Pine Street Loop

1. Roscoe and Eva Hersey House 416 6th 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. Roscoe hersey owned a house in 1879-1880 and lived here for seven years. “Hersey’s new residence,” declared the Stillwater Messenger, “sounds up majestically, and bids fair to become the largest and finest residences in the city.” The house 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 house 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 cutst. His 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 “the big falls on the Mississippi River between St. Paul and Memphis.” He constructed a steamboat, the Brother Jonathan, 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 house, 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 turret, 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 Jacob sold the house over to their daughter, Ann Bean Lohmicke.

6. David and Lucetta Grout House 504 5th Street South

Whelanman 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. Harry-Atwood House 320 Pine Street West

Drawing on the family lumbering fortunes, Edward L. Atwood built this house in 1884, 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.”

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 Well 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 local architect Ludwig Bergmann, and the parsonage, just north of the church, in 1888.

Chestnut Hill Loop

8. Henry and Nancy Nichols House 208 Chestnut Street West

Henry M. Nichols came to Minnesota in 1862 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 1863 to 1879. When other businessmen came his way in 1873, 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.

9. 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 1895, Alexander erected this new house. Johnson died on March 20, 1905, eulogized as “a good citizen, a good friend, and a Christian gentleman.”

10. 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 he organized a lumber company, with his brother, joined by another partner, James Anderson. This Queen Anne house, designed by architect Frederick Sturmeck, was built in 1884, and described by the St. Paul Globe as “one of the finest and most commodious private dwellings in the city.” In 1896 the O’Briens added major additions on the west and north sides.

11. Anton and Rosalia Krenz House 320 Holcombe Street South

One of the many German immigrants to Stillwater was Anton Krenz. Anton was a mason and 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 shingles. The house remained in the family until 1951.

12. August and Olive Krenz House 316 Holcombe Street South

Born in Bohemia, August Krenz moved to Stillwater with his parents in 1858. August and his wife, Elizabeth, left Stillwater in 1903. In 1905, “looms the finest and most commodious private dwelling in the city,” declared the Stillwater Messenger.

13. 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 1895. Its design uses elements of the Stick style of architecture—a style popular in the 1880s and 1890s. 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 Birging 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-cochere on the south side.

14. Henry Clay and Eva Farmer House 418 6th Street South

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Stillwater’s Historic South Hill

The South Hill neighborhood is noted for its Queen Anne architecture and its location near the headwaters of the Mississippi River. This district, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, is one of the largest and most historic South Hill districts in the country, with the Stillwater Messenger eulogized as “a good citizen, a good friend, and a Christian gentleman.”
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 most famous citizen.
- Find out about Atwood’s 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.

Web references:
- www.ci.stillwater.mn.us
- www.discoverstillwater.com
- www.wchsmn.org

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 influences. They often used plan books, drawing on popular works by Andrew Jackson Downing or Henry Russell Hitchcock.

By 1870 South Hill had been transformed by the growth of the city’s neighborhoods. Each is unique, shaped by the city’s dramatic terrain with steep ravines and high bluffs. In the early years, the rest of the city, and the rest of the country, appeared to have been open “Except in a few places, low brush grew to the edge of the bluffs. “ Before 1869 and industry, local citizens looked to the bluffs for space, laying out residential lots and grading the slope of the site often called Zion’s Hill, a school opened its doors— Taking advantage of the St. Croix at 504 Fifth Street S. and Stillwater’s watersheds, local entrepreneurs sprang up on the St. Croix in the 1850s, and wood finishing industries and industry, local citizens looked to the bluffs for space, laying out residential lots and grading the slope of the site often called Zion’s Hill, a school opened its doors— Taking advantage of the St. Croix at 504 Fifth Street S. and Stillwater’s watersheds, local entrepreneurs sprang up on the St. Croix in the 1850s, and wood finishing industries

Historic Stillwater

The Birthplace of Minnesota

Stillwater was the site of the first Catholic church in Minnesota, St. Mary’s Catholic Church (1884) and School.

For more information

To learn more about Stillwater’s past, visit the Washington County Historical Society, 604 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

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Stillwaters South Hill

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