NAME

HISTORIC

John Copas, House

AND/OR COMMON

Bestland Farm

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Route 1, Box 11

CITY, TOWN

Marine on St. Croix

STATE

Minnesota

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT

X-BUILDING(S)

X-STRUCTURE

X-SITE

X-OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

X-PRIVATE

X-BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

STATUS

X-OCCLUDED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

X-YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

MUSEUM

PARK

EDUCATIONAL

X-PRIVATE RESIDENCE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

MILITARY

OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

David Bestland

STREET & NUMBER

Route 1, Box 11

CITY, TOWN

Marine on St. Croix

STATE

Minnesota

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Washington County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

14900 West 61st Street

CITY, TOWN

Stillwater

STATE

Minnesota

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

St. Croix National Scenic Riverway Survey of Historic Structures

DATE

June 1976

X-FEDERAL

STATE

COUNTY

LOCAL:

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

Minnesota Historical Society, Bldg 25 Fort Snelling

CITY, TOWN

Minneapolis

STATE

Minnesota
The John Copas House is located on the bank of the St. Croix River, eleven miles north of Stillwater. The house is a two-storey building of modified cruciform plan set on a stone foundation. It is sided in clapboard and has a wrap-around front porch with spindlework. The gable ends have broken pediments and also ornamental spindlework. The intersecting gable roof has a brick chimney on the front section. A kitchen and enclosed porch are one-storey additions made to the rear of the house.

The present appearance of the building indicates that it was constructed about 1880. Although an early source indicates that the original house was built in 1857, only a few timbers in the basement show that there may have been an earlier house on the same site.

Eight other buildings not included in the nomination are also located on the farm. They include a large barn, a granery, a machine shed, two chicken coops, a corn crib, and a pump house.
John Copas, the original owner of this house, was one of the first settlers and a long time resident of the community variously known as Vasa, Otis, and finally Copas after John Copas himself.

Copas came from Italy in 1848 and after staying awhile in St. Paul, settled in the area which is now known as Copas. Copas and a partner built a log store to serve the needs of the early settlers already in the area.

In 1857 the community was platted and named Vasa. It was expected that a town would grow and prosper by attracting Swedish immigrants. It is recorded that Copas built a house at this time to the south of the Vasa Plat.

The depression of 1857 did much to thwart the sale of land in the community, and the town never developed as planned. Also, the name of the town was changed to Otis as it had been discovered that there was another town named Vasa in Minnesota.

John Copas carried on with the store, however, until 1861 at which time he went into farming. It is recorded in 1881 that he resided in the same house that he had built in 1857 and that the house had been remodeled. His farm at the time included 120 acres.

Again in 1886 there were hopes that the town would develop, spurred by the construction of a railroad line leading from the Twin Cities to Duluth. A post office was established there and the community was finally named Copas. The town never prospered, and today only a few buildings remain.

The John Copas House and farm were passed on to son Frank Copas in 1894. He lived and farmed there until 1938. In 1964 the present owners purchased the Copas House, the farm buildings, and eight acres of the original farm.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Copas Family Paper." Archives/Manuscripts Division of the Minnesota Historical Society.


GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY

UTM REFERENCES

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

A [1, 5] 5 [1, 8] 6 [1, 0] 5, 0 [1, 0] 8 [1, 4, 2, 0] B

C [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] D

UTM NOT VERIFIED

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Marine on St. Croix Quad: 7.5

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Part of Government Lot 6, From the center of Sec. 30, T32, R19, 200' E., thence 300' S., thence 200' W., thence 300' N.

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE

Peggy Lindoo

ORGANIZATION

Minnesota Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER

Bldg. 25, Fort Snelling

CITY OR TOWN

St. Paul

STATE

Minnesota

DATE

9/27/77

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Marine on St. Croix Quad: 7.5

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Russell W. Fridley State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 3/6/80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER 7/4/80

ATTEST: Kristin O'Connell

DATE 7/18/80
Bestland Farm Capers John House
Marine on St. Croix, Minnesota
(Vicinity of)

Liza Nagle
MAY 1 1979
Washington, D.C.

Minnesota Historical Society
690 Cedar Street, St. Paul, MN
May 13, 1976
West (front) and South facades

01581/3