

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only
received JUL 9 1980
date entered AUG 18 1980

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name Kanabec County Multiple Resource Area (Partial Inventory)

historic Historic Resources of Kanabec County (Partial Inventory)

and/or common

2. Location

street & number The County Limits of Kanabec County, Minnesota not for publication

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district 8th

state Minnesota code 22 county Kanabec code 065

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Ownership - see inventory forms

street & number _____

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state _____

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry of Deeds -- Kanabec County Courthouse

street & number _____

city, town Mora state Minnesota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Statewide Survey of Historic Resources has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1979-80 federal state county local

depository for survey records Minnesota Historical Society -- 240 Summit Avenue-Hill House

city, town St. Paul state Minnesota

7. Description

See individual inventory forms

Condition

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

Check one

unaltered

altered

Check one

original site

moved

date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

See Area Description

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUL 9 1980
DATE ENTERED	AUG 18 1980

Historic Resources of Kanabec County

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

1

PAGE

1

This Multiple Resource Area Nomination is based on a survey of standing structures conducted in Kanabec County by the Minnesota Historic Preservation Office as part of a long-range statewide survey of historic resources. The properties included in the nomination represent those which illustrate significant aspects of the history of the county and which have been deemed eligible for nomination at the conclusion of the survey. Additional information and new perspectives for evaluation of specific types of historic properties are continually being gained as the statewide survey progresses, and it is quite possible that additional Kanabec County properties will be nominated in the future. These may be presented individually or as parts of thematic groups when the entire survey is completed. For this reason, this Multiple Resource Area Nomination should not be construed as representing all properties in Kanabec County eligible for nomination.

(The above disclaimer is based on an agreement between Charles Harrington, HCRS, and Russell Fridley, Minnesota SHPO, August 31, 1979)

KANABEC COUNTY - Standing Structures

The basis of the survey for this nomination is an inventory of structures which are indicative of various aspects of the county's history. Structures were identified and inventoried during a county wide survey conducted during the summer-fall of 1979.

Selection of structures for the inventory included both field reconnaissance of pre-identified sites and isolation of sites on a purely visual basis. Pre-identification of sites was limited to a small number of the most significant locations (those unique on a county wide scale, or significantly linked with some aspect of county history.) County histories, individual community histories, and photographs from both the state society and private collections were researched for site-specific information. General references to common buildings were not noted.

Township maps from the 1915 and 1979 County Atlases were copied for field use. Plat maps on file in the county recorder's office were researched for original plat information (proprietors, survey and filing dates) and for addition dates. The filing dates for the various platted areas were noted on current highway department city maps. This collection of maps was useful in gaining a localized sense of development for areas of the county.

All city streets were walked or driven. All rural non-farm structures, pre-identified sites, and locally suggested buildings were visited. The roads connecting these dispersed sites provided a strong sampling of the rural landscape. Pre-identified sites were inventoried regardless of integrity. Other buildings with unusual integrity or unique features were also inventoried. In general, structures built before 1940 were considered for an inventory.

Follow-up information (both localized specific and generalized contextual) on some sites was gathered to help establish significance.

In each region of the county, at least one and in most cases several local contacts were made through the county historical society and by random inquiry. These were most often helpful in locating information on selected properties, but also in pointing out additional locations for inventory.

From the inventory of 92 sites, 5 individual structures were selected for nomination to the National Register, mostly on the basis of their significance within the county. Information and photographs on all sites are recorded on inventory forms for a permanent record.

KANABEC COUNTY

Kanabec County, one of Minnesota's smallest counties with only 523 square miles, is located in east central Minnesota approximately fifty-five miles north of Minneapolis. Pine County borders to the east, Isanti County to the south, Mille Lacs County to the west, and Aitkin County to the north. All borders follow the straight lines of the government survey system.

The topography ranges from rolling, with low rounded rocky hills, in the northwest to nearly level in the southeast corner where Glacial Lake Grantsburg once existed. Most of the county is a slightly undulating till plain with several sizable lakes. The county, with the exception of the northeast corner, lies within the Snake River watershed; the river meanders through the county from the north to the southeast. The bedrock is chiefly Hinckley Sandstone with St. Cloud Granite predominant in the northwest.

