City of Mankato
Historic Context Study

Prepared for the
Mankato Heritage Preservation Commission
Mankato, Minnesota

Prepared by
Thomas R. Zahn & Associates LLC

Winter 2009-10

Historic photographs included in this report are from the collections of the Minnesota Historical Society, and the Blue Earth Historical Society.

This project has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, through the Minnesota Historical Society under the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act as amended. However, the contents and opinion do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendations by the Department of the Interior.

Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the U.S. Department of Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or handicap in its federally assisted programs. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write:

Office of Equal Opportunity
U.S. Department of the Interior
Washington D.C. 20240

City of Mankato
Historic Context Study

Prepared for

The Mankato Heritage Preservation Commission

Judy Arzdorf
Tony Filipovitch
Steve Meyer
Bryan Paulsen
Jessica Potter
David Schrader
H. Roger Smith

The Mankato City Council

John Brady, Mayor
Michael Lavin
Tamara Rovney
Vance Stuerenberg
Charlie Hurd
Mark Frost
Jack Considine

The City of Mankato

Patrick Hentges, City Manager
Paul Vogel, Director of Community Development

Prepared by

Thomas R. Zahn & Associates LLC
Thomas Zahn, Principal
Bethany Gladhill, Project Associate

Winter 2009-10

City of Mankato Historic Context Study

Table of Contents

Mankato Historic Context Study Maps

Mankato Area Map iii
Mankato's Historic Downtown & Neighborhoods Map iv

City of Mankato Historic Context Study

Introduction 1
Importance of Historic Contexts 1
Objective and Methodology 2
Current National Register Sites 4
Related State Contexts 5

Brief History of Mankato 6

Context 1—Pre-Settlement, Native American, Early Archeological, Early Settlement

Location and Viewsheds 7
Native American Settlement and Sites 7
Early Anglo-European Settlement 9
The City of Mankato is Established 9
Related State Contexts 10
Property Types 10
Recommendations and Future Actions 11

Context 2—Transportation – River, Road and Rail

River 12
Road 13
Rail 14
Property Types 15
Recommendations and Future Actions 17

Context 3—Commerce, Industry and Civic Services

Auspicious Beginnings 18
Early Expansion 18
Mankato's Downtown 19
Commerce 20
Services 20
Newspaper 21
Agriculture 22
Industry 23
Civil Services 23
Civic Leaders 25
Property Types 25
Recommendations and Future Actions 28

Context 4—Social, Cultural and Recreational Life

Social Mankato 29
A City of Churches 29
Social Organizations and Clubs 31

Gathering Spaces and Festivals 32
Parks and Public Land 32
Tourism....34
Property Types 34
Recommendations and Future Actions 35

Context 5—Mankato's Urban Development

Becoming a City 36
Urban Renewal....37
Preservation of the Recent Past—A Controversial Topic....38
Property Types 39
Recommendations and Future Actions 40

Context 6—Education

Mankato's University....41
Additional Higher Education in Mankato 42
Elementary and Secondary Schools 43
Property Types 44
Recommendations and Future Actions 45

Context 7—Relationship to the Rivers

Floods 46
Bridges....47
Property Types 48
Recommendations and Future Actions 48

Context 8—Residential

Tale of Two Houses....49
Mankato's Neighborhoods....50
Residential Architectural Styles....51
National Register Properties 60
Property Types 60
Recommendations and Future Actions 61

Context 9—Literary Mankato

Laur Ingalls Wilder....63
Sinclair Lewis....63
Maud Hart Lovelace....64
Cultural Heritage Tourism 65
Property Types 65
Recommendations and Future Actions 65

Recommendations and Future Action

General Summary 67

Bibliography and Sources....68

City of Mankato Historic Context Study
Mankato Area Map

City of Mankato Historic Context Study

Mankato's Historic Downtown & Neighborhoods Map

City of Mankato Historic Context Study

The City of Mankato has seen a revitalized interest in its history due to the recent appointment of a Historic Preservation Commission as part of the City Center Renaissance Plan, and its new status as a Certified Local Government. Residents and community leaders alike are eager to see the community better incorporate historic preservation into everyday life. Homeowners are ready to restore their properties, schoolchildren are excited to learn about their city's history, and the city itself plans to use past development to inform future planning activities.

With the creation of this set of specific historic contexts, the city takes a very important first major step in these efforts. Historic contexts will allow the city to evaluate its resources and incorporate them in the comprehensive planning process, while securing the character and spirit inherent in Mankato's history.

Historic preservation is not, however, a new concept to the city. The Blue Earth County Historical Society (BECHS) has been active since 1901, maintaining a comprehensive library, a fascinating museum, and a beautiful house museum at the City owned and maintained Hubbard House, as well as publishing both books and a monthly newsletter and holding numerous and varied special events. The not-for-profit Betsy-Tacy Society is devoted to the works of famous local author Maud Hart Lovelace and her "Deep Valley" series set in a (somewhat) fictionalized, early-1900s Mankato. Numerous books and publications (listed in "Sources" at the end of the study) have given great insight into the history of the area, and of course the *Mankato Free Press* is an invaluable resource. Local educational institutions, particularly Minnesota State University – Mankato, have incorporated the history of Mankato into their coursework to great effect. Historic preservation commission members themselves reflect this diversity of experience and interests.

With this historic context study, the city takes the next big important step of tying preservation to planning, ensuring a vibrant future for the community by building on the resources of its past. Historic contexts will allow the city to evaluate its resources and plan for future development, while securing the character and spirit inherent in Mankato's history.

The Importance of Historic Contexts

The National Park Service, as it evaluates potential National Register properties, is very specific as to the importance of historic contexts. These standards are primarily defined in the publications *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form (Bulletin 16A*), *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation (Bulletin 15)*, and *Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning (Bulletin 24)*. Bulletin 24 defines historic contexts as "broad patterns of historical development in a community or its region, that may be represented by historic resources." Bulletin 15 expands on the importance of historic context by remarking that "its core premise is that resources, properties or happenings in history do not occur in a vacuum but rather are parts of larger trends or patterns." Bulletin 16A organizes historic context by "theme, place and time" that "allows applicants to understand a historic property as a product of its time and as an illustration of aspects of heritage."

In general, historic contexts are considered most valuable as a "framework" for evaluating the relative significance of cultural resources such as varied sites, structures, districts, and other elements. They serve as an organization tool for defining a community's history, a past which is often otherwise extremely lengthy, complex, and unwieldy.

Rather than concentrating on each individual property, historic contexts focus on broad, over-arching themes that would provide the city with the means to organize and evaluate its resources and lend perspective on the

past. By developing these preservation themes, the city can most effectively evaluate current resources, designate new ones, and plan for preservation in future generations. The contexts will allow for a more fair designation of properties, as each site can then be viewed in terms of what is best for the city as a whole, rather than as a single instance in isolation. These contexts also assist commissioners in making difficult decisions about the preservation of buildings, sites, and structures that best represent Mankato's history, and to target future preservation efforts in the areas where they are most effective.

The contexts identified herein can also be used as a rallying point for educational and community participation initiatives and are integral to future planning for land use, economic development, parks and recreation, transportation, public infrastructure and housing. As more data is organized, the contexts will evolve and change, recommendations will be updated, and the study will become more useful as a long-range planning tool. The expanded contexts, in addition to being a framework for evaluation resources, will be useful in public education programs for neighborhood organizations, government bodies, and local schools. Rather than serving as a static end point that mothballs historic resources, this study is designed to be an exciting jumping-off point for the future of preservation in Mankato.

Objectives and Methodology

As defined above, the main objective in defining historic contexts for Mankato is to provide a framework for the community's history that can assist in making future planning decisions, including, though not limited to, National Register district and individual nominations, a local designation process, a full building survey, and commercial and residential design guidelines.

The study process began by meeting with Mankato's planning staff and its Heritage Preservation Commission to identify prominent local resources, sites, and priorities. While the HPC had been initially interested in defining the city's historic contexts through a smaller-scale approach that focused in specific neighborhoods, it became clear to the consultants, before we even began the project, that a more global view was needed. Thus, it was especially important to meet with the HPC early on to consider Mankato's entire history, and even to look at nearby influences such as the area's agriculture, nearby bridges, and transportation patterns.

We then consulted with the State Historic Preservation Office regarding federal guidelines and state contexts. Since a portion of this study provided through a CLG (Certified Local Government) grant, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) staff has significant input into this process. We also consulted with the statewide preservation non-profit, the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota. The Alliance was particularly concerned with a few threatened properties, such as the Cray House.

The consultants proceeded to collect and review information and history on the city, ranging from primary sources such as city records, Sanford Fire Insurance maps, historical photo databases, the BECHS vertical files, and city directories, as well as secondary sources including previous studies and reports and several early histories of the area. We also compiled a comprehensive map of the city and historic areas, based on several sources. Particularly informative to the process were the many unique resources contained in the Blue Earth County Historical Society, and we are appreciative of their helpful staff. The City of Mankato's Community Development staff were also instrumental in our work, allowing us access to city maps and documents, as well as archival records. We also visited the Minnesota History Center libraries, and the files at the State Historic Preservation Office.

We conducted extensive fieldwork in Mankato. Director of Community Development Paul Vogel took us on a comprehensive driving tour, accompanied by HPC members Jessica Potter and H. Roger Smith. We also toured many times on our own, photographing literally hundreds of properties and features.

In consultation with the Heritage Preservation Commission, we identified nine contexts that most clearly demonstrated Mankato's history, beginning as a Minnesota river town and expanding into the major urban center for southern Minnesota, as well as the particular features that distinguish the community and demonstrate its unique character. The period of influence was defined as being between 1683, when LeSueur first chronicled discovery of the area, to the most recent past. Although 1959 marks the "bright line" for historic resources as of the date of the study, several elements of the more recent past, such as the Mankato Mall, are significant and need to be considered.

These contexts are arranged as follows:

Number 1 – "Pre-Settlement, Native American, Early Archeological, Early Settlement" considers the importance of Mankato's Native American history. It also discusses the early siting and development of the city.

Number 2 - "River, Road, and Rail" focuses on the congruence or river, road and rail in the city. Mankato's excellent transportation systems have always been an enormous asset to its development.

Number 3 - "Commerce, Industry and Civic Services" covers the wide range of businesses, industries, and governmental units prevalent in the town, from the importance of the city as the county seat, to the plethora of retail establishments, to services from attorneys to undertakers. It also addresses civic life, and the importance of agriculture and farmsteads to the development of the city.

Number 4 – "Social, Cultural and Recreational Life" looks at the less tangible, but perhaps more crucial, factors in a city's history — its interpersonal relationships. This context covers religion, clubs and associations, parks and gathering spots, leisure time, and tourism.

Number 5 – "Mankato's Urban Development" acknowledges Mankato's importance as a major southern Minnesota city. It also addresses the extensive urban renewal that occurred in Mankato during the 1970s, and preservation of the recent past.

Number 6 – "Education" discusses not only the role that the State Normal School (now Minnesota State University – Mankato) has played in the city's past, but also the importance of the city's other elementary, secondary, and post-secondary institutions.

Number 7 – "Relationship to the River" goes beyond transportation to look at the impact of flooding and by the construction of bridges.

Number 8 – the "Residential" context outlines the kinds of housing styles found in Mankato, including defining architectural elements and providing visual examples. This context focuses especially on Mankato's well-defined neighborhoods. It also suggests some possible National Register district nominations.

Number 9 – "Literary" is a somewhat unusual context that is specific to Mankato. It investigates Mankato in literature, specifically the works of Laura Ingalls Wilder, Sinclair Lewis, and the extensive connection between the fictional "Deep Valley" of Maud Hart Lovelace's series for children, based in Mankato during the early 1900s.

Each context is arranged around a short narrative, which is not designed to be a full history, but rather to serve as a brief introduction to the theme. Each section also includes both historic and modern photographs; some also include maps. In many cases, some time is spent on descriptions of the past and on lost resources; these narratives are designed to fill in information that would be missing were only current resources to be considered, and to demonstrate the importance of remaining properties. The next component is a fairly comprehensive list of typical

property types associated with the context; this section also identifies some specific Mankato sites as practical. Recommendations for future actions round out the individual sections.

Finally, all of the contexts are designed to be modified through time. As mentioned earlier, the City of Mankato has a new but active Historic Preservation Commission, which is very interested in preservation and planning. It is the consultants' hope that they will use this context study to develop a number of programs, ranging from a comprehensive site survey to public education processes.

Current National Register Sites

Mankato is remarkably well-represented on the National Register of Historic Places. Not only are several individual landmarks listed, but there are also two historic districts, Lincoln Park and North Front Street. The two districts stand in marked contrast, with Lincoln Park being large (323 structures, the majority of which are contributory) and residential, and North Front Street rather small (18 buildings in a 2-block area on the east side of the street only) and commercial.

Most of Mankato's National Register listings were completed by State Historic Preservation Office staffperson Dennis Gimmestad in January, 1980. The most recent addition was Lincoln Park, added in 1995 in a nomination completed by Susan Granger and Scott Kelly. The HPC should consider whether other landmarks or districts may be eligible for Register inclusion, and work toward their nomination.

The following is a listing of current properties on the Register:

Landmarks:

Blue Earth County Courthouse	204 S. 5th St.
JR Brandrup House	704 Byron
Charles Chapman House	418 McCauley
Lorin Cray House	603 S. 2nd
Adolph O. Eberhart House	228 Pleasant
Federal Courthouse and Post Office	401 S. 2nd
1st National Bank of Mankato	229 S. Front
First Presbyterian Church	S. Broad & Hickory
R.D. Hubbard House	606 Broad St.
William Irving House	320 Park Lane
Mankato Public Library	120 S. Broad
Mankato Union Depot	112 Pike St.
Old Main (Mankato State)	5th St. S. at Jackson

Districts:

Lincoln Park District
North Front Street District

Finally, these two properties were Register-listed, but have since been removed:

Adam Jefferson House (removed)	w. end of Cleveland St.	removed in 1987 when relocated
Oscar Schmidt House (removed)	111 Park Lane	removed in 1988 when demolished

Related State Contexts

The Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office has identified several major state historic contexts that apply to Mankato:

Broad Statewide Contexts:
"Indian Communities and Reservations, 1837-1934"
"Early Agriculture and River Settlement, 1840-1870"
"Railroads and Agricultural Development, 1870-1940"
"Minnesota's Tourism and Recreation, 1870-1945"
"Urban Centers, 1870-1940"

Thematic Contexts:
"State Normal Schools"
"Bridges"
"Quarries and Mines"

Brief History of Mankato

Prior to Anglo-American settlement, the Mankato area was occupied by the peripatetic Dakota Sioux, who usually arrived after flood season and camped at the junction of the two rivers throughout the summer. The area where Sibley Park now sits was an important area for powwows and other major tribal gatherings.

Explorer Pierre Charles LeSueur first charted the area in 1683, returning in 1700 to built Fort L'Huillier. In 1803 the land was passed to the United States as part of the Louisiana Purchase, but it was not until the 1851 Treaty of Traverse des Sioux that the land was opened to the public for settlement. Parsons King Johnson and Henry Jackson were the first Anglo-American settlers to claim the site in 1852; their wives chose the name "Mankato" ostensibly after the Indian name for the blue clay soil of the area. The town quickly became the county seat.

In 1862, Mankato became the site of the largest mass execution in U.S. History, when 38 Indian prisoners were hanged by the federal government following the U.S./Dakota Conflict. This unfortunate incident gave the city early notoriety. The hanging site is now commemorated at Reconciliation Park.

The city experienced enormous growth at the end of the 19th century, particularly following the advent of the railroad to the area. Four separate railroad lines, plus continuing river access and good roads, allowed excellent access to the region and Mankato-area agriculture was some of the most prodigious in the state. Mankato became the leading distribution point in southern Minnesota. This, in turn, encouraged a vigorous industrial and commercial environment. Mills were especially prevalent, and the area was also known for its quarries of "Mankato stone." Retail stores and service industries thrived.

South Front Street Postcard ca. 1900

The rich commerce and industry in turn fostered an atmosphere of extensive civic and community engagement. As a result, Mankato was awarded the state's second Normal School (teaching college) in 1868, and education became another key component of the city's identity. This thriving period was a golden era for the city; it forever holds a place in literary history, fictionalized as "Deep Valley" in Maud Hart Lovelace's beloved *Betsy-Tacy* books.

The city grew rapidly throughout the twentieth century, with a strong demand for land and several distinctive neighborhoods (including Lincoln Park, Washington Park, and Sibley Park) emerging. This growth was despite floods, fires, and other calamities, which somehow only served to make the building stock of the town stronger. While many historic resources were lost or significantly altered during Urban Renewal of the 1970s, the close of the 20th Century saw new activity in both preservation interest and sound urban planning.

From its early importance to the Dakota Sioux, to its success as a thriving river and railroad town, to its more recent urban planning history, Mankato has experienced a lot of change, but has continued to thrive and expand. Mankato is the regional center for southern Minnesota and northern Iowa. Its varied history holds the key to future development, as the city seeks to "build its future from its past."

Context 1 – Pre-Settlement, Native American, Early Archeological, Early Settlement

Time span – 1683 to 1860

The first European mention of the Mankato area was in 1683 by the explorer Pierre Charles LeSueur, though Native Americans likely settled the area as early as 3000 BC (and certainly by 1200 BC). The applicable statewide context for "Indian Communities and Reservations" runs from 1837-1934.

Location and Viewsheds

Blue Earth County contains more rivers than any other Minnesota county — including the Minnesota, Blue Earth, Cobb, Maple, Wantonwan, and Le Sueur rivers — as well as dozens of smaller waterways, streams, brooks, and lakes. In the early 18th century, the wooded river bluffs would have stood in sharp contrast to the flat prairie grasslands just to the southwest. The area was known not only for its waterways, which provided a natural early transportation network, but also for its distinctive, blue-clay soil, from which Blue Earth county and the City of Mankato itself likely draws its name. Early explorers originally considered the idea of mining the soil for its copper content, but that endeavor proved to be infeasible, and was soon abandoned.

In many ways, the Mankato townsite epitomized the natural wealth of the area. It was optimally sited at the confluence of two rivers, the Blue Earth and the Minnesota, where the Blue Earth flows into the Minnesota and thus into the Mississippi River watershed. The Minnesota River, formed from glacial melt, was named *mini* meaning "water" and *sota*, "like the cloudy sky" by the Dakota Sioux, and originally called "St. Peter's River" or "St. Pierre's River" after LeSueur by early European settlers. It was especially important as it formed the transportation backbone for the area, and was sacred to the Dakota tribes, who believed the mouth of the river was located between the center of the earth and the center of the heavens. The Sisseton and Wahpeton tribes of the area used the river basin area (currently Sibley Park) as an important meeting and treaty site.

Mankato also marked the southern and western edge of the "Big Woods" (from the French "*Grand Bois*"), an enormous area of mainly deciduous forest that covered much of central to southeastern Minnesota. These dense woods were composed of a wide variety of trees, mostly basswood and sugar maple, but also including ash, box elder, butternut, cottonwood, dogwood, elm, hackberry, and willow. Diverse in both flora and fauna, the forest areas provided an abundance of small game animals, allowing for excellent hunting and trapping.

With prairies and oak savannah to the south, thick forest to the north, and the two rivers meeting at the central basin, early settlers must have been struck by the physical contrast and beauty of the area. Due to land reclamation, river rerouting, flood control, bridges, deforestation, and agricultural needs, few of these original geologic features (along the river), natural landmarks (such as the Big Woods), or viewsheds exist today. However, it is important to keep them in mind while evaluating the importance that Mankato's location plays in its history.

Native American Settlement and Sites

Archeological studies have demonstrated evidence that the area was most likely settled by 1200 BC. The varied terrain described above made it an especially attractive area for several tribes; however, it appears that by the early 1600s the area was primarily occupied by the Sisseton ("Lake Village") Dakota Sioux, with Sleepy Eye ("Ish

Tak Ha Ba") as their chief. The tribe was peripatetic, but usually camped in what is now Sibley Park each summer, arriving after flood season.

