



Prepared in cooperation by the Dodge County Historical Society, Dodge County Environmental Services and the Goodhue County GIS Office

Wasioja Seminary Ruins

LOCATION: 602nd St, Dodge Center, MN 55927

STATUS: Public Viewing

TYPE: Historic, District, Architecture, Settlement

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: The Seminary ruins are located on a knoll overlooking the Village of Wasioja toward the north and west. The original rectangular, two-story structure was constructed of rusticated limestone in 1860 and is another example of Andrew Doig's stone masonry.

SIGNIFICANCE: In 1858 citizens anxious to promote the growth of Wasioja agreed to provide a building for Free Will Baptists who wanted to establish a seminary. The Doig brothers engineered and built a substantial structure of native limestone to house the Seminary, which opened in 1860 with an enrollment of more than three hundred students. By 1861 the promising young school had been renamed Northwestern College. With the outbreak of the Civil War the principal and most of the male students marched off to fight for the Union. Although the enrollment of the Seminary was cut by more than half, the Free Will Baptists continued to operate the school until 1868.

Dr. L.B. Allen reopened the institution and operated it under a lease as Groveland Seminary until his death in 1872. The school was once again reopened in 1873 by the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, which sponsored co-educational instruction until 1894 when the growth of the public high school system forced the final closing of its doors. In 1905 fire destroyed all but the ruins still standing.

The Reverend A.B. Gould, a graduate and instructor of the Seminary, acquired the property and preserved the remaining walls; his heirs deeded the site to Dodge County as a public park in 1950. A historical marker was erected on the grounds in 1969 by Dodge County and the State of Minnesota.

OTHER RESOURCES:

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/93201663>

PROPERTY PICTURES:



Wasioja Seminary Ruins, Wasioja. Ca. 1974. Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, MN.



Old Settlers of Dodge County at Wasioja Seminary. ca Approximately 1885. Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, MN.



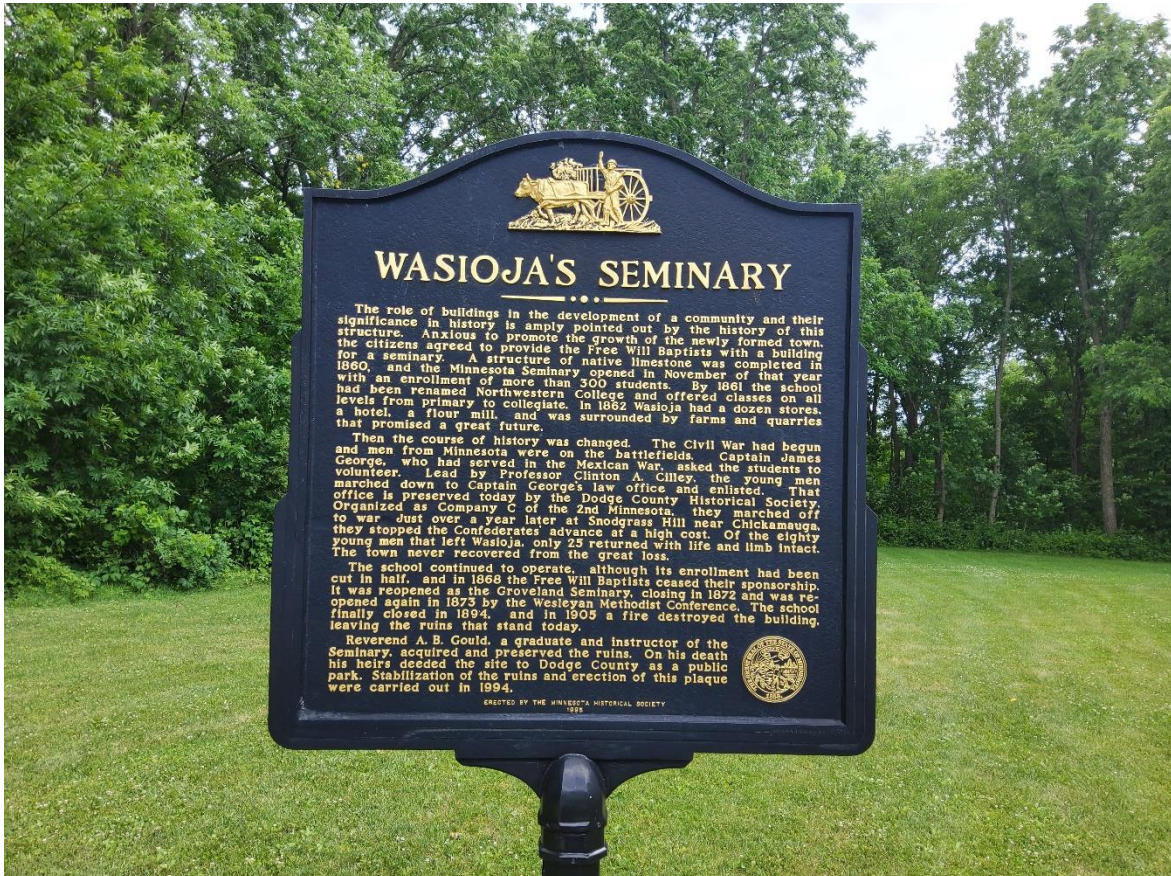
Old Settlers of Dodge County at Wasioja Seminary. ca Approximately 1890. Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, MN.



Wasioja Seminary ruins, 2021



Wasioja Seminary ruins, 2021



Wasioja Seminary plaque, 2021