



Fourth of July in Springfield – 1904 (SHS)

City of Springfield Historic Context Study

Prepared for the
City of Springfield, MN

by
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We live not alone in the present, but also in the past and future. We can never look out thoughtfully at our own immediate surroundings but a course of reasoning will start up, leading us to inquire into the causes that produced the development around us, and at the same time we are led to conjecture the results to follow causes now in operation. We are thus linked indissolubly with the past and the future.

If, then, the past is not simply a stepping-stone to the future, but a part of our very selves, we cannot afford to ignore, or separate it from ourselves as a member might be lopped off from our bodies; for though the body thus maimed, might perform many and perhaps most of its functions, still it could never again be called complete.

- Charles S. Bryant

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Introduction

Brief History of Springfield

This historic context study describes the historical and architectural development of Springfield between 1870 and 1965, with a focus on the period before World War I. The location of the townsite was determined to be a railroad stop for the new Winona and St. Peter railroad. The railroad reached Burnstown in 1872 and plat of the village was filed five years later. Settlement quickly developed around this station and by 1879, the community, built mainly of brick, had 250 inhabitants, 4 stores, 5 grain elevators, brick and tile works, a flour mill, a creamery, a school, 2 churches and a doctor. The village was incorporated in 1881 and the name changed to "Springfield," due to the large, flowing spring on the townsite. The boom years of the 1890s relied on the A.C. Ochsøbrickyard, local farmers (flour mill and creamery), and rail service. The village finally became the City of Springfield in 1923.

Purpose of the Historic Context Study

A historic context study is a document used in planning for a community's historic resources. It identifies the broad patterns of historic development of the community and identifies historic property types, such as buildings, sites, structures, objects or districts, which may represent these patterns of development. In urban areas, context studies typically focus on themes such as industrial, commercial, residential, institutional development, local architects, landscape architects, and buildings. In addition, a historic context study provides direction for evaluating and protecting significant historic resources.

As a planning document, the context study is intended to be a dynamic document, evolving as community needs and desires change. The context study is based primarily on historical research and has not involved inventory of buildings, structures, and landscapes. Future inventory and evaluation will assist in determining which properties relate to specific contexts, possess historical significance, and also retain historic integrity.

Context-based planning, as developed by the National Park Service for organizing activities for preserving historic resources, is based on the following principles:

- Significant historic properties are unique and irreplaceable.
- Preservation must often go forward without complete information.
- Planning can be applied at any scale.

- History belongs to everyone.

Information in this document will aid in planning efforts and decision-making with regards to historic resources as the City of Springfield is faced with future development and expansion.

The contexts developed for Springfield reflect certain statewide historic contexts developed by the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office. These statewide contexts include:

- Railroads and Agricultural Development, 1870-1940
- Urban Centers, 1870-1940
- Minnesota Farms, 1820-1960

Methodology

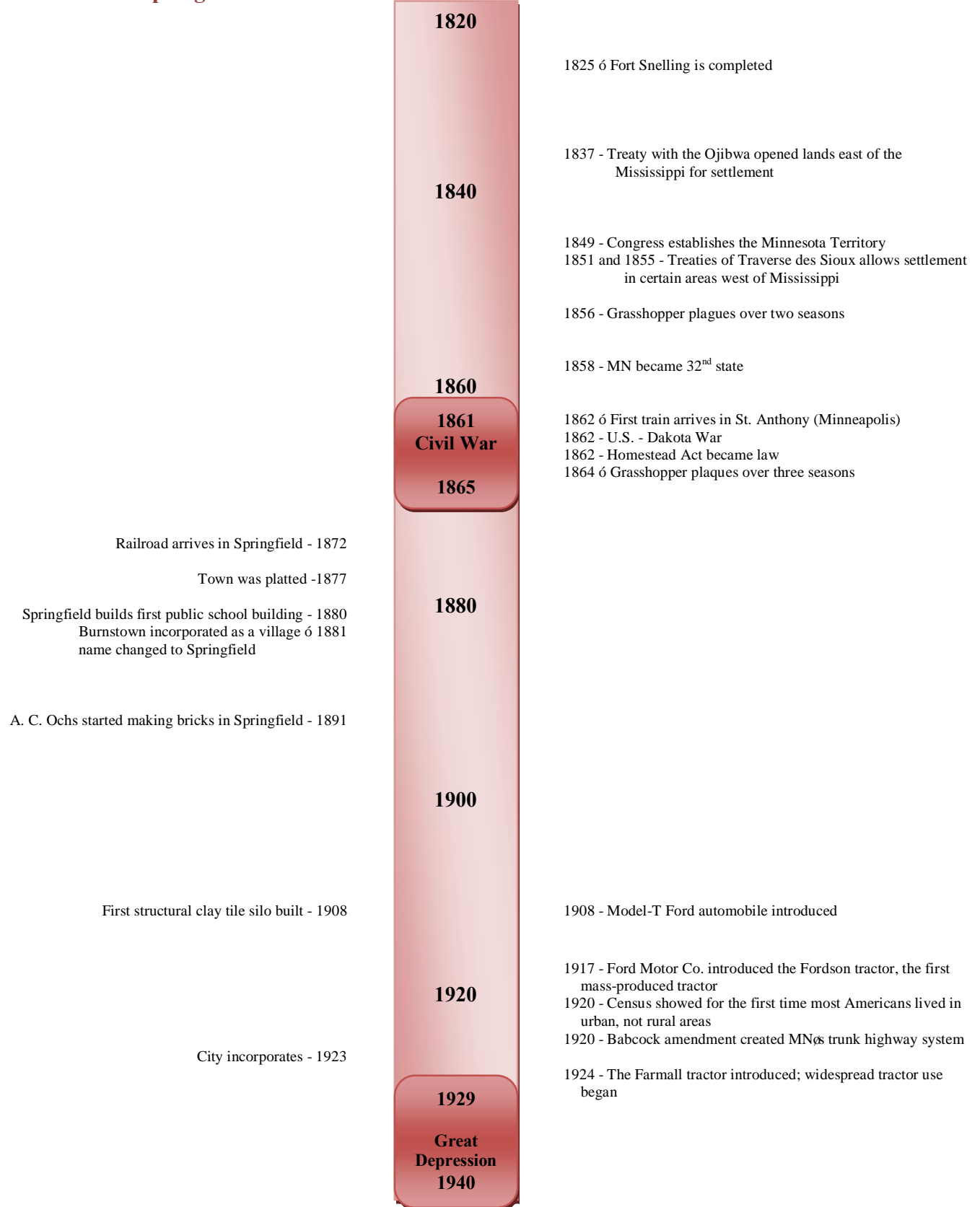
The study process began by meeting with the Malcolm Tilberg, City of Springfield's City Manager, and Doris Weber, Springfield Advance-Press editor and local historian, to identify prominent local resources, sites and priorities. Background research began with reviewing state contexts on file at the State Historic Preservation Office, and researching historic documents at the Brown County Historical Society, Minnesota Historical Society, and the Springfield Historical Society. Primary sources such as Sanford Fire Insurance maps and city directories were also studied. Immensely helpful was the Springfield history book, *Springfield: Town on the Minnesota Prairie*, written by the Springfield Advance-Press.

Historic photos are from the *Springfield: town on the Minnesota Prairie* book, the Springfield Historical Society, Minnesota Historical Society (MHS), MN Bricks website, Gary Revier (Mayor of Redwood Falls), and *A History of Minnesota*.

Timeline

Springfield

U.S./Minnesota



Downtown Springfield



● Properties on the
National Register of
Historic Places

Context 1 – Native American, Early Archeological, Early White Settlement Time Span – 1700 - 1881

Geography and Location

Springfield is located in Brown County, 30 miles west of New Ulm, which is the county seat for Brown County. Located in the western half of Minnesota, Springfield is surrounded by rolling prairie. Retreating glaciers deposited fertile pulverized limestone that has made this area one of the most productive areas to farm in the country.

The only trees were along the Cottonwood River, which flows south of the town. The Cottonwood River is a tributary to the Minnesota River, and though it is not navigable, it did provide energy to power Springfield's first mills.

Native American Settlement

Two Native American cultures preceded the Dakota Indians in this area of Brown County. The Woodland Culture lived on the banks of the Minnesota and Cottonwood Rivers from 800 BC to 900 AD. Among other characteristics, the Woodland Culture buried their dead in earthen mounds; hence, they were also referred to as Mound Builders. Following the Woodland Culture, the Mississippian Culture lived in the area from about 900 AD to 1700 AD. In addition to hunting and gathering, the Mississippians supported themselves with agriculture, growing corn, beans and squash.

After the Mississippians, the Dakota were the last Native Americans to control the Brown County area. Originally from the Great Lakes region, the Dakota moved to southern Minnesota after being pushed out by the Ojibwa. The Dakota lived in villages in the summer, and broke up into smaller groups in the winter to follow deer and other animals. The Dakota nation occupied most of present-day Minnesota, and parts of the current states of North and South Dakota. There were originally seven tribal groups in the Dakota nation: Mdewakanton, Sisseton, Wahpeton, Wahpekute, Yankton, Yanktonais, and Teton.

In 1851, the Dakota signed two treaties with the U.S. government: the Traverse des Sioux and Mendota treaties. The accumulative result of the two treaties was the relocation of the Dakota to two adjoining reservations stretching 150 miles along the Minnesota River. Encompassing a strip

of land 10 miles wide on each side of the river, the original reservations reached from northwest of New Ulm to near the present-day border of South Dakota.

Under the terms of the two treaties the Dakota agreed to give up approximately 35 million acres of land in exchange for "perpetual peace," \$1,665,000 to be paid out over 50 years and services that included blacksmiths, doctors, schools, carpenters and training on how to become farmers. Although the Dakota had been hunters for generations, the federal government pressured them into becoming farmers instead. Any Dakota that did not cooperate was denied any food or money promised to them through the treaties.

The U.S. "Dakota War of 1862 broke out in part as a reaction to events a thousand miles to the southeast. When the Civil War broke out in 1861, the federal government redirected funding and attention to troops fighting the Confederates, as a result, the Dakota's promised supplies came months late.



Erd Building – 108 North Minnesota, New Ulm (MHS)

The conflict started in Meeker County on August 17, 1862, but spread to Brown County the next day, when a group of traditional Dakota men attacked the Lower Sioux Agency. Two days later, about 100 Dakota warriors attacked New Ulm. Ed Tauer explained that his great-grandmother, Mary Schmitz Ryan was told to gather children and go into the basement of the Erd building. Ms. Schmitz had "keg duty." In the basement of the building was a keg of dynamite with the women and children. Ms. Schmitz was ordered to light the keg of dynamite if the Indians broke through

the line of defense around the town. After five days of fighting, the Dakota withdrew up the Minnesota Valley.

The Dakota War effectively ended after the Battle of Wood Lake in September 1862. Even though the Dakota War only lasted a few months, the panic it caused among the white settlers took years to overcome.

At least 500 white settlers were killed during the conflict; it is unknown how many Dakota died. The Dakota paid dearly, though. As Little Crow, leader of the Dakota, had predicted, "Kill one, two, or ten, and ten times ten will come to kill you." Those that were not killed, lost their land, forfeited all payments due to them, and were moved into camps and reservations far from Minnesota. The government paid a bounty of \$500 for each Dakota Indian scalp. The largest mass execution in U.S. history was a result of the Dakota War in Brown County. Originally, over 300 Dakota men were sentenced to be hanged, but President Abraham Lincoln commuted most of their sentences to prison. On December 26, 1862, 38 Dakota men were hanged in Mankato. Little Crow finally said, "we are only little herds of buffalo. The great herds that covered the prairies are no more" (Minnesota Travel Companion p. 125).



Little Crow (MHS)

Even with the banishment of the Dakota Indians from the state, the settlers feared the Dakota who roamed from time to time back to their old hunting grounds. Few settlers understood the Dakota culture, let alone respected it. It was a case of two cultures with two different needs and philosophies competing for the same space. The simple, hardworking immigrants who were looking for a new life, could not allow the Indian to stand in their way. They had sacrificed everything to make a new start. It was a matter of survival. But to the Dakota it became a matter of survival as well.

Early White Settlement

White settlement slowed for a few years after the Dakota war. However, when demand for land picked up again because of the Homestead Act of 1862, large tracts of the former Sioux reservations were turned over to white settlers. Speculators and settlers came by steam-boats following the major rivers and their tributaries - the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers. Because the nearest railroad was in Mankato, speculators traveled over land by covered wagon to find their destinies.

