

## Heritage of A PLACE – the Human Experience

### Introduction

People take pleasure in knowing that they stand on a landscape where others have stood before them; they are drawn to the stories of human lives and endeavors that both create and enhance a sense of place. Bend in the River Regional Park is a unique place, special not only for its natural beauty and dramatic setting, but also for its inherent sense of heritage. The history of the place reveals itself through the collection of farm buildings, which define the family who created them and worked the land for nearly a century, as well as illustrate a bygone day of agricultural achievements in Minnesota. Other aspects of the place's history are less obvious, though equally important. The rugged roads that crossed the land provided access to the earliest frontier and military outposts. These roads were preceded by the trails of the Native Americans, who were drawn to the river and occupied the surrounding land for millennia.



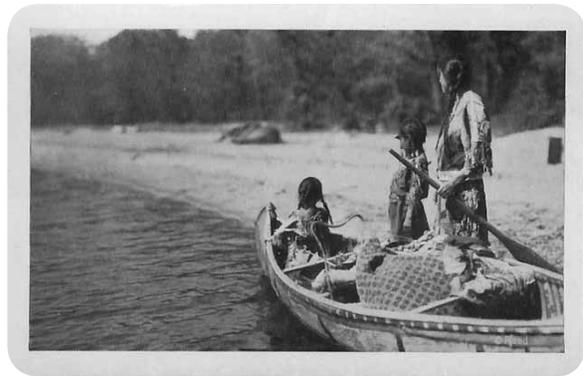
*The Graves Farm, winter 2005. Photo by Pioneer Photography.*

## The Native American Experience

Before farm buildings were constructed, and crops were planted in neat rows on the land, Native peoples traveled through and across what is today Bend in the River Regional Park. Their paths were the first. Travel was by foot, but also by river: the Mississippi River functioned as the original highway through the area. It provided a major route of transportation, and it facilitated communication and trade amongst indigenous peoples.

The importance of the Mississippi River to Native peoples of the area encompasses aspects both utilitarian and spiritual. While their villages flourished around the river floodplains and on terraces, and generations hunted and gathered along the shoreline, it was the area around the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers that was known alternatively as MDOTE, meaning “the mouth or junction of one river with another” or BDOTE, meaning “throat of the waters.” For the Dakota peoples, MDOTE is the center of the Earth and the point of their creation.

Very little archaeological information is available with regards to the early inhabitants of Benton County. One site has been recorded, however, in the southwestern region of the County that confirms the lengthy presence of Native American peoples in the area. Excavations at the East Terrace site (21BN6) uncovered what was described as a “transient camp” periodically used by small groups for the last 10,000 years (4G Consulting 2002:9). Indeed, because much of the Native American experience was so transient in nature, especially prior to 2,500 B.C., its evidence on the land is often displayed only through faint artifactual traces and few sites. Archaeological sites are typically found in locales situated with unhindered access to water resources. In terms of Bend in the River Regional Park, it is because the bluffs rise steeply from the Mississippi River that any establishment of villages or temporary encampments was likely discouraged. This was confirmed during an archaeological investigation of the park, conducted in 2002, which did not reveal the presence of any cultural material associated with Native American people.



*Natives load up their canoe along the river.*

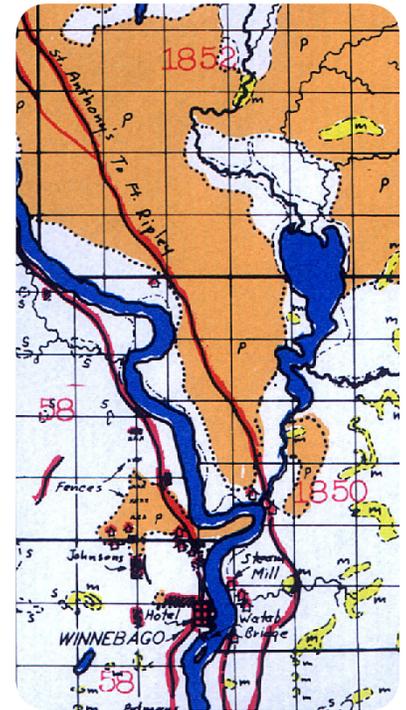
A lack of physical evidence does not, however, negate the fact that canoes once moved up and down river routes. And while the river may have once provided the primary means of transportation through the Bend in River Regional Park area, trails were often located alongside river routes. Indeed, while the history of Native peoples on the land may not be as readily seen as farm buildings and historic homesteads, early people did use and travel through this place. The historian Eva Hoffman’s words best capture the essence of history, place, and the lives that infuse a landscape with meaning:

*I never fail to be moved by knowing that the ground on which I walk is layered with the past – with achievement and strife and the repeated passions and conflicts of human creatures, always changing, always the same. Generations passing like grass (1993).*

## **Byways, Highways, and Railways**

Just as they do today, transportation corridors facilitate and create community and commerce. For millennia, river systems provided the most efficient means of travel, and in central Minnesota, the Mississippi River was a veritable highway, providing a major route of transportation, and facilitating communication and trade not only among indigenous peoples, but later residents of the area as well.

Once the arrival of Euro-Americans began in Minnesota – first with the fur traders, and later by the United States military in advance of permanent settlers – additional layers of transportation corridors were created. Frequently, these new roads were created over existing trails used by Native peoples, since they had already proven to be the most efficient routes and led to locations of mutual interest (e.g. significant river communities or crossings). Beginning in 1850, when Minnesota was still a territory, the United States federal government, under the auspices of the Corps of Topographical Engineers, oversaw the construction of seven military roads through the State. These roads represent some of the earliest transportation infrastructure built by Euro-Americans in Minnesota. One of these roads, leading from Point Douglas (at the confluence of the St. Croix and Mississippi Rivers), via St. Anthony to Fort Ripley at the mouth of the Nokasippi River, passed through Bend in the River Regional Park and may have followed an earlier route used by fur traders leading them from the Red River to St. Paul. These roads had a significant impact on the newly opened territory, wherein settlers could better travel to commercial destinations, be in better contact with their community, and receive mail. The Point Douglas-Fort Ripley Road ran along the east bank of the Mississippi and was instrumental in opening up the central part of the State during the early territory years (Hess 1989).



*Map of region from early surveyor field notes, illustrating the military road.*

A survey was completed for the Point Douglas-Fort Ripley Road in 1851, and construction began a year later. By 1857, just before Minnesota became a State, the 146-mile road was still incomplete in sections and already needed repairs. The road passed through virgin land, comprised of both prairie and oak savannahs. In Benton County, the road passed through the town of Sauk Rapids, Sartell, and then the community of Watab, a small platted village at the site of a river crossing that briefly thrived yet all but disappeared by 1880. Further along, the road crossed Little Rock Creek, then passing into the sandy and mostly treeless territory, including the Bend in the River Regional Park. North of there, the village of Rice provided a tavern and hotel, operated by proprietor George Rice (Hess 1989; Singley 1974).

