

**MNDOT HISTORIC ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT  
STRUCTURES INVENTORY**

OT-PRC-021  
CS 5618

Pelican Rapids Village Historical Marker

<b>Historic Name Other Name</b>	Pelican Rapids Village Historical Marker	<b>CS # SHPO Inv #</b>	5618 OT-PRC-021
<b>Location</b>	TH 59 at CSAH 9	<b>Hwy District Reference</b>	TH 59 4A 241.2
<b>City/Township County Twp Rng Sec USGS Quad UTM</b>	Pelican Rapids, City of Otter Tail 136N 43W Sec 22 Pelican Rapids Z14 E723470 N5162440	<b>Acres Rest Area Class</b>	.1 4
<b>Designer</b>	Minn Dept of Highways (MHD)	<b>SP #</b>	5618-03
<b>Builder</b>	Minn Dept of Highways (MHD)	<b>SHPO Review #</b>	
<b>Historic Use Present Use</b>	Roadside Parking Area Roadside Parking Area	<b>MHS Photo #</b>	013529.01-11
<b>Yr of Landscape Design</b>	1946	<b>MnDOT Historic Photo Album</b>	Ols 2.94 Ols 2.95
<b>Overall Site Integrity</b>	Intact/Slightly Altered		
<b>Review Required</b>	Yes		
<b>National Register Status</b>	Eligible, see Statement of Significance		
<b>Historic Context</b>	Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960		

**List of Standing Structures**

Feat#	Feature Type	Year Built
01	Marker	1946
02	Marker	1946
03	Bench(es), Other	1946

NOTE: Landscape features are not listed in this table

**Fieldwork Date**  
07-20-97

**Prep by**  
Gemini Research  
Dec. 98 G1. 56

**Prep for**  
Site Development Unit  
Cultural Resources Unit  
Environmental Studies Unit

<b>Final Report</b>	Historic Roadside Development Structures on Minnesota Trunk Highways (1998)
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■ BRIEF

The Pelican Rapids Village Historical Marker is a small, triangular-shaped site located on the western side of T.H. 59 at its junction with CSAH 9 (Broadway Avenue N.) just within the northern city limits of Pelican Rapids.

■ STANDING STRUCTURES

**Large Stone Marker.** Erected 1946 by the MHD. The principal feature on the site is a large stone marker constructed of random ashlar and random rubble, roughly-cut granite. Most of the stones are red, gray, or pink. The stones vary in size from as small as 4" by 4" to 10" by 12". The marker is a triangular-shaped structure that has two low wing walls that extend east and west.

The front, central portion of the marker is a 5' by 30" rectangle that is 5' tall. It rests on a granite base that has two pieces of polished red granite at its corners. Mounted on top of the rectangle is a 25' metal flagpole. Mounted on the face of the rectangle (and separated by a row of red brick) are two of the ten reddish-brown, polished granite tablets with incised carving that are mounted on the marker. All ten plaques contain local history information. (See texts at the end of this document.)

The faces of the triangular marker that face southwest and southeast measure about 8'2" by 5' tall. Mounted on each face are four granite tablets.

The rear facade of the triangular marker is 17' wide and 4'9" tall. At the center of the marker is a triangular flower bed that is approximately four feet deep.

Extending east and west from the rear facade are two 11'8"-long wing walls. The walls are 2' high and 20" thick.

**Millstone Marker.** Erected 1946. A 3'-diameter millstone is located on a 9'-long concrete walkway immediately south of the entrance drive on the triangular island. A white, headstone-like granite marker with incised carving rests on a red metal frame at the foot of the millstone. The marker measures about 30" by 18". The text of the marker addresses the use of millstones. (See text at the end of this document.)

**Concrete Benches.** Erected 1946 by the MHD. Two concrete benches with 6' by 16" seats stand on the concrete plaza in front of the two wing walls of the large stone marker. The seats are supported by 1'-square concrete pedestals.

■ OTHER LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND PLANTINGS

The site contains an asphalt-paved, curb-lined entrance drive that is aligned east and west and enters the site from either T.H. 59 on the east or CSAH 9 (Broadway Avenue N.) on the west. This drive divides the site in half, with the large stone marker located to the north and a triangular, curb-lined, grassy island with the millstone marker to the south.

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A 28'-long, 8'-wide concrete walkway leads from the drive north to a rectangular 40' by 18' concrete plaza in front of the large stone marker. (The plaza is made of 4' by 4' concrete squares.) Another concrete walkway extends south from the drive to the millstone marker. There is a modern wooden light pole directly behind the millstone marker.