Sleepy Eye was one of the leaders in negotiating and signing the 1851 Treaty of Traverse des Sioux with Minnesota Territory Governor Alexander Ramsey and Commissioner of Indian Affairs Luke Lea, ceding land in southern and western Minnesota. In return, the tribes received land on the Upper Sioux and Lower Sioux reservations, as well as cash and annuity payments. Although the Upper Sioux reservation encompassed several of the tribes' previous campsites and villages, the Lower Sioux Reservation (just south of Redwood Falls) was located on generally new territory, with the idea that the previous nomadic, hunter-gatherer tribes would become an established farm community. The change in lifestyle, the loss of traditionally held and sacred grounds, and treaty violations by the United States (including late and withheld payments) resulted in tensions both between the tribes and with the new Anglo-European residents.

These tensions eventually resulted in the U.S./Dakota Conflict of 1862 (also known as the "Indian Uprising"), in which several different bands held loosely coordinated attacks against the settlers. Several area communities, including New Ulm and Fort Ridgely, were attacked, and during the course of the conflict 486 white settlers, and an unknown number of Sioux, were killed. Minnesota's 3rd, 4th, 6th and 7th Volunteer Regiments were called to duty, and most of the Dakota surrendered after the Battle of Wood Lake in September, 1862. Three hundred and three prisoners were convicted of murder and rape by military tribunals and sentenced to death. They were held at Camp Lincoln, near the site of Sibley Park.

President Lincoln was said to have personally reviewed the files of the prisoners, and, urged towards leniency by Bishop Henry Whipple, commuted the death sentences of all but 40 of the prisoners. One died in prison, and another was given a last minute reprieve. The remaining 38 prisoners were executed, in what remains the largest mass execution in United States history, at the site of present-day Reconciliation Park on December 26, 1862.

Descriptions of the execution were chilling, detailing how the prisoners were hooded and led to the single gallows, all singing traditional death songs. The gallows, which had been especially built for the event, had four separate noose and trapdoor configurations, allowing for several executions to happen simultaneously. The bodies were buried in a mass grave along the river, with some corpses distributed for medical research. The remaining prisoners were held through the winter at Fort Snelling.

Additionally, during the mid-1850s, the Winnebago tribe, originally from south-central Wisconsin and moved to a reservation near Long Prairie, MN, were relocated by their request to Blue Earth and Waseca counties, though not Mankato proper. Though the tribe did not participate in the uprising, they were nevertheless relocated in the mid-1860s.

Because the 1862 execution was so significant, it has distinctly colored Mankato's native American history in a way that does not reflect early, amicable relationships. The city has recently dedicated powwow grounds to Dakota tribes, declared 1987 a "Year of Reconciliation," and established Reconciliation Park in 1997, and still actively pursues further amends. One major barrier to this is the lack of actual historic resources related to Native American settlement of the area. There are no evident ceremonial mounds or other native settlement indications, and, as in much of the rest of the state, extensive agriculture and development — as well as flooding and natural erosion — has likely destroyed any buried or otherwise hidden artifacts. Nearby sites, such as Cambria, have been found to have some Native American resources, so similar artifacts likely were in the Mankato area, but have been lost.

Reconciliation Park contains a commissioned sculpture and is located on or near part of the execution site, but holds no extant historic resources. This makes the demonstration of this extremely important sub-context all the more challenging.

Early Anglo-European Settlement

The same geographic features that made the Mankato area so attractive to Native American settlement made it an ideal Anglo-European destination as well.

The area was originally established by Pierre Charles LeSueur under the auspices of the French government in 1700 (most accounts claim that he originally charted the area as early as 1683). He came up the Minnesota River from Louisiana with three boats and twenty-two men, and established Fort L'Huillier just south of the current site of Mankato to trade with the Indians. The fort was abandoned in 1702, but the area remained under French control until sold to the United States as part of the Louisiana Purchase.

The first true claims to the area were made in February 1852 by brothers-in-law Parsons King Johnson and Henry Jackson, along with a small party of others. The townsite was originally to have been at "Sibley Mound" (the site of present-day Sibley Park), but the Native Americans warned of flooding, as evidenced by high water marks on the vegetation. The group then decided to move the site further downstream to the site of the present-day city, approximately where the Masonic Temple now stands.

It was the wives of these two founders who chose the name "Mankato," reportedly after the Indian terms "Mahka" for *earth* and "to" for *blue*. Whether the eventual spelling of "Mankato" was a spelling error or linguistic interpretation remains under debate.

The City of Mankato is Established

Unlike other Minnesota river towns, which could be slow to develop, Mankato was settled relatively quickly and became the town seat of Blue Earth County in March 1853. River traffic and the Dodd Road (established in 1853) brought in a steady influx of new residents. The survey of the area was completed in 1854, with platting by the Blue Earth Claim Association of Saint Paul, allowing homesteaders to define their claims.

By the mid-1850s the town had a hotel (the Mankato House, est. 1853), several stores, two quarries and a brickyard, a physician, four large churches: St. Peter and Paul's Catholic Parish (est. 1854), First Presbyterian (with Sunday school beginning in 1853 and regular services in 1854), the Methodists, and the Episcopalians, postal service, and a public school with 37 students.

By 1858, the year Minnesota became a state, Mankato's thriving economy also included the Bierbrauer Brewery, the *Mankato Independent* newspaper, several more churches, more stores, sawmills, wagon makers and liveries, at least one saloon, and a bank. Though the brewery itself is now gone, the gates, steps, and some stone foundations remain, giving a visual reference to this early part of the city's history. Another remaining resource from that period is the Ott Cabin (built 1857), though that has been moved to its present site in Sibley Park (which, in turn, commemorates the site of the first area trading post).

At the same time, the area farmsteads were being rapidly settled. Most of the early homesteaders relocated from the east coast, drawn by the fertile farmlands, river access, and woodlands. Agriculture became a dominant economic force for the area in general, and Mankato, with both river and road (and later railroad) access, was uniquely situated to become a distribution site.

By 1860 Blue Earth County recorded 4,803 residents, mainly in the Mankato environs. No ethnic group excessively dominated the area, but early nationalities represented included Scandinavian, German, and British (English, Welsh, and Scottish).

Related State Contexts

Mankato's earliest historic contexts are incorporated within three of the larger, statewide contexts as determined by the State Historic Preservation office:

- "Indian Communities and Reservations, 1837-1934"
- "Early Agriculture and River Settlement, 1840-1870"
- "Railroads and Agricultural Development, 1870-1940"

Property Types

Note: In general, these property types listed in these contexts will often identify specific Mankato examples as available. Unfortunately, relatively few of these examples are available for the Early History context. The following list represents cultural resources that are likely present in the area, though many may not currently be evident, or may be so altered as to have lost most, if not all, of their integrity.

Pre-European sites
- Gravesites (including the mass graves)
- Caves
- Habitation sites
- Ceremonial and religious sites
- Treaty and meeting sites
- Reservation sites
- U.S./Dakota Conflict sites
  - Battle sites
  - Holding/prison sites
  - Execution site – Reconciliation Park
- Other archeological sites
- Prominent natural features

Pre settlement
- Fort sites
- Trading sites
- Boat landings and river access
- Camp sites

Early settlement
- House/cabin sites
  - Ott Cabin
- Plat lines
- Civic sites
  - Original Post Office
  - Old Log School site (at Union School)
- Church sites
  - St. Peter and Paul
  - First Presbyterian
  - Methodist church
  - Episcopal church
  - Other churches
- Commercial sites
  - Quarries

Brickyards
Mankato House
Stores
Service establishments
Mankato *Independent*
Bierbrauer Brewery site
Farm sites
Dodd Road sites

Recommendations and Future Actions

- *Mankato should pay special attention to archeological investigations of Native American sites. Ideally, a full archeological survey should be completed. Minimally, investigation should be required of any new development, in an effort to discover and inventory any early archeological resources.*

- *Concurrently, the city may desire to pay special attention to any early settlement resources, such as forts, trading posts, and housing and commercial sites. Ideally, a full archeological survey would again be completed.*

- *The Associates are especially concerned that Mankato's rich Native American past be accurately reflected, and recognize that the unfortunate circumstances of the 1862 execution can exert an undue influence upon this history. We recommend working with Dakota representatives to develop an interpretive plan for Mankato's Native American history that more fully develops pre-European settlement sub-contexts. The SHPO could advise and assist on this matter.*

- *Due to flooding and flood control, land reclamation, changes in the river pattern, roads, bridges, and urban development, almost all of Mankato's original vistas and viewsheds have been compromised. A sense of these views and the location, as portrayed in early maps, plans, paintings, drawings, and even photographs if extant, would give modern-day visitors a much better sense of the exploration and development of the area. Such an interpretive display would make a natural collaborative effort with the BECHS, and could be featured at the museum, or perhaps as part of the current Sibley Parkway redevelopment.*

- *Mankato should consider ways to interpret physical resources, including early homes, businesses, and other industries, that may have been destroyed over the years. Because of the city's rapid and extensive development, particularly during the 1970s, many resources have been lost, and such an interpretation would begin during the early settlement period but continue right up to the recent past. Ideas for this include a walking tour of "sites that were," or a physical/website exhibit.*

Context 2—Transportation—River, Road and Rail
Time span – 1683-1960s

As with many other Minnesota river cities, Mankato's transportation context is simultaneously one of its most important — yet least extant — influences. Mankato rose to importance based on its accessibility, first by waterways, then the early Dodd Road and other roads, then the four railroad lines that ran through the city, and finally back to highways, making it a distribution point for all of southern Minnesota.

Transportation resources, however, are generally ephemeral. Actual transportation elements, such as steamboats, barges, stagecoaches, and train cars and/or engines do not often survive, and are even more rarely presented *in situ*. Train tracks are abandoned, roads are upgraded, and in Mankato's case, even the river route changes. Related resources, such as boat landings, railroad buildings, and even newer elements such as service stations, are not valued and are lost. A prominent depot remains in Mankato, has been adaptively reused, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Mankato's transportation history is so very crucial to every part of its existence, from its original siting, to its rise to prominence, to its endurance as an important distribution site. The city should actively work to preserve and protect the resources that still exist, while finding innovative ways to interpret what has been lost.

Mankato Union Depot

River

The Minnesota, Blue Earth, and surrounding rivers provided an extensive transportation network for the Sioux. Early explorers and traders, such as LeSueur and Sibley, also followed these waterways, using log rafts, canoes and larger keel boats to transport both people and goods. The keel boats were described as somewhat like a shallow barge, propelled by six pole-men to each side, and able to carry between seven and twenty tons of goods and passengers (including the pole-men, a cook, and a trader/agent). Because of their ability to adapt to varying conditions, such as poor river landings and low water levels (especially in the smaller rivers and creeks), these small, easy to navigate crafts dominated early exploration in the area.

However, following the opening of the area to settlement, there was an immediate demand for boats that could carry more passengers and enable more extensive and regular importation of goods. The first excursion steamers to take advantage of the high waters of the summer of 1850 were the *Anthony Wayne* and the *Yankee*; it is disputed which one of these boats gave city founder Parsons King Johnson his first view of the area. 1852 marked the first summer that the levee landing was established as a permanent stop, with three trips by the *Tiger* and three by the *Black Hawk* making it a very successful inaugural year. The City of Mankato had been established as a popular steamboat stop.

By the late 1860s, steamboats were making hundreds of stops annually in Mankato, with George Houghton's the *Molly Mohler* alone recording ninety separate trips over the summer of 1867. The average travel time from Minneapolis/Saint Paul was 12-19 hours (depending on the number of stops and whether going upstream or downstream), and the fare was 50¢. Steamboats also allowed for a brisk commodities trade, exemplified by over 62,000 bushels of wheat carried from Mankato by mid-July of 1867 alone, at the rate of 5¢ per bushel.

Though many steamboats visited Mankato, two of the most notable were the *Favorite*, which carried the Indian prisoners north to Fort Snelling in 1862, and the *Julia*, which sank in low water near Jefferson Bend in 1867. Remnants of the *Julia*'s hull remain underwater, and the whistle is on display at the Blue Earth County Historical Society.

Shipping barges also carried goods along the river. There did not seem to be regular ferry service along the river at that point, but there was a ferry crossing, the Cummings Ferry, which used a cable and pulley system to carry passengers, wagons, and goods from Sibley Park due north across the river.

However, roadways and soon the advance of the railroads began to cut into this river dominance. By the summer of 1870, there were only eighty boat landings in Mankato, despite high water and generally good conditions. By the end of the 1870s, steamboat travel had all but disappeared, although the sternwheel steamer the *Mary Barnes* was said to have made a few trips from Saint Paul over the summer of 1881; likewise, the arrival of the excursion paddlewheel the *Henrietta* in April 1897 was seen as quite an important event as it was the first boat to have landed in Mankato for several years. Such visits, however, were seen as novelties and tourist events more than practical transportation.

Today, after much riverfront reconstruction and with new levees in place, no remnants of the formerly busy docks remain.

Road

Mankato had exceptionally early road service. Indeed, though the city founders first saw the townsite while aboard a steamboat, they returned overland to settle it, via cutter and sleigh along roads and the frozen rivers. Dodd Road, the first stagecoach road linking Mankato to Saint Paul, opened in 1853 and became the main stagecoach road to the area. Adjunct roads to Winona and Lake Pepin and a network of military roads followed.

George Marsh soon began a weekly stagecoach trip to Fort Snelling to pick up mail. By 1857 Mankato had three stage lines — a daily route to Saint Paul for a fare of $7, and thrice-weekly local lines and lines to Owatonna at $4 and $5, respectively, per trip. These lines carried people (though many still chose to travel by boat, especially as it was cheaper) and vastly improved mail service to the area. Bridges soon began to span the rivers, which facilitated road traffic but which also had to be carefully planned to allow the steamboats to pass. Mankato's first bridge, built in 1879, was an iron truss bridge that could turn parallel to the river. Mankato also developed a street and traffic system that included a streetcar system (see the "Urban Development" context for more information).

However, winter weather still greatly affected travel, closing roads and obviously precluding boat traffic. Some followed the early settlers' lead and created crude ice roads, but for much of the year the city remained relatively isolated.

This was all to change, however, with the advent of the automobile. Mankato's first car, a Stanley Steamer, arrived in 1897. In 1903, Louis Mayer's blacksmith shop created the "Mayer Special," the first V-8 engine in the United States, reportedly developed in order to surmount Mankato's hilly bluffs. The roadways became busy, and by 1923 there was daily bus service between Mankato and Minneapolis/Saint Paul.

Automobile traffic also required new businesses, including gas and service stations, car dealerships, and trucking distribution centers. Major highways developed included Highway 169, 14, 22 and 83. The highways had a dramatic effect, especially on the west side of town, where West Mankato was split from the lower part of the

city. Sibley Park, which had already been bisected by railroad tracks, was further isolated by the roadways. At the same time, many retail businesses moved to the outskirts of town and the newer shopping centers, often severing the intense local connections and eventually encouraging urban renewal.

As with the rest of the state and country, roads and automotive/truck traffic became the dominant means of transportation, eclipsing boats and trains. Unlike the boat landings, which were stationary, and the railroads, which required extensive infrastructure, road-related resources were especially temporal, changing and adapting with traffic patterns.

Rail

Although Mankato's location gave river traffic an early edge, and roadways eventually emerged as the main transportation routes, the railroads were Mankato's dominant transportation influence from the late 1860s up to the 1940s, with two lines still running today. At the end of the 19th century, four separate rail lines ran through town, and Mankato served as a distribution point for all of southern Minnesota.

Worker polishing railroad engine 1939

In the time of many competing railroad lines, the first to see Mankato's potential was the Minnesota Valley Railroad (later renamed the "Chicago, Saint Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha line, called the "Omaha line" or "CStPM&O" for short — now the Union Pacific). The lines entered the city in Washington Park between Elm and Plum Streets, running along Fourth Street. In the mid-1890s, these tracks were moved to the riverfront due to city planning concerns, and so they might be more competitive with the other lines. Washington Park was dedicated on some of the railroad's vacated land.

The next line to cross Mankato was the Chicago and North Western line ("CNW," now the DM&E) in the early 1870s. These lines ran along the riverfront. With two major railroads in place, Mankato rapidly became an important commodities site, and the 1870s saw a building boom of mills (including the Hubbard Mill), warehouses, and other distribution vehicles constructed along the riverfront for easy train access. The railroads also expanded their holdings, constructing the Red Jacket and other trestles, supply buildings, roundhouses, etc.

Two other, smaller railroad lines served Mankato, the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul and the Minneapolis-St. Louis (later purchased by Chicago Great-Western). When these lines eventually closed, the land vacated by the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul was also converted to public use, becoming the Red Jacket Trail.

Each line maintained their own depot, with one of the most notable related events being the death of Vice President Schuyler Colfax in the Milwaukee Depot on January 13, 1885. Colfax had to walk between the Front Street Depot and the Omaha Depot to change trains, and it is surmised that the extreme cold might have brought on a heart attack. The Vice President was said to have died unrecognized by those around him, identified post-mortem by the papers he carried with him.

In 1896, soon after the Omaha moved its lines, it collaborated with the CNW to build a new depot serving both lines. The Union Depot was located at 112 Pike Street, and currently stands as the only surviving railroad depot in the thirteen Blue Earth townsites where the railroad played a major developmental role. The depot is now used as

offices, and is included on the National Register. Pike Street had included many railroad-related resources, but all of those save the depot were lost by the time the road changed its name to Riverfront Drive in 1978.

The local time difference between the rest of southern Minnesota and Mankato, as well as the four lines and multiple trains, made for a busy schedule and many horse-drawn trolleys carrying people between trains.

The placement of the rail lines also had a great effect on the layout of the city. Some of these effects are very visible, such as the parkland and other public spaces (eg: Washington Park and the Red Jacket Trail) located on vacated rail lines. Others, such as the grading along North 4th Street, are obvious only if you are looking for them. Even more subtle are items that were affected by the rail lines but are not directly related; for example, the plat lines in the industrial area outside of Old Town are non-standard, due to adapting for the tracks and railyards. Railroad-related resources overtook river-related items in importance, even encouraging some reclamation of river land, Other streets, such as the long retail expanse of Front Street, developed in relation to the railroad distribution centers (as well as the steamboat landing). In many cases, these residual effects evoke the best interpretation of the importance of the railroads, especially given the lack of remaining direct resources.

However, in the same way that the railroads subjugated early river traffic, by the 1950s the highway system had substantially overtaken the rails as the dominant means of transportation, for both passengers and freight. Today, two lines still serve Mankato, the Union Pacific and the DM&E, but both are at far lower capacity than at their peak. The UP runs 6-12 trains a day, and the limited-right-of-passage DM&E only 4-8; all almost exclusively transporting freight. Almost all of the tracks, depots, and associated buildings were removed before or during the Urban Renewal period. The Union Depot (as referenced above), the remaining, in-use tracks, the remnants of the rail grading, some trestles at the edge of town, and a few support buildings just outside of Old Town are the only remaining reminders of this once-thriving railroad system.