By the late 1850s, the military necessity of the Minnesota roads came into question. With national defense on the western frontier no longer seen as a priority, the federal government withdrew its support from road-building activity. Consequently, the roads in Minnesota came under the jurisdiction of the various local townships, many of which lacked the resources to maintain them. In any case, by the late 1860s, the public began focusing their attention less on the bumpy and muddy roads, and more on the promise of steel tracks: the railroads. The rails transformed greater Minnesota by opening new territory, linking producers with markets, and creating new towns. In the meantime, the road system became, at best, a secondary means of getting from place to place, and easily fell into

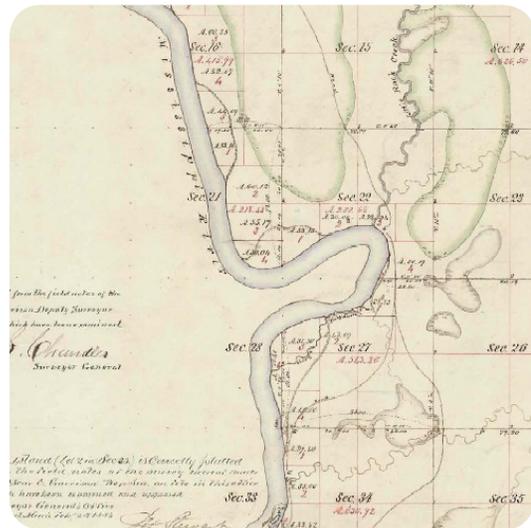
disrepair. Indeed, for many the roads became simply a means of getting to the railroads (Hess 1989). In Benton County, portions of the old Fort Ripley Road remained in use. Eventually, the road became part of County Road 55, which passes through Bend in the River Regional Park. Because County Road 55 was re-routed in the vicinity of the old farmstead sometime between 1938 and 1948, the original alignment of the old military road remains unused on the west side of the old farm house (4G Consulting 2002:27).

Adding to the river and the roads, the railroads brought yet another means of transportation to the prairies of Benton County and through the adjacent parcel to the east of Bend in the River Regional Park. The railroad was incorporated as the Western Railroad Company of Minnesota (WR) in 1874 with the intent to build and operate a railroad from Brainerd to Sauk Rapids, Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Mankato, as well as other lines. Between 1877 and 1879 the WR constructed its line from Sauk Rapids to Brainerd, passing through Benton County on its way. The name was changed to St. Paul & Northern Pacific Railway Company in 1883. By 1884, a line from Sauk Rapids to Minneapolis was constructed, and then extended to St. Paul in 1886. The line was sold to the Northern Pacific Railway Company in 1896 (Prosser 1966:159).

## **Settlement on the River: the Graves Farm**

The land now known as Bend in the River Regional Park is perched above the Mississippi River on the edge of the prairies of central Minnesota. The sandy soil of the region may not have made for the best farmland, but the land was nevertheless snapped up, along with so much of the State during the initial land grants of the 1850s. Land grants were issued for several parcels that later comprised the Graves Farm, now the Park. The difficulty of successfully creating a viable farm and living from the land is apparent in the early land records. When taxes were unable to be paid, and farmsteads could not be “proven” according to the original homesteading agreements, the land reverted back to the ownership of the State. Little is known about the early owners of the land, or whether they even occupied the lands they owned.

In their vicinity, the early owners could boast the amenities of two nearby communities: Watab and Rice. In the village of Watab, a few miles south of the farm, David Gilman cleared himself a farm and built a hotel near his river in 1848. The name “Watab” comes from the Ojibwe word for the long and slender roots of the tamarack and jack pine, which were dug by the Ojibwe, split, and used as threads in sewing their birch-bark canoes. For its first decade, Watab was the most important commercial place in Minnesota northwest of St. Paul. It hosted the County’s first election, was briefly the County seat, had a post office, and provided a crossing to the west side of the Mississippi River. The successes of nearby Sauk Rapids and St. Cloud eventually superseded that of Watab, however, and by 1880 the community had all but vanished. A second village north of the farm also provided a source of supplies and community interaction. The village of Rice was named for innkeeper George T. Rice who kept a hotel to provide rest for weary stagecoach travelers on the old military road. Once the railroad went in, the town was platted on the Little Rock River and later thrived when a station on the Northern Pacific Railroad went in. In the early days of Minnesota, the presence of the railroad could transform a town into a commercial hub; bypassing the community could send it into oblivion (Upham 2001).



*An 1884 survey map of Area showing the river's bend.*

It was not until the 1880s that the land that now forms Bend in the River Regional Park was consolidated from various parcels by George Wolhart, who was likely the first to actually settle on the property and make a working farm from it. The early log cabins reported to have been on the property could be attributed to Wolhart, or perhaps to one of the subsequent owners, Andrew Lorin or John Tindle (4G Consulting 2002).

It is the Graves family, however, who are most closely associated with this farmstead, having constructed all of the existing buildings standing on it and having worked the land for nearly 100 years. Although the Graves family was living in Watab Township as early as 1905, possibly as renters from the Tindles, it was not until 1912 that Edgar C. Graves purchased the 292-acre farm for \$4,600 at the age 27. Edgar, a bachelor for all his life, resided on the farm with his parents, Willis and Emelie Graves, and his siblings Ethel, Irving, Stewart, and Ruth.

Once the Graves family acquired the farm, they set to work on creating improvements that would not only increase the productivity of the farming activity, but also enhance their comfort. According to family oral history, the barn was constructed before the present house, in around 1907. This was a common practice when farmsteading, since it was the barn where the industry of the farm took place, which would in turn earn the money to build the house. The circa-1912 house the family constructed was a fine one indeed. At two stories in height, the lap-sided house exhibits a slimness and



*The Graves House*

verticality often associated with houses placed on tight, urban lots. The complex, cross-gabled roofline emphasizes the triangular form of the gable ends with full pediments and cornice returns. Constructed in a vernacular expression of the Queen Anne style, the long-popular style was commonly seen on Minnesota farms of the period. The practicality inherent to the farming lifestyle turned away from the fussy ornamentation displayed on the high-style Queen Anne mansions in towns and cities, and faced a more utilitarian simplicity aesthetic.



*The Graves Barn and Silo*

The Graves Farm collection of outbuildings demonstrates both the ordinary aspects of Minnesota's early twentieth century farming practices, and the uniqueness of the Graves family values and building patterns. The variety of outbuildings illustrates the diversified farming techniques that were encouraged in Minnesota following the over-production of wheat during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Diversified farming meant that farmers were not reliant on a single source crop or income. It was also preferable to the intensive farming of single crops, which was harsh on the land. The Graves Farm wonderfully exhibits diversified farming practices and the necessary compliment of specific-use buildings. Knowing little about the farm's history, the careful observer can still see what crops and animals were raised on this farm



*Farrowing House*

over 50 years ago. The farrowing house, or piggery, was used to raise newly born piglets. The south-facing, half-monitor roof provided not only light, but also warmth during the winter months. The sun would warm the masonry walls, which were more durable and easier to keep clean than wood. The evidence of pig or hog raising is further substantiated by the presence of the drive-through corncrib, where harvested corn could be dried and stored, and later fed to the hogs. The granary confirms the practice of growing grain, perhaps oats, barley or wheat, or even a combination of grains. The grain could be stored in the protected, tin-lined bins of the granary and used for feed or for sale.