To take advantage of the Homestead Act, settlers had to be over 21 and must never have borne arms against the U.S. (i.e. not fought for the Confederate Army during the Civil War.) The Act promised 160 acres of land, which would be owned outright by the settler after five years if he improved it. The land could also be bought outright for \$1.25/acre. (Brown County Minnesota p. 12)

The prairie sod was tough for the first settlers to cultivate. They had to have a breaking or sod plow with two or three pair of oxen to pull it to break through the prairie sod. Although the prairie did not offer trees to build the settlers' first houses, the prairie did provide tough sod that imitated the durable qualities of brick. Settlers cut the prairie sod with a spade and used the sod as bricks or blocks without mortar to make sod shanties. It has



Ox team with sod shanty in background (Gary Revier)

been noted that the sod shanties would stand for years. Because of the lack of wood, very few of the shanties had board floors. Instead hay or carpet was just laid over the dirt. Settlers would identify their property by digging ditches around their fields.

Early publications marketed the open prairies to the people living on the east coast. The September 1851 edition of the periodical "The Dakota Friend" describes the Brown County area as: "Much of it is of excellent quality, well-timbered and well watered. It is an inviting country to cramped up New England farmers, who dig among the rocks and hills. Here is room enough, a rich soil, and a healthy climate."

The first settlers bought their groceries and supplies in New Ulm or St. James, which were the closest towns. It was a day's trip down to New Ulm and a day's trip back. They loaded up their lumber wagons with enough supplies to last quite a while. The early settlers that could not afford a lumber wagon made the trip on foot, carrying supplies on their backs.

Life on the prairie was very difficult for the early settlers. They had to deal with deadly diseases, blizzards, grass hoppers, prairie fires, and roaming Indians. In the early days such diseases as measles, croup, typhoid fever, and scarlet fever were widespread, and often fatal as even the doctors did not understand how to handle the cases as they do now (if one could even get a doctor). There were cases where the whole family of children died. Hospitals and nurses were not existent (The Days of '69 p. 13).

An early settler told a story about the blizzard in the winter of 1871-72. Winds so strong that oxen would not face them. Temperatures so cold that cattle froze on the prairie. One particular boy, 15 years of age, was in school in Leavenworth. After he got the younger children to their homes, he started walking in the blizzard to his home a mile away. "When he got about eighty rods from the house, the storm was so bad and it was getting dark and he could follow the path no longer. He came to a straw stack where the cattle had dug a hole in the southeast side (opposite from the direction of the storm). He crawled in and made a bed in the straw and stayed all night; he found his way home in the morning" (The Days of '69 p. 10).

Prairie fires were also deadly. In the fall when the grass was dry and no rivers or lakes to break up the prairie, if a fire started (and they did) and the wind was blowing, "it was something to be dreaded." Haystacks and often buildings "were swept away" (The Days of '69 p. 11).

For three consecutive years, from 1874-76, grasshoppers ate the equivalent of over half the crops in the area. Many settlers left their farms, returning back east, or moving farther west to try farming new locations. The few farmers who remained were assisted by the Federal Government, by giving them flour and leftover shoes and blue overcoats from the Civil War.

German, Norwegian, Swedish and Danish were the most common European ethnic groups to settle in Brown County, and they tended to settle in specific settlements. Germans settled in New Ulm, Norwegians in Linden Township and Lake Hanska. Swedes tended to settle in Bashaw Township, while Danes preferred Eden and Prairieville Townships. Scotts and Irish settlers

founded the region around Sleepy Eye Lake.

However, the majority of the immigrants were of German descent. Even though Germans adapted to their surroundings, they clung to their Fatherland, its language and customs, with a sentimentality unknown to Scandinavians. For years in many communities their mother tongue was more commonly heard than English. "Their respect for organization, music, and learning is reflected in their music clubs, in the neat, precisely laid out farms, and in the efficiency with which they conduct their shops and businesses. During the rough pioneer days they managed to keep up their little orchestras and bands, and Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven were introduced by them into Minnesota even before the Paul Bunyan ditties were brought by the lumberjacks." (WPA p 79)

Early Townsite Development

Anticipating the arrival of the iron horse, farsighted capitalists homesteaded properties which the railroad was also interested, but seldom did the settlers buy up enough land to have a monopoly of the sale of lots. Usually they bought the land nearest where the depot would be. With the building of the railroad, the railroad company was given a land grant of every other section of land for ten miles on either side of the track. If some of the land had been homesteaded, the government substituted other land. John Bagen and Ferdinand and Jacob Schwarzrock had beaten the railroad to the property around the planned Burns Station (later Springfield).

The southwest part of the town was "railroad land," part of the government land grant to the Winona & St. Peter Railroad Co. Ferdinand Schwarzrock had homesteaded the northeast corner, Jacob Schwarzrock the southeast corner and John Bagen the northwest corner. These three settlers and the Railroad land company furnished the ground upon which the city of Springfield now stands. Central Avenue (originally named Redwood) separated the north and south property owned by these land speculators.

Ferdinand Schwarzrock immigrated to Minnesota from Germany in 1857. He first settled in Winona for two years, and then moved to Burnstown (Springfield) in 1859, when he was 26 years old. He built his first house in the north part of Burnstown. His house was a large one for those days, measuring 18' x 26'. It served as the first church for St. Paul's Lutheran congregation. It also served as the place for early day elections. Mr. Schwarzrock married Amelia Messerschmidt

in 1873. She gave birth to 12 children in that log house. The last two born were twins and she and one of the twins died at that time. Three other children died in their first year. The house was built largely of hard wood. The logs were hewn square and dovetailed at the corners. The walls were 10 feet high and there were two rooms up and two down. The inside was plastered with a mud plaster held together with straw. Originally the house stood where Hwy 14 now passes. After a new house was built along side it, the log house was moved about 100 feet north of the new house and used as a chicken barn. It was torn down in 1946.

John Bagen, born in Ireland in 1822, immigrated to Connecticut in 1840, then Wisconsin, and before the railroad came, filed on a homestead immediately west of Ferdinand Schwarzrock's log house. He hauled some lumber from St. James when he built his little house on the hill.

Like many towns in Minnesota, Springfield was platted in a gridiron scheme in a north/south, east/west orientation, with the railroad and Cottonwood River passing through the south side of the town. The grid scheme was an advantageous one in many ways. It could be easily laid out by anyone who could work with survey equipment. Since land was a major commodity, the grid pattern was also useful in that it facilitated the sale and resale of it and the preparation of the necessary legal descriptions.

Some of Springfield's streets are named after early land developers. Sherburn Sanborn, William Mellen, George Van Dusen and Walter Brackenridge all purchased property from Ferdinand Schwarzrock and Jacob Schwarzrock for development.

As soon as the prospect of a railroad became certain and its location was determined, Mike Gamble erected a small shack and opened a store. He was Springfield's pioneer merchant, also postmaster as soon as the settlement had a name, Burns. Later, when Springfield was incorporated, the post office was given the same name as the town. He served as postmaster for seven years. Gamble was a 28-year old bachelor when he came here. It was not until he was 41, in 1885, that he married Fanny Donner. A daughter, Mrs. Frank (Olivia) Peischel, lived here until her death in 1966 at the age of 100 years.

In 1872 the railroad was finally extended from New Ulm. Like many railroad towns, Burns Station started to become the center for the agricultural community, serving a growing population of farmers whose needs were varied and numerous. It was not long until businesses started to

provide services and equipment needed by farmers, facilities such as a flour mill to process the harvested crops, and saloons and churches to meet the farmers' socialization needs.

The first house constructed in Springfield was a section house built by the railroad company for A. G. Anderson, who afterwards put in a lumber yard and elevator. The train service was a freight train with an old coach attached, making tri-weekly trips from New Ulm to Marshall. During several winters the railroad was blockaded with snow for weeks and no more trains until the snow plow opened the line in the spring. There being no depot, the freight was left on the ground when unloaded from the cars (69ers p. 6).

After the original plat of Springfield was filled up with homes, Ferdinand Schwarzrock platted one addition after another as the town grew mostly in the direction of his homestead. All the early mansions were built in the northern part of Springfield. Shortly thereafter, the Winona and St. Peter Land Company platted its Second Addition, which included two blocks dedicated to the public: one for the school district (where the high school was later built) and one block comprising Browns Park. There was a debate as to where the school should be built. Mr. Schwarzrock offered land in the east end of town, and the Railroad Land Company offered this block. The vote, in 1883, favored the west end and soon thereafter that part of town started to grow, eventually outstripping the east part of town (Springfield Advance-Press 12-12-73).

The village was incorporated in 1881 and the name changed to "Springfield," due to the large, flowing spring on the townsite. The village finally became the City of Springfield in 1923. Springfield is a common name and known in part, for being a common place-name in the United States. A Springfield can be found in 34 different states, with at least four in Wisconsin alone. However, it should be noted, there are many more common place names in the US, including Fairview, Midway and Oak Grove.

Context 2 -Farmsteads and Agricultural Life

Time Span – 1850s -1963

The agricultural industry has had a significant impact on the physical and economical development of Springfield, some of which are still evident today from farm buildings to local roads. During the town's infancy (1860-1900), agriculture was the leading export industry, bringing the most money into the community. The local businesses like the blacksmiths, general stores, saloons, harness shops, hardware stores, banks and bakeries all initially relied on the success of the local farmers. The farmers have made significant investments in mills, creameries and their farms that have shaped the landscape of Springfield and the surrounding country side.

Early Farming

In the 1850s, when agriculture was undertaken in earnest in Minnesota, farmers ignored the rich prairies and instead chose areas like along the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers with wooded valleys and hills. Clearing the "Big Woods" of eastern Minnesota to farm was time consuming work, but early farmers were wary of land where trees did not grow, where water was obtainable only by digging deep wells, and where cyclones and prairie fires were a periodic menace. "It was not until after immigrants had followed the railroads across the State, and had proved the richness of this prairie country, that they realized their mistake" (WPA p. 69).

Most farms began on a subsistence basis. Early farmers were short on cash but long on labor. L. A. Larson explained the early life on a new farm:

It was 1869...we had no team, no cow, no chickens and a couple of the neighbors broke up three acres which we planted into flint corn and the following year we dug 100 rods (roughly a ¼ mile) of ditch fence to earn enough money to buy a cow. The ditch fence was three feet wide, three and half feet deep and was walled up three feet... the first team we had I earned by working on the railroad when it came through (Days of '69, p. 23).

Early settlers planted vegetables such as potatoes, carrots, corn, onions and cabbage. Hunting muskrats among the woods of Cottonwood River and fishing in the river also provided an important source of food during the early days (Days of '69 p. 23).

“King Wheat”

Wheat was the first crop grown commercially on a large scale in Minnesota. It was considered a frontier crop because it is dependent on abundant and inexpensive land. It had arrived in Minnesota in 1859 after moving westward along the U.S. frontier. Wheat was “the premier lazy man’s crop, taking relatively little labor (and little expertise) to produce,” according to historian David Danborn (Danborn p. 147).

Wheat was the main crop in the late 1800s and early 1900s for Springfield and Brown County farmers. Wheat production in Brown County increased from 14,000 acres in 1877 to 44,000 acres in 1888. Not only did production of wheat increase, but the quality of the wheat was highly prized. Brown County wheat won awards at World Fairs and industrial expositions, establishing it as some of the finest in the world, and giving Minnesota the nickname “King Wheat.”

Not only was wheat easy to grow but it was also easily stored, transported and grinded so as to become an article of trade earlier and for longer distances than more bulky and more perishable products. Grain could also be converted into money the same year it was grown (Larson p. 25-26).

Milling was the main economic driving force for the Brown County economy from 1858 until it ended in 1963. Terminal elevators to store the grain and flour mills to process the wheat sprang up like weeds. In the 1870s, the six mills along the Cottonwood River were spaced so that nearby farmers could reach one and return to their farms in a day. Early in the 20th century, Brown County was one of the three greatest milling centers in the world. Flour from Brown County could be found on shelves everywhere from Europe to Central America.

Springfield’s oldest industry was started in 1886, just five years after Springfield was incorporated. A mill was so necessary that Springfield’s citizens offered three men a free building site and \$2000 as an incentive to building a mill in town. While ownership has changed several times, the mill has consistently been one of Springfield’s leading industries since its founding. The quality of product produced was recognized as early as 1893 when the World’s Fair in Chicago presented the mill an “Award of Merit” for the quality of its “White Swan” flour. The death of L. S. Gregory in 1963 resulted in the sale of the Springfield Milling Corporation to the Hubbard Milling Co. in Mankato. Flour milling ceased in Springfield in October, 1963, after 77

years of grinding wheat into flour. It was the last wheat flour mill to operate in Brown County (Springfield p. 92).



Springfield Milling Co. Postcard (MHS)

In 1904, Springfield's farmers wanted to market grain in a cooperative way and organized the Springfield Farmers Elevator Co. The Farmers Elevator was built the following year along the railroad right-of-way southeast of Cass Avenue and Central Street. Over a hundred years later, the elevator closed in 1996.

Diversification

In the 1870s, economic forces and exhausted soil from 20 years of raising only wheat compelled Minnesota farmers to move from pioneer wheat farming to a more diverse set of crops and livestock. Regions east of Minnesota had followed a similar pattern in the mid-1800s. As land became more valuable, it had to be used for livestock production and dairying rather than solely raising wheat.

