

**MNDOT HISTORIC ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT  
STRUCTURES INVENTORY**

SH-SCC-048  
CS 7103  
St. Cloud Historical Marker

<b>Historic Name</b> <b>Other Name</b>	St. Cloud Historical Marker	<b>CS #</b> <b>SHPO Inv #</b>	7103 SH-SCC-048
<b>Location</b>	NE side of TH 10 .4 mi SE of CSAH 7	<b>Hwy</b> <b>District</b> <b>Reference</b>	TH 10 3B 179.7
<b>City/Township</b> <b>County</b> <b>Twp Rng Sec</b> <b>USGS Quad</b> <b>UTM</b>	St. Cloud, City of Sherburne 35N 30W Sec 6 Cable Z15 E412860 N5044190	<b>Acres</b> <b>Rest Area Class</b>	.1 4
<b>Designer</b>	Nichols, A R, Consult Land Arch	<b>SP #</b>	10-27-26A 7103
<b>Builder</b>	National Youth Administration (NYA)	<b>SHPO Review #</b>	95-2458
<b>Historic Use</b> <b>Present Use</b>	Roadside Parking Area Vacant/ Closed	<b>MHS Photo #</b>	013530.05-16
<b>Yr of Landscape Design</b>	1937-38	<b>MnDOT Historic Photo Album</b>	Nic 1.23 Nic 7.01 Ols 3.149 Ols 3.150 Ols 3.150a
<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 Federal Relief Construction, 1933-1943		

**List of Standing Structures**

Feat#	Feature Type	Year Built
01	Marker	1937
02	Bench(es), Stone	1937
03	Curb, Stone	1937

NOTE: Landscape features are not listed in this table

**Fieldwork Date**  
08-05-97

**Prep by**  
Gemini Research  
Dec. 98 G1. 65

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

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

■ BRIEF

The St. Cloud Historical Marker, also known as First Granite Quarry Historical Marker, is a small, .1-acre site located on the northeastern side of T.H. 10 within the southeastern portion of the City of St. Cloud. The site is about .4 mile southeast of CSAH 7, across T.H. 10 to the northeast of the Minnesota Correctional Facility at St. Cloud.

■ STANDING STRUCTURES

**Historical Marker.** Built 1937 by the NYA. The principal feature on the site is a stone marker that is built of huge pieces of randomly-laid, rockfaced, gray St. Cloud granite on a stone footing. The stones were carefully chosen, cut with many angular shapes, and laid to create a massive, less formal, almost primitive structure that is more irregular in shape and design than other terraced, shrine-type markers inventoried in this study. The mortar joints are deep. The marker is rectangular in shape and is about 36' in overall length. It has a rectangular, flagstone-paved terrace that is sheltered on three sides by 2'-tall stone sidewalls, with a rectangular stone shaft at the center of the rear wall. The rectangular shaft is buttressed at the sides by "piles" of cut rock making it appear that the shaft is almost naturally rising from the "pile." The 20"-thick sidewalls of the marker are formed from a single course of massive rocks with irregularly-shaped tops. The terrace is approached via three shallow, rockfaced granite steps that span the front of the marker. The outer edges of the steps and the central "entrance" to the marker are marked by four huge, irregularly-shaped stone piers that each measures about 2' by 2' by 3'. The terrace and steps both project forward forming a semicircular bay at the "entrance" to the marker. The flagstone on the terrace is unusually well executed. It is comprised of fairly large, smooth, angularly-cut pieces of granite of various shades that were carefully and closely placed.

The marker's rectangular niche holds an incised, polished granite tablet (rather than the usual metal plaque) that addresses the state's first granite quarry, which was located across T.H. 10 southwest of this site. At the bottom of the plaque is incised "Erected by the North Star Gr. Corp., St. Cloud, 1930 [sic]." (The tablet was made in 1930 while this large historic marker and site were not built until 1937.) The tablet also has the seals of the Minnesota Department of Highways and the Minnesota Historical Society carved near the bottom. (See copy of text at the end of this document.) One historic photo of the marker after completion shows that a small metal plaque (illegible due to its small size in the photo) had been mounted over the North Star Granite Corporation acknowledgment at the bottom of the stone tablet. The small metal plaque read: "NYA. Constructed by National Youth Administration Cooperating with Minnesota Department of Highways [year illegible]."

**Granite Benches.** Built 1937 by the NYA. Two granite benches stand against the sidewalls of the terrace. They have rockfaced granite pedestals and granite slab seats (8' long by 2' wide) that are smooth on top but rockfaced on the lower surface. The benches are about 18" high.