*Corncrib*

The big barn, and its attached silo can be considered a small complex for the storage, feeding and raising of large livestock. The lower level of the barn could house large animals – horses would have been used to pull farm equipment to plow the fields, sow the seeds, reap the harvest, and to generally do the heavy lifting needed to sustain a farm. It is likely that the Graves kept milk cows, which were common in this area of Minnesota, and would have provided a ready source of income to the family. Hay to feed the cows and horses would be grown on the farm, then stored in the overhead loft and delivered by chutes to the stalls. Later, the concrete-stave silo was probably added to provide a more efficient way to store nutritious silage to feed the cattle through the winter. The chicken coop was a building commonly seen on nearly every Minnesota farmstead. Often considered the responsibility of the women on the farm, large numbers of chickens were raised to provide the family with fresh eggs, cash from the sale of eggs, and fresh meat.

Several buildings are evidence of the continuing evolution of farms and technology. The four-bay machine shed, probably constructed in the 1930s, rose from the need for larger and more mechanized farming equipment. Instead of horses, farm machinery was powered by tractors, which could pull

larger equipment more efficiently till the 289 acres of the Graves Farm. The new equipment created the need for increased and specific storage needs on the farm. Another later addition is the potato warehouse, believed to have been constructed in the 1940s. This building exemplifies the family’s transition to a new type of crop, one to which the soil was eminently suited. Potato storage required the qualities of a subterranean cellar, so the warehouse was imbedded into the earth with a concrete block foundation. The gambrel roof offered a large, open space, providing easy access to the contents.



*Chicken coop and machine shed*



Other outbuildings on the farm have a closer relationship to the farm’s residential use than its industrial purposes. The well house protected the important source of water, which in early years would have been retrieved by hand,

and in later by the use of an electrical pump. The woodshed allowed for the storage of firewood, probably used to burn in the kitchen stove, and perhaps in a furnace or other heating stoves. The garage, apparently constructed around 1915, shortly after the house, housed the most modern of conveniences: the automobile.

While this collection of outbuildings demonstrates the function and operations of a typical farm of its period, the methods of construction and the notable materials represent something more unique: an expression of the Graves family personality. According to the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, the buildings are a “striking example of Minnesota folk architecture” because of their use of indigenous materials and salvaged parts (Preservation Alliance of Minnesota 2005). Such commonplace buildings, like the farrowing house, were constructed using remnant pieces of granite blocks and slabs from nearby quarries – a highly unusual material, but one reflecting both the common stone material of the region, and the thrifty re-use of available supplies. Even the corncrib stands on a foundation of cut and polished granite. The gabled well house is constructed of huge, rusticated granite blocks, grossly disproportionate to the modest size of the utilitarian building. Reportedly, the stone blocks were salvaged



*Granite block well house and tin-sided garage*

*\* An inspection of a circa 1920 photograph of the William Bell Mitchell house shows that the granite blocks used in the house's foundation appear to match the type used in the well house.*



following the demolition of the William Bell Mitchell house in St. Cloud.\* Indicative of another period, the machine shed employs old wood railroad

car doors – many of which are still emblazoned with the original railroad car numbers – for its walls and roof. Railroad ties may have been used as part of the footings. Other metal panels, possibly salvaged from other sources, were applied to the barn, chicken coop, and granary. The use of these clever construction techniques reflects the thriftiness and the ingenuity of the builders, and creates a unique farmstead landscape.

## **The Graves Family**

These buildings tell us something of the persons and personalities of those who made this farmstead their home for nearly a century. Though they cannot possibly tell the entire story, conversations with members of the Graves family and other documentation have helped to illuminate the stories that are both common to many Minnesota families and special to this one family.

Willis Graves, the family patriarch, was of Yankee heritage – his father born in New York and his mother in Connecticut – while he born in Pennsylvania. In about 1875, at the age of 19, Willis Graves immigrated to Minnesota to make a life of his own. Graves met his bride, Emelie Carlton, in Minnesota and the two were wed in 1881 in Emelie's hometown of Winona. Emelie was born to a Minnesota pioneer family who settled in Waseca in 1856, and she was born the following year. Willis and Emelie started their lives together in Winona, and later moved to St. Cloud (*St. Cloud Daily Times*

[SCDT] 19 February 1931:5). Between 1883 and 1894, Emelie gave birth to five children – Ethel, Edgar, Stewart, Irving, and Ruth (from oldest to youngest). By the 1890s, the Graves family was living in St. Cloud. For a time, they lived at 27 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE, just two blocks east of the Mississippi River, which flows through the town. From there, Willis, a carpenter, could make the short walk to his job at the St. Cloud Manufacturing Company, a bobsled manufacturer on Wilson Avenue. Eventually, Ethel became a school teacher and the Graves’ his eldest son Edgar joined his father at the bobsled factory (St. Cloud City Directory 1904). Reportedly, several years of low snowfall doomed the bobsled company, and the Graves family was forced to seek out new life and living.

Census records state that the Graves were living in the vicinity of Bend in the River Regional Park by 1905, although the family and other sources indicate that they settled on the farm in 1907. Their first home was probably in a small cabin, perhaps constructed by the previous owners. While on the Graves Farm, the children reached adulthood. Edgar acquired the property in his own right in 1912 and probably took over the farming. With the entry of the United States into the raging war in Europe in 1917, both Stewart and Irving (also known to the family as “Pat” or “Patsy”) joined the armed services, leaving their beloved family and farm on the Mississippi River behind. Letters sent home from both sons tell of the sacrifice that the Graves family made during the war. They are on file at the Minnesota Historical Society (Stewart Horatio Graves papers 1918-1919).

### **Votre Toujours, Pat**

Irving Graves’ letters to the “home folks” signal his affection for his family, optimism for his future, and attachment to home. His letters provide some insight into the Graves family back in Benton County, even though we can only glimpse it through Irving’s eyes, as the letters sent *from* home are not known to have survived. In his letter, we learn that Irving was “on the water” for 21 days when departing for France; it was a particularly long and difficult journey because his ship was rammed going out to sea. We know that his job with Company E was working on the railroad line, although he could write very little about his daily activities, conditions or locations due to censorship restrictions. He optimistically writes, “I’ll tell you all about it when I see you.” Irving was attentive to the activities on his beloved Benton County farm home, expressing pleasure that the crop prospects are good, and wishing his family that they could have some of the badly needed rain of which he had so much. We learn that young Ruth, 24 years old, is musical and is active volunteering with the Red Cross in the war effort. Ruth had written him about their brother Stewart’s engagement with a young Anna Paulson, hoping that it would be breaking news. Irving replied that he already knew that “Stew is very much elated over Miss Paulson” and that he had accompanied his brother when “bought that rock,” adding “Anna is a fine girl.” After the war, Stewart and Anna Paulson married. Irving expressed hope that his father’s eyes were getting better, perhaps an indication that Willis Graves had an injury or had undergone some sort of surgery. He also asks how his “old boat is getting along” and wishes he could take it out for a spin.



