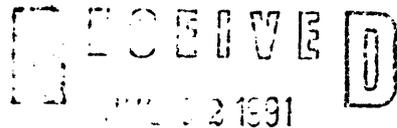


1003

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Crane Island Historic District
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Crane Island in Lake Minnetonka
city, town Minnetrista
state Minnesota code MN county Hennepin code 053 zip code 55364

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private (checked)
Category of Property: district (checked)
Number of Resources within Property: Contributing (14, 10, 2, 1, 27), Noncontributing (4 buildings, 1 sites, 4 objects, 9 Total)

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination requests for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets (checked) does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of certifying official: Ian R. Stewart, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Date: 6/25/91
State or Federal agency and bureau: Minnesota Historical Society

In my opinion, the property meets (checked) does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official:
Date:
State or Federal agency and bureau:

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
entered in the National Register (checked)
determined eligible for the National Register
determined not eligible for the National Register
removed from the National Register
other, (explain:)
Signature of the Keeper: Melvyn Byers
Date of Action: 8/5/91

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

no style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Wood (posts)

walls Wood

roof Wood

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See continuation sheets

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Period of Significance

1907-1940

Significant Dates

1907

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheets

See continuation sheet

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Crane Island is a small island on the southwest corner of Lake Minnetonka. Lake Minnetonka is one of the largest lakes in the southern part of the state and boasts 14 Islands and 24 bays. It lies about fifteen miles west of Minneapolis. Due to its proximity to the Twin Cities, it has been popular as a recreation area since the railroad reached the northern shore in 1867.

The proposed Crane Island Historic District is comprised of the entire island to the shoreline. There are eighteen cottages on the island including the caretaker's cottage in the center of the common. Fourteen of the cottages are contributing and four are non-contributing. Twenty-three outbuildings (storage sheds and privies) are scattered at the back of the individual lots. None are significant in scale, and have not been included in the count of number of resources. Two of the original pre-1915 cottages have been destroyed: the Ada Backus cottage on lot 20 was removed by the Ringnell family in 1918 (Secretary's Record, Book I, 135) and the Hamilton cottage on lot 21 burned in the 1960s and was replaced in 1969. Two contributing objects (a pump and a concrete building foundation), four non-contributing objects (a child's play set, a sandbox, a cast concrete picnic ensemble, and a portion of a water tank) are associated with the properties. Two structures, (a tennis court and a water tank), contribute to the number of significant components on the site.

Thirteen of the fourteen contributing cottages were built before 1915 and they range from small single story dwellings to more substantial two story dwellings. A very small single room cottage built in 1936 makes up the fourteenth contributing cottage. Narrow shiplap and clapboard siding with cornerboards is the predominate finish and reflects turn-of-the-century building materials. Most stand on pier type foundations made of a variety of materials including brick, wood post, and concrete block or cylinders that raise the cottage a foot or two above the ground. Many of these open foundations are enclosed with wood lattice. The lattice is often hinged at the top to make the space under the cottage useable for storage. Most of the cottages have unfinished interior walls with exposed studs. All were built for seasonal use without plumbing or electricity. Each of the cottages is orientated to the shore and all but the single room cottage on lot 4 have porches overlooking the lake, some with open screen windows and others with glass windows.

No single plan prevails on Crane Island. However three of the cottages are story and a half with single story porches that wrap

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around three sides of the cottage affording an expanded view of the lake. This type of cottage, although not well documented by any existing survey, is common in at least one other resort area in the state, that of Detroit Lakes, and is probably common throughout the state. Whether or not this type of wrap-around porch generally represents a later "improvement" to the original cottage configuration is not known. It is known that the wrap-around porches on the Ringnell cottage (lots 19 and 20) represent a later addition. Originally owned by F. Clyde Decker, a carpenter, this cottage was sold to the Ringnell family in 1913. According to the Association Secretary's Record Books, the porch was probably added in 1917 and 1918. The Hermann cottage (lot 25) and the Eustis cottage (lot 4) have similar porches. The plain corner boards on the Hermann porch contrast with the paneled corner boards on the main structure and indicate that the porch was probably an addition. These porches are accessible from the main house by single or double doors in the front, lakeside elevation.

Present Crane Islanders believe that a common builder, J. A. Tyler, built the cottage on lot 9 (for himself) and the Hermann cottage on lot 25. In addition, the Ringnell cottage (lots 19 and 20) and the Hermann cottage are very similar in layout and interior finish. Since J. A. Tyler was a building contractor and an original Association member, it is possible that these three cottages have a common builder. These three cottages, unlike the other historic cottages, have finished interior walls: the Tyler cottage is finished with plaster and the Ringnell and Herman cottages are finished with beadboard.

Exterior window trim is generally plain milled lumber attached over the exterior elevation finish while on others, like the C. T. Backus cottage, the exterior finish is "cut out" around the window openings. (This may represent a later exterior finish.) Some of the smaller cottages appear to have been built from a variety of "at hand" materials and display a number of different types of windows.

Together, the fourteen contributing cottages that ring the perimeter of the island and surround the commons comprise a coherent visual whole of pre-1915 architecture. Trees and bushes planted by Crane Islanders over the years soften the boundaries between cottages and the commons and create a park-like atmosphere and provide privacy. This type of landscaping also minimizes the visual impact of the four non-contributing cottages that were

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built since the period of significance. The small size of the island contributes to familiarity between the cottage owners and a feeling of community.

Although there are many sheds associated with the cottages, this nomination does not include them in the count of contributing or non-contributing resources. Department of Interior National Register Bulletin 14 recommends counting "only buildings, sites and objects that are substantial in size and scale or that are specifically addressed in the documentation of the areas of significance." All of the sheds are very small in scale and are used as privies, wood or tool sheds. They are generally scattered along lot lines. They represent several periods of building and do not significantly add or subtract to the architectural integrity of the island nor do they significantly contribute to the understanding of the history of the Crane Island Association.

## Property Held in Common

### The Commons, 1907, contributing site

The commons is comprised of a roughly triangular piece of property at the center of the island around which radiate eighteen cottages on private lots. It is a relatively level grassy area dotted with a mix of deciduous ash, maple, elm and Kentucky coffee trees. Within the northeasterly half of the area are located one contributing structure and one contributing object: a tennis court and pump, three non-contributing objects: wood children's play set, wood-frame sandbox, and cast concrete table and bench, one contributing site: the concrete foundation of the ice-house, and one contributing building: the caretaker's cottage.

### Vacant lots held in Common, 1907, contributing sites

In addition to the central commons area, eight vacant lots around the periphery of the island are held in common: lots 1, 11, 12, 13, 24, 26, 27, and 28. All of these lots were platted with the initial survey, but cottages were never built on them.

### Tennis court, 1916 contributing structure

The Secretary's Record, Book I, page 49 indicates that the caretaker was hired to build the tennis courts in 1908. However, a later 1916 entry in the Secretary's Record, Book I, page 128 reads, "The most important improvement in the Association property

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was the completion of a tennis court by finishing the grading, surfacing the sand and clay, and the erection of substantial, permanent back stops with iron posts and galvanized netting which should last for many years." The present tennis court has a concrete playing court and wire backboards stretched between metal pipes. The present concrete playing surface dates from the 1960s. The courts remain in their original location.

**Pump, 1932, contributing object**

The pump is a mass-produced cast iron pump on its original location.

**Concrete foundation, ca. 1907, contributing site.**

This concrete foundation marks the site of the community ice-house, one of the earliest buildings on the island.

**Caretaker's Cottage, 1911, contributing building**

This small single story wood frame cottage is finished with narrow drop-siding on the main portion of the building and wide drop-siding on the porch skirt of the front (east) elevation. The cottage stands upon wooden braced corner posts on concrete footings. A central beam spans the length of the cottage beneath the floor joists. The roof is gabled with exposed rafter tails. Windows on all elevations are four-over-four light in wood sashes except for six-over-six windows on the rear elevation. All of the windows have wood screens. The front door is solid core and has five-panels. The rear door is sheathed in wood drop-siding. The front hipped roof porch is enclosed with metal screening. The front stairs are wooden while the rear entry is accessible by a wooden plank.