Diversification was also advanced by railroad interests like James J. Hill. Mr. Hill knew that farmers' reliance on a "one crop system" was not in their, nor more importantly, his long term interest. Experience demonstrated that unless farmers practiced crop rotation and adopted diversified farming systems, even the most fertile land would eventually "give out." But the railroad had made enormous capital investments; it was here to stay. Hill could not afford to have

the soil "give out" (Dickman p. 68). Hill delivered countless speeches, insisting farmers diversify the operations. His railroad company visited town after town and constructed demonstration farms.

Diversification was beneficial to the farmers. It protected farmers from being completely wiped out by the failure of a single crop. Farmers could earn regular "egg money" and a "milk check" instead of relying on a single payment for the grain harvest in the fall. Livestock and poultry made better use of the family's total labor pool, including children, and spread farm labor more evenly throughout the year. Diversification also made good use of farm by-products. Livestock could eat crop residue missed during harvest, and excess milk could be fed to young pigs and calves. Fields could be naturally fertilized with manure, and untillable land could be used for pasture (Historic Context of MN Farms p. 3.29).

Corn acreage pushed into first place at the turn of the century surpassing wheat. New varieties of corn were being introduced into the State, and an influx of Iowa farmers with experience in corn raising started the swing away from cash to feed crops (PWA p. 70).

Silos - air tight structures that preserved green fodder for the winter months " allowed farms to feed dairy cows nutritious green material year-round, which encouraged more milking through the winter. A silo alone could increase the livestock-carrying capacity of a farm by more than one-fourth. The state's first silos were built in the late 1880s, and by WWI they were becoming standard everywhere (Wayne p. 30-37).

The effect of diversification on the built environment on farms surrounding Springfield was profound. Livestock farming, and especially dairying, required farmers to make significant capital investments for new buildings and equipment. Two-story barns (usually housing animals below and feed such as hay above) and silos became a significant



part of Springfield's rural. Diversified farming dominated Minnesota agriculture until the late 1950s (Historic Context of MN Farms 3.29).

“The Butter State”

Dairy farming was a natural choice for Minnesota farmers, many of whom immigrated from places like Scandinavia where dairying was important. Minnesota's climate was good for growing grass and hay, and hilly regions that could not be cultivated made good pasture. Just as important, the (national) butter market had not been captured by another region, unlike the cheese market which Wisconsin already led (Keillor p. 101-102). These factors led many Minnesota farmers to move to dairy products as their main cash crop (Wayne p. 27).

However, Minnesota's dairy farming industry could not have developed without a processing and marketing system. During the settlement period, butter and cheese making were home enterprises and the butter was of poor quality because facilities to store milk and cream were primitive. The churning of butter and milking cows was an irksome task on almost every farmer. Everybody, even young children, helped milk twice a day and do other chores. Wayne explained, “the size of the herd was often determined by the number of people available to milk cows by hand - the bigger the family the larger the herd” (Wayne p. 11).

Butter was an important part of Springfield's early economy as two of the earliest forms of currency in Brown County were eggs and butter. August Hummel, a butter maker in New Ulm

and Springfield, noted, "in those days, every grocery store and even some of the department stores took in eggs and butter in trade for merchandise. The storekeeper was just up against it. If the butter was rancid or unclean, they had to buy it or offend the customer" (Brown County History p. 15).

In the early 1880s, homemade butter sold for 6 to 8 cents per pound, while creamery-made butter sold for about double that. As a result, W.R. Murfin founded a creamery next to Sleepy Eye Lake in 1882, and another in Springfield in 1887, to process butter for sale to larger cities in the east. The need to haul milk to the local creamery every day was one of the factors that led Minnesota farmers to become advocates of the "good roads" movement at the turn of the century. Transportation historian Larsen explained, "the influence of the creamery as a factor in bringing about good roads can scarcely be overestimated. Many a farmer, after he arrived at the creamery and found his cream churned to butter by the bumpy, rutty roads, learned to curse such roads fluently. . .there can be no staying home until the road dries" (Larsen p. 367).

The first Springfield Farmers Cooperative Creamery was organized in 1893. They built a creamery across the river near the southwest end of Riverside Park. With their charter about to expire in 1919, the members voted to build a new creamery in downtown. In 1978, an addition was added to the back of the main building, and the creamery converted from milk can to bulk tank operation and "Cheese Haven" was started, selling 50 varieties of cheese.



Springfield Farmers Cooperative Building (1919)

Cooperative creameries were essential for Minnesota's dairy industry because the financial risk of bringing expensive butter processing equipment to an area was spread amongst the farmers. In most cooperative operations, member farmers shared the profits based on how much butterfat they contributed. Members also used to divide the labor. Some cut ice from the nearest lake or

river in the winter, others hauled coal, and others carried the finished tubs of butter to the train depot. By the turn of the century virtually every city and township in Brown County had a creamery of its own. In 1898, Minnesota had 557 cooperative creameries (84% of all creameries). Twenty years later, Minnesota had 671 cooperatives creameries. This total was just under half of all creameries in the nation (Historic Context of MN Farms 3.35).

The success of the dairy industry for Brown County farmers is still physically evident today as the sod shanties or log huts of the settlers have given way to spacious farm houses.

Context 3– Commerce and Industry Time Span 1872-1935

While a number of historic buildings have been lost (i.e. the Opera House), downtown Springfield has retained a significant collection of historic buildings that chronicles its celebrated history. While a few of the buildings like the Kreitinger Garage and the State Bank of Springfield are associated with a particular business, most of the historic buildings in Springfield have served a variety of businesses over their 100 plus life span. This versatility and longevity demonstrates the importance of these historic buildings to Springfield.

Maybe even more impressive is the dedication that Springfield's residents have demonstrated over the years. Springfield business leaders have established a strong sense of civic duty and pride, from constructing impressive-looking buildings to continuously supporting the city, generation after generation. Some of these business leaders names are Gamble, Schmid, Lehrer, Pieschel, Paffrath, Warnke, Niemann, Engelen, Bendixen, and Rothenbug.

A perfect example of this leadership and dedication is August Niemann. Immigrating with his family from Germany at age 13, August was primarily self-taught. A blacksmith, owner of Niemann's Shop from 1912 to 1957, August was also Chief of the Springfield Fire Department for 28 years, President of the Farmers and Merchants State Bank for 31 years, Director of the Springfield Building and Loan Association for 37 years and served as the City's mayor from 1933 to 1945 during the difficult times of the depression and WWII (Springfield p. 31).

Like many railroad towns on the prairie, Springfield's boom years were from 1890-1910, when all of its industries were growing: milling, brickmaking, farming, and dairying, Many of the impressive buildings during this time were constructed with a second story that were used for office, meeting space or apartments.

One of Springfield's unique architectural styles for such a small town is the large number of elaborate iron cornices placed on the commercial buildings. Introduced in the 1840s, cast iron could be forged into a wide array of shapes and designs, allowing elaborate facades that were far cheaper than traditional stone carved ones. These facades could also be painted a wide array of



Commerce

First Store

Michael Gamble was Springfield's first merchant. In 1872 he built a 12x 14 building on property now occupied by Steinke-Seidl Building Center for many years and now known as The Building Center. A few months later he built a second merchandise store. He opened a lumber yard in connection with his mercantile establishment. His store soon became too small so he built a two-story frame building on the corner of Central street, where the Springfield Car Wash and Laundromat is now located (Springfield p. 23).

Automobile

As an investment, Michael Lehrer constructed a building on the site adjacent to the railroad depot in 1911 (an earlier frame hotel on the site had burned down). Mr. Lehrer wanted a physically impressive building that would be appropriate as a "gateway" to downtown Springfield. The first tenant in the building was Louis Kreiting, who operated a Ford auto dealership. Lehrer is said to have constructed the building for easy possible adaptation to another use (such as a hotel) should the early auto dealership go bankrupt. Mr. Kreiting was very successful, however, selling Model T and later Model A Fords. After Mr. Kreiting's death in 1928, the business was bought by his nephew, Bernard Kreiting and H. Dahmer and moved to a different location.



Kreiting Garage (1911) · National Register

Lumber and Hardware



Schmid & Lehrer Lumber (1884)

In 1884, Michael Lehrer and his partner Wolfgang Schmid constructed a two-story building on Central Street for their new hardware store. The hardware store was on the first floor and a bicycle and tin shop was on the second floor. Extensive remodeling of the store was done in 1921. Hardware and paint were located on the first floor, and appliances, with the latest coal and wood stoves, located on the second floor. Lehrer's children became active in the business. Arthur managed the hardware store, Alfred and Eleanor did the bookkeeping, and Otto took over the plumbing and heating departments.

Runck's Hardware is one of only a few Springfield businesses that are as old as the city itself. Runck Hardware served Springfield's residents, businesses and farmers for 71 years. In 1899 William Runck partnered with C. Heiman of New Ulm and started a Hardware and Machine business in Springfield. Runck's son, William was still operating the hardware store as of 1970.



11 W. Central Street (1900)

Clothing Stores/General Merchandise

Adolph Altermatt established the A. A. Altermatt Mercantile Co. in Springfield in 1891. Altermatt's Mercantile store was a genuine old-fashion, country store. It sold dry goods, ladies and men's ready-to-wear cloths (not just fabric), millinery, shoes, haberdashery, and groceries. Mr. Altermatt's sons, Archie and Ervin, operated the Mercantile store after Adolph's death. The Altermatt's sold general merchandise for 40 years, from 1891 to 1931.



18 W. Central Street (1900)

Emil Swanbeck and his wife, Christine, bought the building at 8 W Central and opened a grocery and general goods store which included an ice cream parlor. A liquid carbonic marble soda fountain was installed with a backdrop of mirrors and leaded Tiffany type glass. Ice cream was at one time manufactured in the rear of the store. The store, affectionately often called "Swanies," was a meeting place for friends and carried one of the first lines of canned foods, the Califo

brand. At Christmas time, Swanbeckø carried toys, games, dolls, buggies, tricycles, coaster wagons, books, and tree trimmings and special holiday taste treats such as lutefisk, lingonberries, holly sprigs, candies, fresh fish and oysters.

Butcher

Lucas Fecker was Springfieldø first meat dealer, stock shipper, and an early hotelkeeper. Feckerø Meat Market was first located on Cass Avenue. Joseph Fecker, at the age of 19, purchased the business in 1895 and was engaged in the business continually for 54 years. In 1931, Joseph Fecker bought the Schotzko corner. The building had been occupied by Langmackø Hardware Store (Springfield p. 25). Afterwards, the building housed a womenø clothing store for many years (Carityø, Adolphsonø, L.J. Larsonø and Christineø).

Cigars

William Mueller built the building at 3 East Central and opened his cigar factory in 1890. He sold most of his cigars to area saloons because every city had a cigar maker in those days. Mueller and his wife, a Hauenstein girl from New Ulm, lived upstairs. Later they moved to a residential area. When Mueller became post master he quit the cigar business and moved the post office into this building.

Before Mueller quit the cigar business, however, he tutored Adolf Arndt. As an apprentice, Mr. Arndt started making cigars with Mueller in 1898. Arndt started his own cigar business with John Eichman in 1905. They located in a building on Cass Avenue. In 1907, Arndt took over the entire business and continued making cigars for 35 years until 1940. The advent of modern cigar making machinery spelled the doom of small cigar factories and mass production gradually forced Arndt out of business (Springfield p. 27).



3 East Central (notice "M" for Mueller on the cornice)

Pop

Springfield residents were estatic when George Vogel started his pop factory in Springfield in 1890. He started his business in a brick building on Central Street (it is an apartment building today). When Vogel retired, the business was operated by his son, Jack. They bottled pop in six ounce bottles and sold the pop locally to people of the community. Vogel later took in a partner, Emil Freznel of New Ulm. Freznel later became owner and then sold to Albert Schmid who moved the pop factory downtown and located it in a building across from the old Mike Lehrer residence. Schmid built a new pop factory and operated it until 1915. (Springfield HS).



217 Central Avenue (1900)

Drug Store

Although the building located at 1 East Central was originally designed and erected for a far different purpose, it has served as the site of Springfield's "Corner Drug Store" for more than 76 years. In 1891, Oscar Erickson constructed the building to house his farm implement shop. For 13 years Erickson served the growing farm population of the area until 1904 when Charlie and Ernest Wescheke rented the building and moved their drug store into it from another location. At the same time the original



1 E. Central (1890)

building was divided in half with the construction of a wall running north and south. The drug store occupied the west half on the corner, and the post office was moved into the east half under the direction of Postmaster John Schmelz.

Banking

For most of its history Springfield has had two prominent banks: the State Bank of Springfield and the Farmers and Merchants Bank. For many years the two banks have been located kitty-corner from each other on Central and Marshall Streets.