*Private Irving L. Graves, circa 1917*

Mail delivery between Central Minnesota and the Western Front was slow at best, and interrupted at worst. Both Irving and those on the home front express dismay that their correspondence had not been received, and sadness that more letters had not been forthcoming. Irving began numbering his letters, so his family would know their sequence and if any were missing. Although he would sign his letters to his mother using his given name – Irving – those to his sisters closed with “*Votre Toujours, Pat*” – Always Yours. The last letter the family received was on October 26, 1918. He cheerfully wrote, “everything is going well... there isn’t much to tell,” but sadly noted “we haven’t had any mail in some time.”

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News of the family tragedy arrived by mail. Stewart Graves' letter to his family from Langres, France on December 29, 1918 states his dismay that he knew nothing of Irving being wounded from official channels, but instead by a letter from home. Giving words of courage in response, he wrote, "It is not so hard to die mother. Fellows on the line don't give it a thought. If a man is mortally wounded, the shock is great enough to make him insensible to pain and if the wound is not mortal, a strong man like Patsy will stand it." Stewart did not know that Irving had already died from his wounds received on November 10, 1918, the day before the Germans signed an armistice for peace; he died two days later. On January 3, 1919, after learning of his brother's death, Stewart writes his family again: "It doesn't seem so terrible to me perhaps as it does to you. I know that a soldier doesn't find it so hard to die – if they did they couldn't walk into the very jaws."

The death of Stewart's close friend and brother – especially on the eve of the armistice – dramatically affected his outlook on life and his political views. Wanting to know more about the circumstances of Pat's death, he and his sister Ethel wrote to many of Irving's comrades in arms. Most were glad to write back, and were honored to express their admiration for their fallen friend. Although some of the details vary, the Graves learned that Irving was part of the Meuse-Argon offensive ordered by General John J. Pershing. The battle was the biggest operation and victory of the American Expeditionary Force in the war. During the six weeks of battle (September 26 through November 11, 1918), 26,277 American forces were killed, and 95,786 were wounded. Irving was a member of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 61<sup>st</sup> Infantry, which was ordered to harass the retreating Germans. On the early morning of November 10<sup>th</sup>, tired and exhausted, the troops stopped in the woods near Chateau Charmois to get some rest during the night. Yet rest proved impossible, as the men were cold, wet and hungry. As one soldier put it, "we passed the night in misery like many others before, and always hoping the war would end, or that we would get a slight wound and be sent to the hospital."

Upon morning, they again pursued their enemy forming a column of twos. The signal corps, of which Irving was a part, followed up in the rear. All of the troops had crossed a hill bordering the woods, except for the signal men. It was then that a surprise attack was made from the woods with machine guns; they were trapped on three sides. The men fell flat to the ground. Three men were killed, and seven wounded. Bullets entered through Irving's back just above his kidney, and into his bowels. The wounded men were able to crawl to the foot of the hill where they could dress their wounds and find protection in the woods. By mid-afternoon, the men were able to crawl or walk under shellfire to an old house in the clearing, where they could stop to await an ambulance. The house, however, was under observation by the Germans and was bombed by shellfire. Irving and others survived the shellfire, and in a massive struggle, Irving was able to crawl on his hands and knees, a few hundred yards at a time, perhaps one or two miles towards the first aid station. Irving was getting weaker, but pursued his goal with dogged determination. Finally, he fell and could not get up, an ambulance carried him with two others to the first aid station. Every bump in the road was painful; he was carried in on a stretcher and went unconscious. The wounds were severe, and he was transferred to a hospital. One friend wrote that he understood that Irving remarked to a fellow patient, "well Naigel, it is pretty tough to go thru so much and then get it when the game is finished." Another wrote, "it seems awful to think that so many were killed the last few days of the war, but I suppose it had to be. I don't know a more honorable death than that of a soldier fighting for his county." Private First Class Irving L. Graves was buried in Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery, the largest American military cemetery in Europe.

Although the war dealt a lethal blow to the Graves family, Stewart responded with charity and generosity. While in France, Stewart's company encountered a French boy, named Charles Monnet. The son of French peasants, eight-year-old Charles wandered into the American camp near the village of Til-Chatel along with other children looking for food left over by the soldiers. Tired, malnourished, and dirty, the soldiers took a liking to the well-mannered and brave boy. The outfit cleaned him up and provided medical attention, and gave him a uniform and boots to wear. As time went on, the

boy became a “mascot” for the 16<sup>th</sup> Corps of Engineers, Company E. For nearly two years, Charles stayed with the company and joined them in the regular Army life of trenches, long marches, and an occasional barrage of shells. When the company was at the front line, Charles attended school. At war’s end, the company wanted to continue their care for young Charles, and Stewart Graves volunteered to be his foster father, with the permission of Charles’ parents. As Charles was probably the first “war orphan” to come to America, provisions for the transportation of French children were not available. Stewart found a freight skipper who was willing take him aboard. Stewart met up with him a short time later, and the two went off to Minnesota. Charles lived with Stewart’s parents and sisters on the farm, while Stewart attended law school. Eventually, Stewart would adopt Charles as his own (SCDT 22 November 1955).

## **After the War**

The death of young Irving in the war was followed by another sad series of events in the Graves family. Father and husband Willis Graves fell ill during the winter of 1920, and died at the age of 64, in May of that year. The following year, the vivacious and well-liked Ruth, the youngest sister in the family, suddenly fell ill and died at the age of 27. She had been married to Mr. Charles Crosby only two years earlier (SCDT 29 May 1920; SCDT 29 April 1921).

After the war, Stewart Graves returned to Minnesota with his foster son Charles and held odd jobs, such as butcher at the St. Paul Hotel (R. L. Polk & Company 1920) while earning his law degree from St. Paul College of Law (now William Mitchell Law School), which he completed in 1921. After working as manager at the Hotel Ogden in Minneapolis, he went on to work as a lawyer in Minneapolis (St. Paul College of Law 1923 and 1922; St. Paul College of Law Alumni Association 1940). He also served as vice president for Mutual Holdings Company in 1930, and for a time lived in St. Louis Park (Minneapolis City Directory 1930). Stewart returned to service during World War II with the construction forces in the Aleutian Islands, Alaska. He later worked for 15 years as a guard and high school instructor at the State Reformatory in St. Cloud (SCDT 2 June 1971:8).