**Wood children's play set, ca. 1980, non-contributing object**

**Wood frame sandbox, ca. 1980, non-contributing object**

**Cast concrete table and bench, circa 1980, non-contributing objects**

**Private Property/ The Cottages**

**Lot 2, 1965, non-contributing building**

The design of this two story L-shaped split-level house accommodates the sloping lot. The ell is composed of a two story wing built into the incline of the lot and a perpendicular wing at the top of the lot. The lower level of the house is concrete block

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and the upper level is wood frame construction with wood vertical siding. The second story projection over the concrete block portion is supported on iron posts. The upper wing of the house is supported by cylindrical concrete forms. Both wings have shallow pitched gable roofs with cedar shakes. A wooden open deck spans the ell at the second story. A second rooftop deck rests on the southwestern portion of the upper level. The house is fenestrated with a variety of modern casement, sliding and raised sash windows. A brick chimney pierces the eastern slope of the upper level wing.

One outbuilding is associated with this property:

- Directly behind the house stands a tall wood frame shed finished with vertical siding. It has a low pitched gabled roof.

**Lot 3, ca. 1907, contributing building**

This small one and a half story cottage stands on a concrete and wood post foundation and is finished with shiplap siding and cornerboards. The side gable roof displays enclosed eaves and returns and is finished with asphalt shingles. A shed roof dormer punctuates the lakeside elevation at the half story. Windows are all wood double sash and vary from one-over-one to four-over-four light configuration. A single story shed roofed open screened porch spans the front lakeside elevation. Roll-up tarpaulin blinds protect the porch interior from inclement weather. A projecting chimney flu pierces the rear gable slope of the roof. A rear single story kitchen addition is finished with wide composition lap siding and displays modern fixed and moveable sash windows. The addition is protected by a gable roof with asphalt shingles.

Two outbuildings are associated with this property:

- A small wood frame utility shed with a gabled green asphalt roof stands directly behind the cottage. It is finished with shiplap siding and cornerboards. A six pane fixed sash window punctuates the northeast elevation.
- Directly behind the utility shed is a recent outhouse with vertical wood siding and a gabled roof with brown asphalt shingles.

**Lot 4, ca. 1907-1911, contributing building**

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This cottage is comprised of a rectangular one and a half story dwelling surrounded on three sides by a single story porch. The main roof is gabled with finished gable ends and exposed rafter tails. The cottage rests on cylindrical concrete posts. The house is fenestrated with a variety of wood sash windows including one-over-one and three-over-one light configurations. All screens are wood frame. The porch is open to the weather with metal sheet screens. All elevations are finished in narrow shiplap siding and cornerboards except for the front elevation of the porch skirt which is finished with Masonite clapboards. An exterior buff brick chimney is centered on the southwest side elevation of the main house.

ca.1933, water tank, contributing structure

A well-preserved cylindrical galvanized metal water tank with a crimped conical roof stands off the southwest corner of the house. It dates from the historic period and contributes to the historic material integrity of the island.

Two outbuildings are associated with this house and are located off the northeast corner of the house:

- A storage shed with a gable roof and a single four-panel door in the northeast elevation is built of complimentary materials.
- A more recent wood frame open wood shed has been erected just to the north and west of the storage shed.

**Lot 4, 1936, contributing building**

A second one-room cottage rests on a poured concrete foundation in the far southeast corner of lot 4. It is of wood frame construction and the exterior is finished with wood shakes. A very small field stone terrace extends from the concrete foundation and spans the width of the front of the house. The steeply pitched roof is finished with asphalt shingles. Fenestration includes nine-light wood frame windows which move upward in a single sash. A band of three windows light the side elevations and single windows light either gable end. Wood shutters flank the single window in the front gable-end facade. A door in the front facade is the only entrance to the cottage.

**Lot 6, 1914, contributing building**

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The Association Secretary's Record, Book I, page 106 indicates that this cottage was built in 1914 by the Merton Amy family. The main body of the cottage is a single-story square wood frame dwelling with a gabled hip roof. The roof is finished with rolled asphalt and a metal roof ridge. The gable on the hip is vented at either end with metal vents. The cottage elevations are finished in narrow wood clapboards and cornerboards. Simple milled and butted 1"x4" boards frame the windows. Wood lattice conceals the post foundation of the house on all four sides and is hinged on the front elevation to accommodate dock storage. Both the front and side stairs are wood. Book one of the Association's Record, miscellaneous pages, notes that the Amys added the stone fireplace and the dining room to the northwest corner of the house in 1919. A second historic addition was built on the northeast corner of the house ca. 1930 to provide a third bedroom. A circa 1920 historic photograph indicates the original use of rolled asphalt roofing and lattice at the foundation, as well as the present window placement.

Alterations to the Amy cottage include the following: In 1986 an expansion was built into the ell on the southwest corner of the house. The addition incorporates three sliding doors on the front elevation and a pair of sliding doors and a bank of four casement windows on the southwest elevation. The addition follows the original height of the cottage, is sided with compatible siding and is finished with lattice at the foundation. Although the window placement on the original elevations have not changed, four of the windows have been replaced with new modern sashes: the three front facade windows have been replaced with one-over-one aluminum frame windows, and the side-sliding windows in the ca. 1930 dining addition has been enlarged. Alterations to the Amy cottage do not compromise the integrity of the cottage enough to make it non-contributing.

Two outbuildings are associated with the Amy cottage:

- A plywood shed with cornerboards and an asphalt covered shed roof stands on the northeastern property line behind the cottage.
- On the property line behind the plywood shed is a wood frame storage shed. It is finished with narrow clapboards and cornerboards. Its shed roof is finished with rolled asphalt.

Lot 7, 1914-15, contributing building

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The Association Secretary's Record, Book I, page 119 indicates that the Dickson family built this cottage in 1914-15. This wood frame cottage is a full two stories high and rests on a concrete block pier foundation. Except for the porch skirt, the cottage is finished in narrow wood clapboards and cornerboards. The porch skirt is finished in shiplap. The cottage is cruciform in plan. A circa 1920 photograph of the western side elevation of the cottage indicates that this configuration probably dates back to that period. The cross gable roof displays exposed rafter tails and purlins and the gable ends are somewhat bellcast. The roof is finished in asphalt shingles. A single story enclosed porch on the lakeside front facade is built into the front portion of the cruciform. The bellcast gabled roofline of the porch projects only slightly at the second story level. A single story mass at the rear elevation of the house surrounds the rear portion of the cross form. The aforementioned historic photograph indicates that the western portion of the rear mass was extant at that time. Two doors on the rear elevation may indicate that the easternmost part of the rear massing is an addition. Window configuration varies from one-over-one to four-over-one and all are wood sash and appear to be original. Nothing in the exterior siding indicates that any of the fenestration has been changed. Windows are framed in simple milled and butted 1"x4" boards. Both the front and back stairs are wood. Wood lattice conceals the foundation piers and is hinged on the lakeside elevation for access to the space beneath the house.

One outbuilding is association with this cottage:

- A small woodframe storage shed, in poor, but stable, condition, stands behind the house at the southwestern lot line. It is finished with narrow clapboards and cornerboards. It has a asphalt shingled roof with exposed rafter tails. A five-panel door punctuates the southeast gable end. Two five-light windows are located in either of the side elevations and an awning-type opening has been cut into the wall material of the rear, northwest, gable end.

