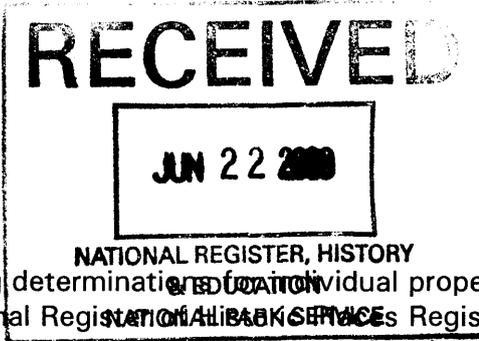


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination of individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Florence Town Hall

other names/site number N/A

**2. Location**

street & number 33923 Highway 61 Boulevard not for publication  N/A   
city or town Florence Township (Frontenac) vicinity  N/A   
state Minn code MN county Goodhue code 049 zip code 55026

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request 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  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] Signature of certifying official Ian R. Stewart Date 6/15/00

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
State or Federal agency and bureau Minnesota Historical Society

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

*Edson H. Beall*

*7/30/00*

*[Signature]*

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)**

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property (Check only one box)**

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Noncontributing
1	1 buildings
—	— sites
—	— structures
—	— objects
1	1 Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)  
N/A



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**8. Statement of Significance**

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**Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)**

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)**

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)**

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1875-1949

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1875

1916

1920

**Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

unknown

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)**

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 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

Name of repository: Goodhue Co. Historical Society

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property less than one acre Maiden Rock, Wis.,-Minn., 1974

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1 15	551540	4928550	3		
2	_____	_____	4		

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a **continuation sheet**.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a **continuation sheet**.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

---

name/title David C. Andersonorganization \_\_\_\_\_ date December 15, 1999street & number 169 Lundy Bridge Drive telephone (319) 382-3079city or town Waukon state Iowa zip code 52172

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets****Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)**

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**Property Owner**

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(This item must be completed.)

name Florence Townshipstreet & number 33923 Highway 61 Boulevard telephone \_\_\_\_\_city or town Frontenac state MN zip code 55026

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Florence Town Hall  
Goodhue County, MN

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**DESCRIPTION**

The Florence Town Hall is located in the unincorporated village of Frontenac in Florence Township of Goodhue County, Minnesota. Although today known as Frontenac, this village was platted in 1872 as Frontenac Station, 1½ miles southwest of the original Frontenac, which had been platted on the shore of Lake Pepin (Mississippi River) in 1857. It was named after Louis de Buade de Frontenac, a 17<sup>th</sup> century colonial governor of Canada. Frontenac Station was established to accommodate the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad, and the Town Hall is located north of the railroad (now the Canadian Pacific System) tracks on the east end of the village on the principal thoroughfare (Hwy. 61).

The Town Hall occupies Lot 8 of Block 10, which was given to Florence Township in 1875 by Israel Garrard. In 1920 the Town purchased Lot 9 which is included in this nomination, and a small portion of it is currently occupied (on lease) by a (non-contributing) mobile home postal facility.

With overall dimensions of 34 by 46 feet, the Florence Town Hall comprises three segments laid out south to north with the oldest and principal portion (hereafter referred to as the "hall") at the south end fronting Hwy. 61. This was built in 1875, and in 1916 a 34 by 22 foot addition was put on which included an elevated stage, two dressing rooms, and a toilet. Later, at an unknown date, a 12 by 16 foot kitchen facility was attached to the north end of the stage segment.<sup>1</sup> The three segments give the facility a Latin cross ground plan, and on the exterior the roof line steps down from the hall to the stage to the kitchen.

There is a partial basement under the stage and about one-third of the hall segment, with access achieved by an entrance on the west side. The foundation under the hall is limestone with a datestone on the southeast corner reading "1875." The stage and kitchen are on concrete foundations.

