

Ceresota Building

1908, 1987, 2015

Northwestern Consolidated Milling Company Elevator A, or what is known today as the Ceresota Building, was built in 1908, and, at eleven stories, was the largest brick elevator in the area and possibly the largest ever built, with a capacity of one million barrels of grain. The building was designed for the cleaning and storage of grain supplied to neighboring mills—Crown Roller Mill and Standard Mill. The building originally contained fifty-seven brick bins for storage.



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Brick grain elevators are the rarest of the elevator types (wood, steel, brick, tile, and concrete). At present, it is the only brick elevator remaining on either side of the river in Minneapolis. Ceresota features a large, windowless south façade with the brand's logo painted on the side.

Minnesota Historical Society

Technological advances in flour milling were already in place by the 1880s, when 18 different millers operated in Minneapolis. Over the next 50 years, consolidations were the primary development in the industry.

Northwestern Consolidated Milling Company was part of a corporate consolidation of the milling companies that inhabited the west bank of the Mississippi. The company started milling flour in 1891.

By combining six mills, Northwestern operated a quarter of the mills in Minneapolis and was the second largest in the world, after Pillsbury-Washburn.



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By 1905, the group owned almost 9% of the country's flour products. It was during this period of consolidation, 1908, that the Northwestern Consolidate Mill (Ceresota) was built.

The company's flagship brand was

Ceresota Flour, and its logo was Ceres Ota. Ceres Ota's name was derived from an imagined history. He was said to be the son of the Greek goddess, Ceres (goddess of grain and agriculture, from whom we get the word cereal) and Ota, the Greek word for son.



Narratives described a young boy receiving a costume of gifts from different countries. Each Ceresota Flour sack displayed a picture of Ceres Ota slicing a giant loaf of bread.

After the center of U.S. flour milling moved to the east coast, the Northwestern's A Mill closed in 1953, when it was converted to storage and light manufacturing.

Of Minneapolis' 34 flour mills, only four are still standing, including the Ceresota building. In 1971 Northwestern Consolidated Mill was a contributing property to the Saint Anthony Falls History District listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Mill was part of a three-building conversion in 1987, along with the adjacent Whitney Hotel (later Whitney Condominiums) and the Crown Roller Mill office building. During the conversion, the 90-foot silos were removed, and that section of the building was rebuilt. The conversion of these three buildings helped kick off the renaissance of the Mill District. The Mill was initially converted into multi-tenant offices, but today it is Millers Landing Senior Living.