**Lot 8, pre-1913, contributing building**

This one-and-a-half story wood frame cottage is comprised of a rectangular gable roofed mass with a single story porch on the front lakeside facade and a single story kitchen addition on the rear elevation. An undated but early turn-of-the-century photograph indicates that the present cottage retains its early

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configuration. The photograph also reveals that the present kitchen was originally a screened porch. (The original configuration of this cottage is similar to the Woodward cottage on lot 17. but larger in scale) The cottage is finished with shiplap siding and cornerboards. It stands on brick pier foundations. The gable roof is finished with asphalt shingles and displays exposed rafter tails. Windows on the main portion of the cottage are four-light casements and are of wood frame construction. Windows are framed in simple milled and butted 1"X4" boards. Braced wood window awnings protect the southwest side elevation windows on the first story. The historic photo indicates that this type of awning was used during the early years of the cottage. Both the front and rear stairs are wood. Lattice finishes the foundation line of the cottage only on the southwest side elevation.

The Secretary's Record, Book I, page 138, notes that in 1917 alterations were made in the Innes cottage probably indicating the expansion of the interior half story space into the shed dormers on either side of the gabled roof. The presence of four-light casement windows in the dormers supports the supposition.that this may be the date of the alteration. The front porch enclosure incorporated one-over-one windows and the extension upward of the porch skirt to meet the windows. The enclosure of the rear porch entailed the construction of walls and the installation of windows. It may have included the extension of the porch a few feet in either direction to meet the full width of the rear elevation.

One structure and one outbuilding, located on the northeastern property line, are associated with this cottage:

- The round metal tank of a former water tank rests on brick piers just off the north corner of the cottage. It is constructed of riveted sheet metal with a conical roof with crimped or rolled seams and an ornamental ball at the peak.
- A recent red shed with a gambrel roof stands behind the water tank.

**Lot 9, ca. 1907, contributing building**

This cottage was built by Charles. T. Backus. It is a simple cottage comprised of a side-gabled rectangle with a shed roof mass on the rear elevation. It stands on low concrete block footings. The house is finished with narrow shiplap siding and the roof is

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finished with asphalt shingles. The gabled roof has a very small overhang. The main window type is a six-light awning window. Unlike the other cottages with simple window framing, the siding of this cottage overlaps the window framing except for wide 3" x 6" sills. Recent additions to this cottage include a gable roofed loft addition (1983) that rises above the front lakeside elevation. The gabled elevation is sided in slightly wider shiplap siding and incorporates a metal frame Chicago type window. A smaller shed roofed bathroom addition (1988) on the rear elevation is sided with wider shiplap like that used on the loft addition. The bathroom addition is the same height as the older rear entry addition and blends well with the original structure. Both front and back stairs are wood. Neither of the additions compromise the material integrity of the cottage enough to make it a non-contributing element.

Two outbuildings, located on the southwestern lot line behind the house, are associated with this cottage:

- A wood frame shed roofed shed with wood shake siding. The roof is finished with asphalt.
- A shed roof wood frame outhouse sided with wood shakes stands behind the shed. The roof is finished with asphalt.

**Lot 10, ca. 1907, contributing building**

This house was built by J. A. Tyler, a building contractor, for his family. It is a one and a half story rectangular wood frame cottage which rests on log footings with corner bracing. The roof is side-gabled and has a gabled dormer centered on the lakeside (front) slope. The cottage is sided with narrow clapboards and cornerboards. All windows are wood sash one-over-one except a pair of two-over-two windows on the second story of the rear elevation. Detailing is modest but classical in derivation. All the eaves are enclosed and all gable ends have eave returns. All of the windows have stylized window trim, sills and cornices. There is no evidence that the plan or fenestration of this cottage has been greatly changed over the years. The house has both front and rear elevation single story porches. The front porch was diminished in size in ca. 1970 and once spanned the entire front facade. The entire rear porch was rebuilt ca. 1970. The original structure was similar to the present structure and was removed because of its poor condition. Both porches are built of wood framing and are open to the weather with sheet screening. The slope of the front

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porch roof is nearly flat. The rear porch roof is shed. The rear porch is supported on modern concrete block.

Two outbuildings, located on the northeastern lot line, are associated with this cottage:

- A modern (circa 1970) A-frame outhouse with wood shingles and board and batten wood siding.
- A small gable roof shed finished with narrow shiplap siding and cornerboards. A five-panel door and four-light fixed window punctuate the front, (southwestern) elevation. The roof is finished with asphalt shingles.

### Lot 11, 1907 , non-contributing site

This lot is owned by the Association in common. Lot 11 was the site of the landing for the streetcar boats until they ceased to run in the 1920s. (A previous landing was located on lot 5, but the lake was too shallow on that side to accommodate the large passenger boats. Lot 5 was eventually divided between the owners of lots 4 and 6.) Located on the northeastern point of Crane Island, it is a cleared area now used for camping and playing by the children of the island. No physical evidence remains of the steamboat landing.

### Lots 14-15, ca. 1940, 19, non-contributing building

This elongated single story wood frame cottage is comprised of an earlier ca. 1940 section and an addition to the east. It has a shed roof that is finished on the front lakeside facade with a wood shake parapet. The cottage is sided with vertical wood lap siding. Modern casement windows light the front elevation and the side and rear elevation of the eastern addition. Six-over-six wood sash windows are located on the side and rear elevations of the western section and indicate that this may be an older section.

One outbuilding is associated with this cottage:

- A wood frame shed in the rear of the lot is finished with vertical lap siding. It has an asphalt shingled gabled roof with exposed rafter tails. It has one-over-one windows and an older five-panel door. It stands on modern concrete blocks.

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Continuation SheetCrane Island Historic District, Minnetrista, Hennepin Co., Minnesota  
Section number 7 Page 12**Lot 17, ca. 1907, contributing building**

This cottage was built by the Association's founder, C. E. Woodward, in about 1907. It is one of the earliest cottages and occupies a high point on the island and has a view of the city of Mound. It is a modest story and a half wood frame cottage that stands on a brick pier foundation. It is sided with narrow clapboards and cornerboards. The gabled roof is finished with rolled asphalt. A single story shed roof porch on the front lakeside elevation is enclosed on all three sides with six-over-six wood sash windows and has a door in the far east end of the porch facade. A rear wood frame single story shed addition spans the rear elevation. It was built about 1934. It is also enclosed with six-over-six windows. Pairs of one-over-one windows light both gable ends of the cottage. A brick chimney is located on the exterior east side elevation. A historic photo that belongs to a second generation owner and dates to the time of construction indicates that the cottage has few alterations to the original fabric.

Two outbuildings are associated with this cottage:

- A wood frame shed roof shed stands behind the house on the south property line. It has a six-light window and a door on the north (front) facade. It is finished with 2' X 6' horizontal butted boards and corner boards. The roof is finished with rolled asphalt.
- A wood frame outhouse stands behind (east) of the shed. It has a gable roof that is finished with rolled asphalt. The exterior is finished with clapboards and corner boards.

**Lot 18, pre-1913, contributing building**

This modest one and a half story wood frame cottage stands on concrete block piers and is finished with wood shakes. The gable roof is finished with asphalt shingles and has exposed rafter tails. A single story porch on the front lakeside (NW) elevation is open with screens stretched between studs. The porch skirt is vertical V-joint lap siding. A rear single story kitchen/dining bay has a gable roof. It is fenestrated with a centered rear entry and six-light French casement windows. An interior nine-light over four panel door between this bay and the central bay indicates that the rear portion of the cottage may be an early addition. This type of window continues on all elevations except for a pair

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of four-light casements on the north side elevation of the main structure.

One outbuilding is associated with this cottage:

- A small wood frame shed is located on the northern edge of the property. The elevations are finished with wood shakes. The roof is finished with inter-locking asphalt shingles and has exposed rafter tails. A door in the east gable end is nine-light over four panel. A fixed five-pane horizontal window lights the south side elevation.

