

"FATHER HENNEPIN: A MINNESOTA STATE PARK DEVELOPMENT  
PROJECT RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY"

BY

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Prepared for the  
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Division of State Parks

Principal Investigator

Elden Johnson

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## Abstract

An archaeological reconnaissance survey was undertaken in November 1979 on a proposed campground project in Father Hennepin State Park on Mille Lac, Mille Lacs County, Minnesota. The survey was negative.

## Father Hennepin State Park

The 1979 development projects for Father Hennepin State Park were listed in the Scope of Work as "Sewer System". However, a check with DNR planning and park personnel showed that the sewer line was already under construction and nearly complete. The project had been surveyed for archaeological sites earlier by Minnesota Historical Society archaeologists Vernon and Queripel. DNR then suggested that in place of the sewer project, a proposed primitive campground be checked. While no definite plans for the campground had yet been made, a general idea of location was known. It is this proposed campground, then, which is discussed in this report.

### Background

Whites were reported in the Mille Lac area as early as 1659 (Radisson), but it wasn't until 1899 that an expedition to Mille Lac was undertaken for the expressed purpose of examining and recording prehistoric villages and "earth-works."

In May of 1899, J. V. Brower and party began a systematic survey of the Mille Lac shoreline. They began at Malmo on the northeast side of the lake, and worked counter clockwise, arriving at Gim-i-nis-sing Bay and Be-dud Point on May 6. The party returned on May 23 to make a more detailed check.

Brower reported the existence of a "modern" Chippewa village, a prehistoric Sioux habitation and a prehistoric mound group near the mouth of the Gim-i-nis-sing River (Malone Creek). But he failed to report any archaeological sites in the area now known as Father Hennepin State Park. (See Map 1).

It appears, from checking the University of Minnesota files that Lloyd Wilford, Minnesota State Archaeologist for many years, never surveyed in Father Hennepin State Park, although he, like his successor Elden Johnson, may have stopped in the park during his many years of research in the Mille Lacs area. Johnson had been asked, before any formal survey was ever conducted, to check the service area/picnic ground and identify possible mounds near the manager's residence. He confirmed the existence of mounds and in 1962 asked a team of his graduate students from the University of Minnesota to recheck and map the site.

## Father Hennepin State Park

The team of Gary Hume and Judith Campbell in 1962 carried out a survey and testing program around Mille Lacs. While most of the work concentrated in the Malmo and Garrison area, they did confirm Johnson's earlier observations of mounds in the yard of the manager's residence. This site was designated 21 ML 15.

In 1966, Johnson sent David Nysteun and Susan Mueller, University of Minnesota field school students to Father Hennepin to map the mounds at the park headquarters. At that time, a prehistoric habitation site was discovered and based on the pottery, was dated to the Middle Woodland (300BC to 500AD).

In 1978 the Minnesota Historical Society survey team of Robert Vernon and Susan Queripel began work in Father Hennepin on two development projects. The first was where a new boat shelter, sanitation building and fish house were to go. This part of the survey was negative.

The second area was for an extension of the campground to the west. It, too, proved negative, archaeologically.

However, a third area, not planned for development yielded archaeological material near the boat ramp. This area was given the state site number of 21 ML 28. (See Map 1).

### The 1979 Survey

The 1979 survey by the University of Minnesota was conducted on 14 November 1979 by field director Jan E. Streiff. Park Manager George Terzich took the author to the under construction campground where the contract called for the survey of the new sewer system. The system, previously surveyed by Vernon, was already nearly complete. Terzich then took the author across the road from the new campground to the possible location of a new primitive campground. While no definite plans have been set forth, the manager suggested that the area would be bounded on the east side by the current fence line and a planted stand of small pines. The north boundary, of course, would be the campground road, the southern boundary was not known and the western boundary logically could be the marsh just south of the road leading into the boat ramp. Given this lack of definites, the author decided to run one line of shovel tests along the length of the area. (See Map 2).