In 1891, the State Bank of Springfield was incorporated. The original board members were: M. Lehrer, J.C. Rothenburg, A.C. Ochs, John B. Schmid and H. Bendixen of Springfield and six of the New Ulm stockholders. J. Bendixen and Wolfgang Schmid were named president and vice president.

On February 6, 1900, the bank and Bendixen buildings were totally destroyed by fire, which originated in the furnace of the Bendixen basement. The bank officials and Bendixen immediately got together and decided to rebuild. A new building was erected by Frank Jaehn, a local contractor. That building of St. Louis face brick and decorative brownstone still houses the present bank (Springfield 75-74).



Springfield State Bank – early 1900's (SHS)



Springfield State Bank - 2011

In 1918, the Farmers State Bank of Springfield was organized. Because most of the original stock subscribers were farmers, the focus of the bank has always been farmers. The bank originally leased out the east half of the Erickson Building. The board of directors hired E. J. Starkey of Iowa as the first cashier, Frank Pieschel assistant cashier and Hattie Dahmer as a bookkeeper.

In 1929, at the beginning of the Great Depression, Frank Pieschel was elected the bank's chief operating officer, a position he held until his death in 1962. He helped many of Springfield's farmers and businessmen through the great depression. He did not agree with most other bankers who believe the best investments during that time was government securities. Mr. Pieschel believed banking funds should be used to support the families, farmers and businessmen through loans. For this, Mr. Pieschel deserves much credit in the development and growth of Springfield.

The Farmers State Bank acquired the third bank of Springfield, First National Bank, in 1929. As part of the consolidating agreement, the Farmers State Bank acquired First National Bank's building located on the northeast corner

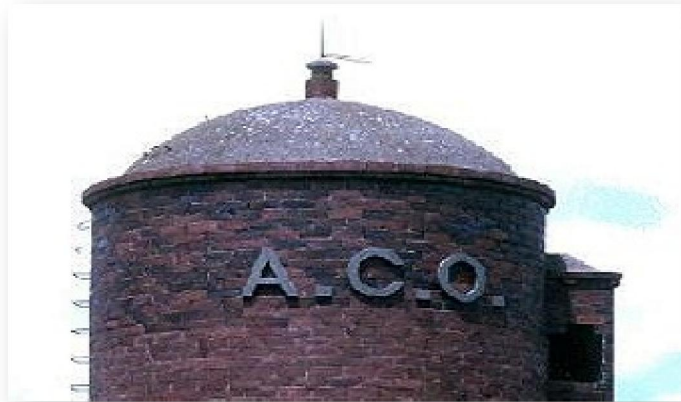
of Central Street and Marshall Avenue. That bank building was constructed in 1906. In 1931, B. J. Engelen won the contract to remodel the building's interior and add a new brick exterior. The most significant improvement was a most modern interior. At that time, most banks had high wall, enclosed, iron grated teller stations. Instead, the bank had a wooded counter with openings for tellers all low enough to look over (Springfield p. 77).



2 E Central Ave (1900)

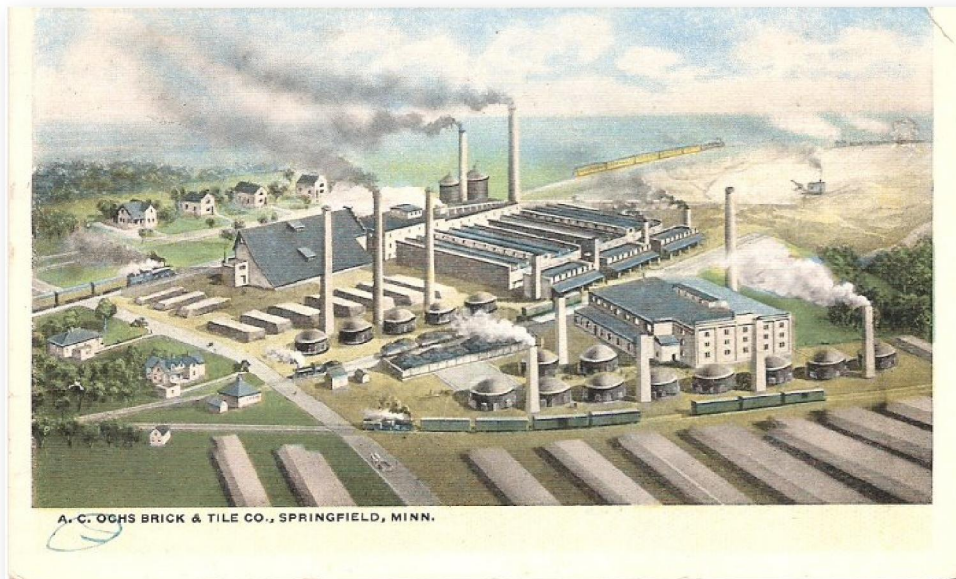
Ochs Brick and Tile Co.

The Ochs Brick and Tile Co. was founded by Adolph Casimir A.C. Ochs in 1891. Ochs had come to Springfield from New Ulm in the late 1880s when he bought a part interest in the Springfield flour mill. Ochs learned the trade of bricklaying while a young man in New Ulm. Then during the



A.C.O. Silo (MN Brick)

booming years of the late 1870s and early 1880s, Ochs went to San Francisco to work as a bricklayer. While there he worked for a contractor who also owned a brickyard. When the bricklayers ran out of brick, they would be moved into the brickyard to help make more brick. This is where A.C. was first introduced to some of the basics of brick making.

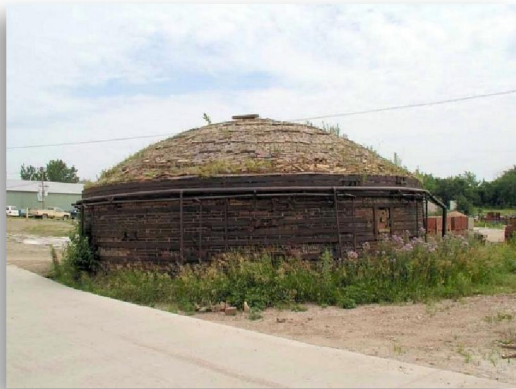


A.C. Ochs Brick & Tile Co. Postcard (MHS)

Ochs started his humble brick making business in 1891 close to the Chicago and Northwest railroad, about one block east of the company's new tunnel kiln building. Making brick was very primitive at that time. Clay was dug by hand and loaded onto two-wheeled end-dump carts hauled by one horse. The clay was then dumped into a pit where water was added and mixed by a horse-

drawn revolving sweep. This was called ðuggingö the clay. After pugging, it was place in moulds made out of hard maple.

These bricks were dried on open-air racks before firing and had to be laboriously hand-turned.



Beehive Kiln (MN Brick)

For years this was the job for many Springfield school boys. Bricks were then fired in beehive kilns. The first beehive kilns were intermittent, meaning that bricks had to be cooled and unloaded between firings, then re-loaded and baked again, which was a laborious process. A major improvement occurred in the industry when continuous kilns were introduced. A series of kilns were connected through chambers that the heat passed through. Heating time was longer with the continuous kilns, but they became the standard

due to their labor efficiency, lower heating costs and ability to create a more consistent brick.

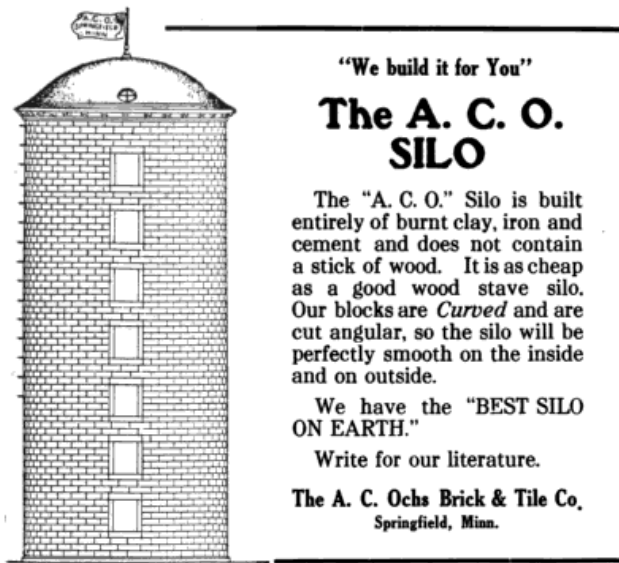
Face brick were developed and first produced in the plant about 1910 or 1911. These were smooth face brick and were used on the old Lehrer building (now the bowling alley and The Garage Restaurant), the George P. Forster (Boyle) and A.C. Ochs (now Paul and Josephine Muske) residences in Springfield. These brick were also used on the old Loretto Hospital in New Ulm, Thompson Hotel in Worthington, and many other structures in this area and in eastern South Dakota. While other products contributed to the success of the company, face brick and its refinements through new colors, textures and sizes, has been, and continues to be, the key product of the company.

After WWI the market demanded a fine textured brick. The company responded and developed its ðEgyptianö textured brick. This was a vertical texturing similar to brick on the City office building. The first large building using these brick was the main building on the campus of the Mankato Normal School in 1921.

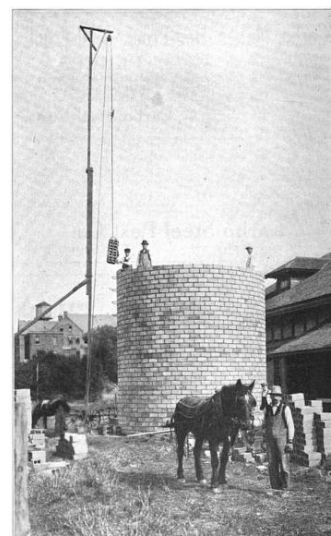
This was about this same time that Ochs also established a sales office in Minneapolis. This move contributed to the use of Ochs brick on many buildings on both the Minneapolis and St. Paul

campuses of the University of Minnesota. One of the most noteworthy structures using Ochs brick was Memorial Stadium, built in 1924, which was constructed with over a half million of Ochs brick. Today there are few buildings at the University that were not built with Ochs brick.

Although the Great Depression wreaked havoc on many a business, Ochs Brick Co. was able to survive thanks to the development of the A.C.O. Silo. The silos became common landmarks throughout Minnesota and other portions of the Upper Midwest (Springfield p.78). A few were also built in neighboring Wisconsin, Iowa and the Dakotas. It is estimated that somewhere between one and two thousand of these silos were built between 1910 and 1945. Concrete stave, and other silo types, caused a phase-out of the familiar A.C.O Silo, but not until the silos helped the company through the Great Depression and left a lasting impact on the rural landscape of Minnesota.



A.C.O. Silo Advertisement (MN Brick)



Building an A.C.O. Silo (MN Brick)

Buildings and homes constructed with Ochs brick can be found today in nearly every Minnesota city and throughout the rural countryside. This would include nearly all buildings on the main and farm campuses of the University of Minnesota, Mankato State University, Southwest State College at Marshall, University of Minnesota at Duluth, Dr. Martin Luther College, St. Benedict College, University of Minnesota-Morris; buildings at South Dakota State University at Brookings, S.D., North Dakota State University at Fargo, N.D., and Michigan Tech College at Houghton, Mich.; St. Mary's Hospital and Sister Kenny Hospital in Minneapolis and the State Hospital in St. Peter; and River Towers apartments in Minneapolis.

Because of high transportation costs, most Minnesota towns had a local brickyard. An exact count has not been determined, but it has been estimated that Minnesota had over 70 brick plants operating over the years. Today the only remaining plant in Minnesota is the Ochs Brick and Tile Co. (now Acme Brick). Two possible reasons for this longevity is Ochsøability to quickly respond to the changing marketplace and for the hard work and dedication from thousands of Springfield residents who have worked at the brickyard over the past 100 years.

For most of the century, Ochs was Springfieldø largest employer. Its payroll, and its purchases of supplies from local merchants, added immeasurably to Springfieldø economy and its financial well being over the years.

Perhaps of even greater significance than the economical impact, is the contribution made by Ochsøemployees and their families to the cultural and moral fiber of Springfield.

Generations have grown up instilled with the traditional work ethic of hard-working parents. Today, many are leaders in Springfield and many other communities.

Springfield has reciprocated with its support of the Ochsøbrick company in many ways to insure the companyø continued success. øThe marriage of company and community has been a good one that has showered benefits to allø (Springfield p. 80-88).