### **Lots 19 and 20, pre-1913, 1918, contributing building**

The original central bay of this cottage may have been located more squarely on lot 19 before 1918 when the Ada Backus cottage, located on lot 20, was removed (Secretary's Record, Book I, page 135) to make way for an expansion built by the Ringnell family. (The present owner has been told that her cottage was in fact moved. The cottage now stands on the lot line between lots 19 and 20.) An April 8, 1919 entry reads that "...the Ringnell Cottage was finished last season."

The present cottage is comprised of a central rectangular story and a half gable-front building surrounded on three sides by a single story hip-roofed porch. It stands on a foundation of post piers. Wood lattice surrounds the foundation on all but the lakeside front elevation. The main roof has two shed-roof dormers on either gable slope. The elevations are finished with narrow clapboards and cornerboards. All roof surfaces are finished with asphalt shingles. All of the cottage eaves display exposed rafter tails. The main structure's eaves are finished with beadboard. All of the porch windows are ca. 1975 additions. They are aluminum frame casement and duplicate the window configuration of a circa 1940 period. A continuous milled porch moulding under the eaves and corner columns indicates that the porch may have originally been open. The different eave treatment on the porch and the presence of milled lumber moulding and corner posts may indicate that the porch was part of the 1918 renovation recorded in the Association's records.

The rear elevation of the cottage bears older six-light casement and French style windows. These windows and the centrally located back door are crowned with milled mouldings that match the moulding of the porch. (Perhaps the rear portion of the house is

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also part of the 1918 renovation.) A rear single story entry porch is finished with a balustrade of jigsaw cut flat balusters. A second flat balustrade surrounds the deck at the second story level. A pair of French doors with lead muntins give access to the second story deck. A pair of French windows with lead muntins are located on the first floor of the southeast corner of the house where the main portion of the house intersects with the porch. A stained and leaded glass window was installed in the south side elevation of the house in ca. 1965. The windows in the front gable end were installed in ca. 1975.

One outbuilding is associated with this cottage:

- A series of connected outbuildings, three gable roofed sheds of varying heights and a shed roof shed, are lined up along the northern property line. They are all finished with narrow clapboards and cornerboards. All roofs are finished with asphalt shingles.

**Lot 21, 1969, non-contributing building**

This wood frame single story rectangular cottage stands on concrete block piers. The gable roof is finished with asphalt shingles. The exterior is finished with stained wood vertical paneling of various widths. The predominant window style is a six-light French window. Two awning windows are incorporated into the rear elevation and two more are located on the north end elevation. All windows are wood frame. An open screened porch occupies the south end of the cottage.

A pre-1913 cottage occupied this lot until it was destroyed by fire in the 1960s.

Two outbuildings are associated with this cottage:

- A shed-roofed wood frame outhouse stands on the northern property line. The elevations are finished with asbestos shingles and the roof is finished with asphalt shingles.
- A very recent wood frame gable roofed shed is finished with vertical panelling. The roof is finished with asphalt shingles.

**Lot 22, 1957, non-contributing building**

This wood frame cottage is comprised of a central two story mass flanked by single story masses on the front (lakeside) and rear

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elevations. It stands on wood post and concrete block piers. The cottage is finished with vertical and horizontal redwood stained paneling. Two-over-two light casement type windows are the predominant window type. A Chicago style window lights the front elevation. Wood lattice is traditionally used along the foundation line on the lakeside elevation.

Two outbuildings is associated with this cottage:

- A modern metal gable-roofed utility shed stands off the northeast corner of the cottage on the northern edge of the property.
- A shed-roof privy with drop siding exterior and metal corner protectors stands behind the utility shed. The roof is finished with rolled asphalt.

**Lot 23, 1914, contributing building**

The Secretary's Record, Book I, page 106 reads, "Two new houses are to be built this season, -- the Bradley's and Amy's." Margaret H. Bradley built on lot 23 after she bought the lot in 1913. The one and a half story wood frame cottage stands on a concrete pier and wood post foundation with a wood lattice skirt. The side-gabled roof is finished with asphalt shingles and displays exposed rafter tails. The exterior elevations are finished with wide shiplap drop-siding and cornerboards. The front porch was added in 1915 (Secretary's Record, Book I, page 119) and is located under an extended slope of the front gable. The porch has four-over-two light wood sash windows on all three sides. Other windows include four-over-two windows on the first floor and four-light fixed windows in the gable peaks. The front and rear elevation dormers are lit by a row of three square double light windows. A similar window is located on the rear elevation and on the north side elevation at the first story level. There is no physical indication that there have been substantial alterations to the original fabric of the cottage.

One outbuilding is associated with this cottage:

- A gable roof shed stands off the southwest corner of the cottage on the south property line. It is finished with wide drop-siding and corner boards. It stands on concrete block footings. The roof is finished with rolled asphalt and a metal roof ridge. A three-light and a single light window are located on the north elevation. Doors located in the north and west elevations are clad in drop-siding.

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Section number 7 Page 16**Lot 25, ca. 1908, contributing building**

This cottage was built by the William C. J. and Susie Hermann family in about 1908. It is a one and a half story woodframe cottage that stands on square wood posts. A fixed wood lattice surrounds the foundation line. The elevations are finished with narrow clapboards and paneled cornerboards. The bellcast cross-gable roof is finished with asphalt shingles. The eaves are finished with approximately three inch v-cut boards. Windows at both the first and second stories are nine-over-one wood sash windows except for larger one-over-one wood sash windows with screens at the second story on the front lakeside facade. Fixed single pane windows light the front and rear gable peaks. All second story windows have wood screens. All windows have moulded wood cornices except for the front facade. Plain 2" X 4" surrounds and new metal rain hoods finish the window openings.

A single story open screen porch under a hipped roof wraps around the house on three sides. The plain corner porch posts, in contrast to the paneled corner boards on the main house, may indicate that the porch is a later, but early, addition and is perhaps part of the 1918 renovation. The porch skirt is finished in narrow lap siding and plain cornerboards.

A recent rear elevation deck is sympathetically defined by a balustrade of square balusters and a square newel post with a ball cap. A sliding door opens to the deck from the rear elevation. A two-light horizontal window on the south elevation where the south elevation makes an ell with the porch, lights the kitchen within.

Two outbuildings are associated with this cottage:

- An asphalt shingled gable roof wood frame shed finished with wide v-notched siding and cornerboards stands southeast of the cottage.
- A second gable-roof frame shed is also located at the edge of the lot. It is finished with narrow clapboards and cornerboards. The roof is finished with asphalt shingles. A five-panel door is centered on the north elevation. A three-over-one window lights the south elevation. A recent single sheet wood door is located in the north gable end.

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The Crane Island Association is significant within two inter-related State contexts: *Minnesota Tourism and Recreation in the Lake Regions 1870-1945* and *Urban Centers 1870-1940*. Minnesota's *Tourism and Recreation* context encompasses the development of the tourist industry as related to the State's natural and scenic resources. The *Urban Centers* context focuses on the development of diverse and robust economies and transportation systems that resulted in metropolitan centers of population, commerce, and culture within the State. It is within this latter *Urban Centers* context of developing industry and commerce that the creation of white collar jobs in Minneapolis enabled middle-class workers, including small business owners, educators, and clerks, to secure both the time and money to build lake cottages for the enjoyment of their leisure time. The regular and frequent interurban trains of the era facilitated the daily commute of the middle-class workers from a separate summer residence to their jobs within the city.

Crane Island's collection of simple vernacular cottages is significant under criterion A and reflects the broad patterns outlined within both the *Recreation* and *Urban Centers* State contexts. The unusual organization of private and communal land ownership within the Crane Island Association represents an early and unique development in the seasonal use of the lake by the middle-class. The island setting of the proposed district enhances the feeling of place while the relatively high level of material integrity of the cottages preserves a sense of time within the first quarter of the 20th century. The cottages represent the most visually coherent and sizable collection of seasonally used modest cottages from this period remaining on Lake Minnetonka.