Stewart and Anna (Ann) Paulson were married in 1925. They eventually had three children, Carlton, Irving L. and Ruth Ann, in addition to their adopted son, Charles Monnet. Both Carlton and Irving earned doctoral degrees. Stewart is perhaps best known for his peace activism, antiwar writings, and pleas for international unity. He was a contributing member of the Peace Committee for the American Humanist Association. Although most of his known writings date from the 1960s, his point of view and outrage concerning the futility of war are clearly influenced by the traumatic loss of his beloved brother Irving, some 50 years earlier. Ann Graves was equally prominent in her progressive values, as the State president of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, and a member of the American Association of University Women, and League of Women Voters. Both Ann and Stewart were founding members of the St. Cloud Unitarian Universalists Fellowship. Stewart died in 1971, and Ann in 1985.

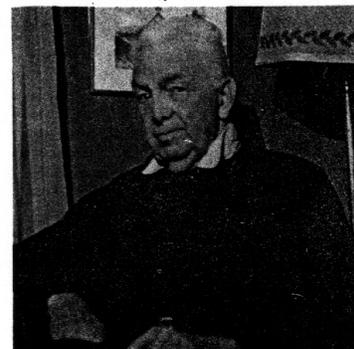
Ethel Graves was a lifelong educator, and began her career as a teacher at Sauk Center, and later advanced to principal of the grade school at Two Harbors. She was enlisted to join the faculty of St. Cloud State Teachers College in 1918, where she continued until her retirement in 1945. She received her B.A.

AN ADDRESS ON  
**WAR**

|by

STEWART GRAVES

Second Lieutenant, Inf. World War I



RICE, MINNESOTA 56367

degree from the University of Minnesota, her M.A. at the Colorado State College of Education, and also studied geography at the University of Chicago. In addition to her broad interests in the field of education, she served as president of the Stearns County Historical Society. Although her advanced education took her to Colorado, her thesis stemmed from her affection for her St. Cloud home. The purpose of her study was to provide materials to supplement student field trips to the granite quarries and polishing mills of St. Cloud. Family sources indicate that she had a close relationship with A. E. Morgan, a St. Cloud native who was a noted engineer and became president of Antioch College and a director of the Tennessee Valley Authority under the Roosevelt administration. The family indicates that Ethel could never contemplate marriage because she was needed to care for her mother, following the death of her father. Ethel never married, and died in 1946 (SCDT 28 May 1946:4; 4G Consulting 2002:C-2; Graves 1934).



*Ethel Graves, circa 1945*

Charles Monnet Graves lived most of his adult life in Sauk Rapids, except when he farmed near Mankato between 1935 and 1945. He was employed by the St. Regis Paper Company, from which he retired in 1974. He died in 1981.

The eldest Graves sibling, Edgar, ran the family farm. He never married and died in 1930 at the age of 55. His mother, Emelie passed away in February of the following year. With Stewart and Ethel pursuing law and teaching careers in other places during the 1930s, the Graves Farm was rented out and no longer farmed by the family. Stewart and Ann Graves and their family eventually returned to the farm to make it their home. Their son, Carlton, later ran his veterinary practice out of the old farmstead, using the house's basement as an examination room. No longer housing cattle, the barn was converted for use as a giant chicken coop. After Carleton died in 1999, the Graves family desired to see the beautiful riverside setting and the historic farmstead available for public enjoyment. The family sold the Graves Farm to Benton County for development of a regional park in 2002. The ecologically and culturally rich site and historic farmstead is now in the stewardship of the community for the pleasure and enrichment of all.

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## **Preservation and Interpretation**

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### **Official Historic Recognition**

The Graves Farm, including its historic acreage, has been determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is an official listing kept by the National Park Service of properties deemed worthy of preservation. The National Register is a largely honorary recognition, but also carries some weight with it in terms of protecting historic properties and providing benefits of historic designation. The term “determined eligible for listing” is an official designation, not merely an opinion, bestowed by the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and carries with it many of the same protections and benefits as an officially listed property.

The National Register is a national listing of properties with historic significance and it includes those that are historic within national, State *or* local contexts. In the case of the Graves Farm, it bears local significance as a representation of Minnesota's agricultural heritage. The complex of outbuildings, as well as the fields, meadows, and wooded areas may all contribute to the property's historic significance, according to the SHPO documentation.

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## **Preservation**

### **Preservation Plan**

Building upon the master planning process, the first step in the preservation process is to develop a preservation plan in order to thoroughly and systematically preserve the historical resources of the Graves Farm. A preservation plan would help to ensure the protection of the valuable heritage embodied by the buildings and landscape of the Graves Farm. A preservation plan would gather additional information about the property, analyze the status of its historic components, evaluate its current condition, and prioritize the next steps necessary for the continued public enjoyment of the historical resources. Ideally, a preservation plan is the result of consensus-building activities that create a shared vision for the future. The plan can result in a variety of outcomes, such as nomination to the National Register, prioritization of stabilization and preservation activities, addressing of re-use opportunities, and development of public interpretation programs.

### **National Register Nomination**

Although determined eligible for listing on the National Register, the Graves Farm is not currently listed on the register. Nomination to the National Register can take the Graves Farm to its final step in acquiring official recognition of its historical significance. A nomination would require additional research of the farm and its inhabitants, which would be carefully documented on a registration form; this is generally done by trained historians. The SHPO occasionally sponsors National Register nominations, although funding for this type of work is quite limited.

Once the form is finalized, the nomination is reviewed by SHPO staff and presented to the Minnesota Historical Society's State Review Board. After its approval, it is sent to the State Historic Preservation Officer, and then to the Keeper of the National Register in Washington, D.C. This process may take as much as one year to complete.

Formal listing on the National Register conveys certain honors, privileges and responsibilities and should be carefully considered by Benton County before pursuing. Implications for listing the Graves Farm on the National Register include:

- Formal acknowledgement that the farm has historical significance that is recognized nationally;
- A certain degree of protection from State or federally funded public projects that may negatively affect the property, including transportation projects (a "determination of eligibility" offers protection only where federal projects are involved);
- Access to the State Capital Grants-in-Aid program, which is generally limited to National Register-listed properties;
- Potential for private parties under certain lease conditions to receive historic preservation tax incentives; and
- A mandatory Minnesota Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) when demolishing a building.

As noted above, the benefits of listing the Graves Farm on the National Register outweigh any potential negative effects and would provide protection for the property and potential funding. Additional funding for historical properties that are listed on the National Register may be available in the future, and it may be wise to have the property listed in advance should such funds become available.

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## **Stabilization and Preservation**

Though the Graves Farm is situated along a well-traveled County road, its location leaves it relatively isolated and remote in feeling. This isolation already has resulted in some vandalism to the structures and continues to threaten the historic site. A preservation plan should address the variety of means by which to limit these security concerns, which may include lighting, alarm systems, or on-site supervision.

The farm buildings have experienced significant physical deterioration and will continue to do so as they remain unused and unmaintained. A preservation plan should address the continued maintenance of the buildings, utilizing reconstruction, preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration measures as necessary.

## **Re-Use Potential**

The re-use of the historic buildings and grounds in a manner that is respectful of the historical use, materials, and spirit of the farmstead will be a challenge for Benton County. Many of the buildings, however, are eminently adaptable to uses that are both appropriate to their historic character, practical in nature, and fit within the current use of the property as a regional park. It is important that the buildings are *used*, almost regardless of their type of use, as this leads to diligent maintenance practices and deters vandalism and other security concerns.

A process for identifying appropriate re-uses has been employed by the SHPO for many years, and would be a likely starting point of the preservation planning process. The process includes the assembly of a team of experts in historic preservation, architectural design, real estate development, building construction specialists, and local representatives. Through a process of interviews, a variety of local stakeholders contribute a broad array of perspectives, information, ideas, suggested opportunities and possible limitations about the re-use potential for historic properties. In general, the goals of the re-use team are: 1) to understand the community issues that may affect a historic property, 2) to develop re-use alternatives, 3) to evaluate the economic and preservation merits of re-use alternatives, 4) to define the most viable options, and 5) to recommend a plan for the community to consider.

Principles for adaptive re-use of historic buildings:

- The new use should not require extensive alterations to the historic buildings, such as large additions, gutted interiors, and/or extensive replacement of historic materials.
- The new use should be as close as possible to the historic use of the building.
- Whenever possible, rehabilitation should adhere to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines on Rehabilitation of Historic Properties*.
- The new use and rehabilitation should be financially and economically feasible.
- The new use should not exert undue wear or cause extensive damage to the historic property.
- Interim uses, such as storage, are appropriate uses as long as the building is maintained and preserved.
- Where immediate uses for buildings are not apparent, appropriate "mothballing" procedures should be undertaken in order to preserve the unused building.

## **Telling the Story: Interpretive Concepts**

Interpretation is the "guiding hand" that enables the visitor to have an enhanced learning experience, creating a more profound and lasting impression. Because the Graves Farmstead is now a public park and is receiving visitors, the property lends itself to the interpretation of historical, ecological,

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and cultural themes. Interpretive themes are best utilized when they arise from authentic experience – connecting the place with active enjoyment and education. The heritage embodied by the Graves Farm offers opportunities for numerous interpretive themes, both historical and natural/ecological. Several potential historical themes are discussed below. Ecological themes would best be developed by an environmental consultant.

A variety of themes related to the historical events that took place at Bend in the River Regional Park provide possibilities for interpretation.

- ***Systems of Transportation.*** The special site of Bend in the River Regional Park, near the Mississippi River and along historic road systems, creates an opportunity to discuss how people from ancient times to the present moved across the land. Native peoples traveled by water along the river – a virtual highway – and that pattern was continued by the Euro-Americans who later settled in Minnesota. Overland routes – possibly those used by Native Americans, and certainly those used by early settlers and soldiers – traveled across the parkland, closely following the established transportation route and lifeline of the Mississippi. These early road routes grew out of favor when the nearby railroad transformed Minnesota’s frontier life, making the population centers and markets easily and quickly accessible. The old roads, then relegated to little more than connectors to rail stations, often became County roads, as in the case of County Road 55. As a result of the re-routing of County Road 55 in the 1940s to the east side of the farmstead, the resulting abandoned road segment west of the farmstead offers a tangible opportunity to interpret the early overland roads in much the same way as they were originally experienced: unpaved trails passing through wooded areas along the edge of the river. Trail markers may more clearly identify and interpret both the location and meaning of the historic road.
- ***Ecological Transformations.*** The transformation of the landscape at Bend in the River Regional Park offers an excellent opportunity to explore the continuing tension between natural and man-made landscapes. In little more than a century, the land has been transformed from its natural setting and ecology into an agricultural landscape complete with ordinary, yet intentional, features such as tree lines, windbreaks, and open fields. As this parcel of land enters into a new century with a new purpose as a public park, how will the landscape continue to evolve?

Exploration of the following questions can help develop this theme:

- What did the site look like before the arrival of Euro-Americans?
- What plant and animal life is indigenous to the area, and how much of it is still there?
- How did the first settlers work to transform their land and what impact did their work have on the environment?
- What is the purpose of such traditional and mundane agricultural landscape features such as tree lines, oak groves, windbreaks, and field configuration?
- What effects do traditional farming methods, once used on the Graves Farm and on others, have on erosion, native plant life, and the Mississippi River?
- What prompted the creation of the extensive windbreaks and what were the policies that encouraged such formations?
- How will land be managed in the future? What changes will be made and what will be kept the same?

The use of historical aerial photographs can be used to provide a visual perspective of the land’s evolution, and particularly of the development of the distinctive windbreaks found east of County Road 55.

- **Family Stories.** The history of the farm avails itself to the interpretation of the interesting family who lived and occupied the land for almost one hundred years. All families have unique and exceptional events that mark not only personal experiences, but also signify the tenor of the times. The Graves family provides such insight and the Bend in the River Regional Park is fortunate to have several sources, in addition to the farmstead, that document the lives of the Graves family members. Most poignant are the letters received from two sons – Stewart and Irving – during World War I. The family lost one of their sons in battle, on the eve of the Armistice. The family’s response to the death of their son and brother, although not entirely known at this time, was that of increased activism for world unity and pacifism. Other sources, such as diaries, letters, and photographs have been reported, but not investigated at this time. In all, the sources provide a remarkable documentation of a family’s personal history. With permission and cooperation from the family, such items can be used to tell the story of this family while making links with the broader social, political, and economic trends of the times.

In addition to the written sources on the family, the farm itself stands as a record of the Graves’ family heritage. The unique and salvaged building materials are a testament to a family’s cleverness and resourcefulness in building a farm during economically difficult times. The buildings make the farm unique and have a story to tell in and of themselves.

- **Farm Practices.** Agricultural methods have dramatically shifted over the past century. Changing technology, increased scale, and specialized farming practices have resulted in many of the outbuildings found on the Graves Farmstead becoming obsolete. This provides an opportunity to interpret an important part of Minnesota and Benton County heritage as what we consider to be a “typical farmstead” rapidly vanishes from view. Interpretive programs can utilize the various outbuildings to demonstrate or describe the activities that historically occurred on the farm and how they fit together as a whole. See the section below for examples of how other parks and history museums have incorporated agricultural heritage into their interpretive programming.

### **Examples of Interpretation at Similar Park Sites**

Several agricultural park and outdoor museum sites in the region may serve as models for potential re-use studies and interpretive programming for Bend in the River Regional Park. These examples are worth noting to gather ideas for potential programming, to get a sense of operational possibilities, and to appreciate the market demand for additional agriculture-related parks.

**Living History Farms.** Perhaps the best known and most successful agriculture-related, living history museum in the region is Living History Farms, located in Urbandale, Iowa, just outside of Des Moines. The 550-acre open-air museum tells the story of the transformation of the fertile Iowa prairies into highly productive farmland over a 300-year period. The museum utilizes re-created buildings and live interpreters with demonstrations to depict agricultural activity in four different periods spanning from 1700 to 1900; an exhibit center displays the history of the twentieth century. In 1999, the museum attendance reached 110,092 visitors, with an additional 29,670 utilized ancillary activities, such as facility rentals.