Kanabec County originally lay within the great pine forest of Minnesota. Dense stands of towering White and Norway pine occupied many of the northern and western townships; stands of mixed deciduous and evergreen trees prevailed throughout the remainder of the county. Today, the county remains heavily forested with approximately forty-eight percent of its total area categorized as forested, primarily hardwoods. The southern half of the county is predominantly agricultural, with scattered wooded areas, while the northern half contrasts with small farmsteads situated in openings in the forest.

Like other Minnesota counties, Kanabec County has a rich history of Indian settlement, European exploration, and fur trading activity. The first known white men to visit the area were the French explorers Radisson and Grosseliers, who are believed to have rendezvoused with the Indians on Knife Lake in 1660.

The Ojibway Indians ceded their land between the St. Croix and Mississippi River to the United States in 1837. Kanabec County lands, however, were not made available for purchase until 1853. The rich pine forests lured lumbermen to the area. One firm is chiefly responsible for both the county's political organization in 1858 and for its initial development. The eastern syndicate of Hersey, Staples, and Bean acquired most of the prime timber land on the banks of the Snake River and its tributaries during the 1850s. For the next two decades until its dissolution in the mid-1870s, the firm dominated county politics and economics. George and Isaac Staples, the firm's resident managers in Stillwater, platted the townsites of Brunswick (1856) and Groundhouse (1857). The former served as local headquarters and as county seat from 1858 to 1882. The communities, like the industry that led to their formation, were transient; neither now exists on its original location. Logging peaked in the 1880s and 1890s before declining in the early 1900s; the last major log drive on the Snake River occurred in 1901. Today, the remains of logging camps and dams are visible throughout the county.

The county entered a new phase of its development in the 1870s with the influx of permanent settlers in the southern townships of Grass Lake and Brunswick. Most newcomers were Swedish immigrants, extending the area of highest concentration of American Swedish settlement in neighboring Isanti County northward into southern Kanabec County. In the remaining decades of the nineteenth century, Swedish immigrants were primarily responsible for settling the entire southern half of Kanabec County. Between 1870 and 1895, the county's population swelled from 93 to 2,714, of which seventy-nine percent were Swedish-born or of Swedish stock.

Construction of a branch line of the Minneapolis and St. Cloud Railroad through the southern part of the county in 1882 stimulated population growth and brought about a significant transformation in the settlement pattern. Prior to construction of the line, communities, with the exception of the small relocated settlement of Brunswick and the crossroads community of Grass Lake, were non-existent. The railroad provided the impetus for the platting of Mora in 1882. Designated the county seat that same year, Mora soon became a thriving trade center servicing both the lumbermen and the increasing number of farmers. Later, after the timber had been removed from their localities, the towns of Ogilvie (1899) and Quamba (1901) were platted along the line. The county's only other incorporated community is also indebted to the railroad for its existence; Grasston was platted in 1899 when the Eastern Minnesota Railroad built a line through the county's southeast corner. All four railroad communities developed as important trade centers for their immediate hinterlands.

Settlement gradually advanced northward as the stands of timber receded. In 1916, the last of the county's fifteen townships was organized into a governmental unit. The northern townships with their rocky soil and poor crop growing conditions remained sparsely settled. Several crossroads communities developed to service the settlers who attempted to develop farmsteads in the region. The county's population stabilized near the 9000 level in 1920. Since then, the population has fluctuated, but a noticeable trend common throughout the region has occurred. The three smaller communities and the majority of townships have declined steadily since the depression, while Mora has more than doubled in size from 1014 in 1930 to 2582 in 1970.

With logging's decline near the turn of the century, Kanabec County developed an agricultural based economy initially centered on the growing of potatoes. But unstable prices and unpredictable growing conditions led to diversified farming and dairying in the early decades of the twentieth century. Today, most of the county's farms are classified as dairy-oriented.

The architecture of the county generally follows the simple building patterns of other counties in the region. The earliest Euro-American structures were of log construction. Log barns are located throughout the county and many log houses exist today as the core for larger structures sheathed in clapboard. These were replaced in later years by simple frame structures of modest proportions. Wood is the dominant construction material

for both residential and agricultural structures. Early commercial buildings were also of frame construction. Many, however, have been replaced by masonry structures after either being destroyed by fire or razed. In the smaller communities of Quamba and Grasston, vacant lots mark the location where frame commercial structures once stood.

Buildings in the four incorporated communities are most often situated on streets which follow a strict grid system. Buildings in crossroads communities and on the county's farmsteads are usually oriented to county roads, which usually follow the grid pattern of government survey lines.