Property Types

River Traffic
- Ferry crossings and landings
  - Cummings ferry
- Steamboats
  - *Anthony Wayne*
  - *Yankee*
  - *Tiger*
  - *Black Hawk*
  - *Greek Slave*
  - *Globe*
  - *Equator*
  - *Reveille*
  - *Wave*
  - *Minnesota*
  - *Clarion*
  - *Time and Tide*
  - *Berlin*
  - *HT Yeatman*
  - *Jennette Roberts*
  - *Isaac Shelby, Medora*
  - *Frank Steele*
  - *Belfast*
  - *Favorite*
  - *Little Dorrit*

Eloian
Albany
Clara Hine
Albany
Pomeroy
Ariel
GH Wilson
Mankato
Stella Whipple
Lansing
General Sheridan
Julia
Molly Mohler
Chippeway Falls
Otter
Pioneer
Pearl
Cutter
Enterprise
Hudson
Flora
GB Knapp
St. Anthony Falls
Tiber
Clipper
Dexter
John G. Gault
Mary Barnes
Henrietta

- Barges
- Landings and docks
- Warehouses
- Dams
- Levees
- Flood plains
- Navigation aids

Railroad

- Tracks
- Depots (freight and passenger)
- Bridges and crossings
- Repair shops
- Roundhouses and section houses
- Railroad cars
- Telegraph
- Warehouses
- Support buildings (repair facilities, storage sheds, etc.)
- Distribution facilities

Roads

- Current roads
- Remnants of early roads and trails
- Stage stops
- Truck stops and facilities
- Gas stations
- Automobile dealers and repair shops

Recommendations and Future Actions

- *As discussed at length in this section, very few transportation-related resources still exist. Those that do, or that are discovered, should be surveyed and cataloged, with particular attention paid to the importance of this context.*

- *The BECHS maintains some transportation resources (such as the bell from the Julia) in their museum. The HPC should collaborate with the BECHS in interpreting these resources to give people a better sense of the importance of river, rails, and road to the City of Mankato.*

- *The number of riverboats that stopped at Mankato (see list above) is remarkable, and its position on the river was an early and crucial transportation advantage. The HPC should find a way to interpret this history, perhaps through an exhibit at Sibley Park or another site close to the river.*

- *A few railroad resources remain, such as the Union Depot and some railroad support buildings just outside of Old Town, as well as gradings, trestles, etc.. The highest importance should be placed on preserving and interpreting these resources. The HPC should investigate placing some kind of interpretive exhibit at the Union Depot, since it is the most evocative remaining resource.*

- *The Associates understand that the City of Mankato is considering various possibilities for the future of the railroads in Mankato, including adding or relocating lines. Such work should try to maintain existing resources (see above), and should preserve other resources that it might discover during the process (such as buried tracks).*

- *In some cases, such as Washington Park and the Red Jacket and West Mankato Trail, resources exist that have been made possible by changes to the transportation system (in this case, the parks are made possible by the vacation of the rail lines). Interpretation of such sites should acknowledge the role that the earlier transportation element played in their development. Such an approach might also be used for extant items that have changed significantly, such as area highways.*

- *Related resources, such as bridges, are addressed more at length in other sections of this study.*

Context 3 – Commerce, Industry and Civic Services
Time span – 1850s to 1950s

Mankato's rise to importance as southern Minnesota's center for trade and industry did not stem only from its easy access to varied transportation methods. Commerce and industry sprung up quickly in the new town, supporting the agricultural trade in the rich nearby farmlands. By the early 1900s, the city boasted a thriving and varied downtown, as well as serving as the main southern Minnesota distribution point for agricultural products. Civic services followed, as Mankato became a true urban center.

Changes in transportation and residential patterns, coupled with urban renewal, led to the widespread relocation of retail services to the suburbs, effectively decimating Mankato's downtown core by the late 1970s. Recently, this area has begun to bounce back.

Auspicious Beginnings

By 1853, just one year after it was founded, Mankato was named the county seat for Blue Earth County. There was already a burgeoning downtown, including the "Mankato House" hotel at Front and Hickory Streets (as well as one other smaller hotel), two stores, two lawyers, two tailors, a quarry, a saddler, a millwright, a warehouse, and a school. There were about 20 families in the town, with housing ranging from rough shanties to sturdy log cabins.

By the late 1850s, Mankato was bustling, with many more stores and taverns, the Bierbrauer brewery — the first brewery in Minnesota west of Saint Paul, a doctor and pharmacy, and a newspaper. The first civic services had begun, with twice weekly stagecoach mail service by George Marsh (though Parsons King Johnson had been the previous postmaster, periodically delivering mail that came by riverboat.) Increasing riverboat traffic — over 200 landings per summer — brought supplies to Mankato, as well as new settlers, and brought wheat and other crops upstream back to the Twin Cities.

Early Expansion

The 1880s were boom years for much of Minnesota, and Mankato was no exception. Railroads had augmented (and eventually eclipsed) river traffic, allowing for the easy transport of the area's rich agricultural commodities. Processing facilities, such as the Hubbard Mill, capitalized on this market, but there were many other agricultural facilities, ranging from tanneries to knitting mills to breweries to linseed oil factories. Non-agricultural commodities included some lumber, but especially the several quarries that provided "Mankato stone," a creamy and durable dolomite that was a valued construction material. Wholesalers (especially groceries) and retailers flourished, as did associated businesses such as banks. The establishment of the second state Normal School in 1868 was integral to the city's prestige as well (see the "Education" context for more information). The population grew rapidly, increasing by 41% between 1880-1885 and diversifying the population from the second-generation Easterners who had originally settled the city to include Scandinavians, Germans, Irish, Scots, and Welsh. This expansion led to the settlement of new neighborhoods, and the availability of civic services including schools, waterworks, gas, electricity, street paving, and telephone service.

The early 1900s, so lovingly described in Maud Hart Lovelace's "Betsy-Tacy" books, were probably early Mankato's peak years, reflecting a time of continuous economic development and population growth. The downtown Front Street businesses that Lovelace chronicles were bustling and prosperous, and with the advent of the streetcar, Mankato really came into its own as southern Minnesota's most prosperous city, and one of the largest agricultural service areas in the upper Midwest.

Many of Mankato's major enterprises continued throughout the twentieth century, and some are still in operation today. Seven to fifteen trains still run through town daily, and the mill still operates, although now as a part of Cargill. The downtown businesses, which at one time had almost all relocated to the suburbs, are experiencing revitalization, providing everything from boutique stores in Old Town to large grocery stores. Mankato today is ready to build on its past to capitalize on community character and add diversity and sustainability to the downtown core.

Mankato's Downtown

Primary and secondary sources describe turn-of-the-century downtown Mankato as a vibrant and busy place. The business district stretched close to a mile down Front Street, in comparison to most Minnesota river towns, where the central business district typically encompassed no more than two to three blocks. The South Front Street area was especially prosperous, including the following businesses (among others): Mankato State Bank; The Majestic and the Wonderland Theaters; the Opera House/Mankato Theater; groceries including Alleman's Draper & Pettersen's and Hansen & Nelsen's; shoe stores Wood & Sterling, C.H. Austin & Son and T. W. Hart; Brett's and J.B. & D. Richards Dry Goods; department stores Fred W. Kruse and Company, S&L, Salet's, and later even branches of Sears Roebuck and Woolworth's; Martin & Hoerr's, Crandall's and Taylor's Jewelers; The Palace Restaurant and the Corner Café; Lamm's Drugs, Thro-Frost Family Drugs, and Laack's Drugs; Stewart & Holmes and Warwick's Books; Nyquist & Iverson Clothing; G. Schmidt & Son Harness and Saddlery; the New York 5 & 10 Store; hardware stores including Art Zimmerman's hardware and Sporting Goods, Lulsdorff's and Lewis'; the Zotalis family's Mankato Candy Kitchen; August Deijke Transfer; and the Salpaugh Hotel, with its elegant Moorish Café. Despite the competition inherent in having similar stores so close together, the business district thrived until the latter part of the 20th century. Many of these merchants built elegant homes in nearby Lincoln Park, the "silk-stocking district" of the city.

The advent of the suburbs, coupled with easy automobile access, led to an extensive relocation of area retail in the 1960s. Although some stores remained in town, many relocated to the Eastgate Shopping Center, Madison East Mall, or other suburban locations. City planners determined that the problem was "blight" and a lack of parking in the aging downtown, and the area was cleared under an urban renewal project that began in 1970.

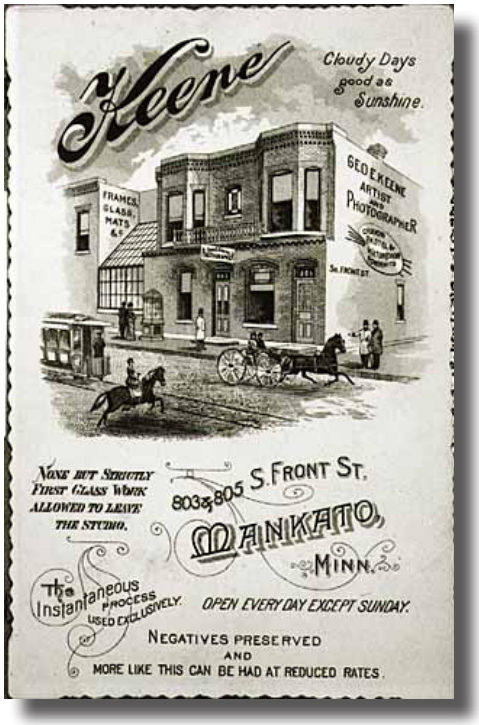
Although original plans called for a massive rebuilding of the downtown core, that development never occurred. Many of the remaining downtown buildings were altered or eliminated as part of the Mankato Mall enclosure project in 1977. Although some new stores were built (such as the Hy-Vee and the Cub), much of Mankato's historic downtown fabric remains irreparably altered and diminished.

The loss of these resources, however, makes the preservation of the North Front Street District all the more important. This small but well-preserved strip of businesses demonstrate the diversity and vitality of Mankato commerce, a sense that continues today as the storefronts house varied shops and services. The buildings also show the progression of commercial architecture in Mankato, ranging from very simple 1870s styles to elaborate Victorian decoration.

The eighteen storefronts in the district were originally the following (in order from Plum Street): the Stahl House, Henry Fricke Boots and Shoes (the later location), Henry Fricke Boots and Shoes (the original location), Frederick Kron Dry Goods and Groceries, Bernard Koehler Boots and Shoes, a later (non-contributory) commercial building, A.M. Klages Grocery, the offices of Doctor Julius A. Heilscher, Miller & Company Meat Market, Wenzl Huetter Tailors, the Mathias Sontag Hotel, the Jacob Sontag Saloon, Kron's Drugs, Schorn Brothers Meat Market, Seidle Drug Company, A.C. Malchow Grocery, and Machow & Krost Photographers. Today, these buildings serve a variety of retail and office uses.

Commerce

Some stores in particular hold an important position in Mankato's past. These stores were generally passed down through many generations of the same family, and members of those families became important civic leaders.



George E. Brett's Fancy and Staple Dry Goods (later renamed Brett's Empire Store, then Brett's Department Store, and generally known simply as "Brett's) opened in 1868. Originally a basic dry goods store located on Front between Jackson and Cherry, it expanded when it moved to the corner of Front and Jackson, and soon became *the* fashionable place to shop in Mankato, with a wide range of both piece goods and fashion. Brett's was also known for serving the many travelers who passed through Mankato, with lounges that included sofas and writing tables, as well as being the first store with a public telephone and one of the first with indoor restrooms. While many buildings were razed in the 1970s, Brett's was one of the few to be incorporated into the Mankato Mall. Passed down through five generations of the family, and expanding to other locations throughout southern Minnesota, the store finally closed in 1992 after 124 years in business.

Another important clothier was Matt J. Graif, which opened on Front Street in 1924. The store moved to Walnut and Front, and then in 1962 to the current Renaissance-Revival styled Graif Building (which was the National Citizen's Bank Building) on Front and Hickory. That building, in turn, is built where the original Mankato House once stood. The store still remains in the building, which is also used for office space and commercial tenants.

Crandall's Jewelers was another business that outlasted urban renewal on Front Street. The store, which opened in 1901, was passed through three generations of the Crandall family before closing in 1991 when Charles Crandall retired. The nearby Martin & Hoerr's Jewelers, established in 1870, was established at 111 South Front Street in 1870, but was forced to move in 1976 due to the renewal project. It relocated to 128 East Jackson Street, closing in 1990 after 120 years in business.

Though most of the remaining historic commercial resources are located in the North Front Street Historic District, there are a few remaining on South Front Street, such as the Anderson Building in the 600 block.

Services

Because of Mankato's role as a transportation and agricultural hub and as the county seat, it hosted many travelers. There were many hotels in town, ranging from "workingman's hotels" such as the St. Paul House on North 4th Street (now the Wesley Annex apartment building) to the exclusive Salpaugh Hotel.

The Salpaugh, at Front and Main Streets, was built in 1889 at the cost of $142,000 (for reference, that is $19,000 more than the Blue Earth County Courthouse, built that same year, cost to construct). The hotel's eighty elegant rooms included the most modern amenities and hosted a bevy of famous guests, ranging from President Howard Taft to gangster John Dillinger. The hotel was also known for its restaurants and public spaces, including the Moorish Café. The Salpaugh later fell out of fashion, and for several years became a dormitory for the Mankato Commercial College before being demolished in 1974. The City Center Hotel currently stands on the site.

Other famous hotels included the Hotel Heinrich, which opened in 1905 and was also known for its public areas, including the exotic Palm Room. It was renamed the Hotel Burton in 1936, and operated until 1984, when it was demolished to make way for the Veteran's Memorial Bridge. The Ben Pay Hotel, which expanded to over 200 rooms with the addition of a 1925 annex, hosted Eleanor Roosevelt and Guy Lombardo, but was torn down in 1967.

A few original Mankato hotels remain in the North Front Street Commercial Historic District, namely the Stahl House (now the Wine Café) and the smaller Mathias Sontag Hotel. Although not still used as hotels, these give a glimpse of what travelers might have experienced.

Many other services catered to both Mankato's residents and the travelers that came through, including doctors, dentists, law firms, architects and engineers, and even undertakers.

Perhaps most crucial to these businesses, and to the farmers in Blue Earth County, were Mankato's banks. Several institutions provided banking services to Mankato's residents and businesspeople, providing an important source of capital and investment. These included the Mankato State Bank (originally the "Mankato National Bank") and the Citizens' National Bank.

The most well-known of Mankato's banks, however, was the First National Bank of Mankato, which still stands at 229 South Front Street, although now incorporated into the Verizon Center. The bank was designed by the St. Paul architects Ellerbee and Round in 1913, in a high-style example of Prairie-style design. It also gained fame by being "almost" robbed by the James/Younger gang in 1876, who decided against the robbery because a trade fair made the area too busy. Reminiscent of the "jewel box" design of Louis Sullivan's small rural banks (the most famous of which is the Farmer's National Bank in nearby Owatonna), this bank was added to the National Register in 1973. It now serves as an event space for the center.

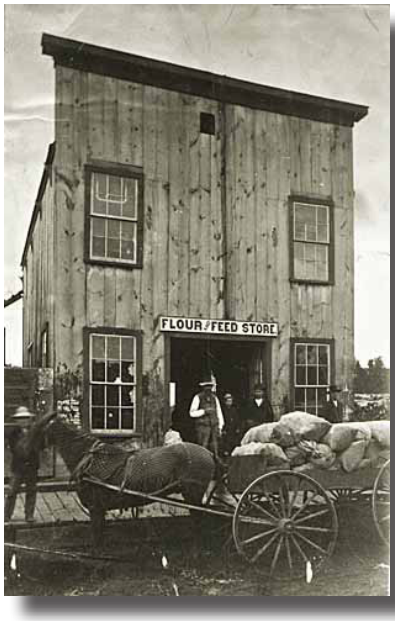
First National Bank, ca. 1925

Newspaper

The *Mankato Free Press* began as *The Independent* in 1857, published weekly by Clinton Hensley and Frank Gunning. In 1863, it was purchased by Charles Slocum, and renamed the *Mankato Union*. Soon after, in 1869, the rival *Record* began publishing (also weekly), and the two papers merged in 1880 to become *The Mankato Weekly Free Press* (later, simply *The Free Press*.)

The paper took the enormous step of converting to daily operations in 1887, and has operated continuously since then. Locally owned until 1979, it is now run by Ottaway Newspapers. The *Free Press'* extensive archives are of enormous use in historic research.

Agriculture



Flour and Feed Store ca. 1881

The City of Mankato was too large and urban to be considered a "farm town," though a few small, early farmsteads existed within the boundaries of the city — especially at the top of the bluffs, where the old Andersen farmhouse still stands. Some families in town also kept small cattle herds up until the 1920s. However, it was the richness of Blue Earth County's agriculture that ensured Mankato's importance as a regional center. From the early riverfront days, when tens of thousands of bushels of wheat were transported up the river by boat, to the current era when trucks carry crops to market, the city has served as the commodities marketplace for southern Minnesota. Blue Earth County currently has over 190 Century Farms — farms which have been operated continuously, by the same family, for over 100 years.

The most obvious reminder of this in Mankato is the dominance of the Hubbard Mill (now a part of Cargill), an enormous structure that sits right on the riverfront in order to best capitalize on river, railroad, and even trucking distribution.

Rensselaer Dean (R.D.) Hubbard was originally from New York state, settling in Mankato in the early 1870s after a failed business trip to California. He first opened a linseed oil factory, then in 1878 formed a partnership with George Palmer and William Pearson to open the flour mill. The mill, eventually operated solely by Palmer after the death of his partners, became one of the largest of its kind in southern Minnesota, and served to control wheat pricing, grading, processing and distribution practices for the entire industry.

Hubbard Milling Company Postcard 1909

More important than the mill itself, however, was what it stood for. Serving as an obvious face for investment in agricultural distribution, it encouraged other similar industry, ranging from grain to fruit to stockyards. Mankato gained other mills (flour, feed and textile), as well as factories ranging from linseed oil to several ice companies to cigar factories to tanneries. It was even home to a carp canning factory at the time of WWII. Similar and related food processing industries arose, including three candy companies — Shari, Ray Company, and Rosenberg & Currier. There were also a plethora of warehouses, storage buildings, and agricultural transfer stations, generally clustered around the railroad.

One important Mankato farmstead was Oswald Windmiller, at the top of Windmiller Hill (now Madison Avenue) on the edge of town. In the early 1900s, Windmiller provided Mankato residents with a wide variety of locally-grown fruits, vegetables, and flowers, which he grew in fields and greenhouses. The site still exists, and is now known as Hilltop Florists. Neilsen Florists was also active downtown in the 1920s, with his greenhouses occupying an entire city block, but it is no longer in existence.

Without Blue Earth County's rich farming base, Mankato may never have risen to its early prominence, but without the city's transportation advantages, those crops might never have attained effective distribution. The two maintain a symbiotic relationship that continues to this day, even as the nation's relationship to its farms changes.

Industry

The final leg of Mankato's commercial base was its other industries, especially its construction related assets. Stone quarries were one of the first businesses to spring up in the area, and soon there were quarries owned by the Coughlan, Widell, Jefferson, Babcock, Breen, Wilcox, Bashaw, Pay, Fowler and Vetter families actively excavating the dolomite limestone known as "Mankato stone." The stone was sought after due to its hardness and durability and because of its unusual color, and was used throughout the state, region and nation not only for buildings, but also extensively by the expanding railroads for their bridges and trestles. Today, the Coughlan (now Mankato-Kasota Stone) quarry is the only remaining quarry in Mankato, though the Vetter quarry still operates north of town.

Mankato was also known for its brickyards. The largest of these was the Mankato Brick and Tile Company, which opened in 1905 and was owned by William E. Stewart. Today, no remnants of this industry remain except for the plethora of brick homes in the city and larger buildings such as the Armory, Good Counsel, and parts of the mill.

Employees, Mankato Brick and Tile Company 1910

At the turn of the century, Mankato's cement factories had a capacity of 1,200 barrels a day. The major factories were the Mankato Standard Cement Company and Carney Cement, whose slag piles are still evident today near Sibley Park and on Anderson Court in West Mankato. Lumber was an early industry, but was not as prevalent as in other, more wooded, parts of Minnesota.

Other industry included metal works, carriage factories, pump works, a steam boiler factory, a sawmill, and blacksmiths. It appears that none of these resources still remain.

Civic Services

Mankato's early urbanization, tied to its commerce and industry needs, corresponded with early leadership in civic services. The city gained its first telephone line in 1880, which ran from City Hall to the Hubbard Mill to the Mankato House. R.D. Hubbard had an extension added to his home soon after. Streetlights, lit by a lamplighter, debuted in 1882, with city-wide waterlines and gas service following in 1883. Water mains were also started in 1883; the first system was a wooden main that connected Hubbard Mill to a sand well, but this was soon supplanted by reservoirs and eventually by iron pipes. Mankato participated in the national "Good Roads" movement, at which time streets were increasingly improved with brick or wood blocks to assist in the transportation of goods to market.

