

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Minnesota	
COUNTY: Renville	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
4	1973

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON:
Birch Coulee

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Birch Coulee Battle Site

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Birch Coulee State Park, accessible by U.S. Highway 71

CITY OR TOWN:
One and one half miles north of Morton

STATE Minnesota	CODE 23	COUNTY: Renville	CODE 129
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/>	Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Occupied <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>
Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/>	Private <input type="checkbox"/>	Unoccupied <input checked="" 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"/>
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"/>	Comments <input type="checkbox"/>
Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/>	Museum <input type="checkbox"/>	Scientific <input type="checkbox"/>	

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNERS NAME:
State of Minnesota, Department of Natural Resources

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
St. Paul

STATE:
Minnesota

CODE
23

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Renville County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Morton

STATE:
Minnesota

CODE
23

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **82 acres**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Minnesota State Register

DATE OF SURVEY: **1965** Federal State County Local

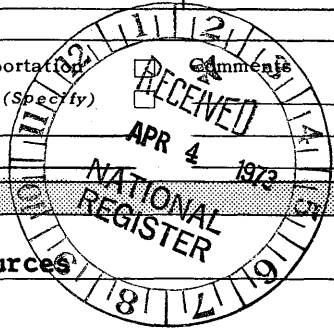
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Minnesota Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER:
690 Cedar Street

CITY OR TOWN:
St. Paul

STATE:
Minnesota

CODE
23



STATE: Minnesota
COUNTY: Renville
ENTRY NUMBER: 4
DATE: 1973

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7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The camp site where the battle took place was located on a prairie bordered by a wooded ravine through which flows Birch Coulee Creek. The Indians could approach within gunshot from all sides and still be under cover. The camp itself was located two hundred yards from the timber along the coulee, "with the wagons parked around the camp, and the team horses fastened to the wagons." The soldiers had what amounted to a corral less than a hundred yards in diameter with the tents inside the circle. Ten pickets were stationed around the camp.

The only alteration to the site has occurred in the camp area which has had some cultivation and the necessary access alterations to the picnic area of the ravine and park.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

B. SIGNIFICANCE

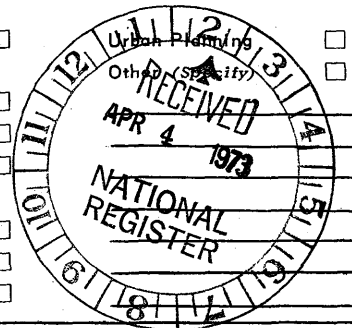
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1862**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/> | Education <input type="checkbox"/> | Political <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Prehistoric <input type="checkbox"/> | Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> | Religion/Phi- <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Historic <input type="checkbox"/> | Industry <input type="checkbox"/> | losophy <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> | Invention <input type="checkbox"/> | Science <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Art <input type="checkbox"/> | Landscape <input type="checkbox"/> | Sculpture <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Commerce <input type="checkbox"/> | Architecture <input type="checkbox"/> | Social/Human- <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Communications <input type="checkbox"/> | Literature <input type="checkbox"/> | itarian <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Conservation <input type="checkbox"/> | Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Theater <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Music <input type="checkbox"/> | Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

On August 31, 1862, after scouts had assured him that no large band of Sioux stalked nearby, Henry H. Sibley sent out a party from Fort Ridgely to bury the bodies of settlers killed in the first outbreaks of the Sioux War of 1862.

The force consisted of about 170 men including an Indian agent, a few citizens who wanted to look for the bodies of relatives, and a physician. The entire party was commanded by Joseph R. Brown, the former Indian agent who had been elevated to the rank of Major in the volunteer army. Some men were mounted, others were infantry. After the force had divided for various errands, it came together again and camped on a prairie near a coulee. The spot was exposed to ambush, and not in compliance with Sibley's injunction to Brown to take every precaution to avoid surprise.

Early on the morning of September 2, some two hundred Sioux, crawling through the coulee and wearing turbans of grass, opened fire on the camp. The surprise was complete and the camp was besieged for thirty hours, its defense in the charge of Brown and Captain Hiram Grant. The soldiers sought protection behind dead horses, more than eighty were killed by Indians, and by digging in with spades, pocketknives, and sabers. The Indians made no overwhelming charge (the charge at heavy costs in lives was not a part of their military tradition) but in the end the whites were saved only by the arrival of Sibley's main force, which had been alerted by the sounds of distant firing but was slow in coming to the rescue.