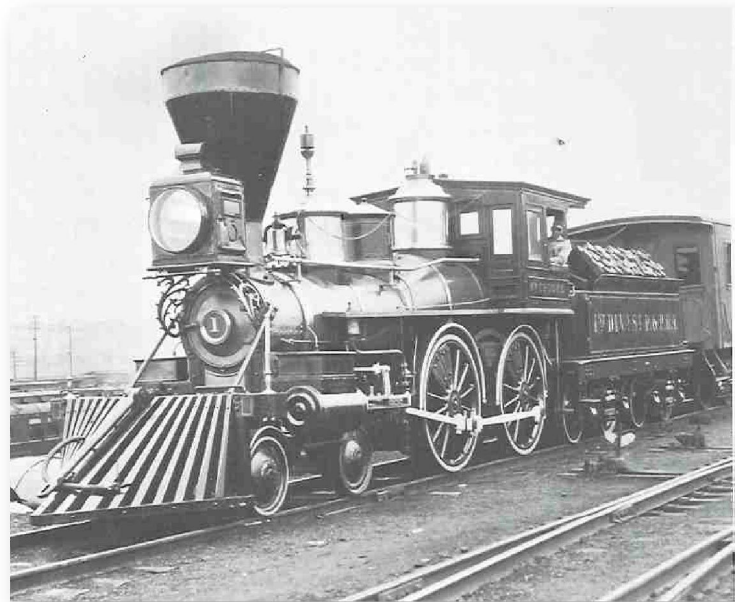


Context 4– Transportation Time Span 1860-1920

Most transportation in Brown County during its formative years was by river, by ferryboat, which is why most early settlements were along the Minnesota River or streams deriving from it. The steamboat provided a means of transporting supplies at low cost. Transportation by land was expensive, even under the best conditions. The conditions of the roads severely limited the amount of goods that could be hauled by wagons or sleighs. These primitive roads, however, did complement the river system, which was usually icebound four or five months every winter, and were sometimes too low for navigation in the summer.

“The frontier country was united in a desire to find a cure for the barrier of distance which discouraged settlement in the rich but isolated western lands. Without navigable rivers, the one practicable means of making such lands accessible was the construction of railroads” (Larsen p. 238).

Construction of the railway network was retarded first by financial panic of 1857, then the State foreclosing on all railroad properties in 1860, and the Civil War from 1861 to 1865. But once the railroads were underway, the system developed at a lively speed. The first tracks to be laid in Minnesota were between St. Paul and St. Anthony in 1862. Just three years later trains were



Early Locomotive (Folwell)

operating on over 200 miles of tracks in the state. With the end of the Civil War, construction of the railroads began in earnest. By 1866, trains from the cities reached St. Cloud. By 1871 trains from Minneapolis reached the Red River Valley. By the end of the decade the railroad mileage had increase to more than 3000, and by the end of the century that figure had more than doubled. Steamboat traffic, which reached its peak in 1880, had by 1910 dwindled to a negligible factor in transportation.

The first railroad train to enter Brown County was the Winona and St. Peter which crossed the Minnesota River at New Ulm on 1871. One year later, the railroad extended to Springfield. The first station stop, Burns Station and Burnstown, were named after the Burns brothers. A small settlement developed around this and a plat of the village was filed in 1877. By 1879, the community, built mainly of brick, had 250 inhabitants, a school, 2 churches and a doctor. Businesses included four stores, five grain elevators brick and tile works, a flour mill and a creamery (Springfield p. 61).



Springfield Depot (SHS)

Until 1870, most Minnesotans farmed in the hardwood forest. Historian Drache wrote, "the railroads changed the picture by luring farmers to the prairies. This was especially true after the farmers learned that they could improve as much prairie land in three years as they could woodland in twenty years (Drache p. 22). The railroads not only enabled farmers to transport their products (mostly wheat) to markets on the east coast, but they also brought much needed material to the settlers on the prairie. Sod houses and dugouts rather than log cabins served as pioneer habitations, but it was not long before these primitive shelters were replaced by neat frame houses. Business savvy managers of sash and blind factories in the principal river towns quickly started supplying the settlers with all the timber, shingles, windows, doors and furnishings for houses via the railroads.

The physical development of Springfield is very similar to many other railroad towns, with a depot, downtown and most of the residential houses on one side of the tracks, and the grain elevator on the other side of the tracks. In fact, 70% of the railroad towns in Minnesota are built upon only one side of the tracks (Francaviglia p. 60). This development pattern is not by coincidence. A number of factors were involved in the planning of these railroad towns, like

Springfield.

First, the railroad companies employed their own land surveyors, and they often platted the towns giving them everything from street orientation to their street names. Second, Railroads, like the Winona and St. Peter in Springfield, were often given alternate sections of land as their incentive to develop the railroads. They may have planned their stops and oriented the town on their side simply to increase the real estate value of the property.

However, the other reasons there are so many "side" towns are more logical. The railroads and towns wanted to avoid numerous grade crossings. The railroad depot, one of the first structures in town, was placed on the town side for safety. Passengers did not have to cross any of the tracks to board the trains. Second, trains often stopped at the station for switching or to take on water or coal. Thus, there would be long delays for anyone wanting to cross the tracks. Only after a town reached a certain size would citizens' desire to locate on "the other side" of the tracks outweigh the inconvenience of waiting for the switching and loading of trains (Francaviglia p. 60).

The speed of development of the prairies was also determined by the marketing of the Railroad companies and other interests. Railroad companies established land development corporations (like the Winona and St. Peter Land Co.) that would aggressively market the prairies to people on the east coast and even European countries, sell land, distribute seed for fields, extend credit on favorable terms, build hotels and reception houses (also called immigrant houses) near depots, and sell pre-built homes to settlers who could afford them (Drache p. 25-16).

The end of WWI saw the beginnings of a new cycle of transportation. Before the war the automobile was largely a rich man's luxury, but after 1918 the ordinary citizen could buy cars for his pleasure and his business, and inevitably he became an advocate of good roads. In 1920 a State highway system of 6700 miles was authorized.

The railroads were arguably the single most important factor in the development of Springfield and other towns on the prairie. Not only did railroads bring needed materials to build houses and buildings and ship products like bricks and grain to market, but they transported the new workers and settlers to the growing towns and were very influential on how the towns were laid out and developed. In fact, many of the older hamlets left without benefit of railway were either moved to new locations or gradually abandoned altogether.

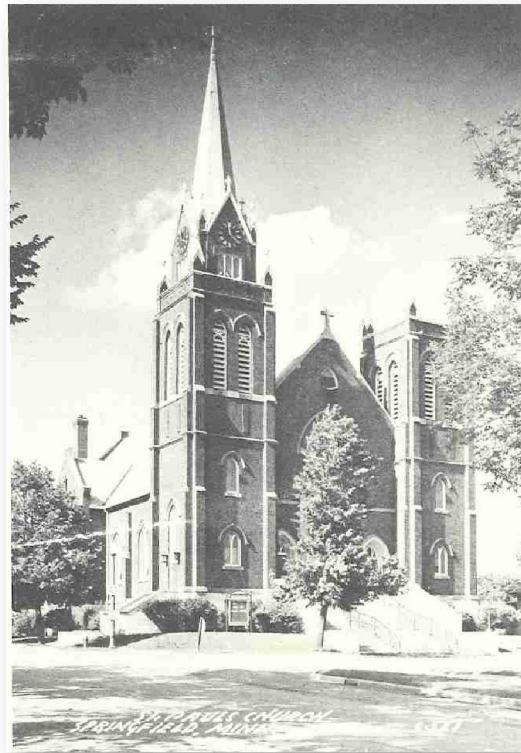
Context 5 – Religion Time Span 1870s-1960s

Churches remain a strong cohesive force in the plains, binding the people together spiritually and socially as the land does physically
ó Hugh Sidney öThese United Statesö

Religion was very important and a priority to Springfield's first residents. Even before the town was platted in 1877, four churches had been already organized (German Lutheran Church in 1872, Scandinavian Lutheran Church in 1872, Catholic Church in 1874, and English Methodist Church in 1873) (Days of 69 p. 9). Religious institutions played a significant role not only spiritually but also socially in the lives of the early settlers, as churches were popular places for meetings and other social events.

St. Paul's

The German Lutherans organized in 1870, and without a church, members worshiped in private homes. In 1878, the members constructed the first church building that served as church, school and parsonage. The membership grew, and a second church was built in 1887 on the northeast corner of Cass Avenue and Sanborn Street. In 1924, the congregation constructed a third edifice (on the site of the second church). St. Paul's Gothic style church seats 800 people.



St. Paul's Lutheran Church (1924)

St. Rapheal's

From 1874 to 1878 Catholic mass was said by Father Alexander Berghold of New Ulm in the homes of John Bagen and Peter McKeever. Even though the grasshopper plague made money scarce in Springfield, the Church decided to build a new church at the same Van Dusen Street as where St. Raphael's church and school are located today. In 1915, the existing church was completed. The fact that Springfield has only one Catholic Church can be traced back to Archbishop John Ireland, who was a dominant figure during the formative years of Minnesota. While many religious groups were establishing churches in the 1880s-1890s, they usually separated by ethnicity. Immigrants tended to associate with people from their original country and service was usually spoken in the parishioners' native language. This is why many towns have more than one Lutheran church. Springfield had two Lutheran churches for Germans and one Lutheran church for Swedes, and separate Methodist churches for settlers of German and English backgrounds. Archbishop John Ireland insisted that the Catholic Church not separate into various ethnic groups. Thus, Springfield's Catholic Church consisted of parishioners from all ethnic backgrounds, but mainly Irish and Germans.



St. Rapheal's Catholic Church · 1915 (SHS)

First Methodist

The German Methodist Church was organized in 1873, and constructed their first church building in 1886. A second building was constructed in 1891 on the 300 block of Marshall Avenue. In 1918, the German Methodist Episcopal Church merged with the English Methodist Episcopal Church to form the United Methodist Church. The church building on Marshall served the new Church until 1929. The old church building was converted into a residence. In 1929, the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Springfield constructed the current church building on the northeast corner of N. Marshall Avenue and W. Van Dusen St. (Springfield p. 142-143).



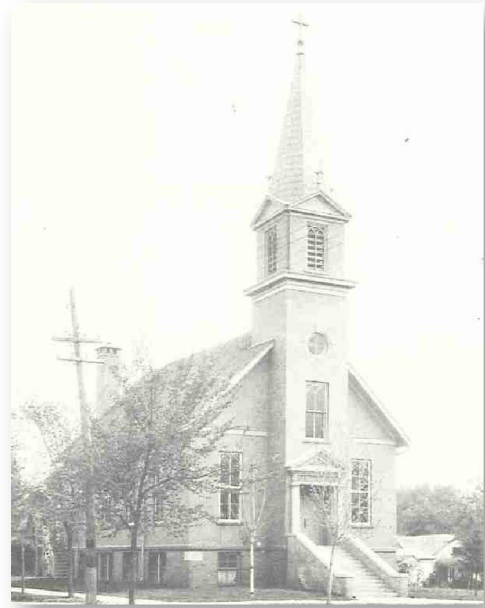
315 N. Marshall Ave. (1890)



First Methodist Episcopal Church of Springfield (SHS)

Zion Evanelical Lutheran

The Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church was formed in 1897 with only a few people, and being a charter member, they first met in Julius F. Wendt's commercial building. By 1913 the congregation grew to 114, and they built a new church on the northeast corner of Central Avenue and Spring Street. The original church was razed to make room for a new church building in 1969 (Springfield p. 144).



Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church – 1913 (SHS)

St. John's

St. John's Lutheran Church was organized in 1870 by 52 Norwegian and 13 Swede emigrants from the old country. The original name was St. Johannes Norwegian Lutheran Church. Services were held in private homes and later in school houses until 1889 when the first church was constructed. The original church was 30' x 18' in size and constructed four miles east of Springfield, which has been razed. A new church was built in Springfield in 1914 on the southwest corner of N. Park Avenue and Sanborn Street, and the name changed to St. John's Scandinavian Lutheran Church. In 1956, the congregation built a third church on Mary Avenue and changed the name again to St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church. The second church building was also razed.

Context 6 – Civic Services Time Span – 1870s-1950s

Public Utilities

A number of public infrastructure improvements during its early years enabled Springfield to grow in size and prosper. The electric light plant in Springfield was erected in 1894. The basement of the building was a cistern, and a small steam engine pumped water from the cistern through pipes into hydrants along Central Avenue, a great improvement over hand pumped water.

The water works department was also located in this building. Springfield originally got its municipal water from a flowing well on the west side of the city. Water flowed three blocks to a concrete reservoir in the basement of the power house. A pump would then supply water through the City's eight-inch water main.

The Springfield telephone system began in 1897 with the formation of the Farmers and Citizens Mutual Telephone Co.

In the early days, all males 21 years of age or older were required, by the Springfield street commissioner, to put in 2 days of street work or pay \$3.

Springfield's early main street (Central Avenue) was illuminated by kerosene lamps on top of 12 foot poles. Every evening, the village marshal lit them, and then returned late at night to put them out.