## Father Hennepin State Park

### Location

The survey was located in the NW 1/4 SW 1/4 Section 3 Twp 43N R 25W (Mille Lacs County). The park is on the southeast side of Mille Lacs and to the west of Isle Harbor. The proposed campground within the park lies on the south side of the main park road leading from the entrance to the beach. It is just across this road from the new main campground expansion. The terrain is fairly flat with only a slight slope from the road south into a marsh. The vegetation is primarily Northern hardwoods, with oak, maple, elm, ironwood predominating and very little underbrush, with the ground cover being grasses. However, in the eastern 1/4 of the survey area there is an old homestead road running north/south off of the main park road. The hardwood forest lies to the west of this road, while a cut-over area lies to the east with birch, small oaks and a heavy underbrush. There are also large piles of boulders in the cut-over area, presumably from the homestead days.

### Methodology

The methodology followed CMA guidelines, with tests being placed every 15 meters unless otherwise noted. The shovel tests (50cm x 50cm) were excavated to a depth of 50cm at 5cm levels. All material was screened through a 1/4 inch mesh screen.

If the first 50cm proved sterile, and subsoil was appearing a soil probe was used to test below 50cm to a depth where subsoil predominated and/or glacial till appeared. (See profiles for details).

### The Results

Thirteen tests were excavated along a line running parallel with the park road for approximately 275 meters and 15 meters in from the road. This was the area of the highest ground. None of the thirteen tests produced archaeological material. However, the area cannot be written off archaeologically. It is recommended that when plans are finalized and the exact location, especially the south boundary, of the campground is known, that an intensive survey be conducted. There is a possibility that a site might exist near the south park boundary where the campground may extend. USGS quads show a marsh in this area, but the low area was probably in the past an arm of Isle Harbor and may well have had a habitation site on this well protected bay. An intensive survey would answer such questions.

Father Hennepin State Park

The Results (continued)

The preliminary field report was submitted to DNR, the State Archaeologist, and the SHPO on 14 November 1979. The State Archaeologist approved the report and determined a no effect with the SHPO informing DNR that they had no objection to the development.

Jan E. Streiff

Archaeology Lab  
University of Minnesota  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455  
29 February 1980

## Bibliography

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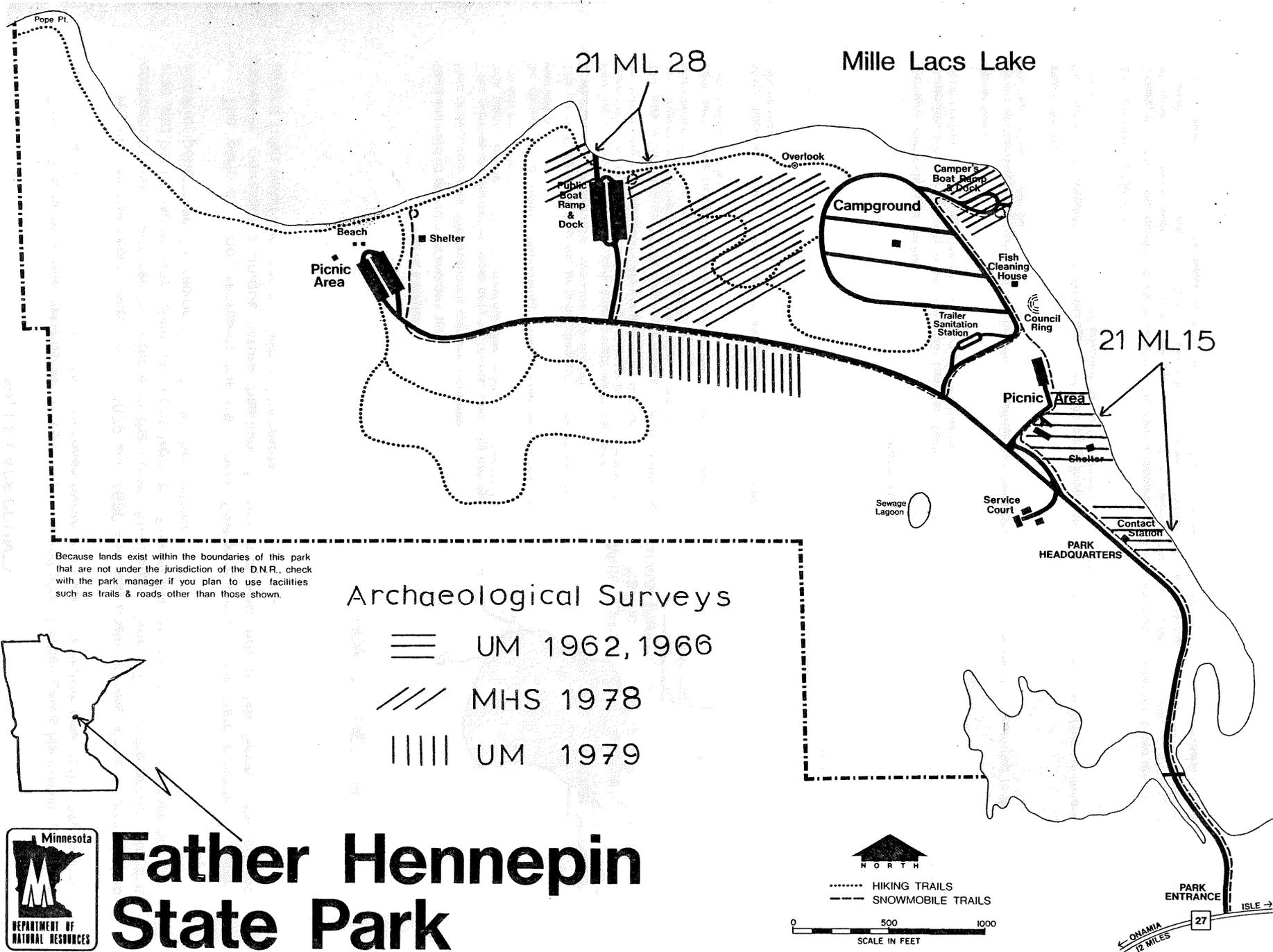
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Wilford, Lloyd A.

