

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0675385

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

Brown County Multiple Resource Area

HISTORIC

Historic Resources of Brown County
(Partial Inventory - Historic Properties)

see continuation
sheet

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

The County Limits of Brown County, Minnesota

CITY, TOWN

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

2nd

STATE

Minnesota

CODE

22

COUNTY

Brown

CODE

015

3 CLASSIFICATION -- Multiple Resources

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Multiple Ownership - see inventory forms

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Recorders Office - Brown County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

New Ulm

STATE

Minnesota

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Statewide Survey of Historic Resources

DATE

1978

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Minnesota Historical Society - 240 Summit Avenue-Hill House

CITY, TOWN

St. Paul

STATE

Minnesota

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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Historic Resources of Brown County

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 1 PAGE 1

This Multiple Resource Area Nomination is based on a survey of standing structures conducted in Brown County by the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office as part of a long-range statewide survey of historic resources. The properties included in the nomination represent those which illustrate significant aspects of the history of the county and which have been deemed eligible for nomination at the conclusion of the survey. Additional information and new perspectives for evaluation of specific types of properties are continually being gained as the statewide survey progresses, and it is quite possible that additional Brown County properties will be nominated in the future. These may be presented individually or as parts of thematic groups when the entire survey is completed. For this reason, this Multiple Resource Area Nomination should not be construed as representing all properties in Brown County eligible for nomination.

(The above disclaimer is based on an agreement between Charles Harrington, HCRS, and Russell W. Fridley, Minnesota SHPO, August 31, 1979).

The basis of the survey for this nomination is an inventory of structures which are indicative of various aspects of the county's history.

Selection of structures for the inventory included both field reconnaissance of pre-identified sites and isolation of sites on a purely visual basis. Pre-identification of sites was limited to a small number of the most significant locations (those unique on a county-wide scale, or significantly linked with some aspect of county history.) County histories, individual community histories, and photographs from both the state and county societies and private collections were researched for site-specific information. General references to common buildings were not noted.

Township maps from the 1905 Brown County atlas were copied for field use. Plat maps on file in the county recorder's office were researched for original plat information (proprietors, survey and filing dates) and for addition dates. The filing dates for the various platted areas were noted on current highway department city maps. This collection of maps was extremely useful in gaining a localized sense of development for areas of the county.

All city streets and a sampling of township roads were walked or driven. Pre-identified sites were inventoried regardless of integrity. Other buildings with unusual integrity or unique features were also inventoried.

In general, structures built before 1940 were considered for an inventory. No attempt was made to locate "the oldest" structures in any one location, except as related to specific historical or physical significance.

Follow-up information (both localized specific and generalized contextual) on some sites was gathered to help establish significance.

In each community, at least one and in most cases several local contacts were made through the county historical society and by random inquiry. These were used most often to locate information on selected properties, but also were helpful in pointing out additional locations for inventory.

From the inventory of over 300 sites, 26 individual structures and 2 districts were selected for nomination to the National Register, mostly on the basis of their significance within the county. Information and photographs on all sites is recorded on inventory forms for a permanent record.

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Survey Method

Area Description

Brown County, located in the southwest-southcentral area of Minnesota, is bordered in part on the north by the very irregular course of the Minnesota River. Its other boundaries with four adjoining counties follow the rectilinear lines of the government survey system.

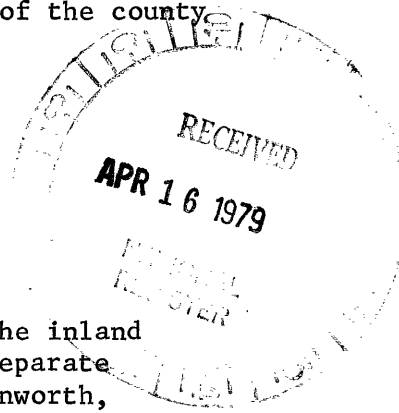
The U.S. Department of Agriculture classifies approximately 97% of the county's 395,520 acres as rural land. The remaining 3% is roughly equally divided between urban land use and water areas.

