

Stillwater’s Historic South Hill

Pine Street Loop

1 Roscoe and Eva Hersey House 416 4th Street South

Roscoe Hersey played an important role in the early development of Stillwater’s lumber and mercantile trade. In 1872 he moved to Stillwater and entered the firm of Hersey, Bean and Brown. Hersey built the house in 1879-1880 and lived here for seven years. “Hersey’s new residence,” declared the *Stillwater Messenger*, “looms up majestically, and bids fair to be one of the largest and finest residences in the city.” The home is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



2 Joseph and Anna Eichten House 215 Pine Street West

Joseph and Anna Eichten built this home in 1890. With its turret, decorative shingles, and a carved sunburst panel on the second floor bay, it reflects the late Queen Anne style. The interior featured parquet floors and a ceramic fireplace as well as a copper bathtub. Eichten worked as a wholesale liquor dealer and a saloon owner, but in 1907, changed careers and became president of Connolly Shoe Co.



3 John and Elizabeth Whiteside House 223 Pine Street West

Born in Belfast, Ireland, John Whiteside moved to Stillwater in the early 1870s, earning his living as a plasterer specializing in decorative ceilings. A local newspaper called him a “well-known and most excellent workman.” Around 1875 Whiteside built this brick home, using motifs from the Gothic cottage architecture made popular by Alexander Jackson Davis. These include the steeply-pitched gabled roof and the narrow windows. Elizabeth died in 1914, followed to the grave a year later by her husband.



4 Austin and Harriet Jenks House 504 5th Street South

Captain Austin Jenks began his Stillwater career rafting logs to “any point on the Mississippi River between St. Paul and Memphis.” He constructed a steamer, the *Brother Johnathan* in 1871, only the second built for rafting logs on the Upper Mississippi. His river interests took him to Illinois, where he lived during the 1870s. In 1879 he returned to Minnesota and began work on this home, completed the following year. It reflects an eclectic mix of nineteenth century architectural styles. The house is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



5 Jacob and Cynthia Bean House 319 Pine Street West

Built in 1879 by Edward Hersey, it was completed in the Queen Anne style with its tower, wide porch, and two-story bay. Soon after construction, Hersey sold the house to one of his business associates, Jacob Bean, and his wife, Cynthia. Jacob was one of the leading lumbermen in the country, with the *St. Paul Daily Globe* describing him as “considerably more than half a millionaire.” Following a stroke in 1901, Jacob and Cynthia made California their permanent home and turned the house over to their daughter, Ann Bean Lehmicke.



6 David and Lucetta Grout House 504 6th Street South

Welshman David Grout came to the United States in 1861, seeking his fortune. A “practical bookkeeper” by trade, Grout wed Lucetta Gray on New Year’s Day 1867 and acquired this property two years later. The home is a fine local example of the Second Empire style, popular in the 1860s and 1870s in Minnesota. The most prominent features are its mansard roof and the bracketed eaves. Lucetta Grout died shortly after the house was built, after which David moved to Chicago.



7 Hersey-Atwood House 320 Pine Street West

Drawing on the family lumbering fortunes, Edward L. Hersey built this home in 1883, designed by architect William H. Willcox. Following the end of his



first marriage, Hersey wed Mary Haskell in 1894, and soon left Stillwater for St. Paul, and sold the property to George Atwood, also a lumber magnate and founder of the Twin City Forge and Foundry Company. The Atwoods erected a private gymnasium in the 1890s, said to have housed “every mechanical device known to athletics.”

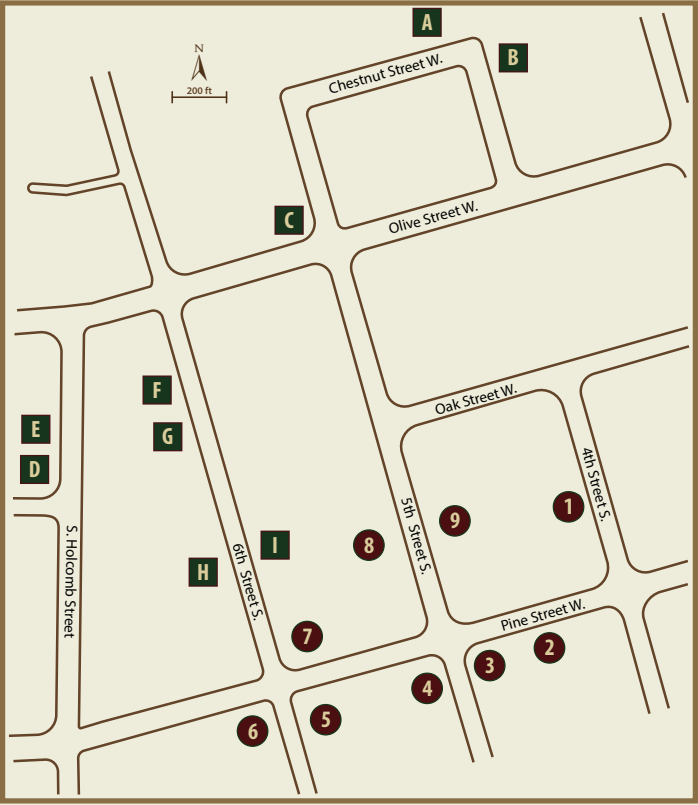
8 Victor and Elizabeth Seward House 416 5th Street South

This was the home of newspaper publisher Victor Seward and his wife, Elizabeth. In 1873 they purchased the *Stillwater Messenger*. The Swards operated the paper for more than three decades. In October 1892 a disgruntled former employee murdered Victor as he walked down a Stillwater street, leaving Elizabeth to run the *Messenger* for another decade – one of the few Minnesota women in that profession before WWI. This Queen Anne style house was built in 1886.