The building is of wood frame construction throughout with the exterior of the hall and stage clad in wood drop siding and the kitchen in wood lap siding. The hall has a low pitch roof with relatively tall window openings with segmental arch heads and shallow hoods. The original multi-light double hung sash (in storage) has been replaced with smaller 1/1 double hung units below infill panels.<sup>2</sup> There are five pairs of decorative wood brackets mounted on frieze boards below boxed eaves on each long side and four pairs similarly mounted on the south gable end. The roof peak here is formed into a segmental arch above a circular panel with "1875" in raised numbers.<sup>3</sup> Below this is an entrance porch with a wide segmental arch hooded doorway. An opening has been cut into the west wall to accommodate a handicapped accessibility ramp. Entrance to the hall is gained through a pair of oak paneled replacement doors (1996) said to match the originals.<sup>4</sup>

The kitchen has a brick chimney at the north end, and a metal chimney is located on the east side between the stage and hall. This last vents a gas furnace located in the basement. The stage and kitchen include the original 2/2 double hung windows, one each on both east and west sides. They also each have doors, on the west side, which are no longer in use.

Noteworthy features of the hall interior include maple flooring, three-inch-deep bead moldings framing the door and windows, beadboard wainscot, and several chairs, benches, and tables said to be original furnishings in addition to several voting booths of uncertain vintage.<sup>5</sup> Turn buttons on the window frames were installed to hold wooden guard rails, presumably installed during basketball games to protect the windows. These rails can be seen in historic photos of the building, and it is known that basketball was played here.

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Florence Town Hall  
Goodhue County, MN

The original lath and plaster ceiling is in place above the recently installed dropped acoustical tile ceiling.

An elevated stage is located at the north end of the hall. The proscenium is 17 feet 4 inches wide, and it includes a black velveteen curtain in two parts which is opened and closed with special hooks attached to long poles. A large oil-on-canvas painting depicting a fanciful landscape with windmill is mounted on the back wall of the stage.

As noted above, an indoor toilet (with no running water) was included in the 1916 addition. This is located in the northeast corner of the stage segment, and in 1995 a "modern" toilet facility was built into the west side of the stage segment, accessible from the hall.

The Town Hall has recently been painted cream yellow with green trim, and it is in very good overall condition, possessing sufficient historic integrity to be eligible for NRHP listing.

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<sup>1</sup>The year 1916 is from township records. Florence Town Board records from before 1895 have not been located. They are also missing for the years 1898 to 1905 and 1926 to 1928. Extant records are in storage at the Goodhue County Historical Society in Red Wing.

<sup>2</sup>The original windows, 4/4 double hung, were still in place in 1978. See photo included in MN SHPO Architecture/History Inventory File No. GD-FLC-010.

<sup>3</sup>The panel is framed, and the wood infill panel with wood numbers is a recent installation. Before that the frame contained a flat panel with no inscription. The frame and insert being mounted directly on the siding, there is no opening through the wall.

<sup>4</sup>The original doors are no longer extant. The current doors (1997) are based on a 1967 photo of the entrance porch and doors.

<sup>5</sup>Town records indicate that 11 dozen chairs were purchased in 1923.

### SIGNIFICANCE

The Florence Town Hall is eligible for NRHP listing under Criterion A in the areas of Politics/Government and Entertainment/Recreation. It also relates to the Minnesota statewide context, Railroads and Agricultural Development, 1870-1940. Built in 1875, three years after the Village of Frontenac was established by Israel Garrard to accommodate the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad and the commercial and transportation activities and opportunities the railroad would make possible, the Town Hall has been the seat of Florence Township government since its construction and has also served a variety of community social and recreational functions over the years. Where the township officials met prior to 1875 is not known, however the present facility has been in continuous use since that time.<sup>1</sup>

Goodhue County is located on the Mississippi River southeast of Minneapolis/St. Paul. A large segment of southeast Minnesota was opened for Euro-American settlement after the Treaties of Mendota and Traverse des Sioux were signed in 1851 and later ratified by the U. S. Government. Under the terms of these treaties, the Mdewank-

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Florence Town Hall  
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ontan Tribe of the Dakota Indians was moved out of this area to a reservation in western Minnesota. Contact had been established between these native Americans and French fur traders at a post on Lake Pepin set up by Nicholas Perrot in 1686, and this was followed by the establishment of Fort Beauharnois on Lake Pepin in 1727.