Electricity came soon after in 1885, but was not available reliably throughout town until 1910. Streets were also paved early, though most have now been covered with asphalt or cement. Park Lane, in Sibley Park, remains as an example of a brick-paver street, and the city is committed to retaining it. There is also a wood block street behind the Hubbard House. Parks, bridges, and transportation are discussed in other sections of this study.

A few of Mankato's public buildings in particular are both important public resources and provide important reminders of its civic service:

Blue Earth County Courthouse
Mankato was designated as the county seat in 1853, and a small courthouse was constructed a few years later. The current Blue Earth County Courthouse was not started in 1886, and finally completed in 1889. During the time there was a great controversy with nearby Garden City as to the location of the county seat, and indeed, the courthouse was not actually formally dedicated until 1988. Designed by the Minneapolis firm Healy and Allen, the building made use of local stone in a mix of French and Italian Renaissance styles for an eclectic and rather fanciful design. The interior has been substantially renovated, most recently in 1965 and again in 1988 and 2009. It was listed on the National Register in 1980. The courthouse's hillside location and wide open square makes this building especially dominant and picturesque.

Post Office
The federal Post Office and Courthouse was added to the National Register in 1979. This building, also of Mankato stone, is done in the Richardson Romanesque style, and is located on South Second Street at Jackson in the downtown core. Although the original, dominating clock tower was removed when the building was expanded, the public lobby of the building retains remarkable integrity.

Library
Another National Register building that has since been re-purposed is the Mankato Public Library, built on South Broad Street in 1902 as part of the Carnegie Library movement. Mankato had had a public library since 1894, but it had previously been located in the YMCA. Built of Mankato stone in a slight variation of the usual Carnegie style, this library served generations of Mankato readers until a new regional library was built in 1977. Today it is the Carnegie Art Center.

Other important city and county buildings have been lost, including City Hall and original police and fire stations. Government services are now consolidated in the Intergovernmental Center at Civic Center Place, a newer next to the Mankato Mall.

The Mankato Fire Department was established in 1860. Although the city's two fire stations (#1 at Madison and Broad and #2 at Pohl and Balcerzak Streets) fire stations are relatively new, they do date from the early 1960s, and will soon need some kind of consideration. The City of Mankato and the BECHS also possess some original fire equipment.

Mankato's hospitals are another important element of its history, though again are lost resources. Tourtellotte Hospital was named after Civil war colonel John Tourtellotte, who donated $8,800 to the city in 1888 in order to care for the sick. The city's first hospital had just twenty rooms, and was located on 4th Avenue, isolating those who needed care just outside of the town. As it was located on the other side of the city limits, it had no running water or sewage systems, with all water being pumped from holding tanks on the roof. In 1897, the operations of the hospital were turned over to the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, who then purchased the John A. Willard house on 6th Street to expand their operations, while continuing to run the Tourtellotte hospital. Finally, a new hospital was built on 5th and Washington in 1899, and operations at Tourtellotte Hospital were phased out.

In 1906, the stones of Tourtellotte Hospital were incorporated into the new Immanuel Hospital, built by the German Lutheran Hospital Association on the former site of the Omaha Railroad's roundhouse. That hospital was merged with St. Joseph's in 1968, which later became part of the Mayo Health System and moved to the outskirts of town on Marsh Street. The old Immanuel Hospital building was torn down in the 1980s to make room for the Gus Johnson Apartment Complex (senior living), though part of a newer wing of the hospital was incorporated into the new apartments.

Civic Leaders

Mankato's successful business and industry climate ensured that many residents became wealthy and prominent city leaders and benefactors. Chief among these, or course, were Lorin Cray, R.D. Hubbard, George Palmer, and Adolph Eberhart. Many of these leaders lived in prestigious Lincoln Park or in central Mankato, where their homes remain in good condition.

Other prominent citizens included engineer and surveyor Milton B. Haynes; county attorneys Thomas Hughes and Samuel Wilson; lawyers John Noe and William Farr; politicians James Baker, Morton Wilkinson, and George Barr; superintendent George Scherer; judge Daniel Buck; and entrepreneur James Ray Tinkom. This is just a partial list of the many who dedicated their lives to the progression of the city.

Property Types

Note: Although this is a comprehensive list, it should be noted that in most cases there are no extant resources relating to these property types (and some that remain have lost a great deal of their integrity). There are a few exceptions, such as the mill and the North Front Street Commercial Historic District, and many civic buildings remain.

However, we have included this list to demonstrate the full range of commerce, industry, and civic leadership included in Mankato's past.

As many of these buildings and related resources were scattered throughout the city, they may turn up, hidden under later development, in future preservation efforts, and should be watched for.

Commerce
Appliances
Automobile
Bakeries
Confectionary/Candy Stores
Clothiers
Dry Goods
Department Stores
Drugstores
Clothing and Dry Goods
Farm Implements/Feed/Seed
Furniture and Cabinetry
Gas Stations
Grocers/Food Markets/Butchers
Hardware
Harness
Ice Cream Parlors
Ice Houses
Jewelers/Watchmakers

Meat Markets
Millinery
Music Stores
Sash, Blinds, and Interiors
Shoe Stores and Shoemakers

Services
Architects
Attorneys
Banks
Barbers
Boarding Houses
Bowling Alleys
Builders and Contractors
Deed Registrars
Doctors
Dentists
Funeral Homes/Undertakers
Gas Stations
Hotels
Insurance
Land Agents
Laundries
Lawyers
Liveries
Machine Shops
Newspapers
Notaries
Painters
Photographers
Plumbers
Printers
Realtors
Repair Shops
    Auto
    Blacksmith
    Farm Implements
    Railroad
Restaurants and Cafes
Saloons
Shooting Galleries
Tailors
Theaters/Opera House
Wagon makers

Industry
Agricultural
    Breweries
    Canning/Bottling/Pickling/Preserving Factories
    Grain Elevators
    Linseed Oil Factories
    Malt Plants
    Nurseries
    Produce
Livestock/Game/Animals
    Dairies and Creameries
    Fishing/ Hunting/Trapping

- Harness and Saddlery
- Livestock/Farmer's Market
- Slaughterhouses
- Stockyards
- Veterinarians

Boiler Makers
Brickyards/Tile/Fire Brick
Brooms
Candy Companies
Cement Factories
Cigars
Coopers
Glass
Ice Factories/Plants
Lumberyards
Factories
Foundries/Machine Shops
Lime Yards
Mills
- Fanning Mills
- Flour Mills
- Feed Mills
- Sawmills
- Textile Mills
  - Woolen
  - Knitting

Pottery
Pump Manufacturers
Soap Factories
Staves and Heading
Tanneries
Quarries
- Marble
- Stone

Civic
Civic Buildings
- City Hall
- County Courthouse
- Library
- Fire Stations
- Police Stations

Hospitals and Clinics
Nursing Homes
Post Office/Federal Courthouse
Poor Houses
Social Services
Public Services
- Gas lines
- Electricity
- Sewer
- Telephone
- Telegraph
- Water

Street Paving

Residences of Civic Leaders

- J.R Brandrup House
  704 Byron
  areas of significance: architecture, education
- Lorin Cray House
  608 S. 2nd St.
  areas of significance: architecture, social history
- Adolph O. Eberhart House
  228 Clark St.
  areas of significance: politics/government
- R.D. Hubbard House
  606 Broad St.
  areas of significance: architecture, commerce
- William Irving House
  320 Park Lane
  areas of significance: architecture, commerce

and other significant residences.

Recommendations and Future Actions

- *As demonstrated above, the volume of commerce, service and industry records in Mankato is large, and also transitory. Since most of these resources are lost, the HPC (perhaps in conjunction with the BECHS) should create a comprehensive database that cross-references past businesses and buildings, along with visual elements as possible.*

- *These contexts provide an extremely brief overview as to the significance of Mankato's commercial and industrial operations, as well as its civic services. Further research should be completed on the topic, and complete survey work completed to establish the existence and condition of these resources.*

- *Mankato should consider commissioning business district design guidelines for the properties in the North Front Street district. Such guidelines would assist in thoughtful, economical, and sensitive preservation efforts that would best protect the remaining assets and leverage the property owner's funding and other resources*

- *Several prominent civic buildings remain, and the HPC should consider ways to effectively interpret these buildings, including tours and displays.*

- *Sometimes resources remain that are not property-dependent, such as the fire equipment. These resources should be displayed and interpreted appropriately. For example, the current fire engine display in Mankato Mall is difficult to access or understand, as it is out of its context.*

- *The HPC should consider creating a guided or self-guided tour focused on the residences of prominent local citizens.*

Context 4 – Social, Cultural and Recreational Life
Time span – 1850s-1950s

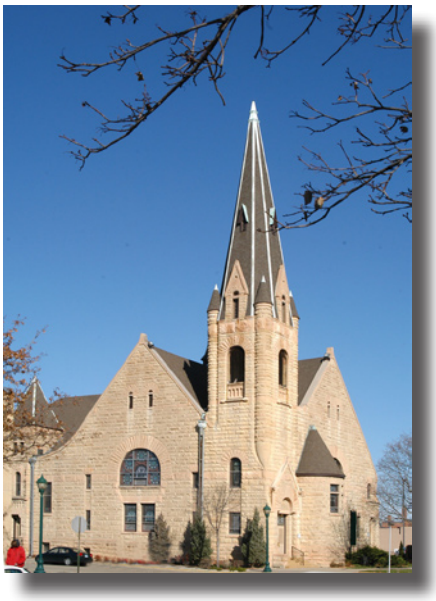
Social Mankato

Although Mankato's dominance as a southern Minnesota urban center was related to its robust commerce and industry, its social history and development is equally important. The interconnectedness of the society is demonstrated somewhat in the ways that this context overlaps with others; in a town where all business is local, social and cultural connections have a strong link to commerce and industry.

Mankato's citizens valued their leisure time, and there were a number of recreational outlets, especially the city's park system. The city's many churches were another important cultural aspect. And, although many traveled to Mankato on business, others came as tourists, and the city is included in the statewide context of "Minnesota's Tourism and Recreation, 1870-1945."

A City of Churches

Mankato's many churches reflected the spirit of the town — the wide range of faiths, the religious values of the area, the educational opportunities, and the over-arching theme of faith and community. Churches provided the gathering spots in town, and one's congregation was as important a factor as one's home and occupation. Churches also tended to define traditional ethnic neighborhoods that evolved; for example, German residents in the brewery areas attended Catholic and Lutheran churches, while the more Anglo residents attended the Methodist and Presbyterian churches near Lincoln Park. In short, religious institutions in Mankato provided the town with three major initiatives — social organizing and opportunity, networks for community interaction, and acculturation for newly-arrived residents.



First Presbyterian Church

Religion was a founding principle of the new city, with the first sermon given in 1853 by Reverend Chauncy Hobart. The First Presbyterian Church was the first congregation to formally begin religious activities, with Elder James Hanna offering a Sunday school starting in 1853. Actual church services did not follow until 1855, and their first dedicated church building was constructed in 1864. That building featured a bell purchased by the women's society in 1857, and often used as Mankato's "town bell." The congregation quickly outgrew that building, built another, and then outgrew that. Their third church is the building First Presbyterian currently occupies, between Broad and 2nd Streets at 220 East Hickory Street in the city's downtown core. The 1896 structure was designed in the Richardson Romanesque style by Minneapolis architect Warren H. Hayes, and incorporates the original Ladies Auxiliary bell. The church, a National Register landmark, is one of Mankato's most distinctive historic buildings.

St. Peter and Paul's Catholic Church is usually considered the oldest congregation in Mankato, as they started holding regular weekly services in 1854 at Kron's Hotel. Soon after, they acquired the land that they currently still hold on 5th and Main Streets, with the church building constructed from 1871-73. The church became an important part of the social and cultural life of the city, especially after adding a parochial school (the first Catholic school in southern Minnesota)and the Loyola Club House. The complex, with the sanctuary, school, and other buildings,

is a massive, intricately detailed, red-brick, Gothic Revival building, and is another of Mankato's major landmarks.

St. Peter and St. Paul Roman Catholic Church ca. 1900

The Catholic faith also became associated with human services in Mankato. The School Sisters of Notre Dame, who arrived in Mankato in 1865 to teach at the school, established a provincial motherhouse at Our Lady of Good Counsel. Catholic nuns tended the sick at Tourtellotte Hospital, and converted the school to a hospital during the typhoid epidemic of 1908. They also ran the Sacred Heart Home for Orphans in West Mankato from 1909-1915.

Another prominent early church was Immanuel Lutheran Church, originally formed as the "German Lutheran Immanuel Church of Mankato" in 1866. The church added Sunday School and a Ladies Aid in their first year, opened a day school soon after, acquired the Pilgrim's Rest Cemetery (just north of Mankato) in 1869, and ran the Immanuel Hospital for most of the 1900s. Both the church and school have expanded on the 2nd and Washington site at 421 North 2nd Street many times over the years, and the church building itself suffered a fire in 1971 that decimated most of the original structure. Salvaged beams from that church are now seen in the altar cross of the new building.

Centenary Methodist Episcopal ca. 1900

St. John's Episcopal Church ca. 1910

Other important churches (many of which no longer exist) include: Bethel Baptist, Bethlehem Lutheran, Centenary United Methodist, Christ the King Lutheran, Evangelical Free Church, First Baptist, First Christian, First Church of Christ the Scientist, First Congregational, Good Shepherd Lutheran, Grace Lutheran, Hilltop United Methodist, Hosanna Lutheran, Lincoln Park Assembly of God, Our Savior's Lutheran , St. John's Episcopal, St. John the Baptist Catholic, St. Joseph the Worker's Catholic, St. Mark's, Seventh Day Adventists, Trinity Lutheran, and United Methodist. Almost all of the congregations have relatively new church buildings, many dating from the 1970s. The preservation of these recent church buildings will be a major issue in the near future. Especially notable among the newer churches is St. John the Baptist, a modernist church constructed in 1961 at South Broad and Liberty.

Two nineteenth century cemeteries (one Catholic, one Masonic) on North 6th Street have been combined into the historic Pioneer Memorial Park. Although the cemeteries are no longer in active use, they still host annual Memorial Day services. Nearby Glenwood Cemetery is the final resting place for the Hubbards and for Maud Hart Lovelace.

Social Organizations and Clubs

The churches, with their schools and Sundays schools, choirs, Ladies Auxiliaries, Bible study groups, and other activities, provided diverse social activities to their members. However, Mankato also had a number of other social organizations which proved extremely popular.

Chief among these was the YMCA. The Y began in 1874, but did not construct a dedicated facility until 1905. The new building at 2nd and Cherry had a pool, gym, and meeting rooms, and even had a barbershop in the basement. That building became an important social spot for Mankato's male youth, and in 1958, the organization acquired the Schmidt house on Park Lane. The mission was expanded to women and families in 1962, and many additional facilities were added over the years. The house was unfortunately razed for the current facility which was completed in 2001.

The Boy Scouts also served Mankato's boys and young men, starting in 1927. One of Scouting's formative leaders, Frederick Russell Burnham, was from the Mankato area.

The YWCA provided similar services to the young ladies of Mankato, starting from a women's auxiliary of the YMCA in 1924. The Cray family was one of the organization's biggest supporters, bequeathing them their house in 1927. The YWCA stayed there for 81 years, moving out only in 2008 after altering much of the interior.

Though women tended to stick to their Ladies Auxiliaries, there were several men's societies and brotherhoods in town. Of these, the original Masonic Temple, built in 1877 at 309 S. 2nd Street, is still in use today, though it has been extensively renovated. The Elks had a nearby clubhouse at 2nd and Hickory, which burned in 1977. They currently meet in rented space. The #901 Council of the Knights of Columbus was originally chartered in the 1920s and is still active today; their former building is located on the 500 block of South Front Street. The Odd Fellows met in Schiller Hall on Jackson and 2nd, which was demolished in 1985; they have disbanded.

Odd Fellows and Free Press Postcard ca. 1910

Gathering Spaces and Festivals

There was another kind of social life in Mankato, a less organized, but no less important one. It revolved around informal gathering spaces — restaurants and cafes, bars and saloons, theaters and opera houses, etc.. Even today, whether it is morning coffee or an afternoon beer, it is these kinds of places to which one goes to sense the spirit of the place.

Downtown Mankato was home to most of these establishments, though there were exceptions — Wykhoff's Oasis Restaurant, for example, was located near Sibley Park. Some of the most popular restaurants on Front Street included:
- Heinze Palace Bakery, Restaurant, and Candy Factory — an extremely popular gathering spot for teenagers
- The Corner Café, considered one of the most expensively decorated in town
- The Moorish Café — located in the Salpaugh Hotel

The Mankato Opera House began as Harmonia Hall in 1872. It burned and was rebuilt in 1882-83. Seating over 1,000, it hosted touring events from music to plays to boxing and wrestling. As movies gained prominence it converted to a movie theater, but was eventually torn down in 1931. The first solely vaudeville house was the Majestic, which opened on Front Street in 1906; there were several other downtown theaters and cinemas, including the Wonderland. Mankato's youth also congregated at Anderson's Dance Academy, while a slightly older crowd congregated at the saloons along Front Street.

The Kato Ballroom is discussed at greater length in the Urban Development context. However, it is important to note here as well, since it has been an important concert venue for Mankato since 1945. The deco/moderne styled building is one of several threatened wood-frame buildings in the city.

For many years, beginning in 1920, Mankato winters were enlivened by a Winter Carnival that rivaled Saint Paul's annual event. Each year there was an ice castle, with ice blocks donated by Miller ice and laid by Bricklayer Union 11. There were sled dog races, and a torchlight parade through downtown. The Winter Carnival ski jump was located near the present site of Jefferson Elementary School; Olympic ski jumper Anders Haugen jumped there. In the 1930s there was also a skating rink downtown. In recent years, the Winter Carnival has been revived.

In the summer, people congregated at the Mankato Fairgrounds (which was much smaller and more localized than the Blue Earth County Fair), which was held near present day Maxfield Street, north of Old Town. Only one building remains of the original fairgrounds, a round stone barn currently used as a car wash and auction house.

Fair Grounds Barn

Parks and Public Land

Perhaps the most distinctive recreation advantage Mankato offered, however, was its attractive and well-developed park system. From the time it was founded, Mankato was a City of public spaces, with each of the core downtown neighborhoods centered around a park, which often served as the area's namesake. Though each park served nearby households, it also provided a gathering spot for city residents at large, especially Sibley Park. Though many of Mankato's parks have been lost, several still remain and continue to serve as community centers.

Lincoln Park
This small, pie-shaped piece of land in one of Mankato's most exclusive neighborhoods is generally regarded as the first true city park in Mankato. Over the years, Lincoln Park has been known for several distinctive features — a fountain, topped with a bronze statue of a Union soldier "The Boy in Blue" (replaced after wind damage in 1935 by a stone tablet honoring Civil War veterans); a cannon from the Spanish-American war dedicated in 1900, which was loaded and fired by neighborhood youth in 1909 as a 4th of July prank and removed in 1943 to be melted down for the war effort; the "Pillow Block" monument, a corner stone from a downtown clothier building, placed by the D.A.R.; and the heritage "Lincoln Elm," which was estimated to be over 315 years old when it was felled due to disease in 1980.

Highland Park
This park had modest beginnings, added in 1896 by special ordinance. The site was originally to be called "Bunker Hill Park" and was considered for several other public uses, including quarantine hospitals or "pest houses." Eventually, the park did have to share the land with a public well. Highland Park had a tourist camp and a small zoo and was at the peak of its popularity in the 1920s, deteriorating substantially by the end of WWII. Only recently has it been fully redeveloped.