Within the larger context of *Minnesota Tourism and Recreation*, the nomination focuses on the local context of the rise of Lake Minnetonka as a major recreational area in the State, first for the upper-class tourist from the East and the South, and later for upper and middle-class Minneapolitans. Easily the state's earliest and premier resort area of the pre-auto era, Lake Minnetonka has a long and significant history of recreational development. The creation of white collar jobs by the burgeoning Minneapolis economy at the turn of the century was an important factor in the development of Lake Minnetonka into a recreation area for the local metropolitan middle class.

The period of significance for the Crane Island Historic District begins in 1907 with the founding of the Association and continues

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to 1940. These dates reflect the full range of physical components of the district and encompass important events in the history of the Island: its founding, its flourishing, the philosophical evolution of the Association, the survival of the Association through the financially difficult periods of the First World War and the Great Depression, and the adjustment to the loss of public transportation to the Island. Sixteen cottages (including the caretaker's cottage) were built before 1915 and fourteen of those historic cottages remain. They represent the endeavors of the original Association. A 1936 cottage, is the most recent contributing element on the Island.

### **Historical Context for the Development of the Crane Island Association**

In the early historic period, the Lake Minnetonka area was occupied by the Santee Sioux (Dakota). Although all of the lake territory had been relinquished by the 1852 Treaty of Traverse des Sioux, several hundred Santee remained along the shores and in the Big Woods that surrounded the lake until "removed" to reservations during the Civil War years. The shores and woods of Lake Minnetonka, a long-time hunting and burial ground, were dotted with hundreds of burial mounds. Circa 1852, the Santee were joined by small farmers, horticulturalists, millers, and the townsfolk of a handful of small lakeside villages.

The development of Lake Minnetonka for recreational use is a history of changing demographics and general related property types: hotels, seasonal cottages, and year-round mansions. The earliest important recreational use of the lake dates back to the post Civil War period when steamers on the Mississippi brought upper-class Southern families to the area to stay in the first commercial hotels and cottages, escaping the sultry fever-ridden summers of the lower Mississippi River Valley. The lower lake (northernmost portion of the lake) was the first to be developed for the tourist industry when it became accessible by the St. Paul and Pacific railroad in 1867. Daily connections were made between the village of Wayzata on the northeast corner of the lake and the twin cities of St. Anthony and St. Paul. When the narrows between the lower and upper portions of the lake was widened to accommodate steamboats in 1873, development of the southern portion of the lake was spurred. However, despite the improved accessibility via the widened narrows and a later rail connection

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to Excelsior by 1880, the southern half of the lake never reached the level of growth of the northern portion.

As the lake began to attract tourists, young adults, couples and families came from the Twin Cities with picnic baskets and stayed the day, while wealthy Southern and Eastern tourists came with trunks and servants and stayed for weeks or months. Between 1867 and 1879 approximately 12 hotels were established on the lake and it was estimated that by 1874, approximately 625 guests could be accommodated. (Meyer: 1974,15) In 1879, the local papers commented that "Lake Minnetonka has begun to put on the airs of the large watering places of the eastern seaboard." (Meyer: 1974,19) That same year the first of the very large hotels, the Hotel St. Louis, was built in Deephaven by Kentucky business interests, Charles Gibson of St. Louis and local flour mill magnate, W. D. Washburn. It had 200 rooms and housed 400 guests and had separate Black servants quarters in the back. The Lake Park Hotel on Tonka Bay, built ca. 1879, had separate cottages on the grounds, could seat 500 in its dining room, and boasted of having 16 electric lights. (Jones: 1974, 246). James J. Hill's Lafayette Hotel, built in 1882 on the site of the Arlington Hotel which had catered to Southerners, was the largest of all the Minnetonka hotels and had 800 rooms accommodating 1,000 people. It was reported to be the largest hotel in the Northwest. During the 1882 summer season these three major hotels registered over 10,000 guests and excursion boats carried 2,500 passengers a day over the lake. (Picturesque: 1906, 78) Locals took advantage of the extra jobs and business created by the tourist trade.

The big hotels remained popular through the 1880s until the depression of 1893 ushered in the beginning of a downswing in the hotel industry. Eventually, a series of major fires devastated many of the hotels and by the close of World War I, only six of the hotels were still functioning. The decline of the big hotels was accompanied by a decline in wealthy out-of-state and foreign tourists. This decline in hotel life gave way to the seasonal use of cottages around the lake by a more local and more economically diverse portion of the population.

The tourism boom of the late 1870s and early 1880s coincided with the earliest development of lakeshore property for private seasonal use generally by upper-class residents of the Minneapolis and St. Paul metropolitan area and eastern cities. Some of the first subdivision of property into individual lots for single family seasonal cottages took place during this period. Quarter

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acre lots on Lookout Point (now known as Ferndale) sold for between \$150 and \$300 in the late 1870s and early 1880s. These lots were soon occupied by the Christian, Pillsbury, Phelps, Bovey, and Ramsey families that represented local milling, lumber, banking and manufacturing interests. (Jones: 1974, 240, 252) These cottages were initially simple and rustic but many eventually gave way to year-round mansions. (Jones: 1974, 251, Hudson: 1908, 545). In 1883, one hundred and ninety-three individual 60'-100' lakefront lots on either side of the Lafayette Club on Minnetonka Beach were auctioned at \$350 to \$800 per lot as part of the Minnetonka Beach community. Ownership of the lots excluded the beach itself which was viewed as communal property by the individual owners. A roster of successful bidders in Richard Bergman's *Early Background of Minnetonka Beach* indicates that most of the property owners were from the upper class in Minneapolis.

The upper class also owned large parcels of land on the lake. An 1890 Hennepin County ownership plat indicates that very wealthy businessmen like James J. Hill, A.M. Carpenter and S.C. Gale owned 80-115 acre parcels on the lake. Other parcels on the lake generally ranged from 30-100 acres. The land use of these parcels is unknown although Grace Bliss Dayton recalled in *Historical Reminiscences of Lake Minnetonka* that the Hill, Dunwoody, and Loring families (all prominent Minneapolis business families) conducted experimental cattle, sheep, and dairy farms at Lake Minnetonka. The surnames of many prominent early lumber entrepreneurs (Walker, Carpenter, Tuttle) appear on larger parcels around the lake. Lumber interests were developed in the woods around the lake as early as the mid-nineteenth century.

As the large hotel resort industry declined, spurred by the economic depression of 1893, the property around Lake Minnetonka acquired new value as individual lots. With a growing middle class market, lake property was purchased by a more economically diverse population. A review of Hennepin County ownership plat maps (1879, 1890) and State of Minnesota Plat Maps (1916, 1930), indicate a general breaking up of parcels on both the lakeshore and surrounding farmlands through the period represented by the maps. Plats of lakeside subdivisions with individual 50'-100' lots appear in the 1930 atlas, but were undoubtedly platted prior to this date. Middle class purchasers built modest seasonal cottages on these lots. Long-time residents, Minnetonka area real estate agents, and local historians from Minnetonka historical societies agree that the number of small early 20th century cabins around Lake Minnetonka has declined seriously in the last twenty years.

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Seasonal use of such properties is nearly nonexistent. A windshield survey of the lake conducted for this nomination concurred with this assessment. The extreme rise in real estate values over the last twenty years have enticed higher income buyers into the area who can buy expensive lakeshore lots, renovate or remove existing older cottages, or build new modern homes. The relative inaccessibility of Crane Island and the organization of the Crane Island Association have no doubt worked to protect these cottages from this type of change. The Crane Island cottages represent a significant collection of turn-of-the-century seasonal cottages still extant on Lake Minnetonka.

