

Site Plans. Minnesota Department of Transportation, St. Paul.

"Summer Meeting of the Otter Tail County Historical Society at Balmoral." *Fergus Falls Daily Journal*, June 26, 1939.

Tweton, D. Jerome. *The New Deal at the Grass Roots: Programs for the People in Otter Tail County, Minnesota.* St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1988.

■ ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND TEXT OF METAL PLAQUE

Craigie Flour Mill

James Craigie immigrated from Aberdeen, Scotland, to Otter Tail County in 1861, and left the county after the outbreak of the U. S. Government-Dakota Conflict of 1862. He returned in 1866 and settled near this site on the southern shore of Otter Tail Lake, where he built a dam across the creek he had named "Balmoral" after a castle in Scotland. He completed the construction of a flour mill (Otter Tail County's first) in 1870. In 1872, Craigie and his wife were drowned in the lake, and their daughter inherited the mill. Eventually the mill was razed. A summer resort, dance hall, and cottages were located at Balmoral as early as 1920.

Millstones

Two millstones were used to grind grain. The lower one was stationary and was called the bedder. The upper stone, called the runner, was driven by the large water wheel. Grain was poured into a bin, then flowed onto a moving belt with cups or buckets, was carried to the top of a chute, and then slid down a pipe into a hole in the center of the top millstone. The millstones had patterns of grooves (called furrows) cut into them, and when the top millstone turned, the furrows crushed the grain between the stones. The ground grain then flowed through the lower millstone, down a chute, and into a bin.

Text of Metal Plaque on Stone Marker

"Craigie Flour Mill. Near this spot James Craigie of Aberdeen, Scotland, who came to Ottertail County about 1868 built the first grist mill in the county in 1870. The mill stones and wheel were imported from Scotland.

"Craigie and his wife were drowned in Ottertail Lake in 1872 and after long litigation the mill was torn down." [Seals of the Minnesota Historical Society and the Minnesota Department of Highways]