9 St. Mary’s Church, School, and Rectory 423 5th Street South

In 1865 priest Alois Plut arrived in Stillwater to form a new parish serving German and Swiss Catholics. In 1871 brewery owner Joseph Wolf donated funds to acquire this property on Fifth Street, and a new school opened soon after. The church building was completed in 1884, designed by architect George Bergmann, and the parsonage, just north of the church, in 1888.



Chestnut Hill Loop

A Henry and Nancy Nichols House 208 Chestnut Street West

Henry M. Nichols came to Minnesota in 1852 as president of the Northampton (Massachusetts) Colony, a group of around seventy-five people looking to settle in “the New England of the West.” Nichols served as minister at the First Presbyterian church in Stillwater from 1853 to 1859. When other opportunities came his way in 1857, local businessmen offered Nichols a new home as an incentive to remain in Stillwater. He chose a plan using Gothic Revival architecture — a style popular between 1850 and 1870. Henry Nichols left Stillwater within a few years, accepting a pastorate in Minneapolis.



B Alexander and Ida Johnson House 119 Chestnut Street West

A native of Sweden, Alexander Johnson arrived in Stillwater in 1858, and quickly established himself as one of the city’s most successful lumbermen. In 1869 Johnson joined with local investors to establish the McKusick, Anderson, & Company, building a sawmill just across the St. Croix River. He lived on this property beginning in 1879, offering him a clear view of his mill. In 1894-95, Alexander erected this new house. Johnson died on March 20, 1905, eulogized as “a good citizen, a good friend, and a Christian gentleman.”



C John and Anna O’Brien House 306 Olive Street South

Like many of Stillwater’s early lumbermen, John O’Brien was born in Maine, coming to Stillwater in 1853. In 1870 John organized a logging company with his brother, soon joined by another partner, James Anderson. This Queen Anne house, designed by architect Frederick Sturnegk, was built in 1884, and described by the *St. Paul Globe* as “one of the finest and most commodious private dwelling houses in the city.” In 1896 the O’Briens added major additions on the west and north sides.



D Anton and Rosalia Krenz House 320 Holcombe Street South

One of the many German immigrants to Stillwater was Anton Krenz. Anton was a masonry contractor and worked on many of the city’s major construction projects. His home, built in 1874, is a testament to his skill as a bricklayer. The house is an excellent example of the Italianate style with its box-like form, the shallow hip roof, and the arched windows with brick hoods, brackets under the eaves, and wooden sills. The house remained in the family until 1955.



E August and Olive Krenz House 316 Holcombe Street South

Born in Stillwater in September 1869, and son of Anton, August worked for most of his life as a mail carrier. On his retirement in 1934, the *Stillwater Gazette* said, “Since January 1, 1900, Gus has carried the mail. So regular were his habits that one could almost set his clock when he went by.” A few years after he began that career, August and Olive moved into this house in 1903. Its look suggests the Stick style, with its wood cross bands, jerkin roof, and patterned shingles.



F John and Sarah Booren House 310 6th Street South

John Booren was born in Sweden and came to Stillwater in 1858. John and his wife, Sarah, ran a popular hotel in town, catering to young immigrants. When the Boorens built this home in 1886, they turned to a fellow Swede, August Jackson, a carpenter and contractor. The house reflects the influence of the Queen Anne style, with its slightly protruding window bays on both sides, decorative shingling in the gable ends, and the wrap-around porch. Booren died in 1918.



G Fred and Mary Yates House 318 6th Street South

Fred Yates, a native of Indiana, came north to Stillwater after the Civil War and built a career as a bookkeeper for the city’s lumbermen, first working for Jacob Bean, later as Cashier for the St. Croix Lumbermen’s Board of Trade and Surveyor of Logs. This house was built in 1889. Its design uses elements of the Stick style of architecture, with a steeply pitched cross gable roof, the decorative truss at the apex of the front gable, as well as the raised horizontal and vertical bands.



H Henry Clay and Eva Farmer House 418 6th Street South

Henry Clay Farmer began his career as a liveryman, hauling passengers and goods from the railroad depot to homes and local businesses. He shifted his interests to the automobile and opened one of Stillwater’s first garages. In 1896 Farmer hired local contractor William Bieging to build this house. It uses several motifs of the Classical Revival style, including the Palladian window in the upper gable end, the refined Ionic columns on the porch, and, to shelter arrivals by horse or engine, a porte-cochère on the south side.