Previous to the 1851 treaties, one signed in 1830 at Prairie du Chien set aside a 15 by 32 mile rectangular parcel along the Mississippi including Lake Pepin for "half-breeds," descendants of unions between the Dakotas and Euro-American (mostly French) fur traders. Lands in this tract were not assigned until 1854, when counties bordering the river in Minnesota were already "filling up" with settlers.<sup>2</sup> Minnesota Territory had been established in 1849, Goodhue County was organized in 1853, and Florence Township in 1855. Florence Township and Goodhue County were settled by Euro-American land seekers who sought to establish farms in the mostly wooded and well watered landscape inland from the Mississippi River, which was the major transportation artery for moving both people and goods until the advent of railroads.

The history of Frontenac before Frontenac Station was established, and including an area encompassing several hundred adjacent acres, relates to the broad trends just outlined. The site of Frontenac was the location of a trading post owned by James "Bully" Wells, which was purchased by an immigrant from Holland, Evert Westervelt, shortly before the arrival of Lewis and Israel Garrard in 1854. Israel Garrard and Westervelt together purchased several hundred acres in the area from Wells' half-breed wife and Elizabeth Faribault, all of which was within the aforementioned Half-Breed Tract. The Garrards later bought out Westervelt and added several thousand more acres to their holdings and became involved in many pursuits, including farming. There were four Garrard brothers who eventually became involved in these activities, but Israel was the major land developer, dealing in land over an area extending about 12 miles along Lake Pepin and up to five miles inland. Israel Garrard and Evert Westervelt platted the Frontenac townsite as "Westervelt" in 1857, after the place had been known as Waconia during the Wells period. In 1859 the name was changed to Frontenac.<sup>3</sup>

According to available accounts, Lewis and Israel Garrard's initial visit to the area was recreational in nature (sport hunting).<sup>4</sup> The Garrards were wealthy Americans from Kentucky and Ohio, and tourism was to become the leading activity in Frontenac. Initially, however, it was one of many Mississippi River towns that grew up with facilities to serve the transportation needs of an early settlement and farming frontier. A levee for steamboat traffic and a grain warehouse were set up by the Garrards in addition to other commercial facilities on or near the river. Not long after the Civil War, however, railroads began approaching southern Minnesota, and in 1871 a line was completed between St. Paul and Winona, where a bridge across the Mississippi had been built.

Where the railroad would be routed became an important issue. Tourism had grown by this time to the extent that Garrard's 1859 grain warehouse had been converted in 1867 to a 30-room hotel. Frontenac had developed into an exclusive resort community and, since he owned all the land in question, it was up to Garrard to decide how the landscape was to be shaped to accommodate developments associated with the new mode of transportation.

Historical sources and current opinion suggest that Israel Garrard was well-liked and regarded as a generous and benevolent southern gentleman (he died in 1901). He is consistently portrayed as having sacrificed a fortune by refusing to permit the railroad to destroy the considerable charm of old Frontenac and deciding instead to donate right-of-way south and west of that village and create a new town altogether (Frontenac Station) to accommodate the railroad and, in the process, most other interests in the area.<sup>5</sup>

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In reality, Garrard was presented with an opportunity to enrich himself more and benefit the area generally by seeing to it that what he had accomplished in Frontenac would be maintained while taking advantage of what the railroad offered.

The original plat of Frontenac Station dates from 1872 with Israel Garrard as the sole proprietor. It comprises ten blocks with 10 to 14 lots in each, mostly 40 or 50 feet wide by 125 feet laid out in a rectangular grid northeast of the railroad tracks. The depot was centered northeast to southwest opposite Block 8, which was originally not subdivided. The area south of the railroad was intended for commercial and industrial development. A plat map of 1894 shows that in addition to the Town Hall facing the main through street and railroad, there is a store, post office, and a few residences, with a church and creamery one block north. South of the tracks there are, besides the depot, two elevators, a warehouse, "stone saw mill," store, and several large occupied lots. By this time Block 8 had also been subdivided into lots. The commercial/industrial facilities south of the tracks and the creamery to the north were agriculture-associated properties with the exception of the limestone-processing saw mill. A quarry nearby supplied a high quality building and ornamental stone (Oneota dolomite).<sup>6</sup>