As is the case in surrounding counties, the majority of this rural land (approximately 84%) is cultivated, most often producing corn or soybeans. Pasture areas make up 6% of the rural land, 4% is woodland, and the remaining 6% is in other uses.

The Cottonwood and Little Cottonwood Rivers, the valley on the south side of the Minnesota, and a handful of lakes (the largest being Lake Hanska) are the major variant features interrupting the cultivated landscape. Man-made features outside townsites are the farmsteads (over 1,500), occasional isolated churches, cemeteries, and schools (most often in use as township halls), and a few remnants of "inland" (no railroad connection) crossroads communities. Also present are the grid of highways and township roads and portions of the railroad system.

The ten platted townsites of the county, nine of which were originally located on rail lines, range today from a set of foundations and crumbling buildings (Dotson) to a city of 13,051 (New Ulm). Three platted towns - Dotson, Essig, and Searles - were never incorporated (although the latter two have survived as communities) and so no separate population statistics exist for them. The population of the incorporated communities of the county line up as follows:

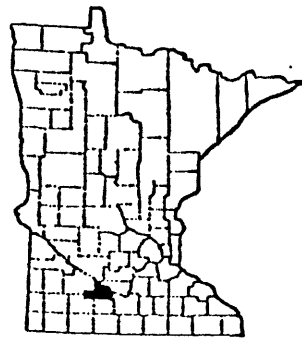
Cobden	113
Evan	126
Hanska	442
Comfrey (part)	512
Springfield	2,530
Sleepy Eye	3,461
New Ulm	13,051



In addition to these platted areas are the several remnants of the inland towns, unplatted and unincorporated, but retaining enough of a separate identity for a place name to remain in use. These include Leavenworth, Iberia, Godahl (mostly in Watonwan County), and Golden Gate.

Township populations range from 325 (Stately) to 922 (Cottonwood). Those townships with the largest populations either include developed but unincorporated townsites, are adjacent to New Ulm, or utilize the Minnesota River as a northern boundary and thus are larger than the standard 36-section size. The populations of the others, located to the south and west, are smaller and range from 576 to 325.

BROWN



The only areas of the county which showed a population increase between 1960 and 1970 were New Ulm and its three adjoining townships. But the growth in this area surpassed the decrease in the remainder of the county, and the 1970 county total of 28,887 was its largest to date.

Following in this section are descriptions of the county's historical evolution during the development years and of the types of building stock that have been employed in the area.

HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

The first designation of an area in the territory of Minnesota to be called Brown County was made in 1855, when a number of new counties were created from older, larger ones by the territorial legislature. This first Brown County was a huge area extending from Lake Traverse to Iowa to the Minnesota River. A series of reductions and boundary changes resulted in the present county boundaries by 1865, and it is this area with which this nomination is concerned.

Most of the present county area was ceded by the Dakota in the treaty at Traverse des Sioux in 1851. The ten mile wide strip along the southern side of the Minnesota which was to serve as reservation land for the Dakota had its southeasterly corner in Brown County; some sources speculate this wedge retarded westward settlement from New Ulm in the first years of development.

However, navigation up the Minnesota as far as Fort Ridgely (across the river from Brown County) was in practice, and the first concentrated group of settlers - the Chicago Land Society - arrived in the county in the fall of 1854. The Society had been formed by German immigrants in Chicago for the purpose of establishing a German colony in the Midwest, and after examining several other sites and wintering over 1854-55 at a riverside Indian village north of present Essig, the group platted the townsite of New Ulm just above the mouth of the Cottonwood River in the spring of 1855. This group was joined by another German immigrant group - the Turner-sponsored Cincinatti Settlement Society - in 1856, and the two formed the German Land Association of Minnesota.

The planned community envisioned by the Association dominated organized settlement activity in the county in the 1850s; there are also accounts of Norwegian settlement in the Linden-Lake Hanska area and of a platted Yankee settlement known as Leavenworth in the central portion of the county (two and one-half miles distant from the later settlement of the same name). Five townships in the eastern portions of the county had been created by 1862.

The role of New Ulm as a defense outpost during the Indian War of 1862 has been well documented. After their defeats at Fort Ridgely and New Ulm, the Dakota were moved from the state and the last strip of reservation land claimed by the government. During the War, most of New Ulm was destroyed (save a few blocks of barricaded buildings) and the rest of the area was vacated.

The year following the Uprising, in 1863, a military outpost known as Fort Hill was established on the northeastern shore of Lake Hanska. Stimulants to the re-settlement of the county came with the opening of the reservation lands for settlement (the county's northwestern section) and with the institution of the Homestead Act. At least three concentrated settlements grew up during the 1860s - Golden Gate in Home Township, Leavenworth in Leavenworth (southwest of the original townsite), and Iberia in Stark Township. All these communities were near water and boasted mills by the early 1870s.

Only remnants of these settlements exist today (Golden Gate is but a wayside marker). As is the case with most of the western portions of the state, the construction of rail lines and designation of station stops on the lines largely determined the urban settlement pattern as we know it today. In Brown County, only New Ulm remains as a functional community dating from the pre-railroad period; it is also the only one of these earliest communities to be included in the rail system when it did arrive. Until then, the community relied on the upper Minnesota steamboat traffic.

The first railroad to cross the county was the Winona and St. Peter, in 1872. This road entered the county from St. Peter near New Ulm and passed through the city and westward across the county and beyond, reaching Watertown, South Dakota, in 1873. According to a local history account, an early settler near Sleepy Eye Lake sold a portion of his land to a lawyer of the railroad, and, together they platted the town of Sleepy Eye Lake, also in 1872. (This transaction may have been a primary factor in the determination of the route along its final course rather than a more southerly one through existing Leavenworth.)

Sleepy Eye Lake (the name was later changed to Loreno and then reverted in shortened form to Sleepy Eye), near the mid-point of the county's trackage, was the only community created the same year the tracks arrived. Again, according to a local accounts, two section houses and a store had been erected at Springfield, to the west, by 1873. The village was platted (as Burns Station) four years later by three men with railroad affiliation.

The other two towns on the line, Essig and Cobden, were platted much later (1890 and 1901, respectively). There is some evidence to suggest that station designation for each point had been made earlier. Essig was platted by the railroad company, Cobden by apparent private developers.

Just after Springfield was platted, a spur line of the Winona and St. Peter known as the Minnesota Valley was completed from just east of Sleepy Eye to existing Redwood Falls, in neighboring Redwood County, in 1878. Eight miles of this line were within Brown County, and Evan (first known as Hanson's Station) was platted near the county's western edge by a local landowner in 1887.

The remaining township areas (after the five that were organized before the Indian War) in the reservation area and the central and western portions of the county were settled and organized through the 1860s and 1870s; the last to organize was Stately in 1879. Urban settlement was delayed in the southern part of the county; several isolated churches and creameries from this period remain in the area today.

Subsequent rail construction did not occur until the turn of the century. In 1899, the Minnesota and Iowa cut through the southwest corner of the county with a granger line from Vesta (in Redwood County) to Iowa. Two towns were created on this line by the Western Town Lot Company (a subsidiary of the railroad) the same year the tracks were laid - Dotson (also known as Bedford) and Comfrey (partially in Cottonwood County). A year later, the Minneapolis and St. Louis constructed a line through the county's southeast corner. The villages of Searles and Hanska had been platted by persons representing the Iowa and Minnesota Land and Townsite Company (of uncertain affiliation) the previous year. (There appears to have been some competition at Hanska; an adjoining plat called Blessum had been filed by a private developer in 1898 - today's Hanska includes both sections.)

