

## St. Hubert's Lodge, Frontenac



Though much is made of Minnesota's German and Scandinavian heritage, the first Europeans in the region were the French. One legacy of their sojourn is St. Hubert's Lodge—Minnesota's sole surviving French American galleried-style house.

In 1854 Israel Garrard and his brothers—the sons of a Kentucky governor—set out on a hunting trip down the Ohio River and up the Mississippi, passing by numerous French-style houses with porches facing the water. Coming upon a small settlement on the high bank of Lake Pepin, Garrard was struck by its beauty as well as its potential. He decided to stay. In 1856 he built a lodge there and named it St. Hubert's after the patron saint of hunting.

His vision was to create a serene village far removed from the hectic pace of the city. The town that grew up around the lodge, renamed Frontenac, became Minnesota's first summer resort. It was popular with families from the South and many others, including orator Henry Ward Beecher and the architects of New York City's Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, partly built of Frontenac limestone.

St. Hubert's upper verandas and exterior siding of foot-wide vertical whitewashed wood boards with battens

over the joints set a pattern for other local houses. To accommodate increasing trade, the original six-room, two-story lodge with double-decked galleries gradually grew into a sprawling 17-room, irregularly shaped structure.

In the early 1870s, Frontenac found itself in the path of the oncoming railroad. Rather than cash in and destroy the idyllic town he had nurtured, Garrard donated a right-of-way four miles to the west. The tracks and highway run there to this day, bypassing—and hence preserving—the old town.

St. Hubert's Lodge was one of 34 Minnesota structures recorded in the 1934 Historic American Buildings Survey. Added to the National Register of Historic Places in the 1970s as part of the Old Frontenac Historic District, it was later restored for conversion to a bed and breakfast (now closed), following the Register's standards for rehabilitation.

—LAURA WEBER

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Sources: Architectural notes, 1934 HABS documentation; Roger Kennedy, *Historic Homes of Minnesota* (St. Paul: MHS Press, 2006), 6–9; *Minnesota Preservationist*, Spring 2003, p. 12.



*St. Hubert's Lodge, photographed for the Historic American Buildings Survey by Joseph McCoy, February 1932 (Library of Congress)*





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