Washington Park
The layout of this park is long and narrow, calling to mind the railroad yard that originally occupied the land. After the railroad vacated the area in the early 1900s, relocating along the river, the city decided to use the space as a public gathering space, dedicating the site in 1915. As with other Mankato parks, Washington Park was once dominated by a large fountain; all of these fountains have since been lost.

Tourtellotte Park
This park, located at what was once the city limits, was named for Colonel John E. Tourtellotte. The swimming pool dates from 1939, and the stone walls and interior murals in the park building are WPA projects

Reconciliation Park
A recent addition to Mankato's public spaces, Reconciliation Park was dedicated in 1997 to recognize the site of the 1862 execution. The Kasota stone buffalo on the site is by sculptor Tom Miller, who also crafted the "Winter Warrior" statue across the street.

Sibley Park
More of a playground for the entire city than a neighborhood gathering place, Sibley Park has been Mankato's most popular park since the 1880s. It is also the largest city park, currently encompassing over 100 acres.

The land itself was purchased from the Givens estate for $13,000 in 1887, following a city resolution approving bond money for parks. It was named for Henry Sibley, whose trading post had stood on the site prior to the settlement of the city. The first use was as a horse track and bicycle track (as well as associated buildings such as a grandstand, judging hall, and stables). In the mid-1890s, the racetrack was disassembled, and new park superintendent focused his energies on making Sibley Park a welcoming major park site. Soon thereafter, access was improved (working around the rail lines, which had been a major safety issue; superintendent George E. Blake was actually killed at that spot in a 1912 buggy-train collision), the zoo was established, and the land was developed with a combination of open greens, extensive flower beds, and picnic sites.

Over the years, it is the zoo that has truly captured the hearts of Mankato residents. It went from being an open deer park to a dedicated space with hundreds of animals ranging from lions to monkeys to bear to a herd of native buffalo. Funds for the acquisition of these exhibits were often donated by local businesses, including the streetcar line which saw the park as a major incentive for business. Probably the most famous zoo residents were

Mutt the lion and his unlikely companion Jeff the dog, occupying the same cage from 1932-1942. The zoo animals also saw their share of controversy, though, especially after park foreman Clarence Stanley was killed by one of the black bears in 1934. In any case, flooding, especially the major floods of 1951 and 1965, required major changes to the zoo, and the city decided to replace the exotic species with a more accessible, farm-themed petting zoo.

In general, Sibley Park has seen the most programming and development of any of Mankato's parks, sometimes to the controversial exclusion of other sites. The park has hosted concerts, pow wows, festivals, and other public events. In addition to the zoo, bandshell, and grand lawn there are historical sites such as the Ott Cabin, tennis courts, sledding hills, ball fields, playgrounds, gardens, gazebos, picnic areas, and walking trails that overlook the river and bluffs. Nearby businesses, such as Wykhoff's Oasis, also thrived.

Most original resources related to Sibley Park — the racetrack, early zoo buildings, the WPA-era dam and lake, the original bandshell, etc. — have been lost. However, the layout of the park generally remains the same, and it is an extremely important part of Mankato's social history.

Other Public Areas
Other than these main parklands, Mankato has several other public green spaces. These include the old slough area, Rasmussen Woods on the old Rasmussen estate in West Mankato (originally the Sacred Heart Orphanage land), the recently-dedicated Center Street bench that honors the Betsy-Tacy books, and nearby Minneopa State Park.

Tourism

In general, tourism-related sites such as hotels and restaurants are listed under the Commerce context, and access is addressed under Transportation. The City of Mankato should be aware of how much tourism has affected the city in the past — for instance, Highland Park contained an important tourist camp. It should also capitalize on heritage tourism in the future.

Property Types

Churches and related buildings
- Parochial schools
- Convents and monasteries
- Church social halls
- Rectories and other residences
- Church administrative buildings and offices
- Cemeteries

Meeting halls and social halls
- Ethic organizations
- Fraternal organizations
- Social organizations
- Multi-purpose meeting halls
- Union halls

Recreation
- Bars, taverns, sample rooms and saloons
- Billiards
- Bowling alleys
- Dance halls and classes
- Museums
- Music halls and concert halls

- Restaurants and cafes
- Theaters

Sports grounds

Parks

- Grounds
- Gardens
- Trails
- Buildings
- Structures (gazebos, walls, picnic tables, etc.)
- Zoos

Tourism related sites

- Transportation sites
- Hotels and inns
- Restaurants and cafes
- Tourist parks

Tourist attractions and historic sites

Fairgrounds

Winter Carnival

Recommendations and Future Actions

- *Mankato's churches are a crucial part of the city's history. Many original churches have been lost; others have been deconsecrated and put into alternate use; some still remain. In many cases, religious cultural resources are lost because congregations need to expand on limited budgets, and are ineligible for tax credits that non-profits can use in preservation efforts. The HPC should work with local churches to ensure that resources are protected and interpreted.*

- *Cemeteries are generally not eligible for National Register nomination. However, in many communities, they have generated much interest and their own preservation societies. Mankato's cemeteries should consider similar initiatives.*

- *Parks play such an important role in the development of the city that they should receive special attention. Currently, they are generally well-interpreted with historic plaques and other descriptions. However, many other parks have been lost, and even the remaining public spaces are missing historic features, like their fountains. The HPC should work to ensure that these sites are well-preserved and interpreted.*

- *There are several social resources remaining in the industrial areas of town, including the fairgrounds barn and the Kato Ballroom. The HPC should prioritize protection of these resources.*

Context 5 –Mankato's Urban Development
Time span – 1852 to present

The City of Mankato developed relatively quickly, especially in comparison to other Minnesota river towns of the period. The establishment of the railroads — securing Mankato as a commodities distribution center, the placement of the second State Normal School, and Mankato's robust business and commerce community, all ensured a thriving and growing economy that made Mankato a vital urban center for southern Minnesota.

Mankato is included in the statewide context "Urban Centers, 1870-1940."

Becoming a City

As stated above, Mankato grew quickly and aggressively. In 1853, just a year after it was established, Mankato became the county seat of Blue Earth County. Commerce was established quickly, ranging from stores to quarries, a hotel to a physician, a newspaper to a brewery (see separate context on "Commerce, Industry, Agriculture and Civic Services"). In 1866, the city was officially granted the second State Normal School (Teachers' College), and the first railroad line arrived in 1868.

As with many of Minnesota's cities, including Minneapolis and Saint Paul, Mankato's greatest growth occurred during the 1880s-90s. This was a period of great optimization of the area's natural resources and of its farmed commodities (especially wheat, and to some extent corn). Mills and other distribution facilities could process the raw materials and then place them directly onto train cars on the rail lines, for rapid distribution throughout the state and nation.

By the turn of the century, Minnesota's urban centers began to grow in importance, changing the state from a rural, agriculturally-based economy to one increasingly centered around its cities. There were broad but clear criteria for definition as an urban center — population size, number of buildings, robustness of commerce and industry (particularly in the downtown core), amenities such as streetlights, paved roads and police/fire systems, and, perhaps most convincingly, the presence of a streetcar line. Seven cities emerged as Minnesota's metropolitan centers — Minneapolis/St. Paul, Duluth/(Superior), and five regional farming centers: Fargo-Moorhead, Grand Forks-East Grand Forks, St. Cloud, Winona, and Mankato. Many postulate that, even with Mankato's robust trade, it was the presence of the streetcar line that served as the "tipping point" for its emergence as a metropolitan area.

The Mankato Street Railway System was laid along Front Street in 1886, with the first cars actually horse-drawn. The original line proved to be unprofitable, and was followed by the Mankato Electric Traction Company, which got electricity from the Rapidan Dam, and laid two permanent trolley lines through the city. The first ran along Broad Street from Tourtellotte Park to Vine Street, crossed to Front Street, then ran to Park Lane and down to Sibley Park. The second ran on Main Street, from Front to Fifth Street, then past the Blue Earth County Courthouse and the Normal School to Warren Street, west to Fourth Street, then to Clark Street, Center Street, and Byron Street, ending on Pleasant Street and Willard. These lines eventually ran all the way to West Mankato. When the Main Street Bridge was replaced in 1917, it was designed with the center lanes as streetcar tracks, with the overhead lines strung through the ornate light poles. Horse drawn carriages also ran along the rails.

Their street cars had motors on each end, so that they could easily reverse at the end of the line, and seated thirty. The lines ran generally downtown, parallel to the river, as they could not ascend the bluffs. The streetcar

lines defined the core City of Mankato, with neighborhoods lying outside of the public transportation services developing more slowly and with less planning. The terminus areas of the streetcars ended up being particularly active social and commercial hubs.

By 1930, however, the automobile had overtaken the streetcars as the dominant means of transportation, and the Mankato switched to buses for its mass transit needs.

Mankato easily met another of the urban center criteria by providing excellent city services. Street lights, manually serviced by a lamplighter, were installed in 1882 and electrified beginning in 1885. By 1910, electricity was available throughout town. The city also established gas lines and a sewer system in 1883, and telephone services began as early as 1880, with the first line running from City Hall to Hubbard Mill to the Mankato House Hotel. This demonstrates the importance of the mill to the city at that time, and soon after, R.D. Hubbard became the first resident to have a line connecting his business with his home.

Urban Renewal

A less optimistic period in Mankato's history occurred recently, during the 1970s, when the city experienced wholesale urban renewal. Urban renewal was a phenomenon that affected much of the country at that time, following the 1968 "Housing and Urban Development Act" and the "New Communities Act." Basically, "urban renewal" referred to efforts by public entities to revitalize blighted inner city areas through massive demolition. Urban renewal involved three major elements: acquiring property through eminent domain (and then demolishing it), conveying land to private developers through a write-down formula for demolition so that they could demolish and rebuild, and the wholesale relocation of affected residents (and sometimes businesses). Unfortunately, most urban renewal stalled out before a fourth pillar — reconstruction — was achieved, and many cleared areas were left vacant for years, and then were often rebuilt with suboptimal uses. Originally envisioned as a kind of Renaissance for American cities, urban renewal is now generally viewed as one of American urban planning's most costly mistakes.

Mankato enrolled in the urban planning movement in 1970, as part of the "Key City Urban Renewal Area, Project Number Minn. R-63." This plan had a lofty purpose:

> "Recognizing the dangers of blight, deterioration, and obsolescence to the continued stability and vitality of the central area as the business, governmental institutional [sic], and cultural heart of the metropolitan area, and as a focus of pride and achievement, the City of Mankato, through the Minnesota Housing and Redevelopment Authority, has initiated a long-range program of urban renewal action in its central business district."

Goals were similar to other urban planning efforts across the nation: to centralize building use; clear deteriorated, obsolete or aesthetically unappealing properties; provide extensive parking opportunities and easy vehicular access; and to redevelop areas as part of a coordinated plan. Businesses in the affected downtown area generally resisted or were opposed to the development efforts, but to no avail. Landmarks such as the Salpaugh Hotel, Salet's department store, and much of the historic downtown, as well as many nearby residences, were torn down. Some of the buildings were documented, but many were not, and much of that documentation is not generally available. The State Historic Preservation Office estimated in the mid-1980s that Mankato had lost more of its architectural heritage than any other community in the state.

Some resources remained but were altered, chiefly the First National Bank of Mankato (now attached to the Verizon Wireless Convention Center) and the buildings/facades incorporated into the Mankato Mall. A small

section of Riverfront Drive, now the North Front Street Commercial Historic District, was left untouched, as well as a few buildings on South Front Street.

Preservation of the Recent Past — A Controversial Topic

The issue of how to treat the recent past is one of the most often discussed topics in the preservation world today. In strict practice, the field of historic preservation has a "clear line" — when the National Preservation Act of 1966 was adopted, it included a 50-year lookback in order to assure historical perspective and to avoid judgments based on trends or fads.

However, the post-World War II era has proved to be a prolific period in both architectural design and community development, and any number of cases have arisen to challenge the fifty-year designation. From the significant works of Frank Lloyd Wright to eminently fragile examples such as the 1960s diner, many resources have achieved exceptional significance or been deemed worthy of protection. The topic has become a large issue in preservation circles, fostering a number of articles and publications, attention from the National Trust and the American Institute of Architects, and even a dedicated non-profit association, the Recent Past Preservation Network. Even the venerable National Park Service has added a National Register criteria covering the topic — *Criteria G: Guidelines for Evaluating and Nominating Properties that Have Achieved Significance Within the Last Fifty Years.*

On a smaller scale, preservation of more current resources has become of major interest to communities in our fast-moving current world. Many people can remember their neighborhood as it was when they were growing up, or enjoy their parents recollections. When our everyday life changes too rapidly, we quickly lose what we value in our community to "progress" — and all too soon realize what we have lost. Preservation of our vital past, from the movie theater to the gas station to the dome home, has become of particular importance to quickly-expanding communities such as Mankato.

This emphasis on the recent past means that major recent construction, especially the downtown examples cited above (the Verizon Center, the Mankato Mall, and even the new downtown hotels) need to be carefully evaluated in future planning and preservation efforts. Now that they are here, they play a part in the history of the city, and to thoughtlessly remove or alter them could be as problematic as earlier urban renewal efforts were.

Some Mankato resources may initially be thought of as part of the recent past, but have actually surpassed the fifty-year threshold. One example of this is the Kato Ballroom, which initially opened as early as 1945 and whose current building dates to 1954. The building's exterior has a deco/moderne flair, though the interior has seen several renovations and expansions. The Kato saw concerts by Louis Armstrong, Glenn Miller, Guy Lombardo, the Beach Boys, and even one of the last concerts by Buddy Holly, and has an important place in the city's entertainment history. This, like so many wood frame buildings of that era, would strongly benefit from preservation investment. To many in Mankato, anything dating after the 1920s is not considered historically important, and has experienced benign neglect since then. Elsewhere, this includes many of the wooden houses and commercial buildings, especially in the industrial areas and the north end of the city.

A less prominent example, that is outside of the 50-year line, is the Eastgate Shopping Mall (built 1964). Though not architecturally outstanding, the mall represents the first phase of the relocation of Mankato's retail establishments from the downtown core.

A popular, but lost, example of the relatively recent past would be Wykhoff's Oasis Drive-In Restaurant, which ran from 1931-1975 in the Sibley Park neighborhood, at the corner of Sibley and Park Lane. This casual, family-

oriented restaurant serving sandwiches, hot dogs, and root beer was a popular stop on the way to park activities, and played live music on the weekends. Sadly enough, it appears that no remnants of the Oasis remain, as it would be an extremely popular historic resource to Mankato residents.

Modern and mid-century residences are also included under the recent past or recently historic umbrella, and are considered separately in the "Residential" context. Mankato possesses many good examples of WWII-era and modern homes.

Other landmarks are currently less than fifty years old, but need to be planned for in the future. Many of these are on the outskirts of the city, with examples including the original Happy Chef restaurant, other shopping areas, former barracks and post WWII housing in the city, and even the very new Veteran's Memorial Bridge and the Reconciliation Park structures.

Property Types

Urban Development:
Streetcar-related resources
- Streetcars
- Tracks
- Associated buildings: garages, barns, repair facilities

Public planning amenities
- Streetlights
- Sewer systems
- Original paved roads
- City facilities: electrical stations, pumping stations, telephone stations
- Police stations
- Fire stations

Recent Past:
- Levees
- Stadium
- Diners
- Gas stations
- Motels and tourist inns
- Automobile showrooms
- Bowling alleys
- Bus stations
- Fast Food
- Movie theaters and drive-ins
- Drive-in restaurants
- Dome homes
- Quonset huts
- Other modern residential – Lustron, shed-style homes, etc.
- Fairgrounds
- Television and radio stations and towers
- Bridges and other transportation-related elements
- Stores and shopping experiences
- Roadside icons
- Themed experiences: Tiki, cowboy, space-age, etc.

Recommendations and Future Actions:

- *As with Mankato's other transportation-related resources, few vestiges of its streetcar system remain. However, remaining (or discovered) resources should be preserved and interpreted, perhaps as part of a larger, transportation-related interpretive plan.*

- *The city should preserve and protect city infrastructure resources as it is able (for example, the preservation and restoration of the original brick-paved Park Lane in Sibley Park). In addition, when providing new amenities (such as streetlights), it should try to make these fit into the historic fabric of the community, while acknowledging that they are not inherently historic. Another Sibley Park example of this model in practice is the new metal pergola, which references prior resources without re-creating them.*

- *The HPC should be especially aware of the vulnerability of resources that are relatively recent, yet just over the fifty-year threshold, such as the Kato Ballroom.*

- *The HPC should find ways to recognize historic resources that have been impinged upon, such as the First National Bank and the buildings incorporated into the Mankato Mall. A potentially useful evaluation tool is how much of the new construction is potentially reversible, and how much has gained importance on its own.*

- *The HPC should identify and inventory potentially significant elements of the recent past, and plan for their eventual preservation. One example of this would be the city's two 1960s fire stations, which represent not only the recent past but also Mankato's urban planning and development.*

- *Some of the buildings and houses demolished during Urban Renewal were photographed, surveyed, or otherwise documented. The City of Mankato should make these resources more generally available, perhaps in collaboration with the BECHS.*

Context 6 – Education
Time span – 1866 to present

For many communities, the educational system is a very important part of either their social and cultural or their civic contexts. In Mankato, however, it rises to enough importance to merit a context of its own, mainly because of the decision to place the state's second Normal School in Mankato in 1866. Today that school (now Minnesota State University - Mankato or "MSU") is a crucial part of the city's identity; also contributing to the context are Bethany Lutheran College and the city's various public and private schools.

Mankato's University

Minnesota opened its first Normal School (the standard name for a teacher training school) in Winona in 1860. In 1866, the state legislature, spurred on by legislator and Mankato attorney Daniel Buck, authorized a second Normal School, to be located in Mankato. The location was contingent upon the city providing $5,000 in seed money. Although the city had problems raising the funds at first, an 1867 state law allowed the city to issue bonds in order to raise its match.

The school officially opened on October 7, 1868, with twenty-seven local students taught by principal George Gage in space rented in the basement of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Tuition was free of charge, though students had a teaching requirement once they graduated. Later that year classes moved to more permanent space in the Shaubut Building in downtown Mankato (now razed).

In 1870, the school's first dedicated building, Old Main, opened at 5th Street and Jackson. Principal Gage was succeeded by his assistant, Julia Sears, in 1872; she in turn was replaced in 1873 by Methodist minister David John. Curriculum at that time was fairly standard, focusing upon basic skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic.

In 1880, Edward Searing was hired in the newly created position of president, and his almost two-decade long tenure inspired a period of great expansion and development for the school. Searing was especially praised for deepening the curriculum and educational offerings.

Charles Cooper became president in 1899, and successfully navigated more expansion and changes for the school. The first women's dormitory, Daniel Buck Hall, was built under his tenure in 1913, followed in 1921 by Cooper Hall. In 1921, the school also officially changed its name to Mankato State Teacher's College. Soon after, in 1922, the original Old Main building burned to the ground, but the state legislature quickly allocated funds for a new main building, which opened in 1924.

In 1933, Frank McElroy became the school's first president to hold a PhD. Some of his changes were rather controversial, such as eliminating the post-graduate teaching requirement in 1933, replacing it with a $10/quarter fee (higher for non-residents).

By the time Clarence Crawford became president in 1946, the sense was that the downtown Mankato campus was too cramped to meet the ever-expanding school's needs, and a site about two miles up the bluff was chosen for

the “Highland Campus” (the original campus then began to be called the “Valley Campus” or “Lower Campus”) Even as new buildings were being built in town, construction on the upper campus continued, until soon classes were equally divided between the two locations. It was under that atmosphere that the school changed its name again, to Mankato State College, in 1957.

James Nickerson was president from 1966-1972, when enrollment grew to over 12,000 students. Douglas Moore then ascended to the presidency, seeing the name change to Mankato State University in 1975. Moore soon realized that the school could not adequately maintain two separate campuses, so began a consolidation into the Highland location.