8. Significance See individual inventory forms

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

See Area Significance

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached sheets

UTM NOT VERIFIED

10. Geographical Data

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

UMT References

A
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mark E. Haidet, Research Historian-Survey

organization Minnesota Historical Society date May 1980

street & number 240 Summit Avenue-Hill House telephone 612-296-9075

city or town St. Paul state Minnesota

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

See individual inventory forms

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Russell W. Fridley

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date

6/26/80

For HCERS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

for Acting Keeper of the National Register

W. Ray Luce

date

8/18/80

Attest:

Kristin O. Connell

date

8/11/80

KANABEC COUNTY

Kanabec County's significance lies in its history of intense logging throughout the last half of the nineteenth century followed by agricultural development precipitated by Swedish immigrants and the arrival of the railroad.

Logging dominated the county's economy during the initial decades of Euro-American settlement. Extensive logging operations commenced shortly after Kanabec County lands were opened for settlement in 1853, peaked in the 1880s and 1890s, and faded from the county scene in the early years of the twentieth century. A notable structure associated with the logging industry during its heyday is the Bronson Farm (1880 +, Arthur Township). The farm represents an often overlooked aspect of the industry -- the need to furnish provisions and supplies to lumbermen in winter camps and to summer horses and oxen and store equipment during the off-season. Developed by Stillwater lumberman Isaac Staples in 1880, the farm served as local headquarters for logging operations on Ann River in western Kanabec County.

The Swedes were by far the largest ethnic group to settle in the county during the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Swedish settlement commenced in the early 1870s centering in the southeastern townships. Coin School (1899, 1911, Brunswick Township), first organized by Swedish settlers in southern Brunswick Township in 1881, is significant for its association with the Swedish population and as a symbol of the importance attached to local education in this predominantly rural county.

The advent of the railroad in 1882 brought dramatic changes to Kanabec County. Mora, soon to become the county seat and the region's foremost trade and service center, was platted that year. Mora's central role in county development since 1882 is evidenced by the Kanabec County Courthouse (1894, 1937, 1974, Mora, placed on the National Register in 1977) executed in the Romanesque Revival style. The C.E. Williams House (1902, Mora), the home of a long-time community leader, reflects the prosperity experienced by the community at the turn of the century. The structure is notable for its Queen Anne design.

Agricultural development expanded as logging receded northward. By the early 1900s agriculture had replaced logging as the basis of the county's economy. Zetterberg Company (1912, 1940s, Mora), the county's largest implement dealership for years, is a local landmark which reflects the shift to agriculture.

A notable structure of engineering interest is the Ogilvie Watertower (1918, Ogilvie). It is significant as an early example of the use of reinforced concrete in watertower construction.

Area Significance

JUL 9 1980

KANABEC COUNTY

Bibliography

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Land Atlas and Plat Book, Kanabec County, Minnesota. Rockford, Illinois:
Rockford Map Publishers, Inc. 1979.

Larson, Gerald D. "Ethnic and Cultural Homogeneity of Kanabec County,
Minnesota, in 1885." Paper for History 3-961, University of Minnesota,
1977.

Molander, S.B. When Kanabec County was Young. Series of articles extracted
from the Kanabec County Progressive (Mora, Mn.) from April 15, 1937 thru
April 14, 1938.

Peterson, Arthur G. History of Kanabec County. Series of articles extracted
from the Kanabec County Times (Mora, Mn) from August 15 thru November
28, 1929.

Plat Book of the State of Minnesota. Rockford, Illinois: W.W. Hixson and
Co., 1916.

Upham, Warren. Minnesota Geographic Names: Their Origin and Historic
Significance. 2nd rev. ed. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1969.

Ziegler, Frank. "KEN-A-BIG": The Story of Kanabec County. Mora, Mn.:
B & W Printers, 1977.

Also see bibliographies on individual inventory sheets.