**Old World Wisconsin.** Old World Wisconsin similarly approaches agricultural heritage through the contributions of the State’s various ethnic groups. Historic farmhouses, outbuildings and small-town structures – many of them important and unique specimens – were transported and reconstructed at the 600-acre site in Waukesha County in eastern Wisconsin. The property

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now has more than 60 historic structures. The museum portrays the history of immigration and resettlement in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Wisconsin. Costumed interpreters re-enact daily life of rural citizens and visitors can take part in many of the activities. Old World Wisconsin is one of the major historic sites operated by the Wisconsin Historical Society.

***Historic Murphy's Landing.*** Located in Shakopee, Minnesota, Historic Murphy's Landing is a re-created historic site illustrating the settlement of the Minnesota River Valley. Once the site of the Mdewakanton Dakota village Tinta Otonwe, the property later became home to Major Richard Murphy's inn and ferry services in the mid-1850s and a grist mill for the sons of Christian Indian missionary Samuel Pond. In the 1960s, the property was established as a living history museum and the historic buildings were complemented by some 41 historic structures moved onto the site, including the log cabin of fur trader Oliver Faribault. The 89.5-acre museum, now owned and operated by Three Rivers Park District (formerly Hennepin Parks), provides visitors with weekend opportunities and activities focused around a variety of themes, such as the popular Folkways of the Holidays from Thanksgiving to December. Livestock and chickens complete the agricultural interpretation of the Berger Farm.

***Grimm Farm.*** The Three Rivers Park District also operates the Grimm Farm in northern Carver County. The brick farmhouse was home to Wendelin Grimm and his wife Julianna. Grimm made a significant contribution to Minnesota agriculture by developing the first winter-hardy alfalfa, known as Grimm Alfalfa, the source of most modern varieties of alfalfa. The Grimm Farm was acquired by the Hennepin County Park Reserve District in 1962 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. According to the program statement, the property is ideally situated to educate urban and suburban school children about contemporary agricultural issues as well as Minnesota's agricultural heritage. The property garnered additional attention when the Minnesota Historical Society declared that the State was losing historic agricultural sites at an alarming rate, and identified the Grimm Farm as one of its highest priorities. As a result, the house is currently undergoing restoration and has received a total of \$186,000 in State funds. The Three Rivers Park District provided \$240,000 in restoration and rehabilitation funding, with an additional \$54,000 contributed by private donors.

***Oliver H. Kelley Farm.*** The Oliver H. Kelley Farm was settled in 1849, prior to Minnesota becoming a State, at the new town of Itasca along the Mississippi River in Sherburne County. Kelley became an expert farmer and learned firsthand the impact that debt, weather, insects and crop failures can have on a farmer. He went on to found the National Grange, which purchased the farm in 1935 and then donated it to the Minnesota Historical Society in 1961. It was named a National Historic Landmark in 1964. Trained interpreters who perform daily farm activities of rural life between 1850 and 1876 teach students about historical agricultural practices and now staff the farm. Scenic trails allow visitors to walk the grounds as well as explore the wildlife and plants along the Mississippi River.

***Eidem Homestead.*** The Eidem Homestead is located in Hennepin County and is owned and operated by the City of Brooklyn Park. The restored historic site consists of a late-nineteenth century farmstead, comprised of a house, a barn, and several outbuildings. Current interpretation depicts the farm at the turn of the century, and has guided tours, hands-on activities, and living history events.

***Holz Farm.*** Not unlike Bend in the River Regional Park, the Holz Farm is a historic farmstead

operated by the City of Eagan in Dakota County. The Holz family operated the farm from the 1890s through the mid 1970s, and in 1993, the City acquired the land and farmstead. The property is one of the last remaining historic sites in Eagan. The farm is open to the public and interpreted to reflect a 1940s farmstead, focusing on the period that electricity came to the farm. The farmstead hosts major city events and other special activities. The barn is used to house the city's equipment and chickens still occupy the old coop. The Friends of the Farm is a grass-roots organization developed to partner with the city to raise funds for acquisition, restoration and preservation efforts on the farm. They actively recruit volunteers and develop educational programs for students. The City is currently developing plans to have the property listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

**Gibbs Museum.** The Gibbs Museum centers around the homestead of the Jane and Herman Gibbs family, who settled on the St. Paul site in 1849 – then well outside of the city. Interpretive programs emphasize the historical interactions of the Gibbs family with the Dakota, whose trails leading to the northern ricing lakes crossed their farm. In addition to the pioneer farmstead, Dakota-style *tipis* are erected on the farm to depict the relationships between the settlers and Native Americans. Plant life illustrates the ecology of this part of Minnesota, where prairie restoration of tall grasses and oak savannahs has been undertaken, and examples of traditional Dakota and Euro-American pioneer gardens are planted. Several historic buildings are used and interpreted, including a 1910 barn, a 1958 barn designed by noted architect Edwin Lundie for the Minnesota Centennial, and a one-room schoolhouse.

**Riedel Farm Estate.** The Riedel Farm Estate is located in Fridley, Anoka County within the Riverfront Regional Park. The 140-acre park features biking and walking trails, picnicking, and a boat launch in addition to the restored 1880s home of dairy farmer Albin E. Riedel. The house now serves as a special event facility and markets its use for meetings, receptions, and celebrations. The property is owned by Anoka County.

**Finnish Homestead.** The Town of Embarrass in St. Louis County conducts tours of restored Finnish homesteads, log buildings, and the *Sisu Tori*, a Finnish craft shop and museum, during the summer and by special appointment. These historic buildings reflect the heritage and vernacular building traditions of the Finnish immigrants who settled in the township during the early twentieth century.

These brief descriptions of the regional and local historical and agricultural museums and public sites suggest that there is an abundance of such resources and that visitorship and funding may be competitive. Staffed interpretive programs and living history museums are expensive propositions. The presence of programs focused on historical farms – particularly that of the Kelley Farm, operated by the Minnesota Historical Society and located about one hour south of Bend in the River Regional Park – would make the introduction of another historic farm museum a challenge. Not only may it be unfeasible, but it may be unnecessary, as many of the programming needs for the interest groups appear to be met.

Historical interpretation may be considered a “bonus” to the natural and scenic qualities of the park, providing an additional layer of interest and enjoyment. Yet, interpretation should express the authentic aspects of the property and should not replicate or extensively overlap with programming available elsewhere. Interpretive programming for Bend in the River Regional Park should offer something unique to both the County and to the region, and it should do so in an unprecedented and distinctive way.

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## **Recommendations**

### **Planning and Preservation**

The Master Plan is the first step in the planning process for Bend in the River Regional Park and lays out the overall direction and long-term goals for the park's development. Additional planning may be required to flesh-out and further develop the programs stated in the Master Plan. From a historic preservation perspective, the following initiatives should receive priority to maintain and enhance the historical aspects of the park.

