New Ulm

1858
New Ulm, Brown County, Minnesota

Manuscript copy of Christian Prignitz’s 1858 plat map... Brown County Recorder’s Office

The town plan for New Ulm—Minnesota’s only community founded upon utopian ideals—is different from any other Minnesota town. The most dramatic of several features is the four-acre garden belt around each city lot provided to German Land Association members. The gardens offered families a link to the land and protection against high food prices and the period’s cycle of financial panics.
Duluth’s harbor boomed with trade in timber, grain, and iron ore, its most famous commodity. Duluth became one of the world’s leading ports largely because the locals defied a federal court order to stop dredging a canal. If the harbor channel had not been widened in the early 1870s, neighboring Superior, Wisconsin, would have dominated port activity.
Artists drew images like this from the ground, but they are known as bird’s-eye views because an area is seen in three dimensions from the downward slanting perspective of a bird. They are fabulous historical resources, often capturing minute details on busy city streets.
Over the last 150 years, how has the landscape of Minnesota changed? How will maps continue to guide the development of Minnesota? This map, derived from satellite imagery, shows in phenomenal detail how the major processes of agriculture, lumbering, mining, and urbanization changed the surface of Minnesota.