I Harry and Mae Farmer House 411 6th Street South

This dwelling was constructed circa 1916 for Harry R. and Mae Farmer. Harry followed in his father’s tracks, operating a garage and later working in the local Ford dealership. The house is an example of the Craftsman style popular in the early twentieth century, featuring wide eaves with exposed rafters and triangular braces.





Historic Stillwater

The Birthplace of Minnesota

South Hill Walking Tours

Chestnut Hill • Pine Street



St. Mary's Catholic Church (1884) and School

For more information

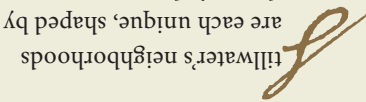
To learn more about Stillwater's past, visit the Washington County Historical Society, 602 Main St. North, Stillwater
www.wchsmn.org

To find information about restaurants and accommodations, contact Stillwater Convention and Visitors' Bureau.
www.discoverstillwater.com

Stillwater Heritage Preservation Commission
www.ci.stillwater.mn.us

The activity that is the subject of this brochure has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior. This program receives Federal financial assistance for identification and protection of historic properties.

Stillwater's South Hill



Stillwater's neighborhoods are each unique, shaped by the city's dramatic terrain with steep ravines and high bluffs. In the early years South Hill was cut off from the rest of the city, and appears to have been open fields and sparse woods. "Except in a few places," wrote one resident, "the low brush grew to the edge of the bluffs." Before 1869 there were only a few homes on the hill including the Greek Revival home of John and Caroline Proctor (220 4th Street S.) and the fine Gothic Revival home built for Rev. Henry Nichols.

As the riverside became crowded with shops, hotels, and industry, local citizens looked to the bluffs for space, laying out residential lots and grading the slope of city streets. By 1870 South Hill had been transformed by the construction of two important civic buildings. On the site often called Zion's Hill, a new county courthouse was completed that year. Across Pine Street, the city's public school opened its doors—three stories tall with a prominent cupola.

Historic photographs are used with permission of the Minnesota Historical Society and the Washington County Historical Society. Captain Jenks began his career rafting logs down the Mississippi to Illinois. Highly successful, in 1880, he built a grand home overlooking the St. Croix at 504 Fifth Street S.



Austin Jenks



Roscoe and Eva Hersey House, 416 Fourth Street S.

Craftsmanship

Lumber drove Stillwater's economy in the nineteenth century, taking advantage of the river that carried timber from the pine forests to the north down to a log-holding boom just upriver from Stillwater. Steam mills sprang up on the St. Croix in the 1850s, and wood finishing industries followed. Products included shingles, windows, doors, furniture and flooring. With the wealth created by the lumber industry, South Hill became a fashionable place to live, and its wealthy residents chose the latest in architectural styles — and so the neighborhood is filled with homes reflecting Italianate, Second Empire, Eastlake, and Queen Anne influences. They often used plan books, drawing on popular works by Andrew Jackson Downing or Henry

Anton Krenz, mason, and residents of South Hill like works." Among them were abundantly evident by their other town, as they make of as good builders as any 1848, "Stillwater can boast *Pioneer* newspaper stated in product. As the *Minnesota* to turn it into a finished the craftsmanship needed knew wood and understood These were people who followed. Products included wood finishing industries Croix in the 1850s, and the Farmer house (418 Sixth Street) and the Krenz house (316 Holcombe Street S.), as did August Jackson.

Among the lumbermen who bought lots were Jacob Bean, Albert Jenks, James Anderson, James O'Neill, Roscoe Hersey, and George Atwood. Others worked in related trades and services, like Fred Yates, Surveyor of Logs. Residents, though, came from all walks of life, representing saloon proprietors and liverymen. Thousands of new immigrants passed through

South Hill's Residents

Hudson Holly. Occasionally they called on the services of some of Minnesota's finest architects — George Bergmann (Washington County Courthouse), George Orff (416 S. Fourth Street), William Willcox (119 Chestnut St W.), and William Kingsley (119 Chestnut St W.).

Many homes have been restored in recent years. The city's Heritage Preservation Commission recognizes property owners who maintain the historical character of their building or site through its Heirloom Homes and Landmark Sites Program.

South Hill Today

Thousands of new immigrants passed through



Henry and Nancy Nichols House (1857)

Explore Stillwater's South Hill

Stillwater, Minnesota, is a city filled with historic homes and great stories. This tour takes you into the South Hill neighborhood, introducing you to some of the city's finest architecture as well as a few of its most colorful characters. There are two loops, each completed in about an hour. On this tour, you can . . .

- Learn about the architectural influences that shaped South Hill's homes.
- Investigate the cold-blooded murder of the city's newspaper publisher, Victor Seward.
- Find out about Atwoods' gymnasium, called "the most pretentious recreation house in the world."

About the tour

This tour brings story and place together, using new technology to offer a self-guided video walking tour of the South Hill neighborhood. You can download it from the city's website, or, if you have a smartphone, use this QR code to stream the tour on YouTube.



Atwood's Museum

This photo, taken around 1910, shows George Atwood in his taxidermy studio.