

Appendix B: Known Minnesota River Valley Historic Sites in Bloomington

Updated December 19, 2012

For thousands of years, people of a variety of cultures have called Bloomington home. Native American groups including the pre-European contact Woodland Period Indians and later the Dakota Indians made their homes and villages along the Minnesota River Valley. About 170 years ago, white Euro-American settlers began claiming all of the land comprising Bloomington and began the current period of development into becoming a formal city. Throughout most of the City's history and "pre" history, the Minnesota River was the primary resource that brought people to the area and kept them here. Many important prehistoric and historic sites once existed, or in some cases still exist, in the Minnesota River Valley and on the bluffs overlooking the Valley. Sites that are still intact, as well as those no longer existing, act as a reminder of Bloomington's past and provide an opportunity for programming and education about Bloomington's settlement and pre-settlement history.

Beginning in 1934, numerous studies have been undertaken to study the cultural resources of Bloomington's Minnesota River Valley lands including the archaeology of mounds (and other sites), former historic sites, and still existing historic sites.

The following list describes many of the important historical and cultural sites along Bloomington's section of the Minnesota River Valley. There are no doubt numerous lesser known sites not listed here that played a role in history, and this list should not be considered a comprehensive accounting of significant places or events that took place in the river valley. Rather, this compilation describes many of the most significant known sites, listed from west to east, with some indicated on the attached map.

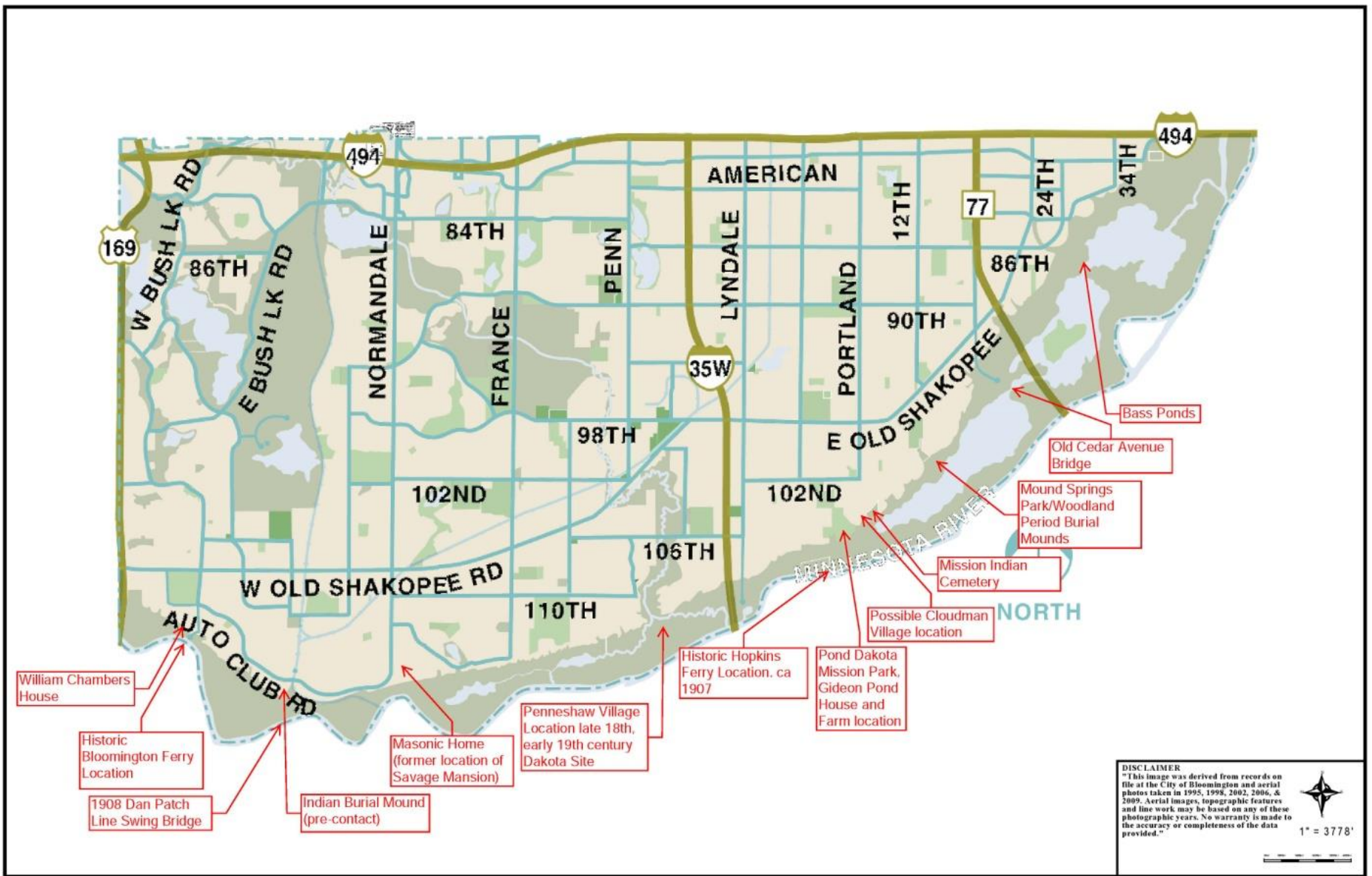
1. Joseph Dean Log Cabin. Built in 1852 by one of Bloomington's earliest settlers. The cabin Site and some foundation stones are still visible.
2. Ellingsen-Tapping Cemetery.
3. Hector Chadwick House Site. Chadwick was a longtime blacksmith in Bloomington and his house was built at this location ca. 1878-1880. His first blacksmith shop was located adjacent to his house, and he later set up a new shop near Penn Ave. and Old Shakopee Road, the original "downtown" Bloomington.
4. William Chambers House. The William Chambers House still exists and is in private ownership. Built in 1856 by Chambers who operated the Bloomington Ferry, it is the second oldest house in Bloomington, after the Gideon and Agnes Pond House. The bricks used in constructing the house were made by Chambers and others out of local clays dug nearby. The brick molds used for the brick making were borrowed from Gideon Pond, who had used them earlier that same year in constructing the Pond House.