Post Office

Like many small towns, the post office changed location quite frequently in the early days. Quite often, whenever political power in Washington D.C. changed, the local postmaster would change and he would move the post office. In the first 100 years (1873-1973), the Springfield's postmaster has changed 10 times and the post office changed locations 13 times. President Woodrow Wilson appointed William Mueller, owner of the cigar factory, postmaster in 1912. Mr. Mueller moved



the post office to 3 E Central. The post office remained there for 37 years, the longest period at one location (Springfield p.114).

Parks

When the town was platted there was a little triangle caused by the diagonal course of the railroad. The city council let it lie and it became a sort of public square where itinerant show people put on their stunts. The village maintained a watering trough there and also the liberty pole.

After the death of Mrs. Martha Anderson, wife of A.G. Anderson, first railroad station agent and pioneer businessman, her children proposed to the council that they would like to improve this small tract of land by making it into a park, with curb, a fountain, trees, shrubbery and grass. The council accepted the offer and passed an ordinance giving the name Martha Anderson memorial Park to the area (Springfield p. 119).

Springfield's largest park is Riverside Park, on the south side of town. Land for Riverside Park was bought from Ferdinand Schwarzrock shortly after the turn of the century by a committee of local citizens who sold stock in an incorporated association. It was maintained by voluntary work and contributions for several years, but it was eventually deeded back to the village (Springfield p. 120). The sports field at Riverside Park was named Baldy Altermatt Field after Walter "Baldy" Altermatt, a star baseball player in the early 1900s, who also had quite a reputation as a stunt artist.

Springfield's Municipal Swimming Pool was built in 1936, partly funded through the Works Progress Administration. At that time it was one of the few outdoor swimming pools in MN, and the first built of brick. Except for the concrete

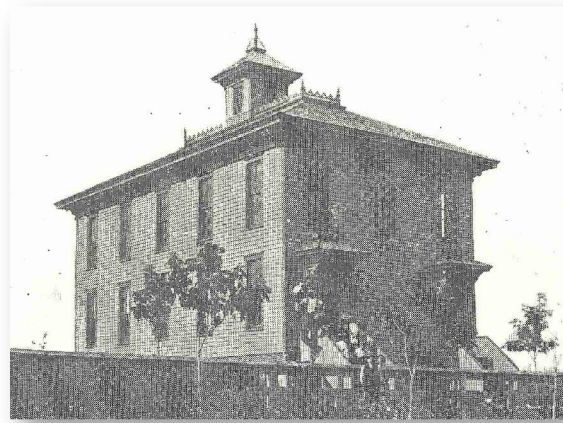


Municipal Swimming Pool (MHS)

footing, the entire pool and bath house were constructed of Ochs hard-burned, smooth-faced brick, backed with hard-burned hollow tile, all reinforced. The bottom of the pool was of brick, laid on edge in a basket weave pattern (Springfield p. 117). After more than 50 years, the pool began to leak, and the pool was removed in 1992 to make room for the construction of a new outdoor swimming pool.

Schools

Springfield has a long history of supporting its school district and making the education of its children a priority. Springfield's first public school was established in 1874. Held in a small railroad section house, eight students enrolled in the fall of that year. In 1880, the voters approved a bond referendum to construct a two-story frame school building. The building was located at the northwest corner of N. Cass Avenue and Van Dusen Street.



1880 School House (SHS)

Scarcely nine years later, in 1889, it was deemed the school building was already too small. The voters approved another bond referendum to construct a two and half story brick school building. The new building was constructed with Ochs bricks and was located on the south side of Central Avenue (where the school complex is currently located). The building was the pride of Springfield for many



1889 High School building (SHS)

yearsö (Springfield p. 131). However, a fire in 1908 completely destroyed the building.

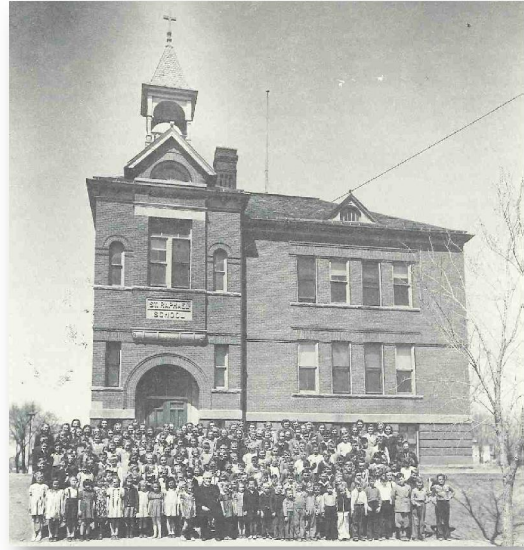
In just eight months, Springfield planned and constructed a new building to replace the one damaged by fire. The new building was dedicated on January 8, 1909. The new school building included a number of modern amenities such as a gymnasium, training room, sewing room, science laboratories, hot and cold running water, two sanitary bubbling drinking fountains, and electric lights.



1909 School House (SHS)

A gymnasium to the west of the original three-story structure was built in 1926-27. Another school addition, almost one-half subsidized by the Works Progress Administration, came during the depression in 1936. This addition connected the 1908 building and the 1927 gymnasium. Two separate bond referendums were easily approved for a 1953 addition to the school building. This addition is commonly called the north and south wings, extended eastward from the 1908 building.

St. Raphael's, Springfield's first parochial school, was built and opened in 1900. A. C. Ochs was the contractor. The all-brick building consisted of five rooms: three were used as a residence for the sisters and the other two were used as classrooms. Each student entering the first year brought his own chair and donated it to the school.



St. Raphael's School – 1900 (SHS)

In 1939 the original building was razed and a modern school building was constructed. The brick structure consisted of eight classrooms, library, office, full basement and an auditorium. This building is still part of the present structure.

Hospital

Rev. J. George Appel and Dr. J. C. Rothenburg were the prime movers in building Springfield's first hospital in 1904. (Rothenburg also served on school board for 16 years and VP of the State Bank of Springfield.) The purpose of the hospital, as conceived by its founders, was to be a Christian hospital for Springfield and the vicinity. For about 12 years it served its original function. It became apparent, however, that an old folks' home was needed by the amount of applications the hospital received. In 1916 the hospital's name was changed to St. John's Old Folks' Home and Hospital of the American Lutheran Church. This was one of the first nursing homes in the country. Residents came from various places throughout United States. The citizens of Springfield used to call the



St. John's Hospital – 1904 (SHS)

residents inmates.ö (Weber) When the new Springfield community Hospital was built in 1958, the St. John's hospital was discontinued and the original building was razed.

Context 7 – Residential Time Span 1890 -- 1940

Springfield's Residential History

While the first homes in Springfield were built in the northeast part of town, the residential district soon started to expand toward the west, and finally Marshall Avenue became one of the leading residential streets.

One of the founders of Springfield was Ferdinand Schwarzrock, for the railroad came quite close to his farm house; ran through his pasture, in fact. After the Original plat of Springfield was filled up with homes, Schwarzrock platted one addition after another as the town grew mostly in the direction of his homestead. All the early mansions were built in the northern part of Springfield. In 1889 the school moved to the hill on west main street, where a four-room school was built, and soon thereafter that part of town started to grow, eventually outstripping the east part of town.

Most of the affluent houses in Springfield were constructed between 1890-1910 and were located along Marshall Avenue. This street became Springfield's "Nob Hill" and has retained a high percentage of its historic residential houses.

Ochs' Imprint on Housing in Springfield

The Ochs brickyard supplied the bricks to a large number of handsome historic houses in Springfield. Constructing houses from brick helped with their preservation. The first big brick house built in Springfield is located at 222 E. Sanborn Street. It was constructed by Frank Jaehn, the early building contractor who built the most houses in Springfield in those days, including the Lehrer House (203 N. Van Buren) and the original banking section of the State Bank of Springfield (later the bank bought the Bendixen portion and consolidated the two.) the house was constructed for Richard Blue, a long-time worker at the Ochs Brickyard.



222 E. Sanborn St. (1898)



335 N. Spring Avenue (1949)

This house was built by the Ochs in 1949, lived in by Lawrence Ochs and family and later by Dale Read, a long-time employee of the brickyard and his wife Vergie.



218 N. Spring Avenue (1951)

Another fine example of the use of Ochs brick is located at 218 N. Spring Avenue. This house was built by Archie Foster, a professional bricklayer.

The Ochses also constructed low-rent housing near the brickyards for their employees. The three remaining houses on East end are 1 ½ stories and 750-1000 square feet in size.



334 East End Avenue (1910)



326 East End Avenue (1928)

The two employee houses located on Washington Avenue are newer and larger than those located on East End. They were full two stories and approximately 1200 square feet in size.



109 Washington Ave N (1930)

Lehrer Houses

Michael Lehrer owned a hardware store and the Lehrer Lumber Co. in town and was a prominent citizen of the community, being president of the State Bank of Springfield. Mr. Lehrer constructed the French Second Empire house at 203 N. Van Buren to house his family, wife Elizabeth, and their 12 children: three sons, Arthur, Alfred, and Otto, and nine daughters: Anna, Emma, Edith, Veronica, Eleanor, Agnes, Viola, Carola and Gertrude. He constructed homes for three of his sons, all of which are excellent examples of Craftsman Bungalows, within a block of each other.



204 Jackson (1913)



124 Sanborn Avenue (1914)



212 Jackson Avenue (1918)

Housing Styles

For a small town on the prairie, Springfield has an excellent variety of different housing types. Prominent business leaders were proud of their town's heritage and designed and constructed houses that embodied this spirit and were made to last. The lack of major fires or tornadoes has contributed to Springfield retaining its excellent housing stock.

It is important to know and appreciate the different styles of architecture in order to determine the best historic preservation practices to use. To that end, the following pages of the Residential Context chapter provide a description of the various styles of vernacular architecture in general and examples of the architectural types found in Springfield, in particular.

Greek Revival

Predominant period 1850s to 1860s

The Greek Revival Style began with public buildings in Philadelphia in 1820, and quickly became popular for residences. The style mimicked Greek temples -- and was thought by Americans at the time to embody the concept of Democracy. From 1830 to 1850 nearly every new public or private building incorporated some Greek Revival elements.

During the second half of the 19th century, Gothic Revival and Italianate styles captured the American imagination. Grecian ideas faded from popularity. However, front-gable design - a trademark of the Greek Revival style - continued to influence the shape of American houses well into the 20th century. You will notice the classic front-gable design in simple "National Style"

farm houses throughout the United States.



This Greek Revival style house at 202 E. Lincoln was originally constructed as a hotel (1890)

Defining characteristics:

- Gabled, low-pitched roof
- Cornice lines emphasized
- Symmetrical plan
- A window in the pediment
- Entry porch with columns

Italianate

Predominate period 1840s to late 1880s

Inspired by paintings of rural villas of Italy, Italianate was one of the most popular styles for housing and commercial buildings from the mid- to late-1800s. This style is particularly popular in towns and cities in the Midwest. There are fewer Italianate buildings in the southern states because the style reached its peak during the Civil War, a time when the south was economically devastated.

Defining characteristics:

- Two or three stories (rarely one)
- Single or paired decorative brackets under wide cornices
- Balanced, symmetrical rectangular shape
- Tall, narrow windows, commonly arched or curved above
- Projecting door and window crowns



I

Examples in Springfield include:

106 S. Spring

217 W. Central

This brick house at 31 S. O'Connell is a good example of Italianate architecture (1890)

Second empire

Predominate period 1855 to 1885

Second Empire buildings with tall mansard roofs were modeled after the opulent architecture of Paris during the reign of Napoleon III, France's Second Empire, from which the style takes its name. French architects used the term *horror vacui* - the fear of unadorned surfaces - to describe the highly ornamented Second Empire style. Second Empire buildings were also practical: their height allowed for additional living space on narrow city lots.

Both Italianate and Second Empire houses tend to be square in shape, and both can have U-shaped window crowns, decorative brackets, and single story porches. But, Italianate houses have much wider eaves and they do not have the distinctive mansard roof characteristic of the Second Empire style.



Michael Lehrer's house at 203 N. Van Buren Ave. is a good example of the Second Empire style

Defining characteristics:

- Mansard (dual-pitched roof, with dormer windows on steep lower slope)
- Rounded cornices at top and base of roof
- Brackets beneath the eaves, balconies, and bay windows

Folk Victorian

Predominant period 1870-1910

Before the age of railroads, settlers built no-fuss, square or L-shaped houses in the Greek Revival National or Greek Revival style. But the rise of industrialization made it easier and more affordable to add decorative details to otherwise simple homes. Decorative architectural trim could be mass produced. As the railroads expanded, factory-made building parts could be sent to far corners of the continent.

Many Folk Victorian houses were adorned with flat, jigsaw cut trim in a variety of patterns. Others had spindles, gingerbread and details borrowed from the Gothic Revival style. With their spindles and porches, some Folk Victorian homes may suggest Queen Anne architecture. But unlike Queen Annes, Folk Victorian houses are orderly and symmetrical houses. They do not have towers, bay windows, or elaborate moldings.