**Granite Curbing.** Built 1937 by the NYA. A portion of the site's curving drive is lined on both sides with granite curbing that is about 6" thick. The granite is grayish-pink in color. The curbing originally encircled the grassy island in front of the marker (and therefore ran along the T.H. 10 shoulder).

#### ■ OTHER LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND PLANTINGS

The site has a curving, gravel, 20'-wide highway pull-off drive that retains a portion of its original granite curbing and creates a curved grass-planted island between the marker and T.H. 10.

Immediately in front of the marker is another 6" granite curb that generally follows the shape of the marker (see original plans) and extends about 7' from its front edge. This curb encloses an area in front of the marker that was originally filled with gravel, according to the plans and historic photos.

Historic photos taken when the site was completed show that shade trees of fairly large size were preserved in the grassy island and along the front of the site, but that most original trees behind the marker had been cut. A later photo shows low juniper and young evergreens in front of the marker and young deciduous trees growing up beside it. Another photo shows at least two wooden picnic tables and a low picnic fireplace formed from pieces of granite that were presumably located on the site. (A 1950 plan (S.P. 7103-07) shows two in-place fireplaces.)

A highway department report from 1938 suggests that the site was originally wooded: "Where T.H. #10 runs adjacent to the northeast corner of the State Reformatory Grounds lies an area which is heavily wooded with very desirable specimen trees. At this location, an historic marker has been erected . . ." (Annual Report of the Accomplishments . . . 1938:35).

The original planting plan (signed in 1937) specifies the planting of 30 Juniper shrubs and 30 Red Cedar trees flanking the front and sides of the marker, 25 Lombardy Poplar behind the marker to serve as a backdrop, and 30 American Elm planted elsewhere to shade the site.

The site is overgrown with grass and brush, and trees are so close to the back and sides of the marker that they are touching it. The land behind the marker is swampy and wet. The site is currently covered with widely scattered maple trees and a cluster of tall evergreens on either side of the marker. The island is planted with overgrown grass and a few widely scattered mature maples. The topography of the site is flat.

#### ■ SETTING

The site is located in a rural setting surrounded by dense underbrush and farm fields. Across T.H. 10 to the southwest is the Minnesota Correctional Facility at St. Cloud (formerly called the Minnesota State Reformatory for Men). The site is bounded by T.H. 10 on the west. Mn/DOT's St. Cloud Travel Information Center (built circa early 1990s) is located about 1.5 miles to the south on T.H. 10.

#### ■ INTEGRITY

##### Alterations

In 1950-1953, most of the granite curbing lining the highway pull-off road was removed in preparation for the construction of the northbound lane of T.H. 10 (the original plans consider

the eventual construction of this lane). (396' or 596' of curbing was removed -- somewhat illegible on plan. The curbing immediately in front of the marker was retained.)

Except for the removal of the curbing and its overgrown state, the site is basically intact. It retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

#### **Notes on Condition**

The marker is in poor to fair condition. The flagstone terrace is collapsing immediately in front of the marker's plaque, but is otherwise in fair condition. The site is badly overgrown and the pull-off road is blocked to prevent autos from entering the site.

#### **■ HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

In 1930, prior to the construction of the historic marker and wayside, the granite tablet that is currently installed in the marker was fabricated by the North Star Granite Corporation. The seals of the Minnesota Department of Highways and the Minnesota Historical Society are located at the lower corners of the tablet. The tablet was erected in 1930 at the entrance to the state reformatory, southwest of this site. It was erected as one of the markers (perhaps the first marker) in the first cooperative marking program of the Minnesota Department of Highways and the Minnesota Historical Society. The program was initiated in 1930. The tablet is unusual because nearly all other markers erected in this early program were 3' by 5' steel signs with white background, black lettering, and the seals of the Minnesota Department of Highways and the Minnesota Historical Society at the bottom.

The St. Cloud Historical Marker and wayside rest were constructed in 1937-1938 by the National Youth Administration (NYA) in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Highways. The marker was constructed of granite from the St. Cloud region. Most of the construction occurred in 1937, with seeding, topsoiling, tree planting, and the construction of the final 156 linear feet of stone curbing occurring in 1938 (Annual Report of the Accomplishments . . . 1938:35). The site was constructed when T.H. 10 was a single-lane roadway, but the original plans planned for the eventual northbound land construction, which would remove some of the wayside rest property.

The original plans are stamped "Final Plans Construction Division N.Y.A. Oct. 1, 1937." The plans were signed by A. R. Nichols (Consulting Landscape Architect), Harold E. Olson (Engineer of Roadside Development), and O. L. Kipp (Construction Engineer). The 1937 planting plan is signed by Nichols, Olson, Kipp, and A. W. Moulster (District Engineer).