Margaret Preska became the school’s second female president in 1979, just in time to witness the completion of the Wigley Administration Building and the final complete withdrawal from the original site. Under her administration, which lasted until the early 1990s, enrolment grew over 40%, with a corresponding expansion of the curriculum. She was excellent at raising capital funds for the school, which repaired and replaced many of the aging buildings and allowed for the construction of the Ostrander Bell Tower and the Andreas Observatory.

Today the school, whose name changed again in 1998 to Minnesota State University - Mankato, operates exclusively out of the former Highland campus. From the original campus, Old Main is still an important downtown Mankato landmark, and should be carefully considered in the city’s preservation planning. As addressed in other contexts, Old Main is now “Old Main Village,” a senior housing community. Other remnants of the campus still remain in central Mankato, including the Blue Earth County Government Center (Searing Center dorm), the BECHS building (former Newman Center), and the Colonial Square Apartments (a college dorm), as well as fraternity houses and rooming houses. Other college-related resources still exist, such as former rooming houses and fraternities, especially on Hanover Street (nicknamed “Hangover Street” by local residents) in Lincoln Park.

Additional Higher Education in Mankato

Bethany Lutheran College

Although Bethany only started offering baccalaureate degrees in 2001, it has actually been part of Mankato’s educational system for almost one hundred years. The school began as “Bethany Ladies College,” in 1911, with four staff members and forty-four students. In 1927, the school became part of the Lutheran Norwegian Synod, a conservative confessional synod that later became the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS). Today, the ELS is based out of Mankato, operating both Bethany College and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, a school that began as a department of the college but separated from it in 1975, and now sits adjacent to the college.

The ELS ran Bethany as a co-educational high school and junior college; its first president was the Reverend Holden Olsen, who had been president of the girls school as well. Since then, tenures have been long, with only six other presidents (and two interim presidents). In 1969, the high school closed, and the school concentrated on its community college offerings. It converted to a four-year college after a vote of the Board of Regents in 1996.

Although Bethany has some historically important buildings, its most significant building is Old Main, which dates back to the school’s 1911 founding. The large hall includes the student center, dining area, bookstore, career center, international student center, faculty offices, and a women’s dormitory.

Other Colleges

The Mankato Commercial College was founded in 1891 by Professor Paine and prominent citizen J.R. Brandrup as a branch of the "Northwestern College of Commerce and Institute of Shorthand." The college became extremely well-regarded. Its space fell victim to another of Mankato's large fires in 1915, a fire that also heavily damaged nearby buildings including the Salpaugh Hotel. The school re-opened soon after, but closed in 1979.

In 1945, residents realized the need to serve veterans returning from the war with continuing technical skills, and organized the first classes of the Mankato Area Vocational Technical Institute in 1945 to serve veterans returning from the war. In 1947, it became a full-fledged trade school, the first in the state. The school was based out of the Kost Garage for many years, moving into its own building on Park Lane in 1950. Despite two nineteen-sixties additions, the Institute outgrew that space, and relocated to North Mankato. In 1989, the school changed its name to Mankato Technical College and it is now part of South Central College.

Elementary and Secondary Schools

In order to prepare their students for their several post-secondary options, Mankato residents first needed to ensure a rigorous primary and secondary education for their children. Mankato's school system began early in the history of the town, when Sara Jane Hanna opened the first school in 1853. Her school was a subscription school, in which the parents paid directly for the children's education, focusing on the "3 Rs" — reading, writing and arithmetic. Classes were mainly in the winter, as the children had agricultural duties in the summer, and Hanna also led a Sunday-school class. Hanna's school was succeeded by classes taught by Mary Ann Thorson in 1854-1855, which expanded registration to thirty students. Another early private day school was led by Professor Weidman from 1860 to approximately 1880, with classes in both German and English.

In 1855, Mankato opened its first public school, in a one-room log schoolhouse at 200 N. Broad Street. It was built by public contributions, since there was still no community school tax. As Mankato grew, the number of students burgeoned as well, so in 1867 the city tore down the log structure and replaced it on the same site with Union School. The school taught all grades, with a range of subjects from basic reading to engineering. The original building lasted through 1919, when it was torn down and the second Union School was built. That school closed in 1975 due to declining enrollment, and the building became part of Mankato Technical College until that institution moved. It is now an office building called Union Park.

Perhaps Mankato's most famous school was Pleasant Grove Elementary, on the corner of Byron and Pleasant Streets, which opened in 1871. This school was immortalized in the Betsy-Tacy books, as addressed in the "Literary" context. It was torn down and replaced by Lincoln School in 1923. Lincoln School was originally an elementary school, but became an interim high school from 1941-1951, as the original Mankato High School had burned down. Returning to use as a primary school, it stayed open through 1981. The building still stands as the Lincoln Community Center.

Franklin Grade School opened in 1875 at Broad and Lafayette and was replaced by a new junior high building on the same site in 1928. It was followed by the West Mankato School (now Roosevelt Elementary) at W. 6th and Owatonna in 1885. The East Mankato School opened in 1894 off of Agency Hill, but stayed open for just five years.

Though the elementary schools were well-attended, it was harder to establish Mankato's public high schools. The first effort — high school classes held in Union School — graduated a class of nine in 1876, but at that time, most students did not complete their secondary school education.

The first dedicated high school was Mankato High School, which opened in 1891 at Hickory and S. 5th Streets. By 1911, enrollment had grown to over 300, necessitating an addition. The school burned under suspicious circumstances in 1941, and, with all available resources dedicated to wartime efforts, a new high school (Mankato West) was not completed until 1951 at Stoltzman Road and Riverfront Drive. Part of the delay was in controversy over the site, which was famously deluged as part of the major flooding in spring 1951. The addition to the current school dates to 1959.

Mankato's first charter school, Wilson Campus School, opened on the Mankato State upper campus in 1959, and was seen as a national model in the early charter movement. It closed in 1978.

Several parochial schools augmented public options. Perhaps the most influential was St. Peter and Paul's school, which opened as part of that church's offerings in 1865. Although the school was co-educational, boys and girls were taught in separate classes. In 1908 the school was closed as a precaution against the typhoid epidemic, which affected over 6,000 residents, and was temporarily used as a hospital. The school burned in 1927, and was replaced in 1928 by two buildings, with classes for kindergarten through eighth grade at the grade school and a new, boys-only high school (Loyola) in a separate building on 5th Street. In the mid-1930s classes again became mixed, with girls admitted to the high school as well. In 1957 the school burned again and was rebuilt. Today, the school maintains the site on 5th Street for its intermediate school, with the original grade school building used by a charter school. Loyola's elementary classes and high school are located in new facilities just outside of town, near Highway 14.

Other parochial schools included Woodland Seminary — a girls boarding school open from 1865-1866, and Immanuel Lutheran School. Immanuel always considered its school integral to the church — it opened at the same time that the church did in 1867, and was originally located inside the church building at Broad and Washington. When the church itself moved to 2nd Street in 1880, the school expanded to fill the entire building; in 1903, with ever-expanding enrollment, a new school was built on the same site. The current school, adjacent to the church, was built in 1970. Classes were originally taught in German, but that practice was discontinued in 1919. Good Counsel Girl's Academy was run by the School Sisters of Notre Dame from 1912-1980.

A different kind of private school was located within the Sacred Heart Home for Orphans, serving that home's eighty residents. The home operated from 1909-1915, on Sunset Boulevard in West Mankato.

Property Types

Post-Secondary Schools
- Minnesota State University Mankato
  - Current site ("Highland Campus")
  - Former site ("Valley Campus")
    - Old Main
    - Any other remaining buildings
    - Associated buildings: fraternities, student housing, etc.
- Bethany Lutheran College
  - Old Main
  - Other original buildings
  - Related and auxiliary buildings, especially as campus expands
- Mankato Commercial College associated buildings
- Mankato Technical College associated buildings

Primary and Secondary Schools
- Original subscription school site

Union Building ("Union Park")
East Mankato School site
Original high school site
Lincoln Community Center (formerly Pleasant Grove/Lincoln School)
Wilson Campus site
Woodland Seminary site

Current School Sites
Franklin School
West Mankato School (Roosevelt Elementary)
Mankato West High School
RiverBend Academy/Eastgate Mall
St. Peter and Paul's School/Loyola
Immanuel Lutheran

Related school grounds and playing fields

Recommendations and Future Actions

- *Mankato's rich educational history naturally lends itself to interpretive efforts in collaboration with the schools. The HPC should work with the elementary and secondary schools (as well as former schools that are public sites, like Lincoln Community Center) to set up interpretive displays detailing the school's history. These efforts could be coordinated with a local history curriculum.*

- *A similar initiative should be made at RiverBend Academy, especially addressing the school's adaptive use of the former mall.*

- *A similar exhibit could be set up at the Union School building in its lobby or other public space.*

- *The HPC should look into the efficacy of interpreting former school sites as well as current buildings. One suggestion would be to create a walking/driving tour with a school theme, which addresses current buildings and lost resources.*

- *As the two larger schools on the periphery of the city center (the Minnesota State University - Mankato campus and Bethany Lutheran College) continue to expand, the HPC should be especially vigilant about preserving historic properties, viewsheds, landscapes and other resources that they might encompass. The HPC should work with these schools to establish a preservation plan.*

Context 7—Relationship to the River
Time span – 1683 to present

Mankato is a very typical example of a Minnesota river town, and as such, its relationship to the river colors all of its contexts, from its location to its transportation history, from commerce and industry to social and cultural.

However, in Mankato's case, this is a particularly complicated relationship, Mankato is sited at not just one but two rivers, the Minnesota and the Blue Earth, with several smaller contributories nearby. This unique location gave the city an early transportation edge. It has also made Mankato especially vulnerable to certain kinds of flooding, which has had a great effect on the city's history.

Mankato's river bridges are included in the thematic statewide context of "Bridges."

Floods

Were Mankato to have been established at Johnson and Jackson's initial preferred site, at "Sibley Mound" where the Minnesota and Blue Earth Rivers met, flooding would be even more of a concern than it is now. There are many explanations as to why they decide to relocate to the present townsite; some say that the Indians of the area warned them that the site flooded in the spring; others claim that the party noticed high water marks on many of the trees. Perhaps it was just common sense that suggested that the low-lying fields, situated close to the banks of the river, would be underwater in early spring. Whatever the reason, the settlers relocated slightly further downstream, where the bend of the river created a natural levee, at what is now the site of the Masonic Temple.

Though this location protected Mankato much of the time, after particularly heavy winters the spring snow melt increased the river flow and flooded low-lying areas. Also, as the town expanded, particularly into the Sibley Park environs, the close-to-the-river neighborhoods were more likely to encounter spring flooding. Finally, as the river naturally shifted, and as some areas were reclaimed by the Mankato Claim Company, flood patterns changed.

It seems the first of the major floods to affect Mankato occurred in April, 1862, after a particularly snowy winter (in fact, many of the "flood years" followed "blizzard years"). Bridges throughout the county were washed away, and early homesteads, mills and other riverside businesses were flooded out. The rivers ran high and fast throughout the summer, which was to some extent good for the development of the area, allowing more boats to navigate the route.

Spring floods continued periodically every three to five years, but the next "Big Flood" was recorded in 1881, which was the largest flood since Anglo-American settlement of the area. The river, which had previously risen no more than twenty-two feet over the low water mark, rose to twenty-four feet, flooding most of the low-lying land. 1881 became referred to as "the year of the high water."

Flooding was persistent but not altogether problematic until relatively recently, when development patterns and shifts in the river route rendered the area more vulnerable. Over the winter of 1951, the snowfall was especially deep, and the spring flooding was extremely bad. Though the greatest damage occurred in North Mankato, the City of Mankato proper was also extremely affected, especially the area just below Lincoln Park, which had never before flooded. This flood was especially terrifying because the water rose extremely quickly, forcing many to leave their homes immediately, in the middle of the night. The area was evacuated for over three weeks. The flood also affected low-lying Sibley Park, especially the zoo, where some animals were moved into city buildings throughout Mankato to protect them.

The city made some changes following the 1951 flood, including removing a concrete and Kasota stone dam in Sibley Park that had enclosed a nineteen-acre lake. Congress also passed flood control legislation in 1958, but Mankato did little in response, which in retrospect was perhaps a mistake.

Though not as dramatic as the 1951 flood, the 1965 flood was perhaps the most devastating to hit Mankato. Although the area was heavily fortified with over 900,000 sandbags, it was not enough to hold back the raging waters. Sixty-two businesses were damaged, mostly up Mound Avenue and into the Minnesota and Poplar Streets area. Madsen's Foods was under four feet of water, and the high school was completely flooded. Though this was just outside the downtown riverfront area, and it was speculated that residual effects to the downtown core were contributory to the later blight that led to the wholesale "urban renewal" of that historic core in the 1970s. Over sixteen-hundred area residents were evacuated, and damage estimates topped five million dollars.

The most heartbreaking crisis, however, occurred at the Sibley Park Zoo, where buildings were damaged and many animals died. Some of the animals, kept on slightly higher pavilions, were able to stay just out of the reach of the flood waters, but of the 100 animals housed at the zoo, most were swept away by the water or died of exposure. This resulted in the decision to relocate most of the animals— many went to Como Park in Saint Paul, and the remaining bison went to Blue Mounds State Park near Luverne, Minnesota. The zoo was re-branded as a farm exhibit.

The City of Mankato then decided to take serious action to forestall future flooding. Rejecting an original plan from the Army Corps of Engineers to create a dam, which would have protected Mankato but potentially flooded nearby agricultural areas, the city instead developed a system of earthen dykes and concrete walls along the river. This removed the Main Street bridge and some riverfront development, as well as inhibiting some river access, but has been relatively successful; subsequent flooding has been minimal, even in high water years. The challenge now is to incorporate this flood control into the fabric of the town, especially as a remnant of the recent past that will soon gain historic status on its own.

Bridges

Mankato's bridges have always been crucial in retaining its dominance as southern Minnesota's commercial hub. With two large rivers to cross, and with railroads and roads playing dominant transportation roles, Mankato has relied upon its bridges to allow it to connect to the rest of the state.

At first, the only way to cross the Minnesota River was via Cummings Ferry, at what is now Sibley Park. The first bridge was an iron truss bridge, constructed in 1879. This bridge was constructed of three spans of iron beams, laid over massive stone pillars, and had a swingspan allowing boats to pass underneath. This bridge lasted until 1917, when it was replaced by the Main Street Bridge, a beautiful, ornate concrete arch bridge designed for both automobiles and the streetcar system. However, flood control measures, including dykes and concrete walls, necessitated that the bridge be removed and replaced. Currently, the major bridge access to Mankato is via the Veteran's Memorial Bridge, built in 1985 and dedicated in 1987.

A number of other bridges provided early river crossings, especially over the smaller Blue Earth river. The first of these was a wood bridge allowing access between Mankato and South Bend, constructed in 1855. A county bridge followed in 1869. A 1907 register lists five Mankato bridges, built between 1869 and 1881, though this seems to include nearby resources such as the Kern bridge (see below). None of these original resources remain within the city limits.

Two other, recently constructed, bridges route Mankato's traffic. The first is an element of the recent past, the

US-169 bridge (the "North Star Bridge"), built in 1960 and reconstructed in 1992. This was constructed when the highway was moved off of Front Street and re-routed along the west side of the river, necessitating a new Minnesota River crossing (it also crosses a rail yard). The second is the US-14 bridge, built in 1976 as part of the re-routing of Highway 14 from downtown to a northern bypass.

Nearby bridges, though not in the purview of this study, also bear importance as feeders that allowed access to Mankato, particularly to area farmers coming to sell or distribute their crops. Probably the most important nearby site is the Kern Bridge (also known as "Yaeger's Bridge"), just south of the city over the Le Seuer River. This is the only remaining "bowspring arch" bridge in the state, and may be the oldest remaining bridge in Minnesota. It is the longest bridge of its kind in the country (there is a slightly longer one in Canada). It has been on the National Register since 1990, and is currently closed, seeking a new use such as a biking and hiking trail.

The railroads built their own trestles and bridges in order to cross not only rivers, but ravines and other changes in elevation. These have generally not been inventoried, and most are no longer in use.

Property Types

- Flood sites
- Flood control mechanisms
  - Dykes
  - Levees
  - Concrete walls
- Ferry site
- Highway bridges
  - Concrete
    - Veterans Memorial Bridge
    - US-169 ("North Star") bridge
    - US-14 bridge
  - Iron and steel truss bridges
    - Former bridge sites
    - Kern bridge (nearby)
- Railroad trestles

Recommendations and Future Actions

- *As with many of Mankato's important historic contexts, flood sites are difficult to commemorate because there are no associated resources. The 1951 flood site is marked on the City Center Walking Tour. The HPC should consider some kind of interpretive marker at the site, perhaps with photographs, describing the event. The nearby high school might also be a good place for such an interpretive exhibit, as well as Sibley Park.*

- *Flood control resources, such as the dykes and levees, are important resources. Currently elements of the recent past, they will soon cross the 50-year historic marker. The HPC should plan for ways to appropriately preserve and recognize these resources. This needs to be done in conjunction with the city Community Development Department, to ensure that they continue to perform effectively. One suggestion might be an interpreted walking trail along the Sibley Park levee, as part of the current are redevelopment plan.*

- *Mankato's original bridges have been replaced. The HPC will need to plan for how to eventually recognize the current bridges, which will eventually pass the 50-year threshold and fall into the statewide thematic context of "Concrete highway bridges in Minnesota." The first bridge to address will be the North Star bridge, in particular investigating how the 1992 changes affected the original 1960 construction.*

- *Although the Kern Bridge is not located in the City of Mankato proper, its fate affects the area's history, and the HPC should assist in helping to preserve and protect the resource.*

Context 8—Residential
Time Span – 1853-1960s

One of the biggest challenges facing historic preservation in Mankato is the vast stock of historic residential properties, representing a wide array of styles and periods. While some of these houses are remarkably well-preserved, most of them have lost integrity or are even threatened.

Thus, this context is almost as varied as the homes it considers. It starts by describing two similar but contrasting historic houses that serve as lynchpins, and that to some extent serve as an allegory for the rest of the housing in the city.

It then broadly discusses Mankato's primary neighborhoods, before moving into a detailed and illustrated synopsis of the city's housing styles. The style section may prove to be the most valuable part of the entire context study for Mankato homeowners, because it allows them to see their particular home within a larger historic framework, and gives ideas for restoration and ongoing care.

The study then goes on to investigate special features, such as specific detailing, multi-family housing, and Mankato's distinctive stone houses and National Register listed homes. Similar to other contexts, it then ends with a list of property types and future recommendations.

Very early two-story dwelling in Mankato1866-1867

A Tale of Two Houses

Mankato is fortunate to have several buildings, many of them residences, on the National Register. The consultants felt that two of these houses deserved special note:

The R.D. Hubbard House – 606 South Broad Street

The Hubbard House was built by Hubbard Milling owner R.D. Hubbard in 1871 as a residence that would demonstrate his wealth and position in Mankato society. It was built in the French Second Empire style, with additional detailing on the mansard shingles and the arched windows. The house was not only known for its beautiful exterior, but for its resplendent interior, which also featured extensive amenities including indoor plumbing, a telephone line, and gas lighting that was powered from an on-site gas plant. There were three marble fireplaces, purchased from southern plantations at the Thieves Market in New Orleans, and stained glass fixtures including a Tiffany light fixture.

Hubbard enlarged the house in 1888 and built a carriage house in 1890. In 1905, just before he died, he employed

Bradstreet's of Minneapolis to redecorate; this work ended up being rushed as Mr. Hubbard passed away in Chicago in August, 1905, and his family wished to follow the tradition of the time and hold his funeral at the house.

The house was then passed to the Blue Earth County Historical Society, along with roughly a quarter of the associated furniture and fixtures. The City of Mankato now owns the house and the BECHS operates it as an extremely well-maintained house museum.

The Lorin Cray House – 603 South Second Street

Although the beginnings of the Cray House are very similar to the Hubbard House, its current state could not be more different.