#### ***1. Secure property from vandalism and further deterioration***

The historical resources of the Graves Farm are under threat from vandalism and natural deterioration through lack of use and maintenance. Efforts should be made to minimize the exposure to vandalism. While passive methods, such as alarm systems and outdoor lighting, can be useful in detecting intruders, the active presence of an on-site caretaker would be the most effective manner to ensure that the property is thoughtfully protected and maintained. The regular maintenance and repair of the historic buildings, as well as maintenance of the grounds would give the property a "lived in" appearance and would discourage intruders.

#### ***2. Minimize deterioration of buildings***

Regular maintenance and use of historic buildings is the best protection against the strain of time and weather. However, when conditions limit expensive rehabilitation projects or when the re-use of buildings has not yet been determined, it may be necessary to temporarily close a building to protect it. This is known as "mothballing." When following the correct procedures for mothballing, buildings can be kept for extended periods of time. Special care must be taken to prevent rot-causing moisture build-up, deter intruders, and retain an attractive environment. Procedures for mothballing historic buildings are outlined in Technical Preservation Brief Number 31 presented by the National Park Service available at: <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief31.htm>.

#### ***3. Establish a "Friends of the Graves Farm"***

A non-profit "Friends of the Graves Farm" organization would provide additional support to help preserve the historic farm and would leverage funding sources not available to the County. This type of organization would expand the grass-roots advocacy and interest in the farm and provide an avenue for volunteers to provide visitor services, spearhead restoration efforts, and raise money. This type of partnership has been used at Holz Farm in Eagan.

#### ***4. Initiate a re-use study process***

The re-use study process would systematically and exhaustively explore the re-use potential for all of the properties associated with the historic farmstead, creatively addressing the economic feasibility and physical realities of the buildings and landscapes. The SHPO may provide guidance and technical assistance for the study.

#### ***5. Develop a preservation plan***

The development of a preservation plan would help guide the future of the park's historic resources by addressing the special needs of significant buildings and landscapes. The SHPO has already suggested that this would be a good next step for Benton County.

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## 6. *Nominate to National Register*

Only six properties in Benton County are listed on the National Register. Nomination of the Graves Farm would elevate the status of the property and add to the growing collection of historic resources in the County. Furthermore, listing on the National Register offers certain protections and opens additional funding sources.

## 7. *Develop an interpretive plan*

An interpretive plan would expand upon the significant stories already known to be associated with the Graves Farm and outline both the interpretive message and the means that would be most effective and appropriate for Bend in the River Regional Park.

## **Specific Re-Use Suggestions**

The development of specific uses of the historic farm buildings is best done in conjunction with the development of the park's overall Master Plan, which guides the use and physical layout of the overall property as a park. While an intensive re-use study could more comprehensively address the best and most appropriate adaptive uses for the buildings and landscape, several suggestions can be made at this time for the re-use potential of several key buildings and structures.

- ***Circulation System.*** Removal of the present alignment of County Road 55 through the property (re-located circa 1940) to an alignment outside of the park would allow for an approach into the park that better replicates the historic thoroughfare and returns the orientation of the house to face the roadway. Portions of the historic roadway may be left untouched, but regularly mowed, to interpret the historic transportation routes once found there.
- ***House.*** At the earliest stage of the park's development, the dwelling could be used to house a resident caretaker. This use would not only be appropriate, but would also allow for the better oversight of the property and protection against intruders. Future re-use options may utilize the house as an interpretive center, with materials and displays most suitably centered on the Graves family.
- ***Well House.*** The well house with its massive granite blocks may provide for an appealing shelter for park visitors. As a safe, and largely fireproof structure, the building may well be used as a warming house for outdoor winter activities.
- ***Barn.*** The large barn may offer several opportunities for re-use, depending on the programming needs of the park. Such spaces have often been converted into picnic pavilions, party facilities, and general shelter areas. Consideration also may be given to stabling horses in the barn for park users or for the growing suburban population of Rice and other areas of Benton County. Another use, one equally appropriate for the Machine Shed, would be for the display and interpretation of historic farm machinery.
- ***Potato Barn.*** As a later addition to the farmstead (circa 1940), the potato barn may lack some of the historical significance and distinction of the other outbuildings. However, its sturdy frame and open expanse may lend itself for behind-the-scene uses, such as storage for Benton County's mowers and snowplows, which would be entirely appropriate as long as the building was not significantly modified or damaged in any way.
- ***Other Outbuildings.*** Other uses may also be found for the remaining outbuildings, although some simply may be preserved as artifacts. Should the park host cross-country skiing and rent skis to visitors, the granary or the farrowing house may be suitable for storage and rental facilities.
- ***Landscape.*** The landscape of the woods and fields surrounding the farmstead are part of the historic fabric of the Graves Farm. While the general feel of the landscape should be appropriate

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to the property's historic character, there is potential for alternative uses. The field immediately adjacent to the farmstead has already been planted in native prairie grasses, evoking the natural landscape pre-dating Euro-American settlement. Other portions of the farm may also represent other eras, or may also be used for alternative farming techniques such as micro-farming or organic farming.

### **Specific Interpretive Ideas**

Although an interpretive plan would further develop the concepts for educational opportunities and methods, several suggestions and observations can be made at this time.

- Use a “light wash” interpretation approach that can easily be overlaid onto a park with important natural and scenic qualities, complementing the visitor experience by adding depth and understanding of this unique site.
- Utilize passive interpretive techniques, such as signage and artifact collections, to minimize staffing requirements.
- Develop a non-museum approach that would lend the farm buildings to be creatively and adaptively re-used for new purposes, rather than simply kept as artifacts.
- Display of family memorabilia, letters and diaries along with contextual information (such as the experience of World War I), in the house.
- Employ interpretive signage for the remnant of the old military road along the historic alignment of County Road 55 west of the house.
- Arrange historical farm equipment along with informative signage in the sheds and barn.
- Use creative interpretive signage oriented to children for discussing the use of farm buildings.
- Address the natural and man-made landscape features by a qualified ecological scientist through walks and tours.

### **Additional Recommendations**

- Ask the Graves family to consider donating their collection of letters, diaries, plans, and photographs relating to the farm and family to an appropriate repository, such as the Benton County Historical Society or the Minnesota Historical Society. Copies can be made to have on file at the park.
- Research and consider conducting an archaeological excavation on the apparent farmstead site located on the eastern portion of the park. Community volunteers and children under the supervision of a licensed archaeologist can conduct the archaeological dig.

### **Potential Funding Sources**

- One Minnesota granting source for preservation of historic properties is the State Capital Grants-in-Aid Program administered by the SHPO (<http://www.mnhs.org/about/grants/capitalcontents.html>). This fund provides capital grants for historic preservation projects for publicly owned properties between \$10,000 and \$150,000.
- Investigate transportation enhancement funds offered by the Federal Highway Administration through the district office of the Minnesota Department of Transportation. Such funds can often be used for recreational facilities and for historic transportation-related projects.

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