MnDOT Site Development Unit files indicate that in 1961 the site included a water supply, three picnic tables, two fireplaces, and two toilets. By circa 1964, the picnic tables, fireplaces, and privies had apparently been removed.

#### **■ PREVIOUS SHPO REVIEWS**

A Section 106 review was conducted in 1995 in preparation for the proposed elimination of the wayside rest and movement of the historic marker to the Mn/DOT Travel Information Center that is located about 1.5 miles to the south on T.H. 10. (SHPO #95-2458). In a letter to Greg Pates (Mn/DOT) dated Dec. 21, 1995, Britta L. Bloomberg (MHS) concludes

that the property is eligible for the National Register and that moving the marker would destroy its historic integrity, render it ineligible, and constitute an adverse affect (Bloomberg 1995). At this writing, the future of the marker is still unresolved. The documents that chronicle this Section 106 review contain various reports and several items of correspondence between Mn/DOT and SHPO.

■ **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The St. Cloud Historical Marker was built in 1937-1938 by the MHD and the NYA. 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. St. Cloud 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 St. Cloud 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 St. Cloud 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 marker's granite tablet was one of the first markers (perhaps the first) erected by the Minnesota Department of Highways and the Minnesota Historical Society in their first joint marking program. 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 St. Cloud Historical Marker is an intact example of the MHD Roadside Development Division's small pull-off style roadside parking areas that incorporate shrine-type historic markers. The marker's design is unique in this study and distinctive in comparison with other shrine-type markers. With its unusual, naturalistic design featuring large, irregularly-cut, dark granite boulders, the marker is an excellent example of the application of the "National Park Service Rustic Style" to an interpretive marker. It 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 St. Cloud Historical Marker is an important example of the roadside development work of prominent landscape architect A. R. Nichols. (National Register Criterion C.)

The SHPO also determined the site to be ELIGIBLE for the National Register during a Section 106 review in 1995 ("Federal Relief Construction, 1933-1943" historic context).

The property 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.

T.H. 10 is very busy past this site, making it difficult to slow and turn into the site. The site is currently closed to the public.

This site is also associated with local historic contexts established by the City of St. Cloud's Heritage Preservation Commission.

This portion of T.H. 10 has been designated part of the Great River Road.

The text of the marker is associated with a granite quarry on the Reformatory site "just west of this point." It is not specifically associated with the site of the wayside rest.

#### ■ REFERENCES

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

Anderson, Rolf T. "Minnesota State Park CCC/WPA/Rustic Style Historic Resources." National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form. Sept. 3, 1988.

"Annual Report of the Accomplishments of Roadside Development Along the Trunk Highways in Minnesota." Minnesota Department of Highways, 1938.

*Biennial Report of the Commissioner of Highways of Minnesota for 1935-1936.* Published Jan. 1, 1937.

*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.

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

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

Upham, Warren. "History of the Mining and Quarrying in Minnesota." *Minnesota Collections*, vol. 8 (1898).

#### ■ ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND TEXT OF STONE MARKER

Minnesota's granite industry began near this site in the 1860s. St. Cloud's first granite quarry, known originally as the Breen and Young quarry, was established in 1868 on what would become the grounds of the Minnesota Correctional Facility at St. Cloud, across T.H. 10 from this historic marker. (The wall surrounding the prison -- thought to be the longest granite wall in the world -- and the majority of the buildings of the 55-acre prison were built with granite taken from the quarry.) More quarries were opened throughout the St. Cloud area as granite of fine quality and unusual variety was extracted. St. Cloud granite was used architecturally for hundreds of Catholic churches and other buildings throughout the

Midwest; purchased by railroad companies for bridge piers, roadbeds, and depots; used for granite street paving blocks in the Twin Cities; and formed into millions of headstones and monuments. Many granite companies in St. Cloud were responsible for nationwide innovations in quarrying, cutting, polishing, and tooling techniques. Only two states, Massachusetts and New York, surpass Minnesota in the quantity of granite quarried. The St. Cloud-Cold Spring granite region produces a fine-grained granite that ranges in color from black, to varying shades of red and pink, to a clear white. The Cold Spring Granite Company is currently the world's largest granite producing company.

**Text of Stone Marker**

"In the spring of 1868 Breen and Young opened the first commercial granite quarry in Minnesota, on the site of the present State Reformatory, just west of this point. From this beginning the industry has developed into a business involving millions of dollars. Erected by the North Star Granite Corporation, St. Cloud, 1930 [sic]." [Seals of the Minnesota Department of Highways and the Minnesota Historical Society carved near the bottom.]