

**MNDOT HISTORIC ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT
STRUCTURES INVENTORY**

SN-MPR-004
CS 7303

Maine Prairie Corners Historical Marker

Historic Name	Maine Prairie Corners Historical Marker	CS #	7303						
Other Name	Kimball Roadside Parking Area	SHPO Inv #	SN-MPR-004						
Location	NW side of TH 15 200' SW of Co Rd 147	Hwy District Reference	TH 15 3B 137.5						
City/Township	Maine Prairie Township	Acres	.05						
County	Stearns	Rest Area Class	4						
Twp Rng Sec	122N 29W Sec 23	SP #	7303-12						
USGS Quad	Kimball	SHPO Review #							
UTM	Z15 E399500 N5023780	MHS Photo #	013507.13-16						
Designer	Minn Dept of Highways (MHD)	MnDOT Historic Photo Album	Ols 3.152 Ols 3.153						
Builder	Minn Dept of Highways (MHD) Cold Spring Granite Co.	Overall Site Integrity	Intact/Slightly Altered						
Historic Use	Roadside Parking Area	Review Required	Yes						
Present Use	Roadside Parking Area	National Register Status	Not Eligible, see Statement of Significance						
Yr of Landscape Design	1949	Historic Context							
List of Standing Structures	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Feat#</th> <th>Feature Type</th> <th>Year Built</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>01</td> <td>Marker</td> <td>1949</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Feat#	Feature Type	Year Built	01	Marker	1949
Feat#	Feature Type	Year Built							
01	Marker	1949							
		Fieldwork Date	10-29-96						
		Prep by	Gemini Research Dec. 98 G1. 35						
		Prep for	Site Development Unit Cultural Resources Unit Environmental Studies Unit						
Final Report	Historic Roadside Development Structures on Minnesota Trunk Highways (1998)								

NOTE: Landscape features are not listed in this table

■ BRIEF

Maine Prairie Corners Historical Marker is a small, .05-acre site that is located on the northwestern side of T.H. 15 about 200' southwest of County Road 147. It is about four miles north of Kimball.

■ STANDING STRUCTURES

Stone Marker. Erected 1949 by the MHD, fabricated by Cold Spring Granite Co. The stone marker is a tall, smooth, rectangular slab of gray Cold Spring granite on a concrete footing. Because its base is not exposed, the granite slab appears to rise from the ground. It is about 8'6" tall, 4' wide, and 8" thick and has incised black lettering. The marker is aligned roughly parallel with the highway. Its text addresses the townsite of Maine Prairie Corners. (See text at the end of this document.)

The original plans specify an approximately 10' by 10' plaza with a bituminous surface in front of the marker, and two 4'-long granite benches. There is no sign of the benches or the plaza.

■ OTHER LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND PLANTINGS

The site has a simple, asphalt-paved highway pull-off drive with no curbing. There is a narrow, grass-planted island between T.H. 15 and the drive. There are three ash trees north of the marker and two ash trees south of the marker. The rest of the site is wide, open, and (today) very windy. A field west of the site is tilled nearly to the marker itself. The topography of the site is flat.

The original plans specify that the site be planted with seven Colorado Green Spruce as a backdrop to the marker, two Mugho Pine flanking the marker, and 20 American Elms scattered throughout the site to provide shade. (These plantings do not exist today and would have provided welcome shade and shelter.)

■ SETTING

The site is located in an agricultural setting and is surrounded by treeless farm fields. The site is bounded by T.H. 15 on the east.

■ INTEGRITY

Alterations

The site appears to be basically intact. The plantings differ from the original plan suggesting that the site was not landscaped according to plan. The plaza and benches specified in the plan have been removed or were perhaps never built.

The site apparently retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Notes on Condition

The marker is in good condition.

■ HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Minnesota Department of Highways constructed this wayside rest in 1949. The plans were signed by Harold E. Olson (Engineer of Roadside Development) and four other officials of the highway department: R. J. Wolfangle (Engineer of Plans), G. G. Gladman (Engineer of Plans and Surveys), and O. L. Kipp (Chief Engineer).