5. Bloomington Ferry Steamboat Landing Site. During Minnesota territorial days, steamboats represented the primary means of getting people and equipment to places along the River Valley. Between 1860 and 1890 the Bloomington Ferry landing was one of the jumping off points for people and cargo entering into Bloomington.
6. Bloomington Ferry Area. Native Americans used the Bloomington Ferry area of the River as a crossing point for centuries, and in 1853 Joseph Dean and William Chamber built the famed Bloomington Ferry for the purpose of creating a more formal and permanent crossing. The ferry would become the only means of crossing the river in western Bloomington for nearly 40 years until 1892 when a drawbridge (map #11) was constructed.
7. Bloomington Ferry Methodist Church Site. This is the former site of the Methodist Church at Bloomington Ferry, built in 1890.
8. Bloomington Ferry Hotel Site. Built in 1855, the Bloomington Ferry Hotel was the first in Bloomington. It contained a post office, general store, and was a hub of activities in the Bloomington Ferry area until it was destroyed by fire in 1905.
9. Native American Mound. Many prehistoric (Woodland Indian era) Indian mounds are located along the Minnesota River in Bloomington. There are an estimate 14 mound groups in Bloomington, with the largest assemblage being found at the Mound Springs area. The largest of the mounds in Bloomington was discovered in the area west of Normandale Boulevard.
10. John Brown House Site. Built sometime in the 1860's, the house was home to the Brown family who farmed the area for several generations. The house stood until 2010 when it was taken down for development by its current owners.
11. Drawbridge Site. In 1892 a drawbridge was completed at this site that spelled the end of an era for the Bloomington Ferry. This bridge would remain in use until the building of the Bloomington Ferry Bridge.
12. Valley View Railway Station Site. Built at the north end of the drawbridge ca. 1910.
13. Minneapolis Automobile Club Site. First built on this site in 1908, the original build burned down in 1918. A second building was then constructed that was one of the grandest buildings ever built in the City. Economic hardship in the 1950's caused the Auto Club to shut down and the building was demolished to make room for houses.