Civic leader Lorin H. Cray built this elaborate, Queen Anne-styled house in 1897. It is located next to the Hubbard house, and local history reports that the two men spent many years trying to out-do each other with the size and grandeur of their homes. The two-and-a-half story house (two stories with an added third floor ballroom) is made of Chaska brick with pink rock-faced granite stone, and incorporates elaborate Victorian ornamentation including towers, a large porch, columns, a side balcony, and numerous stained and beveled glass windows.

Cray and his second wife, Lulu, were philanthropists whose main cause was the YWCA; upon their death in 1927, they left the house and its contents to that organization. Although the YWCA maintained the building well, its institutional use necessitated alterations, and some maintenance was deferred.

The house was sold in 2008, when the Y moved out to newer facilities.

Mankato Neighborhoods

The City of Mankato is comprised of several clearly defined neighborhoods. Each community has a specific character, and often very similar housing styles, and it is generally clear when you are passing from one area to the next. Many of the neighborhoods are named after a central public park.

Lincoln Park represents the city's most high-style housing, and most of the area's 224 buildings are remarkably well-preserved. It was known as the city's "silk stocking district," where wealthy merchants and businesspeople resided. Housing styles include Greek Revival, French Second Empire, Italianate, Queen Anne, Craftsman, and Colonial Revival. The neighborhood is named after Lincoln Park, a small triangular public greenspace that dates back to the Civil War period and is named after Abraham Lincoln.

Washington Park clusters along the long, wide central park space vacated by the railroads. Although similar in period to the Lincoln Park homes, these houses were more vernacular and not as high style, and lots were narrower for higher density. Construction was less detailed, and materials more commonplace. This reflects the

neighborhood's status as a working class district, occupied by service workers, shop employees, etc. The proximity of the neighborhood to the central commercial core meant that many of these people could easily get to work. In general, these houses are not as well-preserved as their Lincoln Park counterparts.

Sibley Park is Mankato's third extremely distinctive neighborhood, located on low-lying land by the river. The community was again a working-class area, as well as an industrial node and leisure area clustered around the prominent park. Houses are in general modest, and many of them are isolated by streetscapes that adjust to the river, large roadways, and railroad lines. Sibley Park also has a cluster of well preserved mid-century modern homes.

West Mankato/Skyline is sometimes referred to as the "new silk stocking district." The streetcar did eventually run up here, terminating on Moreland. These homes, generally in Revival styles with some modern architecture, reflect later expansion of the city, generally from the 1920s onward. Houses are extremely well-built, and some are architect designed. These houses run up the bluff, especially off of Baker Street all the way to Rasmussen Woods.

Tourtellotte Park/Germania also reflects later settlement; this area was outside of the original boundaries of the city and the streetcar lines, and was late to receive city services due to the difficulty of digging around the area's high stone table. Again, houses in this neighborhood reflect slightly later styles: Cape Cod, Neoclassical, and Revival styles, and are smaller, working-class examples of their styles. Surprisingly enough, many of these homes have relatively good integrity, especially as compared to their Washington Park neighbors.

Residential Architectural Styles

Mankato exhibits a wide range of housing styles, mainly concentrated in a few established residential neighborhoods as defined above. Construction materials are equally varied, ranging from early stone houses, to brick structures that demonstrate the prevalence of early local brickyards, to wood frame homes, the dominant construction of the Midwest. It is important to understand the types of architecture present in order to understand how to preserve these homes and to guide sympathetic future development.

To this end, the following pages of this context spend no small amount of time on defining and clarifying various styles of vernacular architecture, as well as giving examples and visual references. The end of the context touches on some associated issues, including design elements such as outbuildings and fencing, as well as considering apartment units, stone houses, and National Register listings.

Greek Revival

Predominant period 1850s to 1860s

Classical models of architecture were of particular interest to a young, idealistic nation based on the Green and Roman democratic principles. Indeed, the style was so prevalent in the mid-eighteen hundreds that it grew to be called the "National Style." Examples of Greek Revival buildings ranged from high style public buildings and institutions such as banks, to grand Southern plantations, to diminutive cottages. Though

Greek Revival Cottage at 424 May Street

Minnesota as a whole has few pure Greek Revival homes, many of its distinctive features are evident in later designs, including front gables, classical columns, and decorative friezes.

Characteristics and Details of the Greek Revival House:

- gabled, low-pitched roof
- symmetrical plan
- cornice line accentuated with wide, divided trim
- front door with sidelights and rectangular transom
- entry or full porches with prominent, classical columns

Another example in Mankato is the home at *118 East Pleasant Street.*

Italianate

Predominant period 1850s to late 1880s

Italianate residence at 139 East Pleasant Street

The Italianate style evolved from the romantic notion of the northern Italian houses and landscapes depicted in late eighteenth-century paintings. These residences often strongly influenced the architecture of the commercial storefront of the late nineteenth century. A typical Italianate is two to three stories high, is characterized by a square or rectangular shape, and is of stone or wood frame construction. The style is particularly prevalent in rapidly expanding Midwestern towns, and Mankato has several excellent examples.

Characteristics and Details of the Italianate House:

- rectangular or square plan
- two to three stories
- low-pitched, hipped roofs
- vertical orientation, with tall windows and doors
- wide eaves supported on large ornamental brackets
- projecting door and window crowns, often arched or hooded

Examples in Mankato include:
602 East Broad Street
315 South Broad Street
602 North Broad Street

Gothic Revival Cottage

Predominant period 1850s to early 1880s

House with Gothic influences at 113 Oak Street

These picturesque homes, often referred to as "cottages," were popularized by Andrew Jackson Downing in two successful pattern books, *Cottage Residences* and *The Architecture of Country Houses*, and are based loosely on ecclesiastical architecture. These fanciful, highly detailed houses were not as common as the contemporaneous Italianate and Greek Revival homes, and relatively few examples remain in the state.

Characteristics and Details of the Gothic Revival Cottage:

- Gothic arched or pointed windows
- steeply pitched roofs, often with steep cross gables
- strong vertical orientation, often with full porch or one-story entry
- on residential models, gingerbread verge board with corner drops
- heavy decorative ornamentation, made possible by the innovation of the scroll saw

Stick Style

Predominant period 1860s to early 1900s

Stick Style/Queen Anne located at 427 Willard Street

Often considered a variation of the Queen Anne style (see below), this unique pattern is really a rather free adaptation of medieval English construction that is somewhere between the picturesque Gothic Revival and more free-form, sprawling Victorian styles. The Stick style is distinctive in that it stresses the wall surface as the principal decorative element, highlighting the exterior planes with the horizontal and vertical banding. Additional decorative detailing appears at the doors, windows, and cornices. Stick styled homes in the Midwest were almost exclusively wooden.

Characteristics and Details of the Stick Style House:

- gabled roof, often steeply pitched and with decorative trusses and cross gables
- overhanging eaves, usually with exposed rafter ends
- horizontal and vertical bands, raised from exterior wall surface for emphasis (sometimes referred to as the "exo-skeleton" of the house)
- wooden construction — clapboard, shingle, or both
- diagonal (sometimes curved), jutted-out porch support braces
- all identifying features rarely present in combination

French Second Empire

Predominant period 1870s to 1880s

Second Empire at 709 S 2nd Street

This style was somewhat contemporary with its French inspiration of the 1850s-1870s and was therefore considered very stylish and modern. The most distinctive feature of this style is the boxy, mansard roof, which was considered particularly desirable because it allowed for a full story of usable space; for this reason, it was common during the period to remodel earlier homes to a modified Second Empire style. Pure examples of the style are relatively uncommon, as the predominant period was short-lived, but Mankato boasts probably the best example in the state in the Hubbard House.

Characteristics and Details of the Second Empire House:

- dual pitched, mansard roof with convex or concave lower slope
- arched dormer windows projecting from a lower roof slope
- lower slope defined by a molded cornice at top and bottom
- eaves usually bracketed
- all identifying features rarely present in combination

Examples of the Second Empire influence include:
The Hubbard House at 606 South Broad Street
816 Center Street

Queen Anne
Predominant period 1880s to approximately 1910

This popular style, considered by many to be the quintessential Victorian style, mixes medieval, Elizabethan, and Jacobean elements in asymmetrical collections of architectural details. In particular, the use of highly ornate spindle work was an American interpretation of the style popularized by the distribution of pre-cut architectural elements through the rapidly expanding railway system. Whether architect-designed or vernacular, Queen Anne homes, with their distinctive ornamentation, wide front porches, and romantic towers and turrets, are a favorite Midwestern house style. A slightly later variation is the "Princess Anne," with the same presence and massing but a simpler decorative style.

Queen Anne located at 811 South 2nd Street

Characteristics and Details of the Queen Anne House:
- asymmetrical composition of towers, tall chimneys, and steeply pitched roofs
- front facing gable
- wrap around, one-story porches with ornate spindle work
- windows with small panes and or stained and leaded glass inserts
- exterior texture through shingles, bay windows, and other details

Examples in Mankato include:
703 North 6th Street
227 East Pleasant Street
528 Byron Street
1616 South Riverfront Drive
204 North 5th Street

Homestead/Gabled-Ell Cottage
Predominant period 1880s to late 1950s

This style is a non-style conscious house design which evolved from the rural dwelling of the 1870s to the modern home after the turn of the century. Simple in layout, and home to an emerging working class, the Homestead dwelling rejected the ornate architectural detailing of the former century and remained simple, utilitarian, and popular through the mid-century.

Homestead, 510 North 4th Street

Characteristics and Details Homestead Cottage:
- minimal architectural detailing
- two stories with simple, box-like massing
- defined by shape, rather than architectural detailing
- either tri-gabled, in the shape of an L, with the front porch tucked into the crook of the L, or in a simple rectangular plan with a simple, gabled roof

- simple, box-like massing
- often wood frame construction with clapboard siding — sometimes brick

Examples in Mankato include:
313 North 6th Street
1424 North 5th Street
218 North 4th Street

Colonial Revival
Predominant period early 1880s to late 1950s

Colonial Revival, 205 Washington Square

The Colonial Revival style draws its influence from the Georgian, Adams, and Dutch architecture of the east coast. The revival style usually strays from strict historical interpretation and tends to be eclectic, using a mixture of details (often exaggerated) from the high styles of colonial architectures and contemporary elements. Variations include Dutch Colonial and Spanish Colonial.

Characteristics and Details Colonial Revival House:
- symmetrical façade with central entrance
- accentuated entrance defined with decorative crown or projected portico (usually one story)
- crown supported by pilasters if projected, portico roof supported with thin columns
- door defined with fanlight and sidelights
- windows often double hung with multi-pane glazing, frequently in adjacent pairs and often with shutters

Examples in Mankato include:
123 Hubbell Avenue
528 North Broad Street
712 South Broad Street
617 Baker Avenue

Prairie
Predominant period approximately 1900 to 1920s

Prairie influence at 612 Baker Avenue

The Prairie style, indigenous to America, was developed and popularized through the Chicago School of Architecture and the work of Frank Lloyd Wright. The horizontal emphasis in the banding of windows and wide overhanging eaves was a philosophical response to the prairie origin of the style. Though pure Prairie styling in an architect-designed home is relatively rare, elements of the style, including banded windows, wide front porches with massive columns, and the wide, symmetrical style, are evidenced in a number of vernacular homes of the time. The American Foursquare, a standard plan with four rooms up and four down around center hallways, is a commonly seen example of this style.

Characteristics and Details of the Prairie House:

- low pitched hipped roofs with wide, overhanging eaves
- stucco finished walls are most common, followed by brick
- horizontal emphasis in the banding of windows
- windows are generally casement or double-hung
- an open plan, integrating all aspects of the home into a unified whole

Examples in Mankato include:
620 West 5th Street
808 North 2nd Street

Craftsman
Predominant period approximately 1905 to 1930s

Craftsman home at 130 Moreland Avenue

The Craftsman style home was popularized in the early 1900s by magazines including *House Beautiful*, *Good Housekeeping*, and *Ladies Home Journal*, which led to a plethora of pattern books. The style was developed and refined around the turn of the century by California architects and brothers Charles Sumner Greene and Henry Mather Greene ("Greene and Greene.") The Greenes were influenced by the English Arts and Crafts movement, oriental aesthetics, and an interest in both wooden construction techniques and the manual arts. The main stated principle of the movement was "honesty" — both in the expression of the structure and in the use of materials. The majority of vernacular Craftsman homes were bungalows, praised for their efficient use of space.

Characteristics and Details of the Craftsman Cottage:

- low pitched roof, usually gabled or with a clipped gable
- usually one story tall, especially in vernacular examples
- un-enclosed wide overhanging eaves, with exposed roof rafters
- decorative beams often added under gables
- front porch supported by tapered square battered columns

Examples in Mankato include:
116-130 Parsons Street
528 North Broad Street
329 North 4th Street
409 East Main Street

English Revival home at 111 Dell Avenue

English Revival
Predominant period early 1910s to early 1930s

This style, often referred to by the layperson as "Tudor," is a post-Victorian blend of Elizabethan and Jacobean influences. Their popularity in America is linked to an interest in the English Arts-and-Crafts movement, as well as a symbolic nostalgia for the country's Anglo-Saxon roots. Three major styles of house make

up the English Revival: English Cottage, Tudor Revival, and (the fairly rare) English Country House.

Characteristics and Details of the English Revival Cottage:

- steep, gabled roofs
- half-timbering
- walls of stone, stucco, or brick, often with mixed colors and materials; stone accents
- a variety of distinctive windows: bays, oriels, and paired casements
- use of arched doors, windows, and/or attached gates

Examples in Mankato include:
418 Mound Avenue
206 South 6th Street
1516 North Broad Street
1722 North 4th Street
304 North 4th Street

Ranch
Predominant period 1945 to late 1970s

Ranch home at 632 Mound Avenue

The Ranch home is a twentieth-century vernacular style that grew out of expansion of the middle-class domestic needs of America's postwar population explosion. As soldiers returned from World War II and started new families, there was a growing need for quickly constructed, simple in plan, and affordable homes.

The single-story ranch home was influenced in design by the Prairie School of Midwest architect Frank Lloyd Wright, with its long, horizontal orientations, its low pitched roof, and window banding ("ribbon windows.") However, the ranch often took advantage of factory-made materials such as imitation stone, pressed fiber wood board, and metal siding. Short of the vague references to Prairie School, and some use of stone as influenced by California residential architecture, the ranch home is generally devoid of historic stylistic detailing.

The split level, popular starting in the 1950s, is a variation on the one-story ranch. The split level incorporated an additional story to allow for better separation of living function, and provided interior interest to the floor plan.

Characteristics and Details of the Range House:

- single story residence with a strong horizontal orientation
- low-pitched gable and hipped roofs
- often an exterior attached brick fireplace stack at the gable end
- use of a variety of exterior materials including face brick, stone, artificial stone, horizontal wood siding, particle board siding, and/or metal siding
- wide use of "picture windows," with or without flanking side windows
- often displaying a garage door at one end of the front facade

Examples in Mankato include:
122 Moreland Avenue
235 Sunset Blvd.
504 South Broad Street

Mid-Century Modern/Modern

Predominant period 1960 to present

Modern home at 316 Oak Knoll Blvd.

Remaining examples of this style are often architect-designed, high-style homes. Many evolved from the teachings and writings of modern architects such as Charles Moore and Robert Venturi, and from commercial and industrial design. These residences generally appear to be multi-faceted blocks, with architectural interest deriving from geometric shape rather than detail.

Characteristics and Details of the Mid-Century Modern House:

- roof variations: either flat (International style) or very pitched (shed style) and sometimes gabled
- little to no decorative embellishment
- extensive use of natural materials, especially wood siding, often vertical and sometimes even at a diagonal
- integrated to site and landscaping
- entrances usually recessed and obscured

Examples in Mankato include:
239 Sunset Blvd.
234 Sunset Blvd.
328 Ridgewood Street

Residential Special Features

In addition to the main dwellings, many houses have notable special features that add to the character of the property. These features, while often not remarkable in their own right, contribute substantially to the character of the home, and should be recognized.

The most evident example of these elements are garages, carriage houses, and outbuildings. Often, these structures are not original to the home; if they are, they should be treated with special care, as they represent part of the historic fabric of the home. Even if an outbuilding was added later, it demonstrates the house's history and period of influence, and ought to be treated in a similar way to the main building. For instance, at the Hubbard House, the carriage house was added much later, but is integral to the property.

In particular, some of the houses along the hillside, near the former brewery on North Sixth Street (near Rock Street), demonstrate outbuildings that are unique and that maintain integrity.

Other examples of exterior detailing includes sidewalks, walls and fencing. Original walks are also uncommon, but should be preserved if available. Fences and walls are important because, like front porches, they mark the transition between the public streetscape and the private yard. In all of these cases, any repairs and new construction of the related elements should be compatible with the original materials and design of the home.

Another consideration that ties back to Mankato's urban planning is the relationship of the street to the home. This includes elements such as streetlights, trees, other plantings, and streetscapes. The public elements of these resources are addressed under the Urban Development contexts.

Multi-Family Housing

Rowhouses at 116-130 Parsons Street

The majority of the houses in Mankato, as described above, are single-family homes. There are some duplexes and triplexes; most are converted from single-family homes, but some were originally designed as such. There are good examples of rowhouses at Kruse Terrace on Parsons Street. There are a few remaining historic, multi-family units, examples of apartment buildings or "flats" that were fashionable in larger metropolitan areas by the 1920s, especially in Lincoln Park. In general, the presence of some higher-density housing demonstrates the urban character of turn-of-the-century Mankato.

Additionally, several of the downtown commercial buildings were constructed with apartments overhead (examples of these may be seen in the North Front Street Historic District). Often, this was a situation of convenience, where the shopkeeper lived above his store to make access and service easier. In other cases, the upstairs living quarters simply provided extra income for the landlord. Today, most of these units have been converted to offices or storage.

Finally, in a couple of cases former institutional buildings have been converted into multi-family units. Probably the most successful example of this is "Old Main Village," in which the Old Main building from the former university has been converted into a senior community that includes both independent and assisted-living units. Another such example is the Gus Johnson apartments, integrating part of the former Immanuel Hospital. In other cases, especially in Lincoln Park, large houses originally built as single-family structures have been converted into multiple units, with varying degrees of success.

Mankato's Stone Houses

Some of Mankato's most unusual and threatened resources are the city's Mankato stone houses. There are few of these homes left, but they are the oldest in the city, and represent an important resource demonstrating the city's development.

One example of this was the Adam Jefferson house, built in 1865 by Jefferson with stone from his adjacent quarry. The house was in poor repair and was especially threatened due to its location, so it was disassembled and painstakingly rebuilt in North Mankato in 2005. Though the restoration was extremely well-done, and Tom Hagen received a preservation award for the project, the move did result in the house being removed from the Register, and destroyed the time-place continuity of the site.

Stone structure at 816 North 2nd Street

At least two other stone houses may face similar issues in the near future. The George Maxfield House (currently Save-More Jewelry at 816 North 2nd Street) is believed to be oldest house remaining in Mankato. Maxfield built the house, which served

as his residence and offices, out of stone from his nearby quarry, so it also served as a showpiece for his stone. Currently the house is in reasonable condition, but could be threatened in the future.

Another house, at 129 North 6th Street, is currently boarded up and in disrepair. It is hidden under additions and alterations, but its style indicates that it may be older than the North Second Street house, likely dating to sometime in the 1850s. It is likely that there are other stone homes nearby, albeit in similar condition and/or enclosed in similar alterations. All efforts should be made to preserve this house and potential others.

There are also three newer stone houses on Carney Avenue — though they do not represent the early history of the area, they are distinctive structures that demonstrate the importance of local stone resources.