The nine-foot-tall, 2 1/2 ton granite monument was a gift of the Cold Spring Granite Company. The text was written by Mrs. Clayton Greely of Kimball. Caesar Copeland of the Beim Farm installed the marker's foundation, and the Kimball Centennial Committee provided funding for the foundation and the dedication ceremonies. The marker was dedicated on Thanksgiving Day, 1949. The Kimball American Legion color guard opened the event and Glanville Smith, president of the Stearns County Historical Society, addressed the gathering.

This marker replaced a previous wooden marker that commemorated the Maine Prairie Fort, which was located near this site. The Maine Prairie Fort marker was erected in June 1931 by local residents. Its text read: "Word of the Sioux Outbreak reached Maine Prairie, so named by its Maine settlers in 1856. About August 19, 1862, after forming a volunteer militia company a stockaded log fort some forty feet square was hastily built just west of this point. Some skirmishing occurred in the region, but the fort itself was not attacked."

■ PREVIOUS SHPO REVIEWS

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

■ STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Maine Prairie Corners Historical Marker is a roadside parking area with a simple site design that was developed in the late 1940s by the MHD in cooperation with local citizens. Its stone marker has a spartan design that is unique 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 NOT ELIGIBLE for the National Register under this historic context because it does not meet the context registration requirements.

■ OTHER COMMENTS

This property may require further evaluation for potential archaeological resources.

T.H. 15 is quiet past this site.

The text of the historic marker is associated with the vicinity of the village of Maine Prairie Corners. It is not specifically associated with the site of the wayside rest.

■ **REFERENCES**

Maine Prairie Corners Subject File. Stearns County Historical Society. St. Cloud.

"Monument to Maine Prairie Pioneers." *St. Cloud Times*, Nov. 24, 1949.

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

■ **ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND TEXT OF MARKER**

Cold Spring Granite

The marker is constructed of Cold Spring Granite. The St. Cloud-Cold Spring area, which is the state's largest granite quarrying region, produces a fine-grained granite that ranges in color from black, to various shades of red and pink, to a clear white. Granite quarrying began in Stearns and surrounding counties in the 1860s. Henry Alexander, immigrant from Scotland, founded Cold Spring Granite in 1898. The Cold Spring Granite Company is now reportedly the world's largest granite supplier and still employs third- and fourth-generation granite workers from this area.

Maine Prairie

Maine Prairie Township was first settled by Euro-Americans in 1856 when several pioneers moved to the area from Maine. The township government was organized and the township officially named in 1858.

In August of 1862, a log stockade known as Maine Prairie Fort was built near this site during the U.S. Government-Dakota Conflict of 1862. The fort was one of more than 50 log stockades that were built by U.S. Government troops and civilians during the Conflict. Maine Prairie Fort was approximately 40' square and two stories tall. A volunteer militia company manned the fort and, although there was some fighting in the area, the fort was not attacked.

The village of Maine Prairie Corners was founded in 1865 near the fort. A blacksmith shop, cheese factory, general stores, and lodge halls were constructed and business was initially brisk. In 1886, the Soo Line Railroad was built across the county four miles south of Maine Prairie Corners, dealing the village its death blow. A new town called Kimball Prairie (now simply Kimball) was founded along the rail line in 1886. Before long, the Maine Prairie Corners post office was closed, and most businesses -- including the structures they were housed in -- were moved to Kimball. The last standing structure in Maine Prairie Corners burned in 1919.

Text of Granite Marker

"Maine Prairie Corners"

"Here in 1856 settlers from Maine established a community that grew into a vigorous pioneer village including three churches and stores, two lodge halls, blacksmith shop, cheese factory -- all built near the site of a 2 1/2 story tamarack fort used during the Sioux outbreak of 1862."

"With the coming of the Soo Line in 1886 most buildings were moved to Kimball. The last to remain burned in 1919."

"Stearns County Historical Society and the Kimball Centennial Committee 1949."