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Department of Natural Resources

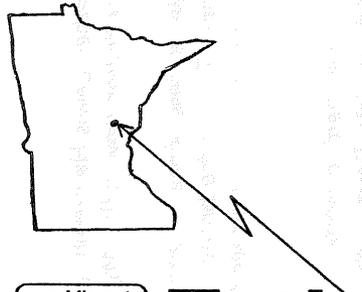
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Because lands exist within the boundaries of this park that are not under the jurisdiction of the D.N.R., check with the park manager if you plan to use facilities such as trails & roads other than those shown.

### Archaeological Surveys

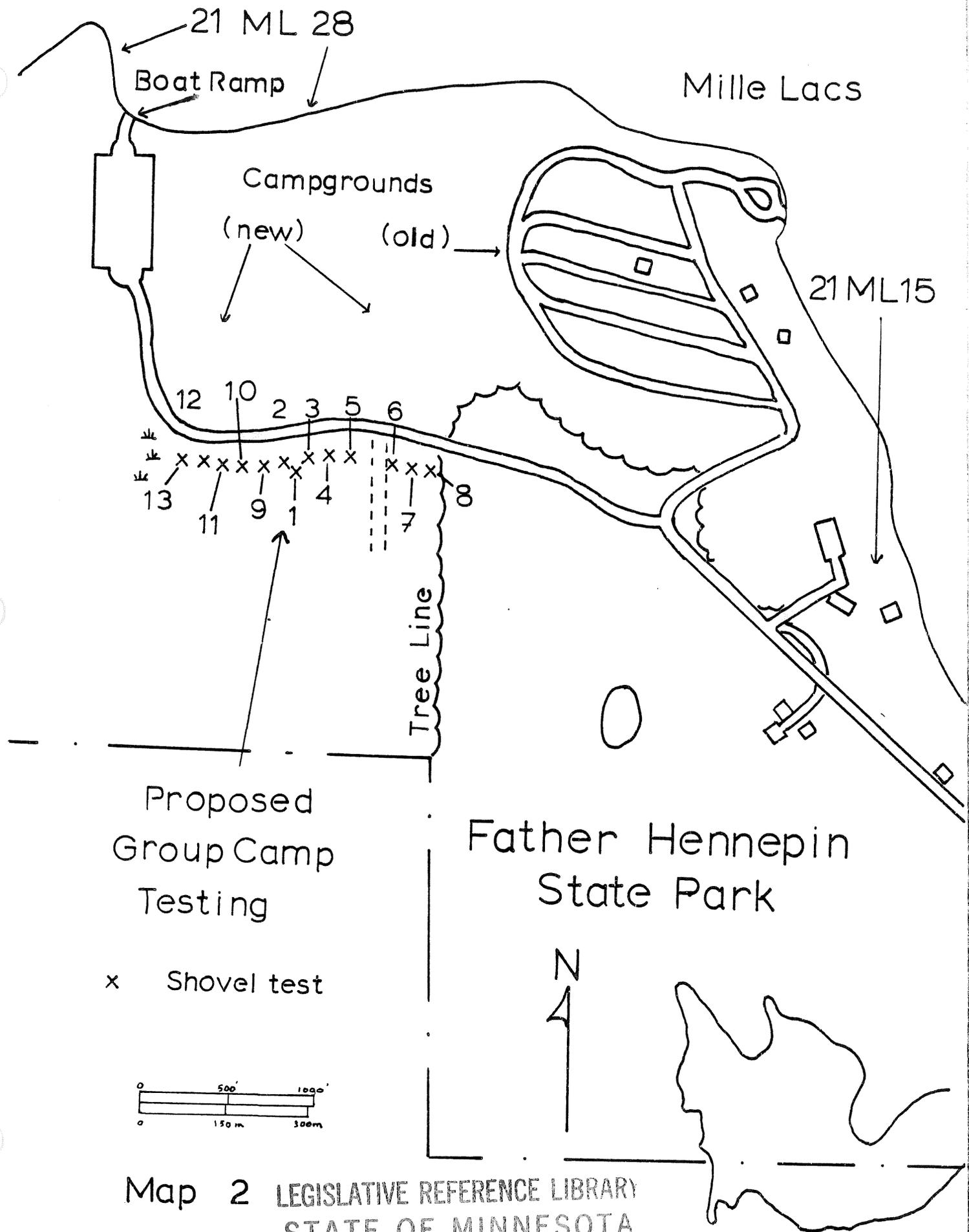
- ≡ UM 1962, 1966
- /// MHS 1978
- |||| UM 1979



# Father Hennepin State Park



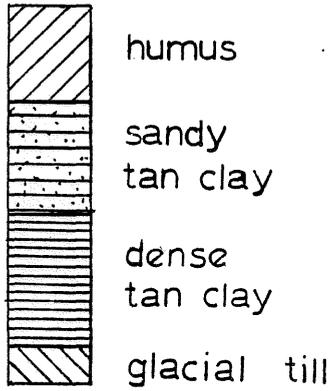
SPRING 1978



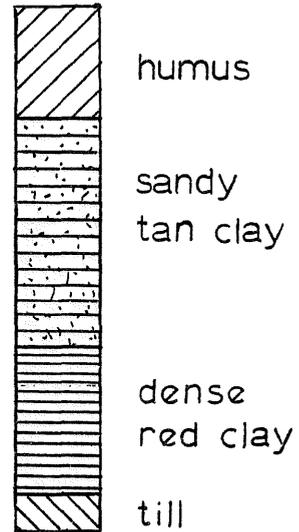
# FATHER HENNEPIN GROUP CAMP

## TEST UNIT SOIL PROFILE

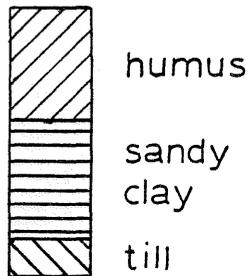
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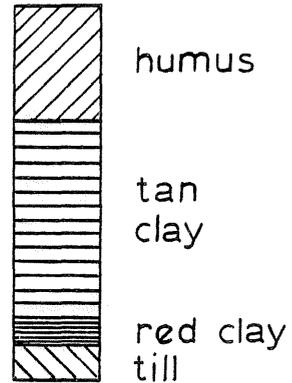
TEST 2



