

**MNDOT HISTORIC ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT
STRUCTURES INVENTORY**

RN-BFS-002
CS 6508
Morton Pioneer Monuments R.P.A.

Historic Name Other Name	Morton Pioneer Monuments R.P.A.	CS # SHPO Inv #	6508 RN-BFS-002
Location	W side of TH 71 1.4 mi N of CSAH 2	Hwy District Reference	TH 71 8A 85
City/Township County Twp Rng Sec USGS Quad UTM	Beaver Falls Township Renville 113N 35W Sec 13 Morton Z15 E341670 N4940240	Acres Rest Area Class	.34 4
Designer	Minn Dept of Highways (MHD)	SP #	6508-06
Builder	Minn Dept of Highways (MHD)	SHPO Review #	
Historic Use Present Use	Roadside Parking Area Roadside Parking Area	MHS Photo #	013500.01-07
Yr of Landscape Design	Ca. 1938	MnDOT Historic Photo Album	Ols 2.117a
Overall Site Integrity	Intact/Slightly Altered		
Review Required	Yes		
National Register Status	Not Eligible, see Statement of Significance		
Historic Context			

List of Standing Structures

Feat#	Feature Type	Year Built	
01	Marker	1907	
02	Marker	1907	
03	Other Feature	Ca. 1975	
NOTE: Landscape features are not listed in this table			

Fieldwork Date
06-08-97

Prep by
Gemini Research
Dec. 98 G1. 48

Prep for
Site Development Unit
Cultural Resources Unit
Environmental Studies Unit

Final Report	Historic Roadside Development Structures on Minnesota Trunk Highways (1998)
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■ BRIEF

Morton Pioneer Monuments Roadside Parking Area is a small, .34-acre site located on the western side of T.H. 71 about 1.4 miles north of CSAH 2. The site is located about four miles north of the town of Morton.

■ STANDING STRUCTURES

Granite Obelisk (Earle Marker). Erected 1907, moved to this site prior to 1948. This marker is located south of the midpoint of the curved pull-off drive. It is a tan, smoothly-dressed, obelisk of Morton granite. The shaft of the marker is about 3'6" tall and about 1' square. The shaft stands on a smooth tan granite base that is about 1'5" square and 1' tall. Beneath the base is a rockfaced gray granite plinth that is 2'4"-square and projects about 1' above the ground. The eastern face of the obelisk is incised with lettering that commemorates Radnor Earle, a victim of the U.S. Government-Dakota Conflict of 1862. (See text at the end of this document.) The Earle Marker was originally erected in 1907 by the Renville County Pioneers on the Louis Zinne farm in Beaver Falls Township where the boy was killed. The marker was moved to this site prior to 1948. It originally stood at the midpoint of the curve of the drive with two adjacent stone benches. It was apparently sifted southward when the second marker was moved to the site in 1981.

Granite Obelisk (Henderson Marker). Erected 1907, moved to this site 1981. This marker is located north of the midpoint of the curved pull-off drive. It is a smoothly-dressed, brown-colored granite obelisk. The shaft of the marker is about 3'8" tall, 1' square, and has chamfered corners. The shaft is supported by a smooth brown granite base that is about 1'5" square and 1' tall. The base rests on a 2'4"-square rockfaced gray granite plinth that projects about 6" above the ground. The eastern face of the shaft is incised with lettering that commemorates victims of the U.S. Government-Dakota Conflict of 1862. (See text at the end of this document.) This marker was originally erected in 1907 by the Renville County Pioneers on the Henry Homeier farm in Beaver Falls Township where the five were killed. The marker was moved to this site in 1981 by the Renville County Historical Society. A small rectangular metal plaque is set into concrete in the ground in front of the marker. The text of the plaque reads: "This monument was originally erected 1 1/2 miles S.W. of this site. It was re-erected here in 1981 Renville County Historical Society."