Ownership of property on Lake Minnetonka by a more economically diverse portion of the local population is directly related to the growth and prosperity of the local economy of the Twin Cities. A robust economy and far-reaching rail network transformed Minneapolis from a local to a regional trade center before the turn of the century. Between 1890 and 1920, the Twin Cities accounted for 31 per cent of the non-farm growth in a region encompassing Montana, North and South Dakota, Minnesota, a swath across the northern border of Iowa, all of northern Wisconsin and the upper peninsula of Michigan. Minneapolis and St. Paul had become one of the nation's 10 leading rail centers and was the northwest anchor for the primary rail corridor between the Mid-Atlantic seaboard and the Midwest. (Borchert: 1987, 61) In terms of employment, the growing retail, wholesale, manufacturing and finance industries of the Twin Cities not only provided skilled and unskilled blue-collar manual labor jobs for thousands of foreign-born workers, but also spawned a multitude of white collar positions and encouraged local small businesses.

The number of white collar positions nation-wide increased ninefold between the years 1870 and 1900. Although many of these new jobs were filled by women, the number of such jobs increased threefold for men. Stuart M. Blumin in his *The Hypothesis of a Middle Class Formation in Nineteenth-Century America: A Critique and Some Proposals* defines white collar jobs as salaried, non-manual jobs. His analysis continues that white collar positions also became distinguishable by their working environments, their relative status, and higher income.

White collar work places were separate and removed from the place of production of goods and were therefore quieter, cleaner and lighter. These new "office" environments included banks, insurance companies, stock exchanges and retail establishments, all of which

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were being built in the downtown retail district of Minneapolis at the turn of the century. As new white collar jobs were created, distinctions of social status evolved between those who did manual work and those who did office work. As early as 1847, Blumin points out, a distinction was being made in the eastern industrialized cities of America between "head" work and "hand" work. Although respect continued for the traditional master craftsman, a new respect was reserved for the new man of commerce. In addition to increased status for white collar jobs, salaries were generally higher for these positions. In contrast to the elevation of the white collar worker in the new compartmentalized economy, Blumin cites that manual workers at the turn of the century earned only subsistence wages. Children of these families generally worked to supplement the family income. Children of white collar families, however, did not have to work and could stay in school longer. (It should be noted that at the turn of the century, Minnesota had passed child labor laws, was agitating for an eight hour work day. By 1913, a progressive Minnesota legislature had passed reform laws providing mother's pensions and workmen's compensation. By 1914, Minnesota had 400 labor unions.) (Blegen: 1975: 467, 455) Class distinctions became related to ethnicity when it became apparent that most of the white collar workers were American born.

The increased income of the emerging middle class and the mass production of goods and products of the industrialized age allowed the new class to participate in the local economy and society in an unprecedented manner that would ultimately shape our definition of a middle class. Increased income allowed this class of people to own their own homes in cleaner, quieter suburban neighborhoods, to continue the education of their children, to take advantage of the many cultural institutions that were being established in the city and to participate in the establishment of community institutions. Non-working wives and mothers, as well as their working spouses, were able to devote time to social and civic affairs. Eventually these families would begin to limit the size of their families and delay the age for marriage which would ultimately enhance their economic standing.

The national pattern of the development of a definable middle class in America as related to the creation of white collar jobs was repeated in Minneapolis. By the turn of the century, similar characteristics began to define the new middle class in Minneapolis: increased status, increased income and level of education, better working and living conditions, and increased

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participation in civic and cultural affairs. Judith Martin and David A Lanegran (1983:4) document the exodus of the middle class from the inner-city in their book, *Where We Live*. As domestic living space in the older sections of Minneapolis was increasingly being taken up by industry and commerce, white-collar families in Minneapolis moved out (generally south), facilitated by the development of the street car system. Meanwhile, the blue-collar working class competed with industry and growing transportation systems for living space in the old city core. A 1900 Board of Education, City of Minneapolis, annual report mentions that an increase in the enrollment of fifth through eighth grades reflected a prospering economy and the ability of laboring parents to send their children further in schools. This statement illustrates the distinction made between laboring and non-laboring parents and indicates that the children of laboring children achieved a lower level of education than that of the non-laboring class. The locally repeated trend toward industrialization and the availability of mass produced goods increased the amount of leisure time for white collar workers in Minneapolis and their families. With more money to spend for cheaper goods, including necessities and luxuries, more free time was available to family members. Since it required only one wage earner to sustain the needs of the entire family unit, these families had time to devote to civic, cultural, and recreational pursuits. With time on their hands, the middle class began to develop tastes for Sunday outings, cultural events and summertime vacations.

In addition to the influence of a prosperous local economy in the creation of the middle class and a new life-style, the development of a reliable and extensive streetcar transportation system was critical to the increased recreational use of Lake Minnetonka by local middle class residents. Easy access to the lake and affordable train fares made seasonal use of lake property by the middle-class feasible. The entire family could pack up and move to the cottage in May and the head of the household could commute daily to a job in the city. Although transportation to the lake from the Twin Cities was in place as early as 1867 when the St. Paul and Pacific Railway made a daily stop at Wayzata on the north end of the Lake and Minnetonka Mills at the northeast corner of the lake, it was the improved service of the turn of the century inter-urban rail systems that encouraged increased local use of the lake.

In 1882, the first cars of J. J. Hill's steam driven *La Fayette* came over the Minnetonka Motor Line to Excelsior. (Meyer: 1978,

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21) This route was improved by Thomas Lowry's electric Twin City Lines in 1906. Called the "Line of Greenery and Scenery," Lowry's new cars were cleaner than the coal-burning *La Fayette*. The electric trains left from the Sixth Street station in downtown Minneapolis and travelled down Hennepin Avenue to Lake Calhoun, with intermediate stops, and turned west to Hopkins and south to Excelsior for a total of eighteen miles in 46 minutes. The rail yard wye in Excelsior ultimately had a six track storage yard with a capacity of forty cars. (Jones: 1974, 388) The cars and connecting streetcar boats (also under Lowry's organization) ran on time. There were four landings on the lake and at its peak, six express boats with 120 passenger capacities ferried tourists and residents to their lake destinations. Excelsior was the main depot for the streetcar boats and was the first boat depot to run on a regular schedule. It offered hourly service on weekdays and half-hourly service on Sundays and therefore captured a large share of the traffic from the Twin Cities. The streetcar fare from Minneapolis was about a quarter and it was an additional dime to ride the ferry. This system of trains and boats was the main mode of transportation to Lake Minnetonka until the automobile became more popular for long-distance travel. The last of the streetcar boats were abandoned "to watery graves" in 1926. (Jones: 1974, 391)

**The Crane Island Association**

Within the local climate of economic growth and improved transportation, middle-class parishioners of Minneapolis' Bethlehem Presbyterian Church, which is located at the corner of 26th and Pleasant Avenue South in Minneapolis, could entertain the idea of an island community in Lake Minnetonka. The Crane Island Association was the dream of Charles E. Woodward, manager of Lindsay Brothers, a farm vehicle and binding twine dealership. While vacationing at the Village of Mound on Lake Minnetonka, Mr. Woodward had explored the upper (southernmost) lake and had seen Crane Island which lay off the shore of Mound to the south. Mr. Woodward was already familiar with the existing denominational Baptist Assembly Grounds near Mound and the Methodist Groveland Young People's Assembly on Wayzata Bay (both in the lower Lake) and liked the idea of creating a community of people with similar interests and values. It was this central idea of a community of families who shared similar social and economic backgrounds as

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well as a common value system that became the impetus for the Crane Island Association. \*

