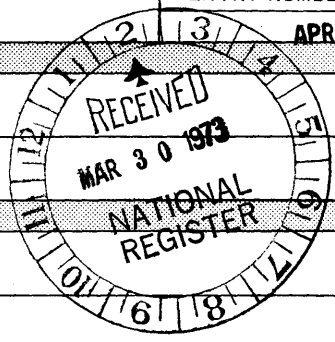


**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>Minnesota</b>	
COUNTY: <b>Fillmore</b>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	<b>APR 18 1973</b>



**1. NAME**

COMMON: **Forestville Townsite**

AND/OR HISTORIC: **Forestville Historic District**

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER: *9 miles W of Preston in*  
**Forestville State Park**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Route 3 in Preston vic.**

STATE: **Minnesota** CODE: **23** COUNTY: **Fillmore** CODE: **045**

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/>	Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/>	Private <input type="checkbox"/>	Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/>	Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Object <input type="checkbox"/>	Both <input type="checkbox"/>	Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/>	Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/>
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/>	Government <input type="checkbox"/>	Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Comments <input type="checkbox"/>
Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	Industrial <input type="checkbox"/>	Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/>
Educational <input type="checkbox"/>	Military <input type="checkbox"/>	Religious <input type="checkbox"/>	
Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/>	Museum <input type="checkbox"/>	Scientific <input type="checkbox"/>	

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNERS NAME:  
**Department of Natural Resources - Minnesota State Parks**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Centennial Building, State Capital**

CITY OR TOWN: **St. Paul** STATE: **Minnesota** CODE: **23**

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Orville Amdahl (Register of Deeds)**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Fillmore County Courthouse**

CITY OR TOWN: **Preston** STATE: **Minnesota** CODE: **23**

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **425 acres**

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY: **Minnesota State Register - 1965**  
**Minnesota State Park Recreational Plan (With Cooperation of National Parks)**

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**Minnesota Historical Society**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**690 Cedar Street**

CITY OR TOWN: **St. Paul** STATE: **Minnesota** CODE: **23**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Minnesota  
COUNTY: Fillmore  
ENTRY NUMBER: APR 18 1973  
DATE: APR 18 1973  
FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (Check One) Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed <input type="checkbox"/>
INTEGRITY	(Check One) Altered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered <input type="checkbox"/> (Check One) Original Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Forestville Historic District is located within Forestville State Park, located approximately thirty miles south-southwest of Rochester, Minnesota, and nine miles west of Preston, Minnesota.

The site, a flat bottomed plain with a trout stream running in a limestone bed, is rimmed by hills on which is a heavy stand of mature hardwood timber of many kinds, numbers of white pine and cedar, and a large variety of other native plant life. At present the area is devoted to farming wherever the terrain will permit. Two tributary streams and a number of ravines carry water into the area, and there are numerous springs near which are dry laid masonry cellars of early buildings. The site contains intact, the original store and a deserted brick residence in dilapidated, but restorable condition.

The town site originally contained at least two stores, two hotels, two sawmills, a gristmill with cooper shop, a distillery, tavern, a chair factory, and a blacksmith and wagon shop. It was a stagecoach crossroads for the Brownsville to Mankato route and the St. Paul to Dubuque route. In 1858 the town contained about twenty houses and one hundred inhabitants, and boasted of a brick schoolhouse as early as 1857.

The existing store, known historically as the Meighen Store, was constructed in 1856 by Robert Foster and Felix Meighen as a permanent structure for their fledgling business which was originally started in 1853 in a log cabin on the site. It is a two storey structure, executed in load bearing red brick, fired in a local brick yard, and contains a residential wing to the side. The frame portion of the wing was added by the Meighens in the 1870s. The building is a late interpretation of the Federal style reflecting the eastern heritage of the town founders (originally from Greene County, Pennsylvania). While considerable shoring has been done to its foundation and a new rough-sawn oak board floor has been installed, the structure remains unchanged from the day it was closed in 1910, containing intact, the original store stock left on the shelves when closed. The residential wing contains many of the original family furnishings and is augmented by period objects obtained locally. The building is in generally good condition.

The Minnesota Historical Society purchased the stock of outdated store merchandise from the Meighen family when the park was taken over by the state, and has made it possible to preserve the authenticity of the inside of the building. The Parks and Recreation Division of the Natural Resources Department maintains the buildings and grounds and provides a caretaker-interpreter who is resident of the park. Seasonal additional help has been funded through local administration of federal aid programs, with local residents benefiting from this employment. Guided tours are given by appointment but the store itself is open to the public daily during the summer.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian  16th Century  18th Century  20th Century   
 15th Century  17th Century  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |                |                                     |              |                          |                     |                                     |                     |                                     |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Aboriginal     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Education    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Political           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Urban Planning      | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Prehistoric    | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Engineering  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Other (Specify)     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Historic       | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Industry     | <input type="checkbox"/> | Science             | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <u>Architecture</u> | _____                               |
| Agriculture    | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Invention    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sculpture           | <input type="checkbox"/>            | _____               | _____                               |
| Art            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Landmarks    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Social/Humanitarian | <input type="checkbox"/>            | _____               | _____                               |
| Commerce       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> | Theater             | <input type="checkbox"/>            | _____               | _____                               |
| Communications | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Literature   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Transportation      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | _____               | _____                               |
| Conservation   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Music        | <input type="checkbox"/> |                     |                                     |                     |                                     |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Place Names, Dates, Events, Etc.)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Forestville Historic District is significant as a frontier settlement whose founding is representative of the rush for land which followed the treaty of 1851. This opened to white settlement for the first time the Minnesota Territory north of Iowa and west of the Mississippi. Felix Meighen and his brother-in-law Robert Foster recognized early in 1853, the suitability for a town at this site. They were seeking an opportunity to invest money made in the California gold fields and in lead mining around Galena, Illinois. A fellow investor was William Meighen, brother to Felix, who at this time was sheriff of Joe Daviess County at Galena. They put Robert in charge of the new store at the log cabin and of their hastily surveyed claims, returning two years later to plat the town and settle permanently as many others were also taking up claims. In 1854 a grist mill had been erected by Forest Henry after their sawmill produced lumber for a frame building. From 1857 to 1868 the Meighens ran a steam sawmill on the north side of the river. During 1856-57 they built the store and residence still existing and the Freemont House, a hotel standing next to it which was run by Major Foster and his wife until her death in 1871. James Eulette had a chair factory. The town declined and eventually disappeared when the railroad in the 1870s bypassed the site.