Radio Tower and Shed. Built circa 1975 by Mn/DOT. There is a Mn/DOT Communications radio tower and associated small metal building at the southwestern corner of the site.

■ OTHER LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND PLANTINGS

The site has a curved pull-off drive that forms a grassy island between the drive and T.H. 71. The site is planted with grass. The topography is flat.

Across T.H. 71 to the east is an auxiliary, shallow asphalt-paved parking area (essentially a widening of the shoulder) that was in place by 1948 and was landscaped by MHD in 1948.

A 1948 planting plan specifies that eight Black Hills Spruce be planted behind the marker to serve as a backdrop (four remain and some newer pines have been planted). Eighteen Mugho

Pine were to flank the benches and the Earle Marker (none are extant). Eighteen American Elm and 12 Carolina Poplars were to be scattered on both sides of the road (only one elm remains near the Earle marker). Seven Black Hills Spruce were to be planted on the eastern side of T.H. 71 (extant).

■ **SETTING**

The site is located in a basically treeless, agricultural setting surrounded by farms. It is bounded on the east by T.H. 71 and a farmstead. Farmland bounds the site on the north, south, and west.

■ **INTEGRITY**

Alterations

The original plans have not been located. Historic photos indicate that the site was improved and landscaped as per the 1948 plan.

Both markers have been moved to this site from other locations. The Earle Marker was moved to this site prior to 1948. The 1948 MHD plan notes "ex[isting] marker -- replace shaft" in reference to the Earle Marker. However, the current marker shaft is identical to the marker shaft pictured in a circa 1920s book written by Earle's son (Earle circa 1920s:n.p.). This suggests that the marker received only minor repairs in 1948 and not a new shaft. (The Henderson Marker is also pictured in the Earle book and is also intact today.)

The pull-off drive was first paved in 1948. Two stone benches were added to the site in 1948 and have since been removed. The Henderson Marker was moved to this site in 1981. At this time, the Earle Marker was apparently shifted southward. A Mn/DOT radio tower and shed have been erected at the site.

A circa 1964 photo in the Roadside Development Division shows a hanging-arm style "Roadside Parking Area" sign marking this site.

The site appears to retain integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Its integrity of design has been altered by the removal of stone benches, the shifting of the Earle marker from its central location to a location farther south, the addition of the Henderson marker, and the addition of the radio tower and shed.

Notes on Condition

The markers are in good condition. The site appears to be in fair condition but only minimally maintained.

■ **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The Earle Marker was originally erected in 1907 by the Renville County Pioneers on the Louis Zinne farm (1.5 miles southwest of this rest area in Beaver Falls Township) where Earle was

killed. Granite for the marker was quarried a few miles from the farm (Earle circa 1920s:n.p.). The marker was moved to this site prior to 1948.

This wayside rest was established prior to 1948. According to construction plans for improvements (S.P. 6508-06, dated April of 1948), most of the current site layout was already in place in 1948, except for the northern (Henderson) marker which was not moved in until 1981. In 1948 MHD added two stone benches in front of the existing Earle marker, planted trees, and paved the drive with asphalt. The 1948 plan title sheet was signed by Harold E. Olson (Roadside Development Engineer), R. J. Wolfangle (Engineer of Plans), Walter Schultz (Assistant Engineer of Plans and Surveys), G. G. Gladman (Engineer of Plans and Surveys), and O. L. Kipp (Chief Engineer).

The Henderson Marker was moved to this site in 1981 by the Renville County Historical Society. It had been originally erected in 1907 by the Renville County Pioneers on the Henry Homeier farm (in Section 14 of Beaver Falls Township) where the five were killed. Some local historians believe the marker may have served as a grave marker. (The five had been buried near the site where they were killed by a U.S. Government burying party.)