Today, the early milling communities have either disappeared or simply survive as a collection of residences. The later railroad towns have not undergone significant growth since the early part of the century and remain transfer points and commerce centers for the immediate surrounding agricultural areas. The first two railroad towns (Sleepy Eye and Springfield) and New Ulm have undergone some industrial development (early ones being flour milling, brewing, and brickmaking) and the accompanying spatial and population expansion. But the basic pattern of the county's organization as we know it today was set shortly after the turn of the century after the last rail lines were laid.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Out-county from New Ulm, the building stock of Brown County has followed the sequence common in most southwestern Minnesota areas. First settlers built with log, sod, and dugout construction methods. As sawmills were established and mass-produced lumber became available, the frame building - in most cases, quite utilitarian and unadorned - became the dominant form of domestic building construction. In a few cases, where individual wealth permitted, larger frame residences with Italianate, Queen Anne, or Classical embellishments appeared. Numerous bungalows were built during the century's first decades; later domestic buildings continued to be mostly of frame and of simple construction in the builder styles common to each decade.

Early farm buildings were mostly of the frame type common to developing farm operations. Several larger barns in the county indicate operations of stock-raising or dairying during the early decades of the century. As in other areas, most farmsteads have undergone radical alterations.

Numerous county farmsteads exhibit examples of the clay block silos built by the crews of the A.C. Ochs Brick and Tile Company of Springfield. The company constructed scores of these silos, most of which are easily identifiable by the A.C.O. initials at the top, throughout the midwest from before 1910 through the 1940s. Examples of other buildings constructed of the brick and block manufactured by the company (which, today, is the only manufacturer of brick in Minnesota) are found throughout the area but are not as numerous as one might expect.

Commercial buildings have generally followed the familiar pattern of initial frame (many with false fronts) and later masonry one-to two-story structures. Some of the smallest towns may have never "earned" a masonry building, but each of the principal towns in the county retains a few examples of the two-story turn-of-the-century commercial structures with elaborate metal cornices.

Although these architectural patterns in the out-county areas are relatively common, the architecture of New Ulm has gained a popular reputation for uniqueness. A recent feature article in the St. Paul Pioneer Press described the town as "still Germanic...where Rhenish architecture mixes with Queen Anne styles." In his book Minnesota Houses Roger Kennedy asserts that the political background of the German immigrants "... had dramatic effect upon the domestic architecture of those areas settled largely by Germans, particularly the area about New Ulm." But geographer Hildegard Johnson, in an article in the German-American Review, states "Some small white houses behind picket fences with their gables facing the streets lend a traditional trace to the otherwise usual small town architecture with falsified gables in the business blocks and typical Middle Western homes in the residential districts." And David Gebhard and Tom Martinson, in their recent Guide to Minnesota Architecture, comment that "Architecturally, New Ulm has often been referred to as a city of German-inspired architecture, but this is only marginally the case."

If we examine the building stock of the city, we may notice, first and perhaps most evidently, a larger proportion of brick structures as compared with the other towns in the area. Several reasons have been proposed. Communities of German-born population in other areas of Minnesota have utilized brick construction, supporting the popular acceptance of the German immigrants' traditional affinity for brick. Also, clay for brick manufacture was readily available along the Minnesota River: most of New Ulm's early pottery works incorporated brick-making into their operations. And further, during the post-Uprising re-building period after the original frame town was mostly burned, the more permanent qualities of masonry may have had added appeal. The extensive use of brick may well be related to a combination of these - and perhaps other factors.

The tradition of brick use has extended over a long time span and a wide variety of styles, from the early simple rectangular or T-shaped one-and-one-half story structures, to turn-of-the-century homes with Queen Anne and classical decoration, to brick bungalows and still later brick examples of common builder styles. Roger Kennedy sees in the geometric brick ornamentation of some of the residences built during the final decades of the century "a new style self-consciously derived from the German Gothic tradition." But beyond this possibility, and a few other single unusual buildings, most of the brick structures seem to make use of basic styles common to the frame buildings of other area communities.