The original planting plan specifies that 60 Colorado Spruce be planted in three groups as a backdrop to the large stone marker and in the northwestern and northeastern corners of the site. A total of 38 low, Savin Juniper were to be planted at the front corners of the large marker and behind the current location of the millstone marker. Twenty-four Silver Maple, Green Ash, and American Elm were to be scattered throughout the property to provide shade.

The site is currently planted with grass, deciduous trees and shrubs, and about 11 of the original Colorado Spruce. New groups of deciduous shrubs have been planted near the large stone marker and behind the millstone marker on the grassy island. An apple tree has been recently planted east of the large marker. The site also has a few scattered mature deciduous trees, none of which are probably original. The topography is gently rolling.

**■ SETTING**

The property is located just within the northern city limits of Pelican Rapids. It is bounded on the west by CSAH 9 (also known as Broadway Avenue N., a city street) and on the east by T.H. 59. It is surrounded by farmland and a few turkey barns on the east, two businesses and a small stand of deciduous trees on the west, a large red metal-sided garage on the north, and T.H. 59 as it enters Pelican Rapids on the south.

**■ INTEGRITY**

**Alterations**

The site appears to follow the original construction plan with three exceptions: 1) The original plan specifies a set of three concrete steps leading up to the concrete plaza in front of the large stone marker. The terrace was built at grade without steps, however; 2) The original plan specifies that the benches have stone pedestals supporting the concrete seats. Instead, the pedestals were built of concrete; and 3) The millstone marker does not appear on the original plans. However, the marker is visible in photos taken at the completion of the site.

The site drive was originally gravel and is now paved with asphalt. A modern wooden light pole has been added behind the millstone marker.

The site is missing most of its shade trees. Original shrubs have been replaced by generally compatible shrubs.

In general, the site retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

**Notes on Condition**

The large stone marker is in poor to fair condition. The red brick that separates the stone tablets on the marker is cracked and broken. The eastern bench is in fair condition, but the

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western bench is cracked and a corner is broken off. The millstone has been poorly mortared and is crumbling and falling apart. The landscaping is well-maintained.

■ **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The Pelican Rapids Village Historical Marker site was established in 1946 as part of a .23-mile-long roadside development project. The title sheet of the original plans is signed by S. Rex Green (Eng. of Lands and Right of Way), R. J. Wolfangle (Eng. of Plans), Walter Schultz (Asst. Eng. of Plans and Surveys), A. O. Torgerson (District Eng.), G. G. Gladman (Eng. of Plans and Surveys), and O. L. Kipp (Chief Engineer).

The large stone marker was erected by the Roadside Development Division in cooperation with the Otter Tail County Historical Society, the city of Pelican Rapids, and the eight adjoining townships. The marker was dedicated on September 22, 1946. The marker and site were apparently designed by the Roadside Development Division, perhaps by staff Landscape Architect Fred Vogt.

■ **PREVIOUS SHPO REVIEWS**

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

■ **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Pelican Rapids Village Historical Marker was built in 1946 by the MHD in cooperation with local groups. It is one of 18 stone, free-standing, shrine-type historic markers recorded in this inventory.

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

Non-Federal Relief Property That Closely Resembles a Federal Relief Property. The Pelican Rapids Village Historical Marker is important as an intact example of a Non-Federal relief property, built during the decade immediately following the end of the federal relief programs (1943-1953), which strongly represents a continuation of the design principles and philosophy of the federal relief-built roadside development sites. (National Register Criterion A.)

Design Significance. Built in 1946, the Pelican Rapids Village Historical Marker is a good example of the MHD Roadside Development Division's small roadside parking areas with historic markers. 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.)

The site may also be associated with the "Tourism and Recreation in the Lake Regions, 1870-1945" historic context.

■ **OTHER COMMENTS**

This property may require further evaluation for potential archaeological resources.

Broadway Avenue N. and T.H. 59 are very busy past the site.

There are two other properties in the inventory that have historic markers on which millstones are mounted. They are the Craigie Flour Mill Historical Marker (OT-OTT-001) and Marine on St. Croix Roadside Parking Area (WA-MXC-015).

The text of the markers is associated with the general vicinity. They are not specifically associated with the site of the wayside rest.

■ **REFERENCES**

*Pelican Rapids Diamond Jubilee.* Pelican Rapids: 1958.