In comparing Frontenac with Frontenac Station, the lots in the latter are smaller, but in general layout they have a similar orientation to the major transportation artery of their respective periods. Most of Frontenac sits on a terrace above the lake shore, and it is separated from the steamboat landing, warehouse (later hotel), sawmill, and tourist cottages by both elevation and a narrow parkway (Valhalla Park). Frontenac Station had a similar parkway directly on the tracks across from Columbia St. This has been long since usurped by Hwy. 61, and although the railroad is still in place and carries heavy traffic, no railroad-associated properties are extant.

The built environment in Frontenac Station today suggests that since 1894 recreation/tourism has become the most important factor in the community's growth and development. By the time that a second history of Goodhue County was published (in 1909), Frontenac was described as "a popular summer resort . . . (of) national prominence," with Frontenac Station notable mainly for its stone quarries and stone processing facilities along with a grain elevator, saloon, general store, and blacksmith shops.<sup>7</sup> Agriculture-associated shipping and processing enterprises no doubt over time shifted to Red Wing, which had well-developed facilities and patterns of economic activity well established before the railroad came through.

While Frontenac Station had few residences shown on the 1894 plat, today building lots are at a premium, and a windshield survey reveals a large number of seasonal residential properties from various periods but mostly pre-1950 in vintage. Its proximity to the larger community of Red Wing (12 miles northwest) has made this an attractive residential location for commuters in recent years. Other properties include the creamery, the Lutheran church, and a store on Hwy. 61 at Scandinavia St. (all on the 1894 plat). The Town Hall is the only extant property of its age with integrity.

The location of the Town Hall in Frontenac Station was no doubt intended to be both convenient to citizens as well as supportive of the economic development of the village, in the same way that county seat locations enhanced the local economy. From the days of early settlement, township-level government has been of vital importance to people in the rural areas of Minnesota. The institutional framework had been developed earlier in New England, and in Minnesota it has retained many of its powers and responsibilities longer than elsewhere in the Midwest, where the tendency has been to give over many of the original powers and jurisdictions to the counties and states.

A perusal of extant Florence Township records indicates that from the days when roads were being established and built to the present when bridge replacement and road maintenance are the main responsibilities, "Roads and

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Bridges" has been the most important single subject dealt with by township officials. In the earliest days, all able-bodied male residents were taxed a given number of work days on road projects, and the importance of roads and bridges to a rural farming population hardly needs mention.

Large issues, including road and bridge expenditures and establishing the tax rates to pay for them, were decided by township residents at an Annual Meeting on the second Tuesday in March. Officials are also elected at this time, and these include three supervisors plus a treasurer and clerk. In the past, the cadre of officials in Florence Township included an assessor, justice of the peace, and two constables. In the days when the townships had health and law enforcement responsibilities, marriage ceremonies, funerals, and court sessions were held in the hall, and birth and death records were kept at the township level. Liquor and tobacco licenses were and still are issued by township officials.

Many town halls in the rural Midwest also served as the location of various social gatherings, as did rural schools. The level of such activities at the Florence Town Hall, however, developed to the extent that the Town Board was prevailed upon in 1916 to enlarge the hall to include an elevated stage and equip it with suitable facilities including ample backstage space plus dressing rooms, a toilet, stage curtains, and a roller in front of the curtain, with which a large advertising tableau (painted on canvas) could be raised and lowered.<sup>8</sup>

There is a rich documentation of the dramatic and musical events staged here over the years. Celestine Schaller, the owner of the Frontenac Inn (formerly the Lakeside Hotel, dating to the 1850s) was personally involved in promoting these activities at the hall, and tourism brought both performers and an audience to this facility for entertainment. Miss Schaller and the Frontenac Dramatic Club contributed both time and money for improvements to the stage in 1918 and for the installation of a check room, ticket office, and balcony on the south end of the hall in 1919.<sup>9</sup>