The few unusual types do exist as exceptions. Two large brick houses, both attributed to local architect Carl Heers, and the Federal Post Office Building exhibit the stepped gables said to be characteristic of a Flemish style. A small number of two-story brick residences with a flat roof and a cornice line of patterned relief brick are of undetermined influence and are unusual for the area. And local architect Julius Berndt, designer of

the base for the Herman Monument, was also allegedly responsible for a number of fortress-like residences; one known example remains standing. Yet, these unusual structure types made up but a handful of the total structure stock of the city, and, further, their specific German lineage needs further documentation.

In spite of the difficulty in applying the label of "German Architecture" to most of the city's buildings, there are at least three somewhat unique features of the community that we might consider as related to the generation of the label. The town does have a greater number of nineteenth century buildings with characteristic "high style" elements than most surrounding communities (especially to the south and west). Further, it does have a solidly German cultural reputation. And it does contain a readily apparent preponderance of brick structures (again, as compared with surrounding areas). These three factors may have combined to create a somewhat over-blown image of "German Architecture". Yet, the very fundamental use of brick, the relief ornament that Kennedy labels German Gothic, and the few unusual structure types which do exist, may decidedly merit specific attention and continued, more detailed, investigation.

One other set of notable buildings - largely outside the German question - are the numerous structures designed by the American Artstone Company of New Ulm. This company, known as the Saffert Company before 1932, has been a continuing manufacturer of concrete building materials since 1918 (and before that date at a plant in Fairfax). Their greatest local impact has been during the late teens and through the 1920s when the company not only manufactured materials but designed and constructed a wide variety of buildings - residential bungalows, imposing gas stations, commercial blocks displaying a Prairie School ornament, elaborate barns and silos. Many of the structures, found not only in New Ulm and Brown County but throughout surrounding southern Minnesota, are easily identified by the use of a rainbow-colored concrete block manufactured by the company.

Individual structures in out-county communities are situated on strictly functional, rectilinear plats characteristic of railroad communities. Common street names are of tree varieties or railroad officials. The major difference in these plats is in the number of additions (although the earlier ones tend to have larger original areas) and possible accommodation to water bodies.

The plat finally adopted by the German Land Association for the town of New Ulm was actually the third plat drawn; it was done in the spring of 1857 by surveyor Christian Prignitz. The plat is singularly notable for its scale, (almost 400 city blocks), its formal symmetry (Center Street acting as a mid-point between northern and southern sections and serving as a gateway from the river, and numerous parks and markets mirrored in both the northern and southern sections), and its system of residential lots and garden plots. Indeed, most "additions" to the plat have actually been replatting of existing areas (many in the garden areas), and several blocks of the original plat are undergoing first development more than 120 years after the original survey.

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Area Significance

During the initial white settlement period (early 1850s through 1862) the primary significance of the area that is now Brown County was in its comparatively dense center of settlement on the southwestern Minnesota frontier, at New Ulm. Later, after the Indian Uprising of 1862, its significance became based on its position as a component part of a larger developing agricultural region. Besides the production of goods on the family farm and the transportation system for the export of these goods, the county also developed, to a higher degree than most surrounding counties, a significant network of industry in part oriented to local processing of agricultural products.

This section will examine aspects of both the county's historic and its architectural significance as related to the individual properties included in this nomination.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Townsite development on the Minnesota frontier was rampant during the 1850s. Most town proprietorships appear to have been individual or small-group speculative ventures. As a large-scale planned community by an outside ethnic group, New Ulm, with its extensive plat resembling utopian models, was significant during the 1850s as a successful departure from the usual urban settlement patterns of the region. One of few buildings remaining in the city from this period is the Greek Revival Frederick W. Kiesling House (c.1860), a typical frame residence. Most features of the town plat itself, including the location of the Cincinnati Settlement Society's Turner Hall, also continue to be in evidence.

