

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED APR 14 1980  
DATE ENTERED JUL 21 1980

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC John Copas House

AND/OR COMMON  
Bestland Farm

**2 LOCATION**

N. of Marine on St. Croix on MN 95.

STREET & NUMBER  
Route 1, Box 11

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN  
Marine on St. Croix vic VICINITY OF  
STATE CODE  
Minnesota 22

FIRST  
COUNTY CODE  
Washington 163

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME  
David Bestland

STREET & NUMBER  
Route 1, Box 11

CITY, TOWN  
Marine on St. Croix VICINITY OF

STATE  
Minnesota

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
Washington County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER  
14900 West 61st Street

CITY, TOWN  
Stillwater

STATE  
Minnesota

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway Survey of Historic Structures

DATE  
June 1976  FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS  
Minnesota Historical Society, Bldg 25 Fort Snelling

CITY, TOWN  
Minneapolis

STATE  
Minnesota

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT                       DETERIORATED  
 GOOD                               RUINS  
 FAIR                                 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

---

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

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.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

ca. 1880

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- "Copas Family Paper." Archives/Manuscripts Division of the Minnesota Historical Society.
- Enquist, Anna. Scandia: Then and Now. Stillwater, Minnesota: The Croixside Press, 1974.
- Neill, Rev. Edward and J. Fletcher Williams, History of Washington County and the St. Croix Valley. Minneapolis, Minnesota: North Star Publishing Co., 1881.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than 1 acre

Marine on St. Croix Quad: 7.5

UTM REFERENCES

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

A	1 5	5 1, 8 1, 6 1, 0	5, 0 0, 8 1, 4, 2, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

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.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Peggy Lindoo

9/27/77

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Minnesota Historical Society

612/726-1171

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

Bldg. 25, Fort Snelling

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

St. Paul

Minnesota

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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*

TITLE

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

*D. Ray* DIRECTOR OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

7/21/80

ATTEST *Kristen O'Connell*

DATE

7/18/80

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



~~Bestland Farm~~ *Copas, John, House*  
Marine on St. Croix, Minnesota

(Vicinity of)

MAY 1 1979

*Washington, DC.*

Liza Nagle  
Minnesota Historical Society  
690 Cedar Street, St. Paul, MN  
May 13, 1978  
West (front) and South facades  
01581/3

**JL 2 1 1979**

Property of the  
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
THIS PHOTOGRAPH IS FOR REFERENCE USE  
ONLY. IT MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED OR  
SOLD WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION.