



Frontenac Station - The Early Years

Sharon M Nelson

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Frontenac Station is located next to the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad (Milwaukee Road) line, about eleven miles southeast of Red Wing, Minnesota on US Highway 61 and eight miles northwest of Lake City, Minnesota. In 1871 agents from the Railroad wanted to build the railroad line through Old Frontenac and approached Israel Garrard about acquiring property. Refusing to sell them land because he wanted to preserve the quiet, commercial-free atmosphere of Old Frontenac, he donated land two miles south of Old Frontenac for the new railroad line. Shortly after the railroad was built through the area in 1871, the village of Frontenac Station was platted and was the last village to be established in the area. By 1878 Frontenac Station was a fast-growing little community, with a depot, three stores, three blacksmith shops, a grain elevator, and a population of one hundred. Later, saloons, a creamery and cheese factory, a stone sawmill, a lumber mill, a service garage, a bank and a hotel were established. Frontenac Station was a bustling little village with Florence Township residents bringing their crops to town for shipment by rail. By the 1950s truck transportation made it easier for farmers to take their products to larger grain elevators in neighboring towns, and soon some of Frontenac's businesses were beginning to disappear. Today this quiet little community is left with very few businesses and most people who live there are retired or commute to work in larger cities nearby. Yet today there are still people living in Old Frontenac and Frontenac Station who can proudly say that they are descendants of some of the early settlers that made these two villages and the surrounding area their home. This book covers the rich history of the early residents, businesses and local news articles, sharing photographs, stories and what life was like growing up in Frontenac Station in the 1860s through the early 1900's.

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