Defining characteristics:

- Porches with spindle work detailing
- Symmetrical façade (except gable-front-and-wing subtype)
- Brackets under eaves were common



Fold Victorian elements are found on this house at 221 N. Cass Avenue (1900)

Queen Anne

Predominant period 1880 – 1910

The elaborate style known as Queen Anne became an architectural fashion during the 1880s and 1890s, when the industrial revolution enabled ornate spindle work to be mass produced and the expanded railway network made precut decorative trim easily available throughout the country.

Defining characteristics:

- Steep roof with a front-facing gable
- Complicated, asymmetrical shape with round or square towers
- One-story porch that extends across one or two sides of the house
- Wall surfaces textured with decorative shingles, patterned masonry, or bay windows
- Ornamental spindles and brackets

Examples in Springfield include:

404 N. Jackson Avenue œThe Schwartzrock House

320 N. Marshall Avenue



Located at 123 N. Marshall Ave., the Bendixen-Schmid House is on the National Register for having good integrity of its Queen Anne styling (1894)

Colonial Revival

Predominant period 1880-1955

As a clear reaction against excessively elaborate Queen Anne architecture, the Colonial Revival became a popular American house style from 1880 to 1955. The Colonial Revival refers to the return of interest in the Federal and Georgian house styles found on the east coast. Reflecting American patriotism and a desire for simplicity, the Colonial Revival house style was the most popular historic revival style in between World War I and II.



On the National Register, A.C. Ochs house at 303 N. Marshall demonstrates Colonial Revival influences (1911)

Defining characteristics:

- Symmetrical façade with central entrance
- Temple-like entrance, porticos topped by pediment
- Multi-pane, double hung windows frequently in adjacent pairs and with shutters

Examples in Springfield include:

- 310 N. Spring ~~α~~Pieschel's House
- 401 N. Marshall
- 518 N. Marshall
- 334 N. Marshall

Italian Renaissance

Predominant period 1890-1935

Italian Renaissance style became popular at the turn of the century as a strong contrast to the Gothic-inspired Shingle or Queen Anne styles. Unlike the Italianate style of the 19th century, the Italian Renaissance style of the 20th was much truer to the Italian villas seen by American tourists

and in photographic sources that became increasingly available after WWI. Unlike the earlier Italianate style, Italian Renaissance houses typically had stucco or masonry walls, which more closely resembled their original Italian prototypes. The style's popularity rose when Edith Wharton's popular book, *Italian Villas and Their Gardens* was published in 1904.

Defining characteristics:

- Low pitched, hipped tile roof
- Moderate to wide eaves with decorative bracket supports
- Entrances usually accentuated by small classical columns or pilasters
- Most often symmetrical
- Upper-story windows smaller and less elaborate than windows below
- Arches above first-story windows or porches



Italian Renaissance influences can be seen at 220 S. Burns Avenue, the Altermatt's house (1914)

Examples in Springfield include:

210 N. Marshall Avenue

602 W. Central Avenue

Spanish Revival

Predominant period 1915-1940

The romantic Spanish Revival style was influenced by Spanish Colonial architecture of earlier centuries. Unlike its immediate predecessor, Mission, Spanish Revival was more ornate with stylistic detail apparent in both large features and small, such as intricately patterned tile work and wrought iron hardware. This style's infancy started in 1915 after an exposition by Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue in San Diego, CA.



532 N. Marshall Avenue is a good example of a Spanish Revival house (1930)

Defining characteristics:

- Low pitched roof with little or no overhang
- Typically asymmetrical
- Red tile roof
- Half round arches, doors and windows
- Stucco surface
- Ornate wrought iron hardware

Another example in Springfield is
310 N. Marshall Avenue

Craftsman

Predominant period 1905-1930

The Craftsman style was developed by California architects and brothers Charles Sumner Greene and Henry Mather Greene. The Greenes were influenced by the English Arts and Crafts movement, oriental wood architecture, and manual arts. This style was popularized by extensive promotion in many magazines such as *Good House Keeping*, *House Beautiful*, and *Ladies Home Journal*. Its popularity resulted in a plethora of pattern books being published, some even offering pre-cut lumber.

What most distinguished the Craftsman home was its philosophical foundation that was predicated on a more functional aesthetic, natural materials and a greater degree of craftsmanship, which Art & Crafts proponents believed to be missing from the more ornate or traditional styles of the period.

Defining characteristics:

- Low-pitched gabled roof
- Deep eaves with exposed rafters
- Decorative beams or braces under gables
- 1 ó 1 ½ stories
- Large, covered front porches, supported by massive, battered columns



Examples in Springfield include:

204 N. Marshall Avenue

212 Jackson Avenue

216 N. Spring Avenue

316 N. Marshall Avenue

Craftsman details are found at this house at 123 Sanborn Avenue (1914)

Preservation Planning Recommendations

Over the past 100 years, the City of Springfield has lost a few significant historic resources. However, a fair number of historic residential and commercial buildings remain that physically tell the story of the celebrated development of Springfield. In addition, these historic buildings have demonstrated their importance to the City, in general, and the downtown, in particular, with their adaptability and durability over the past 100 years. Not only should Springfield explore future historic preservation activities for the sake of preserving these valuable resources but also because historic preservation has proven to have a positive economic impact on communities that undertake preservation efforts.

The primary purpose of historic contexts is developing an understanding of Springfield's historic development in order to evaluate its historic resources and to determine which preservation efforts the City may want to evaluate further. Below are the various Preservation activities that Springfield may want to explore implementing in the future.

- **Historic Preservation Plan** is usually the first step in a city's preservation efforts. A historic preservation plan reviews all the preservation tools in more detail, provides a public forum to decide which preservation efforts should be used, explains historic preservation's terminology, outlines the legal basis for historic preservation, and prioritizes the community's preservation goals.
- **Survey**- examines in more detail all residential, commercial and industrial buildings to determine their historic significance.
- **Historic Preservation Ordinance** should be tailored to the needs and desires of the particular community. They cover the spectrum from being lenient (providing only recommendations) to being stringent (determining paint colors). Just like any planning effort, the community determines where on the "regulation" spectrum they would prefer to be positioned. Preservation ordinances also establish nomination standards and procedures.
- **Nomination to National Register** The National Register of Historic Places honors buildings and places that have a national historic significance. Buildings listed on the National Register are able to receive a Federal and State tax-credit for major improvements.

- ***Local Historic Register*** ó Resources that are of local importance should be listed on a Local Historic Register. Historic Preservation Ordinances only effect buildings on a Local Register, not the National Register. Because of Michael Lehrer's significance to Springfield, the City may want to explore placing all of the buildings he designed and constructed on a Local Historic Register.
- ***Design guidelines*** ó Prepared by historic preservation architects, design guidelines give city officials and building owners ideas on the best preservation practices for building improvements.
- ***Certified Local Government*** ó The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has established a Certified Local Government (CLG) program for cities that meet established requirements. Being a CLG brings many benefits to a community such as preservation grants, technical resources, and networking opportunities. However, one of the requirements is that a separate Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) be established. There may not be enough preservation activities for a separate HPC in Springfield, but a good first step may be expanding the responsibilities City's Planning Commission and change its name to the Preservation and Planning Commission.
- ***Education*** ó The City should use the Historic Context Study as an educational resource for all Planning Commission members.

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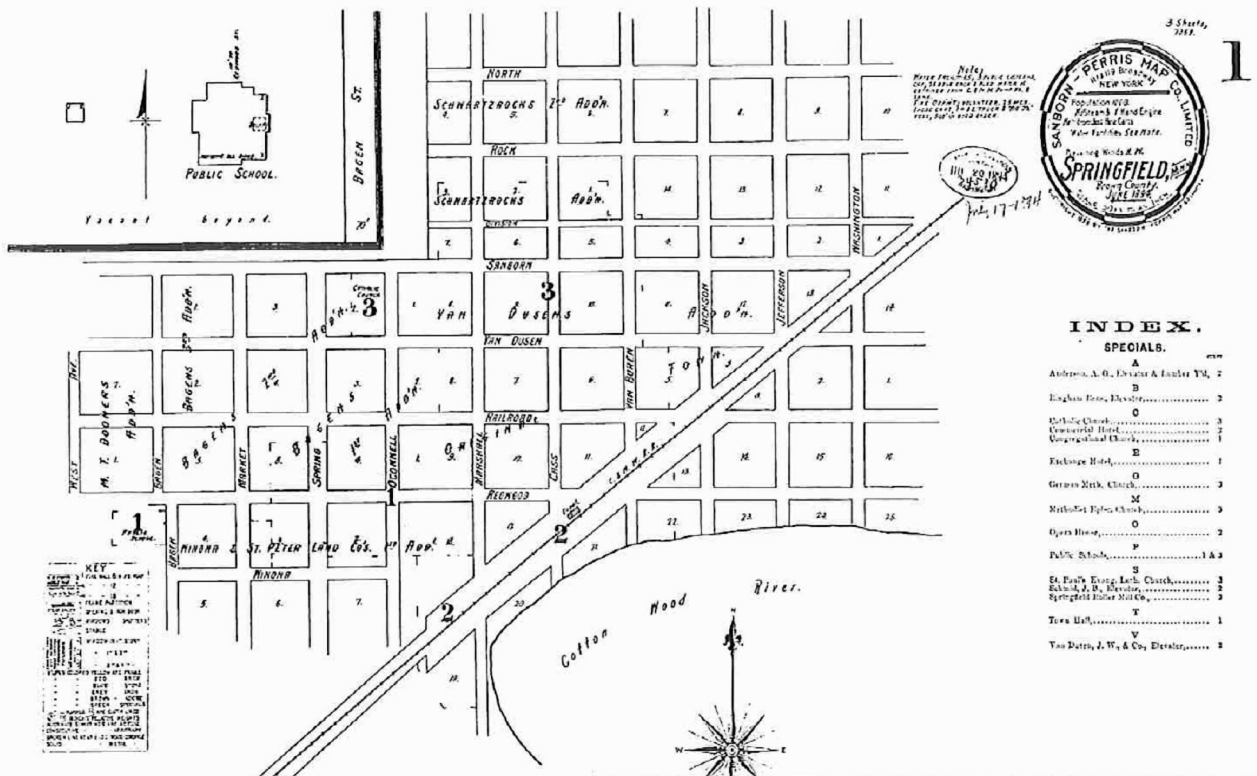
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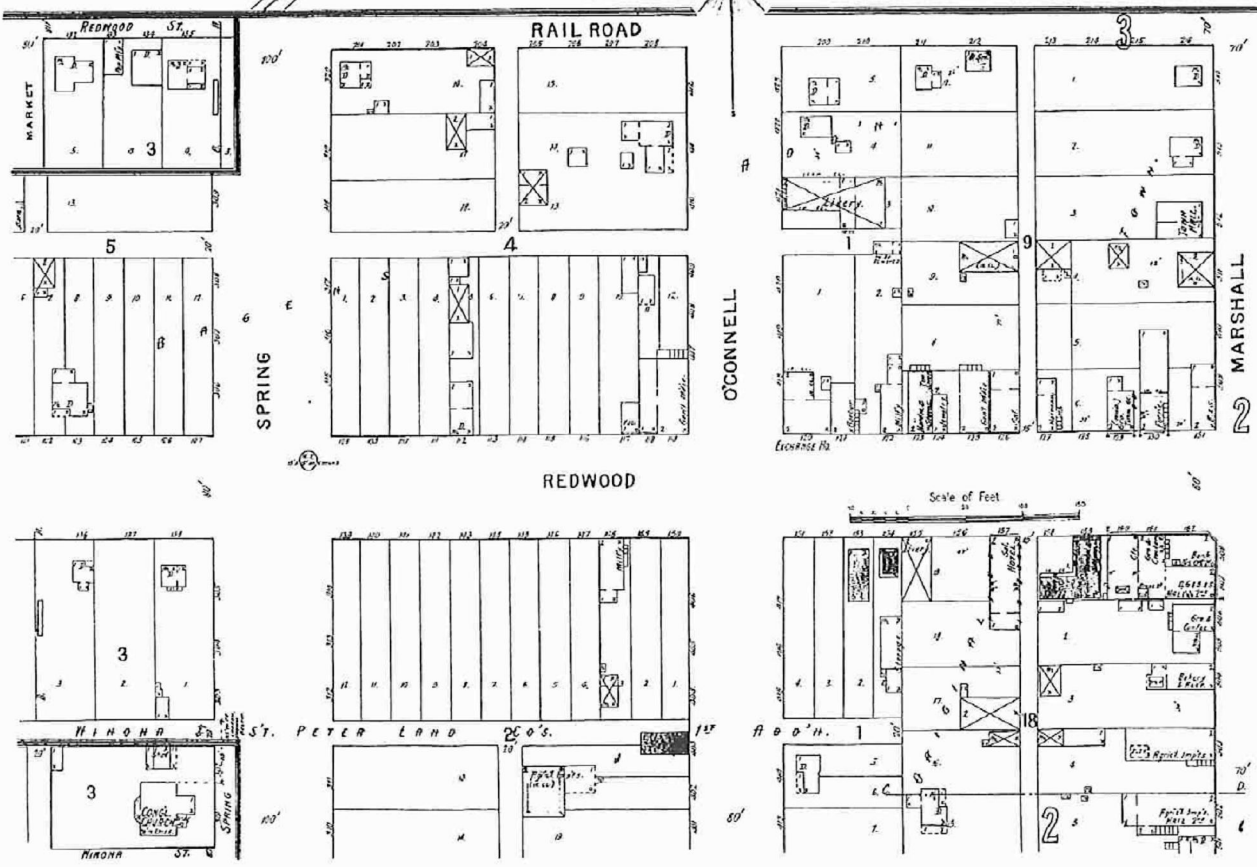
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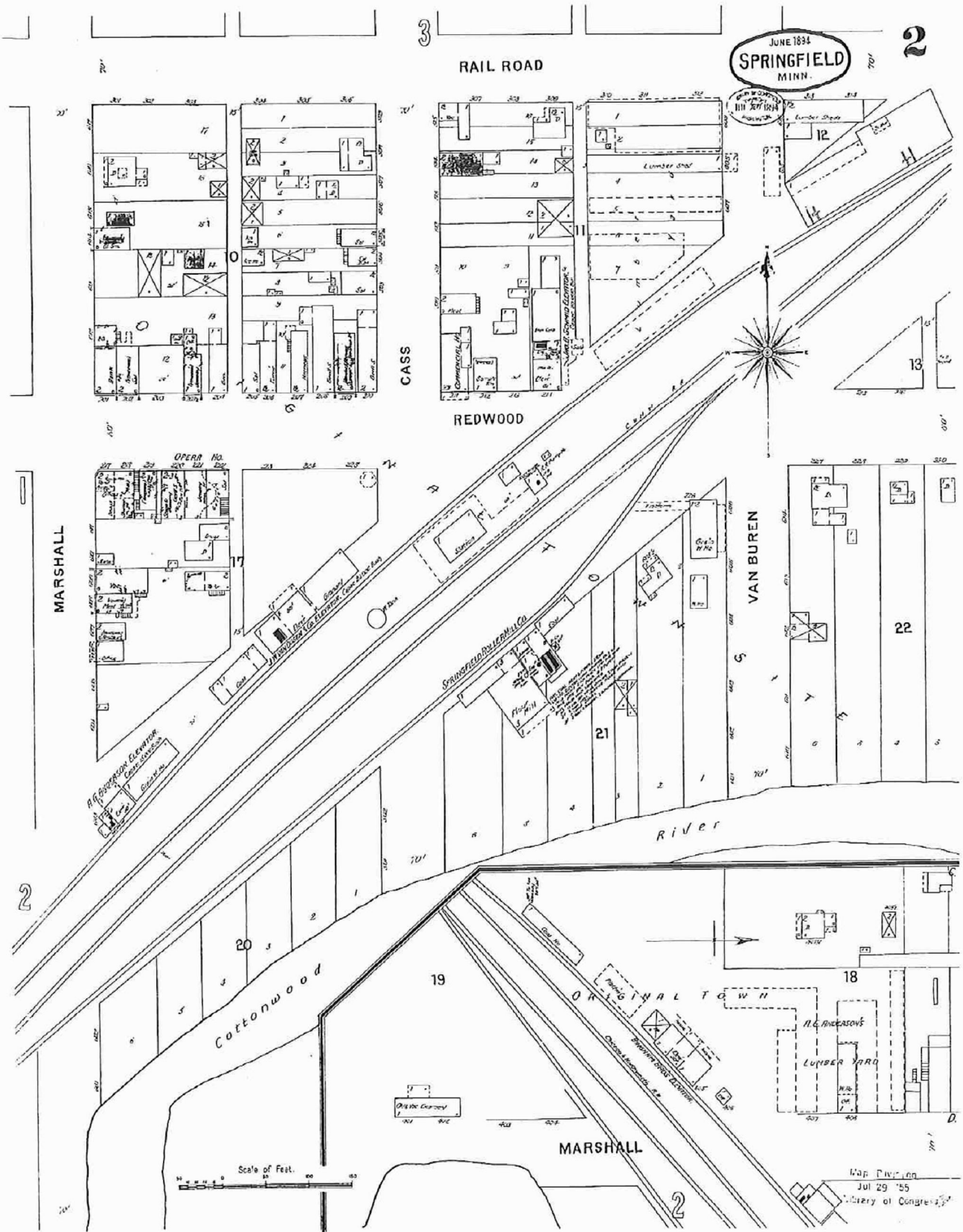