The Renville County Historical Society wanted to place the Henderson Marker on this rest area near the Earle Marker because the Henderson and Earle families had been neighbors and friends. The people commemorated on the monuments were part of a group of 27 friends and neighbors that had attempted to escape together on August 18, 1862, during one of the first incidents of the U.S. Government-Dakota Conflict of 1862. Eleven others in the group (all women and children) were captured by the Dakota and released 40 days later at a mass prisoner-of-war release at Camp Release.

■ PREVIOUS SHPO REVIEWS

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

■ STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Morton Pioneer Monuments Roadside Parking Area is a small wayside rest with a simple highway pull-off design. The site is one of several in this study that contain markers with non-standard designs. Both markers have been moved to the site from other locations. Morton is one of three sites in the study that commemorate events associated with the U.S. Government-Dakota Conflict of 1862. (The others are Birch Coulee Historical Marker and Camp Release State Memorial Wayside.)

This property has been evaluated within the historic context "Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960." It is recommended that the Morton Pioneer Monuments R.P.A. 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. 71 is quiet past this site.

It is recommended that interpretation be added to the site to describe the U.S. Government-Dakota Conflict of 1862 in a culturally-sensitive manner.

The text of the marker are associated with events in the vicinity. They are not specifically associated with the site of the wayside rest.

Birch Coulee Historical Marker, which is another site in this inventory, is located about 1.5 miles south of this site.

■ REFERENCES

Carley, Kenneth. *The Sioux Uprising of 1862*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1976.

Curtiss-Wedge, Franklyn. *The History of Renville County, Minnesota*. Vol. 1. Chicago: Cooper and Co., 1916.

Earle, E. W., M.D. *Reminiscences of the Sioux Indian Massacre in 1862*. Fairfax: Renville County Pioneers Society, circa 1920s.

Rubenstein, Mitchell E. and Alan R. Woolworth. "The Dakota and Ojibway." In *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups*. Ed. June Drenning Holmquist. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1981.

Sketches Historical and Descriptive of the Monuments and Tablets Erected by the Minnesota Valley Historical Society in Renville and Redwood Counties, Minnesota. Morton: Minnesota Valley Historical Society, 1902.

■ ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND MARKER TEXTS

U.S. Government-Dakota Conflict of 1862

The events that led up to the U.S. Government-Dakota Conflict of 1862 are described by historians Rubenstein and Woolworth:

The late arrival of annuity payments promised by the government [in 1851 treaties], failure to provide agricultural aid, and dissatisfaction with the restrictions of reservation life prompted many Dakota to return to their old homes. . . . These areas were now occupied by white settlers, and distrust between the earlier and later masters of the land deepened as the decade wore on. . . . Friction and local outbreaks of violence, spurred by the whites' growing intolerance of the Indians and Dakotas' increasing disrespect for the United States government, created an inflammable situation. . . . [In] August, 1862, driven by hunger and disgusted by unfulfilled promises, the Dakota attacked settlements in the Minnesota River Valley in what rapidly became a desperate attempt to drive the whites out of southern Minnesota. The Dakota War of 1862 lasted only a few weeks, but it had far-reaching repercussions for Indian-white relations in the three decades that followed. The death of about 500 whites and the widespread destruction of property evoked cries for the removal, if not the extermination, of all

Dakota from the state. . . . From a population of upward of 7,000, the number of Dakota in Minnesota dropped to 374 in 1866 (Rubenstein and Woolworth 1981:22-23).

Text of Earle Marker

"Erected by Renville County Pioneers August 18, 1907. In memory of Radnor Earle who was killed by the Indians in the massacre of August 18, 1862 while saving his father's life."

Text of Henderson Marker

"Erected by Renville County Pioneers August 18, 1907. In memory of Mrs. S. R. Henderson and her two little daughters, Jehiel Wedge and Eugene White who were killed by the Indians in the massacre of August 18, 1862. F. Thies axcidently [sic] killed March 1873."

Text of Plaque at Henderson Marker

"This monument was originally erected 1 1/4 miles S.W. of this site. It was erected here in 1981. Renville County Historical Society."