The position of the city as a major frontier center was demonstrated by its role in the events of the Indian Uprising of 1862. Individual settlers scattered throughout the area fled to the city after the first attacks had occurred further upstream the Minnesota River. The success of the city's defenders in turning back the Sioux offensive from its most easterly attack point was a crucial episode in a war which marked the final take-over of Minnesota Sioux lands by the government. The Kiesling House, located within the area barricaded by the city's defenders, and numerous markers scattered throughout the city and county are reminders of this settlement episode.

Although excavated after the Second Battle, the resettlement of the area occurred quickly with the first returnees arriving less than a week later. The Seiter House (c.1865) (part of the South German Street District) and the Melges Bakery (1865) were both erected as part of the building flourish during the years immediately following the war.

This period marked the beginnings of development of the area into a producer, exporter, and processor of agricultural products. This development included the establishment of the units of production (the family farm), of a system of efficient transportation (the railroad), of the trackside towns along this system as centers of area commerce, and of industry for local processing of some agricultural products.

Some individual agricultural settlement preceded railroad construction in all parts of the county, and, in turn, development of the rail system acted as further inducement to settlement, especially in the western areas. The only early frame railroad structure remaining along the Winona and St. Peter (the first and central line through the county) is the Sleepy Eye Freight Depot (c.1887). The New Ulm Railroad Depot (c.1895), is an especially handsome example of the masonry depots which replaced the earlier wooden structures in the larger towns. The Comfrey Section House (c.1899), built for the section maintenance foreman at about the same time the Chicago and NorthWestern tracks reached Comfrey, is the only standing structure associated with the later grange lines in the county.

As in most agricultural areas that have remained viable producers, farmstead buildings have generally undergone radical alteration. Surviving structure which illustrate some of the more successful grain and livestock operations in the county are the Twente Farm Elevator and Granary (c.1885) in Albin Township, the Thormodson Barn (1912) in Linden Township, and the L.E. Potter Farmstead in Burnstown Township.

The development of area commerce in the communities of the county is represented by several notable standing structures. "Main Street" commercial buildings include the Melges Bakery (1865), the Boesch-Hummel-Maltzahn Block (1890), and the Ruemke Mercantile Store (c.1895), all in New Ulm. The automobile had a drastic effect on the commerce patterns of the rural county; three notable structures - the Kreitinger Garage (c.1911) in Springfield, the Bjerneberg Garage (1919) in Hanska, and the New Ulm Oil Company Service Station (1926) in New Ulm - are associated with its early use. The Tivoli Gardens (1885) in New Ulm represents the commercial operations of a local industry, the Schumacker Brewery. The Lampert Lumber Company Line Yard (c.1919) in Essig, Milford Township, is a rare surviving example of a specific building type commonly erected at railroad townsites.

Indicative of the communities which became the primary nodes of commerce in the county are the larger houses constructed by the businessmen responsible for development. Properties retaining good integrity marking these centers are the Bendixon-Schmid House (1894), the home, successively, of two men responsible for financial and industrial activity in Springfield; the W.W. Smith House (1901), the home of a Sleepy Eye banker; and the South German Street and South Broadway Districts, which include the homes of a number of significant commercial and financial New Ulm figures.

Two industries geared to agricultural processing have been flour milling and brewing. Production at flour mills in New Ulm, Sleepy Eye, and Springfield placed Brown County at the top of the industry in outstate Minnesota during the first decade of the century. The complex of the New Ulm Roller Mill (originally the Empire Mill) is the only one remaining in operation and has the best ensemble integrity. (These early mills also played a significant role in developing commerce through their ownership of large networks of country elevators in the trackside towns throughout the area.) Similarly, of several operations once constituting the important brewing industry of New Ulm, the August Schell Brewing Company remains in operation with several early component buildings.