JUL 9 1980

Kanabec County Multiple Resource Nomination
Individual Properties

Bronson Farm, Arthur Township

Coin School, Brunswick Township

Ogilvie Watertower, Ogilvie

Williams, C.E., House, Mora

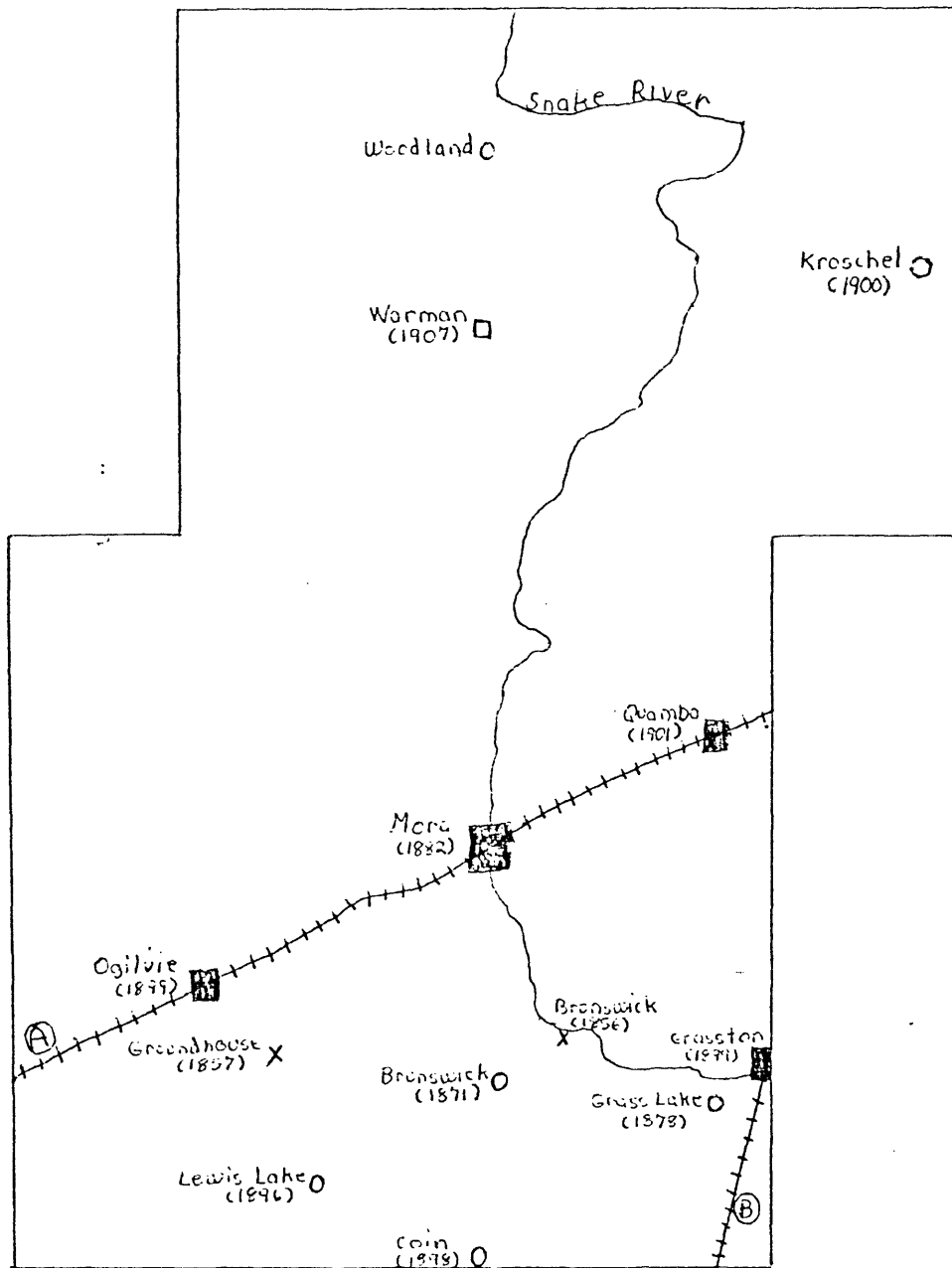
Zetterberg Company, Mora

Previously listed on the Register:

Kanabec County Courthouse, Mora (listed 1977)

JUL 9 1980

KANABEC COUNTY: TOWNSITE AND RAIL DEVELOPMENT



Key to map symbols

- - Platted incorporated community
- - Platted unincorporated community
- - Crossroads community (With the exception of Brunswick, all dates correspond to post office establishment dates.)
- × - Platted community no longer in existence
- (A) - Minneapolis and St. Cloud Railroad Company (1882)
- (B) - Eastern Railway Company of Minnesota (1898)

JUL 9 1980