

## **The Eitel House:**

Originally built in 1875, the Chaska-brick constructed Eitel House was built in 1876 after the first frame house on the property burned down in a fire in 1875. It was owned by locally known and important families over the years, namely the Lano's and the Eitel's, and primarily served as a single-family residence and farmstead until 1967, when the property was sold to the Jonathan Development Corporation.

The Eitel House became a building for civil uses in the New Town neighborhood of Jonathan such as a co-op store, welcome center, and as the "Jonathan Children's House" day care facility until the early 2000's when radon levels became a safety concern. Currently, the house is vacant and unused, but is still under the ownership of the Jonathan Association.

## **Preservation Significance of the Eitel House:**

The Eitel House is worthy of designation as a historic resource because of its historical, architectural and cultural significance; and attained historical significance qualifying it for Historic Resource designation when it was built with Chaska brick in 1876.

The Eitel House embodies the vernacular style for which historic Chaska brick construction is known and is associated with the life of the Eitel Family (early pioneers to Carver County), and also the Lano Family (a well-known family contributing to Chaska's history over the years and who still live in Chaska today). In addition, the house is positioned in a unique location within the Jonathan neighborhood, a New Town built in the 1960's and 1970's, as one of only two Chaska brick farmhouses left in the neighborhood during modern development.

Three historic contexts, as outlined in the City of Chaska's Historic Context Study, are applicable to the historic Eitel House: Chaska Brick (1857-1950), Residential (1857-1950's), and Preservation of the Recent Past (1956-present). The Eitel House is significant in the areas of local architectural history (Chaska brick construction), association with local families (the Eitel's and the Lano's), and neighborhood heritage (farmhouse in the Jonathan New Town neighborhood).

The Eitel House is an outstanding example of the late-nineteenth century cottage architecture and one of Chaska's most valued resources due to both its location in the Jonathan New Town neighborhood and its Chaska brick construction. Contextually, it relates to the early farmstead development to the west and north of historic downtown Chaska and it also relates directly to one of the essential industries in Chaska at the time – Chaska brick production and distribution. This house reminds the community of Chaska's once-thriving brick industry, as well as times when farmsteads and working the land was customary. This old and beautifully uncomplicated house serves as a stoic anchor in a modernly planned neighborhood, signaling to all in the community that the past is worth both remembering and preserving.

The main construction material of the Eitel House is Chaska brick, which is integral to understanding its history. Chaska brick was an extremely popular building material in Minnesota during the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Nowhere was it a more popular material than in the City of Chaska and in the larger environs of Carver County. Residences constructed of Chaska brick, though they vary in period and predominant style, are also relatively congruent.

The high concentration of Chaska brick buildings in the City of Chaska gives a high level of cohesion to its aesthetic standards, and gives the community a distinctive quality and a sense of place. However, the town has lost many resources as vacant lots and infill construction prove. All of the original major civic buildings have been torn down, as well as some schools and larger commercial properties. Virtually all resources relating to the brickyards (save the clay holes), and most relating to the railroads, are gone. Therefore, it is imperative to preserve the integrity of the original Chaska brick houses as a living and fundamental resource for the community.

The Eitel House historical significance contains a strong cultural and social component. The house is certainly associated with the life of persons who significantly contributed to the City of Chaska's culture and development. More specifically, it is associated with various well-known Chaska and Carver County families.

The Lano Family, with members still living in Chaska today, is one of those important local area families. Theodore, one of Chaska's earliest settlers, arrived in Chaska from Germany in 1855.

Joseph Lano, the patriarch of the Lano Family, was born in the Eitel House in 1859. Members of his family have served the Chaska community as City Councilmen, as board members of Guardian Angels Church and leaders of the American Legion, VFW, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Fire Department.

Three generations of the Lano-Baxter Family owned and operated the Baxter-Lano Fairway grocery store on West Second Street. Other Lano's, four brothers back from service in World War II, founded the very successful Lano Implement Company, which originally featured farm machinery and more recently, construction equipment.

Another family of note, the namesake of the house, the Eitel Family, was a pioneer in Carver County (Chanhassen Township). John Eitel was born in 1827 in Wurtember, Germany. He relocated to Chaska in 1855 and owned 180 acres of farm south of Hundertmark Road, across from the Eitel horse farm. John ran the Valley Flour Mill. George Eitel was born and raised here and eventually became the founder of Eitel Hospital in Minneapolis. Harold and Rose Eitel owned the farm off Hundertmark Road from 1946 to 1967 when it was sold to the Jonathan Development Corporation.