

Historic Walking Tour

City of North Mankato, Minnesota
Originally created for North Mankato's 120th Anniversary Celebration in July 2019

Legend

- 1 Former Municipal Building
443 Belgrade Ave
- 2 Belltower Apartments
442 Belgrade Ave
- 3 Marigold Dairy
200 Belgrade Ave
- 4 O.E. Bennett House
322 Wheeler Ave
- 5 A.L. Wheeler House
348 Wheeler Avenue
- 6 Wheeler Brickyard/Wheeler Park
402 Page Avenue
- 7 Tanley Field
441 Monroe Ave
- 8 W.J. Nixon House
442 Wheeler Avenue
- 9 J.B. Nelsen House
503 Cornelia Avenue
- 10 Otto Neitge House
412 Sherman Street

0 100 200 feet
Source: Aerial County, MNdot



120 YEARS OF COMMUNITY: A STROLL THROUGH HISTORY WALKING TOUR

The Walking Tour as listed is approximately 2.3 miles and takes about 35 minutes to complete.

The historical sites on this walking tour will include a plaque or sign indicating they have been recognized as a significant part of the City of North Mankato's history.

For more information on any of these sites or to share your own story visit the Historical Recognition page on our website.
www.northmankato.com/history



120 YEARS OF COMMUNITY

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1

FORMER MUNICIPAL BUILDING

443 BELGRADE AVE.



This location served for many years as the center for North Mankato's municipal services. In 1926 this handsome brick civic building was constructed with deep civic pride to provide space for the city offices, the library, the police department, a fire station and an all-purpose civic auditorium in one structure. The City Hall remained in service here until the late 1960s when the current municipal building was constructed.

2

BELLTOWER APARTMENTS

442 BELGRADE AVE.



In 1890 the first portion of School District 60 was built at the corner of Belgrade and Center. This initial structure had two floors with two classrooms each. In 1904, four rooms were added to the east portion, and in 1920 a seven-room addition was built on the north side. The building was constructed of North Mankato brick and was especially noted for its number of large windows and natural light inside the classrooms. As well as being attractive, the school was known for early innovation, including much-remarked upon steam heat and HVAC system, a "sanitary drinking fountain system," a playground, and a free textbook system. The Belltower building was decommissioned as a school in 1959 and is used as an apartment building today.

3

MARIGOLD DAIRY

200 BELGRADE AVE.



In 1936 Merrill Claridge formed Marigold Dairies and constructed a large plant on Belgrade near the bridge, a \$25,000 one-story simplified deco-style building constructed by Neitge Construction. Marigold proceeded to dominate the local market, producing milk, ice cream and sherbets, cottage cheese, and frozen strawberries with an initial staff of 25 (including delivery drivers). Between 1940-1965, Marigold was one of the largest employers in North Mankato, with 80 people on the payroll, and was one of the top-rated independent dairy companies in the nation. It was sold in 1981 and torn down in the 1990s.

4

O.E. BENNETT HOUSE

322 WHEELER AVE.



O.E. Bennett and A.L. Wheeler were co-founders of North Mankato's Wheeler Brickyard. The O.E. Bennett house was built with bricks from their brickyard. The Bennett home is the location where North Mankato residents decided to incorporate. On December 19, 1898, 127 North Mankatoans used this house to vote for incorporation as a village separate from the rest of Belgrade Township.

5

A.L. WHEELER HOUSE

348 WHEELER AVE.



The A.L. Wheeler House, located on the corner of Cross Street and Wheeler Avenue is a Queen Anne residence constructed of red brick with limestone lintels, sills, and foundation. Architectural detailing consists of patterned masonry in the gables and beneath the second story windows, elliptical fanlights surrounded with limestone and brick detailing in the gables on both the south and east building frontages, a covered front entrance with turned spindles, and a cottage window with a blank lower pane and smaller pane above fronting Wheeler Avenue.

6

WHEELER BRICKYARD/ WHEELER PARK



In 1886/87, A.L. Wheeler and O.E. Bennett started a brickyard on 26 acres of land in North Mankato. Many of North Mankato's bricks were used in town for the residential building boom, meaning that many houses, especially those located on Belgrade and Nicollet Avenues, were built with North Mankato brick. The boom was relatively-short lived, however, as the clay reserves dwindled and what remained was of lower quality. In 1905, Wheeler and Bennett closed their North Mankato brickyard, and a few years later, the city bought the land for what is today known as Wheeler Park.

7

TANLEY FIELD

441 MONROE AVE.



In 1936, Bill Tanley, a bottler for Key City Beverages, came up with the idea of building a baseball field sited at the corner of Monroe Avenue and Center Street. Originally called "Key City Park," in 1937 the ballpark was renamed Tanley Field after its founder. However, the ballpark facilities were completely flooded out in April of 1951. By 1958 the park was torn down to make room for the construction of the Monroe Elementary School.

8

W.J. NIXON HOUSE

442 WHEELER AVE.



This two story Queen Anne residence of red brick was built in 1894. Architectural detailing and identifying characteristics include irregular plans and asymmetrical massing, a strong vertical orientation, a rounded turret (tower), and main floor "picture" windows. This residence served as the home to W.J. Nixon.

9

J.B. NELSEN HOUSE

503 CORNELIA ST.



Jacob B. Nelsen was a prominent North Mankato building contractor and operator of a quarry along the bluff. His construction building was located at 503 Belgrade Avenue, across the street from the old municipal building. Among the buildings his company erected are some located on the campuses of Mankato State University, Bethany Lutheran College and Good Counsel Academy in Mankato and Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter. The company also built many other structures in the Mankato-North Mankato area and in a wide radius around Mankato. Nelsen was president of North Mankato in 1900, 1901, 1903, 1907, 1912, 1913, 1915 and 1916.

10

OTTO NEITGE HOUSE

412 SHERMAN ST.



Otto Neitge was in the construction business in North Mankato. He served as president of the North Mankato Village Council from 1908 to 1911 and again in 1917. As president of North Mankato, Neitge played an instrumental part in preventing the flood of 1917 from becoming a serious threat to area residents when he used 30 sticks of dynamite to break up the ice at Jefferson's Bend.