Other documented social and recreational events held here include meetings of the Grange, Modern Woodmen, Farm Bureau, and Campfire Girls. In addition, Episcopal Church suppers (they had no kitchen facility), Red Cross fundraisers, and the organizational meeting of the Frontenac Cemetery Association took place here.<sup>10</sup>

In 1896 the Board set a policy on hall use which provided no charge for charitable purposes, funerals, weddings and parties, \$1.50 for other uses, and \$2.00 for dances. This was amended on March 15, 1916 raising the rent to \$3.00 for "entertainments and dances, Churches and School entertainments . . . all Churches and Schools situated in the Town to be excepted." A further reference, from September 20, 1922, states "to refuse to rent the town hall to any outside parties for dances after this date---there being too much disorder and rowdyism at such dances."

The purchase of Lot 9 next door in 1920 enhanced the property's function as a community center, as did the addition of a kitchen. Lots 8 and 9 in Block 10 are 50 by 125 feet, so there had been little extra outdoor space for parking or outdoor functions.

Despite the presence of other institutions in Frontenac and Frontenac Station which traditionally serve the social needs of small towns in rural areas, the Florence Town Hall became a community center and played an important part in sustaining community identity and fostering tourism.<sup>11</sup> This plus its established function as the seat of township government since 1875 have helped maintain the existence of Frontenac Station over the years as the initial hopes for commercial and industrial prosperity in association with the railroad were replaced by the reality of recreation, tourism and residential development. These remain the dominant features of land use and institu-

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tional function, sustained at present by the automobile, highway development, and the persistence of township-level government in Minnesota.

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<sup>1</sup>See note 1, Section 7. The location of township records prior to 1895 is not known. The records from 1895 to 1945 are in storage at the Goodhue County Historical Society in Red Wing, but these are not complete.

<sup>2</sup>See Folwell, Vol. 1, pp. 321-325, for information on the Half Breed Tract. Lands here were eagerly sought in 1854 since, as Folwell put it, "the river counties were filling up after the treaties of 1851. . ." (p. 324).

<sup>3</sup>The original plat is on file in the Goodhue County courthouse, Red Wing.

<sup>4</sup>The brief historical sketch included here is based on Densmore and Curtiss-Wedge, pp. 173-175.

<sup>5</sup>Curtiss-Wedge relates at length how well regarded Israel Garrard was in the area, but the interpretation of his motives probably has its published origins in Densmore, pp. 37-38. It is the standard view today (Alverna Miller) and it can also be found in other sources cited in the Bibliography including the NRHP nomination form for the Old Frontenac Historic District.

<sup>6</sup>*Plat Book of Goodhue County Minnesota*, p. 11 (Frontenac Station).

<sup>7</sup>Quotation from Curtiss-Wedge, p. 175. The first county history dates from 1893, but it contains nothing useful about Frontenac Station.

<sup>8</sup>Meeting notes from March 15, 1916. The advertising curtain is in the Goodhue County Historical Society collection.

<sup>9</sup>See meeting notes from March 12, 1918 and March 11, 1919. These features are no longer extant.

<sup>10</sup>Copies of playbills and newspaper clippings (*Lake City Graphic*) are in the SHPO file for this property. See also, "Florence Town Hall . . . Moments to Remember," *Republican Eagle* (Red Wing), November 21, 1975. Town Board records contain numerous receipts of rental monies including many identified only by an individual name. Other uses of the hall are spelled out but remain unclear, such as \$11 received for "medicine Show," on March 3, 1908.

<sup>11</sup>Two churches, the German Lutheran (Frontenac Station) and Episcopal (1868, Frontenac) are extant. A public school dating from 1857 is extant and is located between the two Frontenacs.

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The nominated property consists of Lots 8 and 9 of Block 10, Frontenac Station Plat, Goodhue County, Minnesota.

**VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The Florence Town Hall was built on Lot 8 in 1875, and in 1920 the Township Board purchased Lot 9.