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

"Stone Marker Pieces Together History." *Country Life*, June 28, 1980.

■ **ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND MARKER TEXTS**

**Pelican Rapids**

The village of Pelican Rapids was founded by William H. Tuttle along the Pelican River at a point where the river descends over a set of drift boulders. Pelican Rapids was platted in 1872 and incorporated in 1882.

**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 Stone Tablets on Granite Marker**

There are ten granite plaques on the large stone marker. The top plaque in the center of the marker reads:

"Pelican Rapids Village. First settler: Harrison Harris, 1869. Village platted: 1872. Village Incorporated: May 16, 1882. First Church Organized: Congregational May 10, 1882. First School District Organized: No. 10, Nov. 17, 1871. First Post Office Established: 'Pelican Rapids,' July 8, 1872, O. A. A. Blyberg, P. M. Railroad arrived July 4, 1882."

The plaque directly beneath the top plaque reads:

"This historical marker was erected through the cooperation of the Otter Tail County Historical Society, the eight adjoining townships, the Village of Pelican Rapids, and the Minnesota Highway Department. Dedicated Sept. 22, 1946."

The four granite plaques on the western wall of the marker read:

"Norwegian Grove. First settlers: Henry Ongstad, Ole Raade, Jacob Torkelson, Iver Dahl, Henry Israelson, all in 1869. Township Organized: Jan. 7, 1873. First Church Organized: Immanuel Norwegian Lutheran, Apr. 28, 1870. First School District Organized: No. 48, Jan. 6, 1874. First Rural Post Office Established: 'Norwegian Grove,' Mar. 4, 1878, Haag Back, P.M."

"Scambler. First Settlers: 'Bob' Scambler, Peter Small, 1868. Township Organized: Aug. 8, 1871. First Church Organized: Union Church June 23, 1876. First School District Organized: No. 39, Jan. 7, 1873. First Rural Post Office Established: 'Pelican Lake,' Apr. 2, 1873, P. F. Peabody, P. M. 'Prairie Leaflet' published 1879-1882."

"Trondhjem. First Settlers: Knut Pederson, Lauris Hanson, 1869. Township Organized: July 7, 1873. First Church Organized: South Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1872. First School District Organized: No. 73, July 26, 1876. First Rural Post Office Established: 'Stod' June 12, 1888, John O. Ferguson, P.M."

"Pelican Township. First Settler: John M. Johnson, June 1, 1869. Township Organized: Sept. 5, 1870. First Church Organized: Ringsacker Evangelical Lutheran Church, Sept. 27, 1875. First School District Organized: No. 18, Oct. 3, 1870. First Rural Post Office Established: 'Pelican Rapids,' July 8, 1872, First postmaster O. A. E. Blyberg."

The four granite plaques on the eastern wall of the marker read:

"Dunn. First Settler: George Dunn, 1865. Township Organized: March 16, 1880. First Church Organized: Zion Lutheran, Nov. 30, 1912. First School District Organized: No. 167, May 2, 1882. First Rural Post Office Established: 'Bucks Mill,' June 16, 1886, Simeon S. Buck, P.M."

"Maplewood. First Settler: Peter F. Johnson, 1874. Township Organized: July 26, 1880. First Church Organized: Maplewood Presbyterian, Dec. 25, 1886. First School District Organized: No. 145, Jan. 4, 1881. First Rural Post Office Established: 'Worden,' May 11, 1892. Harrison Worden, P. M."

"Lida. First Settler: Louis De Pochee, 1871. Township Organized: March 18, 1879. First Church Organized: none ever organized. First School District Organized: No. 108, Mar. 20, 1879. First Rural Post Office Established: 'Lida,' May 26, 1882, Henry Moore, P. M."

"Erhard's Grove. First Settler: Alexander Erhard, May 15, 1869. Township Organized: Sept. 24, 1870. First Church Organized: Bagestvold Congregation Norwegian Lutheran, Mar. 4, 1874. First School District Organized: No. 17, Oct. 3, 1870. First Rural Post Office Established: 'Erhard,' June 19, 1874, Oren S. Sweet, P. M. First railroad arrived July 18, 1882."

**Text of Millstone Marker**

"Millstone. Used by flour and grist mills for grinding all kinds of grains. Taken from the old Spring Creek grist mill built by P. S. Peabody about 1872 and later operated by Frank LaCrosse. Use of millstones was discontinued about 1881. The mill was in Section 2 Scambler Township."