Several New Ulm homes in both the South German and South Broadway Districts, and the Otto Schell House, are associated with industries in New Ulm. The A.C. Ochs House (1911), home of the founder of the Ochs Brick and Tile Company in Springfield, is associated with an important county industry not directly tied to agricultural processing.

Beyond this central economic importance, the county is also significant for the German cultural ambience that has remained associated with New Ulm since its founding. Aspects of this directly tied with the building stock are discussed in the Architectural Significance section. Other associated structures are the Hermann Monument (1888-1897) and the Turner Hall (1873, 1954).

Several other buildings are individually notable, but not directly tied to the primary themes related to the county's significance. Early standing structures of government ownership are the Cobden Jail (c.1900) and the New Ulm Armory (1914). The Liberal Union Hall (1910) in Hanska is linked with ethnic/religious settlement. And two homes which derive their significance from the persons who lived in them are the John Lind House (1887) in New Ulm, home of Governor John Lind before and while in office, and the Wanda Gag Childhood House (c.1898), also in New Ulm, girlhood home of the nationally known artist-illustrator.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The primary architectural significance of structures in Brown County lies in the regionally unique "German" architecture phenomenon in New Ulm, and the potential this building stock may have for providing more insight on German immigrant building patterns. This nomination includes a variety of the different types of brick structures built in the city, both those which may be further investigated as ethnic expressions of building and those which are simply traditional styles expressed in brick (but, nevertheless, are significant to the town's image).

The Fesenmaier House (c.1888) is an especially well-preserved example of the T-shaped one-and-one-half story brick houses displaying the polychromed geometric patterns used on several similar buildings constructed during the later decades of the 19th century. The South German and South Broadway Districts, constituting the most concentrated brick residential areas in the town, contain both the mansion scale and more modest examples of late 19th century and turn-of-the-century brick housing; most buildings in the districts reflect traditional styling with more or less elaborate Queen Anne, Italianate, or Eastlake detailing. An exception is the stepped gable polychromed Hose House in the South Broadway area - one of only two such houses in town with features resembling the later-constructed Federal Post Office Building, and which, together, are frequently cited as prime components of the town's ethnic building. Single brick residences of style distinction are the thoroughly Queen Anne Gov. John Lind House (1887) and the August Schell House (1880) (part of the Schell Brewing Complex), variously referred to as German Gothic or German Medieval.

A few single residences in the county are of architectural significance because they are examples of traditional styling in an area where this is relatively uncommon. Located in the three largest communities, they are significant as well-preserved surviving examples illustrating the relationship between significant industrial and commercial activity and "high-style" (albeit builders high-style) housing stock in a community. These include the Queen Anne Bendixon-Schmid House (1894) and the Colonial Revival A.C. Ochs House (1911), both on Marshall Avenue in Springfield, the Queen Anne-Classical W.W. Smith House (1901) in Sleepy Eye, and the Queen Anne Otto Schell House (c.1895) in New Ulm.

Two institutional structures singularly important for their utilization of transitional architectural styling are the French Second Empire St. Michael's Convent (1872) and the Victorian Gothic Old Main (1884) at Dr. Martin Luther College, both in New Ulm.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See attached sheets

UTM NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

see individual inventory forms

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

QUADRANGLE NAME _____

QUADRANGLE SCALE _____

UTM REFERENCES

A

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B

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C

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Dennis A. Gimmetstad, Research Associate

ORGANIZATION

Minnesota Historical Society

DATE

January 1979

STREET & NUMBER

240 Summit Avenue-Hill House

TELEPHONE

612-296-9545

CITY OR TOWN

St. Paul,

STATE

Minnesota

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

see individual inventory forms

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Russell W. Fridley

TITLE

Russell W. Fridley
State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

4/4/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Carol D. Skell

DATE

12-31-79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

Kristen O'Connell

DATE

12/21/79

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

RECEIVED

APR 16 1979

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