In the battle of Birch Coulee, the troops suffered the heaviest military casualties of the war. Big Eagle, one of the Indian leaders of the attack, later reported that he had seen only two dead Indians. Some historians have surmised that the action at Birch Coulee may have diverted the Sioux from the down-river settlements toward which they were headed. On the other hand, events there taught the whites the folly of moving in hostile Indian territory without a large, well-trained army.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Blegen, Theodore C., Minnesota, A History of the State, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1963.

Carley, Kenneth, The Sioux Uprising of 1862, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, 1961.

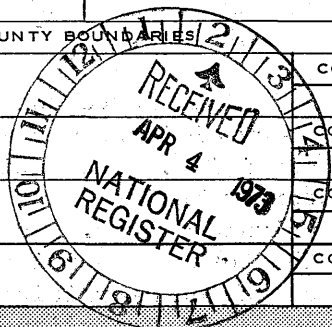
Folwell, William Watts, A History of Minnesota, Vol. II, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, 1961.

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
NW	44°	34'	55"48	94°	58'	48"			
NE	44°	34'	55"48	94°	58'	57"09"			
SE	44°	34'	40"28	94°	58'	48"			
SW	44°	34'	50"28	94°	58'	57"09"			

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



NO
LWM
CD

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Diana Mitchell, Survey and Planning (approved: Charles W. Nelson)

ORGANIZATION: **Minnesota Historical Society** DATE: **March 27, 1973**

STREET AND NUMBER:
Building 25, Fort Snelling

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

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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:

National State Local

Name Russell W. Fridley

Title Director, Minnesota Historical Society

Date 3-27-73

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

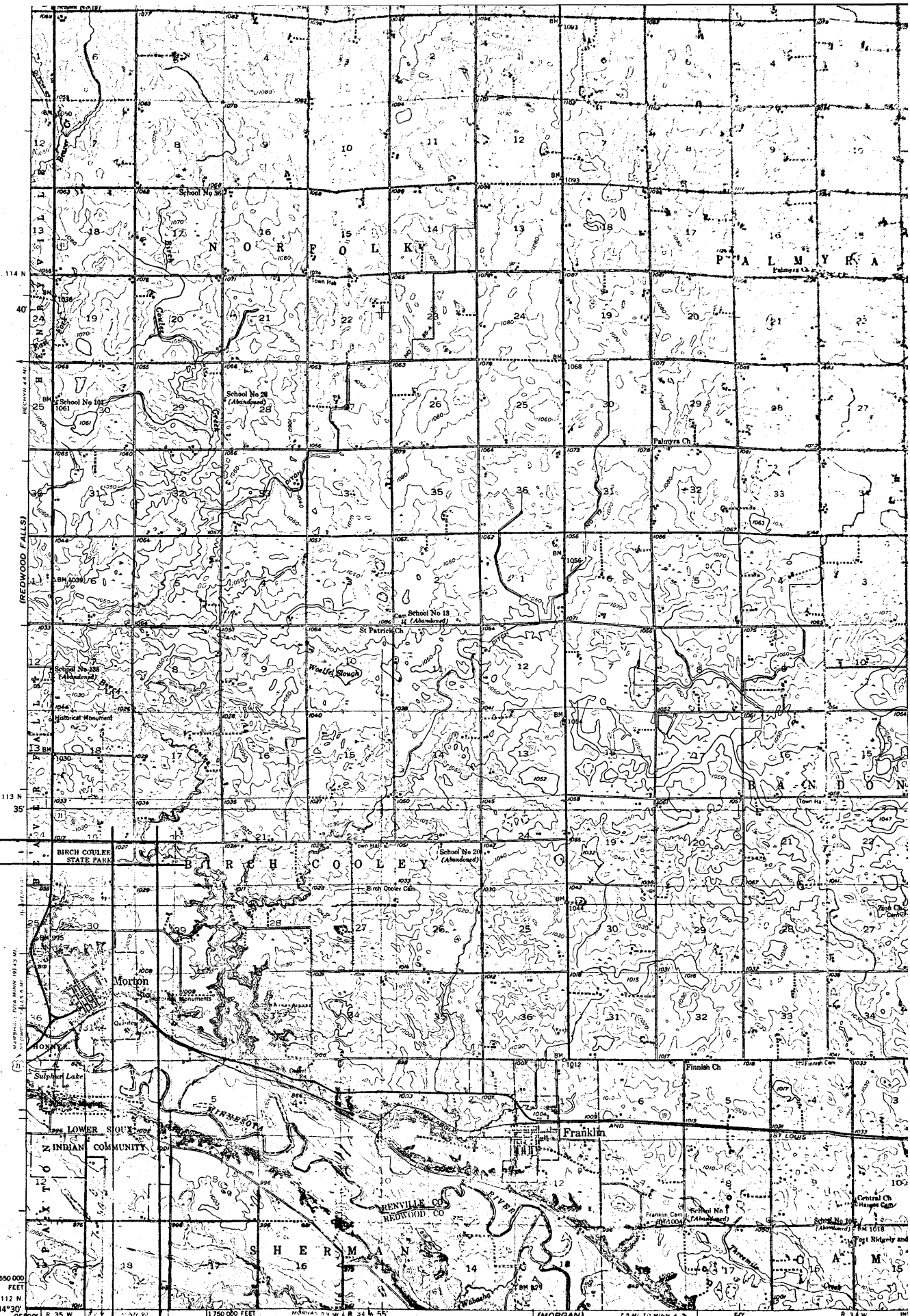
Roberton Uley
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 6/4/73