National Register Properties

The following Mankato residences are currently individually listed on the National Register of Historic Place:
- J.R Brandrup House
  704 Byron
  areas of significance: architecture, education
- Charles Chapman House
  418 McCauley
  areas of significance: exploration, settlement
- Lorin Cray House
  608 S. 2nd St.
  areas of significance: architecture, social history
- Adolph O. Eberhart House
  228 Clark St.
  areas of significance: politics/government
- R.D. Hubbard House
  606 Broad St.
  areas of significance: architecture, commerce
- William Irving House
  320 Park Lane
  areas of significance: architecture, commerce

The following homes were on the National Register, but have been removed:
- Adam Jefferson House
  Cleveland Street
  areas of significance: architecture, industry
  removed 1987, when moved offsite, but re-assembled and preserved
- Oscar Schmidt House
  111 Park Lane
  areas of significance: architecture, commerce
  removed 1988 when demolished

There is one residential historic district:
- Lincoln Park Residential Historic District
  roughly bounded by: Shaubut, Record, Pleasant, 2nds, Liberty, Parsons, Lock, and Bradley Streets, and Grace and Wickersham Cts
  areas of significance: architecture, community planning and development, social history

Property Types

Single-family homes
  Vernacular

- Architect designed
- Apartments and multi-unit homes
  - Rowhouses
    - Kruse Terrace
  - Apartments above storefronts
  - Multi-family units
    - The Newbery
    - O'Mallee Place
- Adaptive Use Housing
- Outbuildings
  - Carriage houses
  - Garages
  - Sheds
  - Barns
  - Other outbuildings
- Landscaping and gardens
- Sidewalks
- Fences and gates
- Walls

Recommendations and Future Actions

- *The HPC should devote special attention to preserving and protecting its National Register-listed houses, especially as two such homes have been lost or de-listed (the Schmidt house and the Jefferson house). Particular attention should be paid to the Hubbard house (well-preserved as a house museum by the BECHS) and the Cray house (potentially threatened).*

- *In order to accurately assess cultural resources, and prior to initiating any more historic districts, the entire residential housing stock of Mankato should be fully surveyed. This could be done as part of the CLG process.*

- *The HPC should consider doing a similar survey of related residential features such as outbuildings and street amenities; these elements could also be included in the comprehensive survey.*

- *Based on this survey, the Mankato HPC should potentially consider National Register nominations of more residences. The commission should then update the outreach materials on the nominated properties. The HPC may want to update the walking tour map, and perhaps even lead occasional guided tours, perhaps in conjunction with the BECHS.*

- *The HPC should consider establishing a local nomination process, for properties that are in good condition and locally remarkable, but that do not rise to National Register standards. These homes should be documented and interpreted as above.*

- *Based on the inventory research and on current knowledge, Mankato should consider designating more historic districts, either locally (if the process is established) or as a district designation to the National Register. Possibilities may include:*
  Washington Park
  Sibley Park
  select neighborhoods in West Mankato

- *The city could also investigate establishing historic conservation districts. These districts, are a unique blend of preservation and planning, Such districts generally seek to preserve a specific neighborhood's "sense of place," rather than individual structures, and make use of zoning and land use regulations to influence future development through*

historic patterns. Both Washington Park and Sibley Park might be better seen as conservation districts, given that focus on maintaining the neighborhood as a whole rather than individual landmarks, if the process is set up strongly enough.

- *The HPC should conduct outreach to city residents regarding architectural styles and preservation techniques. Such information would allow homeowners to understand their home's distinguishing features, and assist them in planning for the preservation of their property. In many cases, alterations have been made to houses (such as enclosing porches) that are easily reversible and would do much to restore the historic character of the house. Such outreach should not ignore elements such as outbuildings, landscape, fences, walks, and other details. Ideally, this process would occur though some sort of residential design guidelines, either the statewide ones currently being developed, or more effectively, though individual neighborhood guidelines.*

- *Mankato still has a few early stone houses. These buildings are particularly valuable in representing early residential development, and special attention should be given to preserving and protecting them. A Multiple Property Nomination to the National Register may be feasible for these homes.*

Context 9 – Literary Mankato
Time span – 1867 - 1955

With Mankato's strong educational focus, it may not seem surprising that the town has many important literary connections as well. From Laura Ingalls Wilder to Sinclair Lewis to Maud Hart Lovelace, several authors have made Mankato their home or referenced the city. Not only are these books important in that they give us well-crafted early descriptions of the community, they are also an important basis on which to build tourism. Mankato should focus on its literary references as a major historic preservation and cultural heritage initiative.

Laura Ingalls Wilder

Mankato stood on the edge of the "Big Woods," and was the commerce center for settlers in the area. As such, it has a contributory role in the "Little House" books as the "big city" that the Ingalls family and their neighbors would go to for major supplies. Although Mankato itself has no associated sites, Highway 14 is affectionately known as the "Laura Ingalls Wilder Memorial Highway" because it connects so many of the book-related sites. Mankato is poised as an important stop on that highway, located almost halfway between Lake Pepin (Wilder's birthplace) and Walnut Grove (site of the Laura Ingalls Wilder museum).

Minnesota State University – Mankato has produced several scholarly references to Wilder's life and work, and is planning the "Laurapalooza" conference in the summer of 2010.

Sinclair Lewis

Mankato hosted Sinclair Lewis and his family over the summer of 1919, when the author penned most of the manuscript for his first best-selling book, *Main Street*, as well as the Saturday Evening Post excerpt of *Free Air* (which led to the full novel). Local businessman J.W. Schmitt offered the Lewises his home at 315 S. Broad Street rent-free for the summer, and the author and his family soon became very involved in the local community. Lewis attended meetings of the farmers Nonpartisan League, played poker at the Elks club, spoke at the university, and spent many summer afternoons along the river bluffs in a horse and buggy borrowed from the livery stable. He was also known for his many eccentricities; one story is that he disappeared during a party thrown for him, returning a few minutes later clad in one of the prominent hostess' most fashionable gowns.

315 South Broad Street

Though *Main Street* was nothing if not barbed in its satire of fictional Gopher Prairie, Minnesota, Lewis seems to have had much fonder feelings for Mankato. He is quoted as saying he liked the "loveliness and general agreeableness of Mankato, as compared with the flat prairie towns," and wrote to his publisher Roland Holt of "the friendliness, the neighborliness, and the glorious sweeps of country round about." He also made Mankato the hometown of *Main Street* heroine Carol Kennicott.

The house in which Lewis and his family lived that summer still stands at 315 S. Broad Street, and is owned by Partners for Affordable Housing.

Maud Hart Lovelace

"Betsy's House" at 333 Center Street

Mankato's biggest literary influence, however, is of course local author Maud Hart Lovelace.

Maud Palmer Hart (Lovelace) was born in a small house on 214 Center Street on April 26, 1892. Soon after, they moved to the house at 333 Center Street that is most associated with Lovelace, now known as "Betsy's House" and run as a house museum by the Betsy-Tacy Society.

Lovelace was an accomplished writer, whose first story, *Number Eight*, was published by the Los Angeles Times in 1911. Over her life she wrote six adult novels and eighteen children's books, the majority of which were the Betsy-Tacy series:

Betsy-Tacy
Betsy-Tacy and Tib
Betsy and Tacy Go Over the Big Hill
Betsy and Tacy Go Downtown
Heaven to Betsy
Betsy In Spite of Herself
Betsy Was a Junior
Betsy and Joe
Betsy and the Great World
Betsy's Wedding

The series started in the late 1930s, when Lovelace began telling her daughter stories about her childhood growing up in Mankato. In 1938, she began penning *Betsy-Tacy*. Although she fictionalized Mankato by calling it "Deep Valley," the inspirations for the stories' events, locations, and people were very identifiable.

Lovelace fashioned the series' heroine, Betsy Ray, after herself, and her sidekick Tacy Kelley after childhood friend Frances "Bick" Kenney. "Tacy's house" is now preserved at 332 Center Street, and is also run by the Betsy-Tacy Society. The third main character in the series, Tib Muller, was inspired by Marjorie "Midge" Gerlach, who lived nearby at 503 Byron Street.

The books in the series are especially notable for their evocative descriptions of Mankato at the turn of the century and in the early 1900s. The books "grow with" the girls, starting with their fifth birthdays and ending with their weddings. The books are especially descriptive of the Lincoln Park neighborhood, the old downtown area (now mostly lost), and the school and social life of the time. They also address, with remarkable sensitivity, the cultural strife between Mankato's established residents and the new Lebanese ("Syrian") residents of Tinkcomville.

Not only do the Betsy-Tacy books give an excellent and accessible history of Mankato, they are also much beloved. The non-profit Betsy-Tacy Society, established in 1990, has an extremely active Board of Directors and membership of 1,000+ across the nation and abroad. The Society runs the Betsy and Tacy houses as house museums, does research, publishes a newsletter and other publications, and holds numerous events annually, ranging from book clubs to holiday events to tours to conferences.

Lovelace wrote three other children's books set in Deep Valley but not part of the Betsy-Tacy series: *Winona's Pony Cart*, *Emily of Deep Valley*, and *Carney's House Party*. She also wrote six adult books, generally set in Minnesota but not identified specifically with Mankato.

Cultural Heritage Tourism

Mankato's literary context provides the city's best avenue to taking advantage of cultural heritage tourism, a burgeoning field that could prove especially attractive for the city. According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, cultural heritage tourism is defined as "traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present." Mankato's literary history relates especially well to this kind of tourism because its literary past is so closely tied to its actual past — especially with the Maud Hart Lovelace books. The books are beloved by generations of readers, and are also especially family-experience oriented.

Heritage tourism is important because it is exceptionally effective. Tourism is big business, directly contributing over $740 billion to the U.S. economy in 2006. Of these tourists, 81% classified themselves as cultural heritage travelers. Visitors to historic sites and cultural attractions typically stay longer and spend more than other tourists — $623 per trip average compared to $457. It is also a growing field, up more than 10% annually even during recent economic circumstances. The most important effect, however, is that this kind of travel is unique to a community's specific circumstances, organically building upon its diversity and focusing on its unique sense of place.

With excellent collaborative potential, including its preservation and literary non-profit organizations, Mankato could effectively leverage heritage tourism to a great degree, which would simultaneously build community pride and encourage economic development.

Property Types

"Little House" associated sites – if any
Sinclair Lewis' Summer Home (J.W. Schmitt house) – 315 S. Broad Street
Maud Hart Lovelace associated sites
- Betsy-Tacy houses (333 and 332 Center Street)
- Maud Hart Lovelace birthplace (214 Center Street)
- Blue Earth County Library exhibit
- Glenwood Cemetery – Maud Hart Lovelace grave
- Associated houses, businesses, streets and other sites — see list

Recommendations and Future Actions

- *Although no apparent "Little House" associated sites remain, Mankato should capitalize on its location on the "Laura Ingalls Wilder Memorial Highway" to promote tourism. The upcoming 2010 "Laurapalooza" conference, to be held at Minnesota State University – Mankato, offers such an opportunity*

- *The Sinclair Lewis house is a private property, and not open to the public. The HPC should work with the house owners to find a way to respectfully interpret the site, without impinging upon the owners' privacy.*

- *The HPC should work with the Betsy-Tacy Society (and perhaps the BECHS) to find ways to promote Maud Hart Lovelace related tourism and events. They should also work to preserve and protect remaining associated resources (see list), while again realizing that these are private residences. Some examples of interpretation include: guided or self-guided tours, the establishment of a special fund for appropriate renovations of the homes, and other special events.*

- *The HPC should work with the local schools to incorporate local literary elements into their curriculums.*

- *The Blue Earth County Library has an excellent exhibit in its Maud Hart Lovelace Wing. The HPC should work with the library to promote this resource.*

- *Partnerships with other libraries, with bookstores, and with other literary efforts should be explored, both for promotional and for funding opportunities.*

- *As outlined in the "Cultural Heritage Tourism" section above, Mankato should put its strongest focus on developing its heritage tourism opportunities, collaborating with groups such as the Convention and Visitors Bureau.*

Recommendations and Future Actions

General Summary

As mentioned in the Introduction, the primary purpose of historic contexts is as a framework for evaluating historic resources, a set of organizational tools for categorizing the past, as a planning tool for guiding future development while incorporating the past, and as a rallying point for educational and outreach activities. These contexts will help Mankato to "build its future from its past." They will also grow and change as the city develops its cultural resource priorities.

Each individual context in this study contains its own list of "Recommendations and Future Actions," which can be changed, amended, added to, or deleted as priorities change. These recommendations offer specific, context-related suggestions to further the historic preservation agenda in the Mankato, particularly with regards to interpreting sites and increasing public-buy in. With a relatively new HPC, not only should the city be concerned with concrete next steps, but also building an agenda for preservation city-wide.

One important next step that the city could take would be to complete a full cultural resources survey, particularly of the residential housing stock. Such an initiative is quite large and time-consuming, but could be done by a team of enthusiastic volunteers under professional leadership.

Another priority would be the commissioning of design guidelines, both for the remaining commercial buildings and for the residential districts. Such guidelines would increase public participation in the preservation process, and help property owners to leverage their resources.

Although Mankato already has several National Register designated historic properties, there is no local designation process. A local process would help to identify significant resources and offer them a level of appropriate protection, while also increasing public participation. A corollary would be increasing the number of National Register properties, based on suggestions made within the individual context discussions.

There are several local organizations, such as the Blue Earth County Historical Society and the Betsy-Tacy Society, that are natural allies for the HPC. The consultants urge collaboration between these groups. Educational institutions, such as Minnesota State University – Mankato, should also be tapped.

The consultants feel that Mankato is extremely cognizant of the historic resources that the city has lost, and will be diligent in preserving future items. The HPC should ensure that less obvious resources, such as elements of the recent past, are included in these efforts.

Other cities have been successful in using completed context studies as a kind of training and introduction manual for new HPC members. Such a use would be an excellent way to ensure that the Commission has a standard basis of knowledge and shared goals for the future. The Mankato HPC has many strengths, including a depth of experience and a clarity of purpose. The Commission should use these advantages, as well as their strong support from city staff, to good advantage in planning for the future of preservation in the city.

Bibliography and Sources

Betsy-Tacy Society. *Website*. Available from http://www.betsy-tacysociety.org. Accessed multiple times from August – November, 2009.

Betsy-Tacy Society. *Deep Valley Sun* newsletters. 2008-2009

Beyond Little House. Available at http://www.beyondlittlehouse.com/. Accessed October 31, 2009.

Blue Earth County. *Website*. Available from http://www.co.blue-earth.mn.us/about/history.php. Accessed August 22, 2009.

Blue Earth County Historical Society. *Website*. Available from http://www.bechshistory.com/. Accessed multiple times from August – November, 2009.

Blue Earth County Historical Society. Vertical Files. Accessed multiple times from August – November, 2009.

Blue Earth County Historical Society. *Historian* newsletters, 1979-2009. Accessed multiple times from August – November, 2009.

City of Mankato. *Website*. Available from http://www.mankato-mn.gov/. Accessed multiple times from August – November, 2009.

City of Mankato. *Key City Urban Renewal Area, Project Number Minn. R-63*. March 1970.

City of Mankato. *History – City Center Walking Tour*. No date cited.

City of Mankato, *Washington Park Architectural Pattern Book*. No date cited.

City of Mankato. *Photo albums of demolished homes*. No date cited.

City of Mankato, *Sibley Park District Historic Resources Survey and Architectural Pattern Book*. June 2009.

City of Mankato, *City of Mankato and the Railroad, Past and Present*. Available from http://www.mankato-mn.gov/upload/images/Regional%20Forum%20on%20Future%20Railroads%20Meeting%203%2029%2007.pdf. Accessed October 12, 2009.

Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration. *The WPA Guide to Minnesota*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1985.

Clark, Clifford Edward. *Minnesota in a Century of Change: the state and its people since 1900*. St. Paul, Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1989.

Gebhard, David and Tom Martinson. *A Guide to the Architecture of Minnesota*. St. Paul, the University of Minnesota Press, 1977.

Gerkens, Larry, AICP. *Shaping the American City*. Privately published, 1999.

Greater Mankato. *Website*. Available from http://www.greatermankato.com/. Accessed August 15, 2009.

Hughes, Thomas. *The History of Blue Earth County*. Middle West Publishing Company, Chicago, 1906. Reproduced by Walsworth Publishing Company Inc. 1976.

Kappler, Charles. Treaty with the Sioux — Sisseton and Wahpeton Bands, 1851. Available from http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/Vol2/treaties/sio0588.htm. Accessed September 30, 2009.

Lingeman, Richard R. *Sinclair Lewis: rebel from Main Street*. St. Paul, Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2005.

Mankato Free Press. Available from http://www.mankato-freepress.com. Accessed multiple times from August – November, 2009.

Mankato YWCA. *Website*. Available from http://www.mankatoywca.org. Accessed 20 September, 2009.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984.

Midwest Planning and Design. *Sibley Parkway Redevelopment Project*. December 2005.

Minnesota River Basin Data Center, Flood Pictures. Available from http://mrbdc.mnsu.edu/mnbasin/fact_sheets/floods.html. Accessed October 1, 2009.

Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office. *Statewide Contexts*.

Minnesota State University – Mankato. *EMuseum*. Accessed multiple times from August-November, 2009.

Minnesota Wine Beer and History Trail. *Website*. Available from www.riverwinebeerhistorytrail.com. Accessed August 20, 2009.

National Register nomination forms:

Author unknown:
- *Federal Post Office and Courthouse* (added 1980)
- *R.D. Hubbard House* (added 1976)
- *First National Bank of Mankato* (added 1974)
- *Mankato Second Normal School* (added 1983)

Completed by Dennis Gimmestad, 1980:
- *First Presbyterian Church*
- *Oscar Schmidt House*
- *Blue Earth County Courthouse*
- *Mankato Public Library and Reading Room*
- *Adam Jefferson House*
- *Lorin Cray House*
- *Union Depot*
- *William Irving House*
- *Adolph Olson Eberhart House*
- *J. R. Brandrup House*
- *Charles Chapman House*
- *North Front Street Commercial District*

Completed by Susan Granger and Scott Kelly, 1984:
- *Lincoln Park Residential Historic District*

No author cited. *Semi Centennial of Mankato, 1852-1902*. Private publication.

O'Neill, Reverend Edward. *History of the Minnesota Valley*. North Star Publishing, Minneapolis, 1882.

Preservation Nation. *Website*. Available from http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/heritage-tourism/additional-resources/2009-CHT-FactSheet.pdf. Accessed October 31, 2009.

Recent Past Preservation Network. *Website*. Available at recentpast.org. Accessed October 1, 2009.

Sanborn Map Company. *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Mankato, Minnesota*. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1885-1930.

Schrader, Julie A. *The Heritage of Blue Earth County*. Minnesota Heritage Publishing, Mankato, 1990.

Schrader, Julie A. *History of the Red Jacket Valley*. Minnesota Heritage Publishing, Mankato, 2001.

Schrader, Julie A. *Maud Hart Lovelace's Deep Valley*. Minnesota Heritage Publishing, Mankato, 2002.

Stenzel, Bryce O. *Mankato Milestones*. Minnesota Heritage Publishing, Mankato, 2002.

Tabbert, George Lyle. *The Lost Parks: A History of the Lost and Forgotten Parklands of Mankato, Minnesota*, volumes 1-3. Privately published, 1990.

United States Senate, website on Schulyer Colfax. Available from https://senate.gov/artandhistory/history/resources/pdf/schulyer_colfax.pdf. Accessed October 14, 2009.

U. S. Department of Commerce and the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities. Cultural and Heritage Tourism in the United States. Available from http://www.nasaa-arts.org/artworks/cultural_heritage_tourism_paper.pdf. Accessed November 5, 2009.

Various Authors. *Mankato Its First Fifty Years 1852-1902*. (prepared for the 50th anniversary of the settlement of Mankato). Free Press Printing Company, Mankato, 1903

Weeks, John III. The Bridges and Structures of the Minnesota River. Available from http://www.johnweeks.com/river_minnesota/river_minnesota_04.html. Accessed August 30, 2009.

Wikipedia. *Mankato, Minnesota*. Available from wikipedia.com. Accessed September 1, 2009.

Wikipedia. *Lorin Cray House*. Available from wikipedia.com. Accessed September 15, 2009.

Wikipedia. *Sibley Park, Mankato*. Available from wikipedia.com. Accessed November 26, 2009.