The Bethlehem Presbyterian Church 75th Anniversary Booklet (the church was organized in 1884) attests to the middle-class nature of the church and neighborhood: "Bethlehem Presbyterian Church is not a famous church. It is not a large church either in plant or congregation; nor is it rich in dollars. Bethlehem is an ordinary church that began and grew in an ordinary neighborhood in Minneapolis." A historic atlas indicates that in 1903 the neighborhood surrounding 26th and Pleasant was a combination of the undeveloped remains of the Blaisdell farm and comfortable two-story homes. Recollections from an oral history conducted with church members in 1959 reveal that concrete sidewalks were laid along Pleasant Avenue ca. 1901, electric lights were installed ca. 1909, and telephones were being used in 1916. The Buffalo Bill Show put up its tents on the open blocks of the remaining Blaisdell farm some time in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Underscoring the middle-class nature of the Crane Island group, a review of 1903 and 1906 Minneapolis city directories for the occupations of the earliest Crane Island lot owners indicate the following white collar professions: a piano tuner, two civil engineers, cashiers at the University of Minnesota and Security Mutual Life Insurance Company, a building contractor, a mason, a plumber, an attorney, an assistant professor at the University of Minnesota, the President of Northwestern National Life Insurance Company, the proprietor of a drug store, a bookseller of religious materials, a surgeon, a nurse, a bookkeeper, and the manager of a farm implement dealership. Only one of the original owners was unmarried female, Margaret Robertson, an unmarried sister to Mrs. C. E. Woodward. She bought lot 16, adjoining her brother-in-law's, but never built a cottage.

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\* Unlike the organization of the Crane Island Association which called for private ownership of individual lots and the cabins on them, neither the Baptist or Methodist communities involved private ownership. Both the Methodist and Baptist grounds were comprised of individual cabins and a meeting lodge all held jointly by the church. Both the Baptist and Methodist camps were used as assembly grounds for church-related functions and were used seasonally by a variety of church groups who may have stayed in the cabins a few days for a conference or longer for children's summer camp. (The Baptist Grounds have been dismantled and the Methodist grounds still exist with many of the turn-of-the-century cabins still extant.)

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The Crane Island concept was to "...combine the interests of twenty-five families for the purpose of establishing and developing a suburban community, the cost to each participant being a small fraction of what it would be as an individual enterprise." (Secretary's Record, Book I: 5) After approximately a dozen names were pledged to the idea, the Island was surveyed by an interested party (Mr. Merton S. Amy) and divided into 26 lots which measured generally 100' of shoreline and 200' deep. An invitation was sent to church members soliciting interested buyers for the remaining lots. Title for individual lots were sold and entitled the owner to stock in the corporation. On June 14, 1906 the Association was incorporated within Hennepin County and shortly thereafter within the state. The Association directors selected lots for communal use for docks and a central commons for recreation.

The Island was cleared in 1906. Many trees had been downed during the 1904 tornado and in 1907, logs were cut and hauled from the Island to be sawn for lumber and returned to the Island to build the ice house (no longer extant except for the concrete foundation). The Crane Island community was fully established by 1915 when fifteen member cottages and the caretaker's cottage had been built. (See part 7 for individual descriptions.) The caretaker's cottage was built on the commons in 1911 and the clay tennis court, also on the commons, was finished in 1916. Although the Ringnell family (lot 19) put in a private well in 1918, the Association did not have a communal well until 1932.

The first Crane Islanders probably anticipated taking the steam-driven Great Northern train to Spring Park on the north end of the upper lake, a forty minute trip from Minneapolis to the lake and a twenty minute ride on the ferryboat to the island. (Secretary's Record, Book I, 8) However, when Thomas Lowry opened his electric streetcar line to Excelsior in 1906, the new line became the preferred route. This line had four depots, one each in Deephaven, Excelsior, Tonka Bay, and Wildhurst. This line would bring Crane Islanders from their south Minneapolis neighborhood to their Island homes until automobile travel became accessible to the middle-class in the mid-1920s. The streetcar boats ferried the Islanders to a landing dock on the northeast tip of the Island (lot 10) on a regular and punctual schedule. (Secretary's Record, Book I, 47) The caretaker was paid by the bag to carry resident's luggage from the landing to their cottages. By 1923, however, only two boats were stopping daily at Crane Island. That year the Islanders began to look for an on-shore landing for their rowboat.

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By the 1930s, the Islanders had parking and a landing at a lot in Zumbra Heights, a community on the mainland just south of Crane Island. (Secretary's Record, Book II, pages 15, 18, 29, 32, 51, 55, 57, 63, 67, 72).

As an incorporated body that encompassed both private and communal ownership, the Association's Board of Directors managed the maintenance of the communally held property as well the community's needs for transportation, mail delivery, refrigeration, sanitation, and fire prevention. Association records indicate that the first caretaker was hired in 1908 and his duties included maintaining the ice house and delivering ice, collecting mail at the Excelsior post office, cutting the grass on the commons, taking in the dock in the fall and general maintenance of communally owned property. The caretaker also provided personal assistance to the cottage dwellers and was paid 15 cents to haul a trunk, 10 cents to ferry a passenger in the row boat, and 22 cents an hour for other miscellaneous tasks. (Secretary's Record, Book I, April 8, 1913) In 1913 the list of communally held property included the ice house, an ice box, one row boat and five pair of oars, a lawn mower, a cultivator, a grind stone, an extension ladder, a peavey, two scythes, a wheelbarrow, and miscellaneous saws, hoes, rakes, shovels, axes, and a branding iron.

Although the Island was not owned by the church but by individuals bound together by the organization of the Association, church-related activities were hosted by the Island from time to time. Carl Roberts, son of Stanley Roberts who was pastor of Bethlehem Church 1899-1929 and one of the original lot owners, recalled that for many years the church's young people's organization would make an annual trip to Crane Island on four-horse tallyhoes (pleasure coaches). (Oral History: np) Sunday services were regularly held on the commons on the Island and in good weather there would be an evening of hymn-singing in rowboats held together. (Jones: 1974, 359)

Since the Crane Island community was intended to be "...an organization of Christian families..." that provided "...summer homes away from the noise and confusion of the city under conditions that shall be mutually congenial and helpful..." the community set up rules and regulations. In 1909 those rules outlined prohibitions against certain activities on Sunday: fishing and playing tennis. Temperance was practiced seven days a week. (The Reverend Roberts is cited in a church history as being

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a local leader in the temperance movement that preceded Prohibition.) Loud and boisterous noises were frowned upon between 11:00 pm and 6:30 am and all day Sunday. The renting of cottages by their owners was popular throughout the historic period and temporary tenants were also expected to adhere to these rules. In order to encourage proper behavior, the rules were posted in each cottage. (Secretary's Record, Book I, 66) \*

By 1924, however, prohibitions that had been easily agreed upon by the Association in 1909, no longer prevailed. The Sunday prohibition against playing sports had begun to weaken. The annual meeting notes from that year indicate that adults were swimming and playing horseshoes and the children were playing volleyball and hide-and-seek. The same entry indicates that the issue of playing tennis on Sundays was raised by a property owner. Fears were expressed that allowing tennis on Sunday would "...be an entering wedge and soon this community would be rowdy like the other communities on Minnetonka." Furthermore, it was pointed out, a prospective buyer for one of the properties was "...frightened away by the sight of a person playing tennis in bathing costume on a weekday..." and "...good people were driven away from the Island by the ultra-freedom of the present residents..." Others debated that "...the conventions regarding Sunday observance in religious homes have changed enormously..." and "...people are looking at the spirit of religion more than ever before, rather than at the observance of certain rules dictated by someone else, particularly someone of an earlier generation." (Record Book II: 23 and 24) By the mid-1920s a singular moral and religious belief was no longer a central issue in the Crane Island Association.