ATTEST:

M. Bradford
Acting Keeper of The National Register

Date 5/30/73



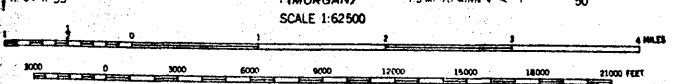
44° 34' 55"

44° 34' 40"

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
 Control by USGS and USG&S

Topography from aerial photographs by Welsh plotter
 and by plane-table surveys 1952. Aerial photographs taken 1951

Polyconic projection, 1927 North American datum



Heavy duty
 Medium duty

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

for Keeper Melvin Lynn
11/19/89

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

**Note: These changes apply to
Birch Coulee in Renville County,
Minnesota.**

REFERENCE NUMBER: 73000995

STATE: MINNESOTA

COUNTY: Renville

RESOURCE NAME (HISTORIC):

CITY:

VICINITY OF:

ADDRESS: off Co. Hwys. 18 and 2

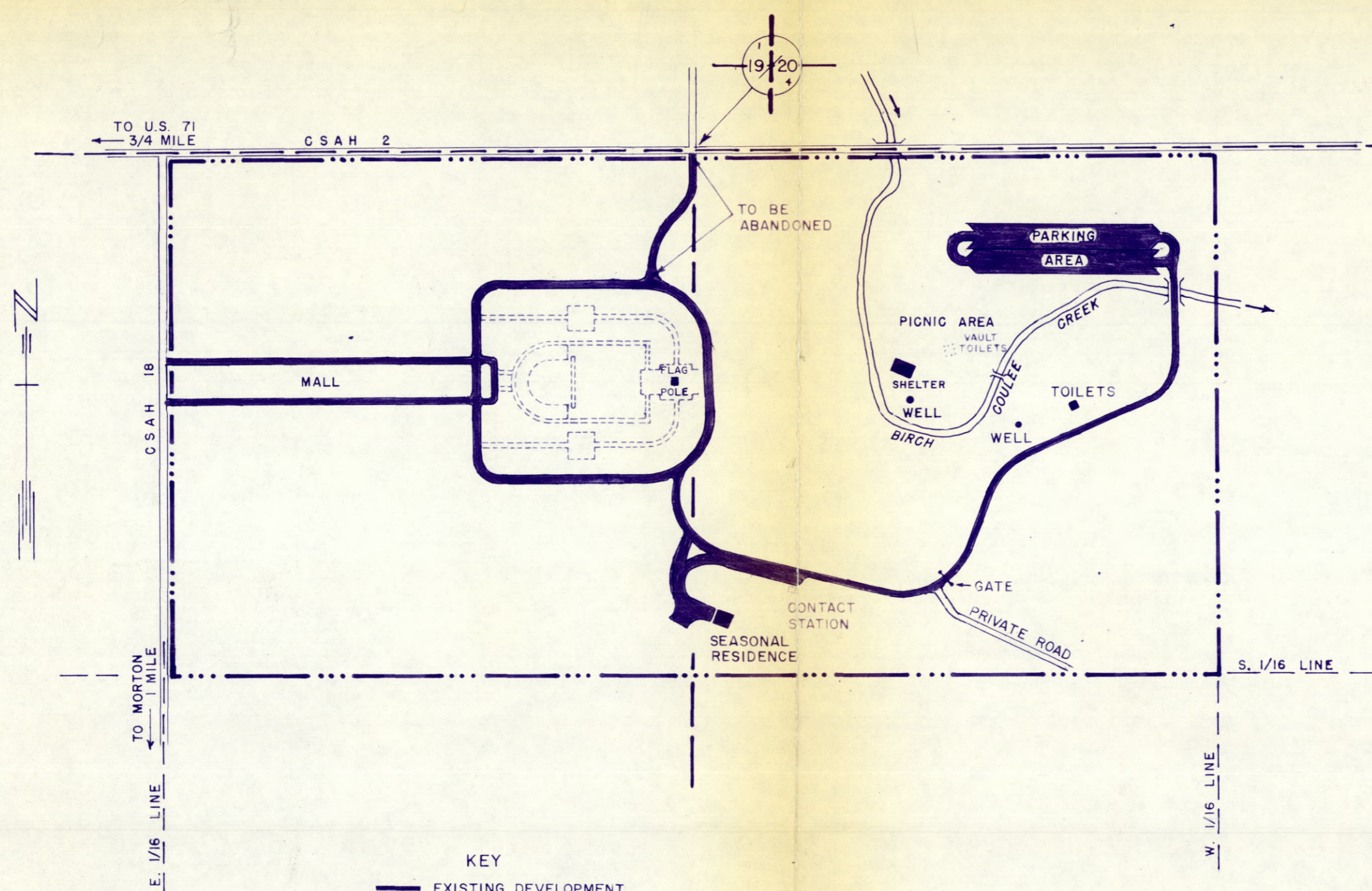
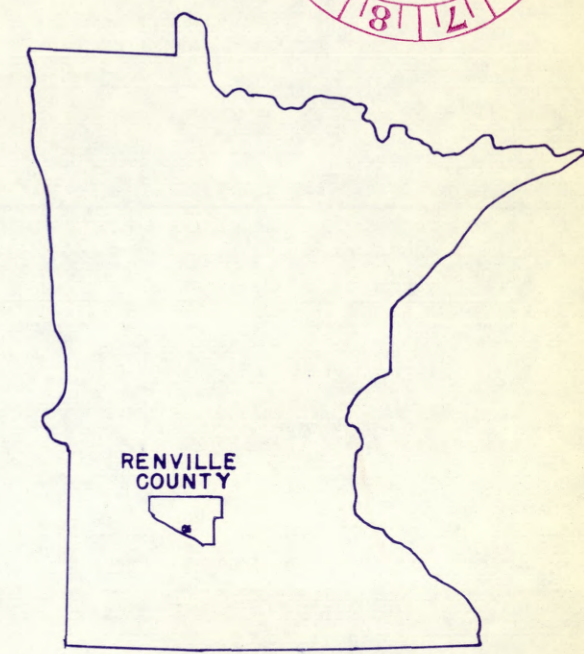
CERTIFICATION DATE:

REMOVED DATE:

COMMENTS: Birch Coulee is no longer located in Birch Coulee
State Park. State Park status has been
removed.

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

JUN 17 1988
Date



NOTE
NO PRIVATE LAND
WITHIN PARK BOUNDARY

KEY
 ——— EXISTING DEVELOPMENT
 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

SCALE: 1" = 300'
 STATUTORY BOUNDARY 82 ACRES

FEB 28 1973

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION			
STATE PARK SITE BIRCH COULEE STATE PARK RENVILLE CO. - NEAR MORTON			
SEC. 19, 20	T. 113 N.	R. 34 W.	5TH P.M.
DRAWN DAD 2-7-63	BUREAU OF ENGINEERING		SURVEY
CHECKED JD 2-13-63			DATUM
REVISED LDS 8-16-71	 CHIEF ENGINEER		
REQ. 58-4	SHEET 5	FILE P.005.00.C	