Forestville's history is representative of a typical mid-19th century town and its early essential industries. The Meighen Store is significant because along with its original store stock and its original business records (recognized by the Harvard Business School in 1940 as the second best example of their type remaining in Minnesota), it remains as a veritable museum for early Minnesota history.

The Meighen family is also significant as a force in the early political development of Minnesota. William Meighen, originally a Republican, later became deeply involved in the "Greenback Party". During the 1860s and 70s he served many terms in both the lower and upper house of the Minnesota state legislature, eventually becoming that party's candidate for governor of the state in 1879. He is mainly known for his vehement opposition to the issuance of state bonds for railroad construction in the 1870s. He was instrumental in establishing a state constitutional amendment prohibiting bond issuance without popular referendum; this leading to a state crisis in 1881 whereby the

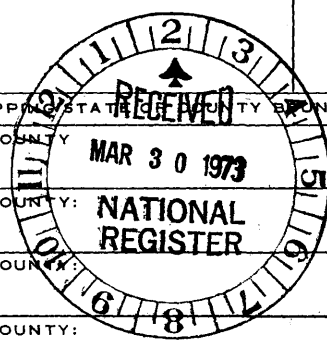
**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Judson Wade Bishop, History of Fillmore County, Chatfield, Minnesota, 1858.  
 Thomas J. Meighen Papers, Manuscripts Dept., Minnesota Historical Society,  
 St. Paul.  
 Meighen Family papers, Forestville Store Museum, Forestville State Park.  
History of Fillmore County, Franklyn Curtiss-Wedge, pub. H. C. Cooper Jr. &  
 Co., Chicago, 1912, pp. 840-42, 908-9, 1010-1013, 1124.  
Minnesota History, ed. Theodore C. Blegen, pub. Minnesota Historical Society,  
 Vol. XX, 1939, pp. 302-3.

NW 15/562970  
 4833740  
 04833750  
 SW 15/563800/4831640  
 SW 15/563020/4831620

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	43° 39' 22"	92° 13' 03"		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	43° 39' 22"	92° 12' 33"		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	43° 38' 18"	92° 13' 03"		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	43° 38' 18"	92° 12' 33"		° ' "	° ' "	



acreage: 425 acres

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE AND COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Thomas J. Lutz (Luther Thompson)**

ORGANIZATION **Minnesota Historical Society - Historic Sites (DNR - Minnesota State Parks, Park Historian)** DATE **March 27, 1973**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Building 25, Fort Snelling (Forestville State Park)**

CITY OR TOWN: **St. Paul (Preston)** STATE **Minnesota** CODE **23**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

<p>As the designated State Liaison 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 National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name <u>Russell W. Fridley</u></p> <p>Title <u>Director, Minnesota Historical Society</u></p> <p>Date <u>March 28, 1973</u></p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p><u>Robert M. Utley</u>                  Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>APR 13 1973</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p><u>J. Woodford</u>                  Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date <u>April 9, 1973</u></p>
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	Minnesota	
COUNTY	Fillmore	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE	
APR 13 1973		

(Number all entries)

8. Significance

existing governor, John S. Pillsbury reconstructed the State Supreme Court in order to have that amendment overruled. This incident stands out as one of the more important events in Minnesota's political history.

Thomas J. Meighen, nephew of William and son of Felix Meighen, is another outstanding figure in Minnesota's political heritage. Originally entering political life in the Greenback Party, he later rose to prominence with its successor, the Peoples' Party, serving as its first state chairman. He later served as party candidate for Congress in 1894, lieutenant governor in 1900, and governor in 1902. He helped found the Farmers' Alliance, serving as its first vice president under Ignatius Donnelly, the group's leader and as its state delegate to the Farmers' National Congress at Rock Island in 1906.

It was Thomas Meighen who ran the family store at Forestville after his father's death, and it was he who preserved a unique bit of Minnesota history when he locked its doors to business for the final time in 1910.





United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

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Note: These changes apply to  
Forestville Townsite in Fillmore  
County, Minnesota.

REFERENCE NUMBER: 73000976

STATE: MINNESOTA

COUNTY: Fillmore

RESOURCE NAME (HISTORIC): Forestville Townsite (Meighan Store)

CITY:

VICINITY OF: Preston

ADDRESS: Co. Hwy. 12

CERTIFICATION DATE:

REMOVED DATE:

COMMENTS:

*Nina M. Archabal*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nina M. Archabal  
State Historic Preservation Officer

JUN 17 1988

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date