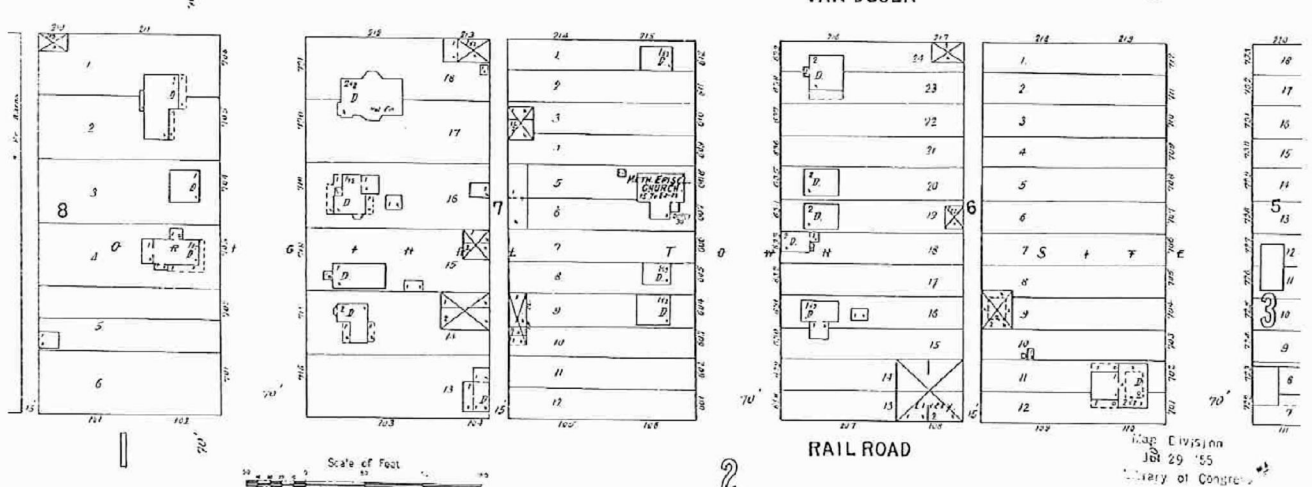
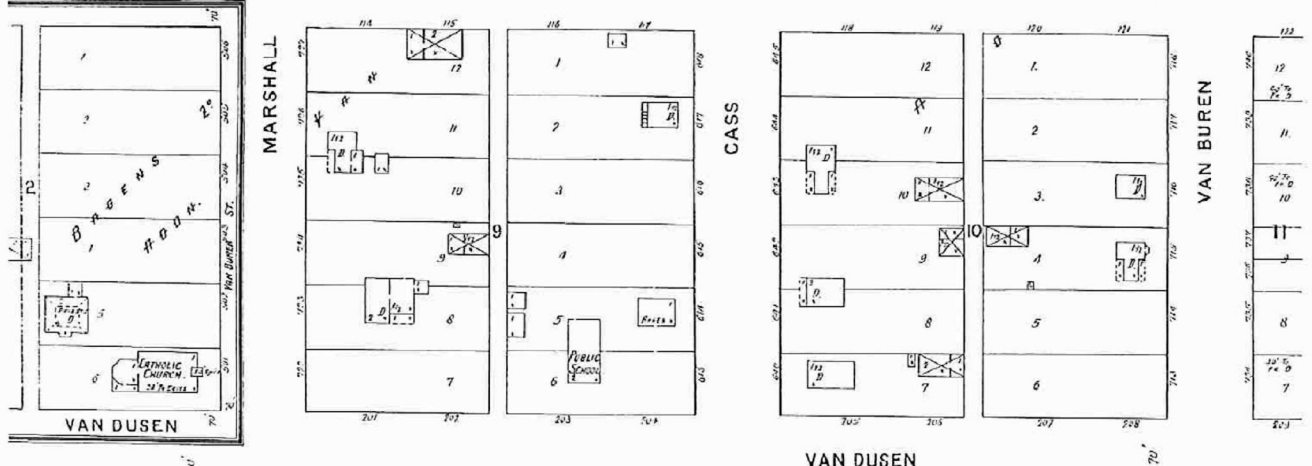
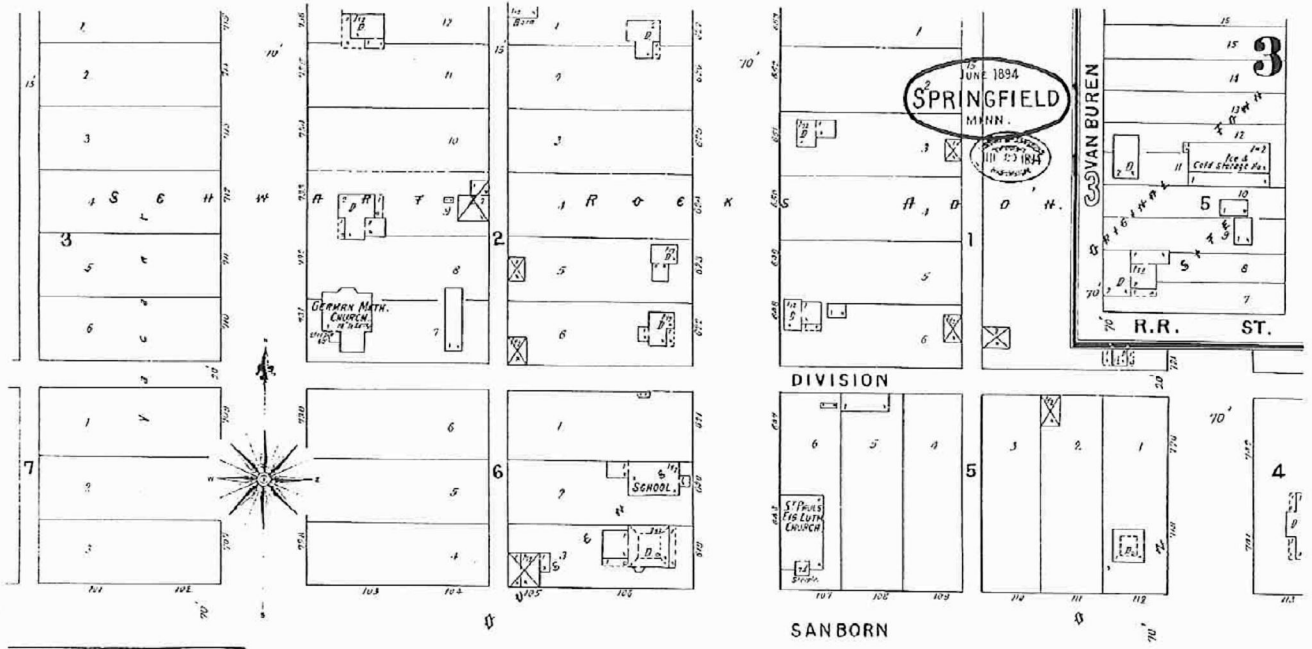
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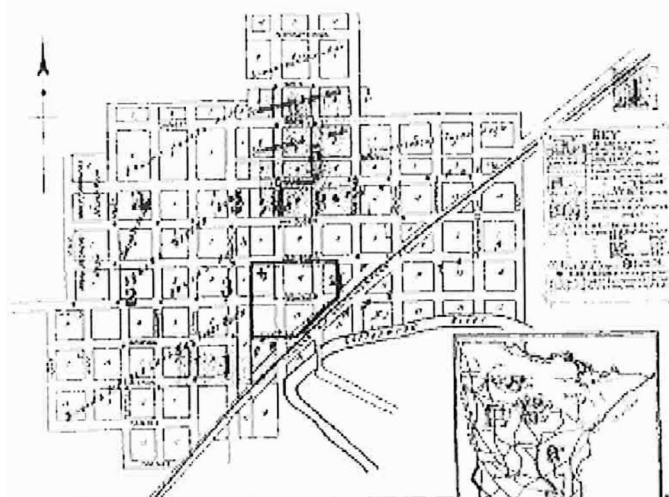
SPECIALS.

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D	Congregational Church, 1/2	3
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F	German Milk Church, 1/2	3
G	Nichols' Elys. Church, 1/2	3
H	Open House, 1/2	3
I	Public School, 1/2	1 & 2
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