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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

DEC 21 1988

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Reads Landing School

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Third St. and First Avenue

not for publication N/A

city, town Reads Landing

vicinity N/A

state Minnesota

code MN

county Wabasha

code 157

zip code 55968

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
1	2 buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
1	2 Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official Nina M. Archabal

Date

Minnesota Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau Minnesota State Historic Preservation Officer

12/9/88

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

*Alvina Byrum*

Entered in the  
National Register

1/19/89

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

School

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)Victorian Italianate

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation limestone

walls brick

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roof tin

other trim: limestone

cornice and brackets: wood

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Reads Landing School is a two-story Italianate red brick building, nearly square in plan and resting on a raised native limestone foundation. Each floor is divided into two rooms with a frontal hall. Two large windows at the side and rear light each room, while the halls are lit by the front windows as well as a window at either end. This creates a fenestration pattern of three bays on the sides and four in the rear; a fifth, slightly set out entrance bay has been inserted in the main facade.

A hipped roof caps the building and supports a cupola rising directly behind the set out central bay. This cupola vents the attic via semi-circular arched louvers. The bay itself terminates in a gable whose returns continue the cornice line of the main roof. Large paired brackets append to a wide, molded frieze and support the overhang of the cornice. These brackets also demarcate the bays and emphasize the corners. Similar but smaller brackets support the swayed cornice of the cupola roof, which rises at a steep pitch to a simple finial. All roofs are covered with channeled tin sheeting.

The window openings are segmental-arched, set into brick reveals, and trimmed with Winona County limestone sills. These latter have hammer-dressed faces and fluted margins. The openings of the entrance bay were given special treatment. A radially mullioned fanlight fills a semicircular arch above the main door; semicircular arches also top paired windows above the door, and a radially mullioned oculus lights the attic.

One masonry detail is so eccentric, and so distinctive of the builder's work, as to constitute a kind of signature: the watertable, rather than finishing off the foundation work, is a double course of brick spaced two courses above the stone foundation.

In spite of a change in use, only minor changes have been made to the building since its construction. Most of the basement windows have been walled up in response to building settling and/or perimeter earth build up. The basement entry on the east end has been enlarged to accommodate an overhead door. Concrete entry steps and iron railings are replacements, as is the massive brick chimney rising at the rear of the building. Other quite fragile detailing, like the mullioning of the windows, remains intact, as does the interior plan.

An outhouse and a metal shed housing the historical society's agricultural machinery and transportation displays also exist on the property. Neither building is of historic significance.

 See continuation sheet

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

exploration/settlement  
architecture

Period of Significance

1870-1887

Significant Dates

1870

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Hill, Daniel C., builder

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Reads Landing School is one of the earlier brick schools built in Minnesota. Its construction and early use marked the peak years of the Reads Landing community's meteoric rise and fall. As a major shipping point for lumber at the confluence of the Mississippi and Chippewa Rivers, Reads Landing had quickly grown from a population of less than 25 in 1856 to a population of several hundred in 1860. It was the second community in the county to organize a school district, the existing school building being a replacement for a frame school finished in 1858. Reads Landing School is also a significant and rare surviving example of the nearly universal mode of first generation brick school design in Minnesota, the bracketed, Italianate box. Three or four school buildings similar or identical to the ReadsLanding School were built in the county between 1865 and 1872, most or all of them by the same builder, Daniel C. Hill. As the owner of a large architectural millwork factory in Red Wing, Hill likely made up the wood detailing for the buildings as well as imparting his distinct stamp on the design of the masonry detailing. The source of the plans is unknown; local newspapers generally credit them to the school boards.

Although its early life stretched into the railroad era, the Reads Landing School, like the town itself, is best viewed in the state historic context of Early Agriculture and River Settlement. The community's population and economy were wholly dependent on river traffic, which for a brief time gave the town an advantage over Lake City and Wabasha. From lumbering center, Reads Landing quickly evolved into milling center, creating the population explosion that produced the school. When the CMSP<sup>1</sup> line was finished in 1871, and chose Wabasha rather than Reads Landing for its Wisconsin bridge in 1882, the town's economy sagged, its population stagnated, and its expensive school slowly became an anachronism. Interior plumbing was never installed, and the wood heating system, a stove in each room, was only replaced in the modern era. Initially, the school had been at the heart of the town's thriving economic life. Twenty per cent of its construction was funded by village liquor licenses, the remainder by a school bond and district funds. Before the first property tax had been collected (in 1876), the school was wealthy enough to loan money to the village for gutter and culvert construction.

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Reads Landing School, Reads Landing, Wabasha Co., MN

Section number 8 Page 1

"Early school buildings in Minnesota" is probably the most useful architectural context for assessing the significance of Reads Landing School. Unfortunately, no cross-county typology of property types that fall under this rubric has been done in the state. Yet enough is known of the specific type to which the Reads Landing School belongs to permit a fair reading of its importance. The pioneer architects Abraham Radcliffe of Minneapolis and Winona and his Winona successor Charles G. Maybury were the most important school and institutional building designers in the southeast quadrant of the state during the period that the Wabasha County schools were built, viz., 1859-72. (No other large schools were built until the 20th century.) Only fragments that can be attributed to them survive, but these and archival illustrations show that Second Empire was the favored style for large state institutions with lateral wings, while smaller cruciform or even square buildings were Italianate. This pattern was picked up by local builders throughout the region, for courthouses as well as schools. The Goodhue County Courthouse in Red Wing (1865, demolished), Italianate, cruciform, and crowned with a mansart tower, was nearly duplicated by the Wabasha school of 1869 (demolished). The latter was the first large brick school building in the county. The Reads Landing School of the next year, and its near clone in Lake City (First Ward School, 1872, demolished), reduced the central tower to a cupola, shrunk the cruciform plan to a box with one main entry, and replaced crossing halls with a single frontal hall. The upshot was equally Italianate, but simplified into a bracketed box close in form, though not scale, to the popular 1860's cubical Italianate house. In sum, the Reads Landing School captures both aspects of the Italianate fashion in school design: its introduction in imitation of government building design, and its separation from that source in the course of evolving into a smaller and more practical (for education) building type.

Though the ultimate source of the plans for all of the Italianate brick construction in Wabasha County is likely beyond discovery, nearly all of the contracting work was done by Red Wing firms, often with Red Wing brick manufacturers as major partners. D. C. Hill became involved with the Goodhue County Courthouse construction, the adjacent school to follow, and the Reads Landing and Lake City schools of 1870 and 1872, respectively. By the time of the latter two projects, he became the sole contractor of record. Distinctive detailing such as the raised brick watertable marks his work of the period in a way to suggest that Hill played at least a minor role in the design of his projects of the 1870's, including the Reads Landing School.

<sup>1</sup>Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

WPA Writers Project, "Annals of Minnesota", a collection of newspaper transcripts filed by county. Especially valuable is a report of a lecture on Reads Landing School published in the St. Paul Pioneer Press, Feb. 26, 1922.

History of Wabasha County (Chicago: H. H. Hill and Co., 1884).

Wabasha County Herald, June 9 and 22, 1870.

District school records, 1874--; in Wabasha County Historical Society collections.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Wabasha County Historical Society

**10. Geographical Data**

Acres of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A 

1	5
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5	7	3	3	1	0
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4	9	1	6	6	3	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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B 

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Zone Easting Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies Lots 1, 2, 14, 15, and 16, and the alley adjacent in block 9, Reads Landing.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire city lots that have historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

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organization N/A date July 8, 1987  
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