TEST 3



TEST 4



0 5 10 20 30 40 50  
scale in centimeters

# FATHER HENNEPIN GROUP CAMP

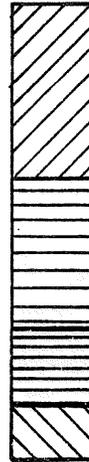
## TEST UNIT SOIL PROFILE

TEST 5



humus  
tan/grey  
clay sand  
water/mineral clay  
till

TEST 6



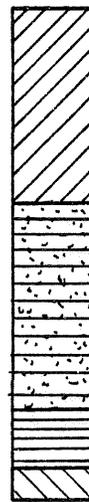
humus  
mineral / water  
stained clay  
red clay  
till

TEST 7



humus  
waterstained  
sandy clay  
red clay  
till

TEST 8



humus  
sandy clay  
red clay  
till

0 5 10 20 30 40 50  
scale in centimeters

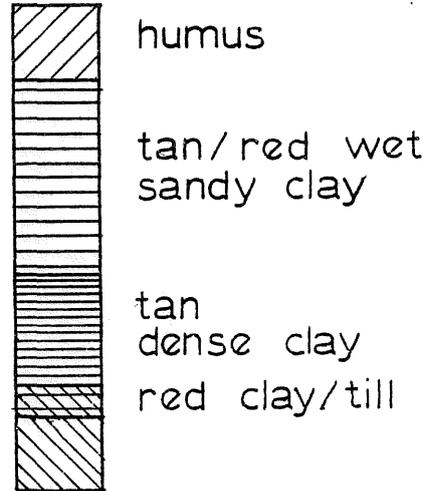
# FATHER HENNEPIN GROUP CAMP

## TEST UNIT SOIL PROFILE

TEST 9



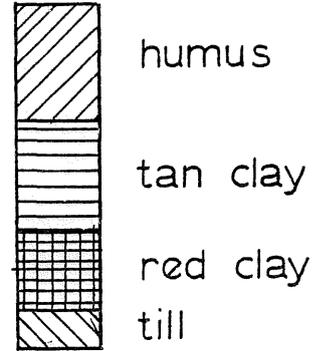
TEST 10



TEST 11



TEST 12



0 5 10 20 30 40 50

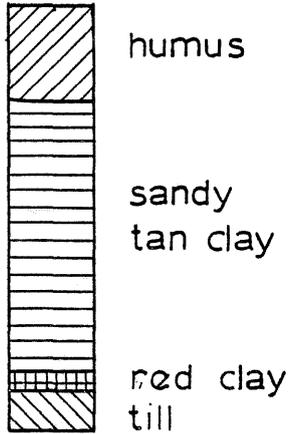


scale in centimeters

# FATHER HENNEPIN GROUP CAMP

## TEST UNIT SOIL PROFILE

TEST 13



0 5 10 20 30 40 50  
scale in centimeters



# MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

690 Cedar Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101 • 612-296-2747

December 5, 1979

Mr. John Winter  
Department of Natural Resources  
Parks and Recreation  
Box 39  
Centennial Building  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Mr. Winter:

RE: Review of the archaeological survey  
work conducted at Father Hennepin  
State Park, Primitive Group Camp,  
Mille Lacs County, Minnesota.

MHS Referral File Number J603

This letter is to inform you that our office has received a statement regarding the above referenced project. Since the proposed camp group has not been chosen, there is a need for further evaluation when this information is available. Once the exact plans are set, the project archaeologist should be notified. When we are in receipt of the results from this additional work, our office will issue a final statement.

Thank you for your support in preserving Minnesota's cultural resources.

Sincerely,

Russell W. Fridley  
State Historic Preservation Officer

RWF/cjb

cc: ✓ Ms. Jan Streiff  
Department of Anthropology  
Ford Hall  
224 Church Street S.E.  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

Appendix A

Archaeological Material from Father Hennepin State Park

<u>Year Collected</u>	<u>Archaeologist</u>	<u>Accession Number</u>	<u>Site Number</u>
1899	J. V. Brower	Minnesota Historical Society	General Isle area
1962	Hume and Campbell, University of Minnesota		21 ML 15
1978	Vernon, Minnesota Historical Society	272A 274B	21 ML 28 unnumbered