14. Dan Patch Line Swing Bridge. Built in 1908 to accommodate railroad traffic across the river, the Swing Bridge still exists but is not currently being used. Since the 1990's it has been situated in the permanently open position to allow uninterrupted river traffic.
15. Colonel Marion William Savage Mansion Site. This is the site of a large mansion owned by Savage who was owner of the famous race horse Dan Patch. The home was eventually demolished and the grounds became the site for the Masonic Home.
16. Wales Estate Site. This site was home to another of the large mansions that once dotted the valley bluffs. The original Wales house built ca. 1895 featured a large wine cellar, a swimming pool and an observatory. The home was demolished in the 1930's.
17. Penneshaw Village Site. Considered one of the oldest Dakota village sites on the Minnesota River, it was recorded as early as 1823. The village took advantage of the many natural resources found at the mouth of Nine Mile Creek and Long Meadow Lake. The location was likely used by generations of Mound Builders/Woodland Indians for centuries before the Dakota as well.
18. McLeod Ferry Site. This was the site a privately operated ferry located adjacent to the busy Chatelle Steamboat landing.
19. Lyndale Bridge Site. Built in 1921, the Lyndale Bridge was an important River Crossing for nearly 40 years, until the construction of the adjacent I-35W bridge in 1960. The Lyndale Bridge was torn down once the I-35 Bridge was completed.
20. Chatelle Steamboat Landing Site. Founded by Victor Chatelle in the late 1840's, this site was home to Bloomington's busiest steamboat landing. Chatelle was one of Bloomington's first settlers and was also the area's first Blacksmith.
21. Hopkins Ferry Site. This was the site of the private Hopkins Ferry—one of the busiest on the river and located immediately downstream of the Chatelle Steamboat Landing. It was owned and operated by Joe Hopkins, one of the influential early settlers of Bloomington.
22. Possible Ka-Bdo-ka Village Site. Located about a quarter mile west of Pond Dakota Mission Park, this site marks the likely location of Dakota Chief Ka-Bdo-ka's winter village throughout the 1830's and 1840's. Two archaeological investigations have been done near this site over the past 20 years in order to determine the exact location of the village. Findings thus far have been inconclusive, but in the 1840's it was recorded that a village including tepees was situated in this area.
23. Xinta Club Cabin Site. Located at the mouth of "Big Brook" immediately west of Pond Dakota Mission Park, the Xinta Club cabin was built ca. 1900 by a group of Minneapolis

businessmen who used it as a base for hunting in the valley. Foundation stones are still visible.

24. Gideon Pond House and Mission. The 1856 Gideon and Agnes Pond House is the only property in Bloomington that is on the National Register of Historic Places. Situated inside of Pond Dakota Mission Park, the area is the site of one of the first missions to the Dakota Indians beginning in the 1840's. Many foundations and building remnants dot the site from generations of farming. Other associated sites are also found nearby including the original brick kilning location below the bluff used by Pond in the 1850's to make the bricks for the house. The site currently enjoys a wide variety of programs undertaken by the City of Bloomington and the Pond Dakota Heritage Society.
25. Mission Graves/Indian Cemetery Site. Located east of Pond Dakota, this site lies next to the backyard of a home in a residential area. This site has been documented to contained several graves of Dakota Indians who were associated with the Pond Dakota Mission/Gideon Pond. Records on the site are incomplete however, and it is believed that many of the Graves were moved to a different location at some point in the late 1800's. It is very possible the some graves still remain on the site, though all are unmarked.
26. Cloudman Village Site. Dakota Chief Cloudman moved his village to this site from the Lake Calhoun area in Minneapolis in 1839. The Dakota from this village represented any of those who Gideon Pond taught farming techniques and did Missionary work with throughout the 1840's. Like all other villages on the Lower Minnesota, it was abandoned following the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux in 1851, and the village moved to a location further west on the Minnesota River.
27. Quinn's Point. Near this site in 1843, Peter Quinn, who was Bloomington's first permanent white settler, built a log cabin. This was the site of the first non-Indian home in Bloomington.
28. Indian Mounds/Mound Springs Park. This features the largest assemblage of Woodland Period Indian mounds in Bloomington, and one of the largest in the Twin Cities area.
29. Old Cedar Avenue Bridge. Used from 1889 to 1993, this bridge is one of the last remaining bridges of its kind in Minnesota. Discussions are currently underway for the future of the bridge.
30. Bass Ponds Site. From the middle 1920's to the 1950's the Bass Ponds were used as a bass rearing and stocking facility. The Bass Ponds got their start in 1926 when the Izaak Walton League was looking for a place to build bass-stocking ponds in order to replenish fished-out lakes in the Twin Cities. The site is now part of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.



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1" = 3778'