Family life, however, remained the focus of Island residents and the Association continued to act cooperatively. The minutes from the pre-1940 period emphasize the Associations' concerns with tree planting, the maintenance of personal and communal property, the availability of transportation services, and the economic difficulties of the First World War and the Great Depression. Throughout the period, families continued to maintain their gardens and entertain guests without the luxury of indoor plumbing and electricity. Beginning in the Great Depression years and continuing to the 1960s, a handwritten and mimeographed newsletter called *The Star* was produced by Association members, young and

\* In *The Response to Industrialism, 1885-1914*, Samuel P. Hays points up that nascent Americans responded to the influx of foreigners by establishing strict Sunday observances. This was an effort to prevent the spread of the European concept of a leisurely and "fun-filled" Sabbath.

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adult. It contained puzzles for the children, hand drawn cartoons and comics, editorials and poetry. An interview with a woman who summered on Crane Island from 1931 to ca. 1970 said that she felt that the continued high level of cooperation through the years was attributable to the educational level of the Associations' property owners and their interest in maintaining the cooperative nature of the association. (That interest continues to the present.)

The years of the First World War affected Crane Islanders in much the same way that it did the larger society. In 1919, the absence of males in the labor force caused a general rise in wages, a condition that forced the Association to forego a full-time caretaker. An April 8, 1919 entry in the Secretary's Record, Book I, page 138, reads, "The Great War is over, but peace has not yet been declared. We are still paying for the war, and things of minor importance are still kept in the background." A year later the record indicates that all of the cottages "...are occupied this summer for the first time in several years..." (Secretary's Record, Book I, misc.)

Despite the financial ups and downs of the period from 1917 to 1940, ownership of property on Crane Island remained relatively stable. A comparison of Association records and Hennepin County records for the period between 1917 and 1928 record seven actual transfers of property (lots 3, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23 and 25) during the eleven year period. (At least one of those transfers was within the same family.) A review of the records between the financial crash of 1929 and 1944, a period that might have seen a high degree of property turnover, indicates only four sales of property on lots 7, 8, 9, and 15. According to City Directories from the period, property owners on Crane Island continued to come from middle-class occupations throughout the period of significance. Conversations with present-day Crane Islanders indicate that nearly all transfers of property have been between friends and relatives, with the consent of other Association members.

Comparative information on similar associations indicates that the Crane Island Association is the only well-preserved example of such an organization within the local lake Minnetonka area. Only two other associations similar to the Crane Island association appear in the local histories of Lake Minnetonka; that of Shady Island and Minnetonka Beach. Thelma Jones' local history *Once upon a Lake* mentions the Shady Island association that, like Crane

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Island, shared common property. The 1913 Hennepin County Atlas indicates that Shady Island was similarly platted, with individual lots around the island periphery and a common space in the center. However, no date is given for it's inception or demise and at present no written or physical evidence of the Association has been found to exist. The Minnetonka Beach (1883) organization, as previously mentioned, shared a common beach front. This association, however, did not represent seasonal use of the lake by the middle-class nor is it presently represented by a historic collection of buildings.

Crane Island is significant as the embodiment of an important component of the larger state contexts *Minnesota Tourism and Recreation in the Lake Regions 1870-1945* and *Urban Centers, 1870-1940*. This well-preserved collection of turn-of-the-century cottages represent the larger historical patterns of a thriving local economy that nurtured the formation of white-collar middle-class positions at the turn of the century, the extensive system of inter-urban rail transit that made the seasonal use of privately owned cottages possible, and the overall development of the tradition of "summering" in Minnesota. Within the smaller local context of the development of Lake Minnetonka as a popular recreation area, the Crane Island cottages represent an early and unique use of the lake by the local middle class and a precious physical representation of that phenomena.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

See continuation sheets

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property 9.6 acres

UTM References

A 15 | 447580 | 4972050  
 Zone Easting Northing

C 15 | 447900 | 4971730

B 15 | 447900 | 4972050  
 Zone Easting Northing

D 15 | 447580 | 4971730

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is delineated by the polygon whose vertices are marked by the following UTM reference points: A 15 447580/4972050; B 15 447900/4972050; C 15 447900/4971730; D 15 447580/4971730.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire island that has historically been associated with the Crane Island Association and which  See continuation sheet contains the district properties.

**11. Form Prepared By**

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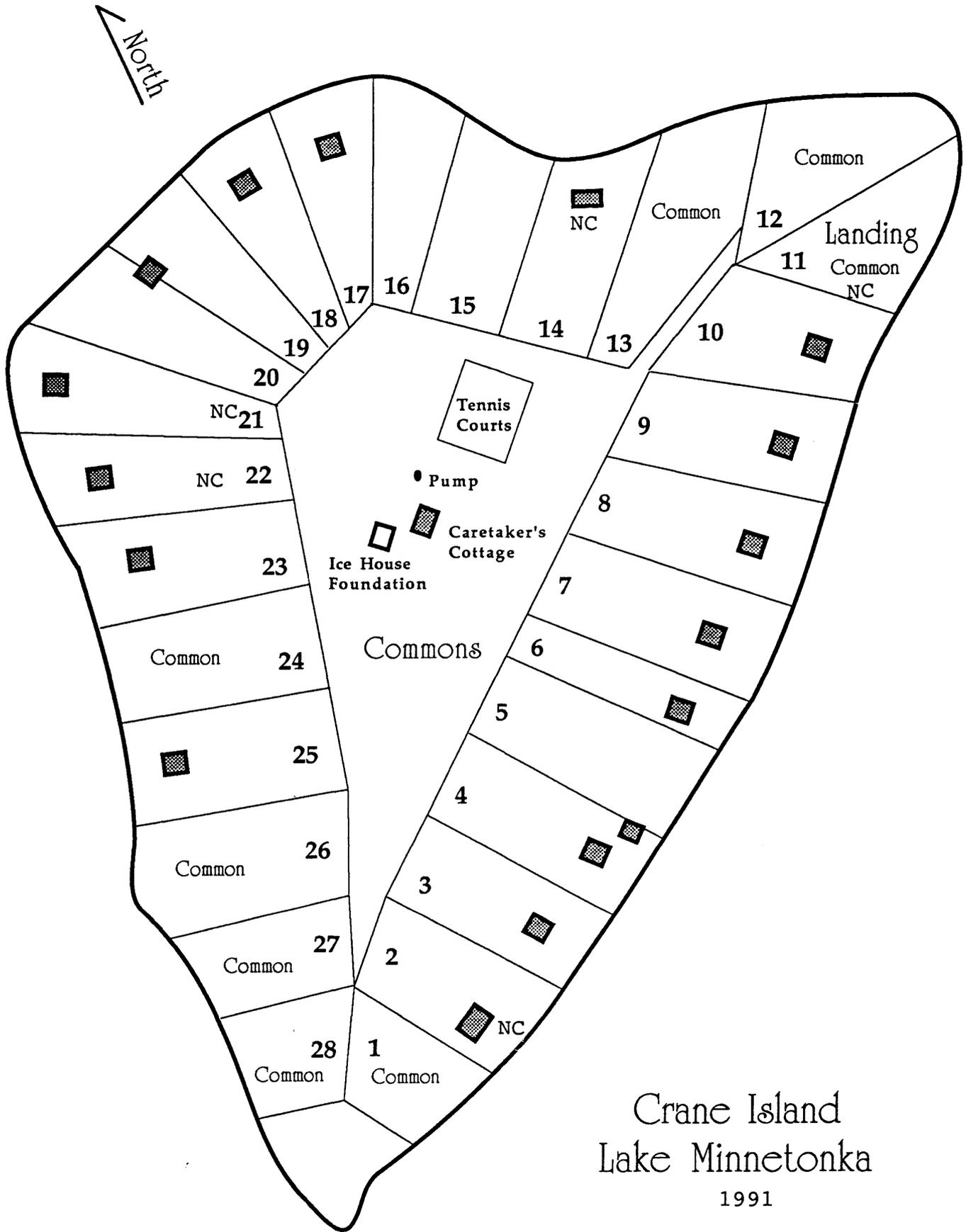
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NC = Non Contributing